

Experiencing the Presence of God's Spirit

by Francis Chan

The goal of preaching is not to make people walk away sad, but to lead them to repentance and change by seeking God's glory and humility.

Duration: 54:27

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, James 5:17

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, repentance, and being open to God's leading, especially for both the younger and older generations within the church. It calls for a willingness to take risks, step out in faith, and make room for the movement of the Holy Spirit. The speaker shares personal experiences of trusting God, seeking revival, and the impact of supporting and believing in the next generation.

Transcript

Here right now to hear Francis Chan, and we are extremely blessed that in his busy schedule, he would take the time to be with us. He's leaving here immediately. His plans have changed where he was flying home to San Francisco.

He'll be flying instead to New York City to be interviewed tomorrow by Mike Huckabee, and then he flies home to preach Sunday morning. So my friend, would you come up and we'll pray, and let you have this place. Father in heaven, you see this man, and he is a shell until you sit right inside of him.

You know his heart desires to say bigger things than he is, and the size of things that you are. And God, not only does he want to say them, but we want to hear them, and you're going to have to give all of us help to get that done, and we can't wait to see you do it, as we thank you in Jesus name. Amen.

Oh man, amen. That is everything I'm praying for right now. Everything, Terry.

I believe that was an anointed prayer. I believe what Dusty just shared came from God. I don't want to interrupt that.

I want to move along and say this is part three to what you just heard. I don't want to take us in a different direction, because I believe God spoke to me through you, Dusty, through Randy. I'm sitting there going, Lord, this is something bigger than what I expected.

I really believe exactly what Terry was just praying, that God wants to do bigger things than just the message I had, you know, and I believe sovereignly. I left my notes over there. You know, I just realized I got so into what you're saying, and what the Spirit was doing, that I'm just going, you know what, there's something going on here, and I want to have the courage to say what I need to say, what I believe the Lord has laid on my heart.

When you talk about, man, that illustration about the swimming pool, and jumping into the deep end, I believe that's what God is calling me to do again. By the way, amazing illustration. I'm going to steal it.

Pretend I made it up, you know, Bertha. No, because I was that same kid, you know, I wanted to stay in the shallow end. I wanted to be where I know I could put my feet down.

I didn't want to, you know, yeah, I wouldn't go. I was the same kid. I wouldn't jump off the diving board, and yet, I see in my relationship with God the times I did, the times I just dove off the deep end, because I knew what the Word of God promised.

Despite what anyone else said, I knew what this book said, and it was on biblical convictions, not on tradition, not just on stuff that I was taught, but when I was alone with the Word of God, and I would see something there, I go, no, God is going to come through for me. I can seek the things of God first. I can seek the kingdom first, and everything else will be taken care of.

He promises me that, so if I don't take a risk on that, how do I even know there's a resurrection? You know, I've got to trust every bit of God's Word, and the times I've taken those leaps off the diving board, off the high dive, in the deep end, because of a biblical conviction, those, I'm not talking about risk just to risk. I'm talking about risk because you are so convicted by the Word of God. You know, a lot of times in church, we like, we almost like convicting messages, and walking away feeling convicted, and I'm here to tell you that is not success.

Okay, I used to, when I first started preaching, man, I would just lay it out. I believe I still do, but I would just teach the Word of God, and if people got angry and walked away, you know, sad, I would be like, yeah, showed you, you know, and I mean, I had people walking out of the sermon as I was speaking, and there was a sense of pride, you know, and later on, I realized, man, a lot of them were not offended by God's Word. They were offended by me, and my lack of love in the presentation, and I just, there's so many thoughts running through my head right now.

Again, just so much I want to say in this brief time, but I, point I was getting at is, I used to think that maybe the goal of preaching was just saying it, and letting people walk away sad, and it's only the last few years that God has shown me that the goal is not for everyone to walk away crying. I mean, where do you see in Scripture Jesus teaching, and the people walking away sad, and that being success? Now, we see that like in the rich young ruler, right? Jesus speaks to the rich young ruler, you know, who has this self-righteousness, and you know, I've done all these good things, you know, I want to go to heaven, you know, on, and on, and on, but it says when Jesus says sell all your possessions and give it to the poor, it says in, I'm sorry, I can't read, verse, chapter 18 of Luke, verse 23, it says, when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. Jesus, seeing that he'd become sad, said how difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. Those who heard it said, then who can be saved? But he says, what's impossible with men is possible

with God. So, the rich young ruler walked away sad, right? Jesus gave him a message.

It was too much for him to take in. He's like, I don't know if I go, I want to jump in the deep end. I don't know.

