

The Call of Christ to the Ministry - Part 2

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman emphasizes the universal call to ministry and the importance of preaching, teaching, and serving in the Christian life.

Duration: 44:48

Scripture: Matthew 9:35, Matthew 9:37, Philippians 2:5

Topics: "Christian Ministry", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the power of Christ over all struggles in life, including addictions and challenges, highlighting the importance of steps on our part to allow Christ to conquer these obstacles. It delves into the call of Christ for ministry, reminding that the entire world is a mission field with opportunities for everyone to serve. The sermon stresses the need for compassion and ministry in everyday interactions, encouraging listeners to be open to ministry opportunities wherever they are. It also discusses the significance of teaching, preaching, and healing in ministry, emphasizing the importance of serving others and having an outflow of God's love and power in our lives.

Transcript

Last week, I talked on the power of Christ, the power of Christ over the demonic realm, the power of Christ over demons, and I would submit to you the power of Christ over anything in your life, no matter what you struggle with, alcohol, drugs, nicotine, you know, whatever it is, pornography, Christ has the power to conquer those things, but it requires steps on our part as well. So I'd encourage you to check out that message if you can. I kind of was left hanging because I didn't get all through my notes, and where I'm picking up now is Matthew 9, verse 35.

Matthew 9, verse 35, and I want to talk about the call of Christ to the ministry, and not just the ministry, what I'm doing, or people full-time at the church, but do you realize the entire world is a mission field? Do you have a job? Do you work anywhere? Do you know any friends? Do you ever go get gas or go to the grocery store? Guess what? Mission field, mission field. I actually blew an opportunity yesterday, I was up in the mountains walking, you can go on a bike ride, actually, I think I brought my bike, and I saw a guy up there with his dogs, and he was just kind of overlooking the valley. I told him, you know, what I did, and I kind of related to him in construction, and then I was in real estate, and then planted the church, and I missed the opportunity to invite him, you know, because I was in a hurry, I got to get going, and just as I was leaving, God convicted me for about a mile, so I was on my bike, I remember, I rode, I just turned

around, went back a whole nother mile, tried to find this guy, invite him to church, and it didn't work out that way, but just wherever we're at, there's ministry opportunities.

We don't know where God's gonna move, and just after the first service, a 10-year-old, I think he was 10 or 11, came up to me in the back and said, I need to know God, so I prayed with him on repenting, and believing in Jesus, and you know, so next time you say, 10, 11-year-old shouldn't be in here, I don't know, that was powerful, so that kind of made my day, so I'm kind of on a spiritual high, but it's everywhere, no matter where we're at, Walmart, you see a mom's about ready to have a panic attack with her little kids, can I help with anything, you need some prayer, oh, it's everywhere, everywhere, so that's what I want to talk about tonight, because it's everywhere, Jesus said that the harvest is everywhere, but guess what, the labors are few, the frozen chosen, we got a lot of God's

word, but we don't have a lot of application, well, I better get started, this is not gonna be good, step-on-toe sermon, right, so chapter nine, I'm also in a good mood, because me and a few of the guys are heading out early in the morning on a fly-fishing trip up in the Sierra Nevada mountains, no phone and email for a few days, it's not a bad thing, let me tell you, so kind of looking forward to that, and with that little 10-year-old, just kind of really excited tonight, anyway, chapter nine, verse 35 through 36, then Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people, but when he saw, but when he saw the, oh, oh yeah, here we go, I skipped it, but when he saw the

multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd, and I wanna remind you tonight that Jesus is still moved with compassion, no matter what you're going through, your difficulty, some of us are here in a great mood, some of us here are in a very bad mood, or their marriage is falling apart, or there's challenges at work, or lawsuits, and the church has their ups and downs, valleys and mountains, and Christ has compassion for your situation, the same shepherd that saved you has not left you, he's here, he wants to show his compassion on us, I know that from the bottom of my heart, and we see three aspects of Jesus's ministry here, he went teaching, and preaching, and healing, and the other gospel accounts say that he

