

Finding Favor in the Eyes of the Lord

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman's sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual awakening, repentance, and full surrender to God, highlighting the dangers of quenching and grieving the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 45:11

Scripture: Genesis 6:5

Topics: "Repentance", "Spiritual Awakening"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the urgent need for spiritual awakening in America, likening the nation's condition to stage four spiritual cancer. He calls for repentance and a return to God, using Genesis 6 to illustrate the consequences of human wickedness and the importance of finding favor in God's eyes, as exemplified by Noah. Idleman stresses that true repentance leads to a transformed life filled with the Holy Spirit, urging believers to awaken from spiritual slumber and embrace their faith passionately. He highlights the significance of grace and mercy, reminding the congregation that God's favor is available to those who seek Him earnestly.

Transcript

Some of you know who I am, some of you are new, and some of you maybe weren't here the last time I spoke. My name is Shane Eidelman, and I pastor a church about an hour and a half north of here in northern Los Angeles County. It's tucked back in the rolling hills of Leona Valley.

It's probably, if you know where Palmdale is, pretty close to there. And many years ago, about 13 years ago, we planted the church, and just having a desire for a spiritual awakening, I believe that's America's only hope. We understand that she has stage four spiritual cancer.

It is metastasized into all areas, from the school districts, to the government offices, to all areas of life, basically. And there is one cure, there is one hope. It's when God begins to awaken His church again, and revive us, and as the prophet would cry out, oh God, would you not revive us again that we may rejoice in you? God, revive your work.

Oh God, rend the heavens, come down and visit your people. And so, that's kind of the theme of my ministry, even though I teach through the Bible. My heart's call is to call people back to the Lord, that back to repentance.

I don't know if you've used to follow church history or anything, but we've kind of removed that word from the church sermons, repentance. It's a very good and very thoroughly biblical word. It means to turn back to God, and reconnect that relationship that is broken.

But this morning, we actually find ourselves in Genesis chapter six, Genesis chapter six, verses one through eight. And when the elders told me about the text, my first thought was not the Nephilim passage, the Nephilim. And if you don't know what that means, you're gonna find out real quick.

There's a lot of debate around this issue. Everything from aliens to angels coming down and having relationships with women, it's all centered around this verse. And so, let's read it.

Let's just let God's word, obviously, it's there for a reason. And it would help explain a lot of things. Genesis six, one.

And as you've been learning, God created everything. And I believe in a literal creation. I believe that God literally created Adam and Eve, God literally created His creation.

And you'll see creation, and then you're gonna see the theme of redemption as you keep going through Genesis. But right now, it's right before the flood. And He said, man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them.

So they begin to have babies and the kids would grow up. And the sons of God, so it's differentiating here, the sons of God are different than the daughters of men. So the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were attractive.

And they took as their wives, those they chose. So there's three different things here that could be going on. The sons of God to me seems like it's definitely something different than just, the text would read a lot different if it was just men and women marrying.

But Jewish expositors say that these were noble men, men of high rank. Others say that these actually were angelic beings. And these angels never married, although angels never marry or are given into marriage, it doesn't mean that they can't interact with humans.

We saw that throughout the Bible. Abraham, Lot, they rolled back the stone with Jesus. An angel appeared to the prophet's mom, Samuel.

And so you see there's an interaction here. So although they don't marry or given into marriage, like Jesus said, we'll be like the angels. It doesn't mean though, that they couldn't somehow interact.

And if we also look at Job, many of you are familiar with this, Job 1.6. There was a day when the sons of God, it's a Bani Ha Elohim. It's this plural text for this type of angelic spirit beings. And when the sons of God came to present themselves to the Lord, Satan came with them.

And so you see this, this is something a little bit different. And at the risk of sounding like a conspiracy theorist, or wearing the tin hat, what they call the foil hats, or talking about aliens and different things, the Bible seems to indicate this is something unique that happened. This is something that was not supposed to happen.

And we're gonna get to that in a minute. Or the third option is the sons of Elohim were the Sethites. And the Sethites from the line of Seth were supposedly a godly type lineage.

And then they married the daughters of men. And then that became a kind of a perverted type of union. The sons of God should have just married those along their lineage.

That's one view. And for me, I can't embrace that because it looks like clearly, the sons of God are distinct and different from humans. Now, how do I come up with that? I'm gonna keep reading because just this in and of itself is not enough, but we're gonna keep reading here in a minute.

