

Seek For The Holy Spirit's Power

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit, highlighting the need for a deep hunger for God's power and presence in our lives. It stresses the transformation that occurs when believers are filled with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to live a life of holiness, boldness, and victory over the devil. The speaker urges individuals to persistently seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit, acknowledging that it is the key to experiencing true revival and becoming a blessing to others.

Scripture: Genesis 32:26, 1 Samuel 10:6, 2 Kings 2:9, 1 John 4:4, Matthew 3:16, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22, James 4:8

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

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Transcript

We have commands in the New Testament that are really very challenging. For example, we are told not to make Moses or Elijah our example. They were great men, but they are not our example.

It is very important to understand that. There is one example that God has given us, and that is Jesus Christ. And in the Gospels, very often He said, follow me, follow me, follow me.

We must take that seriously. Don't say, that is impossible. That is exactly what the devil wants you to say.

All Christian churches say, it's not possible to follow Jesus. Because they say, He was God, how can you follow Him? And that is how the devil has blinded the minds of people. Yeah, we know Jesus Christ was God.

But the other great truth in the Bible is, that when He was on earth, He did not use the power of God to live on this earth. This is a truth that we have preached in the church for all these 38 years. That even though Jesus Christ is God, He did not use that power when He was on this earth.

Because if He used His power as God, then He cannot ask us to follow Him. He can ask us to admire Him. He can ask us to believe in Him.

But He can never ask us to follow Him. But so many times He would say, follow me. Even in the book of Hebrews, it says, let us look to Jesus and follow His example.

So that is a truth that almost no church in Tamil Nadu or India preaches. And even though we have preached it for 30 years in Tamil Nadu, I still find very few people believe that it is possible. Very few people believe that it is possible.

I am not asking if we are walking like Jesus. I am asking if you believe that this is our calling. That is the first step.

Then we can go to the next step and ask God to give us power to live like Him. Do we believe that Jesus came only to die for our sins? Then we are like all the other Christians in India. But we believe that not only He came to earth, not only to die for our sins, but to be an example for us to follow.

Let me show you one or two verses. These are the words of Jesus in Matthew 5. Matthew 5.48 You must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. You must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.

That is a strong expression in Tamil. That means it is your duty, you are in debt to do that. That means it is like a debt that you owe to God.

That you have to become perfect like Him. In what way? See, we cannot be perfect in wisdom. We cannot love people like God loves.

We cannot be perfect in His almighty power. Whenever you read a verse like this, you must read the paragraph what he is talking about. In what way must we be like our heavenly father? He gives an example.

In verse 45 Verse 45 Your father in heaven makes the sun to rise on evil and good people and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. So, that means God is good to bad people. And that is what he is saying.

Please love your enemies. Bless those who curse you. In that area we must be perfect.

So, what does perfect mean? If you got 10 enemies, you love all 10, not 9. And look at these words. Verse 46 If you love only those who love you, what reward do you have? Because even the sinful people do that. And if you greet only those who greet you, what is so great about that even the non-Christians do that.

But if you are to be different from them, you must be like your father who treats everybody nicely. You must be like his father who treats everyone equally. Another verse.

Ephesians 5 We must take these words seriously. Ephesians 5 verse 1 Be imitators of God. Imitate him in what? I can't create the universe like he did.

Again, read the verses. Or the verse before. 4.32 Be kind to others.

Tender hearted. Forgiving others as God has forgiven us. And in that way, be imitators of God.

So, in all these places, he is talking about the way we treat other people. It's very important to understand this. Please listen to this.

God will treat you the way you treat other people. Do you know that Jesus taught that? So, in that area, he says, be imitators of God. As God forgave you, chapter 4.32, you forgive others.

Let me read again what Jesus said in Matthew 6. Matthew 6. Verse 14 This is something that very few people preach. But we have preached it always. Matthew 6.14 If you forgive men their transgressions, your father will forgive you.

But if you don't forgive men their transgressions, your father will not forgive you. Now, I want you all to think for just one minute. Please listen very carefully.

Just for one minute. Think right now. Is there anybody whom you have not forgiven? Anybody.