went teaching, and preaching, and healing, teaching, and preaching, and healing, that's all he did, and I think that's vital in understanding ministry, because there will be opportunities you will need to teach, there will be opportunities you might need to preach, not like what I'm doing, I'll fill in the blank, and there might be opportunities where you need to help people in areas of healing, teaching is teaching them the word of God, and that's wonderful, but preaching is awaking in them from that spiritual slumber, wake up, wake up, and you warn, or you convict, or you challenge, listen, this is a wrong direction, and I had a man tell me a couple weeks ago that if he would have had somebody years ago, early in his life, wake him up, say listen, you're breaking your marriage, you're

destroying your family, wake up, he would have changed, so there comes a time where we need to teach, we need to also preach, we need to tell our kids sometimes, hey listen, you're going in a bad direction, you're going in a wrong direction, we warn them, why, because we love them, and then also we see Jesus healing people, how did he heal people?

Well, he just commanded a word, and it was done, but this reminds me of helps ministry, and we can heal people mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, there are needs all over the body, you can help them mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, and this is the point of the sermon many people

probably yawn, oh yeah, I've heard that many times before, but you don't realize that the power of God in your life only operates when we're working in the direction he wants us to go, if we're just getting fat on the word of God and not doing anything with it, we become Pharisees, we become very good at telling people off, we become very good at identifying incorrect doctor and incorrect doctor, we become very good at being religious, but God says with that inflow, there needs to be an outflow, right?

With that inflow, there needs to be an outflow, that's where I'm going up that way tomorrow, you know Mono Lake, right? Dry and dead and smells, but it's got the beautiful snow water running in, gorgeous snow water, trout, you can drink out of that river running in, running into this, what's the problem? There's no outlet, there's no, it's just a big salt area, salt lake, little brine shrimp live in there, so it's got this wonderful inlet, but it's just sitting there just dead, dying, it stinks down there, like sulfur, like sulfur, same with the Christian life, I've seen it more times than I can count, it happens in my own life, if we just take, we've got the Bible on app everywhere, is it the translation, is that the new King James you got?

The old King James, the Holman Bible, the Jerusalem Bible, the Message Bible, the ESV Bible, the NIV Bible, what Bible you got, we've got them all, we can look up the translations and we can look at the Greek nuances of the word and the historical and the archeological and boy, we have everything, Jesus said that's wonderful, but you better get out and serve because that's what I called you to do, so if we don't take, if we don't have this, as we're getting this inlet, it's meant to be an outlet, we're to learn the word of God so we can apply it to our lives, but then so we can help and teach others as well, so anytime you have just an inlet and no outlet, that you become moody, irritated, there's no joy, there's no peace, all those things are a byproduct of serving Christ, and think about this, we don't necessarily serve Christ by just reading the word of God, and worshiping, if it's all me, it's all self-focused, if it's all about me, service ministry is serving others, so I'm fed so I can be a ministry to others, that's what this whole thing is about, and the funny thing is, studying this, we don't often see Jesus as a preacher, do we?

We see this nice little, turn the other cheek Jesus, you know, no, he's not gonna upset anybody, just walking around with a robe and flowing, and no, he doesn't get upset, but Jesus preached, he said for this very reason, I came to proclaim the truth, that's the word preach is to herald the good news, hey, hello, wake up, wake up, to preach, to proclaim, that's what the church needs sometimes is a wake up call, because you can take them through the Bible systematically and people fall asleep, which is good, but sometimes, don't get me wrong, I listen to Chuck Smith on tape, and John MacArthur, David Jeremiah, Alistair Begg, all the people you like to, I listen to them, I teach wonderful things, but sometimes, they've gotta preach, they've gotta wake in the sleeping church, it's like the other day, I was up again, the same area, I'm walking in the hills, I let my dog off the leash, and on my way back, I heard, sss, sss, sss, sss, sss, like, oh, that's a rattlesnake, right, he's right over there, right where the white piece of paper is, there's a, and the rattlesnake's between me and him, like, wow, get over here, get over here, dog, you think I just, oh, come here, come here, oh, let's see what happens, come on, what did I do?

