

I Pour Out My Soul to You

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of pursuing God with a desire for worship, truth, and a cry to Abba, Father, and recognizing that following God costs something, including our desires and priorities.

Duration: 48:09

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:10

Topics: "Intimacy With God", "Despair and Hope"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the necessity of pouring out our souls to God, especially during times of despair and discouragement, as a means to draw closer to Christ. He highlights that true Christians, filled with the Holy Spirit, will have a deep desire for worship and truth, and that struggles with sin should lead to compassion rather than judgment. Idleman uses the story of Hannah from 1 Samuel to illustrate the power of heartfelt prayer and the importance of seeking God earnestly, even amidst ridicule and adversity. He encourages believers to recognize their need for God and to pursue a genuine relationship with Him, which requires humility and surrender. Ultimately, he calls for a revival of intimacy with God, urging the congregation to pour out their hearts and seek His presence.

Transcript

God will often use despair and discouragement to drive us to Christ, and we have to make that choice to follow Christ no matter what. So the message title is, I Have Poured Out My Soul. I Have Poured Out My Soul, and it's part four in the True Christian series.

If you remember a few weeks ago, I talked about the desperate need for absolute truth, the need to get back to the truth, the inerrancy of God's Word, and I also talked about seeking the Holy Spirit, actually being filled with the Holy Spirit. A true Christian is filled with the Spirit. They are surrendered to the work of the Spirit.

They are filled with the Spirit of God, and that is a mark of a true Christian. Of course, then we talked about the message that I've been hearing from a lot of people around the United States is, the narrow way is the only way, and Jesus is being the only way. That is the only way to salvation, and that is a distinction of the Christian faith, the essentials of the Christian faith.

And you might say, well, how is I poured out my soul? What is it? What are you talking about here, Shane? Well, the basic premise is this. The true Christian will seek God. Be encouraged in that.

Like a magnet to metal, like a moth to the flame, the true Christian, filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in me cries, Abba, Father, not get away from me, Father. There's a cry there, so there should be a desire for the things of God, a desire for worship, a desire for truth.

If there's no desire there, you have to really question, is my faith genuine? Do I really have saving faith? Because I'm not talking about those who are living in defeat right now. I want to encourage you. You know me, I don't preach perfectionism, because if I did, I wouldn't be up here.

So, but it's about falling forward. It's about being encouraged and being built up and being straight. Even if you've been in besetting sin, you are discouraged this morning.

I believe that Christ can break every chain. I believe he can break you out of that bondage of sin and depression. And see, that's how you get back.

But see, there should be a desire there. Now, what happens though, people don't understand that people can struggle in sin. Amen? It's funny how those Pharisees like to just go, I never struggled with sin.

Well, really? I've thrown out this challenge numerous times. I said, come talk to me after the service. I'd love to find out how you do that.

And nobody's ever brought, come up to me and told me how they no longer struggle with sin. And what we like to do is hold our nose up and point out people and be judgmental on those who struggle with something you don't struggle with. Like I'll hear it a lot, mainly from very hard-hearted people.

There's not a lot of grace, let's say for someone who fell back into, you name it, opiates, Xanax, like it in alcohol. It's like, oh, look at this addiction. Look at the ruin of their life, blah, blah, blah.

Just preaching at them and no grace or love. And I'll say, well, you can't stop your caffeine and sugar and nicotine addiction. What's different? No, actually, the root cause of addiction is a stronghold.

It's not different. The consequences are different. You're going to hurt your body more, but you're just as addicted as they are.

And when you understand that all people, all Christians even struggle with sin, you begin to be a little bit more compassionate and understanding. But here's the difference. Mud represents sin.

A lamb and a pig both find their way to the mud. The lamb, the Christian, struggles in the mud and wants to get out. It hates its miserable condition.

But the pig wallows in the mud and enjoys it and even leads others in. That's the difference. Same mud, different response.

And part of our ministry is to encourage those who are stuck in the mud, but also convict those who are pigs. And so I want to talk about this. I have poured out my soul.

And I look back over my life this week a little bit, and I would have to say these are defining moments in my life where I have poured out my soul. That's where sermons come from. That's where change in my life comes from, when I pour out my soul to God.

And that word can be found initially, the word soul in Genesis 2.7. It says that God formed man out of the dust of the earth. So God actually took the elements, I believe, the elements of the earth. And I don't know if you're aware of this, but your body has a lot of the same elements.

And when you need trace minerals, for example, your sodium, your magnesium, all the different trace minerals, those can be found in the soil. So if your kids play in the soil, that's actually a good thing. So all this over sanitizing, it's not really good on the immune system.

I'm going to get into health mode a minute, but I'll switch back. Genesis 2.7, the Lord formed man from the dust of the ground. So there's nothing, there's just an empty body and empty shells, the impression I get.