Verse three, so let's go back up though. Men begin to, children begin to be born. And then the sons of God, whoever that is, saw that they were attractive.

They married them. And the Lord said, my spirit shall not abide with man forever. For he is just flesh.

His days shall be 120 years. Basically God's saying, these guys are taking me off. They're doing things they should not be doing.

This is becoming corrupt. And I'm not gonna continue dwelling with them. Their days shall be 120 years.

Now we open up another can of worms because does 120 years mean how long man is now going to live? Remember they're living 900 years, 800 years, 700 years, 600 years, 500 years. Now cut to 120 years, one view. The other view is the flood is going to come in over 100 years.

And that's when God's gonna judge them. And it is interesting that we can look at just the human body and how it can't really go past 120 years old. You've seen the records and different things.

My thought is I try not to get real dogmatic on things that aren't clear. Because both of what I just said are good points. Both of those are true.

The flood was coming over 100 years and God is not gonna strive with man. In other words, hey, you're done at 120 years. We don't see that really.

We see people dying 70s, 80s, 90s. There are centurions that are well over 100. And it's because our bodies just begin to break down maybe a lot quicker than it used to.

And we get in all kinds of reasons why with the pre-flood condition of the environment, all different kinds of things. But all we know here is God says, I can't keep dwelling with these men and these women because they're getting very evil and very corrupt. And then we see in verse four, here's the word, the Nephilim, the Nephilim were on the earth in those days.

Okay, so they're not on the earth anymore, but they were on the earth in those days and they were also on the earth afterward. So maybe they were afterward after the flood. When the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore children, these are mighty men, men of old, men of renown.

And so here's where we see that the Nephilim, whoever this group is, had relationships with the women. And it looks like produced some type, I believe John MacArthur would teach us as well, some type of offspring that is not good, not healthy, not God's design. And the word Nephilim means to fall.

So could it be the fallen ones? And then my mind started to think Jude, Jude six, and the angels who did not stay within their own position or their own abode, they left their position, they left their proper dwelling. God has kept them in eternal chains under the gloom of darkness until the judgment of that great day. So wait a minute, there's a group of angels who did not keep their abode where they should have stayed, their

proper dwelling place.

Could it be they came to earth and had this relationship with women and the deeds were evil, it was corrupt, and God destroyed and started over? But then it brings up a lot of questions. There were Nephilim on the earth in those days and then after that. And another translation, you prefer the English standard version here, so that's what I use here, and I use that as well as the New King James.

The New King James would say there were giants in those days. And it's interesting, Goliath was a giant or the Amaleks were huge. King Og in the Old Testament, his bed was almost 14 feet long.

And so you hear stories of these things. And even now, at first, we're never gonna talk about aliens in the church, right? Unidentified flying objects. But now it's like, I've talked to friends of mine with NASA and different things, and these fighter jet pilots, they're seeing things in the sky.

They're going 15,000 miles an hour in hard rights and so you can see, okay, this could be, Jack Hibbs is actually teaching on it this week through his radio network where we air his program and I've been listening and they believe, a lot of people believe that could be demonic angels, demonic activity going on because remember, they can possibly break into both realms, the realm we live and also the realm they're in. And as you can see, it can get a little interesting. And so I like to just stick with what I do know instead of all this speculation and well, how about this? And you gotta wonder though, like think about, they go back and they wonder how are the pyramids built? And do you know some of those big stones, I mean, they're 15, 20, 25,000, I think, or 25, don't quote me on that.

I think I said the wrong number at the first service. But 20 tons, that's heavy. And one of our biggest cranes in the world can't even pick that up.

So how did these things happen? So it just makes you wonder, food for thought. There's not much you can do with it. So really the key is don't get caught up with questionable information.

Don't get caught up in arguing or debating. And I've seen people get upset at each other when they disagree on the non-essentials. And it's just very safe to say, you know what? I'm not sure.

But what I am sure of are the following verses. Chapter six, verse five through six. The Lord saw the wickedness of man and it was great in the earth.

And that every intention and thought of his heart was only evil continually. And this word wickedness, sometimes people get upset at that, you know, if they're called wicked. Oh, I'm not wicked.

You know, they have this idea in their mind, but wicked, wicked, the actual, the root word, and if you look in the Old Testament, it's a Hebrew word. Wicked just means that they were hostile toward God. So if a person is wicked, it means they're hostile toward God.

