

Workers vs. Worshipers (Take the Test)

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman emphasizes the critical need for Christians to prioritize love over works to maintain spiritual vitality and growth.

Duration: 41:07

Scripture: Revelation 2:4

Topics: "Self-Criticism", "Love vs. Works"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the critical distinction between being a worker and a worshiper, urging the congregation to engage in self-criticism for spiritual growth. He references A.W. Tozer's assertion that spiritual progress is directly linked to one's ability to critique oneself, highlighting the danger of becoming rigid and prideful in one's works without love. Idleman warns that a church can be active in good works yet lose its first love, leading to a lack of spiritual vitality and influence. He calls for repentance and a return to the heart of worship, reminding the congregation that true maturity involves humility, accountability, and a loving spirit. The sermon challenges listeners to examine their hearts and rekindle their passion for God, emphasizing that genuine worship must flow from love.

Transcript

Let me quote A.W. Tozer. This is so important. If you're getting ready to go to sleep, don't.

If you're thinking about where to go to lunch, don't. If you're thinking about something, think about this. Give me 30 minutes.

This is so vital to this church. A.W. Tozer said, A Christian will make spiritual progress exactly in proportion to his ability to criticize himself. Do you want to grow spiritually? I bet everybody in this room would say they want to grow spiritually.

They want to get mature. But they don't like this last half. By your ability to criticize yourself.

See, here's how you grow spiritually. Even my own preaching, growing spiritually. A couple years into this, you know, Shane, you're a little hard.

You're rough. You're hurting people. There's not love.

So, Lord, help me. And I mature, hopefully. You know, you criticize yourself.

My heart's getting hard. I'm drifting from your truth. And you start to mature because you criticize yourself.

You repent and you grow. You work on this thing. You have to work on it.

Does anybody have anything to work on? Just me? Oh, thank God. But as you work on those things, as you admit it, as you are transparent and accountable, you begin to grow and mature. See, we look at a mature Christian, we think they got it all together.

They don't got it all together. They've learned how to humble themselves and repent and allow God to rebuild them so they're a mature Christian. But the person who never allows the Word of God to critique them and criticize them and convict them, always making excuses, always thinking they got together, they will never mature.

They'll be sucking their thumb at 40 years old where the babies have binkies. You know, I should buy some binkies and just as an imagery. They'll be sucking the binky.

They'll just have that binky in their mouth. They'll never be growing spiritually because they do not criticize themselves. They do not look in the mirror and say, God, help me in this area.

Because the moment you think you got it all together, oh boy. So that's what he's saying here, and that's so important with this sermon. You will make spiritual progress exactly in proportion to your ability to criticize yourself.

In other words, to be open and teachable. We have to be open and teachable. We don't like constructive criticism, but if we're open and teachable, you become mature.

Open and teachable, but you become mature. And even when you're mature at my age, you still need to be open and teachable and mature. And that's what maturity is.

It's about learning, growing, repenting, and getting back on track. But I will tell you up front what we're going to read in Revelation 2, chapter 2. This type of church, this type of person often has the courage to speak God's truth, but not the humility that allows God's truth to speak to them. And I know that, I mean, I was this person.

I still struggle sometimes. Who doesn't? What I'm about to talk about. But I was this person in 2005, 2006, maybe I'll talk about that in a little bit.

But we love the truth of God, right? We preach it, we're courageous about it, but when somebody comes to challenge us a little bit, we're not open. See, we want to preach it, but not receive it. That's what he's talking about.

That's the type of church he's talking about. Are you ready to read about this church? Revelation 2. Well, we can't do it now, but let's say it. It said, to the angel of the church of Westside Christian Fellowship.

Wow, this is good, right? Oh, that sounds good, doesn't it? I mean, that sounds like us. If I were to say so, myself. Works, helping people, we labor in the cause of Christ, we're hopefully patient.

We hate evil, don't we? And we will point out false teachers. That's why they don't flourish too well here. We like to pick them off early.

If somebody's bringing in destructive teaching, destructive heresy, we will pull them aside. It's happened a few times. No, you're not going to have that home group where you're teaching universalism and all people are saved, and Jesus isn't really, he's one of many ways.