And then it says, he breathed on him the breath of life. And man became a living, the word is nephesh, nephesh, he became a living soul. So from the dead body of a shell, the soul is the seat of our emotion, our intellect, the will.

It's who we are as people. So when you pour out your soul to God, that's what you're, it's all that's within me rejoices in who God is. It's a pouring out of your soul.

It's a pouring out of who you are. And the story that I want to talk, speak from is in 1 Samuel. 1 Samuel, many of you know the story.

I love the book of Judges for some reason. I like Samson. I like to speak at men's conferences and talk about Samson and what is your Delilah and the things that can take you out and take you down.

Delilah doesn't have to be a girl. She can be a man. She can be a drink.

She can be a, those things that come into your life that are sent by the enemy. And then the judges, Eli and Samuel, and just these, these men of God that were raised up, Deborah, Brach, and it goes down the list, Gideon. And, but that we see in Samuel that there's this lady named Hannah, but she was barren.

And in the Old Testament, being barren basically meant you were cursed. There's no favor from God. It was, I mean, look at Rachel, Leah and Rachel.

Give me a child lest I die. They wanted a child so bad and they were made fun of and they were, they were scorned and they were ridiculed. You don't have God's favor.

And so we see Hannah was being teased off and I'm sure and mocked and scorned and you lost God's favor. You've lost God's favor. You're, are you receiving that now at all? Or is it just me from people mocking and scorning? You lost.

You loser. It's over. Give up.

Or in life in general, following God. There was a while there, I had a local atheist group that was after me. Boy, oh boy.

They would write editorials in the paper and they would all kinds of stuff. And, and just the mocking and the teasing and the scorning. You lost God's favor.

And those mocking voices will still continue. You will still hear them as Christian. Where is your God now? Where is your God now? And you're taunted by the mocking voices, but this is not where you get

discouraged.

This is where you get encouraged. And you say, Oh, mocking voices. My God has never failed me.

And he's not going to start now. Jesus has never lost a battle. God is still on the throne.

The lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world is coming back as a lion and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord. He would speak the universe into existence. He was flattened entire mountains.

The waves in the sea have to obey him. Can you imagine commanding the Atlantic and the Pacific and saying here waves no further and a Syrian army that came out after the nation of Israel, God wiped out the whole army, would just smoke the word death angel, go and take them out. He would come and conquer kingdoms.

He would rise up and pull down. He would shoot and destroy. He actually called the prophet Jeremiah to go to who I send you pull up and root out and pull down these strongholds of evil through your preaching.

So you have to remind yourself, my God has not failed. It's either revival by fire or revival by grace that's coming. What they mean by that is if things go in a bad direction in America, revival is still coming.

It comes from fire. It comes from persecution. The church in China, it's exploding.

They can't stop it. Even though we have an organization we pay to smuggle Bibles and they say they can't get enough in there. Even though they're rewriting the Bible and you have to send your sermons in early and get it checked by the communist government.

We're not far from that, folks. I hope you realize that. And the church in Iraq, one of the missionaries I follow is in Iraq and Syria.

And you see in the Old Testament, God give me this lest I die, pour out my heart to you. Why? Because it shows God this matters to me. This matters.

Do you think God is going to move on behalf of our nation if we all come to church bored, looking at our watch? Boy, I hope Shane doesn't go too long. Kim spent 30 minutes on four songs. What is going on here? Where's the potluck? I need to get out of here.

I've got plans. That kind of person will never receive a strong anointing from God. They're too busy for God.

God needs to be put back on the front burner, not the back burner. If you're too busy to pursue God, you're too busy. I've told people, give up that job.

Give up that deceptive relationship. Get out of the media so you can pursue the heart and mind of God. Oh, Shane, that's pretty radical.

Yeah, it'll cost you something. It will cost you something to follow God. David says, I will not give that which cost me nothing.

I was at a men's conference. Before I planned the church, I used to speak at men's conferences all over the United States. And I was at one and this guy was crying his marriage, his wife leaving him unless he

doesn't change that weekend.

And so I was praying with him. And I'm like, what's going on? And of course, it was pornography issue. And I talked with him.

He goes, every time I turn on ESPN or something, you tell me something about this would trigger it. And I said, man, this is okay. Well, accountability prayer.

But you need to get rid of this, this stuff that's that's causing it. And he looked at me goes, Are you kidding? I'm a sports fanatic. Like, well, how bad do you want freedom? How bad do you want? So are you crying over I told you get rid of ESPN? Are you crying over you're gonna lose your marriage? My goodness, you folks, but you see, that's a Christian man.

Oh, that's gonna cost me too much. Yes, following God costs you something because it costs Christ the cross. The son gave his life on that cross.

