

Locked and Loaded

by Shane Idleman

In 'Locked and Loaded', Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of being spiritually prepared through prayer and faith to combat the enemy's attacks.

Duration: 42:13

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the necessity of being spiritually prepared, or 'locked and loaded,' to face the attacks of the enemy in our Christian walk. He discusses the importance of prayer as a powerful weapon against spiritual strongholds and the need for believers to align their hearts with God's will through persistent prayer. Idleman highlights the struggles of faith, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the significance of repentance in overcoming sin and distractions. He encourages the congregation to prioritize their relationship with God and to actively engage in prayer as a means of spiritual warfare. Ultimately, he calls for full surrender to Christ, urging believers to seek transformation and healing through the power of prayer.

Transcript

Hope is yours to take. Peace is found in grace. The title of the message this morning is, Are You Locked and Loaded? Well, one person's excited.

And most of you know what that means. Without being locked, as you're pulling back the lock and you're loaded, there's a cartridge in the chamber. Now you're ready.

Most deputies walking around are not walking around with an empty gun where they have to go and find some shells. It's locked and loaded, other than the safety, maybe, that's on. You're ready.

You're ready for the attack of the enemy. And same thing in the Christian walk. We have to be locked.

We have to be loaded. We have to be prepared for the onslaught of the enemy. And I've actually been talking about demonology the last few weeks.

So if you haven't been here, make sure you go back and listen to those messages. This will make a lot more sense. How does the demonic realm influence us? How do they gain access? How is there a stronghold in our hearts and in our lives? How can we give them permission in certain things? So that was

talked about a few weeks ago.

Last week, the title was Something Has to Break. And if you remember, it was a story in Mark where this man came to the disciples to cure his son. He was having epileptic seizures.

And he was demonized. And the spirit would throw him into the water, throw him into the fire. And he went to his disciples, Jesus' disciples.

He was desperate for God to move. And Jesus wasn't there. So my version is probably they had a conversation that the disciples would say, Hey, that's okay.

We've done this before. We've got this. We know what we're doing.

And in pride and arrogance they said they tried to drive out that demonic spirit and it would not go out. And then the scribes were debating them or actually arguing with them, probably laughing at them. Where's this Christ you serve? Where's your power? And then Jesus walks up.

And game changer. Anytime Jesus walks up, it's going to change the game. It's going to put things in your favor.

When you call upon the only name that will save, the only name that will set free, that's why there's power in the name of Jesus. That's why you can't pray in His name at school board meetings. Try it sometime.

Pray in His name at the Los Angeles County Board of Directors meeting. Try it sometime. I did a couple years ago and they didn't like it.

And just try praying in that name because every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The demons tremble at the name of Jesus Christ. They are not co-equals.

They are not fighting this battle. Jesus is victorious. He has already overcome hell, death, sin, and the grave.

We can live in that victory and we can put on the whole armor of God and we can fight from a position of victory. So Jesus walks into this scene. He just cast out the demon.

He actually said, death and dumb demon, death and dumb spirit, leave this boy. And the boy experienced tremendous freedom. And it's an interesting topic.

I don't quite understand it because those of us who are, a lot of you that come here are conservative. I'm kind of conservative. People label me as conservative, but still believing in the power, the giftings of the Holy Spirit.

But Jesus said, if you believe on me, you're going to cast out demons. And I'm like, I like just preaching. I'm not sure about that part of ministry.

I mean, it can get messy. It can be difficult. But that is a mandate for believers that when they are filled with the spirit of God, that that authority in you is greater than the darkness that is in someone else.

And you can, by the grace of God, be able to help and deliver people and set them free. And so he set this boy free. And the father, actually before that, he said to the father, if you believe, all things are possible.

If you believe, and the father cried out, I believe. I believe. But, help my unbelief.

And I love that. Thank God that's in the Bible. Because that is my prayer a lot of times.

Lord, I believe. But here comes unbelief. Here's those fiery darts.

Here's the enemy coming in. Lord, I believe that you can move. But help my unbelief.

And so, you know the disciples, Mark 9 verses 28 and 29, they want to know why they couldn't do what they used to do. Because remember, unless I'm misreading some of the history, the historical context of the New Testament, it appears that the disciples were casting out demons before this situation. So I don't know if we have Mark 9, 28, 29 up.

If not, that's okay. I can just read it. And so, when he had come into the house, Jesus, his disciples asked him privately.