I've got a lot of stuff. I kind of want to play it safe, just in case you don't come through. I want to make sure I can keep all these riches and everything else.

I want to play it safe. And he walks away sad, because he couldn't walk away from the stuff. And Jesus doesn't go, yeah, look at him.

I did it. I made him sad. No, he just looks at him, and I believe it was a tone of, it's so hard.

It's so hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. It's so hard for guys like that. It'd be easier for me to cram that camel over there, through the eye of this needle, than for that guy to enter the kingdom of heaven.

It was a sad moment. But what I love is, you know, the disciples are like, well, then how can anyone get saved? He goes, hey, it's possible with God. You know, with men, it's not possible.

But with God, it is. And what's great is, in the very next chapter, in Luke chapter 19, it says, he entered Jericho and was passing through, and there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich.

So in the very next chapter, you have this rich man, and you know the story. He's in the tree. He sees Jesus.

Jesus says, come on, I want to go to your house. I want to eat at your house. He jumps out of that tree, gets so excited, throws this party.

Man, I've got Jesus here. He makes this grand announcement in front of everyone. He goes, look, everything I have, I'm going to give half of it.

I'm just going to give it away to the poor right now. And with the other half, I have ripped off, I have stolen from a lot of you. I'll give you four times whatever I stole from you.

And what does Jesus say? Today's salvation has come to this house. Why? There was a repentance right there. See, that was the joy.

That's what God wants, is this repentance that leads to life, right? Godly sorrow. Second Corinthians. You know, godly sorrow leads to repentance, but there's a worldly sorrow that leads to death.

There's a godly sorrow that leads to repentance, which leads to life, not walking away sad. We walk away sad when we're not willing to change. We walk away like Zacchaeus when we realize the truth, and we actually do something.

We actually repent. We don't sit week after week, year after year, being hearers of the Word and not doers of it. But we hear the Word of God, and like Dusty was saying, we look at those dreams, we look at those biblical convictions and go, I'm going to change.

I'm going to do it. And we become like Zacchaeus. Or you can choose today to walk away sad.

But I'm just telling you, look, that is not the goal. And we don't want to be hearers of the Word and not doers. I mean, for our own good.

I believe that Satan is thrilled with a lot of our church services. I believe the enemy loves it, because Satan is the great deceiver. And James says, when you hear the Word and you don't do it, you're deceiving yourself.

And so Satan's sitting back going, look at these guys. They gather on Sunday morning to hear a message. They're not going to apply.

They're deceiving themselves. My job is done. Man, I hope this country is filled with church.

I hope they fill them all up and preach the Word of God and no one does it. That would be Satan's dream, because then they could just deceive themselves, and he doesn't have to do anything. Our God is a God of repentance, of actual change, of turning.

It's not hearing the Word of God and not do anything about it. Man, Isaiah 6, you know, one of the passages that changed my life. Isaiah 6 that you both preached from was one of the passages that changed my life, because it got me thinking about, wow, here's this prophet of God, a prophet of God, and yet the moment he saw God, he just says, I am dead.

Woe is me. Woe is me. Those words, woe is me, in the Hebrew, it's, I'm about to be ruined.

I'm about, when he says, I am ruined, I'm about to be destroyed. His immediate thought, when he saw God, I mean, think about it. You're coming in the presence of God, and angels, high angels, are covering themselves up and screaming, holy, holy, holy, and everything is shaking, and smoke is filling the temple, and you walk into that, and his first thought as a prophet of God, probably someone holier than any of us, he just walks in there, and he goes, I'm dead.

I am dead. He's going to destroy me. He goes, I know what I've done.

I know what's come out of this mouth. I'm a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes just saw, I just saw the king. He's, do you understand, when I saw that, I go, that's gonna be me.

It doesn't matter if I'm in front of a crowd, and people clap for me. It doesn't matter if I write a few books, and, and it's celebrated. It doesn't matter if I grow a congregation of thousands of, none of that's going to matter.

I'm just going to see God, and go, I'm going to be so stunned. Job, the most righteous person on the earth, the most righteous man on earth, when he encountered God, do you see how he just goes, my ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. I'm just going to be quiet, and repent, and dust cloth, and I'm just gonna, I'm just gonna be quiet.

I can't believe this. I'd always heard about you, but now I see you. Look, that's gonna be all of us.

Any moment, we're gonna see that God, and all the angels, and all the glory, and do you know what that moment's gonna be like? You're not gonna care about any of this stuff, and all the things you're holding on to, man, and we gotta prepare for that. This is real stuff. Look, the things I said to you, who, like I said last night, I respect you.

