

The Cry of the Prophets - a Call to Anguish

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman calls for a return to the anguish that drives deep prayer and revival in the church today.

Duration: 55:42

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6, Jeremiah 9:1

Topics: "Revival", "Anguish"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the urgent need for anguish in the church, drawing from the cries of the prophets and the deep emotional connection to God's heart. He argues that true revival and a powerful prayer life stem from a place of deep distress over sin and the state of the world, urging believers to embrace godly sorrow and seek a deeper relationship with God. Idleman highlights that without this anguish, the church risks becoming complacent and ineffective, losing sight of its mission to call people back to God. He calls for a return to fervent prayer and fasting, as well as a commitment to humility and a hunger for righteousness, to align with God's will and spark revival.

Transcript

Hope is yours to take. Peace is found in grace. The title was going to be The Cry of the Prophets.

There's something about travailing or persevering, about anguish and seeking the heart of God. There's something about travailing or persevering, about anguish and seeking the heart of God. But then I added a call to anguish, and I don't know how many of you have seen David Wilkerson's short clip.

If not, definitely YouTube it. It's about eight minutes. He talked about this issue as well, where there's a call to anguish.

And some of you might not really understand that in the church. The reason is, the church over the years has become so sugar-coated that we don't like the taste of meat. We like the sweet things and tell us, I just want to come in my sin and leave in my sin.

I just want to come and just be encouraged and never challenged. And there used to be, especially in the early church, a call to anguish. And the prophets, there would be a cry of the prophets.

And they would cry out for God's people because there's a healthy balance where we're encouraged. Anybody need encouragement today, or just me? So we need to be encouraged, and I found the Holy Spirit, even in conviction, encourages you. You can leave built up and edified, even though you just got

right hooked by the Word of God.

It's something, it's amazing, because that's what the role of the prophetic in the Old Testament would do, is it would hurt in order to help. He told Jeremiah, I'm calling you to go. You will pluck out what I tell you to pluck out.

You will root out. You will destroy. You will be like, your words fire in the people like chaff.

But then you will rebuild, and you will encourage. Without a call to anguish, you're not going to see God really move in revival. And that's been a theme of this church for a while.

You're not going to see God really break your heart for the things that break Him. You want a deep and emotional, emotional in a good way, a deep prayer life. It comes from anguish.

Filling what God fills, filling the heart of God. And this word anguish is interesting. It's extreme distress.

Intense mental and physical strain. Shane, I don't know if I like this topic so far. But just based on the definition, you might not.

But the deeper the brokenness, often the deeper the relationship with God. The deeper the anguish and filling the heart of God. And if you go and drive by abortion clinics, and you get that anguish, that little children are going to be killed in there today.

That anguish leads to a very deep, deep prayer life. It's really the way to know the heart of God. And I know if many of you have had that in your past, I want to encourage you.

You know, God knows. And that pain is still there. But let that pain drive you to the cross.

Because those who have been forgiven much, love much. Think about that. The pride arrogant man, he doesn't have a very deep relationship with God.

The prideful Christian, it's the person who's been broken and humbled. And they've anguished over their sin. And they've called out to God.

There's that deep, I don't like that, but that's just the way it is. That deeper, that pain. Ask a woman how she felt before she held the little baby.

Deep anguish. Pain. And that famous verse, when Zion travails, sons and daughters are born.

There's a travailing in the old church. Maybe 100 years ago, 200 years ago. And I don't know why, but I'm always drawn towards those books.

Whether it's Leonard Ravenhill or A.W. Tozer or the revivals of the past. There's a book out there, it's about this thick on all the revivals that occurred in Scotland in the last 300 years. I didn't know 80% of them.

It's actually the number one place for God reviving his church is actually in Scotland and Wales. I'm reading, and we were all night in travail holding on to the promises God gave us. And we would get there and we would be there in the morning in anguish and desperation for God to move in our city.

You just don't see that anymore. Unless I can get you in in an hour and five minutes and get you to the buffet line and have you feel comfortable. That's not church.

My heart has been so broken over when I used to travel and speak at churches. I mentioned before a mega church I spoke at and it was all just bells and whistles. I had my timer right here that told me I have exactly 30 minutes.

Actually, when I got there, it said cut down your message to 25, I think. And then the worship team had their three, I mean, it was down to the second. And it was just the anguish for what could be.

An hour and five minutes is our top time. We've got the parking lot. And I understand parking issues, but we need to start being more concerned with people than parking.