You've got to be on guard for that, and we're doing really good. You've tested those who say they are apostles and are not, false teachers. You've found them liars.

You've persevered. You have patience and have labored for my namesake and have not become weary. Verse 4, though, pops up.

Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent. Wow, he's calling the church that preaches repentance to repentance.

I have this against you. I know your works nevertheless. So here's the first point.

Works do not trump love. Works should not be put above love. Outward works must flow from inward love.

So when Jesus says, return to your first works, he's actually, in my opinion, he's not saying go find some other things to do. He's saying, no, go back to the reason why you did them. See, you can still go to the hospital homes, but go with the right attitude.

You can still work and serve as an usher, but come with a broken, contrite heart. You can still stay on the worship team, but be broken and humble before God. Same work, different heart.

By their fruit, by their heart, you will know. See, the heart is everything. I can show you people who do tremendous work, but they're on their way to hell.

And I can show you people who do work, and they're on their way to heaven. What's the difference? The heart. The heart.

So it's not go back and do first works, different works. What first prompted you to do? Because when you first became a Christian, what first prompted you? When people come up, Shane, I want to go to the hospital homes. I want to visit.

I want to get involved in children ministry. We're going to host, hopefully, the homeless here for one week when it's cold outside. How many people want to come to that? Because it comes out of their loving heart.

I want to. And then once we become workers, what happens to that love? It fades. See, love doesn't leave.

You leave love. Same thing. That's good for a married couple.

I just don't love them anymore. Well, guess what? It didn't leave you. Love doesn't leave.

Love, actually, is something we do not based on feelings, but based on what we know to be true. So here what we're talking about. We're talking about workers, right, who have left their first love.

Workers labor and are patient. They hate evil, but without love, they become rigid and controlling. We snap at people.

We don't like to be challenged. Workers without love are often grumpy and easily irritated. Anybody convicted? I mean, we can hear pin drops in the first service.

I mean, this is going to ruffle some feathers. And just a confession here. It's been a hard week for me.

I emailed a few people, texted to pray for me in this week in the sermon. Because the more I studied, the more I realized that this is Westside Christian Fellowship, if we're not careful. See, he's going to talk about the lukewarm church in the future, but lukewarm people usually run from here.

They usually run for cover. They don't want to have anything to do with this church. But it's the people who love God's truth, who love his word.

Yeah, Shane tells the truth. I love that truth. But then our hearts can grow cold and callous and hard, and we leave that first love.

So it has a lot to do with this church. And with this type of person, there's a sense of entitlement. Workers become bitter and arrogant because they are workers and others aren't.

See, we can hear that if we're working at the church, right? Working. Why aren't others working? Why aren't they doing what I'm doing? Why do I have to carry this load? And what comes in? Bitterness. Trust me, I have to fight this weakly sometimes.

Bitterness creeps in. They've been around a while, and they want the control. They view themselves as more spiritual and in tune with God.

They know more. Pride is at the forefront. I don't know about you, but when your knowledge increases about the Bible, does humility also increase? No.

Come on. We like to tell people, look at what I've been learning. Let me see if I can put you down.

Let me see if I can overcome that argument. And we become puffed up on knowledge and very limited on humility. See, those must run together.

Jesus is basically saying, pastor, preacher, teacher, I hear your truth, but it's lacking spiritual life. Have you ever been to a church that you just go, and there's death from the pulpit? God forbid. God forbid.

They're talking about fire, but sitting on an iceberg. Where's that spiritual life? Where's that passion? Where's that unction? Where's that anointing of the Holy Spirit? Jesus is saying, return, pastor, preacher, to your first love. See, I'm very, very, very clear of this fact.

If I don't spend time with God, broken before God, filled with His Spirit, this sermon will become very dead and lifeless. Because it's not about pneumatology and eschatology and hermeneutics and homiletics and sermon preparation and inductive and deductive immediate approaches to my sermon preparation. That can be void of God's Spirit.

We can take pride in it, actually. Many churches that hold the truth high are very arrogant if they don't watch it. It's an area we have to be careful in, in this type of church.