I think they're a little ashamed or embarrassed. And they said this, why could we not cast it out? Why could we not cast it out? So he said to them, this kind, this kind cannot come out except by what? Prayer and our favorite word at the very end. Can you just say prayer? And what I didn't do last night is I pulled these up this morning at the stadium.

I want to read to you a couple quotes. John Gill was an incredible commentator I think 300 years ago. He said they had been feasting and indulging themselves with the people and so they were in a very undue disposition of mind for such extraordinary service for which our Lord tactically rebukes them.

And then Spence Jones writing this 100 years ago. Though all things are possible to faith, some works are more difficult. I can attest to that.

This kind can only mean this kind of evil spirit. The possession was of a long standing. It involved a terrible body malediction.

It was one of intense and unusual character. The mere word of exorcism or the name of Jesus spoken with little spiritual faith could not overcome this mighty enemy. And other commentators agree it appears unless you can read something into this it's not there.

It appears that Jesus is saying but this kind, this kind of stronghold this kind of demonic bondage is going to take a little work. It's going to take a little perseverance. It's going to take a little fasting.

It's going to take a little bit of your time. A little bit of your energy. And you're going to have to redirect your focus to pull down heaven to remove this from your life.

And that's pretty clear. And many of us can relate. How many of you have prayed Lord remove this.

Lord help me with this. And it's not leaving very easily. You're not being delivered of this.

You're not being set free. And I've noticed over the years that God sometimes will instantaneously set someone free. We'll pray for them or they'll see God and their anger is gone.

Or they've been struggling with a certain addiction and it's just gone. And we praise God. Isn't that wonderful? But that's not always the case.

That's not always the case. Sometimes people struggle and they have to, that demonic element, that demonic stronghold is not easily dealt with. It doesn't just, you don't just pray Lord help me with this area.

Oh God I rebuke it in Jesus name and then the next day you're free. Sometimes it takes some effort. Sometimes it takes some work.

And so that's why I ask the question are you locked and loaded? Are you ready for what God wants to do in your life? And the greatest weapon we have against the enemy is rarely fired. The greatest weapon you have against the enemy. The greatest weapon we have is not just coming to church.

It's not singing worship songs. It's not listening to a sermon. And I love to read the word of God but sometimes that alone, that alone is not enough.

Did you know you can actually live in deception if all you do is read the word and not apply it? Be doers of the word and not hearers only and you're living in deception. You can deceive yourself because the power of God's word comes in the application. And that's why I give, if you've been coming here a while you notice I have a lot of practical application because we have to apply God's word and then the power of the word of God comes alive because we are applying it.

So the greatest weapon we have, the greatest weapon we have that is clear in scripture for the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God is when Christians get on their knees or lay prostrate or stand or do whatever and they begin to pull down heaven. They begin to cry out to God and their heart shifts. Their heart changes and it becomes the cry of a child like to a father.

Lord, please heal our nation. God, we are getting perverted. We are getting sick.

The school districts are falling apart. God, you've got to do something and I'm going to stay here on my knees all morning. I'm going to miss breakfast and Lord, I need to pull down heaven.

We need to hear from you. God, make a difference in our community. Make a difference in my family.

Lord, my children are on a broad road to destruction. God, would you bring them back and I'm going to contend because the power of the name of Jesus Christ is great and it can do wonderful things and though I see it, I will not give up faith. And that's the most powerful weapon we possess is prayer.

That's why I said the most important service here is at 6 a.m. And that's why it's so hard to get to. Isn't that interesting? That's why it's so hard to get to because it's the most important. That's why we're praying, I don't feel like it.

Well, welcome to the club. Sometimes you have to tell your feelings, we're going. You're not controlling me.

I'm controlling you. And then after that discipline takes place, God begins to fill you with the spirit and reward you because of your obedience. We want the feeling first.

God says, no, do it first. Discipline yourself and then the feeling will come. If I just let my feelings take me, that's easy.

It's when we don't feel like it that really adds up in the kingdom of heaven. And that's why I believe it's so hard to do. I mean, let's be honest.

I've given you this example before, but so many of you are new. What about if I said we're going to lay out a pile of a thousand dollars and the first hundred people here get a pile. There would be, you'd sleep out in front.

Probably starting Friday night or Saturday. You would camp out, you would put your tent and asleep. I know my kids would.