People experiencing the radical power of God. I don't know how much I should open up, but this morning I ran to Pastor Abram, too, in the hallway and we talked. It took a good two hours this morning to get my heart right.

Two hours. Bad moods, irritation. You think leading a church like this, there's no irritation? Somebody's upset every day.

Handling meetings, the negative emails, the stuff, the county, I mean, it's just, and it takes time. You can't hit 20 seconds on a microwave and expect to experience the power of God. And then there's this aspect of anguish.

The prophets had it. God told Isaiah, cry aloud and spare not. Cry aloud.

He was telling the people, he was telling Isaiah to go and tell the people, cry aloud and spare not. Lift up your voice like a quiet sparrow. Lift up your voice like a trumpet.

And then he said, go and tell Jacob her sins. Go and tell Israel her transgressions. Isaiah, I've called you for such a time as this.

I put the anguish of my heart into your heart to see how people have drifted. To see the families being destroyed and people walking away from the faith. So lift up your voice like a trumpet and plead with the people.

Fill my anguish, Isaiah. And it's, I mean, I could have took you to 10 other prophetic voices. There was always this called anguish.

Why do we think we can escape that today? Same church. Well, the Old Testament was in the church. But the same church, the same cry, the same call.

I am the same today, yesterday, and forevermore. My word does not change. Whatever I speak, I proclaim.

God says it will not return void unto me. What was true 10,000 or 6,000 years ago, depending on the age of the earth, right, for some of you. What was true then is true now.

Don't worry, I'll tell you my belief when we get into Genesis. Just as a little caveat there. And then what about the famous prophetic voice? The voice of one crying in the wilderness.

You should look up these words in, this would be the Greek or the Hebrew in the Old Testament. These words, the Hebrew language was poetic. It was, we just don't see that today.

Like in our vocabulary, we have one word for love. Love. They have quite a few.

Phileo and Agape and all these different things. And this word, the voice of one crying. It's not, he's in the corner crying.

It's a pling, it's an anguish. And you see that, you drive by even the schools sometimes I drive by. And I feel the anguish of what must go on in the classrooms sometimes.

What must go on in the homes of these kids? What must go on when they're wanting to pass legislation where you can change your sex without parental consent? May I be loud and clear that that is child abuse? That's exactly what, where's the anguish? Where's the anguish for that? Where's the anguish for the pornography that's ripping our families apart? The little girls that are being trafficked when they get, where's the anguish? Where's the pain? Because that will get you here for prayer. When I see lightly attended prayer meetings or worship mornings, it just tells me there's no anguish. If there were, you would set an alarm clock.

You would say, I've got to align with the heart of God. Now let me just encourage this church, I've never seen so many people hungry for God. When you have over 100 people at 6 a.m., there's a hunger there.

So don't let these words convict all of you, but let them convict some of you. Because you're contending for your children, but you never wept over them? Oh Shane, my son's a prodigal, he's into this, and why aren't you here? Have you fasted? Fasted, I get a headache. You know what my excuse was for years? I have low blood sugar.

Oh, borderline hypoglycemic, man, that was my excuse. Come to find out, I was addicted to sugar and caffeine. But there was no anguish.

Your carnal nature says, feed me so I can destroy you. And so fasting silences the voice of the flesh so I can hear the voice of the Spirit of God. Now how long to do it, what time to do it, you take that up with God.

I do have a book coming out, 40 Days to Reset Your Life, it'll be free to all of you, that I talk about this important topic. But just understand, understand that prayer has to be added to your arsenal. Do you know why that's so important? Because when you get into prayer and you get into God's Word, you begin to think like God.

You begin to see what's wrong, what's right. You begin to see where I'm off course, where I'm on course. You begin, your heart breaks for the things that breaks God's heart.

Did you know that Jesus was a prophetic voice? He would cry out as well. The famous verse, of course, is when he's riding into Jerusalem. And he actually sees, this is probably 33 AD.

He can tell that in 70 AD when Titus comes in and conquers Jerusalem and a million Jews are slaughtered, children dashed against a wall simply because they rejected their Messiah. Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Do you think there was any tears shed? Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem.

Folks, we've got to get back to that. We want God to revive America and wake us up. You've got to get back to a little bit of anguish.

A little bit of anguish. Now I'm going to be happy and joyful tomorrow, but give me a little bit of anguish today. There's got to be a balance of that.

Just like a diet, you eat just one thing, you're going to be very malnourished. But the same thing with the spiritual diet. The anguish for the things that hurt the heart of God.