It costs him everything. It costs him his humility. It's a constant we let this mind being you which is like the mind of Christ Jesus who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but he made himself of no reputation.

He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death on the cross, your Savior, your Lord and King and standing naked on the cross, the nails didn't hold them to the cross. The love of Christ held them there. And that's why it goes on to say everything he will bow, and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord.

So if you need direction, pour out your heart to God, you cannot be in a hurry. Church cannot be the answer in and of itself. So many people come and they come on Sunday.

Oh, I heard Shane I saying I must be good. No, this this is the rally. This is the pep rally.

Remember those in high school? This is the this is the the go out go team go out and do it. This is where it starts not where it ends. Who's going to hold back God.

As a matter of fact, I think many times our blessing has become our curse. That's what happened with the children of Israel. God led them out and their abundance led to idolatry.

Oh, but Shane, we don't have those little idols anymore. No, it's about 60 inches long and called the Entertainment Center. Whatever we give our affection, don't worry, I have a TV, but it's wherever you give your affections to and the idolatry.

So Hannah said, Okay, after being teased and ridiculed, her handmaiden, her basically wife number two, that's why they don't do that anymore. Thank God. Right? One's enough.

God said, I'll bring them together, the two shall become one flesh. And if anybody ever asked you or tells you this, like, look at God allowed all the he allowed it. That's not his will.

There's a big difference. Look, the Bible has slavery. That's not God's will.

Look polygamy. It's not his will. Big difference there when you study the Bible and understand what is the will of God and what he allowed.

And so Hannah said, I'm going to take this to the Lord. But first, her husband Elkanan said, Why are you weeping? Why are you crying? Why are you not eating? Am I not better than 10 sons? And now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorstep of the tabernacle of the Lord. And so she was there at the tabernacle.

Her husband didn't quite understand. And she was in bitterness of soul. Have you been there before? The word bitterness of soul is mean there's there's a heartbreak that's occurring.

There's just you can't see your way out. You're bitter, you're angry, and your soul's messed up. Young kids say jacked up, right? There's bitterness of soul.

And do they still say that? Am I dating myself? Okay, no. All right. And she was in bitterness of soul.

And she prayed to the Lord and she wept in anguish. So she took her plea to the Lord and she plead to him. But I want to stop there.

And I wrote down this early this morning. This is very important during the wickedness of Israel's history. Israel was at a time where everyone was doing right in their own eyes.

They were sacrificing to Baal. They were rejecting God. Idolatry was rampant.

Sexual morality. They lived in a very wicked place. But this man, Elkanah, even during this wickedness, he would lead his family to worship God.

Men, that's a message for you this morning. God is not calling you to back down in fear. He's calling you to step up and fight this battle.

You lead your family in prayer. You lead your family in worship. You wake them up and you say, let's get here in the morning and let's pray.

Let's do something for God. And yes, it might be hard. But you tell your feelings what to do.

They don't tell you what to do. If we walk around with our feelings telling us what to do, we would be miserable. I would never even have made it here this morning.

And I probably would have stopped by Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts. And then I'm leaving here. I go to Panda Express and Carl's Jr. And then go sit and watch four hours of TV, right? For just listening to the flesh all day long.

And so, men, there has to be something in you that rises up saying, we're going to worship God no matter what. We're going to fight this battle. I don't know about you, but I'm not going down without a fight.

There has to be a desire in you to make a difference. So don't bail out. Pour it in.

Don't bail out the boat. Pour it in. Pour it into seeking God.

And here's what Hannah did. She made a vow and said, oh, Lord of hosts, oh, Lord of hosts, if you indeed look on the afflictions of your maidservant and remember me and not forget me, give me a child and I will consecrate him to you. I will set him apart to you.

It's interesting here. The word she used for Lord of hosts, Adonai Zadavot. It means the Lord of armies.

She called down the Lord of armies. You know you can do that sometimes. God's not this little cosmic ball of love and this little doting grandfather and this gentle dove.

He is the Lord Jesus Christ and the angel armies come down from heaven and they will fight and they will do battle. Jesus said, if my kingdom was of this world, my disciples would have fought. There is a warring savior.

There is a gentle judge and a warring savior. And we must remember that God bowled down your angel armies. We need you to fight this battle.

We are lost without you. God, if you do not move, our children are lost. We will end up in a cesspool without the fighting of your army.

In this case, it's okay to say, Lord, we need you to engage this army. It's way too big, is it not? When you've got all the Google, Facebook, Twitter, all the media is against you. I think I told you guys last week, we used to reach like 150,000 less people now a month because of all the shadow banning that they shut down and they'll work behind the scenes.

And then you've got the print media and you've got the online and everything. Everything is screaming and fighting against you. But be encouraged.

God does not need a huge amount. If we could just get 100,000 people in a stadium, that would be great. But God says, I'm looking.

