

# Something Is Missing

by Shane Idleman

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit's power in our lives and the consequences of lacking it, encouraging listeners to prioritize prayer and surrender to God for a deeper relationship with Him.*

**Duration:** 43:20

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 17:9, Ezekiel 36:26, Matthew 7:1-5, John 3:17, Acts 2:38, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 4:18, 1 John 4:20, Revelation 2:4

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Renewal"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of recognizing when something is missing in our lives, particularly in relation to the power of the Holy Spirit. The speaker emphasizes the impact of a lack of the Holy Spirit in churches and individuals, leading to lifeless sermons, stagnant faith, and a deficiency in love and compassion. The sermon highlights the need for spiritual power, love for God's Word, worship, prayer, and others, as well as the danger of a hard heart marked by unbelief, lack of compassion, sin mastery, and thriving pride. The message concludes with a call to transform a heart of stone into a heart of flesh, embracing God's unconditional love and rejecting pride and anger as tools of the enemy.

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## Transcript

The title of the message is Something is Missing. Something is missing. Have you ever had that feeling whether it's at home or at work or in your own personal life, your walk with the Lord, that something is missing? I've been there.

I've been there many times. And people say, Shane, I can't explain it, but something is missing. And the topic is going to be from Acts 19.

We're starting Acts 19. But I'll just tell you up front, what I'm talking about in this sermon is the power of the Holy Spirit. That's what we're finding out right here.

And I know this topic is a little controversial and some people wish we would hurry up and get through the book of Acts so we can avoid this topic, but this is probably one of my most favorite topics. Because something is missing in the pulpits of America. Something is missing in many churches, and this is it.

Sometimes it's best to describe what is missing in the negative to show you what I'm talking about. When the power of the Holy Spirit is absent in a church, absent in a pulpit, absent in a preacher, here's what happens. The sermons are lifeless and boring.

We're falling asleep. There's something stagnant and dull. The preacher lacks authority.

They lack power. They lack boldness. They're weak and they're wavering.

They just want to discuss things and they're not real sure and they don't want to offend and they don't want to upset and the spiritual power is lacking. Also, when a pulpit is lacking the Spirit's power, they lack love and compassion. It was said of many of my favorite preachers D.L. Moody, Whitefield, Robert Murray McShaney in Scotland many hundreds of years ago, that they often couldn't get through a sermon without tears.

That's preaching with power because it's underscored with love and compassion. See, there's many people preaching with anger. And this is what the Bible says.

That there's no compassion, there's no love. So that's what's missing in a pastor and a preacher and a church without the Spirit's fire. It's lifeless.

It's boring. It's stagnant. It's dull.

They lack authority. They lack power. They lack boldness.

They're weak. They're wavering. They lack love and compassion.

And you might say, well, Shane, that's great for pastors, but what about me? And I want to submit to you this morning that the same things apply. When you lack the Spirit's power, your life is boring and lifeless. You're stagnant.

You're cold. You've grown cold to the things of God. And I actually prayed this morning whether I should say this or not.

I don't want to say it out of frustration. But when we have almost 600 families in our database and sending out and say they called us home, and we can't get three or four people to prayer in the morning, something is wrong. And I'm not saying it out of frustration and anger.

I know God has to do it, but my heart yearns for that. I know it's difficult. I know it's challenging.

I have kids. I know how hard it is sometimes, but we've got to begin prioritizing God. Let that be the tweeter, to twit whatever they call that thing.

A tweetable quote. God has to be the priority. Priority God.

I'm going to make something up. Shirts maybe. Priority God.

And I'm just being honest. I'm being open. I'm being transparent because it happens in my own life too.

See, prayer is really the heartbeat of the church. It's the heartbeat of your life. It's the heartbeat of your spirituality.

You tell me how well and how often you pray, and I'll tell you how you're doing spiritually. We've lost this area. But you have to preach with love and compassion as well, and you have to have love and compassion in your own hearts.

And something Charles Spurgeon said many years ago that has really stuck with me. He said, I would give up 10 worlds rather than preach an unfelt Christ. And I would quit today.

This would be my last sermon ever preached. I would get back into real estate if I had to preach an unfelt Christ. Just going through the motions like a social club.