They're rebellious. They don't want to do what God says. So we think of wickedness as some, you know, warlocks and black magic and Satanism, which of course it is, but it also is just a person who's rebelling against God.

So their activities are wicked. And as a preacher, I have to just tell you something. I think in the churches, we have to get back to telling people the truth.

We need to get back to calling out sin. We need to be back to calling people to repentance. That's our only hope.

That's what the Bible did. That's what the prophets, the prophets were actually called to call the people back to God. They were called to Isaiah's and Jeremiah's and Hosea's and Joel's and Amos and Obadiah and Jonah.

They would call the people back to God, repent and turn back to God. And the problem in the church is that we don't talk too much about repentance. We don't talk enough, but it's a very offensive word right now.

Are you aware of that? In our culture that don't offend. Hey, pastor, you can talk about anything you want, as long as it doesn't offend. Well, if that's the case, I'm going to go, let's go eat, I'm leaving.

Because the message offends. It's where our wickedness and the sinner is confronted by his need for a savior. He's called out, he sees the light as he's living in his darkness and a response is required.

As much as I love the love of God, did you know the attribute, the number one attribute above all other attributes that is mentioned throughout the Bible is holiness. The angels cry, holy, holy, holy. Our God is a consuming fire, holy and righteous.

No one will see, without holiness, no one will see the Lord. And it's time to tell people the hard truths, the hard, the difficult things. So they wake up and they understand what is at stake.

Because we can either lull the church back to sleep or we can wake her up. Wake her up in the condition that she's in. And then it goes on to say, and the Lord regretted, regretted that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him to his heart.

How can God regret what he did? And I don't understand all the ins and outs, but I do know this, God is sovereign. His sovereign plans will prevail, but there's also something called his permissive will, where he allows people to make decisions within his will. So God created, but yet he was grieved because he saw the choices that they made.

I mean, that's the plain reading of the text is what shows that. And parents, you can relate, can't you? You know what your kids are gonna do. You give them a choice, but, and they make the wrong choice, you know they are and it still grieves you, it breaks your heart.

And I'm, without a shadow of a doubt, I believe that without the work of the Holy Spirit, we would be in the same spot today. Because men, fallen men cannot stay static. They cannot stay in one spot.

As I often teach, sin either withers or grows depending on whether you feed or starve it. And so the wickedness will actually grow and get worse and get worse and get worse. Sin fully grown brings forth death.

And so we have to abort that sin, pull it up by the roots and repent and get back on track. That's how you keep your heart clean before God. So God was grieved.

And this might be good for someone. Did you know that you can grieve the Holy Spirit? Let me give you a quick teaching on pneumatology. How many of you know what pneumatology is? Oh, there's more than that, come on.

Pneumatology is a portion of theology. You got soteriology, pneumatology, eschatology, and pneumatology is the study of the Holy Spirit. And so what Christianity believes, what we teach, I know the elders here teach us as well, is that once a person repents and believes in the gospel, they are now what, born again.

They are a new creation of Christ and the Holy Spirit is the one that's going to teach them. And the Holy Spirit now comes and resides in them. So you have all of the Holy Spirit at conversion, but it begs the question, does he have all of you? And so that's why you'll hear these incredible stories of people on fire for God.

Have you heard those stories? Maybe that's some of you, hopefully it is. People on fire for God and others aren't. What's the difference? They're both Christians, correct? Let's say assume.

One witnesses, they're on fire for God, people call them a Jesus freak, holy roller, too extreme. I love when people call me too extreme. I say, well, we have extreme mountain biking, we have extreme makeovers, we have extreme whatever, why can't we have an extreme and passionate love for the Lord Jesus Christ? Because we should have, there should be a desire, there should be a fire welling up inside of us.

The Holy Spirit has given to us, yes, you can grieve, but you can also quench. What do you quench? You quench a fire. Jeremiah said, his word is in my heart like a burning fire.

I'm wary of holding it back, but I cannot. The God's word is like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces. It's like a fire that devours.

It's passion, it's desire. Why does one person have it and another person doesn't? It often boils down to full surrender. I believe without a shadow of a doubt, I gave my heart to the Lord, like people call it that, but really you repented, you believe in the gospel, you believe that Jesus saved me, and I was 12, and I got with the wrong people, my dad wasn't a believer, and you really wouldn't know it.