I'm looking for men and women who will humble themselves. 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. You plus God is the majority.

Amen. Listen, I'm not just trying to, oh, let's just, let's just pick up the team. That is the truth.

God says you plus God is a majority. We don't need to worry. And let me just tell you up front, you're going to always be outnumbered.

Get used to it. Always outnumbered most of the time. But God calls us to swim against the current and make a difference.

So she said, Lord, I need a child, please give me a child. And here comes negative Nelly, which is the negative priest. And he said, What are you doing? Are you drunk? Did you drink too much wine? This was interesting.

She's pouring out her heart. Can he tell the difference? You're drunk. And she said, No, no, no.

I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink. But I've poured out my soul before the Lord.

That's where the theme comes from. I've poured out my soul before the Lord. And I want to tell you this morning, don't expect others to understand your pursuit of God.

When you pursue God, guess what? Not everyone's going to keep up. Not everyone's going to agree with you. I mean, when I came back to the Lord 20 years ago, and I said, This is what I'm doing, everyone else

went the other way.

When you pursue God in these dire times, I'm talking about the old truths of holiness, and righteousness, and being on fire for God and loving his word, loving the inerrancy of Scripture. When you when you embrace those things, you're going to look odd to people, they're not going to understand you. And when you begin to really worship God, you begin to you begin to have a hunger for God, you find yourself on the altar, you want to get people aren't going to understand that the mocking voices are going to come back.

And I want to encourage you guys to listen to the podcast or the the interview I did with Kim yesterday, and we just released it, listen to you know, talking about these issues. But I believe a lot of people who aren't engaged in worship is because they have not experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in their own life. I truly believe that.

I believe they're quenching and grieving the Spirit, because especially men, there becomes in us this macho, right? Real men don't do that. Real men bench press a lot of weight and beat people up. They don't go and worship, that's for women.

Actually, David was a warrior and he worshipped. All great men of God are worshipers. Now I'm not talking about acting weird, you have to do whatever God your personality is.

But there should be a desire for worship, a desire to press into God. Why? Because the Holy Spirit in you is calling you to a deeper walk. Abba, Father, the Holy Spirit cries, Abba, Father, God, I want more of you, Father.

I'm drawn to you like the magnet to the steel. I'm drawn to the Holy Spirit within you, draws you to that worship, unless you're quenching and grieving the Spirit, unless there's a big kink in the water hose. From that story I told a few weeks back, when my son was playing with water outside, the water hose was on full blast and I was waiting for it to just get him in the face, and it just trickled down.

Come to find out there's a whole bunch of kinks in the hose. And when he removed those kinks, he couldn't even barely hold the water. But the same thing happens in us.

Think about the parallel with the Holy Spirit. You're not quenching and grieving the Spirit of God, because when you quench and grieve the Spirit of God, the flowing of His Spirit and His power cannot flow out of you. There's a stop in that.

Quenching is like, think of a fire. You have this roaring fire going, and somebody throws water on it, and the Holy Spirit is quenched and grieved. So here's four keys where we have to press in.

Do you need direction this morning? Psalm 102 says, Lord, hear my prayer. Basically, I need direction. Lord, hear my prayer.

Let my cry come to you. Do not hide your face from me. In the day of my distress, incline your ear to hear me.

God, I need an answer quickly. So don't let discouragement discourage you. Cry out.

There's something refreshing to you about pouring out your soul to God, saying, God, I need to hear from you. The Bible says He is an ever-present help in time of need. Cry out to Him no matter when it is.

Where does my help come from? Where does my help come from? 401k? Where does my help come from? From God, the maker of heaven and earth. I look to the hills, and I see there is God coming when we're discouraged, and if you pour out your heart to Him, you can be filled back up. And then, of course, safety.

Psalms 62. Trust in the Lord all the times. Pour out your heart.

There's that word again. Pour out your heart before Him. It would be like if I had just a sparkles bottle, remember, the five-gallon, and just poured it out.

But you see, now that it's poured out, now it can receive. And you're pouring out. And actually, when I'm pouring out, I'm pouring out pride, correct? I'm pouring out bitterness maybe.

Lord, I'm so mad and frustrated with things, and I'm pouring out these. Lord, I pour out my frustrations to you. I pour out my fear to you.

I pour out my anxiety to you. Lord, I could drink offering to the Lord as you're being emptied of yourself. You're filled with the Spirit of God.

That's where boldness comes from, and passion, and peace, and long-suffering, and gentleness, and kindness. All the fruit of the Spirit comes from that emptied life. But there's safety in that.

That's what He's saying here. Trust in Him at all the times. God is your refuge.

I wish I had time just to do a word study on God as a provider or as a safety. And they would call it a refuge because they would run into a tower, for example, to shield themselves. So they would say, you are my tower.