I mean, wouldn't that describe? I see your work. I mean, Jesus. And I thought, what about if He walked in? I'm going to observe you guys for a week.

Oh, my Lord. I know your works. I've seen your patience.

You hate evil. You're a good apologist. You can point out false doctrine.

But I have this against you. You've left your first love, and you better return quickly. Because you're hurting people if you don't.

You're representing me, and you're hurting people if you don't return. I mean, those are scathing words. It basically said, uh-huh, nevertheless, nevertheless, I have this against you.

Jesus, or He's also saying, Mom, Dad, ministry leader, usher team, worship team, children's ministry team, I see your works, but there's no spiritual life. Where's your spiritual life? Do you ever just go through the motions, and as a result, you get grumpy? You get angry? You get irritated? You're not filled with the Spirit? We're filled with the flesh. Jesus often hurts us before He helps us.

I have this against you. The reason is blind spots are hard to see. Aren't they? That's why they're called.

Yeah, there you go. Everybody sees the cross right now except me. Shane, everybody sees this in you, can't you? Everybody sees this pride, this arrogance, can't you? So He's pulling out the blind spot of getting comfortable in our works, comfortable in what we know, comfortable in serving.

It becomes a badge of honor. See, I go to the hospital homes every week. I'm an usher.

I'm an Awana teacher. Right? I've read through this every year for the last 30 years. My Bible translation is the only right one.

They don't do communion like I do communion. I mean, you can see, right? This can just get ugly. That type of heart has to be confronted, and it has to be confronted swiftly and decisively so that person goes, oh.

See, I don't really mind if somebody doesn't like when they're challenged. I mean, who does? Doesn't really. But I do mind when they go home and nothing changes.

Right? They should go home and go, yeah, they're right. I know it. Like Jesus said, He talked about the man who, when the father told him to go do something, he said, I will not.

But then he went and did it because he realized he was wrong. But the Pharisees say, I will, and they don't go. And Jesus says, which one of you do you think would be accepted by the father? Because it's the end result, knowing our need, seeing our need for repentance.

See, here's the thing. When works flow from love, we go from depressed to joy-filled, empty to purpose-filled, joyless to joyful, bitter to loving, tired to renewed, angry to gentle, and boastful to broken. Do you want that? I know I do.

And it takes, like Tozer said, to go back and criticize yourself. I'm getting hard in this area. Also something interesting.

A fresh move of God, a fresh move of God can make workers uncomfortable because their control is being threatened. They don't have intimacy with God, so they don't have intimacy at church. They don't want intimacy at church.

I've noticed this. I'm trying to be as delicate as I can. But workers who've left their first love do not like worship.

They'll come and participate, but their heart's not in it. They'll sing, on a hill far away stood an old rugged cross. But in their heart, they're really saying, I'm so mad that Dodger's lost.

This wasn't as funny in the first service. The emblem of suffering and shame. Oh, that was a terrible game.

Right? See, they're workers. They're not wanting to worship. When you challenge a worker who's left their first love to come to the altar and worship, they run for cover.

Worship morning, I'm not coming. Extended worship, I don't want that. Why? Because I'm a worker and not a worshiper.

Oh, Martha, Martha! Stop working and spend time with your Savior. Why are you busy about so many things? Worker who have left your first love, you need to return. You need to return.

I thought of so many people this week preparing this sermon that need to hear this. I mean, we all need to hear it, don't we? A fresh move of God intimidates those who are hard-hearted. Church becomes very mechanical.

They become hard and abrasive versus humble and gracious. They typically are not worshipers. They work, but it's hard to worship.

And then also we can glean from this, Jesus is not messing around. Quickly, quickly. This is why many churches die, I believe.

Many churches die because Jesus is warning and warning and warning, and then He comes quickly and does what? Removes their lampstand. What is a lampstand? It is for pointing the way of truth, influence. Jesus removes their lampstand.

He removes their influence in the community. Removes their influence. They know not that the Spirit of the Lord has departed.

Sure, they'll show up and have potlucks, but there's no baptisms. There's no salvations. It's the living dead.