I would bell out because there's no power in that. Don't miss this topic this morning, folks. I also believe that God has called me primarily to a few different things.

Preach repentance. Preach revival. Preach renewal.

Preach restoration. Preach prayer. Preach the filling of the Holy Spirit.

This is vitally important. This is why I went from cursing God and getting drunk and losing my marriage and losing so many different things to now I have to raise my arms and worship Him and adore Him. Because the Holy Spirit's power has so radically changed my life that everything is different.

I mean, you look at your finances different. You look at your friendships different. You look at where you go differently.

You look at how you spend your time differently. You look at how you raise your children different. Everything is affected.

So that's the question this morning. Something is missing. Is something missing? So in Acts 19, God, part of me feels that's enough of a sermon.

Let's just get into worship, right? But I wanna get through this. I think it's important. Acts 19, and it happened while Apollos was at Corinth.

So if you're in Jerusalem, Corinth is way over and way up there. This would've took days and weeks journey sometimes. And then Paul, having passed through the upper region, came to Ephesus.

So Paul is way over in this area in Ephesus. And finding, this is interesting, and finding some disciples, he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? That's what it made me do this week. That's interesting.

And the word receive in the Greek is have you, did you accept, did you take hold of, did you embrace the Holy Spirit when you believed? Now, either that is the most ridiculous question Paul can ask. Well, that's like saying, Shane, did you breathe today? Of course, it's in me. The breath is in me.

Of course I breathed today. Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Now, I'm going to try not to wade into the controversial waters here on this one. Because there are different sides.

You talk to a charismatic, you go to Jack Hayford's church in Van Nuys, you're gonna hear a little bit of interpretation of this. You drive a few miles to John MacArthur's church in Sun Valley, you're gonna hear a little bit different interpretation of this. And when great men of God are divided on issues, I try to stay humble and teachable.

Try is a key word, right? So I'm not going to wade in controversial waters this morning, I have before, and I know many of you would like me to. And I might, I might if I take a rabbit trail, I might go in that direction.

So let's think about this.

He met disciples, I mean, that is a very odd question. If I meet a person in Lancaster, you go to such and such church, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? What? What are you talking about? Well, so they said to him, we have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit. Now, 15 years ago, my wife and I were in a small group, marriage theories, didn't have any kids yet, and I was teaching on this, or reading this, and I had a pastor's son tell me, he told me.

You know what, Shane, I would say the same thing. And I left there thinking, what is going on? But now looking back, knowing that church, knowing that pastor, they avoid these controversial things. The Father, the Son, the Holy Word.

We're not gonna talk about the guys we see on TV, we're not gonna, but the problem is, you're talking about the power of God. You're talking about something coming upon you, inside you, residing in you, the third person of the Trinity that is vitally important. So if you magnify this aspect, you'll get weird.

But if you minimize this aspect, you'll be powerless. That's just the way it works, on the topic of the Holy Spirit. And churches don't wanna talk about it.

Many times they don't wanna talk about what they don't have. Same applies to us. We want to, you catch somebody who doesn't know Jesus, they don't wanna talk about Him.

You catch somebody who doesn't have the Holy Spirit in them, they don't wanna talk about the Holy Spirit. So they said to Him, we have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit. And He said to them, into what then were you baptized? So they said, into John's baptism.

Now granted, I will give this side some leeway here, in that this is a transitionary period. You're going from Old Testament to New Testament. You're going from the baptism of John to the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

That you're going from the church not existing to the day of Pentecost when the world hears about the church loudly and clearly. So what he's saying, they were baptized into the baptism of John. John the Baptist, if you remember, was the forerunner of Jesus Christ.

The Bible, the prophets spoke of this. They said, God said, I will send my messenger before you, and he will pave the way for you. If you read some commentaries, even Josephus, I believe, and other ancient literature, many times, they would go out into the villages and onto the roads.

They would prepare those roads for the coming of the king. The king is coming, chariot is going to travel. They would go, they would remove the boulders, the stones, the dirt, the potholes in the roads and different things.

You go to third world countries, you'll see exactly what I'm talking about. Now we go, oh look, they just paved this road. Isn't it wonderful? But they would go out before the king, and they would get the road ready.

They would prepare the way. So John the Baptist comes on the scene preaching repentance. Repentance, repentance, repentance.

