



SERMON NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

27 Minutes to Change Your Life

Fifteen Minutes in the Bible, Seven in Prayer,
Five in Worship

Twenty-seven minutes a day in the Bible, in prayer and in worship builds the library the Holy Spirit draws on and the reserves of power we need when life demands a spiritual response.

PREACHED BY

Pastor Jason Mayfield

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SERIES

We're Rooted in the Bible, Week 4 of 6

MAIN TEXT

Mark 9:29

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Sermon Transcript

Amen, hallelujah. Well, let me invite you to turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter 19. I'm not — Mark chapter 19, there aren't 19 chapters in Mark. Making up all kinds of stuff this morning. Turn to Mark chapter nine. We're just writing Bibles up here, amen. Mark chapter nine, and we'll look at verse 29 here in just a moment. Today, we are continuing a series we've been in. We've been talking about one of the values of our church, which is we are rooted in the Bible. We are rooted in the Bible. Now this series, the value is we're rooted in the Bible. The series has taken on a little bit different tone in that we're really talking about how you can hear from the Lord.

Somebody say, "I need a word." You've never said anything truer than that, amen. You need a word from the Lord. And so we're talking about how you can get a word from heaven yourself. And so this morning, I'm going to do a little less of a sermon. Those things tend to sneak up on me and the preach comes on me occasionally, but I'm going to do a little less of a sermon and a little more of a workshop with you on how to actually spend time with the Lord in a way that you can develop your life to hear from heaven. And so what I'm going to talk to you about today is 27 minutes to change your life.

27 minutes to change your life. Somebody shout 27. 27 minutes to change your life. Let's look at Mark chapter nine, verse 29.

MARK 9:29 ESV

²⁹ And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

It says, "And he said to them, 'This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.'" That's it, that's all I'm going to read. And we're going to come back to it at the end of the message. 27 minutes to change your life. I regularly listen to four preachers. Three of them I'm hyper tuned in with. One of them I'm keeping an eye on and I'm checking in with every few weeks. But I've got a handful of preachers that I like what they do. I like how they preach and I want to be connected to the way that they are in the pulpit.

How many of you know you don't get better on your own? Sometimes you gotta partner up, and I partner up through YouTube, hallelujah. And so, in fact, when we came here, we sowed seed into one of those preachers. We said, "I want some of that to be released in our church." And so I've got four preachers I stay hooked up with, three of them all the time, one of them occasionally. Well, last week I happened to on Monday say, let me check out the one that I only check out every once in a while, the one I'm not listening to as regularly. And I turn on his message on the podcast in my car and he preached some stuff very similar to what I preached last Sunday, which is interesting to me.

I'm not particularly brilliant and that's not what I'm trying to portray here. I'm attractive, but not brilliant. It hurts when you laugh. But it was interesting to me because I don't really hear a lot of people teach this stuff the way I teach it. And I find that the Lord doesn't typically just speak to one person on earth. It spreads around. But when you can hook up with a couple of them people, that's an encouraging thing to happen. So he was preaching a lot of stuff very similar to what I was preaching last week, but he did do something that I see lots of people do.

And that's, he found himself where I think most people find themselves, in this conflict between being led by the Holy Spirit and reading the Bible and obeying the Bible. Almost as if at times they're warring against each other. And Jesus really told us that there would be two entities that would communicate everything that you need to know about the Lord. Jesus said to the Sadducees one day, he said, "And he said to them, 'This kind cannot be driven out by—'" Oh, I'm sorry, that's my first Scripture. This is Matthew 22:29. I can't read off the screen or I'll mess up.

I'll read whatever's in front of me, amen. Give me Matthew 22.

MATTHEW 22:29 ESV

²⁹ But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.

Yeah, there we go. "But Jesus answered them, 'You are wrong because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.'" You know neither the Scripture nor the power of God. Two entities: the Scripture, the Bible; the power of God, the Holy Ghost. Those are the two things that are communicating to us what we need to know about God and from God, amen? But a lot of times people seem to be trying to balance what's going on between these two entities. It's almost like people struggle with the relationship between the two, because you'll hear people say things like, "You need to be led by the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit will never tell you anything contrary to the Bible."

So now we're policing the Holy Spirit with the Bible, which — if the Holy Spirit is saying a bunch of stuff that's not in the Bible, one would wonder if we've got to go back to the beginning of the equation and ask, are we hearing the Holy Spirit? But here's the reality. These things are not in conflict. You don't have to be an arbiter of peace between the Holy Ghost and the Bible. They're not in conflict, rather they're in concert. The Holy Spirit and the Scripture are in concert. You're going to find out by the end of this series how powerful that principle is.

But today I just want to tell you this level of hearing from the Lord — this is what we talked about last week — that the Holy Spirit is speaking to us at this level by bringing the Scripture to our memory, amen?

JOHN 14:26 ESV

²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

He's drawing the Scripture out of our memory and he's communicating to us that way. How many of you have seen the movie Transformers? Y'all don't act like you haven't seen it. It's one of the biggest movies ever. More of you have seen it than are raising your hands. I won't judge you, I promise, but how dare you, right? Listen, I can't endorse it as your pastor, but I will just say Ashleigh and I saw it in the theaters and we were sitting there going, this is way better than we ever thought it was going to be.

It was a moviegoing experience. And in Transformers, there's a big yellow robot, big yellow Transformer, his name's Bumblebee. Bumblebee can't talk. Something in his little robot body is broken, amen? And he can't talk, but he can communicate through the radio. Well, let me just tell you, there's nothing broken about the Holy Ghost, but the way that the Holy Spirit communicates at this level is he gets you to tune in on some things that have been said in the Scripture and he'll give you specific instruction for your life and your situation. And again, let me remind you, four levels of hearing from the Lord.

