

When Experience Meets Scripture (Video)

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and experiencing the gifts of the Spirit. It addresses the division in the church regarding the continuation of these gifts, highlighting the need for a genuine encounter with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit to validate scripture. The sermon challenges believers to seek a deeper relationship with God, to return to their first love, and to be open, teachable, and willing to be filled with the Spirit.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:1, Matthew 5:6, Jeremiah 29:13, Acts 2:38, James 4:8, Revelation 2:4

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Gifts"

Description

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Transcript

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit. And I'm gonna be in teaching mode for the next week or two, back to teaching versus preaching. Sometimes they're interwoven and sometimes that happens.

But I think this is such an important topic. And the title is, When Experience Meets Scripture. When Experience Meets Scripture.

So this whole division in the church, many of you aren't aware of, I'm not gonna really talk too much about that, but there's a division where some believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, at least they would call them the sign gifts or the miraculous gifts, have ceased, where others believe that they have continued. And when your experience lines up with scripture, it's hard to talk you out of that. So when you experience the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and you see his gifts being revealed, yes, there's counterfeits, but there's also original.

When you experience that, it helps to validate scripture. And what we teach here is we don't interpret scripture based on our experience, amen? In other words, hey, I've experienced this, so let me look at the Bible through the lens of my experience or we would be in trouble. We interpret our experience through the lens of scripture.

So if what we're experiencing lines up with the scripture, then you're in a pretty good spot. There's no way to be led astray if what you're experiencing through God lines up with scripture. For example, many of you don't know this, but because the ministry is out there, not everybody's a fan of emotional worship.

Not everybody's a fan of, what's this? Are they crying? Did they sing that line twice? That's repetitive, that's brainwashing. No, it's worship. I might sing, holy, holy, holy is our God for five minutes in my room.

I'm not being brainwashed, I'm being transformed by the renewing of my mind. And so people who haven't experienced the power of God have a problem with emotional worship. Now, emotional worship by itself isn't good.

I mean, emotionalism and ah, just getting caught up but you have no character, that's not good either. But there's nothing wrong when a heart is engaged to express that and to be, I mean, there's a Laker game tonight, there's gonna be people excited. LeBron, did you see that? And then everybody's, what did they, why, they're expressing how they feel.

So see, worship can express whether a person's at the altar broken and repent, whether a person is joy-filled because they've, I don't know if you've ever been delivered from something, but you might get a little excited. You might wanna worship. And so often they'll tie in emotional worship, the Holy Spirit, and all these things together because it's the Holy Spirit that allows us to worship God from the depths of our being.

That's why the Bible says, deep calling unto deep. Our, the Holy Spirit cries, Abba, Father. Not get away from me, Father.

We have to wonder what spirit is influencing us if we lack that heart for worship. Now, I know there's preference. Don't get me wrong, I actually did a YouTube clip the other day, you can find it on YouTube.

I'm gonna share it here in Facebook pretty soon. But talking about that, and preference plays a role. I mean, obviously, you're not gonna worship the way, depending on your age, for sure, you're gonna, you are transformed by the hymns and the organ.

And that is good, that's God-given, that's preference. How somebody else, I can still remember the song when I came back to the Lord, Nicole C. Mullins, My Redeemer Lives, my, oh man, can I sing that song? And other people are like, hmm, I don't really do, that doesn't do it for me. Or sometimes people send me, let's say Keith Green on YouTube, I'm like, hmm, man, I read his biography, I love that guy, his heart, he was powerfully used of God.

But I just can't, it just doesn't do anything for me, I guess, because see, that's just preference. There's nothing wrong with that. And as I share it on the YouTube clip, and I'll share it with you, I can still remember some of the best times I've ever had, way up in the high Sierra mountains, with an eight track.

And my mom would put in, John Denver. Thank God I'm a country boy, I got cakes on the griddle, life ain't nothing but a funny, funny riddle. Thank God I'm a country boy.

See, I still remember that, it's preference, I love that. Because it was time with my dad and my mom, and little and growing up, see how these things play a role. So half of our worship wars are simply over preference.

Why do you guys do it that way? Well, because that's how God changed me. Why do you do it that way? Because that's how God changed you. And there's nothing wrong with preference.

But then it gets down to different things, and lyrics, and theology, and different things, which this isn't a topic about worship, unless you want me to change gears. It's more of a acknowledgement of when the Holy Spirit changes your heart, that you want to worship. And the topics that are coming up are miracles, healings, tongues, and discerning of spirits.

How are you gonna try to get through that today? Well, I don't know if I am. This will be part two probably, I'm gonna try to get through it, we'll see what God wants to do. But 1 Corinthians 12, let's just start where the Bible starts.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, and yes, I did talk about this already, but it's been so long, many people have forgotten where we were, and they didn't, as many of you are new, some of you are not here this morning. Now concerning spiritual gifts. So what's happening is the church in Corinth, like any healthy church, any healthy church that's having a move of God's spirit, you've gotta put some corrals around it, you've gotta put some boundaries, you've gotta put some rules, that's what Paul's doing.

Do you have to put rules around your children? When they're awake? When they're sleeping, they're fine. So when a sleeping church is asleep, they don't need these rules. But when there's a church that is alive, yes, that convicts people, trust me, I'll just get emails just on that one alone.