And of course, one of my favorite, Jeremiah, he said, Oh my soul, my soul, my soul, my soul, I am pained in my very heart. I am pained in my heart. And the psalmist would say, I cry tears like a river.

These metaphors, these allegories that they would use sometimes to show anguish. My heart is like a flood that's been poured out. My bed is stained with the tears of the weeping prophets.

And there is this anguish. And you would line up now with the heart of God. And from that anguish now comes boldness.

Now comes assurance. Now you've held down, you've pulled down heaven. You've spent time at the altar.

Now you can go out in the prayer of the power of the Holy Spirit because of this anguish. I would say without that, without anguish, a person should not be a preacher. I'll go on record, tweet it out.

But Cheney's got a degree. He's got a couple degrees. Leonard Ravenhill said you can have 32 degrees and still be frozen.

But it's true. And David Wilkerson, who I mentioned earlier, God, this topic is just unbearable sometimes. If the news headlines don't give us anguish.

But see, people who have anguished over the things of God, they do things for God. Now I'm not talking about concern. Many of us are concerned.

But concern says, well, Sally, that's a concern. What should we do about it? I don't know. Let's go to Chick-fil-A.

But anguish says we're going to fast tonight. We're going to get up in the morning. We're going to seek the heart of God.

It's our only hope. It's our only hope. Do you think all of this out there is going to repair itself? David Wilkerson, who I mentioned earlier, said, When God determines to recover a ruined situation, He would find a man and baptize him in anguish.

I checked a lot of Scriptures, and that is true. When God would want to recover a ruined situation, He would find a man and baptize him in anguish. I mean, you could say that today.

When God would want to recover something that is ruined, He would baptize a man or a woman in anguish. That word baptized just means overwhelmed by the things that are on the heart of God. A deep prayer life comes from a place of anguish.

And most God-given passion comes from anguish. And one example of many is Jerusalem was in ruin by the time Nehemiah came on the scene. Nehemiah was a cupbearer.

Jerusalem was in ruin. And he didn't have the media like we do today. It's one reason I think we should limit it, because you don't need to know what's going on everywhere all the time.

We weren't designed to absorb that much depravity, and that much crime, and that much hatred. He said, When I heard that Jerusalem was in ruins, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned, and I fasted, and I prayed before the God of heaven.

And that's the part I wanted them to put up. And his anguish was evident to the king. And so the king said, or actually the king asked him, What's wrong? And he said, I said to the king, Let the king live forever, knowing that he could have lost his life to be in anguish, to be in pain in front of the king.

And he told the king, many of you have heard me quote this before, Why should not my face be sad when the city, the place of my father's graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire? In other words, Nehemiah is saying, Why should I not be sad when the place of my father's tombs lies in waste? Isn't that parallel a lot of what we're seeing today? Why shouldn't we be sad when we see what God built has come to this? But what God has built lays in ruins. There should be a righteous indignation for the things of God. Did you know that the courts used to have Ten Commandment monuments as well? You know they used to pray? John Jay was the first Supreme Court Justice of the United States of America.

He said, Unto him who is the author and finisher of our faith, I render sincere and humble blessings for the redemption through his son. The Supreme Court, they would actually, the Supreme Court is on record, record for saying, you can look, Google it, that this is a Christian nation back in the 1800s. Now, a nation can't be Christian, technically, right? But the foundational principles that it was built upon were of God's Word.

And of course, on this point, people come to me afterwards, Yeah, but Shane, what about slavery? Or did you know many, many founding fathers abhorred the practice and fought against it? I've got three pages in my book, One Nation Above God, if you'd like to test your theory that we are a racist country. Let me tell you, we are not. We are not.

Is there racism? Absolutely. But you're listening to a media that is fueling, fueling what is not going on in our nation. Is there issues? Yes.

Is there problems? But it's not a skin issue, it's a sin issue. We are, we are, if you take, if you take what God built, what God built, the rules of Harvard. Anybody think Harvard's kind of liberal nowadays? Harvard, when it was built, it said, let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life, which is to know God and Christ Jesus, which is the foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.

Harvard, Yale Universities, all these universities were to train ministers of the gospel. 26 of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were ministers of the gospel. We have drifted so far from God, there should be a holy indignation.

There should be a, there should be anguish of how we've mocked God, we've ridiculed him. We redefined marriage and we spit in his face. And at some point, the judgment of hand of God is going to fall on a disobedient and wayward nation.