The first one was you can hear from the Lord through preaching. That's the first level. The second level, through the Holy Spirit bringing the Scripture to your memory. This is really the level where you get to start hearing from the Holy Spirit on your own. You don't have to have a mediator to hear from the Lord. At level one, you gotta have someone to help you out because you can't listen to preaching without a preacher. Gotta have somebody else. But at level two, you can start to have the Holy Spirit communicate to you personally. So if you're seeking guidance, or you're in a situation that you're worried about or you're trying to figure out, and suddenly the Scripture starts to come to mind out of nowhere, I would pause, I would pay attention.

That's probably the Holy Ghost talking to you, amen? So this puts us in a little bit of a paradigm where if we take in less Bible, we give the Holy Spirit less opportunity to bring things to our remembrance. The Bible does not say that the Holy Spirit will download the Scripture into your brain. So you've gotta have some encounter with the Scripture to some degree for the Holy Spirit to have something to draw on, amen? So you gotta at least have a pass through. Some of y'all could use one, amen? Man, y'all gotta respond a little bit today on the laughs.

I need you to be charitable in your giggles. Be a giggle giver in Jesus' name. Or else I'll keep saying dumb stuff like this through the whole morning. But the Holy Spirit will bring it to your mind. So listen, pay attention, because when you have less Bible, you're giving him less opportunity. But when you have more Bible, you're giving the Holy Ghost more opportunity to speak to you. And today I want to teach you, I want to talk to you about how to build that library for the Holy Spirit to draw on. To, in essence, build the vocabulary that the Holy Spirit will use to communicate with you.

And it only takes 27 minutes a day. Somebody say 27. All right, number one. It's the first thing you need to do. If you want to spend 27 minutes a day with the Lord in his presence, building his library, you need to read the Bible for 15 minutes. Read the Bible for 15 minutes. John, how do you feel if I take off? I got John on the camera this morning so I can do things like this. I'm off my leash, amen. Y'all aren't having no fun this morning. I'm going to tell you what, I'm going to start giving y'all candy when y'all walk in, try to hype y'all up. I'm going to give you all the dyes in it too, to get you hyper, amen.

Everybody gets a mint when you walk in from now on, amen. So 15 minutes in the Bible every day. Did you know it only takes 12 minutes a day to read the Bible in a year? Only takes 12 minutes a day. So why 15 minutes? Because I know some of y'all need an extra three minutes. Amen. So 15 minutes a day. Now I'm going to be a little less systematic. I'm just going to kind of hit you with a bunch of thoughts today. You need to be writing, okay? Grab that little note thing in the seat back in front of you, write some of this stuff down, write it on your phone, amen.

Take this, because it's going to help you. One of the biggest misconceptions people have about reading the Bible that holds them back from engaging in time in the Scripture — big misconception, biggest one I've ever encountered — is most people think they need to understand the Bible to read the Bible. Imagine walking into your high school science class and the teacher say, "Don't use this textbook until you can pass the test." That makes no sense whatsoever. You do not need to be able to understand the Bible to read the Bible. In fact, you need to read the Bible to understand the Bible.

Here's some more for you. You're probably not going to understand the Bible the first time you read it. You're going to end a pass through the Scripture going, "Well, I'm going to trust that preacher that it was helpful, because it sure doesn't feel that way." In fact, all you'll do the first time you read the Bible is find all the verses you've heard. "Oh, there it is." In fact, I knew somebody who started reading the Bible one time, and she had gotten saved dramatically later in life. And she said, "I feel like I need to read the Bible." And some lady in the church said, "Just start in Matthew."

And so she started in Matthew and she read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and by the time she got to John, she said, in the middle of it, “I’ve got my hands in the air going, where is Noah? This is the same story on repeat,” amen. And we really do get into this thing in the Pentecostal church where we talk about daily bread. It’s kind of a misconception. We get out there and we talk about daily bread. Every time you go to the Scripture, you’re going to get your daily bread. You’re going to get what you need from the Lord every time you open the Scripture. In fact, we used to have little Daily Bread booklets.

I haven’t seen one in years, but we used to have little booklets that said Daily Bread. But we treat reading the Bible like every time you get into it, it’s going to be a spectacular spiritual experience. But here’s the reality. You’re going to have good days and you’re going to have bad days in the Scripture. Good days and bad days. In fact, this week on Monday, I was reading the Bible and it was a bad day. I quit early. I said, “I’m not going to read all the way through. I’ll pick back up tomorrow.” It was a bad day. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday were all normal days in the Bible.

They weren’t particularly good. They weren’t particularly bad. But Tuesday — Tuesday, I walked out of my Bible reading with a revelation that I could only articulate through like a calculation, like a formula. I wrote a theorem, folks, on Tuesday. You’re going to get the Mondays, you’re going to get the Tuesdays, you’re going to get the Wednesdays, amen? Hallelujah. So, have you ever heard this? How do you eat an elephant? Anybody know? One bite at a time, amen? The Bible is 750,000 words. It is an elephant of a book. You have to eat it one bite at a time.

So let me manage some expectations for you. First thing you need to know is that when you read the Bible, you’re probably going to have to read it three times for it to really start making sense. Nobody talks about this. Everybody talks about how 15 minutes a day, it’ll change your life. Not for three years it won’t. And don’t be discouraged by that. You’re tilling up the ground of your life. You’re tilling up the ground of your soul. You’re tilling up the ground of your spirit when you get into the word every day. But I promise, on the back end of that thing, the Holy Ghost will start to talk to you in ways you don’t even understand.

In fact, I was shocked one day to find out that this is actually a biblical principle, to read the Bible three times before you really get something out of it. And I found it in Exodus, because Moses is given the Ten Commandments three times. Moses is given the Ten. Now, most of us think he’s just given the Ten Commandments once on the mountain, he comes down. No, he’s given the Ten Commandments three times. First, he’s given them in the hearing of all of the people of Israel.

EXODUS 20:1-17 ESV

¹ And God spoke all these words, saying, ² “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ “You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴ “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷ “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. ⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. ¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³ “You shall not murder. ¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵ “You shall not steal. ¹⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

That’s through the preached word, by the way. That is level one of hearing from the Lord.