But when a church is alive, there's boundaries, because immaturity comes in. When I was filled with God's spirit 20 years ago, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and I was an immature believer, I didn't even know what a lot of the division was, I didn't know that people were upset at these issues, and until you start, isn't it interesting though, you first love the Lord, you're telling everybody, you know, I'm like, what church are you with? What denomination are you with? Well, don't you know that doesn't happen anymore? I'm like, well, I'm just reading the Bible. Something that's interesting, if you look at many underground churches, or the church in the Middle East, China, when they come to know the Lord, they read the Bible, they actually believe that you could pray for somebody, and they would be raised from the dead.

They actually believe that a person could be healed. Because they read it, they believe it. Now in America, we put so many theological arguments around the New Testament, that well, why this doesn't happen, what this can mean, I'm not sure, I don't know, we don't really see that anymore, we don't need that, we have the word now.

We have to be careful, because I think we should read the New Testament as children. If you just had the Bible, and you're on an island, you would not come up with some of the stuff we come up with today. Just, where do you come up with this? This piece comes together, and this piece comes together, and this puzzle, and like, well, what does the Bible say? God is sovereign, man must repent and believe.

For example, on the issue of election, or the gifts of the Spirit, Paul spends a whole chapter explaining it here, then he spends a whole chapter, chapter 13 on love, and love will, gifts will eventually leave when Jesus is here, but the love will never leave, and then he spends a whole chapter in 14 on how to use the gift of tongues and compare to prophecy. So verse, chapter 12, now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant, meaning, I don't want you to be unaware of what's happening. I don't want you to not understand the spiritual gifts.

And ignorant is basically ignorant, in the Greek language, or the word, if you break it down, means not knowing something, I'm not aware of something. So he's saying, I don't want you to be not aware of what the Holy Spirit is doing, you know that you were Gentiles, and you were carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. So they were Gentiles, and they were carried away to whatever they were led.

Wasn't that you, if you remember, in the world? Boy, I was at the bar scene, and I was here, I was at this thing, I was wherever, the gluttony, and barbecues, and beer, and alcohol, and I was just being led away by every belief. I think God's this, no, I think he's this. I thought God was whatever I thought my lifestyle would accept, or support.

That's why you're seeing a big move in our country, where people who are perverting the grace of God, try to redefine his scripture to fit their lifestyle, because they're tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, and they're also being led astray by their flesh. So therefore, I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed. And no one can say that Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit, fruit inspectors.

Now, commentators are divided, if you just read the Bible, it sounds to me like they were concerned that they were maybe speaking tongues, maybe exercising gifts, and they were concerned that maybe this wasn't of God. So God is saying here, listen, I make known to you, anyone speaking by the Spirit of God, if he's praising God, if he's lifting up God, Christ, and exalting Christ, and if there's fruit there, and if a person experiences the powerful move of the Spirit, and they're saying that Jesus is Lord, nobody can say that except through the Spirit of God. Do you know that most, I mean, I guess I should say, all cults or false religions will deny the deity of Christ? Just try asking a Jehovah Witness, is Jesus Lord? No, no, no, no, not created being, is he Lord? Is he the Lord of your life? This shocked me, I had some over a couple months ago, I love the guys who have a cell phone number, and he said, we're gonna have Bible studies, but he never called me back.

Ah, where's it going with this? Oh, and I said, okay, can we at least open and pray, prayer? Well, no, we don't pray to Jesus. Oh, okay. And you ask other, ask Mormons, again, I'm not poking, I'm just telling you what they believe.

I don't know why people get upset at this, if they believe it, they believe it, they shouldn't be upset, I'm not upset at what I believe. But they say, no, Jesus isn't God, he is the God, the God died for you. You ask any religion, well, he's a good teacher, he was a good prophet, even Islam will acknowledge that he is a prophet.

But when it comes to the deity, see, only God could die for you, a created being's gonna die for you, God shed his blood on the cross on Calvary, and it's that perfect, sinless, spotless lamb, the holy, righteous blood that makes atonement for the sins of the people. Only God could accomplish that, that's why it's amazing grace, how sweet the, oh, I might turn to preaching mode, I'm getting back to teaching. Man, there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit.

So in other words, there's different gifts, but it's the same spirit, is there not? People have different gifts. There's people I know right now, we're looking at the church, they would be great at administration, or they would be great at helps, or there's certain people I call, if somebody needs encouragement, I'll call them and say, can you encourage someone? But that person I call to tell them and encourage with them, I'm not gonna let them balance a checkbook, it'll be out of funds by next month, because they wanna help, they wanna help, they wanna help, they wanna help. So these different gifts in the body of Christ, we come

together, it's the same God.

There are differences of ministries, but it's the same Lord. That is so important, guys, there's so much division in the church. I mean, you probably don't see it the same level I do, but there are people that will not even come to this church because of the songs we play, or because I believe in the gifts of the spirit.

I remember we had a couple guys a couple years ago that walked in, heard that, walked out. Oh, it's one of those churches. Well, it's just what the Bible says, I don't know what to tell you.