Get over here now, come over here, this way, this way, I'm empathetic, I'm emotional, because there's danger right there, I can't go to him, he's gotta come to me, I'm not jumping around a rattlesnake, you get over here, and he's, oh, he's getting his tail in front of the wagon, go, go, no, don't go get the snake, get over here, you're in trouble, get over here now, that's emotional, why? Because you also have to waken the church and say, listen, God says there's a judgment to come, and with the wages of sin is condemnation and wrath against God, the fires of hell, that's real, see, you gotta proclaim it, Jesus did, I just read last week, again, where he said, do not fear him who can kill your body, but fear him who can cast both body and soul in hell, I don't like that people say, it doesn't matter what we like, it's what God

requires, and that's what preaching does, it makes us feel uncomfortable, because when the power of the Holy Spirit hits our hearts and we hear, oh my God, I'm not in right relationship with God, I need to be, that's something that the dynamic that doesn't take place by teaching alone.

Jesus preached, we're called to preach and to warn people, but to also love them. If I, you know, I've said this before, the concept of hell and being separated from God eternally and eternal flames and weeping and gnashing of teeth where the worm does not die, not easy reading, don't really like it, guess what, it doesn't matter what I like, it's what God has called me to do.

As a pastor, how can I not warn? How can I only encourage and only encourage and only encourage but never warn? Try being a parent and doing that. Little Johnny, I know you just hit your sister in the mouth, but it's okay, I'm just gonna encourage you, you're gonna be a big, good boxer someday. Well, I can't, I gotta just, I just gotta encourage.

Don't cuss at your mom that way, you'll be a good sailor someday though. Just, all we do is encourage. No, we encourage and we warn.

If the Bible says the wages of sin is death, we are under the condemnation and wrath of God unless we repent of our sin and embrace His gracious gift of forgiveness through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross. That's what the Bible says is the road to redemption, yet I'm going to ignore it and never say anything? That's what the church needs to hear. We have to preach, that's what preaching is.

Jesus did it, Jesus did it. I think some of, he'd be kicked out of some of our churches today. Do you realize that? Get out of here, don't be preaching.

I remember I talked about this before, I spoke at the American Baptist Conference in Wisconsin a long time ago, and preaching like this and about that cross and the narrow way and the 10 versions, five were without oil, and I gave an appeal, and I was shocked. I would say half the room raised their hand. I mean, there's 500 people there.

It's a big auditorium, and it's like, whoa, hold on. Wait a minute, this is a room full of Christians. I don't understand, I'm not saying that, but in my heart, I'm thinking, Lord, what in the world? This is amazing to me.

As I prayed, and there's a line of people, and I was talking to them, and every third person would say, we never hear anything like this. We never hear anything like this. We never hear anything like this.

Really, and you go to church, Baptist church, 150-year-old churches, all across the Bible Belt. I mean, the whole choir, three-quarters of the choir, boys, 12 and 14, raising, you want Christ? You're singing worship, and you want Christ? I left there, I was shocked. In the American church, see, nobody ever tells you that why we worship Christ, that we're sinners in need of a Savior, that God has come to redeem us, and you better be ready.

Like the 10 versions, five, we're not ready. It's not a pleasant thing when you're not ready for Christ. How do we get ready? You repent of your sin, you acknowledge Him.

Do you want to do that tonight? What? I mean, I was baffled, honestly. In the American Baptist churches, we don't hear that. What in the world do you hear? Encouragement, encouragement, that's all.

do this. I don't know, this stammering, stuttering guy who barely graduated high school, people made fun of, fat, stupid and silly.

And they just made, I can't do this without you. And God empowers that vessel. God says, good, now get out of the way.

Now that you're out of the way, give me the filling of the spirit with the power of the word and let me change the lies. That's all you have to do. Just be the empty vessel that proclaims the truth.

So that's why a lot of times I don't worry too much about what the perception is. Because if God's in it, I know that he's doing what he needs to be doing. Because that's all I'm supposed to do is tell you what's in here.

Not my opinion, not cursory study, but after spending time in prayer and humility and fasting and seeking God. And this is what the word of God says. Studying great theologians, here's what it says.

Here's what the word of God says and that's my job. And many times that falls under the category of preaching. So don't forget that.

When Jesus talks about ministry, sometimes that means to awaken and to challenge. After all, if we don't have the voices crying in the wilderness, who's going to cry out? If all we're doing is cuddling and coddling and encouraging, where's going to be the challenging and the convicting? Did Paul say go and hide the unfruitful works of darkness? Expose the unfruitful works of darkness. How do you expose the unfruitful works of darkness? You call them to the carpet.

