

A Call to Anguish

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of anguish and prayer in seeking God's will and experiencing spiritual awakening.

Duration: 17:22

Scripture: Matthew 26:36

Topics: "Fervent Prayer", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

This sermon titled 'A Call to Anguish' delves into the deep emotional turmoil Jesus experienced in Gethsemane, highlighting the concept of anguish in prayer and the necessity of seeking God fervently. It emphasizes the need for Christians to move beyond concern to genuine anguish for the state of society, the church, and the nation, urging a return to fervent prayer, fasting, and seeking God's face. The speaker challenges the audience to embrace a spirit of anguish, drawing from biblical examples like Jesus, Nehemiah, and Jeremiah, and stresses the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit for true transformation and revival.

Transcript

The title of the message this morning is A Call to Anguish. A Call to Anguish. And I borrowed that sermon title from David Wilkerson.

Do you remember him? Yes, hopefully some of you do. And he passed away some years ago, but if you get a chance, listen to that message on YouTube. A Call to Anguish.

And you will be transformed. And as I was studying for this message, that sermon came up and I listened to it again a few different times. And I want to give him, obviously, credit for the title, even though he took the message in a lot different direction than I'm going to take it.

Matthew 26-36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane and said to the disciples, Sit here while I go and pray over there. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and he began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then he said to them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.

Stay here and watch with me. He went a little further and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not I will, but as you will.

And maybe it's just me, but that verse really stuck out this week. It's Jesus saying to his Father, God, let this cup pass before me. If you're not aware, the cup throughout the Old Testament is the cup of God's wrath and indignation.

The prophets will use that imagery, the cup of God's wrath being poured out. God's wrath being poured out, the cup of his wrath treading the winepress and the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And Jesus said, Father, if there's any other way, Father, if there's any other way, let this cup pass from me.

And he's not saying it like I'm saying it. I mean, if you imagine Jesus Christ, our hero, the man, the myth, the legend, right? The truth. He's standing right here.

He's saying, Father, if there's any other way, basically saying, Daddy, Daddy, is there any other way? Please, Daddy, Father, any other way? It's as if the Father's saying, no, son, there's no other way. That is the only way, the only truth, the only life that nobody can come to the Father except through the sacrificial death of his Son. Imputed righteousness, that we take on the righteousness of Christ.

And he was born to die. He was born. He lived a life.

He knew. He started his ministry. He was preparing himself for this moment.

So when he comes here in this garden, and I think it was Luke who records it, the blood, there's so much stress and anguish that the blood was coming out of his corpuscles and mixed with water, and he was sweating blood. Father, not only did he know what he was going to be beat, and he was going to be whipped and scourged, he knew all of that, but he also knew that that point in time in history where all the sin from Adam down throughout history, all of the sin, all the wrath of God had to be poured out on Jesus Christ at that point of history, and that's when he cried out, oh my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why have you left me? So not only is he absorbing God's wrath, that the Father leaves him. And as a father, I can't look down and say, son, there's no other way.

There's no other way. That had to happen. He had to be crucified.

So when Christians come in church, they continue in sin. They mock the cross. They mock this life that we're called to.

It's sad. Because we see Christ's anguish. He's in anguish.

So if God says it's the only way, Jesus said it's the only way, who are we to say there are other ways? Just talked to a man last night who thinks he's going to get into heaven by his good works. Boy, they'll be surprised. Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping and said to Peter, wait.

Or what? Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again, a second time he went away and prayed saying, oh, my father, if this cup cannot pass away from me unless I drink it, let your will be done.

So Jesus' anguish was the result of what he was about to go through. A call to anguish. Jesus was about to go through hell on earth.

Our anguish should be from what we've turned into. Our nation, the church, where we see people drifting away from God, the decadence of society. And I use that word strongly.

Society has grown so decadent and perverse, it's scary. There should be anguish. The problem is we have concern, but not anguish.

See, concern will go, oh, that is sad. What's for lunch? Anguish will say, like Jim said, let's turn the clock around. Let's pray.

Let's fast. Let's seek God, because the laws that they're passing, and as I said before, the number one, the highest spike in suicide right now in our nation is girls 10 to 14. And they're sitting here in our audience.