See, I believe there's the body of Christ is a lot broader than most people think. Now, I'm not talking about accepting false doctrine, I'm not talking about these different things, but for example, the guest speaker next Sunday, I've already got emails from people warning me, he's part of the NAR, he's part of the hyper charismatic, he says, no, he's not, I know him, I've known him for years, he doesn't believe any of that baloney. But because we get so concerned, and what I've noticed, people send me YouTube videos, watch this YouTube video, and I watch them like, that guy's a Pharisee, I don't even know if that guy's safe, stop watching YouTube videos, stop watching conspiracy theories, just stop it, right? If I watch enough YouTube videos, I'll think the earth is flat, that George Bush took down the Twin Towers, that there's chemtrails, all these things in the sky are chemtrails, and it's all toxic chemicals for the state of California trying to kill me.

Now, some of that might be true in there, I don't know, but I trust in God. If you think those are chemtrails, then why aren't you fasting because you should be detoxing. I still don't know how NASA doctored all those round world photos.

But I just, but guys, that's my point is there's, if anybody gets mad at me for this, I'm sorry, I apologize up front. But there's so much, people watch YouTube, and they get the videos, or they read this article, a lot of the things you'll read aren't even from people who are saved. They're not even from people filled with the spirit of God.

Did you know, you many of you know George Soros, the guy who funds a lot of the, yeah, not good stuff. They're planting certain Christians, into organizations to write articles. Do you think the thing that Christianity today did against our president, do you think that was just coincidence? I mean, there's plants going into these organizations trying to uproot the United States of America and Christianity, so don't believe everything you read.

Check it by the word of God. These groups are so much bigger than what we really acknowledge. Charismatics won't hang out with conservatives, and conservatives won't hang out with charismatics, and then there's people caught in the middle because you don't believe quite like I do.

And we have to just get back to this, do you believe in the essentials of the Christian faith, and understand that there are different ministries, but it's the same Lord, different activities, but it's the same God who works in them all. So verse seven, but the manifestation of the spirit, the manifestation of the spirit. Okay, don't worry, that's not a weird word.

Manifestation means reveal, revealing. The Holy Spirit reveals these gifts for the profit of all. Isn't that interesting? The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not for us to just be fed, and be fed, and be fed, they're actually for us to bless others, is it not? Did God give me the gift to preach for myself? Did He give you your gift for yourself? It's actually to bless other people, and for one is given the word of wisdom through the spirit.

Now, I'm not gonna talk about these again, because you can go back and listen to the message I did on these, but to one is given a word of wisdom through, a word of wisdom through the spirit. So somebody has, God put something on their heart, and says, listen, I need to share this with you, and it usually has to do with wisdom, hello? What is wise? A wise decision, probably, have you, hey, I don't know if you consider this, God really put on my heart, and it really helps a person make a decision. But Shane, we have the word, yes we do, but sometimes the Holy Spirit wants to reveal something to us outside of the word, as long as it lines up with the word, correct? I've shared this before, and I hate to keep using the same examples, but before I started pastoring, nobody would ever, never said, have you considered to be a pastor? I never heard that.

But then the last couple months before we decided to plant the church, everybody asked me that, and I've been praying for direction, God, I need confirmation, I need, you know why I like the word of wisdom, or word of knowledge, because I trust God, I don't trust me. So I can read the Bible, and like, God, I feel you put this in my heart, but I don't know if this is you. This just might be a good idea.

I need confirmation, I need to know, I need to hear from you, and God uses these gifts of the spirit to build up and edify the body of Christ. So one is given a word of, wouldn't that be so cool if somebody came up to you, and you know, there's an environment, actually this morning at 6 a.m., I guess I should tell you about that a little bit, the sound system didn't work, so we didn't have worship, we had an hour and a half prayer meeting. It was incredible, and people sang, we're at the altar, it was really, really moving.

About 70 people were here, but that's the environment where you allow God's spirit to speak to people. But if you were going through a situation, and you didn't know what to do, and you're just praying, you're seeking God, you come to church, and somebody runs up to you and says, hey, you've been on my heart all week. I don't know why, but I feel God just wants me to tell you, don't give up, just keep moving forward, despite what it looks like, and this person starts crying, because they're about ready to give up on their marriage, or on their son or daughter they've been praying for.

We heard a prayer request this morning, a son-in-law daughter that they've been praying for for 18 years is finally asking questions. Instead of mocking God, they're finally asking questions. See, that's how these gifts work.

Yes, we have the Bible, yes, it's all we need for life and godliness, but I need God to speak to me sometimes. I don't know about you. I need to hear from God.

I need to know, Lord, is this you? I trust you, but not Shane Idleman. I've got myself a lot of trouble by following good ideas, but then to some other, to other people he gives faith, and we're gonna talk about that in a minute. Oh, to another, the word of knowledge.

So that follows wisdom. So a word of knowledge is something that a person knows. So let's say God put something on my heart or your heart, and you just have this, you know something about a person, and it helps to get them through, a particular situation.

And then to another, this gift of faith is given. To another, the gifts of healings. Look at how that's plural.

The gifts of healings by the same spirit. To another, the working of miracles. To another, prophecy.

To another, discerning of spirits. To another, different kinds of tongues. To another, the interpretation of tongues.

But one and the same spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as he wills. So it's the Holy Spirit distributes these gifts as he wills, as he desires. This is why you can't manufacture it.

You can't manufacture it. You can't just, you know, pray over someone and say, okay, and you try to manufacture it. You try to make it happen.