Most of you who are older than I am, I respect you. I honor you, and as I pray, I go, God, what's the most loving thing I could say to them? It's like, man, open their eyes to what they're about to encounter, about to who they're about to see, because I grew up in church, and for years, no one talked about this stuff. I'd see little paintings of Jesus with long blonde hair, holding sheep, and in your head, you're just, you just start thinking, oh, okay, that's God.

That's, no, no, no, this is, this is Jesus. It's the Isaiah 6 vision of, this is Him in all of His glory. That's who we're gonna encounter, and I just want you to understand what that's all about.

When Randy spoke, he talked about how the young people that he worked with, he felt like, you know what, they're only going to get about half of their potential, maybe, and he says, you know, some of it's because of the doctrine and not knowing God deep enough to make it through the difficult times, and I believe that's true, but I believe there's another reason why they may not reach their potential, and God help me as I say this. I believe there are people in this very room that will hold them back, and I work with so many young people, and they are dying to be led by elderly people who are still living by faith, by elderly people who are willing to believe in them like someone believed in you. They're willing to not, not just suppress them and say, oh, you don't understand, you don't get it, but maybe to humble ourselves, and I know this is difficult.

Man, it is hard for me when someone younger, I tell you, man, when I hired my youth pastor, and I saw these young people, you know, just taken off, and pretty soon, you know, great things were happening amongst the youth, and me, the senior pastor, not as much was going on in my ministry as in this guy that I hired, you know, and but then they started to challenge me, you know, they started to question some of the things we're doing in the church, and man, that's hard for, you know, not that I'm that much older, but as an older man to go, you're 18, you're challenging me, but then I went to the scriptures, and I went, oh, I think he's right. That's hard. He's right.

I'm off on this. Oh, she was right. I'm off on this, and that humility it took to go, oh, you know what? You're right.

You're right. You're right. I was off on that.

I was off on this. This is just what I was taught. It was what I grew up with when I searched the scriptures.

There was this humbling, because I, you know, ultimately, as much as I want to hold on to my pride, and as much as I hate being wrong, you know what? I'm going to stand before God one day, and I go, okay, you know what? I don't want to hold on to that extent. To where I have to stand before God and answer to him, but I've got to let go of some of these things, and I'm telling you, the times I've jumped in the deep end, amazing things have happened. The times I've stepped out in faith and really believed to the point of risk, to the point where, okay, I know that's more biblical than the way I've been living, so I'm going to repent.

I'm actually going to change my way of living. Man, those have been the most amazing times in my life. My wife and I, you know, we made decisions of giving when we read the scriptures and say, wait, he's going to come back in all of his glory with all of his angels, and he's going to split us up, you know, sheep and the goats, and it seems like the only thing there in Matthew 25 is about how we cared for the poor, because that's a true reflection of a believer.

It's not that those works saved you, but it's the fact that, look, you know what, if you're a lover of God, you're going to be a lover of the poor. That's just part of our characteristic. That's what the Spirit does in us.

He makes a slave to us. When we see those who are starving or have no clean drinking water, our hearts break, and we, like Jesus, go, I want to rescue. I want to do whatever I can to help them.

We look in scripture. We see it all through that book, and so it's like, let's start giving. Let's start giving, and people say, wait, wait, you guys, you know, people would ask me, they go, well, what if you and your wife give so much that at the end of your life you have nothing left for yourself? I go, that'd be awesome.

They go, really? But what if, what if you starve to death? I go, really? In America? I'm not going to go to any of the shelters and ask for food. I mean, are we really going to starve to death? You got to work hard to starve to death in our country. I go, first of all, there's that.

Secondly, I go, Jesus promises me that won't happen as long as I'm seeking the kingdom first. I go, but thirdly, let's just say hypothetically. All the shelters are done, you know, and God accidentally forgot that here Lisa and I were seeking his kingdom first, and we starved.

Let's just say, let's just take the most extreme situation that we give away everything to the ministry, to the poor, and my wife and I whittle away. Oh, I'm hungry, I'm hungry, I'm hungry. We gave away too much, and then we die.

I go, let's say that happens. I go, what a great way to come into the presence of God, to go, whoops, you know. I, maybe I took your word too literally, you know.

I, you know, I thought you're, you know, about caring for, what a great way to come in the presence of God. No, I gave it all. I'd love that moment.