Anywhere. In your church. Maybe your mother-in-law did something wrong, you have not forgiven.

Maybe your brother-in-law cheated you of the property. You have not forgiven. Maybe some brother did something to you.

Maybe you felt the elder in your church was too strict with you. And you have some bitterness against him. Or against some neighbor who is a non-Christian.

Or somebody many years ago did something wrong, you still have not forgiven. Maybe your boss in your office treated you badly or dismissed you from your job. Just think for one minute.

Is there anybody in the world whom you have not forgiven? Only you know that. Your wife does not know, your husband does not know. But I want to tell you the truth.

If you have not forgiven somebody, I want to tell you in Jesus' name, your sins are not forgiven. I don't care which preacher told you that your sins are forgiven. I want to tell you in the basis of Matthew 6.15, you are not forgiven.

You may be a part of CFC. But you are not forgiven. And I want to tell you another thing.

If a person dies with sins not forgiven, there is only one place he will go to. And that is an eternal hell. You can't say that day, Lord, I went to the conferences.

The Lord will say, did you read Matthew 6.15? Do you know what the devil told Eve? Do you know what he actually told her? God has commanded this, but don't worry, nothing will happen. The first lie in the Bible. Do you know what is the first lie in the Bible? Do you know why Jesus said that the devil is a liar? Jesus said that in John chapter 8, the devil is a liar.

What was the lie he said? If you disobey God, God will not punish you. See Genesis chapter 3. The devil asked Eve, has God said that you cannot eat from any tree? And the woman knew the word of God. He said, God has said that you should not eat from the fruit of the tree, in the knowledge of good and evil.

Because, verse 3, God said, if you eat from it, you will die. That's like saying, if you don't forgive others, you will not be forgiven. That's like saying, if you don't forgive others, you will not be forgiven.

You will go to hell. But the devil said, no, no, no. You will not die.

You will not go to hell. Nothing will happen. Even if you disobey God, nothing will happen.

I am telling you. Eve, don't let anybody frighten you with all this. I am telling you, you will not die.

And like a foolish woman, she believed the devil, instead of believing God. Today, Jesus says, if you don't forgive others, you will not be forgiven. And the devil says, no, no, no.

Don't take all that seriously. See, that person did some harm to you. How can you ever forgive that person? Yeah, yeah, God will understand that your case was a little bit difficult case.

Nothing will happen to you. Don't worry, you will go to heaven only. That's exactly what the devil wants you to believe.

A lie. That was the first lie in the Bible. If you disobey God, you will not be punished.

God will not keep his word. He is such a loving God. You will not die.

Disobey God, don't worry. And what did she discover? She discovered that she died, her children died, and death came into the whole human race. So, right from the beginning of the Bible, we learn one thing.

Sin is a very serious thing. If you disobey God, God is going to keep his word. And don't believe the lies of the devil.

So, I want you to do another thing right now. Right now. Wherever you are sitting.

You think of the person you have not forgiven. Have you thought of all the people you have not forgiven? I want you to say to the Lord in your heart. Lord, I forgive that person.

I want you to close your eyes. Bow before God. Just one minute.

One minute. Think of the person or the persons you have not forgiven. One person or ten persons.

It doesn't matter what crime they committed against you. Close your eyes and say to God. Lord, I forgive that person.

And I forgive that person. And the other person. And if there is anybody else I can't remember, I forgive all of them.

Lord, I am weak. I cannot forget what they did. But I forgive them.

I may not meet them. I may not be able to fellowship with them. But I forgive them.

From my heart. And Lord, like I have forgiven them. Please forgive me all my sins.

In Jesus name. Amen. Shall I tell you something? I believe that some of you have passed out from death into life in this last one minute.

It doesn't take long. It doesn't take long to go from life to death also. This is one area you have to be very careful.

Nowhere in the bible does it say, If you commit adultery, your heavenly father will not forgive you. If you murder somebody, God will not forgive you. There is no such verse.

If you slap your wife, God will not forgive you. If you shout at your husband, God will not forgive you. Those are not serious.

They are sin, definitely. I am saying they are not as serious as this. If you don't forgive others, your father will not forgive you.