The second time he receives them, he goes up on a mountain because he decides he’s ready for more of the Lord. By the way, this is only for people who are ready for more of the Lord. If you want to live and just be a cultural Christian and show up once in a while, knock yourself out. But this is for people who really want the Lord. And so he goes up on the mountain and the Lord carves out two stone tablets and then writes the Ten Commandments on it. He comes down after this experience, sees what’s going on with the people of Israel. They’re worshiping an idol.

He gets so mad. He throws the Ten Commandments down on the ground and breaks them.

EXODUS 32:19 ESV

¹⁹ And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

He’s so transformed by his time in the word that he throws a temper tantrum. Say amen or oh me. The third time he goes back up on the mountain, he has to carve out the stones himself.

EXODUS 34:1 ESV

¹ The LORD said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.

But the finger of God still writes the Ten Commandments. There’s a lot I could teach you on this and I’m going to just blow past it today. But the third time he gets the Ten Commandments, he comes off the mountain and he comes down.

He sees people doing this right here. He's thinking, "What is that?" Until Aaron hands him a black t-shirt and says, "Put this over your face."

His face is shining in a way that it is disruptive to the people around him.

EXODUS 34:29-35 ESV

²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. ³⁰ Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. ³² Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³ And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, ³⁵ the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

The glory of God got on him the third time he got the Ten Commandments. I'm telling you, there's something about getting through the Bible three times. It will change your life. And I know if you've never read the Bible, you're going, "Three times?" Yeah, three times. It's not that hard. That's the other thing. Write this down in big, bold letters. It's not that hard to read the Bible. You know why it's not hard? Because they write it in English. It's not like you got to take it to Spanish and translate it and get it back.

It's it. I mean, even if you don't know what it's saying, you know the words written on the page. Amen. It's written in English, hallelujah. And I will just tell you, if you want to read it three times, the best way you can do that is get on a Bible reading plan. Now I tell people to read the Bible three ways in the first three times. First time is read it cover to cover. Genesis to Revelation. Just read it straight through. Get the lay of the land. I wasn't planning on telling you all this. It's kind of like doing a puzzle. You lay out all the puzzle pieces.

First time you read the Bible, you're just laying everything out so you can kind of see where everything is. Okay, Josiah is over here and David's over here. Moses, Noah. Okay, Ezekiel. All right, Elijah. Okay, I've got — okay. I'm kind of getting some pairs. Jesus and Peter. Okay, I'm figuring out where everybody is. Okay. The second time you read it, read it in chronological order. Just go online. Say, "I want to read the Bible in chronological order." It'll give you a plan. Download that thing. And when you read it in chronological order, what happens is it's like putting the edges of the puzzle together.

You get a good framework for how the Bible operates. Chronological order — by the way, the Bible is not written in the order of events. But if you read it in chronological order, you actually see how things happened in order. And then the third time you read it, just read it any way you want. And what'll happen is those puzzle pieces will start to fill in and you'll start seeing the full picture of Scripture. Oh, I'm a poet and didn't know it. Hallelujah. And last thing I'll say is faster is better. Faster is better. First time you read the Bible through, I think one year is good.

But if you can read it in six months, these three times, that'll maximize your life. By the way, I'm just trying to help you maximize. This ain't like — this is going to be a strange sermon. I'm already feeling it. It is a strange sermon. I'm a strange

preacher. Amen. Hallelujah. I'm okay with that. Praise the Lord. Big tip for you. Big tip. When you read the Bible, get you a physical Bible. Get a physical Bible. There's nothing sacred about it. I do find it helps, though. Get a physical Bible. And if you're not a great reader, or if mornings aren't great for you and you want to do it in the morning, add an audio Bible in.

And you can use your phone for an audio Bible. YouVersion, the Bible app on your phone. It has tons of free audio Bibles. You can read along with the narrator. Amen. Hallelujah. You know what's great? You also get to read along with the author, the Holy Ghost. Amen. Feeling like preaching a little bit. Number two. Number two, pray for seven minutes. Pray for seven minutes. Pray for seven minutes. Why? Well, it's less than 10 and more than five. Real spiritual answer here. Pray for seven minutes. Now, I just want to say this. I have been shocked over the years by the negative reaction on seven minutes I get from people who pray zero minutes.

Seven minutes is not a prayer time to roll your eyes at. Seven minutes in prayer will change your life. It will change your life. In fact, if you pray seven minutes a day, do you know that you'll pray a little over 42 hours a year? Would you want to mess with somebody who prays 42 hours a year? I wouldn't. Praise the Lord. And this is how you do it. Very simple way. Write these things down. Start with a little prayer list. Just like a Bible reading plan, you need something to help you get through. A little prayer list. And this is what goes on it. Number one, you thank God for one thing.

One thing. Not 15 things. Because sometimes what we'll do is we will try to thank God enough to ask him for whatever we want to ask him for. We'll try to twist his arm. But also, what'll happen is when you start trying to create these huge lists of gratitude — because let me just tell you something. If you're starting your prayer journey, you're probably not that grateful of a person anyway. That was a good place to say amen, but everybody felt that in the soul apparently. Hallelujah. Let me give you another chance. If you're not a person of prayer, you probably aren't that grateful anyway.

Amen. Some of y'all catch on quicker than others. Hallelujah. But thank God for one thing. And the reason is, is because you can get in there and start thanking God for stuff that you don't even care about. And you're not being grateful. You're just being pretentious. You thank God for something you actually care about. Something that actually matters. Then after you thank God for one thing, write a list of three to five things you want to see God do in your life. Three to five things you want to see the Lord do in your life. Measure them. I would also encourage you, keep it in your immediate sphere.

I'm not saying the Lord doesn't hear it. I just don't know how effective your prayer for some Middle Eastern government to do X, Y, and Z is going to be on your own. But pray for something you're going to see in your sphere. Pray for your children. Pray for — here's a good way to pray. Here's a way to think of it. I just feel like the Holy Ghost gave me: pray in a way God could let you down. Because some of us pray stuff that if it just kind of worked out, we would say that the Lord answered our prayer. But if it didn't work out, the Lord didn't really not answer our prayer.