I'd love that moment. What are we afraid of? You know what I'm afraid of? I'm afraid of holding on to too much stuff and coming before God and going, well, I wasn't sure if you'd come through, so I just kept this storehouse, and I kept building bigger and bigger barns. But no, every time we gave away, man, the way that God would respond, just supernaturally.

Man, and then, you know, I end up writing this book like five years ago. I don't write. I've never written.

I don't, you know, I'm Asian. I'm math, you know. SAT, you know, it's like my math score was, you know, near perfect.

My English is like, you know, it's just this thing where you just do what God tells you to do. Anyways, suddenly, they're telling me, hey, your book's going to be really successful, and looks like there's gonna be a lot of people. There's a chance that you may make millions of dollars.

And I'm looking at my wife, and I'm like, millions of dollars. What are we going to do? What are we going to do? And I said, you know what? If we take this money, we're going to end up buying things that we don't need. We're happy, and we'll regret it for all of eternity.

How many times have we bought stuff and go, why did I buy that? What a waste. I go, but if we give it away, we've never regretted that. And for all of eternity, we won't give it.

I said, let's just sign over all the royalties right now to non-profits. Just sign it all, give it all to the poor, so that we can't touch it. Because, I go, I believe this.

And if I really believe this, then let's just do that. And this amazing thing where millions of dollars starts coming in, and we're able to build schools, you know, hospitals, or whatever. Stuff we're afterwards going to go, yeah, look at that, look at that.

I mean, I'm talking about joy here. I'm talking about, you ever been to a foreign country and feed a kid who wasn't going to eat, unless you gave them that? There's something so amazing in that. It was so amazing.

When I came back to my church, after going to Africa the first time, you know, I'm looking at my wife going, gosh, you didn't go with me. But I'm looking at everything we have, and it's not sitting well with me. And she's going, what do you want to do, sell our house? I go, if you don't mind.

But I'm looking at these kids in Africa, and they're digging through the trash, trying to find anything to eat. And I'm thinking about our two little girls, at that time when we had two, we have five now. And I go, I'm thinking about our two kids, and what would I want someone to do for them? What would I want some rich American to do for them? I'm supposed to love my neighbor like I love myself.

Let's get practical here. And the amazing wife, I go, but honey, but I'm not going to have you sell the house. I want you to come to Africa first.

I want you to see it, because you'll understand once you're there. She goes, no, as much as I love this house, I trust you. And that afternoon, we started looking at trailer parks.

There's a woman of God right there, who takes the word of God literally, and says, no, we're not just going to feel convicted. Oh, those poor Africans. Oh, those poor people in India.

No, there's a thing called repentance, where you actually do something, and you sell, and you change. It was our church, our church, who, you know, we were about to enter a 20 million dollar building program. And I just said, you know, if this is really what's going on in the world, how can we spend this much on ourselves? Let's just meet outside.

So what if it rains on us? So what if we get wet a little bit? Maybe we'll remember those who don't actually have homes, and maybe we'll actually do. It's about change, and to see some of the angry people leave the church, and others flood in, and go, no, you know what? That's right. I'll sit in the blazing hot sun.

I mean, what an amazing testimony that would be, if people drove by, and saw a bunch of believers sitting on a field. I said, what if they saw thousands of people sitting in the rain? They go, what in the world are those people doing? We're saying, you know what? We take this word literally. I want to stand before them one day, and to see the congregation come alive, as we started giving, and giving, and giving.

And to go to one of the most, one of the life-changing moments in my life, was getting to Africa, and seeing the school that the church had built. I was there earlier, when there's just naked kids running around, malnourished, everything else, and then I walked back, and I see hundreds of little African kids, so beautiful, all in uniform, all getting food, getting vitamins, shoes on their feet, getting educated, singing to the Lord, as I snuck into the back of this put together, you know, throw together little school house, and see hundreds of little kids. I'm just in the back watching them as they're smiling, worshiping God, and the teacher in the front of the room sees me in the back, and she stops everything, which I didn't want her to

do, but she goes, hey listen, stop, everyone turn around, look, there's Pastor Chan.

I want you to know that every one of you is sponsored by someone from his church, and all these kids start screaming, and clapping, and do you know what that feels like? And you know, people go, well, oh you're a martyr, you're just, I'm not, I'm saying that feeling is better than any car I could buy, any house I could ever live in. It is so much more blessed to give than to receive, and to take those leaps, and say, no, that's what I want. You should have seen, man, there were times when our congregation gave, and I would tell them about the projects, the way that God came through when we come in.