Shame, shame, but those scriptures are for Israel. That doesn't apply to us any day, today. Are you sure? Because I don't want to test it.

I do not want to test the waters. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, it was written to Israel. God said Solomon, King Solomon, when I bring pestilence and famine, if my people who

are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways.

So you're telling me if America did that, there would not be a blessing shortly behind that? Again, we're not to focus on blessings. We're to focus on God and Christ alone, but there should be. When your kids can turn on ungodly perversion, where's the anguish? I mean, I remember I was little, no iPhones, nothing.

Leave it to Beaver and I love Lucy. But now you've got reality shows and programs that are a stench in the nostrils of a righteous God. You're calling good evil and evil good.

You are perverting and sexualizing the children. And why is there not a holy indignation? Why isn't there anguish and say, oh God, I'm going to find myself on that altar to protect my children because the enemy goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. And you've got to guard up the walls, build a wall.

Shelter your family, shelter your own personal heart. And it's done through anguish. I can tell there's not a lot of people in anguish because there's not a lot of people at prayer meetings.

A nation that honors God can acknowledge God. Acknowledgement is not establishment. The Establishment Clause, the government formed, the government cannot establish a national religion, but it can openly and unapologetically proclaim that God is the reason for our success.

And so in my heart anyway, there's an anguish. And God gave me this around 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 when I started to read about American history. And of course, the charge comes up, oh, what about slavery? Yeah, did you know that many of the founding fathers, I've got three pages of them.

In my book, One Nation Above God, they abhorred the practice and they fought for it diligently. Why don't we ever hear that? Because there's an agenda to divide. You don't hear about the Christian men and women who did mighty things for God.

Yes, religion was used to promote some very ungodly things, but you don't throw the baby out with the bathwater, thank God, or we wouldn't have any kids. Anguish. I've been in deep anguish about how far we've drifted.

Did you know that pornography would have never been allowed as freedom of speech, freedom of expression? Never. Because the founders said that with social responsibility, with freedom comes social responsibility. If it injures people, it should not be a freedom which is allowed.

And we've drifted so far, so far. Up is down and down is up. Woe be to those who call good evil and evil good.

And so he said, why should I not be sad when the place of my father's tombs lies in waste? Basically, the father's tombs, what he's saying there is, look what God has done. God pulled the people out of Egypt, pulled the people out, the Red Sea crowd, all those miracles, pulled them out, established them as the apple of his eye. And he said, when you were young, I birthed you, I nursed you, I cleaned you up, I saw you as an infant lying in your own blood.

God talks to Israel like this. And I cleaned you up and I wrapped you up and I raised you and you were this, but then you committed spiritual adultery and you rejected me. And now the nation lies in ruins.

And so he's lamenting over, look at my father's tombs, what was built? And then he says, and the gates have been destroyed by fire. Why is this significant? Gates represent security. Gates represent security, commerce, and justice.

They would meet in the open gates and justice would be served. Is anyone concerned about the direction of our justice system? Pack the Supreme Court so you can push a liberal agenda? I have a problem with that. There's anguish, there's anguish over that.

And we look around, the ruins are all around us. Sometimes I pulled statistics and quotes out of the sermon because it's already heavy enough. But the amount of child abuse that happened during COVID would shock you.

What parents did to their children to keep them quiet and not crying all the time and the addictions that have skyrocketed. It's lying in ruins. What's it going to take for us to wake up? China on our shores, Russia? If you don't think God doesn't use foreign nations to judge, you are gravely mistaken.

I'm praying against that. But the wake up call keeps getting louder. Anguish, desperation.

A guy I've talked to a few times, he's the CEO of Promise Keepers. And they rented, was it Dallas Stadium, I think. And now all kinds of stuff, all kinds of groups are coming against them because they have Christian values.

My goodness. You're offended, I'm offended that you don't appreciate God. We can't go off who's offended.

But there should be anguish in praying over these things. The ruins are all around us. Where is the desperation? Where is the anguish? You hear a lot about the woke church these days, right? If not, that's okay.

But the woke church won't wake anything up. The dead church won't revive anything. And the carnal church continues to lead millions down the broad road of destruction.

Because there's no anguish. There's no urgency. There's no fear of God in this place.

And the church is, in general, ordaining clergy that openly mock the will of God. That should get us in such a position of prayer that nothing, nothing can stop us because of the anguish that what lies in ruins. And I believe that's personally why there's not a lot of prayer warriors.

Have you heard that term before? Because that comes from anguish. Anguish. They fill the heart of God.