So I know many people, you, so what, tell me, please tell me, what is the difference? What is the difference? A thousand dollars of the presence and power of God in time alone with God. You say, oh, I'm so tired. You wouldn't be tired if a thousand dollars was sitting here.

You would do whatever it takes. The car is fueled up, but the battery's dead. I've got a backup plan and we are getting there early because I've got to have that.

I've got to find that. There's a desire. The yearning for God needs to be greater than the yearnings for the things of this world.

Who can serve both God and man and you can't serve two masters. You'll love the one and hate the other, despise the one and be loyal to the other. God says, choose me today and serve me with all of your heart.

But you see how it's a matter of the will. It's a matter of the will. How filled you are with a praying spirit is how filled you're going to be with the Holy Spirit.

We talk about that. We sing about that. Lord, fill me with your spirit.

But your prayer life is the gauge, the fuel gauge, so to speak, of how filled you will be with the Spirit. Praying spirit. Praying always.

Broken and humble before God. That is in direct correlation with being filled with the Spirit. Because that praying spirit is on fire for God.

It's desperate for more of God. And a friend of mine, actually he's an agnostic, believe it or not. He said, but Shane, why do you pray? Why should I pray if God already knows everything? Have you ever thought about that? I have.

I mean, he knows. He gives me the desire of my heart. Why am I going to pray for the desire he gives me? Why am I going to pray for what he already sovereignly decreed? Why am I going to pray if he already knows what we want, what we need? And here's the answers I shared with him and he was satisfied with that.

I'm glad. Number one, prayer is not always about what we want. That was a hard one to absorb this week.

Prayer is not always about what we want. James 4.3 actually says, when you pray, you do not receive what you're asking for because you pray for what you want, my prayer phrase, so you can spend it on your desires, your fleshly desires. And so many people pray.

Now, there's nothing wrong to pray for, Lord, I need a vehicle that runs. I need a house to live in. I need financial open doors here.

Those are genuine needs, actually. So want and need are a little bit different. So this idea of, but he already knows what we want.

But here's the key. Prayer aligns us with God's will. Prayer aligns us with God's will.

So he knows what I want, but I actually change what I want when I'm praying. You come in praying, Lord, I want this, I want you to do, and then you start to change, and you start to, Lord, help my heart, help my unbelief, help my anger, help my frustration. I know why they're acting this way.

It's because of me, Lord. And you get your heart right before God, and now your prayers line up with God, and God says, now you're abiding in me. Ask what you want, and you will receive it because now your heart is set on me.

Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established, and now your prayer is lining up with the sovereignty of God's will, and now those prayers are being answered because they line up with the will, nature, and character of God. And so your prayer life will change you from the inside out. I'll be transparent with you.

One of the things I've been praying for in the morning here that God has changed is if we have to add another service. My flesh does not want that. More service.

We're already exhausted. We're already doing so much. But then I begin to just, Lord, whatever you want.

What do you want? You'll strengthen us. You'll build us up. You'll encourage us.

Lord, you'll give us wisdom. And now my thought, it changed from, Lord, do something different, or I don't know, but my mindset has changed. How many spouses begin to pray for their spouse and realize they're the problem? I hope the 11 a.m. is a little more honest.

Or we pray for our children and we realize that maybe it's the parent who needs to change. And so prayer actually changes us. And at the core, really, isn't it? Praying is obeying.

Praying is obeying. We can't be in rebellion and get our prayers answered. Praying is obeying and lining up.

Actually, you don't pray very well when you're in rebellion. You don't want to pray because you're right and God's wrong. And we sing that song, Holy Spirit, you are welcome here.

Is He? Is He really? Holy Spirit, you are welcome here. Praying is obeying. Lining up my heart with God's Word.

How often do we line things up? We line up our vehicle when we're driving down the street, or I hope you do, to stay on a certain side of the road. Contractors line up what they're doing with the engineered set of plans. The people building the house, the framing, they line up their wood with the studs that are braced into the concrete.

They line it up. Crane, direct crane, when you're running massive cranes, you line it. Everything is lined up.

We've got to line up our heart with the Word of God. And when we get lined up, everything else falls in place because you're lined up, you're squared up. The plumb line.

You're lined up with God's Word. On this issue of rebellion, John Piper said, if a child has a certain bad attitude and misbehaves, a good father will not give him everything he asks for. Oh, every parent knows that's true.

If the child is misbehaving, you're not going to give them everything they ask for. The Bible teaches that in order for our prayers to be answered, we must do our Father's will. John 15-7, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you.