You say this is wrong. Woe be to the people who call good evil and evil good. Woe be to that nation, woe be to that people, woe be to that church, woe be to that denomination who begins to call good evil and evil good.

And woe be to the church that scurries through a sermon, rushes through worship and tries to get to the nearest restaurant. God's not in that. Some of you I put on, I think I sent out an email.

If you're not on the email list, fill out the card and we can put you on that. But I sent a video where they're talking about the underground church in China. You know, six, seven hour prayer services and worship services where they're not in a hurry.

They're just so glad to be there. And they're hiding, they're hiding. Yet we come in here, comfortable chairs, air conditioning.

I'm not trying to make you feel condemned, I'm trying to make us all feel convicted. So the heart change when it begins serving others. It should be a privilege to serve people.

But really it becomes a burden, doesn't it? No? Robert Murray McShaney said, most of God's people are content to be saved from the hell that is without. They are not so anxious to be saved from the hell that is within. Wow.

You gotta read some of these guys. This guy died at age 29. He was one of Scotland's most anointed preachers.

If he would step to the pulpit, people would begin weeping. Oh, that's just emotionalism. No, it's called anointing.

It's called spending time in the prayer closet. So when you come up here, you're a vessel of the Lord. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hands of God because it can break and it can convict, it can challenge, it can change.

And that's what preaching does. It goes and deals with the hell that is within as well within the heart. Because don't forget, your heart and my heart is desperately wicked.

Oh, don't tell me that. That might be offensive. Well, Jeremiah said the heart is desperately wicked.

Who can know it? I, the Lord, I search your heart, I search your mind to give every man, every woman according to the ways, according to the doing. That hasn't changed. The heart left to itself would be, would be, it would ruin us.

Because desperate, look at all these shootings. Everybody's going, oh, why is he shooting? Well, you wonder why? It's not a gun problem. It's a sin problem.

Don't give me emails and say, I'm not advocating for the NRA here. All I'm saying is, it's not, I think Cain killed Abel with an AR-15, or was it a? Well, was it? A rock, a rock, a big rock, he hit him right on the top of the head. Sin problem, sin problem.

That's the only, so the next time they say this, it's a sin problem. All the guys, mass shootings, they're addicted to violent video games. Oh, wow, you wouldn't have never guessed that.

Sin problem, problem of the heart. The heart is desperately wicked. Who can know it? As some of you are sitting in the audience right now saying, my heart's wicked.

I've never repented and believed on Jesus Christ. Why in the world do you think I came in here today? To tell you that. Turn to him, stop playing games.

He knows you. See, we can come to church and have everybody fooled. I got my mom fooled, I got my dad fooled.

I got that guy fooled, I got that guy fooled. But God says, no, not me. Not me, you've not got me fooled.

My son died for you. Would you stop playing games and repent? But guess what? That only takes place often through preaching and calling it out. That's one of the great things about preaching.

A man who loves you the most is the man who tells you the most truth about yourself. Did you catch that? A person, let me put it in a word. A person who loves you the most is the person who tells you the most truth about yourself.

Good and bad, right and wrong. They tell you the truth because they love you. And think about it, we tell our kids, right? Listen, you're not gonna scream at your sister like that and call her names.

It's not gonna happen. I love you enough to tell you the truth and I love her. Same thing in marriage, right? Spouses are often the ones who tell us the truth.

Why, because they don't like us? Oh, maybe some cases. I see some facial expressions out there that aren't too encouraging, right? They tell you the truth. That's why my wife tells me sometimes, don't use those words in the pulpit.

You know, I've got a list now in my head. I gotta remember not to say. Sometime I'll tell you when they're not recording, okay? Not curse words, they're just words that sometimes slip through.

Okay, now let's get on the point of the sermon. I'm gonna go through quick. I know you guys are ready for the nearest restaurant.

So Matthew chapter nine, verse 37. But before I get to this, I wanna recommend a good book. I wanna do this more often because all the books I'm reading, I wanna just kind of give it to you as well.

It's called On Being a Servant of God. On Being a Servant of God by Warren Wiersbe. But it's not for the fainthearted.

If you're gonna be convicted, you will be convicted. It's about our attitude and how we're serving God and different things. It's in your bulletins.