You know, we're going to give a million dollars this year to Children's Hunger Fund. We'll write a check for a quarter million dollars every, every quarter, and I remember the day, uh, the second quarter, or third quarter, after all the, all of the summer months, I go, we don't have the money. I was in a little bit of a panic, but I didn't tell anyone.

I'm not even going to announce it to the congregation, but we have to write a quarter million dollar check next week, and it's not in the bank, and did I open my mouth too soon? What in the world, Lord, what, what in the world, what did I get us into? That next Sunday, took the normal offering, said nothing. No one knew it was due. Monday morning, the people who count the money come into my office, and they go, Francis, you're not going to believe this, because they knew the problem.

I knew the problem. No one else knew the problem, and they hand me a piece of paper, and they said, this was the offering this weekend, \$251,000. You guys, it was unbelievable.

You know, I, I was calm, you know, I'm looking at this paper. I go, wow, that's really cool. Um, man, do you guys mind leaving, and just, just shutting the door? You know, it's one of those Joseph moments, where can you just clear this place out, because I just want to cry.

I just want to be by myself, and cry. I just want to be by myself, and, and thank God, and just cry before Him, because this is a holy moment that I don't think anyone else is going to understand. No one else even knows about this, because it was like, God, I, I've seen you come through for me, and my family, but when you come through for the church body, if we give this stuff away, and I just, just leave the office, and I just sat there, I just sobbed before God, going, God, you always do this.

You always come through in these amazing ways. Man, when I moved to San Francisco, you know, I just thought, you know, I don't like these conferences. You know, no offense, where we just sing, and, and speak, sing, and speak, and talk, talk, talk, talk.

I go, let's do something. Let's gather people in the city. I don't know if anyone will show up, but what if I just spoke in the morning, and then we worked all day, and we fed the homeless, and we, we cut their hair, we, we got Dennis, and, and, and, you know, fix their teeth.

We got our, you know, the class is optimal. Optometrists, you know, uh, ophthalmologists, we're optometrists. Which one? Both.

Okay, let's get them both there. You know, let's, uh, I just do all of this stuff, and, and see if anyone even shows up, and we had like hundreds of people sign up. Okay, let's just jump in the deep end here, see what happens.

The, the leader of the rescue mission realizes, you know, it was, uh, it was Wednesday before Friday. Friday was the conference, and Wednesday he goes, we don't have any meat, and Francis wants us to cook 8,000 meals with no meat, and we have no money. Meanwhile, they've been fasting and praying, but he has a staff meeting with his staff going, what do we do? It's Wednesday.

Friday, we're supposed to cook 8,000 meals, and we have no meat, you know, and he decides to borrow a credit card and go, well, maybe we do it on credit. I, I don't know what to do other than to buy a bunch of meat on credit. Two hours after that staff meeting, the local supermarket calls us.

Trader Joe's calls us and says, hey, something weird just happened. All of our refrigerators just broke down. Do you mind taking all of our meat? Literally.

You guys, amazing. Truckloads, truckloads, literally truckloads of pork chops, steak, chicken came to our front door. Do you know what a rush it is to pass out that food? And no, this came from the Lord.

There's no other explanation for this. So the next year, we do the same thing. Just this last summer, we go, let's do that conference again.

This year, twice, more than double the amount of people show up. So we had to do two conferences, one on Saturday, one on Sunday. The Wednesday, no, the Tuesday before, we have a staff meeting, and at the staff meeting, the kitchen manager says, hey, you guys, we only have enough meat for one day.

So don't give everything out on Saturday, because there's another 900 people coming on Sunday, and they'll have nothing to pass out. We're like, not again. 15 minutes, maybe 20 minutes after our staff meeting, we get a phone call.

Trader Joe's. It's only happened twice. 15 minutes after the staff meeting to get the phone call that says, all of our power just went out.

Can you take our meat? And it's to the point where we go, this is impossible. You should have seen our staff that day, how we were giddy, how we're just walking around going, can you, this is impossible. What last year was impossible.

Not again, but to experience these things. I'm saying it's when we step out in faith. When we go and we actually do something.

You know, people say, well, I don't really experience the presence of God, and I go, well, are you out making disciples? Are you stepping out in faith? Well, I don't feel Jesus next to me. Well, Jesus says, I'll be with you always, but where's the context of that? It's Matthew 28. Go, make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Teach them to obey everything I commanded you, and I'll be with you always, even to the end of the age. People go, well, I don't experience Jesus. I go, are you making disciples? People say, how come I don't experience the Holy Spirit? You tell me these stories where you experience the Holy Spirit.