That's a truth you can take to the bank. And then number two, why do we pray if God already knows what we want? And this might not, well, I don't know if it will catch some people off guard or if they're not aware of this, but I can show you, actually, there's quite a few Scriptures that prayers can actually change God's mind. Your King James will say that God repented.

Not a good choice of words. The actual word, the word in the Hebrew and the Old Testament is God relented. He changed His plans.

Any examples come to mind, Nineveh? In 40 days, I'm going to destroy Nineveh. Judgment has been pronounced. But Jonah comes and preaches repentance and they prayed and they fasted.

There's that word again. Can't get away from that word this morning. Is that where the rubber meets the road? I mean, I'm fine if I'm praying, but I want to stop by In-N-Out Burger.

I want my donut. I want my cup of coffee. I want my Mexican food and Panda Express.

And I want these things. And I'm not going to give up those things. But that's where the rubber really meets the road.

It's not about self-depriving self. It's about giving up something to spend more time with God. And so God relented for 150 years.

Nineveh survived. King Hezekiah was dying. He told the prophet, go tell the king he's dying.

Get his house in order. And he cried out to God and God spared his life. There's other incidents even throughout the Bible.

I'm going to do this to Judah or Israel. I'm going to judge them. My judgment is coming.

Here it comes. But if my people humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will relent from what I was doing and I will heal their land instead of judge their land. So a lot of that is conditional on the prayers of God's people.

God says, you intercede. He actually told Ezekiel, I sought for a man from among the people who would stand in the wall, stand in the gap between me and the nation, between me and judgment. I looked for a man who would intercede and say, Lord, not on our watch.

We are sick of this depravity. We are sick of this perversion. And we are going to pray, God, that you not judge this nation.

And God said, I looked and I found no one who would intercede. Who would intercede before me and what my plans are? But then there is something called the perfect will of God. I just talked about the permissive will of God.

There's something known as the perfect will of God that you will not be able to change. God says, this is my sovereign decree. This is what's going to happen.

This is how it's going to happen. We read about things in the Bible, for example. Depending on your eschatology, your view of end times, we can pray all day long, Lord, reverse course on the Antichrist.

Bring just the kingdom of God here and now. Let us enjoy peace and prosperity now. And bless you, Lord.

But a sovereign decree has already been decreed. Now, we might be able to prolong the process. We might be able to be strong witnesses inside of the persecution and things like that.

But God's sovereign plans will prevail. And thank God, thank God we can trust in His sovereignty. And then really, the topic of the sermon this morning, the reason we pray is because it is a weapon of warfare.

Prayer is a weapon of warfare. And I would not be honest with you if I told you I know how this works. I've got this mastered.

I know exactly how prayer works. All I know is what Scriptures teach, that the weapons of your warfare are not carnal. It means you're not going to pull out an AR-15.

Or a sword. You're not going to defeat the enemy with any of those things. The weapons of your warfare are not physical.

They are spiritual. For the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments at every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of thought, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Therefore, finally, brethren, watch out for the trickeries and deceits and the wiles of the devil.

Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to withstand him. And putting on that belt of truth. That's why the enemy, the fake news, is getting us away from truth.

We don't know what to believe anymore. Yes, we do. Believe in God's Word.

Put on that belt of truth. And stop worrying about what CNN says and what the next physician says and what's going to happen with the vaccine, the mark of the beast, and all these things. You are being led astray.

And get back into God's Word. Put on that breastplate of righteousness and living holy, right lives. Put on the helmet of salvation and trust in God's sovereignty.

Charge your feet with the preparation of the gospel and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And then it says, holy, it doesn't leave it there. It says, and then having done all, pray and pray again.

Pray in all supplication. Let your life be a life of prayers. You have that armor on.

It's that prayer that's going to hold you up. It's that prayer that's going to sustain you. It's that time you can call on God at two in the morning and say, Father, I need you.

God, my children are lost. This nation is lost. And God begins to hear the cry of his children.

Prayer keeps it all together. Yeah, it's hard to clap for that because it hurts a little. That's okay.

I wasn't trying to encourage people to clap. I was saying it hits to the heart, this idea of prayer. But here's a few things I want to share with you.

It's not about the length of your prayer. It's about the depth of the prayer. Throughout the Bible, the prayers of God's people were pretty short.