People would go down into the Jordan River, they would prepare their hearts, they would repent. Go down, repent. So there's this baptism of John that's a baptism of repentance.

So that's what they were baptized into. But Paul noticed something that was off. Here's my thought.

If the disciples had the Holy Spirit, why ask if they received him? If they weren't disciples, why call them disciples? So I'm just gonna, this is the item in paraphrase for those who are interested. Three things are possible. They lacked spiritual power and fruit.

They lacked spiritual power and fruit. There was something, it's like, and I wanna ask this a lot of times to Christians. It's like, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Because you look just like Hollywood.

Not the Holy Spirit. There's no difference. You look just like the world.

Just like your friends at work that love to cuss and drink beers and look at pornography. That's you. Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Because something's missing.

Something is missing in their walk. That's why it's applicable to us today. I'd like to ask all of you the same question.

Are you lacking spiritual power? Are you lacking fruit? And if you don't know, come up and ask me. I will be honest with you. I can tell many times those who are not fully surrendered to God, those who are not living that vibrant relationship with God.

Or number B, letter B. They did not hear about Pentecost. This could be, because this is a transitional time. They were baptized in John, in John's baptism.

I guess they believed that Jesus had risen from the dead, but they had not believed in Pentecost Acts 1.8 from the English Standard Version of the Bible. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. Now let's just take a quick test.

Don't raise your hand. But how many of you have received power? Oh, there we go. Even the microphone understands.

Right, there's power. Or how many of you are saying, I need that. I want that.

I desire that. I don't have that. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witness in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.

Basically, power, there might be something to this. Power, Jake will say pull that away a little bit. Power equals witnessing.

We are given boldness and power to witness. We're not given boldness and power to go hide in a closet and read the Word of God and get high on the Word of God all week. We're called to go out and bring this witness out.

Or C, they said they believed, but they didn't have a relationship with God, a true relationship. They were Old Testament believers in that they believed in Yahweh. They believed in God.

They were baptized and they got baptized in the Jordan River in John's baptism. They did all that, but they did not have a relationship with God. So those are your options.

They lacked spiritual power or they didn't know about Pentecost, therefore they didn't know there was something more to it. Now this is also an interesting topic. I might take a lot of rabbit trails this morning, but many people, and I wanna be careful in the wording, I believe, and let's just say up front, I've said it many times before, but I believe that you have, as a believer, you have all of the Holy Spirit.

The question is does he have all of you? That's what the question is. It's not like, and I read just last night, I was reading John Wesley and his journals and the Methodist movement. They taught perfectionism and there was a second work of grace.

So as a believer, you need to go seek this second work of grace that might happen months later or years later and when you receive this baptism, this endowment of power in the Holy Spirit. If you don't have it, you need to be seeking it. But I think many times we're saying the same thing because what they're calling a second work of grace, they say I'm calling a person who hasn't fully surrendered their life.

And it often isn't until they fully surrender everything, they give God everything, they cry out a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. They give him everything and bam, they are filled mightily with the Holy Spirit. So that's what needs to take place.

Verse four, then Paul said, John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him who has come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, so something was wrong, something they were missing, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, you guys ready for this one? Here we go, we're gonna get controversial again.

This darn book of Acts, not Shane Idleman, this book here of the Bible is gonna get controversial again. Paul laid hands upon them and the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. There you go.

Now, this is an interesting word. I believe we taught this maybe last year, but I wanna also bring this to your attention. The Holy Spirit came upon them.

In talking about the Holy Spirit, the Bible uses three prepositions. You know what a preposition is? It tells you what the noun, the Holy Spirit, is doing. So there's a preposition the Bible uses, para, P-A-R-A.

And we get that word parakletos. The Holy Spirit comes alongside of us. And then there's another preposition, the Holy Spirit was in them, E-N.

So the Holy Spirit indwelt the believer. You would think that would be enough, wouldn't you? Comes alongside, convicts, draws, now he's in us. But there's another preposition, E-P-I, epi.

And that's when the Holy Spirit comes upon a person. They are radically changed. Because when you go from being filled with Shane Eidelman to being filled with the Holy Spirit, life is different.