Somebody asked me, I might say, well, hold on, come here. Yeah, I'm a Christian. You know, you had your image uphold.

Back then, I was into bodybuilding, so a lot of steroid abuse, fighting, beating people up, bench pressing. Right, that's what a man was. Drank a lot of beer, got in fights, and lifted weights.

But I was dying inside. I had control of my life, my life had control of me. And I'm a Christian, I go to church now and then, but never led anybody to the Lord.

The Bible, can we be honest, was kind of boring. Christian worship, oh my goodness, that's for women. Give me some Metallica.

Dun-nuh-nuh-nuh, dun-nuh-nuh-nuh, dun-nuh-nuh-nuh. That's man's music. Or if I felt like drinking, put on some country.

George Strait, Conway Twitty, I'm dating myself. And Tim McGraw and Faith Hill were becoming popular, and you know, it's like, yeah, that worship, worship, that's kind of for really weak people. But I was a Christian, and I believe I was.

What's the difference? I was quenching and grieving the Spirit. There's no fire, there's no real desire. And then through a series of events, God broke me.

You ever been broken by God? Do you know God spans? God will pull out the paddle, and He will spank you. And it hurts. All right, hotshot, let me take your career from you.

Let me take your health from you. Let me take your, you fill in the blank. Discipline, humble, humble, humble, humbling yourself.

The biggest humbling thing I'll never forget was, I had worked my way up, I don't know if they have a 24-hour church, 24-hour fitness around here. But I worked my way up and became a district manager, and corporate, at the corporate level, running multiple fitness locations. And I was responsible for a \$300,000 budget every month.

The problem with that is, once you become a corporation, you have to beat yourself every month. They call it same store growth. And I had to keep beating myself every month.

They want a 6%, 8%, 10% increase over last year. And I couldn't do it. Here I am, number one salesman in Southern California, running all this, and in my 20s, and they demoted me.

Thought I could walk on water. Now I have to go work for people I used to manage. Corporate America doesn't play around.

Humbling, humbling. So many things, I could go into my whole story. But God finally broke me.

I'll never forget, I remember, I remember where I was at, in a little town where I live. I remember the house, I remember the address. And I finally cried out to God, and said, enough, God, I'm turning everything over to you.

I can't do this anymore. God, Father, I'm coming home. I'm coming home.

And the tears, oh, the tears of joy. How do you have tears of joy in the midst of tremendous sadness? Because the Holy Spirit is filling you. I mean, I'm driving, just laughing with joy, even though I'm going through hell.

And the Bible came alive for the first time ever. The Bible came alive. I couldn't, Mom, look at this.

I know I've been telling you that for 25 years, son. Or 20. Look, it's bye-bye country.

Put on just Christian music, and begin worshiping the Lord. And God's breaking me, and breaking me, and filling me. And then from that came this boldness.

Like, oh my goodness, people are not gonna like me. Because back then, I was a motivational speaker. I would go, and I would speak, and you'd fill out a form card.

How did you like our speaker? How would you rate him, one to 10? Like, hope everybody likes me. Oh, when you're a preacher, all that goes out the window. Because you actually don't say, I hope everyone likes me.

And you say, God, I hope I do what you call me to do. Let the chips fall where they may. What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Woe be to you if you're pleasing men. God has to wreck and remove all of that from you. And you just come up and preach His Word, with the authority of God's Word.

And so everything became alive now, alive with God. What's, it was such a dramatic transformation that I didn't even know if I was safe to begin with. And that's, but that's where, did you know, that's where most Christians live? Back with the quenching and the grieving of the Holy Spirit? There's no passion for God, because they're feeding on things that are counterproductive.

Netflix binges, rarely getting to church, not having worship on, and reading the Word of God, and being, that's how you're filled with the Holy Spirit. Whatever you put in, you're gonna get out. Somebody said, maybe you guys can help me with this, as a man thinketh in his heart, hmm, who said that? Jesus, whatever you put in, you're gonna get out.

As a man fills his mind and his heart out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth is going to speak. And as you fill yourself up on the things of God, you're filled with the things of God. I know it sounds so funny, but as you fill yourself on the things of God, now you're filled with the things of God.

Now there's a boldness for the truth. Now you can go walk into school district meetings and say, you will not teach this garbage to our children. Now you will take a stance for the truth of God's Word.