We are like doctors. Who tell you the truth about your sickness. If you got cancer, we will say you got cancer.

It can be cured. But if you don't accept the cure, then you can die. So be imitators of God.

Jesus said in Matthew 5. Verse 7. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. If you are merciful to others, God will be merciful to you. Psalm 18.

These are important verses for you to remember. Verse 25. If you are kind to other people, God will be kind to you.

If you are blameless, God will show himself blameless to you. If you seek purity, God will show himself as pure to you. But if you are crooked, then you will find God is also crooked to you.

What do you learn from these verses? That God treats you exactly like you treat other people. Especially people who are poorer than you. We are much smaller than God.

And there are many people in the world who are at a lower social level than us. If you have a servant working in your house, that servant is lower than you in the social level. I will tell you something.

Please listen. The way you treat that servant, God will treat you the same way. You say, but she is so stubborn.

God will say, you are also very stubborn. Be merciful to others. It is better to let that servant go away and not work for you, than treat that person badly in your house.

Say, I can't handle this. This is too much for me. Please go somewhere else.

It's a very serious thing. Because the Bible says, all human beings are created in the image of God. You know, it says that in James chapter 3. Let me show you some of these verses.

James chapter 3, verse 8. No one can tame the tongue because it is full of a restless, evil and deadly poison. With the same tongue, we bless the Lord our Father. And with the same tongue, we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God.

He is not talking about believers. He says, all human beings have basically been made in the likeness of God. And you curse them.

And you praise God with the same tongue. That is very dangerous. The way you treat other people, God will treat you.

You want God to be good to you? Be good to other people. Especially people who are lower than you. Let me show you in James chapter 2. And verse 5. My beloved brethren, God has chosen the poor of the world rich in faith.

But, verse 6, you have dishonored that poor man. And you give honor to rich people. You be careful.

That is how people in the world are. I want to be very careful in my life that I don't treat other people badly. If I cheat other people, God will cheat me.

It's a principle you must never forget in your life. God will treat you like you treat other people. That is why be careful about your tongue.

Don't go around speaking all types of evil about other people. It's very dangerous. God's grace will withdraw from your life.

I believe that is the reason many people do not grow spiritually. They sit at home and criticize all the different brothers in the church. And their children also suffer.

The children hear all that and they go away from God. So, whenever I see one family, children have gone away from God, I ask them a question. Have you been speaking evil about people in the church? Your children heard all that.

You are reaping what you have sown. No, that doesn't mean there is no hope. There is still hope for you.

Whatever sin you may have committed, there is forgiveness with God. Whatever you have done, but the Lord says, acknowledge your sin. That's all you have to do.

Only acknowledge your sin. Don't blame other people. Lord, I did wrong and I am reaping what I have sown.

I cannot do anything about my past life. But I have said that to God in my younger days. I said, Lord, I have done a lot of foolish things.

I spoke against your servants. I cannot do anything about it now. I repent now.

Please forgive me. I really repent. I don't want to do it again.

God has been very merciful to me. I want to tell you that God will be very merciful to you. But acknowledge your iniquity.

And say, Lord, help me in the future to be careful. There is another verse where Jesus said, in Matthew chapter 7, the first law that I taught you today, treat other people, God will treat you the way you treat other people. So if you want God to be good to you, be good to other people.

Especially to people who are lower than you, in the social level than you. There is no need to ask you to be good to rich people because we are all automatically good to rich people. But here is another verse.

Matthew 7 and verse 12. See, we teach the laws of God in the church. If you obey those laws, it will go well with you.

This verse is called the golden rule. The golden law. What is that? In whatever way you want people to treat you, you treat them like that.

Do you want people to help you when you are in some great difficulty? Yes. Then please help other people when they are in difficulty. When you make a mistake and somebody suffers for it, do you want him

to forgive you and say it's alright, it was a mistake? Yes.

Then treat other people also like that when they make mistakes that cause you to suffer. You know, this is especially in our husband wife relationships. Do you want your wife to always treat you with some respect? Do you want your wife to always treat you with respect? Likewise, treat your wife with respect always.