The Shane Eidelman still wants to go back to the alcohol, back to the fleshly things, of not going to the prayer meetings, back to being a mean jerk. The flesh wants to go back, but the epi, the upon, the Holy Spirit, is pulling and yearning for the things of God. That's why you have that fight within, the flesh and the Spirit is going back and forth.

And if you're not filled, you are losing the battle. You are losing the battle. Just like gravity, right? It pulls you back down, back into slavery, back into bondage.

So when Paul laid hands on them, now there isn't anything mystical about laying on of hands. I don't, mystical meaning, you know. Well, here's the thing with God.

Throughout the whole book of Acts, the Spirit moves however He wants. After they were baptized, boom. Before they were baptized, boom.

On the road, boom, boom. He just, the Holy Spirit moves how He wants, like the wind. Jesus quoted that in John 3. Famous verse, John 3, 16.

Those who, for God so loved the world. That whole discourse is with Nicodemus. And He's saying, the wind, the Holy Spirit blows wherever He wishes.

But, there's a laying on of hands, it's agreeing with somebody. Let me lay hands on you. Let me agree with you.

And the Holy Spirit came upon this group of people when obedience took place. They were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I don't want to minimize what happened here.

This is very significant. This was a turning point. This was the most important day of their life.

Nothing compared to it. They were transformed. If the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and these believers were speaking in tongues, which was, I guess, okay in the New Testament, right? But not okay now, people say.

You know, and they were doing, and the Holy Spirit, they're witnessing, they're seeing the power of God. That is life changing. They were transformed.

And this is really a final opportunity for me to talk about this topic. I know I've talked about it a lot in the past, and I'm sure I will in the future, but getting through the book of Acts, we're gonna get into the different things. So I want to just remind you of two scriptures.

John 7, 3, 8. Whoever believes in me, as the scriptures say, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water. So let me put this back on you. Are you experiencing those rivers of living water? It's either yes or no.

I'm not sure means no on this question. I'm not sure. Have you experienced rivers of living water? Matthew 3, 11.

I baptize you with water for repentance, John the Baptist said. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. See, if you just look at the Bible, you don't need to be scared about these terms.

You know, people are, oh, don't talk about, the Bible does. When a person, when the Holy Spirit comes upon somebody, they are baptized with fire. There's just no way around it.

There's no better word to describe that. You wouldn't say they were, when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they act like cute little bunny rabbits. Right, when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they acted cowardly and timid.

It's fire, what else represents it? What else represents Spirit-filled bold preaching but fire? But a fire, God spoke to them, fire, a fiery cloud came down. It was just a magnificent thing that took place. Now, these two scriptures have been bothering people for 2,000 years.

These scriptures bother people. When I challenge people in this area, and the reason we challenge is why. So conviction takes place and change takes place.

I don't challenge or step on toes so people get offended and leave and get up mad. I won the argument. That's not the point.

The point is, oh, here's my whole goal. Oh, I better just, cats out of the bag again. I'll just tell you, my whole goal in this sermon is for you to say, that's what I need.

That's what I need, God, that's what I need, and you take it to Him and I get out of the way. Because it's a transforming work of God. So something is missing, and I believe this is one reason why many people are turned off by church.

We talk about a powerful gospel, but where's the power? We talk about a powerful, life-changing gospel, but where's the power? Where's the boldness? Where's the love, the compassion? Everything we see, where is it? You see, that's what's leading people astray, or that's what's turning people off from Christianity, is either loud Bible thumpers who just like to scream at people, or those who are so passive and so timid, they don't have a, I don't know what the Bible says about anything, from transgenderism to homosexuality to gay marriage to sin. I don't know what it says. I'm not saying anything.

I'm gonna look just like the world and hide over here. See, that's not right either. That's not right either.

That's why many people are turned off by the church. They either see the carnality and the hypocrisy, or they see the anger and the lack of love and the hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is on both sides.

The Spirit coming upon you makes all the difference. You can know the Bible, believe in Jesus, and try to live a holy life, but still be missing something. See, that's my goal this morning, for you to go, Lord, I'm missing this.

I'm missing this. I need this. So here's the application.

Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Is there spiritual power, not just knowledge? See, I wanna make this clear. Because I'll talk to people, they'll say, yes, there's spiritual power. No, and I know, they just have head knowledge.