Verse 37, then he said to his disciples, the harvest truly is plentiful, but the labors are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labors into the harvest. And we talked about this already, that the world is our mission field.

And think about this, send out labors into the harvest. Do you know that word labor? It's not a term of relaxation. Think of a labor, think of a day labor.

You call the day labor places, what do they call them, the labor ready? I need a day labor. You think that guy's just gonna be sitting, watching TV, eating grapes? Oh, this is a great job. I wish they'd hire me full time.

No, when I used to hire the day laborers in construction, I said, here's a hole I need dug four foot deep. I'll come back at lunch. Don't hit the gas line that's right there.

And you might wanna have a lot of water. Right here, it's gonna be here a while. Oh man, come on, it's what you paid to do.

Labor, you're gonna labor, it's hard. So when Jesus said, you're gonna go out and labor, it's gonna be hard. But people come in the church fed up on the word of God, they want everything to be easy.

I'm gonna pick and choose who I minister to. That's why people drop out of ministry all the time. It's getting hard.

Exactly, it's supposed to be hard. What about if I said, you know what, this is my last Saturday. I'm done with this.

Forget, this is too hard. What, why is everybody laughing? This is too hard, I'm tired of this. You couldn't pay me enough money to do this.

People are mean, people are nasty, they don't stay committed. I can't treat them the way they treat me. This is hard.

They're gossiping, they're saying this, I'm done with this. Ministry stinks. Exactly.

Your master made himself of no reputation, coming down from heaven, taking on the form of a man, a sinful man, and being found in the likeness of man, he humbled himself to the point of death, even death on a cross. You will not know the power of Christ in your life until you humble yourself and stop saying, I wanna be recognized. No, you need to start saying, I wanna be used.

There's a big difference. Everybody wants their name on the PowerPoint. But if you don't recognize them, I can't keep doing this, it's too hard.

We have enough people, we have enough worship people to last me the whole year. There's no lack of worship leaders or worship helpers. I get emails every month, people even out of state, here's my resume to lead worship here.

No, we're good, we're good, we're good. All the time, I can lead worship. We got a good worship, hey, you need work, we're good.

If I said, hey guys, I'm gone next Saturday, I need somebody to speak for me, there'd be a line up here. Half, 80% of them aren't called to do it, but they'd wanna do it anyway. There'd be a line.

Say, hey guys, we need some children's ministry helpers. Guess what? Well, hold on, what's the difference? What's the difference? We know what the difference is, don't we? I wanna be recognized, not I wanna be used. And Oswald Chambers in his book, Upmost For My Highest, said that God buries his men and women in the midst of paltry things.

No monuments are erected to them. They are in a place where they cannot be seen, and that's where they're used by God. See, too many times we're jockeying for position.

We want this, we want that. Look, we bring corporate America into church America. Church is not ran like a corporation.

In some areas, it is. I've got background in both, with budgeting and board allocated budgets and profit and loss statements. You gotta make sure you, you know, I got all that.

But the spiritual side is not ran like a corporation. You don't come here, it's all about me and climbing the corporate ladder. You actually come down off that ladder and humble yourself and serve others.

And many, I believe many people are irritated and moody and upset all the time because they're not serving God. You weren't meant to be fat on the word of God. All the, just give me more, give me more.

God says, no, you gotta move it out. You gotta move it out. This is how we measure success though, isn't it? This isn't working, I quit.

This isn't working, I quit. I'm glad Jesus didn't say that. Think about it, everybody betrayed him.

Everybody left him. Peter, what are you doing? No, he denies him. Judas betrays him.

The disciples flee. He's hanging on a cross for them. Glad he didn't say, oh, this is not working out.

I came to conquer Rome, not be in submission to Rome. I came to conquer those soldiers, not let them beat me. Powers in the submission of Christ to Christ.

Powers in submitting ourselves, humbling ourselves because the humbler you go, the more God exalts you. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. In due time, he will exalt you.

You exalt yourself and he will abase you. Abase, you know what that means? Put down at the uttermost parts of the lower earth and just stomp on it. He will abase you, he will crush you.

He will crumble you because you didn't humble yourself. And many times he does that to us to help us humble ourselves. Listen, I'm gonna bring you through hell.

