

Wounded but Valuable ■ Finding Intimacy in the Struggle

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the importance of pursuing intimacy with God, even in the midst of struggles and wounds. It highlights the need to prioritize God's presence above all else, to humble ourselves before Him, and to seek His face continually. The message underscores the value of being wounded but finding healing and redemption through Christ's sacrifice, urging listeners to respond to the call of salvation and repent from the heart.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, Isaiah 53:6, Isaiah 53:11, Revelation 5:4, Matthew 7:14, John 4:23, Luke 10:38, Mark 14:3, Genesis 32:24, Isaiah 6:1

Topics: "Intimacy with God", "Healing through Christ"

Description

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Transcript

And I mean, there's not a week that goes by, it just happened this week, that I'm not helping or reaching out to someone who's been wounded. Not necessarily by the church, but just in life and family issues, marriage. And if we're not careful, when we get wounded, like a wounded animal, we can run and hide.

And we can become bitter and upset. And that's usually why many people, you see them at church, you wonder, where have they been? Life has hurt them. They get upset at God, there's frustration and failure.

And it's not fun to go to church when you're not doing good, is it? You don't wanna be here when you're not doing good spiritually. And that's actually when we should be here. And that's when we have to tell our flesh, okay, get out of bed, let's go.

Well, I need to be here and hear from the word of God. And I want to encourage you on the last half of this, finding intimacy in the struggle. You can find intimacy with God in the struggle.

And as I look back over my life, I realized the struggles, the hardest parts were when I found the deepest intimacy with God. And I remember clearly, I could've went the other direction and I wouldn't be up here this morning. And learning to, Lord, that pain drives you to the cross, instead of driving us to bitterness and resentment and anger and fear and a critical spirit and frustration, that actually begins to take away the intimacy with God.

I don't like it, I didn't design it that way, but God blessed the broken road that led me straight to you. And through that brokenness and that being wounded, and we get wounded by the church, don't we? We wound people, I wound people, you wound people. And I know a lot of people say, but the church hurt me.

Yeah, that's pretty much the church. It shouldn't be that way, and in heaven it won't. But right now, people hurt people.

It's not necessarily about that, this topic, because we can be wounded by a lot of different areas. And I'm gonna actually glide through Genesis 28 through 32. As I told you before, we're gonna start going through a little bit more rapidly.

I'm excited to get into Exodus, Genesis Exodus, when they exited the land of Egypt and God delivered them. And of course, Leviticus, what God did with the Levitical priesthood and the sacrificial system and numbers and Deuteronomy and Joshua and Judges and Ruth. But I'm also having a struggle with, do I also now teach when Genesis is over, maybe a New Testament book? You know, and then kind of rotate that back in.

And I know everyone wants to hear about Revelation. So I'll be praying about that. That's gonna take a lot of study.

Boy, it's exhausting to hear the different views and to see what's going on. I just wanna be sensitive to what God is doing. And did you know we're having a guest speaker from Ireland next Sunday? And then also David Barton is gonna be here to talk to us about what the nation was founded on and why that is so important is because as we're getting into Leviticus and numbers, did you know that God created the legal system? I'm gonna really surprise a lot of you.

The institution of government is God's idea. He formed it, the institution of the church, the family, the government. And why is that so important? Especially now, if you thought, you know, many years ago, well, it's no big deal.

You know, we don't really need to get involved. Well, you can see clearly now leadership matters and leadership has always mattered throughout all of the Old Testament. Leadership matters because it points us in a direction toward God or away from God.

And so that will be coming up. But in Genesis 28, I think that's where we left off. And of course, it would take me a while to go through all of that.

And I wanna encourage you to read Genesis 28 and 29, 30 this week, you can get caught up. But this is, you know, we talked about Jacob and Esau, this big fight at home. Anybody have fights at home? I'm gonna just leave it there.

Just gonna leave it there. And usually that's because I believe God is working first and foremost in our hearts and in our homes. And so that's where a lot of demonic opposition is going to be, number one.