We pray real vague, and prayers you can't really monitor in any way, shape, or form. And look, here's the thing. I want to give God honor in everything that I do. I want to give God praise. I want to give him glory. But there is a point at which you do want to sit back and go, "Okay, the Lord did it or he didn't." And I'm just not one of those people — if I'm praying for somebody who has cancer, I don't want to be saying, "Well, the Lord healed him after 29 rounds of chemo." I want to give the Lord an opportunity. I want to take it to the throne and say, "God, I want you to do it."

And I want to be able to either say, "I saw God move here" or "I did not see him move here." But when God does specific things, when God answers specific prayers, he sets himself up for incredible glory. And God will do things for you if you'll get honest enough and true enough with him, because he'll do it — not because — he will do it because he loves

you. He will do it because of the cross. But there's a good case to be made in the Bible that he will do it for no other reason than for his namesake. So give God an opportunity to bring glory unto himself by showing his power in your life.

Three to five things. And now, seven minutes doesn't sound like a lot, but let me just encourage you, if you are starting a prayer journey, it's going to take you a little while to figure seven minutes out. You will find two minutes and 15 seconds in, you have said everything you've ever known on the planet to the Lord. You'll start reading bills to the Lord at that point. "Well, Lord, I'm seeing here on the light bill, what is this surcharge, Holy Ghost?" And so in seven minutes, you gotta fill that in. But for those of you who've been praying for a long time, let me give you two tips that have helped me to expand my prayer time over time.

The first one — I'm not getting into this today, I'm not going to teach on it. I'm doing a big series on the Holy Ghost in the beginning of the year. But one way you can do it is you can pray in the Spirit. I'm going to tell you right now, you can fill in your prayer time by just partnering with the Holy Ghost and praying in tongues. You get you a lot of time in your prayer time that way. Okay, so that's one way. The other way is to pray the Scripture. It's to pray the Scripture. And this is something that I do every morning. This is actually the way I like to pray the most. What I'll do is I'll just open up to the Psalms, and it helps that I've got a Bible with notes in it.

So I kind of know where the hot pockets are. You know what I'm saying? But I'll start to just read through and just pray the things that are written in the Psalm right here. I just turned arbitrarily.

PSALM 45:1 ESV

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah; a love song. ¹ My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

It says, "My heart overflows with a pleasant theme; I address my verses to the King." Lord, I thank you that I can come before you boldly before the throne of grace because of the finished work of Jesus Christ.

HEBREWS 4:16 ESV

¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

I don't have to just walk out here and say things about you. I can say things to you. See, I'm ready to pray right now. So I'll just start to pray the Scripture.

You'll find yourself go from seven minutes to 30 minutes, lickety-split. How long is a good time? Like if you were to really break out of seven minutes, 15 minutes, and you'll probably take your whole subdivision for Jesus Christ. I mean, I'm serious. There's a lot of boldness that comes from the secret place.

MATTHEW 6:6 ESV

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Amen. Number three. Number three, you need to worship for five minutes. Worship for five minutes. You read the Bible for 15, pray for seven, worship for five minutes. Why five minutes? Because most worship songs are five minutes long. This ain't rocket surgery.

Amen. Nobody? I hope y'all are laughing on the internet today. Praise the Lord. Drop the laughing emoji in the comments. I need your help today. Amen. Worship. I feel like he's coming to town, folks. Amen. Hallelujah. Worship for five minutes. Worship. I like to do this for two reasons. Number one, for me personally, I was a worship leader for years. I'm obviously — I'm a pastor. I've been in the ministry for so long that oftentimes I don't get to participate in the moments of church. I'm aware during worship. I'm thinking, I'm processing. I'm just — I'm doing what God's called me to do, but I'm here to labor in the harvest.

Amen. And so I'm kind of alert and doing my thing and I might not be as engaged as you have the opportunity to be. And so I like to end with worship because it gives me an opportunity to make that music portion we do in the service not just the opener for the preaching, but an actual time that we get to come in and make much of Jesus Christ. Somebody say amen. Amen. The second reason that I like it is that it helps, especially if you're getting started. If you're getting started with reading the Bible, getting started with prayer, maybe you're not great at it.

Maybe you're reading the Bible for the first time and it ain't making no sense. Maybe you're starting to pray and you're done in a minute and 17 seconds. And you're ending those moments and you're going, "I'm not getting anything out of it. I don't feel like I'm putting anything into it." Well, at the end of your prayer time, you get to do exactly what preachers all over the world get to do. They get to land the plane and say, "I need the band and the singers to come up." I'm going to say that one day, amen. I'm just going to say it in faith. I need the band to come up to the stage right now in Jesus' name.

But you get to do the same thing. And then right there at the end, while you may be weak in your Bible reading and weak in your prayer, you get to call in the reserves and get a little bit of help. And you can turn on one of those songs that blesses you and causes you to magnify the Lord. You can turn that thing on and you can lift your hands to heaven and you can sing and worship right there in your room, your car, wherever it is that you find a good place to seek the face of the Lord out. And you'll end strong and encouraged. And how many of you know when you end well, you'll come back the next day.

You'll anticipate the next day. So end with worship. This is 27 minutes that will absolutely change your life. Now, let me give you one tip before I move on. And that is, when you're picking worship songs, try to find songs that magnify Jesus and not yourself. We have come through this season in the church where, Lord, we've been singing about ourselves. In fact, some services I've been in, we sang about me the most, the devil second, and Jesus got some honorable mentions. I actually had an older lady at our church in North Alabama — and I'd gotten together with all of our seniors one day and I sat down at the piano and played.

We just sang and we worshiped. I'm going to do that a little bit moving into the next year. I just haven't had time yet. But all of our seniors in the church, you're going to get a little bit of time with me singing some old songs and having a good time and eating sandwiches. Hallelujah. It's going to be good. And maybe some Holy Ghost hot dogs. In Jesus' name. And she — right before I went over and sang, she had made a comment to me and I didn't particularly care for the comment. So I wanted to dig to see how this might get a little ugly, 'cause I was curious. Let's see what I was dealing with.