That's what happens to many churches. Or it can also apply to pastors. Let's hit home for a minute, but just to me.

Right? If a pastor begins to leave their first love, and God will warn them, I believe, through conviction, through sermons, through the Word of God, through worship if they're really doing it, and there's a point where they have to come back to their first love and spark that renewed passion, spark that renewed hope and that love for Christ. And if not, God will remove that influence. When you start to drift away from God, He removes His type of influence.

I mean, you can fill stadiums if you're a charismatic speaker. It doesn't mean God is moving. And I know there's a lot of pastors when they started, there's a dividing line coming out now.

A lot of churches, when they come out in support of gay marriage, say a church says, you know what? We're going to be all-inclusive. We're going to come in support of gay marriage now. LGBT community, they can serve on a worship team.

They can be pastors. You begin to lose that influence. The churches shrink.

The influence is gone. The fire of God is no longer on the altar. People are not being saved and converted because they've drifted from that fire.

It's the living dead. Remove the light and churches and Christians go through the motions. The fire fades.

Not only is the church dying, here's a good thing. If you're no longer witnessing and loving others, is the joy of your heart in Walmart? Costco? Traffic? Is the joy of your heart there? Because when you leave your first love, you'll be a worker at church, but once you get out in the community, you're just like everyone else. You're not looking for that single mom who might need help with her groceries and may be paying for it.

Wherever you're at, witnessing, I'm telling you about the love. It's in you because the Holy Spirit's working in you. Because you love your first love, you have to tell other people about him.

What do we do when we see a great movie? Oh, you've got to go see this movie. You've got to go see this movie. Oh, it's unbelievable.

Did you see the Dodger game last night? Did you see how many home runs, over 100 home runs in the postseason? Oh, we get so excited and so excited. We tell everybody. It's all over Facebook.

Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Everything. We tell everybody when it comes to this, we're silent because we've left our first love.

When you love Christ, you have to tell people about him. Now, I'm not saying every person in line at the store, every aisle you go to, but you know what I'm talking about, right? Those of you who've been there, maybe drifted or you're there now and you know that, gosh, you see some of your heart just breaks for them. And if you're, I won't say that, but I was going to say, if you want your heart to break, go to Walmart.

It's a good spot. I mean, there are some broken people. Can I help you with this? Can I pay for the grocery? A lot of you, some of you in here make good money.

You can do that. It's a love of Christ. It's helping others and it opens the door.

It opens the door to communication. So just look in your own soul. And the reason I'm preaching this so hard is because we're all vulnerable to leaving our first love.

It's interesting too. These people are apologists. They could point out false doctrine.

Could you? Could you point out a false teacher? Could you tell me where they err? So these people were apologists. They loved the word of God. They had a zeal for truth.

They tested those who were apostles and found them false. But they are very opinionated but not very loving. Did you know that? When you leave your first love, you get very opinionated.

You like to hear yourself speak and how right you are. But you've lost that love. And as we know from Scripture, a hard heart precedes a deaf ear.

When the heart becomes hard and callous and you drift from that first love, you cannot hear from God as clearly. You cannot hear that still small voice of God. You cannot hear Him through the worship and through His word and how He's speaking to you because you've already formed opinions.

You already know what it says. You're just getting through it so you can check off something on the checklist. Have you ever did that? Just me.

I read the Bible today. Got through my five chapters. What did it say? I have no clue.

I just know I got through what I was supposed to get through in order to get through it in a year. Right? And it becomes now this works-oriented leaving my first love. Let's take the Ephesus test if you're ready.

This is the church of Ephesus. Here's the test. Are you rigid, unyielding, and like to be right? Do you weep over the sins of others or enjoy pointing them out? Are you more concerned about being right or being loving? Does being challenged about your attitude bother you? Are you often defensive and critical? Has gentleness vanished? Is grace hard to come by? Are you judging the church and others? This is interesting.

You think that workers would have each other's backs. But often, once we become workers, right, and we are drifting from our first love, now love is no longer the gauge of my heart, now pride and arrogance are, I begin to pull others down. I begin to form a defensive, arrogant, angry heart.