It's what God graciously gives. So my question this morning to you, the first question is, does any of this that we just read, does it apply to us today? Oh, you don't have to answer. I was just throwing it out there.

But that's the divide in the church. There are people who will not come here over this reason. And I probably shouldn't say this, but I'll tell you, I probably wouldn't go to their churches either because many times they are dead.

They're dead. Dead to the things of God. Dead to emotional worship.

Dead to hearing from God. That type of group often won't have prayer meetings. A prayer meeting, well, if they do, it's at least a 10.

It's in a side room and there might be two people there. For God to get 70 people here at a 6 a.m. prayer meeting? That's a service. Did you know that 80% of churches in America are 80 people and under? 80% of churches in America are small, 80 people and under.

And when God begins to move on the hearts of people, you want to do things. You're excited about God. You might get up automatically and wake up and can't wait to get to church.

See, there's a lot. You're alive to the things of God. I didn't say without challenges.

I didn't say perfect. I didn't say you walk on clouds all day. And just, you know, everything you touch turns to gold.

No, there's warfare. You've gotta fight. You've gotta break through.

Anytime you're delivered from something, you've gotta maintain that deliverance. You let that enemy back in, he might bring seven worse than the first and the last day of that man is worse than the first. You've gotta fight.

You've gotta contend. This is how I fight my battles. But there's a hunger for more of God.

There's a hunger to get in his word. There's a hunger to have prayer meetings. If it was up to me, I might open this church every morning.

And those would be here hungry and hungry. And what, can you imagine 24 hours, seven days a week, 24-7 prayer where people have different shifts? Do you know that already happens? That happens. See, there's a hunger for God.

So when people begin to deny that the Holy Spirit is working this way, they often do not have the power of God. Because you can't say that that doesn't happen and still operate in a mighty, powerful moving of God's Spirit. Yes, some of these pastors have Spirit-filled preaching.

I believe that they're still filled with the Spirit in regard to their preaching. But I believe they lack this area of being filled with God's Spirit. This is when experience meets Scripture.

So let's think about this as well. Is today's church different than the New Testament church? I mean, in some ways, of course, but practically speaking, is today's church any different than the New Testament church? If we could go back 2,000 years ago and bring someone into the church at 6 a.m. this morning, other than the microphone, you would not see a difference, an attire. And may the language they speak.

But there would not be a difference because the church is still praying. The church is still hungry for God. The church is still crying out for God.

I would love to see somebody from, wouldn't you love to see an early church member from 2,000 years ago who walked with Jesus maybe? And they would come and say, show us how to do church. You better get everything off your schedule for today. You better plan on not going to lunch.

You better plan on not looking at your watch. I have a feeling they were not in a hurry. That was the Lord's day, not the Lord's hour.

It was the Lord's day. The whole day was set apart for God. Now I'm not talking about drawing it out just to draw it out and making it boring just to be boring.

I mean, to make it boring. But if it gets boring, you know, and it's just doing it to do it, but there should be an excitement about following God. And then another question, is everything we need in the word of God? Well, it is.

The Bible says everything for living godly according to Christ Jesus. Every principle, I believe every truth I can show you. I can show you from our immigration policy, nationally, politically speaking.

I can show you from abortion to gay marriage to transgender issues, to the borders, to security, to the role of government, to the role of the church. All truth is found in God's word. Yes, let's clap for that one, that's a good one.

Everything we need is in God's word. So the gifts of the Holy Spirit would be referred to something that is supplemental, not above the word, actually sits underneath the word and it allows a believer to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit. And also, are we in the last days? I mean, I hope we all are on the same page with that.

We are in the last days and the prophet Joel, who Peter quoted, Peter actually quotes the prophet Joel when the Holy Spirit descended upon the church in the upper room, the church was really born, the Holy Spirit fills the believers, they're speaking with tongues, they're glorifying God. Peter said, they're not drunk, this is that that the prophet Joel spoke of. He said, in the last days, in the last days, I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your old men see visions and young men dream dreams. And are those not still happening? When God pours out his spirit, see, when you're filled with the spirit, it's not a boring, mechanical type of, let me read the Bible, let me go to church, that's a good, you know, you're filled with the spirit.

You're sensitive in your family to the things of God. You're praying specifically for your children or your spouse, in the store, you're sensitive to the word of God and the things of God. People come to your mind, you need to pray for, you need to reach out, you're filled with the spirit, so you're overflowing in your daily life.

And I believe that's what Paul said when he said, I pray daily without ceasing. See, it's a life of prayer. I can go an hour and not pray, but in my spirit, it's a life of prayer.

It's praying without ceasing. It's God, how can you use me today? God, what do you wanna do? God, you're so awesome. And as I'm singing this song and as I'm at this store, Lord, bless me.

Does this person need to be blessed and helped out with food and finances and the hospital homes that we go to? God, bless those people there. Show me what they need. And you operate filled with the spirit.

Why do you think the enemy is going after that more than anything else, I believe. I believe the number one attack that the enemy is trying to do on your life, the life of this church, any church for 2,000 years, is to deflate the person filled with the spirit. Because when I quench and grieve the spirit of God, I don't even wanna be here.

And you don't either, do you? Pray. And when you're quenching and grieving the spirit of God, just me mentioning a 6 a.m. prayer service sounds dreadfully boring. Why, because the spirit's not connected.