My daughter's here this morning. How in the world can we say, oh, that's disheartening. See, there should be an anguish.

There should be a soul-wrenching. Not on my watch. Every father in this room, every grandfather in this room, every mother, you should be saying, not on my watch, devil.

That's not gonna happen. I'm gonna pray, and I'm gonna fast, and I'm gonna have this flesh cement and be crucified. I'm gonna seek God with all my heart.

I'm gonna be in anguish. Because see, that's what anguish does. It causes us to seek God.

Without anguish, you will not seek God. Nobody fills their stomach and watches ESPN and says, I'm gonna go seek God for the next hour. They can't because they're full on the things of God.

What about this week in the paper? Desert Rose Elementary School in Palmdale dispatched a sheriff deputy to stop a seven-year-old from sharing Bible verses with his classmates because somebody could be offended. And earlier in the week, the satanic temple from L.A. comes out here and puts a pentagon over the valley with their GPS. I mean, folks, the day of concern is over.

Where's anguish? And what David Wilkerson said in his sermon that I recommend, A Call to Anguish, when God determined to recover a ruined situation, He would share His own anguish for what He saw happening to His church and His people, and He would take a man and baptize him in anguish. That's how really God would change the course. When God determined to recover a nation, a church, a family, He baptizes a person in anguish if they're willing and if they're ready.

Why? Because anguish will put your knees on the ground and your face into the sofa. That will cause you to not eat that day. That will cause you to seek God.

Look to His Word. You rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. That's what warfare is.

You're not fighting against ISIS and all these things. You're fighting against principalities and against powers in the spiritual realm that are sent to kill, steal, and to destroy. The only way to pull down fortresses of the enemy is to pray and to fast and to be in anguish.

Anguish of soul. And like most of us, He came and He found them asleep. Most Christians are on life support.

They show more anguish over losing a job than losing God. Losing God in our society, in our homes, and in our churches. And you know this is true.

We're more concerned about the stock market than what's happening with the truth. We're more concerned about our retirement than what's happening to God's Word. And there's no revival.

There's no renewal without anguish. Jeremiah said, Oh, my anguish, my anguish. I'm in pain.

Oh, the anguish and the agony of my heart. My heart pounds within me. I cannot keep silent, for I have heard the sound of the trumpet, and I have heard the battle cry.

What Jeremiah is saying is I see the armies gauging up against God's people. I see them because they've departed from God. They've left God.

They've rejected Him. And Jeremiah says, I'm in anguish because of that. I see.

I hear the battle cry. I hear the sound of the trumpet. And just this week in the news, ISIS releases a kill list targeting thousands of Christians in the United States of America.

Twenty people just last night killed in Orlando, Florida. Where is the anguish? Where is it? We need gun laws back, Shane. No, we need our prayer closets full.

And I'm all for protecting ourselves, but that's not our only hope. When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted.

And I prayed before God of heaven. Nehemiah said that. Word came back that Jerusalem was laying in waste.

And Nehemiah said, why should I not be sad when the place of my father's tombs lies in waste? And agony and anguish, he prayed and he fasted. Here's another good test. If this sermon is upsetting you, then you need a heart check.

If you want me to hurry up and get through this, you need a heart check. It's funny. Sometimes I'll say things like that.

People say, aren't you concerned people will leave? And I'm like, no. People need to leave that aren't on the same page. Gideon got down to 300 from thousands.

If this kind of message upsets people, and there's division and disunity, then there needs to be a parting of ways. Because we want a church filled with God's spirit. We want a church filled with God's power.

We want to just worship and praise Him. We're not concerned about the petty little things that we all want to argue and complain about. Myself included.

I could be sitting right there preaching at myself. Leonard Ravenhill said, we need to close every church in the land for one Sunday and cease listening to a man so we can hear the groan of the Spirit which we in our lush pews have forgotten. And he's tying right into Romans where Paul's saying, we don't know what to pray for, but the Spirit intercedes and makes groanings that can't even be uttered.

There's an anguish there. There's an anguish before God because you're travailing. You're anguishing.