And she had made some comment to me like, “I just love it when you sing those old songs.” And I thought, “Well, what do you say? You saying you don’t like the new songs?” And so I said, “Well, why do you say that?” And I thought she was going to say, “I just don’t like all these drums and the guitars and all this stuff.” And she goes, “I just like being able to sing songs about the Lord.” And I thought, what a referendum on the state of our worship ministry in the church right now, where we sing it. Now I will tell you, I think we’re turning the corner a little bit. Some of these newest songs are actually starting to talk about the Lord again.

Like we showed up to make much of him. How about that for an idea? Amen. And so I’m excited about that, but find you a song that magnifies Jesus and doesn’t talk about you. And I’ll just tell you — and this might be your favorite worship song. You don’t have to talk to me about it. I don’t have to talk to you about it. We don’t have to let anybody know. If I’m getting in your Kool-Aid, I’m sorry. But we got this song that it goes, [worship] The whole thing is about how you do it.

When are you going to do the thing that you do? You just singing about this, whatever this is, it’s how I fight back. Why don’t you fight the battle and make much of Jesus. Amen. Hallelujah. All right. Y’all like that song apparently. Amen. All right. This is the last thing I want to tell you. I’m feeling fun now. All of this, this 27 minutes, it all works together in aggregation. Meaning that it’s little parts coming together and making a whole. It’s little parts coming together. In Matthew chapter nine, verse 29 — we can put that on the screen and just leave it up here.

Matthew 9:29. And Matthew 9:29, this happens after Jesus comes off the Mount of Transfiguration. He comes off the Mount of Transfiguration and he’s been alone with some of them. I’m sorry, did I say 22:29? Matthew 9:29. It’s the last verse that’s in the presentation this morning. Oh, Mark, I’m sorry. That’s why I’m throwing you off. I read it. It doesn’t mean I don’t make mistakes. That’s another good one right there. You can make mistakes, even if you’re a Bible reader. Amen. So Mark 29 — or Mark 9:29 — happens when Jesus comes off the Mount of Transfiguration.

MARK 9:2-13 ESV

² And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁶ For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” ⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. ⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. ¹¹ And they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” ¹² And he said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³ But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”

He’s been with his disciples. He’s with three of his disciples. He’s had a major moment happen, a spiritual moment up on the mountain. And he comes down and he walks into a situation that any church leader would love to find themselves in. He finds his disciples and the people they’re ministering to in a screaming match. They’re screaming at

each other. And he comes down and goes, “What in the world is going on?” And the people start to tell him, say, “Well, your disciples came over here to cast the demon out of this boy and they can’t do it.” And once he gets everybody calmed down enough, he casts the demon out of the boy.

He looks at the boy. He says, “Come out of him.” And the spirit comes out. That’s all he does. He speaks to it, comes out.

MARK 9:14-27 ESV

¹⁴ And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them.

¹⁵ And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him.

¹⁶ And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” ¹⁷ And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. ¹⁸ And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” ¹⁹ And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” ²⁰ And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. ²² And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ²³ And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” ²⁵ And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” ²⁶ And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

Later that night, the disciples are sitting around the table for dinner. And one of them gets enough courage to lean over to Jesus and say, “So how did you get that demon to come out and we couldn’t?” And Jesus answers with this statement right here. He says, “And he said to them, ‘This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.’” Now, some of your Bibles say “prayer and fasting,” but I want to encourage you — I want to make this more accessible.

It is a well accepted fact that the most reliable manuscripts do not include “and fasting” in either Mark or in Matthew.

MATTHEW 17:19-20 ESV

¹⁹ Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” ²⁰ He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

And so we know Jesus said that this kind doesn’t happen — it doesn’t come out by anything but prayer. Here’s what’s interesting. This has always fascinated me right here, is that Jesus gives them an answer that does not mirror what he did. He says, “This kind doesn’t come out—” He didn’t pray. “This only comes out by prayer.” Jesus didn’t pray. Jesus doesn’t strike me as a “do as I say, not as I do” kind of leader. But Jesus says this kind only comes out by prayer.

What Jesus is telling them is that there is some power that you can only operate in if you have some history in the secret place. You have to have some time that you have spent with the Lord. In fact, what you're doing is you're harnessing the power of God in those moments. You go into the secret place with God and you're charging up your battery. You're building up your reserves for when situations and circumstances demand that you respond not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. And at times, not even just in the Spirit, but in power. But you're building your reserves there.

27 minutes with Jesus over time. It's a little over — it's almost seven full days of the week, in fact, but it's a little over 160 hours a year that you spend with the Lord. And by the way, Bible reading, prayer, worship — these are not individual things. They are, and we treat them that way. This is a composite whole of being in the secret place with the Lord.

Talking about spending 27 minutes a day with Jesus. Now this is going to help you if you'll practice these things that we talked about today. Some of y'all are looking at me like, "That's it?" Yeah, but I'll tell you what, I might've just preached the single most important thing some of you've ever heard.

All over the earth, I have had people engage in this model. Some pastors who confided in me and said, "I don't pray, I don't read, I don't have any time with the Lord behind me. I'm dying out here. I have no idea what to do, because everybody else has put it behind a veil." And they talk about praying, but they don't talk about praying. They talk about reading the Bible, but they don't talk about reading the Bible. And then we wonder why people solely depend on coming to church for their spiritual growth. It's because it's the only thing we can figure out what to do with.

We'd show up at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday. It's the only thing that has any clear instructions. So this is going to help you. That's what I'm wrapping up here. But we're talking about the second level of hearing from the Lord. The second level where the Holy Spirit brings the Scripture to your remembrance, and that coming to your mind, you will know it is divine instruction. You will know it. You will know. You will know. And this is going to help you with that. But I want you to know, while it's helpful for level two, it is absolutely crucial for level three, which I'm going to talk to you about next week.