Do you want other people to treat you like that? Treat other people also like that. What Jesus says in the 12th verse is, this is the whole Bible. This is a wonderful lesson for us to learn.

I believe our life can change if we seek to follow these simple principles. In the old testament, man could not have the ability to live like this. See, like you can say, I know people have told me this also, brother, I find it so difficult to forgive that person.

I want to be kind to people but very often I just become rude. Yeah, it's good to realize that. It's good to realize that in our own strength we can never, never live according to these standards.

So, that is the first thing that we need to learn. Where is God's standard? Treat other people the way God has treated you. Treat other people the way you want them to treat you.

You say, Lord, I want to do that but it's very difficult. Okay, then the Lord says, come to me. I will give you the power of the Holy Spirit.

See, the purpose of all these commandments is to show you how impossible it is for you to live up to the standard. So, if you hear this message and say, okay, now tomorrow onwards I'm going to live up to this, I'm going to do this, you will not succeed. You need to come to the place where you say, Lord, I want to live up to this standard but I cannot live up to this standard.

Then you will come to God. You will say, Lord, please fill me with your Holy Spirit. My dear brothers and sisters, your greatest need is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

There's a beautiful verse that the Lord spoke to my heart many years ago. I want you to listen to this and take it as a word for yourself. 1 Samuel and chapter 10 and verse 6. This is what Samuel told Saul.

The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you mightily and you will prophesy and you will be changed into another man. Listen to that. When the Holy Spirit comes upon you you will be changed into another man.

Isn't that wonderful that he will do that? We must come to him with a thirst. Lord, I'm not satisfied with the way I am. I want to be changed into another man.

Another woman. I want your Spirit to come and fill me. I know in my own life that is what God did.

My whole life was changed when God filled me with the Holy Spirit. It is not because I understood some truth that my life was changed. I fear that with many of our believers in CFC churches we are just understanding more and more truth.

We are not being driven to seek for the power of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to live this life without the power of the Holy Spirit. There are many examples in the Old Testament also.

Let me show you one example. Turn with me to Ezekiel 37. It says here that the Lord took Ezekiel into a valley full of dry bones.

He asked Ezekiel can these bones live? Ezekiel did not say no. He said Lord you know. So first thing he said preach the word of God to them.

See that is what you have been hearing. Preach the word of God. And so he preached the word of God.

And suddenly what happened verse 6 some flesh came on top of these bones and they became like human beings. And bone came upon bone in verse 7. And in verse 8 the flesh came on top. And now they did not look like bones.

Now they look like human beings. That is stage 1. I feel that many of us have come to this stage. We look like bones.

We heard the word of God and the bones have come together and the flesh and we look like human beings. But in verse 8 there was no breath in them. Then God said there is one more thing that is required here.

Pray the Holy Spirit will come upon them. Which is called here the breath of God. And when he said that breath came into them.

Then they stood up like an army. You see there were two stages there. First they were like bones.

And when the word of God came they became like human beings. But no life. Then the Holy Spirit came.

Then they got life. So I feel that many of our people in our churches are like in that stage 1. You know we sit in the church we look like believers but the power of God is missing in our life. The joy of the Lord is not there in our life.

We don't have a power in our life. We look like other believers we speak like them we pray like them and we understand all the things. One more thing is required we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And that was possible when Jesus came. John the Baptist said he will not only take away your sins he will fill you with the Holy Spirit. This is the answer to all our needs.

That's what made the disciples completely different when they were filled with the Holy Spirit. They suddenly became aware that Jesus is real. That freed them from their fears freed them from their anxieties they knew that God will be with them.

They were bold to face any situation in life. That is the great need we have also. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

We are open for the Holy Spirit to come upon us. That is what made all the great prophets what they were in the Old Testament. Another thing all the fear of the devil will go away from our life.

See in the Old Testament they could not fight the devil. Why? Because they didn't have the Holy Spirit. If you don't have the Holy Spirit God does not allow you to fight the devil because he will just knock you down.

There are so many believers who are afraid that demons are oppressing them. Is the devil troubling me? Is the devil troubling my children? People say the devil is coming into my home. It cannot happen if you are filled with the Holy Spirit.