Now you will make a difference between, because the fire of God is within you. You want to expose the unfruitful works of darkness. I love you enough to tell you the truth, but I will not capitulate to a dying and dead culture, hell-bent on rejecting God.

I will stand and watch, because the Spirit of God is living mightily through me and through you. That's the difference. It's night and day, night and day.

So this is a huge issue that you can grieve the Holy Spirit. You can quench the Holy Spirit of God within you. And so maybe some of you, we had some people make a choice at the first service that came forward for prayer.

Choose today who you will follow. If God be God, follow Him. If that sounds familiar, that's because Elisha was on Mount Carmel.

He called out the false prophets, and then he stood before the children of Israel, and he said, how long will you waver between two opinions? How long will you waver between two opinions? If God be God, follow Him. Basically begin to give God all your passion, all your desire. If you seek me with all of your heart, you will find me.

Out of the abundance of the heart, your mouth is going to speak and praise God. We've got to get back to that. Waking up the church.

Something I often say is if you don't like what I'm saying, it's probably because you need to hear what I'm saying. Isn't that true? And then we read in verse seven and eight. God was sorry, there was tremendous wickedness, and God said, I'm going to blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land.

Everything is going to be destroyed. I am sorry that I have made man. But that's not the last sentence, right? What's it say? But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

You should do a study sometimes on all the butts in the Bible. We are surrounded by such great an army, Jehoshaphat would say, but God, Hezekiah, this army, the Babylonians, the Assyrians are coming against us, but God, Lord, we're going to hell in a hand and a handbasket. But God, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, I will begin to heal their land like never before, turn from their wicked ways, humble themselves and call down heaven, getting the passion and the fire back.

God hears the desperate cries of His children, not some boring prayer as if we're at a cemetery. We need the passion of God back in these places. But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Thank God for that. Thank God. Thank God for His favor.

If it wasn't for God's favor, I would not be up here. Would any of you still be around? You know what I'm saying? I'll thank God for second chances. Well, I'm about on number 4,052, right? Because we're not perfect.

But the key is to fall forward. Or as a famous book title was, fell forward. God, I've fallen.

I need to get back up. I need to be restored to you. I need that passion.

I need that desire. And I know God hears the desperate cries of His children. Parents, you know, there's a cry.

When you hear that cry, you're jumping up off that couch. You're running outside. You know that cry.

Mom, dad, help, help, help. Well, hold on. Let me eat first.

No, there's desire, desperation. God hears. He hears a contrite and broken heart.

I will in no way cast away. Come to me humble and teachable. And I will lead you.

If my people seek me with all of their heart, all of their strength. If you seek me, you will find me. And the more you find me, the more you love me.

It's an all-consuming passion. It's a desire for people, men and women, to get on fire for God. The biggest thing the church in America needs today is to wake from their slumber.

Awaken from your slumber and return to the first love. I didn't say it. Who said it? Jesus, be hot or cold, but if you're lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth.

Shane, why are you being so hard? This is not hard. You know what this is? It's speaking the truth in love. I love people enough to tell them the truth.

I will not come up here and play games and give you my opinion and try to tickle the ear. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. And they will look for their teachers.

Why are the most popular teachers on TV? They won't tell you anything about repentance. Trust me, repentance, the blood of Christ, judgment, nothing. Oh, how it must offend the heart of God.

These are the things Jesus died for. And he said to preach it. I have to listen to my master and preach what the Bible says.

But again, Noah found grace, found favor in the eyes of the Lord. And this is where we get our concept from, grace. Grace, amazing grace.

What is that? It's favor. It's God pouring out his favor. And then what is mercy? We hear that word mercy a lot too.

Mercy removes the punishment. Mercy says you're due a punishment, but I'm withholding it. And grace gives you favor.

I'm sure you've learned already in the past months, or you will in the months coming up as you're in Genesis, that the bottom line is because of the fall of Adam, that relationship with God has been broken. It's been damaged. It's been marred.

So that's the whole point of the cross. It's not some suspicious superstition. It's not some thing, oh, that's what you believe.

That's what we believe. Jesus himself said, I am the only way, the only truth, the only life. Nobody comes to the Father except through me.

There's no backup plan. There's no plan B. There's no other way. And that cross bridges the gap and then we repent and we believe that God has set us free and has provided that way of escape.

Grace and mercy meet at the cross. That's the redemption story in a nutshell. How important is grace? Did you know that's our number one hymn in America? It's based on that, correct? Amazing grace.