I go, well, are you being his witness? Because why did he send his Holy Spirit? He says, you'll receive power when my Holy Spirit falls upon you, what, to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth. But we want to feel him in here where it's nice and safe. You go, oh, I think I felt him.

You guys, is that why he gave us his Spirit? He says he gave us his Spirit so that we could be on his mission, so we could be his witnesses, and we'll experience his Spirit when we're, I'm not saying we can't experience him in a safe setting. I'm just saying when I look in Scripture, it's people that went and did something, suddenly they experienced the presence of God. Man, I used to get, I got frustrated like a year ago, you know, being at this at a conference, and I'm going, Lord, how come, you know, I believe James 5 17, that Elijah was a man just like us.

That's my favorite verse. Elijah was a man just like us, but he prayed earnestly. And I'm going, God, how come I don't see fire come down from heaven? It was right before I was about to speak, God, how come I don't see fire come down from heaven? How come I've asked for this, and I believe James 5 17? You know I believe that.

You know I believe, just like Elijah did, that you could do this right now, that God, you could do this. How come I don't get to see it? And I was, I was at that borderline, almost frustrated with God, like, oh God, I believe. Why won't you shake the ground? Why don't you have fire come down, so that when I leave, people don't talk about me, they talk about you.

How come I've asked for this over and over again, and yet when I speak, I'm waiting for this miracle, and I'm not seeing it actually happen. How come, God? And it was one of those moments where I felt like God just opened my eyes to the scriptures right then. It's like he spoke to me through his word, and he basically said, Francis, Elijah was on Mount Carmel, surrounded by prophets of Baal, who were about to cut his head off if I didn't come through.

You are at a Christian concert. Oh yeah, and he reminded me that all the stories in scripture, it's when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow down, that he throws them in that pit of fire, and the king's like, wait, I threw three people down. Who's that fourth one? That somehow, this presence of God is in those places of risk, when we do things.

And I'm just saying, look, there have been times in my life, look, when I started my church. Yeah, let me just go with this. Let me just close with this.

I was married about, well, let me go back even further. When I was engaged to my wife, the church I was a part of fell apart. They kicked a senior pastor out, and then right before I left for my honeymoon, they asked me, Francis, will you take over the church when you come back? Will you be our interim pastor? I was like, oh my gosh, I don't know.

I'm 25, 26, I'm about to. Yes, you know what? If the Lord wants me to do it, I'm going to do it. I will do it.

Go on our honeymoon, we come back, we change our mind. Oh, really? Okay. In fact, we don't even know if we want you here because, you know, you were friends with the last pastor, and we really didn't like the last pastor.

Oh, okay. And I just remember looking at my wife, and a bunch of people had left the church. Some of you have gone through situations like that.

And I just got so sad for people that left the church and walked away from the Lord and started a Bible study with them. And then I just said, you know what? Why don't we, this is crazy, but we've only been married two weeks. What if we started a church? I just want a place where we really teach the Word of God.

I want a place where when we sing, we're really singing to Him. I want, even if it's in my house and no one else shows up, just a couple of our friends, I want the real thing. And my wife, you know, looking at me, and I go, look, that means we get no money, and you work full-time and support us for a while.

And I go, if it doesn't work out, I'll go wait tables or something. I go, but I just want to be right before the Lord. And again, the godly woman I married says, you know what? If that's what you believe God's called us to, then let's do it.

And amazing, amazing what God did in that place. I had no idea. I didn't know what I was doing, but I'll tell you the first thing I did.

I found the oldest guy I knew, a guy named Ron Wilson, and a man who loved the Lord, an older man I could actually look up to. And I said, Ron, what if I did this? People aren't believing in me. I don't want to do anything that would be offensive to God.

And Ron said, this older man looked at me and says, Francis, I will follow you wherever you go, because I believe the Spirit of God's in you. Do you know what that did for me as a young man? To have a 60-year-old man look at me and say, I'll go wherever you go. I will follow you.

Like you? Really? You would, like you would show up to service. Like you would actually be, like it blew my mind that an older man would come alongside of me and believe in me. Do you know the courage? It blew my mind that this woman that I married said, no, I believe God's in you, so I'm going to follow you.

And that is, of course, an older man knows that I'm going to make mistakes. I'm going to do dumb things. But he saw the Spirit of God in me and says, I'm going to trust that guy.

I know him enough to know that the Spirit of God lives in him, and God's moving in him, and something might happen here, so I'm going to support him. Do you know what that does for a younger guy? Versus having people say, well, you know what, I don't know if you're going to do it. You know, we don't want you in our church.