Number two is when you spend a lot of time with people, you're gonna tend to have a little more friction. And we saw it here, Jacob, and of course, he stole Esau's birthright and he kind of tricked them there but we also see from Genesis, can't remember exactly the chapter we were in, but God said that the younger Jacob is going to be the main guy, how's that? He's gonna be head of the household there after the father dies and Jacob and Esau, and they both depart. Jacob departs because Esau is going to kill him.

And Esau departs because it's time to get out of the home. Genesis 28, 15, God's word to Jacob was critical. In this time, as Jacob, I'm sure, is fearful, you think your brother's gonna kill you, you're fleeing.

Behold, God said, I am with you and I will keep you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you. Now some of you can relate to this, some of you cannot.

And I wish I could spend more time on this. But I believe, I truly believe you can hear from God. You can spend time in his word and he can deposit something in your heart that you know that's God and that's a word you can hold on to.

And we see from Psalm 119, 49, remember, remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope. So he's saying, Lord, remember what you told me? Remember what you told me that my son or daughter would come to know you? Remember what you told me about this area of my life? Remember what you spoke about this? Lord, it's hard, the waiting time is hard because we want microwave Christianity. But God says, no, waiting time is not wasted time.

Remember that word I spoke to you that I will do that good thing in your life. And here's where we get in trouble though. I've seen people on TV, they throw that out there like this applies to everyone here.

Well, number one, if you're not a believer, that will be difficult because you need to become a believer to really hear the voice of God. And some of you, you might be wanting to hear from God things that, or you thought you heard from God, but these are things that feed your fleshly carnal nature. And that's not God.

Anybody ever got in trouble by following the wrong voice? And so what you do is you spend time, that's why we're fasting this month, fasting and praying, Lord, I need to hear from you. And a scripture might come out, leap out and begin. God begins to minister to you through his word and gives you that word that what I'm gonna do in your family is gonna come to pass.

What I'm gonna do in your life is gonna come to pass. And we forget those sometimes we have a responsibility. Do we not? When God put on our heart to plant this church and we knew without the shadow, I mean, there was always, you never really know.

There's a little bit, I remember when Francis Chan, I was listening to him and he said, he knew that God called him to plant that church about 80%. I'm like, okay, I feel good. Because on this side of heaven with the sinful nature and I trust God, I don't trust Shane.

There's a good idea, not a God idea. But as you pursue that, we could have messed that plan up. We could have took a detour to our destiny.

And maybe that's where some of you are this morning. You're on the detour path through disobedience and you need to get back on the right path, the narrow path that God wants you on. And I believe as we talked about his sovereignty, his sovereign plans will prevail.

But within his sovereignty, there's a permissive will. I believe says, here's my will for your life. You need to live for that.

You need to live as if I've called you to do this. And sometimes that's why he shows us in advance so we can line up our character with what God has called us to do. But we can also get sidetracked and get off that road.

And that's why the enemy goes after most Christians. I believe, all of us, it's I believe that God saves you. And the enemy says, okay, but now I'm gonna prevent you from doing anything for God.

I'm gonna make you discouraged. I'm gonna have you fall off the right path. And I see it all the time here at this church.

People are just doing so great. And then they get off that path. And so it's hard to claim a promise when you're not walking in obedience.

Now, before you feel beat up, as I often say, it's not about direction or perfection. It isn't about direction. It's not about being, and I think John MacArthur actually said this, who I borrowed it from.

It's not about perfection. It's about what direction are you going? I could even add, it's not about perfection, but affection for God. And so God takes a mess and a mistake and can begin to reshape and reform and rebuild you and put you in the right direction.

But you gotta get on the right path. He can't steer something that's not on the right path. I can't steer the boat unless I put it in the lake.

But there's something to this, it's wonderful. I don't know about you, but this, I even remember a message years ago that Jim Cimbala preached on remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope. And I still have stuff in my Bible.

Maybe I'll tell you about it someday that I'm still praying about. And we'll see if God's gonna do it. And he keeps reminding me to press in and seek him.

And it's a long time to wait, isn't it? And then Genesis 29, we see now that Jacob meets Rachel. Jacob finds a wife. He goes to the right place.