It's hard to pray and really pray if you've got Doritos in one hand and a soda in the other, or you're on your way to hurry to work, or you're just sitting around the table. Let's pray real quick. It's all good.

Do it please. But I'm talking about soul searching, heart wrenching, God changing His direction type of prayer that pulls down heaven. I mean, I can take you to Daniel.

Daniel, 21 day fast, praying. I can take you to Hezekiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel. I can take you to different places in the Bible where people would pray and fast and they were in anguish.

They were in anguish of soul. So I want to encourage you a few things before we end. Take your anguish to God.

Jesus said, take this cup from Me. We have to take our anguish to God and say, God, this is not right. The divorce rate in our nation, the suicide spike, all these people coming in and doing things to our society.

The Bible verse, Lord, this is not right. I'm in anguish. God, would you move? And then people have the audacity to say, Shane, it doesn't even matter.

Have you read Revelation? I said, I don't care. I'm not going down with the Titanic. I'm trying to fill it, take out the water and let God bring revival and renew because I believe what David Wilkerson said.

When God determines to recover a ruined situation, I believe that God wants to recover the church. I believe He wants a spiritual awakening, but you've got to be prepared. That's why you're not going to see revival, and I'm not going to see God changing us just sitting at home with our feet propped up on the couch watching television gorging our flesh.

It's not going to happen. It never happens. Ever, ever, ever.

I've never read of any awakening, revival, God revisiting a church and a place and just His power and His presence so strong unless Christians were praying and fasting and in anguish and saying, God, Your Word says you must move. You promised that you would move. Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.

The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. See, your best defense is not in the sermon. It's not in watching the lyrics up on the screen or in good intentions or knowing about God.

Your best defense right now, our best defense is what we do every time when the service is over. The worship opened our heart, the sermon convicts us, and the time of prayer is when Christians, as a united body, we come together and we pray. We pray against the things that the enemy's doing.

We pray for our children. We thank God. Instead of asking and asking things, what about if we just sought the face of God? I often wonder if God ever says, stop seeking my hand.

Stop seeking my hand, what I can give you and seek my face. Seek my face. Because what we haven't read yet, when Christ is dying on the cross, He says it is finished.

It's over. Complete mission accomplished. It's over.

He absorbed God's wrath. He provided the way of salvation. That should be celebration.

So on one hand, we should be in anguish for what was happening, but on the other hand, we should be in celebration and God just works that in our hearts. So I'm going to have the worship team come up and begin to lead us in a few songs of worship. And as always, I'll just encourage you, go ahead and stand.

But you can even start making your way to the exits now, the hallway in the side. We've got a big prayer room over there now. And we just encourage all of you who want to pray, all of you who want to be filled with God's Spirit, to meet us there and pray.

And there's nothing wrong with that. There's nothing wrong with a person saying, I want to be filled with God's Spirit. See, that's not weirdness.

That's being filled with His Spirit. Peter was filled. Paul was filled.

Are you aware that Jesus Christ Himself was filled with the Spirit of God? It said after 40 days of fasting, through the temptation of the enemy, He came out in the power of the Holy Spirit. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. That's our only hope.

And my concern is we have correct doctrine. We have correct doctrine. But the doctrine has not penetrated our heart.

It has not broken us and humbled us before God. It's a very simple test. Am I filled with love and joy and peace and gentleness and contentment? Or am I filled with anger and arrogance and jealousy and backbiting and complaining and gossip? Those two things can't commingle, can they? If I'm filled with the Spirit, those things must run.

But if I'm filled with all that flesh, what happens to the Holy Spirit? Quenched and grieved. Sad. How can the Holy Spirit be sad? I don't know, but He can.

He can be quenched and He can be grieved. And I often get this imagery sometimes of the Holy Spirit when He's quenched and grieved, just waiting like that lion. Open that cage.

Would you just open that cage? And we keep that lion, that roaring lion, trapped in that cage. And when you fill with the Holy Spirit, you let that lion loose, and you're filled with the boldness of God. Then you can treat your family better.

You can love your wife instead of yell at her. Wives, you can treat your husbands with respect instead of disdain. Kids, you'll love your parents instead of mock them and tease them.

When you're filled with the Spirit, it changes everything.

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