CITYLIGHT
CHURCH

SERMON NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

Stop Settling for Substitutes

The Pentecostal Experience Must Come from Jesus and Point to Jesus

The real Pentecostal experience cannot be bought, earned or produced on command. It comes from Jesus, it keeps Jesus highest, and it calls us to walk with Him as friends, so stop settling for substitutes.

PREACHED BY
Pastor Jason Mayfield

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SERIES
We're Openly Spirit Filled, Week 1 of 5

MAIN TEXT
Acts 8:14-24

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01

Sermon Transcript

Amen. We're a church that believes in the power of God. I said, we're a church that believes in the power of God. I'm going to walk around a little bit this morning. Is that all right? New year's resolution, gotta get my steps in. I have a friend who — I probably shouldn't tell y'all this, but I'm going to tell you anyway, I'm feeling good. I got a friend who his father-in-law was a coal miner, one of the dearest brothers that has ever entered into the kingdom of heaven. He's a sweet man, can't pronounce anything. Calls Charles Barkley "Charles Broccoli."

Can't pronounce anything. And his doctor told him he needed to walk more. And so they put a treadmill in the house and he got a pedometer. And my buddy said, I was on the phone with my mother-in-law one day and I hear Harold in the background screaming, "Norma, where's my peter meter?" That was better than y'all let on. Well, we believe in the power of God here in this church. We do. In fact, last week I preached a message called "The Anointing for Favor." The anointing for favor. I got a testimony on a Wednesday that after that message, that word got into somebody in this church and they had a business deal that was not going through for them.

They had had blockades. He walked into the week, had a $50,000 miracle by Monday afternoon, because we believe in the power of God in this church. Right? So that's why we're starting this series, which is one of the values of our church. I've been talking to you through value. We've talked about four of them. Now we're getting into the fifth value that we're talking about. And that is that we are openly Spirit filled. This is not going to be a closeted Pentecostal church. We're not going to lock the Holy Ghost in the attic like some crazy uncle that we only let out at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

No, this is going to be an openly Spirit filled church. Can I get a good amen in the house? So this is what I want to invite you to do. I feel like preaching. This is going to be long. Y'all just buckle up. Should've got y'all sub sandwiches today. So I want you to turn to Acts chapter eight. We're going to go there shortly, but I want to read a different scripture to you as we get started, because I know that some of you who have been around for a while, who have been with me since August, because August 3rd was my first day as the pastor of this church.

I know some of you have kind of looked at me and gone, is this pastor even Pentecostal at all? Because I know some of y'all, it's a real shock to the system to, like, just sit under teaching. And that's what we've been doing. I've been teaching. And there's a reason for that. Now I'm not trying to hurt nobody's feelings, but I'm going to tell you what it is. Everybody say, go ahead. Say, "I'm tough. I can take it." Okay. We're going to repeat a lot today. When I came here, the Lord spoke to me and said, "You need to make sure the foundation of that church is strong before you do any Pentecostal ministry."

I need you to hear me. This is an openly Pentecostal, openly Spirit-filled church. I say Spirit-filled, I'm trying to make the Baptists who want to check us out feel a little more safe and comfortable, amen. But I'm a Pentecostal preacher. I have a Pentecostal ministry. If you got me in a room with a hundred other Pentecostal pastors, three of us are going to be off in the corner because we're the ones that are probably going to be the most Pentecostal out of that group. I'm full bore. I like it all. If you've seen anything crazy in church, I was probably having a good time watching it.

I enjoy all of it. But here's the deal. I followed the Apostle Paul's leadership on this. I felt like this was the band-aid from the Lord. This is why I've been doing what I've been doing and I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing. How many of you know the Corinthian church? Probably our most dysfunctional of Pentecostal churches mentioned in the Bible, amen. They had some crazy stuff going on in the Pentecostal church. Well, Paul's way of addressing that is found in 1 Corinthians 2.

> **1 CORINTHIANS 2:2** ESV
>
> 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

This is what Paul did. Paul said, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

I want you to think about the stuff I've been preaching to you since I got here. We've talked about the cross, the cross, the cross, the cross. And guess what we're going to talk about from here on out? The cross, the cross. We're going to keep doing that. But I find it interesting in this passage that Paul said, "I decided." It was a decision. And I need you to hear me. I can get up here and preach anything. We can preach any topic in the Bible. We can go anywhere you want to go. We can run around the room and scream and shout our heads off and do all that stuff.

But I have made a decision in this season of our church leading up to this moment. Somebody say this moment. This moment. I have made the decision to lay a foundation of the finished work of Jesus Christ so that we can move forward into Pentecostal power. That is real Pentecostal power. I'm talking about the real thing. The power of God touching your life. That being said, I'm going to do that again today because we had Christmas and I'm afraid y'all have forgotten all the stuff I preached last year. So we're going to do a quick Jesus, Jesus, Jesus message today.

That's what I'm going to preach. Are you ready for it? Let me ask you a question. Just curious question. How many of you have ever bought something and you waited for a long time? You wait two or three years. Maybe you wait 10 years and you, you know, there's no reason you didn't buy it. I'm not talking about something crazy. I'm just talking about something that you just, for whatever reason, you never bought it. You never got it. And then you finally bought it. And we've all had the experience where we buy something and then we're kind of let down by it.

But I'm talking about you bought this thing you put off forever. And it turns out it was a game changer. You've got this thing now and you're thinking, why didn't I buy this 20 years ago? Anybody ever bought anything like that? That you just, you finally got it and you're like, this is awesome for me. It's the KitchenAid mixer. I put it off for years. And then one day I finally went and got it. And guess what? It's the best gadget I've ever bought for the kitchen. I got so much junk in my kitchen that I used once and it's still taking up space.