Equal yoke finds a wife, Rachel. And in those days, the dad gave permission and then the dad tricked him. Late at night in the tent, I don't know how this happens, but somehow Leah went in.

And in those days, you're married after you consummated the marriage and he wakes up. It's a wrong person. I'm just gonna leave that one there and you can kind of take that to the Lord because I don't know how that can happen.

Maybe no candles were lit and just, but the dad tricked him and said, oh, we have to give the older first. And he worked for this Rachel. He worked years for Rachel.

Now he has to work again. Now he's got Leah. I don't want Leah.

I don't want Leah. But the dad tricked him. Maybe he's getting back at Jacob for being the trickster.

That's what his name means actually, a trickster, a deceiver, he'll catch her. But we know God. Maybe that wasn't a mistake.

But he ends up working. So now he's got Leah and Rachel. He's married to both of them.

Again, God's word does not allow for polygamy. I mean, I'm sorry, it doesn't promote it. It doesn't encourage it.

It allowed for it when people would do it and certain things would happen. Genesis 31, now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob, no children. And here's another problem.

Leah is the fertile one. Baby, baby, baby machine. Rachel, Rachel, they had baby mama drama back then.

Let me tell you. If you don't know what that is, that's okay. Rachel saw she bore Jacob, no children.

In those days, even, you know, it can be now, but those days, it was like a death sentence. You were depressed. You were worthless.

You didn't produce any children. And I know people can feel like that even today. And maybe God wants to encourage you this morning.

Take that woundedness to him and he'll show you how valuable you still are. That intimacy with God through the struggle. And I've known people, and there are people here who are struggling, they want kids.

Take that struggle to the Lord. Watch the intimacy that will be formed. It's incredible what God will do with brokenness and humility.

And she cried, give me children or else I die. You gotta want something pretty bad to say give me a child lest I die. See, she was wounded, but valuable.

We plan, but God directs. Again, Jacob was tricked. It's a wonderful opportunity to find intimacy in that struggle.

Genesis 30, verses 22 through 24. Then God, what? Remembered Rachel. Did he ever forget? And it would take time, but if you look up certain words in the Hebrew, it basically means God then began to act on her behalf.

You remember, he heard her cry. Well, that could preach a sermon right there. He heard her cry, he heard her perseverance, and he began to act on behalf of her.

And God listened to her and he opened her womb. And she conceived and bore a son and said God has taken away my reproach. And so she called his name Joseph, one of the most powerful figures in the Old Testament.

You know Joseph. We're gonna get to Joseph in a little bit. Incredible story.

So through that waiting time, through that pain, through that uncertainty, through that doubt, she brought forth one of the most anointed Old Testament figures that we have today. And again, I wanna remind you, waiting time is not wasted time. How often do we need to be reminded of that? Waiting time is not wasted

time.

I'm telling you, as we're into this October fast, I talked to my wife yesterday, I feel like quitting. There's no results yet. Hungry, moody, I feel disconnected, but somehow I was reminded that it wasn't until Jesus went those 40 days that he came out in the fullness of the Spirit.

We don't know if he was blessed during the wilderness experience. I would think so. But sometimes the fruit comes later.

And we've been so conditioned with immediate gratification. And even this morning at home, I look at the clock, it's 3.30, okay, God, Lord, I'm gonna get up, I put on worship, and it's just, man, I'm not feeling it. I'm not feeling it.

Do you always have to feel it? Or it's possibly the greater blessing to God is in the persevering when you don't feel it. And I'm convinced the waiting time is not gonna be wasted time. And that's true faith.

Lord, I don't feel it, but I know and trust you, and you persevere through that. We cannot look at things through the natural eyes. And also, she found joy in failed plans.

And then the plans begin to be realized, and then finding purpose in the pain. See, it's interesting, all of these things, we talk about the joy of the Lord, and it's incredible. But often, the greatest joy, joy unspeakable, often comes out of pain.

I love feeling joy when everything's going good. But there's something special when you're going through difficult pain, and here comes tremendous joy. Same thing with finding purpose in the pain.

That pain finally breaks us. And we begin to say, okay, God, now what do you want me to do? My plans are falling apart. I'm discouraged.