I'm gonna get rid of everything you trusted in, all your gods, all your glory. And now will you serve me? Now will you humble yourself? Now will you cry out to me and give me everything? Oh, no, you still got some things you're hanging on to. Well, let me try to get rid of that and get rid of, now are you ready? No, not yet.

Well, now are you? No, not yet. We keep fighting God. He just says, listen, everything's mine already.

Just give it to me, hand over the reins and say, Lord, how can, that would be a wonderful thing if we say, God, however you want to use me, use me. However, and mean it. Because many people say it, oh, yeah, but I hope he doesn't put me in ushering cleaning up restrooms.

However you want to use me, as I sing amazing grace next Saturday. All right, worship, there's no problem up here. Everybody thinks this is an elevated position.

Actually, this is a servant's position. People don't realize that. Any pastor who's truly been called of God realizes this is not a glamorized position.

It's dying to self, it's crucifixion to the world. It's following guidelines in 1 Timothy 3, 10 things there. I can't be greedy for money.

I can't have a drink of alcohol. I can't have another woman in my life. I can't, well, all these things are good, but I can't, you know, all these things.

I can't be, I can't love herself. I can't be easily this. I can't be boastful.

All these things I got to keep working on. I got to have my house in order. And as soon as I don't, people want to tell me.

I've got all these things I've got to do. Why? Why? Because it's a servant leadership. We serve best by leading.

That's why we got to grace resources and feed the homeless. That's why I started to talk to homeless people once a week. That's why, because I got to lead by example.

These aren't glorified positions. Anytime you get in the ministry and think I've arrived, I made it, God says, oh Lord, I haven't called you. Yet they ran.

I haven't spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But had they truly stood in my counsel, had they truly stood in my counsel, they would have turned the entire nation back to me. The funny thing is if we said, listen, we've got a ministry opportunity.

We want you to be in charge of. We'd have that person that would stay for years. In charge of.

But we say, hey, we need you to serve in this area. It's kind of inconvenient, it's tough. I don't know, I don't like kids.

Really? So on that note, we do need a lot of helpers. Children's ministry, ushers, media, sound, we need helpers, people that want to help in this area. And guess what? You're not going to feel like it.

There's not a Saturday that goes by that I sometimes don't feel like coming here. Oh man, 2.30, I got to be there already? Can't we relax by the pool or in-law's house? No, no, got to be, but it's once you get there. I know I said this before, but it's going to sink in at some point.

It's once you go through it. The pain of discipline. See, the reward comes after the fact.

See, a laborer was paid before he did the work. No? I can make a political speech right now, but I'm not going to do that. Wait until October, November.

I'm just kidding. But anyway, a laborer was paid after his work. He had to go through the work.

Same thing with Christ. It's hard, yes, it's hard. That's why it's called ministry.

It's called serving. It's not easy. The joy comes later.

I have to say, listen, I'm going to serve in this area. It's hard, I don't like those little kids over there. I don't like the age of six and up.

I don't like, yeah, exactly, it's hard. It's hard, ministry is hard. It's not easy.

And here's one reason, here's a few reasons why people get themselves into the ministry, to prove that I'm spiritual or that I'm important. Oh, not a good idea. For validation, they want people to validate themselves, or they think it's a source of income.

They think it's an easy job, and so on. These aren't valid reasons. The true reason a person should be serving is saying, God, what do you want me to do? My life is yours.

And that would be a very healthy statement that some of you could make tonight. Say, Lord, what do you want me to do? He'll show you. Because when the desire meets an opportunity, an open door, that's where ministry happens.

You have the desire, and I just open the door. There's open doors. Children's ministry, media, sound, ushering, we need all those, the church is growing.

There's more people in the first service now than here. And we can't even start children's ministry for the first service. So we have 17, 18 kids in here, which is good.

I don't mind it. But we also want to have something available for people who want to drop their kids off and just worship God. A single mom coming and saying, I need somebody to teach my kids.

I need to just worship God. We want to be able to provide for that. And we can't because we don't have enough helpers.

So on one hand, this isn't, I didn't mean to tie all this in. It's not meant to make everybody feel guilty. All of us, all of us are susceptible to this, right? We want the comfortable route.