The Holy Spirit, yes, a person can be saved, but they can quench and grieve the spirit to such a degree that the things of God do not come alive. Doesn't the scripture come alive to you? You read that, the word of God, it says, is living. The word of God is living, more alive than me.

The word of God is living, it's active, it's sharper than any double-edged sword. It pierces, it divides the soul and the spirit. It's going after him and her and them and up.

It's living, it's vibrant. And it's a living faith. He who believes in me, as the scriptures say, out of his belly will flow rivers of stagnant cement.

Out of his belly will flow rocks. Hardness, barrenness, dryness, none of that. Out of his spirit, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water.

And you have to imagine, when they're at the Jordan River or they're in Israel, they don't have what we have. They just have imagery. That's why the Bible is so picturesque and uses so much imagery.

You picture, you see living water, which would be water that is moving, gushing over boulders and down waterfalls. In this living water, there's nothing more dramatic or graphic in the mind of a person to say, out of you is going to flow that, spiritually speaking. So if a person is dead to the things of God, I'm here to awaken you.

I believe that's one of the aspects of this church. I was just talking to somebody this week, and we have a very unique calling, this church does, many of you know, that's why a lot of you are here. And I was asking, hey, what are your thoughts on this? We've had, because we're coming up on 10 years in September, we've had thousands and thousands of people attend this church.

Did you know that? Of course, many people move. And maybe in September, we'll have those who have been here the first service stand up. I think there's only about, what, six of us? Five of us, maybe? But, and I joke about it, but it's kind of true, it's really the treadmill church.

People come in, yeah, that's what I want more of God, but as soon as they begin to sin and quench the spirit, they don't want that type of church. They don't go to church at all, or they'll go to a very comfortable church that doesn't offend, it actually encourages them in their sin. So with this kind of church, you're

going to see lives radically change, but you're also going to see people run for cover when they're under conviction.

They don't want, see, that's the difference. When a person is under conviction, they want God to change them, they'll run here. They don't even know why they're here, they're just here.

But the person who's enjoying their sin and wallowing in their sin and convicted, they're not coming in here. That's the last place they want to go. Now, of course, there's preferences and differences and people, I think people at certain levels, I've actually referred people to other churches.

They say, Shane, I really, you know, I see what you're saying, but I want a church that goes through Genesis to Revelation. I want Bible teaching every single Sunday, expository, word for word. I want to know what the Greek says, I want to know what the Hebrew says, I want an inductive, deductive, immediate approach to your sermon preparation.

I want it to meet all the homiletic and hermeneutic approaches to your sermon studies. That's what I want. Okay, I can recommend a good one, but those who are alive and want more, but that's an encouragement to you.

I know some of you, many of you are not maybe where you want to be, but you want to be. That's why you're here. That's why you're here, to be filled again with the Spirit of God.

And that only comes, let me tell you this, that only comes often through hard preaching. Preaching that digs deep, preaching that gives the scaffolding out. See, what's the difference between a robber at your door with a knife and a surgeon? See, many people can hurt you with the word of God, but when God's word is preached in all its fullness, it's that scaffold, it's that little knife removing the cancer tumor, and it hurts.

It digs deep, it offends. Oh, if you know how many times I got offended working on sermons. Oh, golly, it cuts my heart, because I can't come up here and be an actor.

I want to live it. That's one of my biggest, and I tell my wife, I tell her, God, I want to live what I'm preaching. I want to be on Monday, who I am on Sunday.

Oh, it's a challenge, oh, is it not? That's the hardest part of my life, is living what I preach. That is the hardest part of my life, is living what I preach, and falling short, and getting back up. And these people here, I know you are hungry, so as much as you feel like maybe it hurts, it's because God loves us.

God loves us enough to hurt us. I've seen it many, many times over a year. A prideful man needs to be hurt of his pride before he repents and is filled with the Spirit.

He needs to be lovingly confronted. He needs to be slapped with the Word of God. Not just, if all we're doing is encouraging, nobody changes.

So we are in the last days, and the God Spirit is being poured out. Also, I don't want to share this a lot, maybe we should at some point, but I can tell you testimonies in the last year, probably maybe even six months, of dozens and dozens and dozens of people being filled with God's Spirit. Being filled with God's Spirit.

Shit, I don't know what happened. Church was boring, I rarely came. Now I can't get enough.

I started praising God, and now I'm speaking a language I don't even understand, what's wrong with me? God's moving, I feel, I had this going on, I had this going on, what's going on? Just read the Bible. Read 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. Now I should tell you, people are new, people are listening, probably, and I mentioned tongues and different things.

It's a strange gift for me, too, I mean, when I think of, I'm not, it's odd that God would do that. I mean, it doesn't make a lot of sense. It's like, okay, it will as we read, but I'm there with you, I understand that some of these things are hard to understand.

Again, not apologizing for the Word of God whatsoever, it's in there, I believe it's beneficial, but sometimes we don't quite understand everything that God is doing. Do you wanna know why to everything? My kids do. Why this, how come, what happened, where, when, how? Why does He do that, why'd He do that then, how's it work? And sometimes we just have to trust that God moves by His Spirit, and will change us in ways that we don't even know about.