There's gotta be purpose in this pain. And as we've heard before, God has to break a man and cleanse a man before he can fill a man. I came across this quote, and I didn't research this person.

His name is Jacob Rodriguez, possibly a pastor. But he said something very interesting. Jacob thought he was marrying Rachel, but he got stuck with Leah.

He loved Rachel, he endured Leah. Yet Leah was fertile and produced many children, including Judah, the line that Jesus came through. With Rachel, it was love at first sight.

With Leah, he had to learn to love her. Your fruitfulness may come when the least attractive, through the least attractive things in your life, things that you have to learn to love. This might be a good time to insert for the young adults, and even those of us who are older need a good reminder.

That's real love. Real love is not eye candy. That's lust.

Now, it's good to be attracted, don't get me wrong. But real love, biblical love, endures in the difficult season. Love is patient, love is kind.

It doesn't envy, it doesn't boast. It's not rude, it's not proud, it's not self-seeking. It might not like the Rachel, but it's putting up with the Leah.

That's real biblical love. Here's what made me think he's a pastor. Sunday is my Rachel, the week at times is my Leah.

But actual growth happens during the week. Preaching is my Rachel, fasting is my Leah. I don't grow when I preach, but when I fast.

Altar calls are Rachel's, phone calls are Leah's. Sunday worship services are Rachel's. Rehearsal, worship team, you can relate to this.

Rehearsals are Leah's. Eventually you're married to both, but you better learn how to love Leah. Maybe it was just for me, that whole section, but it really made a lot of sense.

Because many times we pursue our plans and we're called to do that. But we just, those things we enjoy that are fruitful, that are blessings, the things we love, the Rachel, but we forget that God's often in the Leah's. And then chapter 31, Jacob flees from Laban.

So Laban's the dad. And after many, many years of working for him, he's made Laban very rich. And it was time to go.

And he took some of the livestock with him and different things. And Laban had a change of heart. The father-in-law had father-in-law problems and mother-in-law problems in those days.

He began to chase after Jacob, wanted to get his stuff back. Jacob's got some problems going on. He's since the womb all the way to the tomb.

You're gonna see him wrestling and having challenges. And then chapter 32 is a very interesting verse. Not only is Jacob fleeing Laban, but he finds out his brother Esau is coming to see him.

Remember Esau? I don't know how many years ago, don't quote me on it. 20 years ago, maybe, wanting to kill him. Somebody research it, let me know this week.

Don't Google it right now, because you'll look at your text messages and posts that came in on your Facebook and stuff. But there was this, Esau's coming, oh my goodness. But just to let you know, Esau by this time, his anger has subsided.

He's now married, he's got a lot of things and he just wants to see his brother. But something interesting happens while he's waiting to meet Esau, Jacob wrestles with God. Genesis 32, as he's wrestling with God, this wrestling match that goes on, God said, your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel.

So this is where God changed his name. And there's a lot here, I don't wanna read too much into the text, but that wrestling with God and God breaking him. That's where a new identity comes out.

And maybe some of you need that. You're stuck in the old man. You need to wrestle with God for a season and be broken by God.

And come out, not necessarily with a new name, but a new purpose, a new plan, a new goal for your life. For you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed. Now we know God didn't lose the wrestling match, correct? I don't think he, especially he's 97 or so at this point.

He didn't lose it. So what does it mean? He wrestled with God and won? Now again, a word study and taking time, but it gives the meaning that he struggled with God and he didn't prevail and beat God, he actually persevered and continued in the struggle. And as a reward, God rewarded him.

Jacob called, his name was from Jacob to now Israel. So as we go forward, the nation of Israel, Israel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, actually Abraham, Isaac, Israel, Jacob's name is changed. And Jacob called the name of that place, what? Peniel, Peniel, it's a Hebrew name.

It's gonna be important in a minute. And he said, for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved. Now, who did he wrestle? Well, we don't get a lot of different, different theologians are divided, of course, on this issue.