I mean, if the flesh was left in charge, it would ruin us. We would never go to work. We would never put our plate aside and not get seconds.

We would never, it would just be an ongoing parade of flesh, just feeding, feeding. So you've got to fight your flesh. I don't care if I don't feel like it.

I'm going to serve for the next six months. I'm going to serve for a year. And you make a commitment.

The enemy doesn't like you serving people because that's when you're filled with the spirit of God. I truly believe, I'm going to make a statement. I hope it's not too controversial.

But I truly believe that many people are not filled fully with the spirit of God, experiencing the power in their life because they're not serving people. There's no outlet. You can have a lot of inlet.

You've got the Greek in this ear. You got John MacArthur on that ear. You got this book and you got this.

You read the latest book and Francis Chen's book and this guy named Kyle Eidelman's book and all these people and people are reading, reading, reading, reading, reading, reading. Well, that's great. But guess what? You're missing the whole point of to go and disciple others.

That's another problem. I've got five or six people in this church that I need to put in with mentors and disciples. Older men, have anything to do in the evenings? I've got some guys.

No, no, too busy. Where does this come from? It comes from the selfish heart. Guess what? I have one too.

I sat in that pew four years ago at a different church. I didn't do much. I'm traveling speaking, that's what I do.

Can you help in children's ministry? No, I'm not good with kids. No, not gonna happen. Right? That's what, I know all the excuses out there.

I'm just not good with kids. Good, maybe God's telling you to be good with kids. I just don't like people greeting.

Good, that's probably where you need to be. You need to be, God gets us out of our comfort zone by ironing, sharpening iron. If you don't like to greet people, you're not a social person, guess what you should be? A greeter.

Well, then that's not my gifting. Listen, when it comes to serving God, sometimes your primary gifting isn't always gonna be your primary gifting. Step out, here's the secret.

Step out and serve, apply spiritual disciplines, obedience, worship the word, all the things we always talk about. Step out and serve and allow God to open the doors. See, he can't move a vessel that's standing still.

He moves a vessel that's moving, right? Can you drive a car with the key out and the engine off? Of course not, it has to be going down the street. And then guess what works real well? The steering wheel. So a lot of times we don't know what God wants us to do, so we stay in confusion forever.

We sit at home like, Lord, show me something. Show me, give me a letter in the mail, something. Give me a lightning bolt.

Lord, if an airplane flies by, maybe I'm supposed to be a flight attendant. Just show me something. And we live frustrated all week long, all month long, in many cases, years long, because you just don't step out and serve and let God, because see, when you humble yourself, then God will exalt you, then he'll direct you.

I've told you, before I cleaned up throw up in those bathrooms 14 years ago, there's an usher here. It was back when I was so on fire for God, I'd do anything for him, I didn't even know what Christian division was. Calvinism, Arminianism, Rapture, Premonition, Amelia, I didn't know about any of the debates.

I just want to serve God. And then all the debates come in, everybody wants to argue, oh, spirit-filled, spirit-led, don't use those words, giftless spirit, unrelenting, all these arguing, I just want to serve people. What happens is we come in wanting to argue more than we want to serve.

We want to debate and critique more than we just want to serve. Be careful, if you bite each other, you will devour each other, Galatians 1.5. If you bite and devour, we have to be careful in this area. And serving, serving removes all of that, because it's humbling ourselves.

It's very hard to remain prideful and arrogant when we're humbling ourselves and serving. Try it, we should do, somebody should set this up, I'm all game, we brought food over to Grace Resources some while back and fed a couple hundred people. Not, you know, the most interesting crowd.

You know, if I'm back there praying with them, bringing out coffee, they're ordering me around. Honestly, they're getting mad, like, go get me some more coffee, I need some sugar in my coffee. Okay, hold on, it's like, wow, my coffee's cold, go to the microwave, but serving, okay.

I left there, just filled with this, I felt so, you know, like, oh Lord, thank you so much for them humiliating me. You remember, right, they tell you to go do stuff. I mean, like, well, I'm a pastor, I don't do that stuff.

The flesh want to say, you go get your own coffee. But I'm serving them, and it begins to, you can't get mad, you don't want to argue. You're not debating the five points of Calvinism when you're serving on the battlefield.