They haven't led a person to the Lord in years. They're yelling at their spouse. Their priorities are misaligned, and they're gonna tell me they're operating in spiritual power.

They have never seen healing. They've never seen demons removed, or the demonic realm fight against them. They don't have any spiritual power, but they have knowledge.

Is there a love for God's Word? Is there a love for God's Word? Is there a love for worship? Is there a love for prayer? Here's a good test. Did you love that song, Spirit Breakout? King Jesus, would you come and sit back on the throne again? King Jesus, would you turn this nation around? King Jesus, would you repair marriages and families and restoration? King Jesus, take your rightful place on this throne. King Jesus, and we bow, Spirit Breakout, and change our carnality, crush our hypocrisy.

Break us, so the fragrance of Christ can flow out. Remember, that's why I often say, do you know how you get your perfume? Do you know what happens to the flower? How do you think the olive feels about the olive oil you're using? See, unless you're crushed by God, you cannot be used by God. Unless you're a broken and contrite spirit, I will not turn away.

And it's these kind of sermons that people get irritated at. Is He challenging me? Yes, I am. God is, through His Word.

Is there a love for God's Word, worship, prayer, and others? We can't miss this. I am so tired of compassionate, let's, is that even a word? Let's say Christians who lack compassion. How's that? That is like, that's an oxymoron.

Jesus said, you'll know, they'll know you're my disciples by how well you translate the Greek. No, right? Come on, Bible students. Jesus said, you'll know, they'll know, the world will know that you are my disciples because you go to church all the time, because you got your King James on the counter of your house and on the dashboard of your car.

They'll know, no, no, no, they'll know that you are my disciples because of your love. You have to preach with love, you have to live with love, and that doesn't come naturally. Does love come naturally? It comes supernaturally.

How? By the filling of the Spirit. This is the greatest need. I would say when I travel and preach, I used to do a lot more until God called me to this, but this is probably the most, the topic that gets the most feedback from people.

Prayer lines are full, tears are flowing, because they realize they've drifted from the one they used to love, or they've never known Him in the power of the Holy Spirit. See, I'm not afraid of this word. The power of the Holy Spirit, the fire of the Holy Spirit, the unction of the Holy Spirit, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, you better have it.

I don't care what you call it, you better have it. Baptism is interesting. I don't want to miss this.

Baptism was a step of obedience. They were baptized, then the power flowed. And if you need to get baptized, talk to us afterward, because I believe it's a huge step of obedience.

Getting baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism was emphasized. It was a major deal to them.

But I think it's important to clear the confusion. Acts 2.38, on the day of Pentecost, I'm going back to where we were a year ago, Peter replied, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sin, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He goes on to say, there is no other name under heaven given by men by which we must be saved.

So now there's a group, and they actually Facebooked me this week and said I was an error and might be leading people to hell. Because, I'm not baptizing people in Jesus' name only. You'll see there's denominations.

If you were baptized in Jesus' name only, only, only, because right here, Acts 2.38. Peter said, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Well, why are

you doing it, Shane, when you do it in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit? Why are you doing that? Well, I'm following Jesus. Should we read what he said? Okay, good, thank you.

Matthew 28.19, therefore go and make disciples all of the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. See, people, when they get arrogant, they don't get teachable. When they're arrogant, they're not teachable.

They get stuck on one dynamic of God's Word because both are true. If you look at the setting, Peter is preaching to the Jews who were baptized in the name of John, who may be baptized into the sect of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribes, all different kinds of baptisms or things going on. Peter said, no, no, this is the Jesus who you crucified.

He's risen from the dead. You be baptized in His name. His name.

Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus said it's compliments of Trinity. So both are correct.

I don't see a problem here at all. But it does bring up a good point. This is just one example, one example of elevating a verse at the expense of others.

Do you know we do that in the Christian community? I've been guilty. You love this verse, right? I'm gonna use this verse against you. Or actually the verse that people who don't like what I'm saying right now across our nation, this is what they'll tell me.

Don't judge. Matthew 7, the Bible says do not judge. The problem is you have to keep reading.

You can just keep reading. Jesus said remove the plank from your eye first and then you can see better to judge your brother. And then he says in John, I believe, that we're called to judge and discern all things.