You are my buckler. You are my fortress. You are my refuge.

You are my sure foundation. You are my God, my sword, my deliverer, and all these attributes of God that shows the strength of God. That's why David said, you train my hands for war and my fingers for battle.

This is a God who will not give up. This is a God who will fight on your behalf if you position yourself and you empty yourself and you pour out your spirit, you pour out your soul to God. And then if you're dealing with pain this morning, Psalm 142, I cry out to you.

I pour out my heart to you. Here we go. All throughout the Psalms, a pouring out to God.

Attend to my cry, God. Please attend to my cry, for I am brought very low. Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me.

It's okay to say that. God, what's coming against us is too strong. Unless this is the massive spiritual upheaval.

God, it's going to take you to expose. It's going to take you to encourage. God, we need you to move.

I cry out. I pour out my heart to you. Use me however you can.

So pray this morning. Oh God, I am thirsty. Oh God, I am thirsty.

Another song we sing often. The more I seek you, the more I find you. That's the same thing with God.

The more you seek God, the more you find him. And the more you find him, the more you love him. It's a seeking.

There's a hunger. There's those who hunger and thirst for righteousness shall be filled. Oh bless the Lord, oh my soul.

All that is within me, bless his holy name. So let God awaken your barrenness this morning. Is your soul dead? I'm talking to two groups of people.

First, the Christian. Is your soul dead? Is there no dynamic relationship with God? No vibrant relationship with God? I'll give you the easiest test right now. When I said there is a prayer meeting, you either said hallelujah or shoot, I'm not going.

That's too boring. What about if I said we're just going to do worship for the next hour and a half? I'm out of here. I'm hungry.

So you can gauge the temperature for your spiritual temperature by how much you want to seek God. So if you are barren, you are dead, you're quenching and grieving the spirit of God, you can change that this morning. You say, Lord, I fully surrender my life right now, right here.

I want that renewed relationship again. Oh, what about David when he repented from his sin? Oh, that the joy of your salvation would return to me. Blessed be the bones that you have broken.

Create in me a clean heart. Renew a right spirit within me. God, I've been distant, but the prodigal son is coming home.

When that prodigal son comes home and that wayward daughter comes home, there's a joy unspeakable. There's a hope that you can't explain. And you begin to worship God again because now I was lost, but now I'm found.

I was blind, but now I see I'm coming back home to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And that relationship will be restored and renewed. And there's hope and peace and joy again.

You could be in debauchery and sin right now, and God can pull you out of it. Break every chain. Break the chains of bondage and addiction and pride and arrogance and fear and anxiety.

Spirit of the living God, would you break every chain this morning as we worship you and as we put you first, God? We want to be delivered and set free. And God will hear that prayer. Can you imagine what was said of D.O. Moody, that the world has yet to see what God will do with a man or woman? Fully surrender to him.

And D.O. Moody said, I want to be that man. We need to bring that back again. Where are the men and women saying, God, I want to serve you in this generation.

I want to surrender all of my life because 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. But be careful, your adversary goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. So if the devil's looking for you and God's looking for you, who finds you? Empty your soul.

You'd be amazed at what God will do with the surrendered vessel. I think I told you this many months ago, but I'll never forget the day I was down by the LAX at the LAX Hilton. I think I was working in construction.

I'm digging ditches and running heavy equipment, backhoes, loaders, excavators, and came back to the Lord. It's probably been five, six years. And I began to, Mike Huckabee was speaking and other people, and they begin to, I didn't know a lot about, you know, what happens in our nation, but they begin to talk about like saline abortions and what would happen.

They show pictures of partial birth. And I went back to the hotel and I just cried myself to sleep. Oh, I forget.

I said, God, if you can use me, I will not shut my mouth. I will speak. And I wasn't speaking to anybody, but I said, if you, if you, if you call me for such a time as this, I will give the voice to those who have no voice.

I will be loving, but I will be as bold as a lion, because this is a stench in the nostrils of a righteous, holy God. He might not call you to that. That's okay.

But when you surrender, you say, God, however you want to use me, God will use you. And that, right, Kim, in your book, I read that too. And I also read you didn't make the choir or the worship team until you surrender probably.

And that's how it works. God wants, here's, here's why this is so important. If I don't surrender, I'm doing ministry in my own strength.

So I'm going to rely on my master's degree in theology and my PhD in hermeneutics and homiletics, which I don't have any of that. I'm just, just saying those things, but, but there's a pride. And I see that many young pastors where they got to be careful.

If you read about the pastor who just fell in Hillsong, Carl Lance and Justin Bieber, I spoke on this a couple of years ago. I try to warn guys close to them that you can't go out and have the party lifestyle. You can't have this flippant kind of not serving God.

You know, you're, you're on the view, you're on Oprah. You're not saying anything bold. I can, you're not going in a good direction.