See 1 John 4 See I am not showing you these promises so that you can live in the good of these promises. 1 John 4 The last part greater is the one who is in you than the one who is in the world. Do you really believe that? That whatever the devil may do someone in me is greater than him.

That reality the Holy Spirit brings to us. It is our greatest need. We will never be afraid of the devil after that.

Once we are filled with the Holy Spirit. So I want to encourage you to pray to God in the way that Jacob prayed in the Old Testament. There was a time in Jacob's life when God came near him.

And I believe that God is coming near you today. And Jacob prayed a prayer. I want you to listen to that prayer.

It is in Genesis 32. Jacob told the Lord. Verse 26.

I will not let you go unless you bless me. Will you pray that prayer? You go to God and say, Lord I will not let you go from today onwards until you fill me with the Holy Spirit. Even you children.

You must pray to God that he will fill you with the Holy Spirit. Change me into another person Lord. I remember the days when I was praying for this.

I said Lord if it takes 10 years, let it take 10 years. But I will not let you go until you fill me with the Holy Spirit. Even now I pray that.

I say Lord I want to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. Sometimes I weep and pray. Lord you can take away my health, take away my money.

Don't take away the Holy Spirit from me. I want the power of the Holy Spirit in my life. Every day of my life.

Pray like that. God is a rewarder of all who diligently seek Him. His promise is, if you seek me with all your heart, you will find me.

I wish that all of us here, just like you forgave everybody little while ago, all of you will now pray to God and say, Lord I will not let you go until you fill me with the Holy Spirit. I am willing to give up anything in my life. Any sin, anything.

Even good things I am willing to give up. Abraham had two sons. One was born against God's will.

His name was Ishmael. The other was born in God's will. His name was Isaac.

But do you know what God asked Abraham to do? He first said, send away Ishmael. So that is a picture of how God tells us to give up all the bad things in our life. That you may have done.

God told you, get rid of all those bad things in your life and you say, yes Lord I want to get rid of them. But now you are still not having the power of God. Because now God says, I want you to give up all the good things in your life also.

The gifts that I have given you, like Isaac, I want you to love me more than my gifts. You know how if you give a cycle to your son, the son can love the cycle more than he loves you. He spends more time with the cycle than with you.

That often happens with God's children also. So when I say give up everything, you must say, Lord there is nothing in my life which I want more than you. Lord Jesus I want you, that's all.

You can take away everything else. I want you to fill me with the Holy Spirit. I want the same power that the apostles got on the day of Pentecost.

That's what I said. I went to a Pentecostal church and I saw them making a lot of noise. I came back to my room and I knelt down and I said, Lord I don't want that.

I don't want a spirit that makes a lot of noise. I want a spirit that will make me holy. I want the same spirit that came on Peter, James and John on the day of Pentecost.

If it takes me 10 years, I will wait 10 years but I want it. If it takes me 10 years, I will wait 10 years but I want it. God tested me for many many years.

God filled me with His Spirit. I don't believe that would ever have happened if I had not been desperate and said, Lord I will not let you go unless you bless me. I want to tell you my dear brothers and sisters, I fear that many of you are missing God's best in your life.

Because the most important thing in the Christian life you are not seeking for. You are happy with knowledge and good fellowship and conferences. It's not enough.

Seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is what changed the apostles. Even seeing Jesus did not change them.

But when they were filled with the Spirit, they were completely changed. I heard the testimony of different people who had this experience. That's what gave me a hunger also.

In the Old Testament there is an example of a man called Elisha. I want to show you something from his example. He got a double portion of the Spirit of Elijah and I want you to see how he got it.

In 2 Kings 2, it says the time came when Elijah was going to go up to the whirlwind. Listen to this. Elijah said to Elisha, you stay here in Gilgal, I am going to Bethel.

Elijah said, imagine a prophet telling you to do something and you don't listen to him. Elisha, stay here. And he tells the prophet, I am not going to stay.

That's pretty bold. So he goes with Elijah. They go to the next place.

And Elijah says to Elisha, you stay here in Bethel, I am going to Jericho. Verse 4. He says, I am not going to go, I am not going to stay here. So he goes with Elijah.