And then He gives, I'm gonna skip down to verse 27, He gives the analogy of the body. Now you are the body of Christ, and the members individually, and God has appointed these in the church, okay, here's some controversial words, God has appointed in the church first apostles. Now this is a lowercase a for a reason.

We don't believe or teach that people have that apostolic calling like the apostles, the 12 apostles. That is over and done with, that was, when Jesus was died on the cross, there are no more big capital A apostles, at least how we believe, what we teach in the Bible. But there is what they would call the office of an apostle.

And this is just a person who is sent, a person who is sent to plant churches, a person who is sent to do God's work. So somebody would be the Apostle Paul. If he were here, there would still be an apostle, because they're going out, they're planting churches, and they're going out, they're sent ones.

So God still calls those people to go out and be sent. My beef is with those people who put apostle and prophet and stuff like that on their business card. That's tacky, that's just not good.

That's just, come on, where's the humility? And I've noticed the self-proclaimed apostles aren't often apostles. The self-proclaimed prophets aren't always necessarily working in that gifting. Something I found is those most called of God, most gifted of God with the strong anointing of God are often the ones who do not run to the calling.

They do not run for those titles. Those who are truly called to be a pastor usually run from it for a while. Those who truly have that prophetic-type gifting don't want to shout it from the rooftop, they want to go hide in a corner.

Because they understand the magnitude and weight of God's calling. And unless you've done, for example, let's say preaching, unless you've done that, that's why it's good for pastors sometimes to talk because you carry a unique burden that not many people understand. I have to get up tomorrow morning and I have to speak to you what God has put on my heart through the text of scripture that lines up with his word to make sure it's theologically accurate, to make sure people are blessed and edified, that marriages are restored, that prodigal sons are home, that sinners are repenting and coming to know the Lord.

And again on Monday, and again on Monday. And now we threw Wednesdays in the mix. So you carry, it's not just, hey, look at that, prepare this, no, the health expo, that's easy.

Here's healthy stuff, that's easy. But when you're preaching God's word, there's a weight, there's a burden that people don't understand. It's like, you know, if you speak, let's say a manager speaks at a luncheon and he asks his boss, okay, is that what you want me to cover? Is that, you know, did I do okay? When it comes to preaching, you're answering to the boss.

There's a weight, there's a burden that you have to make sure you deliver to the people. This isn't, hey, I showed up, here's what I think. This is, you're actually investing into the lives of people.

You're struggling with alcohol. You're about ready to commit adultery. You're about ready to walk out on your marriage.

You're thinking God doesn't exist. You're thinking that you're troubled. You wanna commit suicide.

And all these groups and voices, and you've gotta let God speak individually through these people, that's a burden to carry. And then also the burden of the Lord. God gives me a burden.

God gives me, like, pregnant with the word of God and you have to share what God has put on your heart. There's a burden, so sometimes I go home exhausted, exhausted from preaching, Monday, exhausted. I'm like, I'm just as tired as physical activity.

What is wrong with me? Because the mental, the spiritual, the praying with people and discerning different things, it's just, it's a tremendous, so God has to, my point was God has to call a person to that. He has to call you to, if you wanna be in ministry, make sure he's calling you to that. Don't call yourself.

I've talked to pastors, they're like, well, I got into this because I like to help people. Oh, don't do it for that reason. Oh, I got into it because it's just, you know, I got my career path now and I'm in this denomination.

And no, did God call you to do it? Because the enemy will chew you up and spit you out if you can't anchor your whole existence and your whole calling on God called me to do this. We had to delete a whole post on Facebook because everybody was calling me F-bombs. This, tons of people, where did that come from? God called me to do this.

The darkness hates the light. It doesn't discourage. I feel for them.

I understand though that if God, think about it, if you knew God called you, for example, God put you together in your marriage, God called you guys together, you think you're gonna get divorced as easily? If God called you to do something, God told me to do this, I have to do this. God put this on my heart, I have to do this. You often go back to that.

That's your anchor because you're not gonna be on smooth sailing waters all the time. You're gonna hit those storms and the pitfalls and the different things. I'm gonna have to preach the same as I do to 50 or 500 or 5,000 because God called me to do it.

So he's given first apostles. Second, he's given prophets to the church. Oh goodness, prophets.

How many of you, don't raise your hand, but I know people think, oh, prophets. If you understand, this term is simply one who proclaims God's word. Think of John the Baptist.

This is what cracks me up when people say your sermons are too hard. Have you read John the Baptist's sermons? Have you read Jesus' sermons? Oh, there's a lot of wonderful, mild, meek, humble preaching, but go find the ones where he said you whitewashed tombs. Jesus spoke much harsher than I am speaking to the hypocrites.

If I could get a room of hypocrites and those who proclaim to know God and don't really know him, and I start saying, you look nice on the outside, but you're as dead as a corpse on the inside. And John the Baptist goes on to say, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Who warned you? You're gonna come in here and make a mockery of God's sanctuary? How dare you, you whitewashed tombs? You built sepulchers. You honor the prophets, but your fathers killed them.

You arrogant, boastful people. That's Jesus. See, sometimes we need that prophetic type of voice, and Jesus actually operated in all the giftings, the apostolic, the prophetic, the teacher, the preacher, the evangelist.

He operated in all those areas. He actually operated as high priest, as king, and as judge. He operates in all those areas.