You're not debating the gifts of the Spirit. Are they valid today or are they gone when you're fighting on the battlefield? You think soldiers in the battlefield against Satan are arguing over those things? Doctrine, yes, non-essentials, no. Big difference, big difference.

Let me close with this. Many times we'll pick and we'll choose who we want to minister to. Will we not? I'll minister to that person, that, but not that group or not that group.

We pick and we choose. And what happens is we usually take the road, less travel, the easy road, right? Well, I'll do ministry, let me do, let me do the baked goods ministry where I can make donuts and take it to people. Okay, you know, or let me, you know, stuff that we just, not hard, not difficult, but God sometimes wants to chip off those rough edges and put us in difficult areas of ministry so we grow.

How do we grow if we're not chiseled and shaped by God? You do not grow on your own. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but we grow through tribulations, through trials, through patience, through faith,

through perseverance. That's how we grow.

Christian character is not just born with it. It's manufactured through the furnace of affliction and serving. And I believe many, I believe that God wants to move in many of the lives in this room.

I know, because he did it in my own life, but it's not gonna happen until you step out and serve. Because, ah, now you've humbled yourself, now you're serving, now, I mean, Jesus Christ, he washed his disciples' feet. I get to that text, I go, oh, my, help me here.

Dirty feet walking in the desert, and Jesus Christ, they said, put a wrapped towel around him and got down and washed their feet. Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world? If that doesn't embarrass us, we're in trouble. That embarrasses me.

I've never done that to anybody. Now, I know some churches take it to where it's, you know, you gotta do it, it's in the Bible, and, you know, it's more of a submission thing, and somebody did it, great. But the whole point is, if Jesus Christ humbled himself to this, who are we to walk around and pick and choose? I'll do ministry here as long as it glorifies me, as long as I'm recognized, as long as it's all about me, as long as it fits in my schedule, as long as I don't have to devote too much time, too much money, too much energy, then I'll minister.

That's not ministry. That's not ministry, that's a social club. Ministry is laboring, it's hard.

I'm just shooting you straight. But it's the most rewarding thing you've ever done. Most rewarding thing by far.

I'll close with this, we talked about the power of Christ, the compassion of Christ, and the call of Christ, but I also want to throw this out there, the power of Christ to save. The power of Christ to save. Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Whoever believes on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Whoever returns to the Lord shall have that renewed fellowship again. See, some of you need to hear that as well.

Some of you have drifted from God, and he calls us back through his word, through the preaching of his word. He calls the prodigal son back home. Some of you, he's calling back home to renew and restore your relationship with him.

Some of you have never been saved before. Maybe you've been playing church. You've been kind of questioning the God thing, and that's okay.

We've all questioned the God thing many times when we were younger, some of us. But this is where the rubber meets the road, and the power of Christ to save. You'll never know that until you confess and repent of your sin and turn to him.

You have to remember something, too. The cross by itself did nothing. Think about it, it's not a blasphemous statement.

The cross by itself is just a bunch of wood nailed together. What happens if Peter goes on that cross? Nothing, right? James, nothing. Actually, some of them were hung on a cross upside down.

The power of the cross is who was on it. You realize that? The power of the cross, the power of the crucifixion is because Jesus Christ was on the cross, being shed, his body was being shed and broken for us. So the cross without Christ is pointless.

Ministry without Christ is pointless, and marriage without Christ is pointless, and life without Christ is pointless. That's where everything culminates, at this closing point. If Christ is not the center of your ministry, of your marriage, of your life, you're missing out.

And the call of Christ compels us, come back, come to me, put me back in the center. And that's a wonderful thing. Many times, it's not too late.

It's not too late for you to put him in the center of your life. Or if you've never embraced him before, it's never too late to repent and believe on the only name that saves. That's the power of the Christian faith, and that's the power of Christ.

And that's the power of ministry. Once you get involved in ministry, yes, it'll be hard, it'll be challenging. You're gonna have to fight like, oh, I don't know.

But once you take that step, and you stay committed, I've never seen Christ let a person down, ever. That name will not fail you. We don't fail Christ.

I mean, he doesn't fail us. Christ doesn't fail us, we fail him. I know it's hard, but it's true.

He doesn't fail us, he will not fail us. He will not fail you if you look to him.

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