Then they reach Jericho. And Elijah tells him, verse 6, you stay here, I am going to Jordan. He says, no, I am not going to stay here.

And when they reach Jordan, when they cross the Jordan, Elijah asks him, verse 9, why are you following me? What do you want? He said, why do you think I have followed you all this time? I want only one thing

from you. I want, verse 9, a double portion of your spirit. And he got it.

But see, so many times he was tested. No, what I am telling you is that God will test you at different times. He will give you a blessing and say, are you happy? Say, yes Lord, I am happy.

You will be there only. He will say, Lord, I am not happy. He will give you another blessing.

Okay, are you happy now? No, I am not happy. Or maybe some wonderful answer to prayer. The Lord says, are you happy now? No, I am not happy.

You got a promotion in your job. He gave you money to build a house. Are you happy now? No, I am not happy.

Or some of you girls, you found a good husband. Are you happy now? You say, Lord, I am not happy. And finally the Lord will ask you, why are you not happy? I have blessed you in so many ways.

What do you want? Lord, I want the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire. Pray that. Say, Lord, I will never be happy until you baptize me in the Holy Spirit and fire.

Make me like a burning flame for you. Till the end of my life, like a burning bush, burning with fire for God. I pray that every single one of you will pray like that.

There will be a revival in all of our churches in Tamil Nadu. If you say, Lord, I am not happy with any blessing that you give me, I want you to fill me with the Holy Spirit. I want to tell you another thing.

Don't go to some Pentecostal church to get this. You may get some strange spirit. I did not go to a church.

I knelt down in my house. God filled me with the Spirit in my house. It is Jesus who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit and fire.

Take some time, whenever you get a little time, alone with God every day. And let there be a cry in your heart, Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit. Many of your problems will be solved.

Many of your children's problems will be solved. Your life will become a blessing to all the people you meet. This is the whole secret of the New Testament message.

Some things will happen in your life which are much more than just understanding the word of God. You must never be satisfied with understanding God's word. I am not saying that is not important.

But you remember what happened when the bones heard the word of God. They came together and they got flesh. Was that good? Very good.

But it was no use. What is the use of people lying there like dead men? That is not much better than the bones. They needed one more thing.

The Holy Spirit had to come in. I really believe that is the great need in our CFC church. Some of you got fed up with the other dead churches and you heard the truth in the church.

You heard some CDs or DVDs and you came to the church and there was a rattling of the bones and flesh has come upon you. Good. Now you need one more thing.

You need to pray that the Holy Spirit will come and fill you. Then you will be part of the army of God. Brothers and sisters, young people, this is what you need.

I have heard of young people, young people who are just teenage girls filled with the Holy Spirit. You don't have to be old. You have to have a lot of hunger for God.

Say, Lord Jesus, I want this. You know that Jesus himself, when he went into the waters of baptism, he prayed for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God came upon him.

I said, Lord, if you needed it, who am I? I want this more than anything else in my life. Let's bow our heads before God. I didn't really preach a message to you today, but I shared with you what I feel is the burden of God for you.

That all of you will seek him to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You may not understand it. Don't worry.

You come to him and say, Lord, I don't understand all this, but I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I'm sick and tired of my defeated life. I'm sick and tired of being a hypocrite.

Lord, I want a change. I want something to happen in this conference. I want you to meet with me.

If it takes 10 years, I'll wait for it. But I want this more than anything else. You may ask, how will I know that I'm filled with the Holy Spirit? Pray to the Lord.

Lord, you give me an assurance that I'm filled with the Holy Spirit. Just like he gave you an assurance that your sins are forgiven, he will give it to you. And if you're already filled with the Holy Spirit once before, are you walking in that fullness of the Holy Spirit every day? If not, repent and come back to the Lord.

Lord, I need to come back to you. I have become careless about this fullness of the Holy Spirit. I want to be filled again and again and again.

Help me, Lord, our Heavenly Father. Lord, I find it impossible to speak about this wonderful subject. My words are not enough.

I pray that your Holy Spirit will help everyone here to see their great need. And I pray that you yourself will make up for what is lacking in what I said. That people will seek you with all their heart and their lives will be changed.

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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