It's interesting, I was looking over recently, this is a big side trail, when our founding fathers brought forth our nation, the reason we have three branches of government is because they use that scripture. Jesus will be our king, or God is our king, our lawgiver, and our judge. That's why we have those three branches of government.

They actually reference that scripture in the late 1700s, if you look at their writings. Is that interesting? Tax-exempt status, they reference from Ezra. Separation of powers.

They would actually reference the Bible four times more than any source in writing up the founding documents of the nation. They would actually stop the meeting and have days of prayer and fasting. That's why Benjamin Franklin, I told you before, who wasn't even a Christian, he wasn't even a Christian, he said, gentlemen, they couldn't agree on something.

He said, let's stop for a minute. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it possible that this empire can rise without his aid? They would go back to God. They would look to him and him alone.

So God gives apostles to go out and be sent. God gives prophets, why, to proclaim. It's usually, those with this gifting usually have a difficult message.

It's that very cut-and-dry, right-and-wrong, you know, that John the Baptist type of calling. And then there's third, there's teachers. Now what do the teachers do? They equip the people.

They equip the people. It's wonderful to have John the Baptist come in and preach repentance, but then who's going to equip the people? And that's why many pastors usually operate in some of these different giftings. They'll have a heart for evangelism, they'll be a teacher, they'll also be sometimes prophetic in their preaching.

So these are all gifts that God has given to the body. And then he gives, after that, miracles. Uh-oh.

Healings. Helps, administration, varieties of tongues. And this is what cracks me up.

People have no problems with helps, giftings, or administration. But if you go to the other ones, that's when they say, no, that doesn't happen anymore. Well, why don't these happen anymore than either? And Paul just used it as one long list of gifts.

Are all apostles? No. Are all prophets? No. Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? I mean, some people would say yes, but my answer would be no.

That's why he's asking, anytime you ask a question, is everyone a prophet? No, they're not. Is everyone a teacher? No, they're not. Is everyone a worker of miracles? No, they're not.

Does everyone speak in tongues? No, they don't. So Paul here lets people know there's gonna be different gifts. And that's why in some churches, they teach that the evidence of someone being filled with the Holy Spirit is always the gift of tongues.

I believe they call that, I think that's what Pentecostals, or even some assemblies of God, inside of those camps, people believe differently. But there are groups that believe, no, the only evidence that you're filled with the Holy Spirit that you receive is mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit. The evidence is tongues.

See here? But then that would throw D.L. Moody down the toilet. Billy Graham. John Whitfield.

I mean, I can list so many people. Actually, the true sign, the true sign throughout all the New Testament of someone who has been radically changed by the power of the Holy Spirit, who has been filled with the Holy Spirit without a shadow of a doubt, you ready for this? Is boldness to witness for Jesus Christ. When you've got the, not arrogance, boldness.

When you're ready to die for your faith, or you don't care who's listening, you'll pray for someone, you're telling people about that boldness of the Spirit. That's the number one evidence that you are filled with the Spirit. That boldness to witness.

And I read a recent, I don't know, the number was too high, 80 to 90%. I don't know where they get these numbers. 80 to 90% of the church have not witnessed to anybody in the last year.

We have a filling of the Holy Spirit problem. Because here's what happens. Many times it's happened to me.

So again, I'm not preaching at you. I'm right there with you. But we can go to church, go have lunch.

Many of you get to take a nap, praise God for that. Put on the Laker game, go to work Monday. Put on radio, read the Bible out, talk to people at work, hi.

Go home, eat, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat. Never tell anybody about Jesus. Often because you've quenched and grieved the Spirit.

The fullness of the Spirit is not there. There's times where I have to go to hospital homes to see if someone needs, there's this overpowering fullness of the Spirit. Not every day.

What I just said, sometimes I do. I get home and say, I didn't talk to anybody about Jesus. Unbelievable.

But that's the number one mark. So what I'm gonna do, oh, wow. Four more pages, it's not gonna turn into part, there'll be part two.

But I think all the, even the rabbit trails were so important for you guys this morning. But the main scripture used to support the gifts ceasing. The main scripture for those who say that the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit has ceased.

I want you to read this for homework. First Corinthians chapter 13, specifically verse eight. Or you can read all of First Corinthians chapter 13.

It basically says, when that which is perfect comes, that which is in part will be done away with. Prophecy will fail, tongues will be ceased, but love will never fail. And we're gonna talk about that a little bit next week.

But I wanna, I just wanna ask you a few questions here. I'm gonna get to where I wanted to get to. Are you empowered by the Holy Spirit? Are you empowered by the Holy Spirit? Are you genuinely filled with the Holy Spirit? Are you broken? Are you open? Are you teachable? I didn't say gullible.

But there has to be a willingness. There has to be a willingness. I think many of you know, that's one of my biggest frustrations as a pastor, is seeing so many people dying spiritually with living water just steps away.

Yes, you come to a church service now and then. You read the Bible, but you're dying inside spiritually. And that's the test.

Are there rivers of living water flowing out of you? Jesus said it. If you believe on me, as the scriptures say, out of your belly is going to flow rivers of living water. God's word's gonna be in you like a burning fire.

What other imagery could you get? A burning fire. They would see lightning strike, the whole forest is on fire. They would see this rushing river that nobody could stop.