You can see it because it's their own strength. And so when you empty yourself, you don't come up in your own strength. You probably be, you might be embarrassed for me if you heard my prayer Sunday mornings.

Well, Shannon, I thought you got together. I mean, I do kind of, but I say, God, if you don't move, if you don't speak through me, God, I don't want to speak. If you don't ignite my heart with a passion, you think I can make this up? God, if you don't ignite my heart with a passion, with a boldness, with a love of your truth, Holy Spirit, if you do not work through me, if you do not anoint me and call me God, I'll be the empty vessel.

Just have me say whatever you want me to say. You'd be amazed. People leave here all the time because they don't like what I say, but I'm not trying to be politically correct.

I have to be biblically correct. I don't go home and say, I want to hope everybody loved my message. I go home and I say, God, did I please you? Did I speak the words you give me? Because I feel sometimes like

Jeremiah, that his word is in my heart like a burning fire.

And like Jeremiah, Lord, who am I to speak? And God says, you speak what I speak into your heart and into your mouth. You go to who I tell you to go to. You pull down and you root down and you speak and you proclaim the truth of God's word.

And if you do it in brokenness and humility and love and the power of the Holy Spirit, you will see results. Many of you don't know this, so it's kind of nice to have new people because you can share old stories. But I barely graduated high school with 1.8. Still have dyslexia, learning disability, writing disability.

I had a tutor, a speech teacher. I just cheated my way through high school. Stupid in construction.

Couldn't write very well. Couldn't spell well. Still struggle.

I have to have a couple editors. But God, actually, I think it's a blessing, not a crutch. Because what in the world are you resting in? Nothing.

Nothing. Unless God is in it. And God takes the least likely, the foolish things, to confound the wise.

And that's one of the top questions we get into the church. The number one question right now for years has been, where can I find another Bible-believing church like West Side Christian Fellowship on fire for God? All across the United States, even in different countries. Sweden, the UK.

That's the number one question. But then that follows sometimes later is, where did you go to seminary? What school did you go to? Who gave you the authority? And it's often the Pharisee who wants to pull you down. There was a church in town when we started that said, well, that church is not a real church because he didn't go to seminary.

Never mind the fact I've read thousands of books, read systematic theology, listened to all kinds of sermons on preaching and hermeneutics and homiletics and sermon prep. And the key, though, really, the key I'm going to tell you, because a lot of the pastors watching too, young pastors, before you prepare the message, God's got to prepare the messenger. It takes broken men to break men.

God prepares you. It's okay to have real life experience. And God takes that person, the least likely, but the most, see, the least likely is the most reliant on God.

Before you go out in ministry, before you go out and do something, you say, God, if you don't move, I'm not going to impress them. I stutter sometimes, I misspell, I miss things. My wife drives her crazy sometimes.

It's like, you know, but God uses that because there's total dependence on God. If you don't move, that's why I love Charles Spurgeon. In the old London church he had, every step he took, he would say, I rely on the power of the Holy Spirit.

I rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. God, Holy Spirit, I need you. Lord, I need you.

It was that reliance on God because the word says that the humble I will teach my way. The humble I will lead. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.

Do time. He will exalt you. Exalt yourself and he will abase you.

And there's just so much the brokenness. And even I can't believe what God has called this ministry to and what God took the least likely. I explained before, all these sermons now, they're aired on top of the Trump Tower in New Jersey, in New York, and all over the United States.

The places where I write the articles, the people who own those sites, those at the White House have read the articles, your articles on the website, Arthur. And like, how in the world? That's impossible. Unless, see, I'm not saying it to boast.

What does Paul say? I boast in what Christ has done. To show you, the least likely in this audience, you don't have a degree, you gave up high school, you've got kids now, you don't know what, it doesn't matter. You plus God is a majority.

He can give you a peace that surpasses all understanding when you align with his will. You might help single moms. And there's so much fulfillment in that.

We were actually talking about this, Kim, in the podcast when young worship leaders, I want to do what you do. Do you want to go through what I went through? Because most people, what they really mean is, I want the limelight. I want to be, I want to be up there.

I want to be the authority. This is not, this is servant leadership. This is dying to self.

It's not a glorified position. It's a position of brokenness and humility, relying on God and leading a church through a pandemic and a nation rejecting God. It's very difficult unless you're filled with the Spirit.

The only way I get up and continue is I say, God, this is what you've called me to do. Half my pastor friends are not opening their churches. I get negative emails weekly.

I'm doing this. I'm spraying the virus. I'm this.

I'm too arrogant. I'm this all the time. I have to say, God, I'm just doing what you called me to do.

Who's going to close down the church of God? That makes no sense. See, I remember when the church was bold. I remember when the church didn't care about liability insurance.