And not to alarm you, and I don't know what God will do in the future, but a real prayer meeting where there's prayer warriors and anguish, it's not your normal little, oh God, help us in this area. Sister Sarah's looking for a car. Jason's wanting that job to go through.

Little Sally needs that schooling. Which, all good things, right? I pray similar things. But when there's anguish, it's not fake, it's not fabricated.

You feel what breaks the heart of God. There's a travail, there's an anguish. So I'm going to challenge you, maybe you should put 6 a.m. on your calendar on Sundays.

I think we're still doing it on Wednesdays too as well. Anguish sparks revival. How often have I been saying revival is our only hope.

Awakening, a great spiritual awakening of God is our only hope. And we need to be careful because pastors have different callings. That's why they'll say, Shane, why don't you just teach through the Bible? Genesis through Revelation, like Pastor Chuck.

And I'll say, I can recommend a good Calvary Chapel, but that's not my calling. The same with what they would say. There's different callings, and God has given me this burden for a spiritual awakening.

That's our only hope. Apart from God reviving His church, and a revived church always goes back to His truth. Always goes back to His Word.

Always goes back to the fear of Lord. You won't see a genuine revival without the fear of God. It's amazing.

I would read these, and people would come into church, and the presence of God was so thick that they'd have to get on their knees right then and say, God, have mercy on me, a sinner. They would just come to the altar. A man by the name of Robert Murray McShaney, he died at age 29 in Scotland.

It was said when he would walk to the pulpit, the anointing was so strong that people would begin weeping. Guess what? He wasn't on social media. Three to six hours alone with the power and presence of God pulling down heaven, his soul anguished for what he was seeing in the taverns and in the families, and God literally baptized him in anguish and called him to preach the gospel.

So when he walked out, it was in the authority of God's Word and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. We don't see those things anymore, but revival will spark. I'm sorry, anguish will spark revival.

I was reading of one in 1930. It was a revival in a school in India. It was a school for missionaries, and it's all documented.

It's an amazing account. There was a remarkable movement of the Spirit. What was the explanation for the sudden movement? It was afterwards discovered three boys under the age of 12 had been going out early in the morning to the edge of the jungle to pray in such anguish.

You don't think God hears their prayers? With the lips of youth of the kids, you have perfect praise. They had prevailed with God, and he answered by fire. There was anguish.

The Hebrides Revival of 1949. One night, God gave one of the sisters a vision in which she saw the churches crowded with young people, and I believe one was blind and another one was hunched over and bedridden, and they're in their 80s or so, and they've been praying for God to awaken this church. That's all you need.

God bless you is the majority. Oh, if we could just get 300 people together. If we could get, if we could get 30,000 in the stadium, God might tell Gideon to bring it down to 300.

And so they said, we have this dream, this vision in which the churches were crowded with young people, and I believe this is coming to our parish. At that time, though, there was not a single young person attending public worship, and these churches were little. Did you know the average church in America is about 80 people? The average church in America.

And back in the 1800s or so, it was even less than that. They just had little parishes, 30, 40, 50 people on the outskirts of town, and there was not a single young person attending public worship, a fact which cannot be disputed. Sending for the minister, I think it was Duncan Campbell, I'm not sure.

She told him her story, and he took her message as a word from God to his heart. Turning to her, he said, well, what do you think we should do? She said, give yourself to prayer. Give yourself to waiting upon God.

Get your elders and your deacons together and spend at least two nights a week waiting upon God in prayer. If you do that at your end, we will do this at our end. There was anguish, and we will pray until two in the morning.

There's an anguish, there's a desperation, and the New Hebrews Revivals, and it's something they still speak about today because the power of God was so evident that people would go in their fields and in their homes, and the presence and atmosphere of God was so tangible that it could not be mistaken. People would turn from their sin and turn to God. Oh, it's such a weighty topic.

You don't know, but I've been praying under my breath. Lord, help me keep it together. Crying is not manly.

That's how I was raised, weren't you? For those of you who are new, my dad would say that all the time. Boy, don't cry. But Dad, I've got a big gash in my head.

Boy, you don't cry. And men coming to worship, they're like dead men. You know what the reason is? I'm just not emotional.

Well, you express anger real well. You love your sin. You get excited about sin.

I'm just not emotional is an excuse. Anyone heard of Oswald Chambers? His famous book. What's the name of that again? Whoa.

One. Oh, my utmost for my highest. Yeah, my utmost for his highest.