Obviously, it seems like some type of wrestling occurred and he actually touched his hip in the hip socket, was hurt and the Jews today still don't eat the meat that is on the hip socket of an animal because of this. So something, he met someone, but we know you can't see God and live. In the New Testament or Old Testament, he said, I speak to prophets through dreams and visions, but through Moses, my servant, I speak to him face to face.

But it goes on to say that he sees a glimpse of my glory. He sees a portion and even Moses had to turn as God's backside. Now, we know God is spirit and there's no physical form, but could it be an imagery there of God allowing? We don't know exactly, don't get caught up in it.

Because we know nobody can see the holy presence of the glory of God and live, they would evaporate. But there are sometimes where God can give you a glimpse into who he is and his character. That's one reason Jesus came to earth, is to reflect the image of the father and to show us God.

I've seen God face to face and my life is preserved. I did not die. That's why I love that song.

I wrote down the lyrics this morning. I come broken to be mended. I come wounded to be healed.

I hope you come to church that way. I come broken to be mended and wounded to be healed. And here's what's interesting, after this experience, okay, he experiences God, he meets God face to face somehow, some way, the presence of God, maybe it could be the manifestation of Christ there.

People talk about that in the Old Testament, Melchizedek and lots of different things. But, and I don't like to get too complicated and too authoritative, meaning this is exactly what it was, because we just don't know, other than what Scripture explains. But now, after he meets God, his name has been changed, incredible experience, you'd think he would be better.

But physically, he's worse. What's he doing? Hey, what's wrong with you? I met God. I met God, yep.

Well, that doesn't look like it was a good thing. Oh, it's a very good thing. See, this is the limp that will not leave.

It's a reminder of your dependence on God. It's a reminder of your brokenness. Some of you, you're struggling with things.

It could be, and I pray God takes it away, but sometimes he doesn't. Sometimes you can pray, you can pray three times in one morning, and what do you hear? My grace is sufficient. We don't know exactly what it was.

I've got my thoughts, but the Bible says that a messenger of Satan, technically a demonic, maybe a demon, harassed Paul. A messenger of Satan was sent to Paul to buffet his flesh, and Paul prayed three times to let this go. Physical ailment, a struggle, we don't know, but God said, my grace is sufficient.

Could it be sometimes in some of our lives that that struggle keeps you close to the cross? That limp that's not gonna leave. I don't want people to see my limp. I wanna be perfect.

I want God to take this away, but sometimes that doesn't leave. It has a purpose, though. Wounded but valuable again, and Jacob turns from a deceiver in his name to now meaning God's fighter.

Struggled with God and prevailed. He struggled all of his life, like I said, at birth and with his father, with his father-in-law, with God, and the name of that place he named Peniel means the face of God, the face of God, but I don't wanna just hop away from this important moment because Jacob had a life-changing experience. Jacob had a life-changing experience, and I think that's what's missing in the lives of most believers.

Can I shoot you straight this morning? Is that not true? Many believers have not experienced that life-changing moment that God has radically wrecked them and rebuilt them, that he has meant them and answered, that he has brought them to their knees in order to build them up, because that's when you're a changed person. You go from normal Christianity, yeah, I know about the Bible, I believe in God, but then to now you actually meet God. You don't run into him and he shakes your hand.

I'm not talking about that, but there's a deep spiritual experience that happens when you wrestle with God and he prevails in your life. Bars and entertainment have more passion many times than the church. I would love to follow some of you men around all week.

I bet you get passionate at other places. I bet \$1,000 you get passionate at other places, very passionate, because that's what you worship. And some of you, do you remember your pursuit when you're in love with your spouse initially? Where does that go? Where does that happen with some of you? Same thing happens when we're seeking God.

And I heard about this before and I've seen it before and I don't remind myself of it because it's a little depressing, but do you know that most people, even in ministry, they don't finish well? They're young, they start out on fire for God and then life starts and beats them up. As they get older, they actually get more bitter. How many older people do you see that just have the love of God in their hearts versus a very critical spirit? And that concerns me, I don't want that to happen.

I wanna finish strong. Well, what's the remedy? You've gotta keep the pursuit hot. You've gotta keep pursuing God.