I'm not against long prayers. Please don't misunderstand. But I've been in powerful prayer meetings and I've been in dead prayer meetings.

And often the dead ones, they like just go on for five minutes. Preach little sermons as we're praying. And oh, what about bless Martha down the street and do this and those things can be good.

I'm not saying that. But sometimes we think that it's the length. And God says, I want to see the depth of your prayer.

Sometimes you can't even pray. You just cry out, oh God. Oh God, the situation.

You don't have words for it. You have tears, but you don't have words. And sometimes the tears often carry a lot more weight because it's the heartbreaking, it's the yearning of the believer crying out saying, God, we are living in desperate times and desperate times call for desperate measures and my heart is so broken I don't even know how to pray.

And thank God for the verse that the spirit intercedes on behalf of those and there's groanings there that cannot even be deciphered because the spirit is interceding on behalf of God's people. It's not about the length. It's about the depth.

I want to get into prayer meetings again where you see people prostrate on the floor and crying out to God. The old saints used to call it travailing, travail of the soul. And we pulled down heaven and we stayed till two in the morning until God's will became crystal clear.

And we called on him. There was not a lot of words, but there was a lot of hearts breaking for the will of God. That is the will of God for us is to pull down heaven.

Remember, impressing others doesn't impress God. So many people want to impress people when they pray. That does not impress God.

God knows our hearts. The Bible says a broken and contrite heart I will not turn away. And then another key to being locked and loaded in this area of prayer is we have to abort sin.

Sin will kill prayer or prayer will kill sin. Did you know in all cases of people that I've known over the years and you know this in your own personal life, backsliding, you know what backsliding is? I mean, you can tell by the word. You're sliding back away from God.

You're in a backslidden state. You're in a prodigal son state or a wayward daughter. You're backslidden from God.

And if a Christian does that, they're miserable. They're miserable, they're angry, they're upset. And that always begins with neglected prayer.

Before they got to that position, they got out of this position. Backsliding is because we neglect that time alone with God, that time of prayer with God. I've got a book on leadership.

And they interviewed the top 280 Christian men who have fallen, usually because of a moral failure. And the top reasons at the very top of the list. You know all the names that have been in the news over the years? This book's kind of old, so it's probably over the last 10, 15 years.

You know, you have the Jimmy Swaggards and the Ted Haggards. I mean, you name it. Even contemporaries.

It's the same reason. Interviewing them at the top of the list was they were too busy. And their devotional life suffered.

And they drifted from God. Their neglected prayer. Eighty percent of them counseled women of the opposite sex.

And that's a no-brainer. But the top of that list, the top of that list was they had no more time for God. They had become successful in the ministry, but not successful in prayer.

And you've got to stay humble. That prayer life has got to be your heartbeat. That's the heartbeat.

When you drift from that, you drift. Just recently, I hope they don't listen to this. I don't think they will.

But many of you know Charlie Kirk, correct? Turning Point USA. And Rob McCoy. Rob McCoy texted me and asked me if I'd fly out to Florida for a week and be with these pastors and Charlie and talk and I just didn't have peace.

I've got to be in prayer. I've got to be in this revival atmosphere. I've got to stay close to the Savior.

And there's things you turn out. You turn down something that might be good for the greater. You know what your weaknesses are.

You know what your strengths are. And you stay in that state of prayer and humility. You can be too busy for God.

If you're too busy, you're too busy. We've created a celebrity now in our nation. The celebrity preacher.

You have Carl Lentz that fell with Hillsong. And I told my friend a couple years ago he's going to fall. When I saw him with Justin Bieber and having drinks at the bars.

Guys, where's your prayer meetings? Where's your worship services? Where's your humility and your accountability? No one is beyond falling. And so this digression away from God always begins with neglected prayer. And our whole life, Morgan will tell you, we ask this question, we answer this question at the Q&A.

Things are different. I have to live a little differently. I have to go to bed reading books on prayer and wake up with a prayerful hungry heart.

I can't be so busy doing this and doing that. And you've got to say no as long as God is a priority. Put him on the front burner, not the back burner.

And when you don't neglect prayer, it's hard to backslide. Because you can't backslide if you're constantly seeking God. Backsliding is a result of not seeking God and you turn like a magnet away from the things of God.

But if you're focused on God and He's pulling you to Him, that is how you stay anchored. And another thing that amazes me, interviewing these 280 men, I think it was in the top three, is without a doubt, they all thought, it will never happen to me. Pride cometh before destruction.