Thank you. But did you know that he was dead inside? As I believe he was teaching at the Bible college. He was in such anguish.

Here's his word again. Over the barrenness of my own soul. He said, God used me during those years, but I had no conscience communion with him.

The Bible and many of you can relate to this. I know it because I could have. The Bible was the dullest, most uninteresting book in existence.

He was straight as a gun barrel, but just as empty. A few years later, he wrote this. If the four previous years had been hell on earth, these five years have been truly heaven on earth.

Glory be to God. The last aching abyss of the human heart is filled to overflowing with the love of God. See, without anguish, you're not going to receive that mighty feeling of the Holy Spirit because that anguish is really often a reflection of brokenness and humility.

And from that, God will begin to fill you. God put a round in Oswald's chamber and pulled the trigger. Heaven was rent and the downpour came to his parched soul.

There was anguish. It's okay, we see it throughout the Bible. You know the story of Leah and Rachel? Rachel, yeah.

And Leah was having all the kids and Rachel wasn't. She cried out to God in anguish. Give me a child lest I die.

Even Paul said, he said, I would be accursed for the children of Israel's sake away from Christ if they would be saved. See, there was an anguish. There's an anguish.

And look what's going on in our nation or the church. Where's the anguish? It was said of John Knox in Scotland. He would cry out to God, Oh God, would you give me Scotland for the cause of Christ or I shall perish.

There's the anguish. And from that anguish, you're gonna do things. From that anguish, you're gonna restore your marriage.

From that anguish, you're gonna pull down heaven. You're gonna see God answering prayers because now your heart's aligning with the will of God. You're not over here praying amiss all these things on selfish pleasures or to go get someone or bitterness or anger or frustration or complacency or modern day Phariseeism or pride and arrogance.

You're praying from a broken heart of anguish and God hears those prayers because they're prayers of His. They're prayers of His. And now some of you might be asking, okay, how do I, how to recover this anguish? How do I get this heart, Shane? Well, I will tell you, none of this is going to be new, but we need a reminder.

Number one, you need to embrace, embrace godly sorrow. Think about this. When was the last time you wept over the condition of our nation, the church and the family? Now, you can't go home and make this up.

Ryan, come on. I don't want, like A.W. Tozer used to say, don't come up here and cry about it, go home and live it out. And there can be a fakeness and a phoniness.

We don't want any of that, but when was the last time that you would meditate on how far we've drifted? Meditate on God's word. And I don't want to touch base on this too much, but I did last week. Without a shadow of a doubt, the men who are never at this altar, the men who are never at prayer meetings, the men who are never broken before God, are not men who are shedding a tear.

There's not an anguish for anything. There's a lot of arrogance, wrong A, but not a lot of anguish, because that anguish will drive you to the altar. And we pray for the kids that are cutting, we pray for the kids with suicidal thoughts.

Do you realize the enemy is after your family? If that doesn't produce anguish. But what has happened over the years is we come to church and we can mark it off our calendar. It's not a checklist, it's a battlefield.

And there has to be a godly sorrow. And when you begin to immerse your mind in the word of God, see, that's where it comes from. You can't just go, okay, I'm going to do a chainsaw.

Okay, okay, okay, oh, let me be sorry. Let me be sorry. What's on Netflix? Let me be sorry.

What's on Vudu? And Amazon Prime? What's on social media? Okay, but it's not happening, what's not happening? Why is it not happening? Because you have to immerse your mind into the word of God. And then what happens? Your thoughts literally change. You begin to see the heart of God.

You begin to see the heart of God for people. You begin to see how far people have drifted from that holy standard. And that begins to, there's now a burden on your heart.

And there's an anguish. And you look in the mirror. And that anguish begins to drive you closer to God.

Because now your thoughts align with his thoughts. God says, it's not my desire that the wicked should perish. And you read about the broad road that leads to destruction.

And your heart becomes, how many people do we know on the broad road to destruction? All of us know quite a few people. How many of us know kids or your grandkids that are at that pilgrim's progress crossing and not sure if they want to take that broad road? If I knew that, I would fast and I would get on my knees before almighty God and I would call down heaven. I was going to say this to the end, but it fits right here.

Set aside time to fast and pray. Set aside time to fast and pray. Two things we don't like to do the most.

We don't want to dethrone King's stomach and we don't want to ruin our schedule. Decades ago, Gordon Cove, he challenged his readers when he wrote this. You ready? Sit down, buckle up and hold on.