So there's this fire, there's this unction, and there's this flowing out, and people desperately want that, but either sin has bound them, either pride has bound them. I guarantee that's the reason many people are not filled with God's spirit, because they're saying, who are you? I've been a Christian 30 years. Who are you telling me? I need more of God.

Well, I came here to tell you this morning that you probably need more of God. Many in this room, I need more of God. I need God to fill me up.

That's sometimes we sing that song, Lord, fill me up. Fill me up, God, fill me up. And it's funny, it's the people who aren't filled that have a problem with that song.

That's brainwashing. You guys are getting emotional. You're just somebody who's not filled.

You want worship to get over, so you can go eat your Carl's Jr. Listen, we're calling it out. God's called me. I don't say these things to make fun.

I don't say these to upset. I say it because it's the truth. And I want men and women filled with God's spirit.

Do you really want God? Do you really want God? Do you wanna be full of God's spirit? So that's my first call this morning is I wanna talk to those who want more of God. They haven't experienced the gifts. They don't know much about the Holy Spirit.

They've been dead in their Christianity. They've been lukewarm. They've grown distant from God.

You need to read Jesus Christ gave one command, return to your first love. Return. And it's funny, Jesus kept the same thing that had been going on for thousands of years.

The prophets, you know what they would say? Return. Return, oh backsliding Israel. Return to me, come back to me, your loving father.

I brought you up out of Egypt. I delivered you as a newborn child. There's blood all over you.

You're laying in the field, he said, Jeremiah. He said, I cleaned you up and I held you. I nursed you.

I rose you up to be this wonderful flower, this perfect vessel for my use, but you departed from me and you fell after other lovers. Idolatry came in and pulled you back away. Now this pure and perfect virgin is now a harlot and God still says, but I called you back, called the people back.

It's a general call to the people to come back, oh backsliding Israel. And Jesus says, when you have left your first love, when that candle no longer flickers and that fire is out, all you have to do is return to me. All who return to me, God says, I will fill.

If you seek me, you will find me. But there's a seeking, it's a travail, it's a yearning. It's saying, I don't have all of God and I want it.

It's you, it's those of you, it's those of you who are gonna get so mad at my sermon that you're gonna go home and say, God, oh, he's right. He's right and I want that or you're gonna continue to fight it. I remember this story, D.O. Moody.

Many of you have heard of D.O. Moody, famous evangelist. Two ladies, I wish I could say what they told him to some people, but I haven't yet. These two ladies came to D.O. Moody.

He was a pastor. The church was okay, he was just pastoring, go through the motions. And these two ladies came up to him and they said, Mr. Moody, Mr. Moody, we are praying, we are praying that you'd be filled with the Spirit.

Ooh, he was mad, he was mad. How could they? Don't they know who I am? Look at this church, I'm a pastor. And for a week he fought that until he surrendered to it.

He realized that he was building his ministry, his name, there's no power in his preaching. And when he confessed that and said, God, I need that, the Holy Spirit, I think it was on the streets of New York, fell upon him, he ran into a room and he said, God, remove your hand, your love is so vast, I'm gonna feel like I'm gonna burst. Remove this power and presence.

And from that day forward, now you heard of Billy Graham, I mean, D.O. Moody. I can tell you about Billy Graham, too. He's in a hotel room in a different country and they prayed for Billy Graham to receive the fullness of the Spirit.

He was already evangelist. And as soon as Billy left that room, I think it was in Scotland or somewhere, they said, the world's gonna hear from Billy Graham now, and they did. I'm not talking about these big names, I'm talking about even you.

The fullness of the Spirit. There has to be something in you that breaks and says, I need that, I need that, I don't have that. And that's hard for mature Christians to say, isn't it? Right, because we got, I got it down.

I know what the Bible says. I'm maturing my faith. But be careful because the scriptures also say that knowledge puffs up.

I don't know why, but people, when they first come to the Lord, they're full of the Spirit. When they get a lot of knowledge in them, they get kind of dead and boring. They don't do things for God anymore.

That's what he said, return to your first love. Return back to that relationship I once had for you. So that's my call to you this morning for those who need to know the Lord in that way, to be filled with the Spirit.

My other call is for those who don't know who Jesus is. The Bible says clearly and profoundly that you must repent and believe. It's that simple.

That's why Jesus said, if you just embrace faith like a child. Aren't you glad he didn't say, if you just embrace faith like a Pharisee who has a theological training and knew the Old Testament. He just said, come to me like a child.

So if you need that this morning, you know what? I believe even if you need to be filled with the Spirit, come to him like a child. Listen, I love theology. I love theological books.

But there's something that happens. The more knowledge that we take in, the more pride-filled we become. It's funny, I've seen people go from filled with God's Spirit, get a little knowledge in them, and now they think they know everything, and there goes the Holy Spirit.

My prayer this morning was, God, you have to fill me. I need you. I need you this morning.

God, you've gotta speak through me because this sermon is not popping. I don't know what you're gonna do with this. I need you to move, and that's what some of you need.

You need to be filled with God's Spirit. If you're not a believer, you don't know Jesus, take time as we close and repent and believe. All you have to do is say, God, I need you.

I ask you to forgive my sins. I wanna turn my life completely over to you today. No more running.

No more excuses.

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