Paul also says the same thing. So they say don't judge, and really what they're saying is I'm gonna get away with all kinds of sin and you leave me alone. I'm just gonna live my life however I want and you be quiet, you can't judge me.

And that's not true. The Bible says once our heart is right, we can make certain assessments. I believe, now I don't know if I, oh well, goodness gracious, I started the process, didn't I? I don't care if it's Trump or Obama, whoever, but I believe I love if godly men, godly women are surrounded by our leaders.

Praying for them, showing them what righteous judgment looks like. See, for thousands of years in the Old Testament, the Mosaic form of government governed the people. The laws matched the heart of God.

The laws matched the heart of God. And to get people in office or around them that will pray and support and encourage and look at what the Scripture says. Another verse, turn the other cheek.

And you're all aware, right, when Jesus got slapped, he didn't turn the other cheek. He confronted, he said, why have you slapped me? What evil have I done? He also said, do business. This is warfare, bold as lions.

So both are true. What about this one? God is love. God is love.

I hear that all the time, but shame, God is love. Again, what they're really saying is love means I can do whatever I want, so God is love, he lets me do whatever I want, like a doting grandfather, right? Or a

cosmic ball of love floating in the universe. He's just love.

Okay, God is love, but God is holy. He's a God abounding in mercy, but he's a just God. See, the whole Scripture, you gotta have the totality, oh yeah, you can clap on that one.

But see, both are true, both are true. We see it all the time. You're going 60 miles an hour down the street, and the police pull you over and say, I'm writing you a ticket, why? You didn't stop at the stop sign.

Well, it said 65, right, but it also said stop. Right, same thing with the Word of God. It doesn't contradict itself.

Both aspects are true. In salvation, man is responsible, but God is sovereign. You'll stay very healthy spiritually if you learn to balance the truths of God's Word.

Many get baptized. Many don't get baptized because they think that's too serious, I'm not there yet. The problem is you won't see that in the Bible anywhere.

Anywhere, so if that's what you're saying, I'll just wanna challenge that thinking. That's the enemy planting in seeds of procrastination. Acts 19, eight, and he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months.

Paul did, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe but spoke evil of the way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. Let me stop here for a minute.

But when some were hardened, some were hardened and did not believe, the danger of a hard heart, the danger, see we went from something is missing now to danger of a hard heart. I could make this into two sermons. But I won't, don't worry, I'll go quickly.

The danger of a hard heart. Here's another good test. Those who feel that the spirit want me to keep going on, those who are not want me to end.

They're hungry, they wanna get out of here, they're convicting, come on, hurry up, what's wrong with this guy? The danger of a hard heart is this, it's not easily broken. See, that's the danger of it. A broken and contrite heart God will not despise.

I've been saying it all morning, Psalm 51, 17, a broken, which means God, I give up and I give in to you. And a contrite heart, a heart that's remorseful and repents, God will not despise that. See, this is the one thing I love about God.

You can take him to the bank on every single promise. I mean, what about if it's in parentheses and I'll consider it? He just says, no, if you do these things, if you do these things, I will not turn you away. And here's the fact of the matter.

The Puritan authors used to say this often, that the same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay. The same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay. What's the difference, a broken and contrite heart? So here's four signs, I'll get right to the closing.

Four signs of a hard heart in a believer as well as an unbeliever, because I want to hit both here. Number one, we don't want to talk about our faith. If I have a hard heart, if I'm an unbeliever, when I lived in that

lifestyle, I don't want anybody to talk about faith.

Don't talk about faith and politics because they're interwoven. My faith, people crack me up, says, you leave your faith at home. Leave your faith at home, don't bring it to the workplace.

Really, how does that work? It doesn't work, that's impossible. That's why people don't like faith and politics because they're interwoven. Your faith determines how you live.

So a hard heart says, I don't want to talk about it. And a person who's a believer, let's say, maybe in a prodigal state, caught in sin, they don't want to talk about it either. If they're not living for God, they're living for Laughlin, the jet skis, and the 12-pack of Corona, they don't want to talk about their faith.

There's a hard heart there. When we have a hard heart also, public confession. We don't like being challenged.