I think that's what we do sometimes as the years go by. I know what the Bible says, I've read it 30 times. I've done all this.

I remember back in the 1980s, and we lose that pursuit and we lose that joy and we lose that newness and that fullness of the Spirit and people become critical and angry and I've seen even the older crowd sometimes discourage the younger. Instead of encouraging them, they try to, well, you know, that's not really real. God doesn't do that today.

You'll learn more as you get older and they begin to quench that fire that they themselves have lost. You've gotta get back to that pursuit if that registers with you this morning. You've gotta get back to that pursuit.

I wanna share something with you. I'm actually speaking next Sunday in Torrance at Rolling Hills Covenant Church, if you know anybody in the Los Angeles area. And it's hard for me because I've got two sermons in my mind.

But I'm talking about the story from Mark 14 where this woman came in and poured the oil on Jesus. There won't be a screen for this because this is all new. But she poured this oil on Jesus.

And there's two different accounts of this. A woman on his feet, another pouring on his head and it could be different situations, different story. The Synoptic Gospels and John are a little bit, they disagree on this a little bit, but the bottom line is we know there was a woman who poured this expensive oil on Jesus.

And were the people happy? They were indignant. Why was this fragrant oil wasted on Jesus? For we could have sold it and given the money to the poor and they criticized her sharply. I'm gonna share just a few points that I'm sharing next week.

There is no such thing as wasted worship. Did you, you probably don't know, but this church gets criticized sharply because of our worship. Some people in there are too loud.

I'd rather I'm too loud than too quiet. That's too much worship, that altar. I don't know about that.

That's a little emotional. Yeah, you need to get some. Criticizing, criticizing.

There's no such thing as wasted worship. The reason is pride prevents intimacy. Pride prevents intimacy with God.

Anybody struggle with that? We've got a persona. We've got, I don't want people thinking too much about me. And prideful comes in, a critical spirit comes in.

And I've been waiting to tell you this story for a few years. Brian Long, find him on YouTube when he spoke here. It's incredible, three messages he gave during a Red in the Heavens type of event that we have.

It was more of a revival weekend. And it's a story of W.P. Nicholson and Daft Jimmy. It'll make sense in a minute.

W.P. Nicholson was a high-ranking Presbyterian, a theologian, very smart. And of course, Presbyterian, coming from John Calvin, the five points of Calvinism, untold depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, perseverance. He had it down.

Theologian, smart, astute. People say, oh, there's a great teacher. But he knew he was missing the fullness of the spirit.

He knew he wasn't, why are all these other people so excited, but I'm not? What do they have, but I don't have? He could only play it off so long. And there was a boy they would call Daft Jimmy. Daft was not a good word back then.

Meant a little, you know, just Daft Jimmy. He's just, you know. And so Daft Jimmy is walking down the street at Salvation Army, playing his tambourine with a little group, and they're just loving the Lord.

And they said, but the people aren't affected. We need to pray. And they recognized W.P. Nicholson.

They said, hey, hey, hey, would you come pray with us? In the street, all these people. He's, oh, I don't really wanna identify with Daft Jimmy. And these tambourine singing Christians, these emotional, younger, I've got an image to uphold.

But he was reluctant, and he finally went over there and he prayed with them. Daft Jimmy said, I've got a tambourine. Would you walk down the street and praise the Lord with us? And he knew at that moment, if he didn't listen to God, he would not receive the fullness of the spirit.

His pride had to be crushed at that moment. His arrogance, his trust in theology, his trust in what he stood for and his image, and here's who I am. How can I lower myself? Oh, but to go high church, you gotta lower yourself.

You gotta humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. You've gotta identify with the poor and the impoverished and the lame and the weak. Oh, we've gotta get rid of the haughtiness.

Come down out of your high ivory tower and begin to humble yourself before God. I don't wanna be seen at that altar, why not? I don't wanna be seen engaging in worship and worship mornings and all this emotional stuff. I've got an image to uphold.

Then you will never know the fullness of the spirit until God breaks you, and I pray he does. And he talks about when he made that decision, the scales of hypocrisy and Phariseeism fell from his eyes. And he experienced the joy of the Lord for the first time.