It will never happen to me. I'm a Christian. I've been a Christian 30 years.

I'm in ministry. Oh no, I know. See, knowing what to do is not doing it.

Oh, I know I need to pray. I know I need to fast. And I have a lot of friends at a lot of these events or at the Southern Baptist Convention or with these organizations I mentioned.

Big events. And they'll say, Shane, it's sad because there's not prayer meetings at these events. There's let's go to the bar and have a drink afterwards.

But there's not prayer in the morning. There's not worship. There's not seeking.

See, you can be so involved in ministry and we've created this celebrity type of image. No, a true celebrity in God's eyes is one who's on the altar. It's one who's not looking for fame and recognition.

A one who is broken before God. They're seeking the heart of God. Their heartbeat is for revival and atmosphere that pleases God.

Talking about revival is not revival. Talking about what God is going to do is not doing what God wants us to do. Talking about prayer is not praying.

That's why I've been to many prayer conferences but there's little praying. That's not a prayer conference. That's a talking about prayer conference.

And sometimes those things are good if they get us to pray. That's why I've said before, prayer is a great sin killer. It's hard to fall when you're always on your knees.

And also another key to being locked and loaded is prioritizing. Prioritizing prayer. It does have to be prioritized.

I know this sounds funny. But you put the doctor on your calendar, why not the prayer closet? You have your schedule all lined out but no time for God. So here's what happens.

Hey, I've been there. It can still happen to me. All squeeze God in sometime later.

And then you get home, you're tired and sometime later turns into this. Zombies on the couch. Give God your freshest time of the day.

The time where you have the most energy, the most excitement. Give Him that part of the day and then you need a quiet heart, a quiet hour and a quiet place. If you only pray when you're in trouble, you're in trouble.

A quiet place, a quiet hour, a quiet heart. And I know what moms with kids are thinking right now. That's easy for you to say.

Husbands, watch the kids and let them have a quiet hour. Their spirituality is your responsibility as well. And then finally on this keys to being locked and loaded, deal with distractions and discouragement.

Deal with distractions and discouragement. Those two things will knock you off course. Distractions, always busy.

And I know it's hard. There's a policy in our home. I'm trying, it's hard.

I've been doing it a while. But my phone off at seven at night and I don't look at it until seven in the morning. That is hard.

Because you're always, what's going on, you're distracted. And if you're giving Facebook more time than God, you will be distracted. Or the media more time than God.

And I believe personally, that is why there is so much fear in the Christian community. So much fear with what the government's doing or where COVID's going. There's so much fear because they're not living in God's Word.

Not living in the truth. I told someone recently, they're fearful of getting it and dying. Who wants to get it and die? But you're going to die.

And at this rate, three now are going to die of cancer. And that is a lot worse often than dying of COVID. But our fear, our fear.

So you're afraid that you're going to go spend eternity with the Savior? Often it's because they don't have that deep and abiding relationship. Now again, I'm not saying fear doesn't come in. I don't want to go just yet.

I want to see my kids grow up a little bit. I want to see who the next governor is going to be. Don't get me started.

Do not feed that fuel pump. I want to see what happens in 2024. My hope isn't in these things, but I'm curious to see if God is going to give us a measure of revival in our bondage.

They prayed that in the Old Testament. Did you know that? They would pray, God, give us a measure of revival even in our bondage. God, would you rend the heavens and pour down and come down and visit your people.

I believe God loves to do that in the midst of darkness. He loves to shine the light even brighter. It's dealing though.

You have to get rid of these distractions and discouragement in your life. Don't let discouragement stop you from praying. The devil cannot steal the presence of God.

Think about that. The devil cannot steal the presence of God from your life, but he can keep it from you. The presence of God.

Some of you can relate. Some of you can't. Let me just tell you, it's when God changes the atmosphere.

When your heart is broken. The tears of carrying weight. And God fills you with the Holy Spirit.

Like Paul said, do not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. And in that filling, is the fullness of joy comes out. And the presence of God.

Your words carry weight. The word of God comes alive. And that presence of God is very real.

And the enemy cannot steal that from you, but he can keep you from it. The Scripture is very clear on this. I'm going to close with this.

I've said before, that prayer is a great fear quencher. If you're wondering what I meant by that, the Scripture says, I sought the Lord through prayer, obviously. And He heard me.

He heard my prayer. And He delivered me from all my fears. See, people think they can be delivered from their fears, from their anxiety, just by hearing what I'm saying.