It is crucial for level three. It is required for level four. And the reason I'm using that language, to give you a little precursor into next week — since I became a senior pastor and stopped caring about countdown clocks. Good night. I promise I'm going to get back to 30 minutes by January. I'm going to lose 50 pounds and I'm going to get back to 30 minutes. Amen. Praise the Lord. But the reason that I'm being very particular in saying that there are requirements, there are levels, is because we have allowed people in our churches — God forbid, some of them in our pulpits — to run amok, to talk about having a word from God, hearing from God, prophesying this, that and the other.

And we have held them accountable to nothing. We are in a day and age — and I want you to know it is not unique to this time particular, but it is enhanced in this time — we have people who will get up and preach and do not know the Bible at all. You can download it from the internet. You can rip it off from somebody else. And I don't have a problem with people preaching other people's messages and taking other people's. I don't do it. I actually think it'd be more work to try to preach somebody else's message. I'm getting this stuff on my own. So I might as well just go with a simpler source.

It'd be like having a well in your backyard and then driving to Iowa to get water. It just doesn't make sense. There's a well back there. I got a well. Amen. You know, you have access to a well. What I don't want to do is, as we get into the time in our church where I'm able to unleash — see, I'm not even preaching the good stuff yet. I'm just preaching some foundational values to help make sure we're all on the same page. I figure if I preach some of this stuff up front, I don't have to chase around and correct silliness when I actually start to rend the veil in front of you a little bit.

So I'm just kind of setting expectations and foundation. I think it's important. But if we don't hold ourselves and hold people accountable to say there are levels to hearing from the Lord, we will tolerate all kinds of nonsense. We'll tolerate all kinds of mess. We're not going to be that church. We're not going to be that church. I've decided to pastor you people. I'm not going to blow in and blow out on Sunday and get out here and then just accept whatever nonsense happens. All Scripture is inspired by God, profitable for correction, instruction, reproof.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16 ESV

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

Let's use the Bible that way.

Let's get in line. Let's hear from the Lord. We don't have to run off into nonsense. We don't have to romanticize. This was a word I couldn't articulate a few weeks ago, but I felt it in my spirit. We do not have to romanticize the spiritual when you can actually just have the spiritual. And the funny thing is, is the spiritual is a lot less romantic than what most people want it to be. I'll just be real straight with y'all. I was real underwhelmed with my baptism in the Holy Ghost experience. Anybody with me? I thought I'd fly through seven walls, praying in tongues going, "Hey, I think that's Chinese."

I didn't have that moment. And I've got friends that have. I know somebody who said, "I was down in the altar one time and heard this person screaming some gibberish. And about two minutes later, I realized it was me." I didn't have that experience. It was natural. It was normal. Every time I've seen God do breakthrough, natural and normal. God will move in powerful, but pragmatic, normal, comfortable ways. We don't have to sit out here and romanticize spiritual stuff when we actually can tap in to the source. I believe that what I'm teaching you right now will dramatically increase your quality of life.

And I felt like I really — I'm just talking to you for a minute. I felt like I really heard from the Lord in the last few days, speaking of it being normal. A lot of times, I actually don't even know this stuff's happening. I'm just in my room. I get it. I come out and then we just live life. And I'm storing this stuff up kind of like what the Bible says about Mary.

LUKE 2:19 ESV

¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

I just treasure it up in my heart and move on. But I really felt like the Lord spoke to me this week, because I've been trying to figure out, what am I going to do? What's the thing? What's the thing?

What am I about to do in this city? 'Cause I didn't come to play around, by the way. I'm not here to mess around. I'm here to take the city for Jesus Christ. And I felt like the Lord really put it in me. My job is to help people improve their quality of life through Jesus Christ. In fact, I had this little phrase come to me that you're probably going to start hearing more and more next year. That Jesus makes life better for anyone. Jesus makes life better for anyone. Anyway, I've just talked a little bit here at the end. How many of you love the Lord? If you appreciate the word, give him praise.

Preaching Notes

Before You Preach

This is the fourth message in a six-week series on being rooted in the Bible, and it continues the four levels of hearing from the Lord. Last week was level two: the Holy Spirit bringing Scripture back to our remembrance. This week is the practical follow-through: how to store up the Scripture He draws on.

Tell people up front that this is less a sermon and more a workshop. Ask them to write things down. The content is simple on purpose. The church has hidden daily time with God behind a veil, and this message pulls the veil back: 15 minutes reading the Bible, 7 minutes praying, 5 minutes worshipping.

Read Mark 9:29 at the top and leave it hanging. You come back to it at the end, and it is the payoff.

Introduction

MARK 9:29 ESV

²⁹ And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

Have the congregation say it: "I need a word." Everyone needs a word from the Lord, and this series is about how you can hear from heaven yourself. Today: 27 minutes to change your life.

THE BIBLE AND THE SPIRIT ARE IN CONCERT

Many believers feel a conflict between being led by the Holy Spirit and reading and obeying the Bible, as if the two were warring against each other. But Jesus named the two ways God makes Himself known, side by side:

MATTHEW 22:29 ESV

²⁹ But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.

The Scriptures, the Bible. The power of God, the Holy Spirit. People often try to balance the two: "Be led by the Spirit, but the Spirit will never tell you anything contrary to the Bible." Now we are policing the Holy Spirit with the Bible. If what we are hearing contradicts Scripture, the real question is whether we are hearing the Holy Spirit at all.

The Holy Spirit and the Scripture are not in conflict. They are in concert. You do not have to be a peacemaker between the Holy Spirit and the Bible.

LEVEL TWO NEEDS A LIBRARY

Last week: at level two, the Holy Spirit speaks by drawing Scripture out of your memory (John 14:26). Level one, preaching, needs a preacher. Level two is where you begin to hear from the Spirit on your own. When you are seeking guidance and Scripture suddenly comes to mind out of nowhere, pause and pay attention. That is probably the Holy Spirit.