How sweet the sound. Okay, he's gonna get controversial here, you ready? I don't know if we, can we say this? That saved a wretch like me. I was lost, but now I'm found.

I was blind, but now I see. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound. All those hymns, all those hymns came from men and women filled with the Spirit of God.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Here's my heart, take and seal it.

Seal it in thy courts above. Or what about Horatio Spadford? It is well, it is well with my soul. I see billows roll.

It is well, it is well with my soul. And to really wake you up, think about the context and how that song was written. As these sea billows are rolling out in the ocean, the captain of the ship came and said, Mr. Spadford, this is about the location where the vessel went down and he lost all of his daughters.

Then he wrote the famous hymn. Listen, folks, if you can take your pain to the cross, God will rebuild your life. That place of pain can be your greatest place of anointing.

That place of pain can be your greatest ministry. All those who have been forgiven much, love much. The more I've been forgiven, the more we've been forgiven, the more we love much.

Amazing grace. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. It's where we get our famous saying.

Many of you have heard Christ alone, Scripture alone, faith alone, to the glory of God alone, grace alone. And that's really, if you could take and encapsulate the gospel message, that's what we believe. It's through faith alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone.

In other words, there's no works. There's nothing I can do to earn it. It's God's favor upon our lives as we repent and believe.

That's the key. Repent, turn. Can repent means I'm thinking this way.

Let's say I'm wicked. I'm a sinner. I reject God.

I'm repenting. I'm turning this way and I'm walking to the light. I have repented.

My old life is gone. My new life is ahead of me. I see the light now.

The darkness is at bay and Lord, I see the light and I'm turning to you. I've repented. Now joy comes into your heart.

But be careful, that old man wants to turn you back around. Right, prone to wander. Lord, I feel it.

Prone to leave the God I love. It's that fight, it's the battle that Paul talks about, that's battling within us. We have the Adamic nature, this wicked nature that I believe is still in us, but now I've been redeemed and I have the Holy Spirit in me as well and I want to live for Christ.

And sometimes like Paul, I say, oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of sin and death? For with the mind, I serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin. That's why again, being filled with the Spirit is so important, making choices that build that relationship. Charles Spurgeon said, you are a great sinner, but he is a great savior.

And I have to tell you that word repentance is beautiful. It's life changing, it's life altering. Of all the words in the Bible, I've seen that one make the most difference in the lives of people.

Correct? Repent, repentance. They turn from what they know to be wrong into what they know to be right and then joy follows. And my wife has seen this more than anyone else, but one of the marks of when I'm speaking, even at our church, traveling, one of the most amazing things I think I've ever seen, it almost, I mean, I almost went crazy initially when I didn't understand it, but I would, you know, given a message like I am here and you'd have even just this morning, a young girl gave her life to the Lord and came forward for prayer.

And another, let's say there's a single mom, she's going through hell and she comes up, she's crying and thank you so much. I was so encouraged by the message. Oh, thank you so much.

But then a minute later, I got Judgmental Jerry coming up or Critical Kathy. I can keep going. I don't like anything you had to say.

Wait a minute. What's the difference? Same message, same tone, same voice fluctuation, same Bible. Receptive, unreceptive, hard, arrogant heart, soft, pliable, humble, ready to receive.

That's the only difference. And I see it everywhere I go. So yes, the messages are designed to slap you in the face, so to speak, spiritually speaking.

That's how we wake up. Whoa, hold on. I'm going the right direction.

Did he just say that? Yeah, I did. God's word says it. Just go and read Isaiah, Jeremiah.

Check out Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah. Man, you think I'm hard. Or John the Baptist, you stiff neck people who warned you to flee from the wrath that is to come.

Therefore bear fruits worthy of Abraham, worthy of repentance. And don't say we are children of Abraham. Oh, God is gonna lay the ax at the very root of the tree.

You need to repent, you brood of vipers. Jesus, you whitewash tombs. You're clean on the outside, but you're dead men's bones on the inside.

The reason is he loves them enough to speak the truth in love. Because you can coddle someone and keep them in their sin, or you can challenge them and lovingly confront them and let the spirit of God convict them. And you see massive amounts of change by that conviction.

The word of God is convicting. Remember what I said earlier, the word of God is never portrayed as a soft pillow. And the word of God was like a gentle feather from a dove that dropped to the ground.

Never. A fire that consumes, a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. My word, he says, is like a sword that divides.