You might ruin something, and we're trying to protect something. What are you even trying to protect? You may be protecting your church from the movement of God. Versus this man who took a chance and said, no, I see the Spirit of God in that man, and I'm going to let him in.

In fact, I'm going to support him, and I'm going to build him up, which is what I see in Scripture the older men are supposed to do. I'm going to pass the baton to him. I'm going to let go.

That's what I believe this message is about today. I believe this is the reason why I'm here, just to jump in the deep end for a second and go, I believe that there are some of you who could be preventing the move of God. As I see some of these young men rising up in your church, the Spirit of God is upon them, and my fear is that some of you older people, not all of you, you'll have to stand before the God tonight and know whether you're one of those that are getting in the way, or one of those that are encouraging the young people.

I'm not saying let them walk away from the faith. I'm not saying compromise the Word of God, but I'm saying dig deep into why you're resisting, and is it truly from the Scriptures? Is it truly from the Scriptures? Are you sure that you're not going to pass on the church because of a biblical conviction, or just something you were raised with? Because you will stand before God on that, and some of you may still have to stand

up on your boards and say, look, I believe what's about to happen is the Spirit of God, and I believe we're going to have to pass it on to the young people, and maybe you need to be the first one on your council to do it. I wasn't going to bring this up, but I don't want to do anything in the flesh, and so I'm still debating right now.

Okay, listen, let me keep it a little bit generic. It's okay. I don't ever want to slander.

I don't ever want to do anything except out of love, and so I'm just watching my heart right now and going, okay, is this, are you sure this is love and not pride or anything else, and I believe this is out of a heart of love that I'm about to say what I'm about to say. Look, when I moved to San Francisco, a dark, dark city, dark, dark city. I've never been in such a dark place.

You feel it. You walk in. You just know it spiritually.

Yeah, there's a lot of great history. It's a beautiful city. I'm learning to love it.

I was born in that city. I never lived there, but my mother died giving birth to me in that city. I was named after the city because my mother died there.

Then they shipped me to Hong Kong right after I was born because my dad had no way of taking care of me, and you know, but so there's something about that city. My mom was buried there. My dad's buried there.

Came back to the city and saw some just, it was sad. Ran into a member of one of your churches. Praise God, we became friends, and he was so excited about maybe we can do something.

Maybe we can do something together here, and I got real excited, and I go, man, you've got this giant facility. No one goes here. Just a little old crowd that's dying out.

Let me bring in some young people. Let's just pray together and see what the Lord might do. A bunch of young people came in, and we worshiped together without instruments.

It's like, we'll adapt. We'll conform. Let's just, let's just be respectful and worship, and the prayer, it was just exciting.

I thought, wow, maybe we'll just, you're right. You know, we're in this dark place. You've got this facility.

Maybe we can just fill it up again, and no, no, no, no, we're not going to do it. It's like, are you sure? I mean, you've got this stuff, and you know, like we could see a movement of God. No, no, we got to protect this.

Man, it was heartbreaking to me. I'm not going to lie to you. It kind of dampened my spirit a little bit.

It's like, well, why wouldn't you? What are you trying to protect at this point, and then I think a lot of us, maybe I'm saying this out of love, you know, and out of love, I even, you know, said, hey, you may want to talk to that group and go, look, we have this stuff that could be used for the kingdom. Are you sure you want to protect it from that, because you will stand before God on that, because I want my house, my car, my everything to, I don't want to hold on and go, no, no, no, we're not going to do that. Man, I don't know what's going on in your churches, okay? I'm just saying, would you look for the move of God in the younger people to hand the baton onto? Would you look for that, rather than just an automatic resistance?

I understand there's a sense in which we've got to fight against the world.

They are trying to change our stand on the Word of God, on morality, and what God says is sin is still sin today, because that is the Word of God, and we don't back off on that, right? I'm not talking about compromising the Word of God. I'm talking about a humbling that needs to take place in those of us who are further along, to say, maybe they're onto something, and maybe I have to let some of these younger people make some of the mistakes that I made, and maybe we've been holding on a little bit too hard, and for some of you that have been in the shallow end your whole life, I'm saying, maybe this is the time where you just say, forget it. I see what's happening in other places.

That looks fun, and man, I'm 80, 90 years old. You know, maybe there's the Caleb's in this room that go, you know what? I remember when I used to live by faith, and so what if I'm 80 now? Who cares? I still got the same God, and I want to believe again. I want to have faith again, and I want to believe.

I'm going to follow one of these young people that I see the Spirit of God in. Is he going to make mistakes? Absolutely. I mean, I could sit up here and spend the whole day telling you my mistakes, but I'm telling you right now, I love Jesus Christ.