This theologian, the joy of the Lord, he didn't care what people thought. Oh, if we could get to that point. Can you imagine? Pride prevents intimacy.

Guys, worship has a cost. Worship has a cost. The more you seek him, the more you find him.

And the more you find him, the more you wanna seek him. Let this picture sink in for a minute. This lady anoints Jesus for his burial.

This oil is flowing. She finds herself at the feet of Christ and is being mocked. And I just can't believe sometimes what I see in the Christian community.

What people mock the most about this church is our worship, emotionalism. You're allowing people to come to the altar and be broken before God, and you're getting excited about worship. Brother, that's not biblical.

No, the problem is you've never been baptized in the spirit of God, and you don't have that relationship, so it offends you. It offends you. You wanna, hey, I brought out all 12 cylinders today.

I'm a double barrel shotgun this morning because I'm fasting and I'm ticked off a little bit. And so I'm just gonna let it go. But isn't that the truth? Is not that the truth? I'm preaching to myself.

I don't know how transparent. I've got so much I could tell you. God's been dealing with my own heart.

Do you remember when I gave a, just a prophetic word that someone says that God wants to do with this church? And you'd be amazed at the people that upset. Like, okay. God's not gonna do a mighty, powerful.

When God does something mighty and powerful, it's emotional. Hello. Hello, you are encountering God at a very deep and profound level.

But we want to keep God in a box. I don't want it to disturb me. I don't want it to mess up my plans.

And something I've struggled with, I've been open about this. It's in one of my books at the end, talking about revival, when I believe God put on my heart years ago. I was raised, maybe, I love experience, but I was raised conservative, right? I'm like, ask my, I don't get too emotional.

I'm just low key. But when God wrecks you, I got my MacArthur study Bible. I've got an image to uphold.

I listen, I'm just shooting you straight. Don't get carried away. Don't get crazy.

All things are done to be, all things will be done lawful and in order. Don't, you know, and we've got this image to uphold. I don't want people thinking we're weird.

I don't want to get like that church down the street, way over across, and you have seen the image, and people begin to shoot you, and look what Shane's allowing, and look at what Shane's doing, and look at the emotional, and like, you know what? I got to the point this week, I don't care. So if you're watching, if you're watching Armchair Quarterback, I do not care anymore about the opinions of men. I don't want to hear from you.

I don't care about your opinions. The problem is you are as hard as a rock, and you've never experienced the power of God, and we are tired of not being able to let God do what he wants to do. Now, on the flip side, we are a church of sound doctrine, of solid theology.

If it doesn't line up with this word, we're not going to allow it. But I want you to think, and I've said this before, but it fits. I want you to think about this for a minute.

What would you do, and this is thoroughly biblical, this has God all over it. I would say most churches in America know nothing of God's power and presence. They've got their songs timed, they've got their sermon timed, they've got their song and Bible, we're out of here.

That's not God moving in the service. You don't see anything in the book of Acts happening. What happened? They're waiting in an upper room, 120 people.

They fill the wind, and there's no windows open, or maybe there are, there's gushing wind, flames of fire. If you see what is going, what you would, most of us would flip out and get out of here. I'm with you, right? I'm like, well, what's going on here? But isn't it interesting? That's biblical, God did that.

God did that, that's biblical. Now, of course, when he's working, so is the enemy. So it's a very difficult thing to navigate and to steward.

But I'm telling you, are you W.P. Nicholson or Daft Jimmy? You better humble yourself before God. She was at the feet of Jesus, weeping and worshiping, and she was mocked. Is that amazing? What happens, those people mock that is because they've never experienced it, and they are jealous, and they are hard,

and they are rigid in their hearts.

You know the story. Also, Martha, Martha. Martha's good, what Martha did is good.

Me and my wife talked about that this week. Martha, Martha, you're worried about many things, but Mary has chosen, chosen, chosen, that which is foundational, that which is important, that which is the priority. And it's not to be a worker, it's to be a worshiper.

See, too many people, and I'm gonna release this to we have 40 people signed up, 40 volunteers for ushering. Be careful you're not hiding your lack of intimacy with working. So I've seen it over the years.