And we begin to shoot each other. Not physically, right? With our words. Life and death are in the power of the tongue.

Anybody who's drifted from their first love is like a sniper. But those who are on fire with their first love are usually, more often, about encouraging. They'll feel the gossip rising up, but they know it's the work of the flesh.

So just be careful for those who've maybe drifted in this area. And also, I want to ask a question. Did last Sunday's service bother you? If you don't know what happened after the second service, a lot of the people, a lot of the church came to the altar.

Came to the altar, extended worship. But workers who have left their first love are offended by that type of service. You won't find them on the altar.

You won't find them humble and broken before God. Back to pride and opinionated. They say, that's for spiritually immature people.

That's for spiritually immature people that want to go up there and cry at the altar. That's for weaklings and wimps, charismatics and crazies. Oh, sir, you are gravely mistaken.

Have you ever killed a thousand men in battle like David? Are you as bold as Samuel, as courageous as Elisha, and as passionate as Jeremiah? They were all worshipers. John fell down in the presence of God. The angels fall down in the presence of God and cry, holy, holy, holy is our God.

Actually, a worshiper is a mature believer. Oh, don't get me started. That could be a whole nother rabbit trail.

But those who worship the Father must worship Him in... Oh, we like the truth part. We love... Shane, tell me more about the truth part. But worshipping in spirit, I mean, of course, commentators are divided and different things, but it's worshipping God in truth and in spirit.

When I'm worshipping, my spirit doesn't... I don't know what to ask for, but my spirit, like Paul says in Romans, groanings, utterances that are so deep, I can't even make out. It's deep calling unto deep. It's the spirit crying, Abba, Father.

I might get into preaching here in a minute because this is true worship. If the spirit inside of you is worshipping, it's crying, Abba, Father. Not get away from me, Father.

It's wanting more of that worship, more of the altar, more of brokenness, more of humility and being filled with God's spirit. That's genuine worship. Worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth.

We don't worship a cosmic killjoy or a cosmic ball of love or the Star Wars force. That's not truth. We worship God in truth, who he is, his nature, his character, his attributes, and because of that, the Holy Spirit within me has to worship.

That's worshipping God in spirit and in truth. But thank God Jesus builds us back up after that spanking. But this you have.

You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Now the Nicolaitans in verse six, there's a lot of different speculation, but obviously they're either false teachers or they taught people they could eat food, sacrifice to idols, or what I kind of tend to lean towards is if you look up the word Nico in laity, the laitans, you have against the laity in the Greek there. So these people possibly were against the laity.

You see this church hierarchy forming, much like say what's in the Roman Catholic Church today. You see that hierarchy forming and they look down upon the laity. They are the spiritual advisors.

They are in tune with God. The laity's not. So this word could mean against the laity.

So there's some type of corruption coming into the church that these people did not like and neither does Jesus. And then he says, he who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Do you know what that means? That means open up your ears and say, Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I? Wonderful example by the disciples. When Jesus said, one of you will betray me, nobody made excuses. They all said, but Lord, is it I? Self-examination, is it I who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says.

To him who overcomes, to him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. So if this is still talking to us in the context, he who overcomes, overcomes what? Overcomes pride and arrogance and this drift from God. If they overcome that, if they humble themselves, I will, tree of life, I will restore communion with them.

I will restore my relationship with them. That fervency. You know exactly what happened.

Do you remember your spouse when you first met them? Oh, you couldn't get enough. Now what happens? Can you leave for vacation for a week? Can you just go for a while? Not my case, I've heard of people saying that. But isn't that what happens? You couldn't get off the phone.

See you tomorrow. See you tomorrow. Everything with thought, every concept, the way you live, the schedule you made, the choices you made was centered around that first love.

Same thing in this area. And we notice here too that workers who have left their first love are defenders of the truth. Oh my goodness.

It doesn't stop there. Defending the truth though must come from a loving heart so it pierces and encourages. Some of those who are so adamant about the truth are also the most offensive.

Some of those who are so adamant about the truth, right? Like, I'm going to throw this at you. Are the most offensive. See you're supposed to rightly divide the word of truth and underscore and season your words with grace and come with humility and gentleness in order for it to be effective.