We're always right and we are proud of it. That's a hard heart. This is where a church needs to be careful because even the right doctrine, the right doctrine with the wrong heart or with the wrong spirit can bring division and dissension through a critical heart.

Number two, love and compassion have vanished. Even a believer who's got a hard heart doesn't have love or compassion in their life. Isaiah 6, 10, the New American Standard Version.

Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull and their eyes dim. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears and understand their hearts and return and be healed. Lacking compassion.

Number three, sin is mastering you. If you're an unbeliever and you've got a hard heart, sin is mastering you. If you're a believer and you've got a hard heart, a besetting sin has taken you over.

You keep falling in an area and you're hooked on this sin that's got you down. And that's often the result of a hard heart. How do you know, believer? What you used to control now is controlling you.

Number four, pride is not thriving. I'm sorry, pride is thriving in you, not dying. Jeremiah 16, 12, you too have done evil even more than your forefathers.

For behold, you are each one walking according to the stubbornness of his own evil heart without listening to me. That's a sign of a hard heart. And he just said right here, unbelief is a hard heart.

And I'm only bringing that up because I want to help. Unbelief is a hard heart issue. Some were hardened and did not believe.

So let's close with a few thoughts. The heart of stone must become a heart of flesh. David, you prayed that this morning.

You just confirmed it with me in there in the prayer room. The heart of stone must become a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36, 26, I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit in you.

I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. A self-righteous man once boasted to a Christian friend of his in Los Angeles. He said, you know, John, I'm not such a bad fellow.

There are many worse than I. His friend replied, Steve, you're measuring yourself by the wrong standard. You measure yourself by the harlots and the drunkards you see on Skid Row and you feel quite satisfied by comparison. But go and measure yourself alongside Jesus Christ and see how you measure up.

There is none that are righteous, no, not one. But let's not forget this. God's unconditional love.

God demonstrated His own love for us. Hope I can get through this one. This is a hard verse for me sometimes.

But God demonstrated His own love for us and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. See, when I read that, I lost it. I lost that 18 years ago.

You mean when I was snorting crystal meth, I was shooting up steroids, getting high, drinking, cursing God, actually using those names in vain? When I was, He died for me. Could that be? Is that true? Well, I was in my sin. I mean, if you just sit and focus on what He did, that loving Father dying for us, while I'm caught in that, because you know what we would do? Well, not until you clean your life up.

I'm not doing anything for you until you straighten up. But actually in our sin, in our depravity, He died for us. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but the world through Him would be saved.

The closing thing to remember is this, the greatest weapons, the greatest weapons, always remember this, in Satan's arsenal, the greatest weapons in Satan's arsenal are two, they are pride and they are anger. Pride prevents repentance and anger keeps me away from God. But what do we do? We say, why, why, why? God, why did you allow this? Why did you do this? Why did you not, why did you make me into some stupid 12 year old who barely graduates high school and can't speak well, and people make fun and overweight and getting all mad at God? Why? Why did you do this? Why did you take my dad before I even had a chance to say goodbye? Why? Why? So how is it then, a person like Horatio Spadford, how can he write the lyrics to the famous hymn, It Is Well With My Soul? After losing his four daughters in the Atlantic Ocean, the ocean liner they were on hit a Scottish ship and only the mom survived.

And she sent back a telegraph to the husband saying, I only am left, just me. And he can go back to that same spot in the Atlantic Ocean and write, when peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrow like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well. It is well with my soul.

So how can you have that, and then somebody else curse God if they lose someone or they get sick? What is the difference? What is missing? What is missing? The heart of stone needs to become a heart of flesh. That's what's missing. And even as a believer, your heart has become so hard and callous.

That's why Jesus said, oh, return to me. Return to me. If you've left your first love, come back to me.

Stop blaming God. Stop blaming God. If you're going to blame anyone, blame the one who is the liar from the beginning.

Blame the one who is a thief that is said to kill still and to destroy. Blame the great destroyer and the ultimate deceiver. Blame Him! If you're going to blame anybody, He's the Master of deception, the Father of lies.

Do the math. Do the comparison. Blame the thief that is said to kill still and to destroy, not the God who has come to restore, renew, and revitalize.

Something is missing. Something is missing. It's that cold, callous heart.

It needs to be changed and transformed.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32017.mp3>

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