I love God. I love everything He's done for me. Am I still going to make mistakes? Yes, I am, but I want to do what the Spirit wants me to do, and I believe, I believe like Elijah, that there may be a day where I call down fire from heaven.

I believe that can still happen, and man, I tell you, there is nothing like older people who will come alongside of me and support me. Older people that even have means and say, you know what? Here, use my building. You know, here, use my car.

Here, use my knowledge. Here, use anything I can give to you to pass on, because I hope you have a double portion of whatever I had, because this is about the kingdom, and it's not about me, and I'm just saying, you know what? Look deep. Look deep into your heart.

Is that belief still there? Is that faith still there? Try to think back to when you were young, and you had those crazy ideas. How awesome it would have been if an older person like you now would have come alongside and said, you know what? I believe in you. I thank God for Ron Wilson.

I thank God for elderly people who came into my life and prayed for me. I thank God for my wife's grandmother who was on her knees praying every day. I thank God for a man in India just just two days ago called me on the phone to say, I pray for you every single day.

A man who's already been in the ministry 40 or 50 years and just has led over 2 million people to the Lord, true disciples of Jesus, who are willing to die for their faith, and he's telling me he prays for me, and he believes, and do you know what that does? Where you go, okay, I thought God was working through me. It's great to see it affirmed rather than everyone criticizing me, and these older people telling me it'll never happen, and then protecting the church from the movement of the spirit. It's time for a, I believe it's time for something new to happen here.

I would love it if I came back, and the majority of the group were in their 20s, because some of you let go and encouraged that, and said we want the next generation, and we'll make some compromises, not in scripture, but in the way we do things. Maybe I'll start conforming to the way you do things, because it's not a biblical issue, and then we'll agree on the biblical standards, and on the way we do things. I'll let it

go, because I don't want people going to hell.

It actually matters to me, and I don't want to stand before God. Let's pray and believe right now. Would you join me? There needs to be humility on the younger people, and the older people.

It is all about humility, humbling ourselves before the Lord. God, I pray for the young people in this room, the young people that these congregations represent. There may not be a ton of them, Father, but God, I pray for them.

I pray for a spirit of humility, that they would respect the elders, love the elders, love them, seek to learn from them. God, I pray for the older people in this room, that there'd be humility. God, open their eyes to areas that they've held on to that were not biblical.

They may actually be hurting the movement at this point. Open their eyes to young people, that they may actually be discouraging, when the church was a place where we're supposed to stir one another up to love and good deeds, that they may be the very ones preventing them. God, but you have to open our eyes.

God, we're fools. We don't understand anything until your spirit enlightens us. You have to open our eyes to what is true and what is right, so I'm asking you, Holy God, please show me where I'm wrong.

Show us where we're wrong, God. Show us where we're preventing you from moving. God, I do pray for revival, and I pray that it starts in this room with a humility and a repentance.

God, may we believe again that you can move mountains, that you could breathe new life, that you would take some young people. Lord, this is my prayer right now. God, would you raise up some young people within this church, maybe even people that are in this room right now.

Maybe there's some kids that are sitting here listening, go, man, maybe he's talking about me. That will be the future leaders, that will have a fire based upon your word and your spirit, and that they will not back down, and they will be willing to gracefully challenge. Maybe some who are stuck in their ways, but with grace, patience, and respect.

And God, right now, I pray that you'd break any strongholds that Satan has put into our lives. God, it's so hard to break habits, but by the power of your spirit, we can. And God, I pray for repentance.

I pray that there would just be a crop of elderly people who would repent, and humble themselves, and take risks to where the young people are just drawn to them, and fall in love with them. God, would those of us who are older lead the way, set the example in our faith, and recognize that we're going to see you any day. And before we do, we want to see another great move of your spirit.

God, only your spirit can bring us to repentance. So, I pray for that, Lord. And I pray that either we bring people to repentance, or you remove them.

And God, if I'm a person who gets in the way of your move, I ask that you remove me. God, I don't want to be that person. I want to be yielded to you.

We believe that you are God Almighty. You sent your Son, because of your great love and mercy, to die for us. And that he rose again.

And that if we would repent, be baptized, we would receive your Holy Spirit. And that through the power of your Holy Spirit, Lord, we could do things that the world has never seen before. And so, God, please fill us anew.

Fill us anew, we pray. Move in the Church of Christ, please, all for your glory. And may Jesus be the only name that is lifted up when it's all said and done.

In his name, we pray. Amen.

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