Illustration: Bumblebee. In the movie *Transformers*, the yellow robot Bumblebee cannot talk, so he communicates through the radio, tuning in to things already said. There is nothing broken about the Holy Spirit, but at this level He works in a similar way. He tunes you in to what has already been said in Scripture and gives you specific instruction for your life and situation.

The Bible never says the Spirit will download Scripture into your brain. You have to encounter the Scripture for Him to have something to draw on. **Take in less Bible, and you give the Spirit less opportunity. Take in more Bible, and you give Him more.** Today is about building that library, the vocabulary the Holy Spirit will use to speak to you. It takes 27 minutes a day.

1. Read the Bible for 15 Minutes

It takes roughly 12 minutes a day to read the whole Bible in a year. Why 15? Because some of us need an extra three minutes.

Here are several thoughts. Have people write them down.

You do not need to understand the Bible to read the Bible. This is the biggest misconception that keeps people out of Scripture. Imagine a science teacher saying, “Don’t open this textbook until you can pass the test.” You need to read the Bible to understand the Bible.

You probably will not understand it the first time. The first time through, you will mostly find verses you have already heard.

Illustration: “Where is Noah?” A woman who came to faith later in life decided to read the Bible, and someone told her to start in Matthew. Halfway through John she threw up her hands: “Where is Noah? This is the same story on repeat.”

Expect good days and bad days. We talk about “daily bread” as if every time you open the Bible it will be a spectacular spiritual experience. It will not. One week Pastor Jason had a bad Monday and quit early, a breakthrough Tuesday, and normal days the rest of the week. You will get the Mondays, the Tuesdays and the Wednesdays.

Eat the elephant one bite at a time. The Bible is around 750,000 words. It is an elephant of a book.

READ IT THREE TIMES

Manage expectations: you will probably need to read the Bible three times before it really starts making sense. Nobody says this. Fifteen minutes a day will change your life, but maybe not for three years. Do not be

discouraged. You are tilling the ground of your life, your soul and your spirit, and on the back end of it the Holy Spirit will speak to you in ways you cannot yet imagine.

Moses received the Ten Commandments three times.

- **First**, God spoke them in the hearing of all Israel (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:22). That is the preached word, level one.
- **Second**, Moses went up the mountain because he wanted more of the Lord, and God gave him the tablets: “The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God” (Exodus 32:16). Moses came down, saw the people worshipping an idol, and broke them (Exodus 32:19). So transformed by his time in the Word that he threw a temper tantrum.
- **Third**, Moses had to cut the stones himself, but God still did the writing: “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets” (Exodus 34:1). This time Moses came down with his face shining so brightly that the people were afraid to come near him, and he put a veil over his face (Exodus 34:29-35).

The glory of God got on him the third time. There is something about getting through the Bible three times.

It is not that hard. It is written in English. Even when you do not know what it means, you can read the words on the page.

A PLAN FOR THREE PASSES

Get on a Bible reading plan. Think of a puzzle.

- **First pass: cover to cover**, Genesis to Revelation. You lay out all the pieces and see where everyone is: David here, Moses there, Elijah over here.
- **Second pass: chronological order**. Search online for a chronological plan. The Bible is not arranged in the order events happened, and reading it chronologically is like putting the edges of the puzzle together.
- **Third pass: any way you want**. The pieces start to fill in, and you see the full picture of Scripture.

Faster is better. One year for a pass is good. If you can do each pass in six months, even better.

Two tips: Get a physical Bible. There is nothing sacred about paper, but it helps. And if you are not a strong reader, or mornings are hard, add an audio Bible. The YouVersion Bible app has many free audio Bibles, and you can read along with the narrator.

2. Pray for Seven Minutes

Why seven? It is less than ten and more than five.

It is surprising how many people who pray zero minutes roll their eyes at seven. Seven minutes a day is a little over 42 hours of prayer a year. Would you want to mess with someone who prays 42 hours a year?

Start with a prayer list. Like a reading plan, you need something to help you through.

Thank God for one thing. One thing, not fifteen. We sometimes pile up thanks to twist God's arm before we ask. And if you are new to prayer, you may not be that grateful a person yet, so a long gratitude list turns into thanking God for things you do not even care about. That is not gratitude. That is pretense. Thank Him for one thing that actually matters to you.

Then list three to five things you want to see God do in your life.

- **Make them measurable.**
- **Keep them in your immediate sphere.** God hears every prayer, but pray first for what you will see: your children, your home, your work.
- **Pray in a way God could let you down.** Many of us pray so vaguely that if things work out we say God answered, and if not, nothing was really asked. Give God an opportunity. If you are praying for someone with cancer, take it to the throne and ask God to heal. When God answers specific prayers, He sets Himself up for great glory. He does it because He loves you and because of the cross, and Scripture makes a strong case that He also acts for His own name's sake.

Seven minutes takes practice. Starting out, you may run out of words two minutes and fifteen seconds in and find yourself reading your light bill to the Lord.

Two ways to grow your prayer time:

- **Pray in the Spirit.** Partner with the Holy Spirit and pray in tongues. (A series on the Holy Spirit is planned for the beginning of the year.)
- **Pray the Scripture.** Open to the Psalms and pray what is written. For example:

PSALM 45:1 ESV

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah; a love song. ¹ My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

"Lord, I thank You that I can come boldly before the throne of grace because of the finished work of Jesus Christ" (see Hebrews 4:16). Now you are not only saying things about God. You are saying things to Him. Praying the Scripture can take you from seven minutes to thirty in no time, and there is a lot of boldness that comes from the secret place (Matthew 6:6).

3. Worship for Five Minutes

Bible for fifteen, prayer for seven, worship for five. Why five? Most worship songs are about five minutes long.

There are two reasons to end with worship.

It makes worship personal. Pastors and worship leaders are often working during the church's worship time, alert and thinking about the service. Ending your own time with worship makes it more than the opener for the preaching. It is a time to make much of Jesus.