I don't know, but I haven't won anybody to the Lord by yelling at them and calling them names and belittling them. You know what, you're right. I do need to repent.

I mean, you're a jerk to me, but I do need to repent. See, the power is in the love and in the truth together. The word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We behold the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. Love and truth. Love and righteousness.

They're married. They're together. When you separate, when you just have only truth and you're so, so impressed by your own Bible knowledge.

I mean, I know it'll never happen, but these people, they're so impressed with their knowledge of the Bible, I'd love to have them sit down with Jesus for an hour. He would school them times ten. They would find out that they're not all that.

Be careful in this area. I've seen it destroy a lot of lives. Let me close with a few things.

One word, this type of Christian does not like to hear, the type of person we've been talking about who's left their first love, the one word they don't like to hear is what Jesus used, repent. Do you know why? They've been telling everybody else to repent. But you know what sometimes? We need to repent.

That just means a change of heart, a change of attitude, a change of mind that leads to a change of action. It's actually a turning. If you look up the word in the Greek or the Hebrew, it's a turning from where you were going to where you're going now.

And actually, I believe mature believers are repenting often. I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't have did that.

I shouldn't have acted that way. I repent. So the very word, the very word that will heal them and restore them is the word they are running from and not looking in the mirror.

Quickly, Jesus said quickly. Here's why. They are hurting and not helping.

They are dividing rather than uniting. I think about this often. When you're engaged with somebody, are you uniting or are you dividing it? Are you bringing unity into the church or are you bringing division? Because we know the difference, don't we? This little thing gets us in trouble.

This little ruly, unruly thing. James said it's like a little rudder on a boat that just changes the course of that boat. Or it's a little flame.

Did I say everything right? It's not supposed to be funny. But it is actually. And it's like a little fire, a little flame.

Have you ever lit a little flame? And it's just huge. It's that little thing they call a tongue that makes noises. And from what we're thinking and it processes and it says things it shouldn't say.

Are we uniting the church or bringing division? Because I didn't say this at the first service. Maybe I should. But one thing we don't put up with here is gossip and backbiting and slander.

We try to nip it in the bud when we hear about it because that will bring down a church just as quick as anything else. That little forest fire. So if you have anything against anybody, me, anybody else, just go directly to them.

That's actually what the Bible says. It's not biblical to go to somebody else and down talk that person. It says go to your brother who you have an offense against and see if you can reconcile.

So you're actually an heir when you don't do that. Myself included. You were supposed to go to that person.

So after we surveyed this church, I've got two questions for you. Number one, are you dead spiritually? Do you lack salvation? Now this person, you've been able to hear about a 40-minute family talk for 40 minutes, the church talking to the church about this area. But I also don't want to leave you dead in your sins and in your trespasses.

If you've never repented, you've never believed in the name of Jesus, you've been playing games, you've been playing church, you've been putting church on your checklist, but your heart is never broken and repented and called on the only name that saves, I want to give you that opportunity this morning. All you have to do is say, Christ, I need that. I believe that you died for me.

I believe that you rose again. You're my only hope. I trust in you this morning.

See, it's not the eloquence. That's what people don't realize either. These eloquent prayers.

Oh, Father. And it's like 10 minutes into it. Peter on the water drowning just said, Lord, help.

Lord, help me. That's a short prayer. We need to stick by that sometimes.

Lord, help me. See, it's the heart. It's the heart.

It's like, oh, I don't know that much Bible. I don't know, Shane. Just say, God, I need you.

God, I need you. And then the next group is most of us here, are you dying spiritually? Is your pride preventing a mighty filling of the Holy Spirit? A mighty baptism of love. People get offended at that word, mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism just means to be overwhelmed with the Spirit's presence and power. That's a good thing. And the charismatic circles have made it kind of weird, but it's a biblical thing.

To be overwhelmed with the Spirit's power. To be overwhelmed. A baptism of love.

Often when the Holy Spirit just fills your heart, there's joy unspeakable. I love cockroaches. And where does that come from? Just love.