That's called therapy. And I was reminded, I love this quote, that a man was interviewing a pastor in Africa. And this is true.

I've seen it before, talking to Christians there, pastors there. He said, in Africa, you don't have a lot of counseling. But in the Christian church, that's all we do.

I need therapy. I need counseling. I need therapy.

I'm not against it. But he said, but in the African church, where we're seeing revival and things break out, you don't have counseling. What's the difference? Would you be curious to know? Or do you want me to wait until next week? I might do that to get you.

He said, in America, you counsel. In Africa, we repent. See, Americans like to have their sin talked about and go through therapy and listen, but not do.

Not repent. Not break under the weight of the pressure of sin. We've been conditioned by feel-good messages.

Because we hear somebody on TV, I feel pretty good, they never call us to repentance. They never call us to turn from sin. And they've done studies.

They've done surveys. There's a big church in Orange County that I've listened to them talk about it. And they said, we used to come in and do demographic studies.

We'd send out mailers to all the people for church growth. We wanted to know, what did the people want to hear in church? That's the wrong question. You need to be standing before Almighty God in your prayer closet saying, God, what do you want to tell the people through your word and call them to repentance? We're not trying to grow a big church.

We're trying to get people to convict it and turn to the Savior. Who cares what the man down the street wants to hear? I need to tell him what he needs to hear. And that's how you get people to repent and break under the power and presence of Christ.

Prayer is a great wisdom giver. James 1 says, if any of you lacks wisdom, ask of God. Ask and He will give you that wisdom.

And then finally, I love the power of prayer that sets a person free. The power of prayer to set free. I looked in the book of Joel.

I looked in the book of Romans. I looked in the book of Acts and there's a consistent theme. They all said this, everyone who calls praise, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

They shall be set free. We need to shout that to the rooftops. That's what America needs to hear.

Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. We've shed the blood of innocent children. We have mocked God's word.

We have called what is perversion good and what is good evil. Our hands are stained with the blood of innocent children and with perversion. And God, we cry out to you, everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Give your heart to Christ. Knee and bow at the foot of the cross and let Christ change your heart. That's how you change the nation and the state in our community.

You change it from the inside out. That's why this whole debate over racism is wrong. It's not a skin problem, it's a sin problem.

All these people want to do training or curriculum. Change the heart. Change the heart.

You can't have somebody go to six weeks of training and have that fix their heart. Repent. Repent.

Did you know they used to teach that in the public schools? 150 years ago, read what teachers used to teach. Read what kids used to learn 300 years ago in the schools. 1620s when the public schools... It was amazing what they used to learn, what they used to teach, and how far we've drifted.

Now it's about self-esteem. Don't hurt little Johnny's feelings. Little Johnny, his feelings need to be hurt.

So he repents. So what's preventing you from calling on the name of the Lord? I know there's most of you here at the 9 a.m. You have a relationship with God, but some listening might not, or some visiting might not. But what is preventing you from calling on the name of the Lord? Usually, without a shadow of a doubt, it's one word.

It's a very ugly word. It's pride. Proud.

I'm a proud man, or I'm a proud woman. I don't need God. And you know why atheism really rejects Christianity? You actually have to have more faith to be an atheist.

To believe that everything came from nothing. And that these little amoebas and little single cells just kind of developed, and I think I'm going to be a boy, and I think I'm going to create a spleen, and create a heart, and create a liver, and I'm going to be a male, and this one's going to create a female, and they know how

to give their chromosomes to each other, and now it's going to bring birth and life from nothing. It's absolute absurdity.

The fool has said in his heart, there is no God. The reason they believe it is because of pride. I don't want there to be a God.

I don't want to submit, and I don't want to surrender. Well, you better do it now on this side of the cross, because on the other side of the cross, it's going to be too late. Some of you need to totally, totally dedicate and consecrate your life to Christ.

Stop playing games. Stop living on the fence. Full surrender.

Did you know there's really no other option? Jesus doesn't say, He didn't say, carry your cross sometimes if it fits your schedule. Follow me from time to time. Commit some of your works.

It's full surrender. But then we say, but Shane, I can't do that perfectly. Neither can I. But your heart can be engaged in that direction.

Your heart can want more of God. And so if you're here this morning, and you need to fully surrender your life, pray, Lord, I'm surrendering everything. I'm putting it at the foot of the cross.

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