You might not be able to handle this one, but it's true. Gordon Cove, he was on the mission field. Powerfully used of God.

He challenged his readers when he wrote. He wrote, not me, even though I agree with him. You have not sought the Lord with your whole heart until you have tried a protracted season of prayer and fasting.

You know why that's true? Because the word of God is crystal clear on the need to fast. Not to twist God's arm. Not to gain merit or favor.

Jesus didn't say, if you sin and when you fast. Or did he say that? He did. But we put it the other way.

When you sin and if you fast. He said, when you give, when you pray, when you fast. It's a denying of the fleshly appetites because you want a greater appetite that being for God.

Nehemiah fasted. Esther fasted. Daniel fasted.

Elijah fasted. Moses fasted. Want me to keep going? Convicted? Jesus fasted.

And he came out of the desert in the power of the Holy Spirit. Here's the point I wanted to get to. Have you heard of Neil T. Anderson? He's written books on the bondage breaker and things like that.

He asked a high priest of Satanism this question. Who came to know the Lord? Six months later at his church, he gave his testimony. And Neil T. Anderson asked him this question.

Based on your experience of the other side, what is the Christian's best line of defense? The Bible app on your phone? Nope. He said prayer. And when you pray, mean it.

Fervent prayer stops Satan's activity like nothing else. But the problem with prayer is it's so commonly used. We don't realize that it pulls down heaven.

Your weapons of your warfare are not carnal. They are mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds, casting down high things, imaginations, thoughts, and bringing those thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The weapons of your warfare are not carnal.

Through prayer and fasting, that's how you fight this battle. So if we think coming here, listening to a sermon, and watching some lines in the screen, if we think that is going to pull down heaven, if we think that is going to stop Satan's plans, now, it's not a bad idea, but that should just be fueling the pump, priming the pump for more of God. Also, to get this heart of anguish, recommit your life to God.

Zechariah 1.3 says, Therefore, tell the people. I don't know why, maybe it's me, but when God tells a prophetic voice, a prophet often, go tell my people this. The God of the universe is speaking to us through his word, tell the people this.

This is what the Lord Almighty says, return to me, declares the Lord, and I will return to you. And you know what happens when you return? There's an anguish in a good way. There's tears of joy.

There's anguish because your heart breaks for how distant you've been. And that anguish begins to drive you to prayer, drive you to worship. It's total abandonment.

Total abandonment. And we bought into the lie that partial obedience is good with God. Have surrender.

Jesus said, pick up your cross, follow me on Mondays and Fridays. Die to self. And it's hard.

I've not mastered it. I have to die to self every day until I leave this earth. I often feel I don't measure up.

I often feel I could pray more. But see, that's good because that desire keeps the fire lit. You don't beat yourself up with it, but you allow that to be motivation.

And this next one is absolutely important. I talked about last week, listened to last week's message, but humble yourself. Humble yourself.

In Isaiah 58, it's an amazing passage. They were actually fasting, and God said, I don't even hear your prayers. Wait a minute.

I thought fasting. No, no, no, no, no. Fasting and prayer, humility, the combination there.

Why? Because the people had a critical, harsh heart that needed to be crushed under the power of the cross. And then finally, there must be a continual hunger and thirst for God. Matthew 5 tells us that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled.

And there has to be something inside of you that says, God, I am dry, I am parched, and I need you to rain down living water on my soul. I'm in anguish over not having more of you. And that changes the way you live.

Does it not? I hope so. It changes the way we live. And all of these things, desperate times call for desperate measures.

Desperate times call for desperate measures. God's word is clear. If you seek me, you will find me.

If you hunger and thirst, you will be filled. You will be satisfied. And then finally, as a closing thought, of course, I want to make sure I don't skip over this, but anguish over sin leads to salvation.

Anguish over sin. Any of you ever watch Ray Comfort's videos? That's why he's so effective with things like, Such is the Way of the Master. And they used to do that, many sermons in the past.

But we've got away from that, too. We've got away from all these things. Let's remove the foundation and see if the building still stands.

And that's why it's okay to tell people about the bad news. But many times you hear these guys on TV or video, it's all the good news. Well, sure, I can accept Jesus.

Why, though? What's the big deal? Well, I don't know. I don't want to upset you. But the Bible says that we are under the wrath and condemnation of God.

We are living our life under the wrath and condemnation of God. And once we embrace Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross, that's the only hope for redemption. And you begin to see your sin in light of a Savior.