People who are not worshipers, there'll be lots of workers because they lack in the area of worship, and the working hides it. I'm here to expose it because your work should flow from worship. It's so interesting that the town of Bethany means house of answers or a place of poverty.

A place of poverty. His presence must be our pursuit. That's the title of my message next week, His Presence, Our Pursuit.

She wanted nothing more than His presence. Guys, if you get that right, everything else will fall in place. Everything else will, let me go on record saying, if you become a lover of His presence, the more I seek you, the more I find you, all those things will come together.

His presence is my pursuit. Doctrine, I love theology and worship, but His presence is my pursuit. I'm gonna get up in the morning pursuing you.

God, I wanna feel your presence and your power. Even when I don't, I will not falter. I will not fail.

I will keep that line. I will hold that line. And Lord, someday, there are days when heaven opens and the Spirit of God descends upon your heart and you're broken like a child.

But there are other days where it's a fight from the pit of hell. But you struggle through it like Jacob. His presence must be our pursuit.

And then finally, on this topic of wounded but valuable, one of the most incredible scriptures in Isaiah, Isaiah 53.5, I believe we have that one. But He was wounded. Jesus was wounded.

Look at the value that came from that. Do not dismiss your pain, folks, this morning. That woundedness you have can be a very good asset if given to the Creator.

Clay in the hands of a potter. But He was wounded for our sins, our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And by His stripes, we are healed. You know, people obviously ask me a lot of times, mainly people who are not believers, you know, I don't understand, why, jeez, I don't understand everything either.

I don't understand everything. I just know it's true. Now, you can't just say that something is fake, right, of course, but you know that I'm a sinner.

I was a sinner. There's no way I could stand before the Holy God. And it makes sense.

I needed to pay that penalty. I can't pay that penalty. Only the perfect sacrifice wounded for my transgressions.

That's where that big term substitutionary atonement comes from. The atoning work of salvation, Christ, we had to substitute in that perfect sacrifice, satisfy the wrath of God. GotQuestions.org says this, Christ was wounded for our sins, for our rebellions.

He had not rebelled against God. In fact, He always obeyed the Father's will. It was our rebellion against God that caused the trouble.

Christ in His mercy and His grace was wounded to remedy the problem. And I can only tell you this, the Bible says without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. The life of the flesh is in the blood and it's required.

And that's why the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ on the cross, giving up of His life, that sacrifice in order that we might live before God. To me, it doesn't seem like some weird story. To me, it actually makes a lot of sense.

A lot of sense. That's why Jesus said, Father, if there's any other way. He said, Son, there's no other way.

There's no other way than go to Calvary. But I like Isaiah here because he owned it. He said He was wounded for our transgressions.

He was wounded for our transgressions. And this is what we forget. So many people hear scriptures like this, but you can't just hear it, you have to receive it and respond to it.

The narrow is the way. Narrow is the way. Why? There's few who respond to the message of salvation.

I don't know if you saw it on the news, but I instantly thought of this closing point the other day. North Carolina man dead after following GPS to a destroyed bridge that dropped into the water. Be careful what path you're on.

You can't trust GPS. You can't trust society. You can't trust our culture.

You can't trust anything but God and God alone. I want you to just ponder this this morning. Is anyone worthy? They asked that in Revelation.

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole? Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll? No one was found worthy. John began to cry. And the angel touched him and said, don't cry, John.

The lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed. And that's why we're all here this morning. Some of you may be listening or here.

I don't know everyone here with a group this size. The church is packed this morning. I don't even know if there's a seat available.

But if you've only heard about Jesus, that's called head knowledge. There's no heart engagement. The Bible's clear.

You have to repent from the heart to say, I'm lost. I'm lost. And it was so hard for me for years, not until my late 20s that God just broke me and spanked me.

Anybody relate? Why? Because of pride. I was concerned with how I looked to others. Can we be honest? Especially in my 20s.

People say, are you a Christian? Yeah, shh, shh, shh. Don't tell many people though.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/MnKFx1zgnyl.mp4>

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