Oh, that little guy, I don't want to hurt him. You know, it's just this love and love. I'm being a little humorous, but you know what I'm talking about.

There's just love that you don't understand. Why do I love my neighbor now? Why do I love cats? There's just love that falls out. It just comes out of you.

So do you need this mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit? This mighty baptism of love? Do you always have to be right? Do you think you're the final authority? Have you grown cold and callous? I'm going to read something from a book I try to read every few years. It's *The Way to Pentecost*. It's from Samuel Chaddick.

The subtitle is this. The preacher who burned his sermons and caught the fire of the Holy Spirit. Here's what he says.

I lived and labored for my sermons and was unfortunately more concerned about their excellence and reputation than their repentance of the people. But don't think this is just about pastors. You could put this in here.

I lived and labored for my work. I labored for my 501c3 status. My ministry.

My books. My education. My reputation.

Who I was. I labored to look a certain way in front of people. I wanted to get that Ph.D. so I could put on a business card and finally show my family I've arrived.

See, you've got to be careful. This can fit into all of us. Soon, however, his sermons were exhausted and nothing had changed.

Staring defeat in the face and sensing his lack of real power. Have you ever sensed that lack of real power? You're just like, I like what Shane's talking about, but I don't have it. He felt an intense hunger kindle within him for more of God.

At this point, he heard the testimony of someone who had been revitalized by an experience of the Holy Spirit. So with a few friends, he prayed and searched the Scriptures until God sent revival. One evening as he was praying over his next sermon, a powerful sense of conviction settled on him.

His pride, blindness, and reliance on human methods was paraded before his eyes and God humbled him to the dust. Well into the night, he wrestled and repented. He got out his pile of precious sermons and set them to fire.

What do you need to burn? Your precious books, your precious resumes, your precious reputation, and what you're trying to build in your own strength? As soon as he threw his sermons in the fire, this is in his

own words, I could not explain what happened, but it was bigger than I had ever known. There came into my soul a deep peace, a thrilling joy, a renewed sense of power. My mind was quickened.

I felt I had received a new faculty of understanding. Every power was vitalized. My body was quickened.

There was a new sense of spring and vitality, a new power of endurance, and a strong man's exhilaration in the big things. See, when I experience that in the Holy Spirit, I want to give that fire to you. That's the whole point of getting passionate and preaching this topic is to get this fire embedded into you so you say, I want that.

I don't have that. God, I'm desperate for more of you. I surrender.

Fill me with your Spirit. Then the tide turned. At his next sermon, seven souls were converted, one for each of his barren years.

And that happens. I've seen it so many times again. When they finally... God, I'm giving this all to you.

I'm throwing it in the fire. Once they're yield, then they are filled. Once they yield to his work.

Because we often do the things in our own strength, don't we? I want the recognition. I want the notoriety. I like having a victim mentality.

I like my appearance. I like this. And we don't want to give up certain things, but if we're holding on those things that we know are hindering the work of the Holy Spirit, you will not be filled mightily with the passion and the unction, the love of Christ that I'm talking about.

I mean, if I had a big old sparkles bottle, I've demonstrated this before, there's about this much water. No, maybe this much. And God wants that overflowing and overfilling so it spills out into everything else.

But we walk around so... we've so quenched and grieved the Spirit that we don't have that passion. Everything, Shane, you just read applies to me. I've lost that.

I've lost my first love. But that's the love of God. Jesus says, okay, here's where you are.

Here's how you need to get back. It's actually three easy words. Return.

I'm sorry, remember, repent, and do the first works. Remember. I've fallen.

I shouldn't be here. I remember that. Oh, I remember that.

And I repent, and I go back to that. And then I do the works all over again, the works, but now it's with the right heart. And you'd be amazed.

There's like a spring in your foot. It's like a bunny rabbit. There's a spring.

You're hopping to things. You're joy-filled. You want to get up in the morning instead of throwing the alarm clock.

Oh, here comes Monday. You look forward to Monday. You look forward to Sundays.

A worship morning? I can't wait for the worship morning. Oh, no, I don't want to go to that because something's wrong in the heart.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31999.mp3>
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