It helps you finish strong. When you are starting out, your Bible reading may not make sense yet, and your prayer may last a minute and seventeen seconds. At the end you get to do what preachers do and call the band up. Turn on a song that helps you magnify the Lord, lift your hands in your room or your car, and call in the reserves. You will end strong and encouraged, and when you end well, you come back the next day.

Choose songs that magnify Jesus, not yourself. The church has come through a season of singing about ourselves: some services sing about us the most, the devil second, and Jesus gets honorable mentions.

Illustration: “Songs about the Lord.” At a previous church in North Alabama, Pastor Jason gathered the seniors around a piano to sing. Beforehand an older woman told him, “I just love it when you sing those old songs.” Expecting a complaint about drums and guitars, he asked why. She said, “I just like being able to sing songs about the Lord.” What a verdict on the state of our worship. Thankfully, many newer songs are talking about the Lord again. We showed up to make much of Him.

4. Power Is Built in the Secret Place

All of this works in aggregation: small parts coming together to make a whole. Return to Mark 9:29.

Set the scene (Mark 9:2-27). Jesus comes down from the Mount of Transfiguration with three of His disciples. He walks into an argument: the other disciples, the crowd and the scribes in a shouting match. The disciples could not drive a spirit out of a boy. Once things calm down, Jesus speaks to the spirit, “come out of him and never enter him again” (Mark 9:25), and it comes out. That is all He does.

Later, in the house, the disciples ask Him privately why they could not cast it out.

MARK 9:29 ESV

²⁹ And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

Some Bibles read “prayer and fasting.” The most reliable early manuscripts do not include “and fasting” here, and they do not include the matching verse in Matthew either (Matthew 17:21).

Here is what is fascinating: Jesus’ answer does not mirror what He did. He says this kind comes out only by prayer, and He did not pray. He just spoke. Jesus is not a “do as I say, not as I do” leader. **What He is telling them is that there is power you can only operate in if you have a history in the secret place.**

In the secret place you are charging your battery, building up reserves for the moment circumstances demand that you respond not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and at times in power.

Twenty-seven minutes a day is a little over 160 hours a year with Jesus, almost seven full days. And Bible reading, prayer and worship are not three separate things. Together they are one whole: time in the secret place with the Lord.

Some will think, “That’s it?” Yes. And it may be the single most important thing some people ever hear. Pastors have confided, “I don’t pray, I don’t read, I have no time with the Lord behind me. I’m dying out here,” because

everyone else had put it behind a veil. Churches talk about praying and reading the Bible without ever teaching how, and then wonder why people depend only on Sunday morning for spiritual growth.

Conclusion: There Are Levels

This rhythm is helpful for level two. It is crucial for level three, which is next week. And it is required for level four.

Why insist on levels and requirements? Because churches, and some pulpits, have let people talk about having a word from God and prophesying with no accountability at all. Some preach without knowing the Bible. There is a well in your own backyard; you do not have to drive to Iowa for water. Getting this foundation right up front means the church will not have to chase down silliness later. We are not going to be the church that tolerates nonsense. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). Let us use the Bible that way.

We do not have to romanticize the spiritual when we can actually have the spiritual. And the spiritual is usually less dramatic than people want it to be. Pastor Jason was underwhelmed by his own baptism in the Holy Spirit. It was natural and normal. Every breakthrough he has seen has been natural and normal. God moves in powerful, practical, ordinary ways.

Often you do not even notice it happening. You spend time with the Lord, you come out, you live life, and like Mary, you treasure these things up in your heart (Luke 2:19).

Close with the word Pastor Jason sensed that week for the church and the city: **Jesus makes life better for anyone.** The assignment is to help people improve their quality of life through Jesus Christ, and these 27 minutes a day will dramatically improve yours.

Close in praise: if you love the Lord and appreciate the Word, give Him praise.

Scripture List

Every passage read, cited or alluded to in the message, in the order it comes up.

Read

Read aloud in the message.

MARK 9:29	²⁹ And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”
MATTHEW 22:29	²⁹ But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.
PSALM 45:1	To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah; a love song. ¹ My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

Cited

Named or quoted along the way.

MATTHEW 17:19-20	¹⁹ Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” ²⁰ He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”
2 TIMOTHY 3:16	¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

Alluded to

Drawn on without naming the reference.

JOHN 14:26	²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
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EXODUS 20:1-17

¹ And God spoke all these words, saying, ² “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ “You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴ “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷ “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. ⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. ¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³ “You shall not murder. ¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵ “You shall not steal. ¹⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

EXODUS 32:19

¹⁹ And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

EXODUS 34:1

¹ The LORD said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.

EXODUS 34:29-35

²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. ³⁰ Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. ³² Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³ And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, ³⁵ the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

HEBREWS 4:16

¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

MATTHEW 6:6

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

MARK 9:2-13

² And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁶ For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." ⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. ⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. ¹¹ And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" ¹² And he said to them, "Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?" ¹³ But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."

MARK 9:14-27

¹⁴ And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. ¹⁵ And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. ¹⁶ And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" ¹⁷ And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. ¹⁸ And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." ¹⁹ And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." ²⁰ And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. ²² And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." ²³ And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes." ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" ²⁵ And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." ²⁶ And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

LUKE 2:19

¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

ABOUT THE PREACHER



Pastor Jason Mayfield

SENIOR PASTOR, CITYLIGHT CHURCH

Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, where he and his wife, Ashleigh, lead a church devoted to Building Lives on Jesus. His preaching is rooted in the Bible, full of hope, and grounded in one conviction: an incredible life is built on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For more than 20 years, Pastor Jason has given his life to the local church. He has been credentialed with the Assemblies of God for 21 years and ordained for 14, and he has led revitalization in churches that went on to rank among the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in America. He carries a deep conviction that the church can be both excellent and supernatural, and a passion for revival.

He is an author and the creator of Tear Up Your Bible and POWER 27, a daily rhythm of Bible reading, prayer and worship. His resources have helped more than 100,000 people go deeper in the Scriptures. Above every title, his greatest joy is seeing people meet Jesus, be filled with the Spirit, and grow into everything God has called them to be.

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