Do you know that's why many churches are, well, our liability insurance won't cover it. Well, I don't think they worried about that 2000 years ago. As a matter of fact, churches didn't have liability insurance 50 or 60 years ago.

So for 1950 years, they relied on the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus broke the law. He went and prayed and touched the leper because the compassion of God drives us to do these things.

Now we submit to the government. I got it. But when the government is going, hey, why are, and when our own president says churches are essential, the department of justice, I saw the letter he wrote to our governor and said, you will allow the churches to be open.

What authority do I submit to first and ultimately God and God alone. And then you let the chips fall where they may. One of the things that God has shown me is that every service is different.

Over the year, you can't cookie cut. I've got, I've got one service, you know, a couple of people struggling with same sex attraction, addiction and suicide. They need to hear something else, something else, a

single mom need to be encouraged.

So you allow the Holy Spirit to work through you in, in, in unique situations. And the final one here, I just want to close on guys. This is a big deal.

Intimacy, intimacy, men. You don't like to hear that word. Do you? Sometimes, unless you have this wrong view of what it is, it's really not about sex.

It's about intimacy. Know me, know me, closeness, familiarity, compassion, or companionship, intimacy. We need that with God.

As a deer pants for flowing streams of water. So my soul pants for you. Now don't make the mistake that many people do.

They just gloss over that. A deer pants means desperation. Unless that deer finds that stream, it's going to die.

And so as a deer looks for that, can you imagine coming across a stream and you find you're about, you're out that you're about ready to die and you find the stream and you're just engulfed by it. You think you just take a little sips here and there. You just dive into that thing.

As a deer, as a person looking for water on the brink of, of a thirst and dehydration, as they find that water, that's how my soul pants after you. Lord, I want to serve you with all of my heart. I need to hear from you as that deer pants after the water.

God, let my soul pant after you. See, there's a difference between knowing the shepherd and knowing about the shepherd. There's a story I remember many years ago, I've told this a few times about at a church, they were having a contest on who could read the 23rd Psalm better.

I don't know why they're having that kind of contest. But so one man got up there. And you know, those guys that are eloquent.

I mean, just smooth. And he just made his voice and fluctuate. The Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. Oh, man. Holly was gonna call this guy.

And people. That was good. That was good.

But then the other man didn't show up. He was sick or something. So the producer ran and grabbed the janitor, the old janitor in the back room, cleaning the toilet.

He said, Come on, I know you know the 23rd Psalm. And so the janitor comes up here and his voice is kind of cracking. And you could you could tell that you could see the tears falling.

The Lord is my shepherd shall not want. And just do that that relationship that pain. He missed a few things.

It wasn't that great. But he got a standing ovation. And the young arrogant orator, orator, whatever they call them.

He was so mad he was leaving. And when the deacons grabbed him outside, he said, You know what happened? You know what happened? You knew the 23rd Psalm, but that janitor knew the shepherd. That's the difference.

Many Christians know the Bible, but they lack the intimacy with God. And that intimacy only comes through humility. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.

Come broken before him as a deer pants for the water the flowing stream so my soul pants for you. At the first service, I would encourage you to listen to that because there's so much there I talked about the worker and the worshiper. You know, it's easy to be a worker.

But it's hard to be a worshiper. Because worshiper is where the rubber meets the road. That's why I believe many people don't come to worship because sin besetting sin is stopping that.

There's not a fire. There's not a fervency for God. Isn't that true? What we what we crave, we will go after.

That's why I love that the more I seek him, the more I find him. And the more I find him, the more I seek him. See, this is a hunger that will never be satisfied.

Jesus told the woman, if you come and drink of this water, you will never thirst again, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. For if you believe on me, as the scriptures say, you will be bored to death. If you believe on me, as the scriptures say, out of your belly will flow rivers of living water.

So begs the question, if the prophets say his word is in my heart like a burning fire, if John the baptist said he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire, and if Jesus said out of your belly will flow rivers of living water begs the question, where is this rivers of living water that so many are lacking, because they lack the intimacy with God. I just sense there's many here maybe this morning with a critical spirit. You want the filling of the spirit, you want more of God, but you're too critical.

You pull down churches, you pull down pastors, you pull down people. Repentance must happen this morning in order to be filled mightily. Isaiah said, I will pour out, God said through Isaiah, I will pour out water on the thirsty land.

Are you thirsty? You have to be thirsty. And that's why God says, many times, till up the soil. Have you ever used one of those tillers? When I was little, it would go and it would wreck the soil, till it up.

So God says, your follow ground, break up your follow ground. I can't pour into concrete, your hard is not allowing the spirit of God to pour into you. Come and let the spirit of God come in and till up that soil.

And God said, created me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me. Oh God, fill you me with your spirit. I truly believe only second to salvation.