You begin to see that my sin put Him on that cross as well. You begin to see I'm wretched and poor and blind and miserable without Christ. And that anguish over sin leads to salvation.

You cling on to Christ. The old pastors and preachers used to preach, hell hot and heaven sweet. They would show you both sides of the coin.

They would say, wouldn't you turn from the wrath that is to come? As a matter of fact, when Spurgeon was saved on a snowy night as a teenager, the man looked at him and said, young man, young man, turn from the wrath that is to come. And Spurgeon was saved that night because unless we wake people up, they don't understand the magnitude and the gravity of their sin. Listen, this is Bible believing, fundamental preaching.

The wages of sin is death. Turn from the wrath that is to come. Whitefield would weep.

Wesley would weep. Preachers of the past would weep over the condition of the people because you're telling them the truth. It's hard to hear, but don't you want to tell your kids, listen, you are lost without God almighty.

I don't want to paint your best life now picture. Choose Jesus if you want. Try him out.

You tell them they're lost without Christ. Jesus did. Do not fear man who can kill your body, but fear God who can cast both body and soul in hell.

He talked more about hell than heaven. It's a separation from God almighty. That's a pillar of the Christian faith.

The cross, sin, redemption, hell, virgin, I mean you've got the inerrancy of scripture. These are foundations. And once we begin to remove the foundation, let's get rid of absolute truth.

That's pretty offensive, right? Let's become the woke church and just relate to everyone and just remove that pillar. Remove the pillar of Jesus is the only way. That's pretty narrow, Shane.

And you start to remove all these. Let's not talk about sin. Let's not talk about repentance.

Let's not talk about judgment. You just mentioned hell. Oh, you're going to lose half your audience.

And you remove these foundational, you remove them. And there's nothing left to stand on except the voice of a man without an anointing from God. And it falls on deaf ears.

And nobody is changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because the power of the Spirit convicts so much that people every single Sunday I know leave here upset. I guarantee it.

And I hear from some of them. My husband said he's never coming back. And he often does eventually later.

There's a young lady who sits here sometimes. She was into New Age and Satanism, I believe. And she hated it, hated me.

Because the Word of God is like the sun. It'll either harden the clay or it'll melt the wax. If you come in here haughty and boastful and arrogant, it'll become more hard and rigid.

But if you melt under the power of God's Spirit convicting you, you will see radical change. Three pastors in Canada have been arrested for keeping their churches open during the pandemic. Oops.

Sorry. Hey, let's edit that one out of it. Just kidding.

Come on, there's a lot. Things are legitimate, but there's a lot of shenanigans. A lot of shenanigans.

You can leave an abortion clinic open and liquor stores and I've got to close down? I don't think so. We need those bold leaders again. I'm tired of lukewarm, passive men that do nothing.

You're sitting here addicted to porn and you love your Facebook and you love your NFL. Why don't you get passionate for God and wake up? Your family's going to hell and you don't care. Wake up.

I can tell by your face you're not happy with me, but I'm here to wake you up. I don't care what your opinion is of me. I honestly do not care, but I care what God thinks.

And Jesus, of course, cried out in deep anguish on the cross. He cried out on the cross, Father, Father, all for us. So I want to challenge you this morning to make that decision.

Listen, I've been in church long enough to know half the church is playing church. Not everyone that comes in here has repented of their sin and bowed their knee to the Lord Jesus Christ and be crystal clear that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord. That's why you can't pray in his name.

You can go online and see city council meetings where they'll have a Satanist pray. It's embarrassing. But you pray in Jesus' name, they're going to petition you.

There's power that shakes the heavenly realm. Even the demons believe and tremble at the name of Jesus Christ. When you come walking in a place and say, Jesus is my Lord and my Savior.

I will not let the enemy destroy me. He doesn't know what to do with that. And you begin to pray, you pull down heaven.

A quote from Charles Spurgeon. He said, sometimes Satan whispers or he tells me, you're unworthy, you're unworthy. He says, well, it doesn't bother me because I've always been unworthy.

Who's worthy of his grace? Who's worthy of the cross? Our sin put Jesus Christ on the cross. It's been said many times at Easter that the nails held him there. I could call down ten legions of angels, Jesus said.

I just speak the word and my Father listens. But he hung there and died because of the unworthiness. And now we can stand before God worthy.

And that verse that is just so powerful. Even while I was a sinner. Even while I was caught in sin.

Even while I was shaking my fist at God. Christ died for me.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31775.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/the-cry-of-the-prophets-a-call-to-anguish/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net