It goes, it pierces the joint and the marrow. It's a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. A sword, fire, and hammer? That hurts.

I don't know if you ever got touched a fire or got hit with a hammer or been cut. It hurts, it cuts, it penetrates our hearts. And then finally, I'll leave with this.

Noah found favor in the eyes, the eyes of the Lord. Now we all know that God is spirit. Jesus said, God is spirit.

Those who worship him must worship him in spirit. They're connected spiritually and truth. By the way, just a nugget, I didn't tell the first service this, that's a very healthy balance to be filled with the spirit and have the truth.

You can't have one or the other. Right, you've seen those churches before, their circus environments. Hey man, if it's odd, it's God.

Roll around and do some things. It must be the spirit moving. No, no, no, we need truth.

But you can have the cemetery and no spiritual power. You know the cemetery? Dead as a doornail. You wouldn't wake them up if you went and lit a fire under their foot right now.

But we have the truth, you have the truth. Yeah, but you lack the fire of the spirit. You're straight as a gun barrel theologically, but you're just as empty.

It takes a fire of the spirit. So the eyes of the Lord, although salvation is a sovereign act of God, you can position yourself in his line of sight. The Bible's very clear, very clear.

It's actually so clear that all churches within the Christian faith are under this one banner. If it's outside of this, it is called a cult. Outside of this, faith, belief in Jesus and Jesus alone.

I repent, I acknowledge that I'm a sinner. I need a savior. God, I repent and I believe and I have faith.

I trust in you by faith alone, through grace alone, to the glory of God alone. That's the Christian message in a nutshell. I wanna share something.

I'll have the team come up in just a minute. But when I read this, God's eyes, the spiritual eyes, I immediately thought when I was a brand new, I'd say prodigal son. You know that story? And I love with the prodigal son story.

He ended up eating with the pigs. Ever been there? Not technically, but he's eating with the pigs and the Bible says, and when he came to himself, he ran home back to the father. What did the father do? I've been waiting for you, you're in trouble.

The father ran, what a beautiful story. But I opened the Bible, one of the first things I read was the eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to him. And then that same reading, I'm reading, the devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

And it just, it dawned on me that morning, who finds you? One or the other will find you. There's no middle ground. Either we're pursuing God and not perfectly, right? Make mistakes, I wouldn't be up here.

But you get back on track, you keep fighting again. Perseverance is a mark of a Christian warrior. It's persevering.

Sometimes a quote I use at men's conferences, anybody know Vince Lombardi? Famous Green Bay Packers coach, he said, at any man's finest hour, his greatest sense of fulfillment is when he lies exhausted on the field of battle victorious. And I thought, that should be for Christians. That should be to Christians, that the mom and dad at the end of their life can say, I did the best I could.

I tried to raise those children. I fought the good fight of faith. I exposed the unfruitful works of darkness.

Yes, I might walk around with a limp a few times where the devil got me, but I got back up and I was here to fight again. And like David, I strengthened myself in the Lord. I will get into my prayer closet.

I will pull down heaven. I don't care if I don't see results right now because the God I know and the God I trust is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. There might not be immediate fruit, but God, you're gonna find me on this knees, my knees, even if America is going to hell in a hem basket, I will not give up.

I will intercede before this land and before our churches. Perseverance, God loves the perseverance. Why? Because you're trusting in him.

Don't you realize that's what faith is? Faith believes in God even when you don't see the results. It pleases God without faith. It's impossible to please God.

So I'm gonna stop there because I'd have a lot more rabbit trails. But folks, you have to realize only one person can sit on the throne and that needs to be God. If you're like any other church throughout the United States, many of you need to fully surrender your life this morning.

You need to get that fire back. You need to get that passion back. You need to get the love for God's word back into your life.

And some of you maybe never had it. You've never fully committed. You never fully repented.

And I wanna pray with you if you want that this morning. We're gonna be up front to pray with you in just a minute, but I think the worship team's gonna come up and sing a final song. One of the ones I love, I love reading about hymns, in case you didn't know, because who wrote those hymns out of the tremendous pain, because the tremendous anointing, those people you know who touch your heart the deepest, usually went through hell and back.

And they cling on to their Savior. If you're barely holding on this morning, make sure it's to the hymn of His garment. But Fannie Crosby wrote, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.

"Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine. "This is my story, this is my song, "praising my Savior all the days long."

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