The greatest need in the church today is for men and women to be filled mightily with the spirit. But now we debate over theology. Well, he said baptism of the spirit.

He said the filling. He said the unction. He said the anointing.

He said the empowerment. I'd rather miss the exact theological term and have the power. Then get the term just right and miss the power.

Now this is coming from someone who loves theology. But there is a difference. There are some, whether you're overwhelmed, filled, baptized, immersed, something different and dynamic takes place.

God's word is boring. Now I love it. Worship is turn Kim Walker off and give me George Strait and a 12 pack of beer.

Or now worship comes alive because I'm filled with the spirit. I don't want to go to church. I'd rather go to the dentist.

Now I can't get enough of church. I definitely don't want to go to the dentist. But see that the spirit filled life.

You need to know that churches have struggled with this. I read the early church fathers, Augustine and Ignatius, Irenaeus, Polycarp, Justin Martyr. There was always trying to draw people back to the Holy Spirit.

Then you see William Tyndale, John Hus, Whitecliffe translate the Bible, 13, 1400s. Then the Reformation, Ulrich Zwingli and John Knox and Luther. And then you come into George Whitfield, Spurgeon.

It's all there. There's, there's this emphasis on the spirit filled life. That's biblical.

If a person's convicted about it means they're lacking it, and they're jealous or they're prideful. So they have to put down people that have it because they've never experienced the power of God in their own life. You know, that's the reason most people make fun of emotional worship.

Haha, look at them all raising their hand. How silly. No, you've just never been wrecked by the power of God.

How are you supposed to act when God begins to pour out His Spirit on you? There's been times, you know, if you've been coming here, why I can't sometimes finish my sermon, or it's hard to go up and worship. How is that of the devil when I go home a better husband, a better father? Why do you hear from so many people across the United States being transformed by the Word of God through preaching and through the worship and different things? Why? That's the fruit of the Spirit. You need that intimacy, guys, mainly.

So say that, pray that this morning when we conclude, oh God, I'm thirsty. God, I need you. Let God awaken your barrenness this morning.

If you're dry, if you've been maybe to a, what I would call a dead church. Listen, the church of the living God cannot be dead. When a church resembles a cemetery, we've got problems.

It's not supposed to be a circus, but God forbid a cemetery. Think about that. The Bible is the Word of God, and the Word of God became alive.

It's living, it's powerful. So you have the Word of God, you have the Holy Spirit moving, and we come not expecting anything. We come like a give me four songs, quick sermon, potluck.

No wonder we never see a powerful move of God's Spirit. Because often, you know what the old saints used to say? Travail. And it's embarrassing sometimes to read some of those journals.

I've got George Whitfield's journals, I've got Wesley's journals, I've got Robert Murray McShaney from Scotland, his journals, and spent all day in prayer and fasting. All night prayer meeting began at 10, we left at 6 a.m., the Spirit of God transformed every heart there. And you just, where is that? Because anytime, anytime you make experiencing God something like a microwave, it's not going to happen.

You cannot rush God. You cannot rush the moving of the Spirit. You cannot try to hurry things through.

Our heart has to be in the right spot. I just want to throw this out there to those who might be watching this morning that do not have that relationship with Jesus Christ. All of this is way over your head.

The Holy Spirit, that is weird. Well, lucky you're not reading the King James, it was a holy ghost. But basically, that is God's Spirit.

God is Spirit. Those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth. God is not a person.

He revealed himself in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. And as a believer, you receive the Holy Spirit of God, and you begin to crave the things of God. So if you don't have that this morning, I want to encourage you to repent of your sin and believe and say, Jesus, I need you as Lord and Savior.

And God will answer that prayer. Who the Son sets free is free indeed. Jesus said, if you know the truth, if you know the truth, the truth will set you free.

That word know is an intimate knowledge, a relationship. It's not knowing head knowledge. There's many people on a highway to hell, like I was, I used to crank ACDC up, grab a 12 pack and just I'm on a highway to hell.

And I was I was I was heading in that direction. And God reached down, he grabbed me out of that sin and that pain and and begin to give me that passion desire for him again. So you can have that if you're dead, spiritually, and you're on that highway to hell that they say, many people are on that highway knowing about God.

Correct? Oh, I know about Jesus. He died for my sins, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. No, no, you have to embrace that.

And I'm going to close with that Romans is clear Romans Paul wrote to the church in Rome. He said that the wrath and condemnation is on those who don't believe. But blessed be the God of our Father and Savior, Lord Jesus Christ, that he has provided the way.

If you believe in your heart, that God has raised him from the dead and he has died for your sin, and you believe and you confess, you bow your knee, Christ, you are Lord, you are Savior. I'm not the master of my own destiny. I'm not the captive of my own ship.

I submit and I surrender my life to you this morning.

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