I used the KitchenAid mixer twice yesterday. I love this. Am I right? It's awesome. In fact, let me find out who has a KitchenAid mixer. Okay. All right. Who does not have a KitchenAid mixer? You don't have a KitchenAid mixer? You seem like you would have a KitchenAid mixer because you cook and stuff, right? You get down in the kitchen, don't you? Because you got that New Orleans on you. You got that good cooking on you. You know what? It's a shame you don't have a KitchenAid mixer. I tell you what, I've got one right here.

I want to give you one. Oprah's audience was a lot better to her on this right here. I think y'all are trying to figure out, is he going to pull a fast one on us or no? I've got a KitchenAid mixer right here. Here. Nobody should not have a KitchenAid. I'm going to sit it down. It's heavy. All right. Well, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely. That'll change

your life right there. Amen. KitchenAid mixer. One of the reasons that the KitchenAid mixer changed my life is because, if you haven't figured this out yet, my daughter Jocelyn is a very picky eater. Jocelyn eats about seven foods, okay?

Have y'all heard of, like, Michelin star restaurants? Okay, well, Jocelyn decides that level based on how good the chicken tenders are there. Okay? So, you know, you could go to Ruth's Chris and she's going, chicken tenders are halfway. And so she only eats a handful of things. Well, when I got the KitchenAid mixer one day, I decided, because I really love potatoes. I really love potatoes. I really love them, y'all. And so I decided I was going to make some homemade mashed potatoes. There's nothing like them. Homemade mashed potatoes. And I didn't ever use them because I come from a family, see, our people, we're hand mixer people.

So you gotta stand there through the whole thing. But once I got the KitchenAid mixer, I'm like, oh, I can be whipping up my potatoes and do other stuff. So I started making homemade mashed potatoes. So I thought, let me see if Jocelyn will get into these. Okay? So she tries them. Guys, all I can figure is it was a prophetic picture of what it's going to be like when she says yes at the altar of her wedding. The love that came out of her was — I mean, you could see the change. I've seen the same effect on people when they've received the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

I mean, it's just, her life shifted in that moment. Here's the problem with homemade mashed potatoes though. You can't do this every day. It's peeling and washing and it's a whole thing. I mean, and it's a mess and it's two pots and it's just a lot that's going on with the homemade mashed potatoes. So you can do them once in a while. If you're not super busy, you can do them once a week. If you're like me and Ashleigh, every three weeks would be about where we could do it. And at some point Jocelyn decided, probably because she only eats about seven things, that I need more access to these mashed potatoes.

And that's when she found instant mashed potatoes. Y'all, she is eating instant mashed potatoes every day, it seems like. We have them delivered from Amazon. For all I know, they show up automatically. They're just — instant mashed potatoes are coming into our house and she's eating them. And she eats them all the time. But can we all agree that instant mashed potatoes are an insufficient substitute to a Yukon Gold with butter, heavy whipping cream, maybe some little chives if you want to get fancy with it, you highfalutin people? And you get what I'm saying?

You throw some stuff on it, but I'm talking about a homemade mashed potato. They're insufficient. They're an insufficient substitute. I worry sometimes that in the Pentecostal church, we trade the authentic move of the Holy Ghost for something that we can have more frequently, more conveniently, more predictably. And even though it looks like mashed potatoes, it's not mashed potatoes. Even though it has the form, it doesn't have the power. And so we can sometimes in churches like ours, we'll accept the things we can do on command. See, I can shake on command.

I can fall on the ground without anybody's help. I can do all of this stuff. But the question is, is that an instant response or is that the homemade response? Was the Holy Ghost on that or am I just doing the thing I think I'm supposed to do? And if you think I'm one of those young preachers — first, thank you, first of all. But if you think I'm one of those young — I feel my preach on me this morning. If you think I'm one of those young preachers that doesn't like that stuff that goes around going, well, we don't need all that mess in the church, that's just overactive.

It's just people acting it up. No, that's not me. I want it all. My favorite thing is seeing people hit the ground. I think it's fun. I don't know what it does for people, but I'm having a good time. I like that stuff. But I've seen the difference between somebody who was falling on the ground and somebody who got knocked on the ground. I've seen the difference. And to make that trade is unnecessary. It's unnecessary. So if you want the real thing, shout, "I want it." I want it. All right, turn with me to Acts chapter eight. Acts chapter eight. We're going to look at verse 14.

This is going to be my primary text and I'm going to preach. I don't normally walk around with the iPad, but I was feeling cool today. Amen.

> **ACTS 8:14-24** ESV
>
> 14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them
> Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had
> not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid
> their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given
> through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so
> that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver
> perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor
> lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and
> pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the
> gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." 24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of
> what you have said may come upon me."

Acts chapter eight, verse 14. It says, "Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For he had not fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Now, when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.'"

"But Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.' And Simon answered, 'Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.'" Now I'm going to preach quick on all of this. And I want you to know I could go in about 10 different directions.

I really am not going to try to wear y'all out this morning, but I am feeling it today. I feel the Holy Ghost right now. Like it's on me right now. So number one, first thing I want you to hear and I want you to write this down. Jesus must be the source. When it comes to the Pentecostal experience and the Pentecostal expression, Jesus must be the source. Now I want you to understand this, that when we see in this text Simon, who ultimately ends up — Peter tells him off. We might need a little bit more of that every now and again, amen. But Peter ends up kind of telling him off.

But I want you to hear this. Simon did a lot of what we do. Think about it. Give him the benefit of the doubt for the moment, okay? See, some of y'all have read this passage thinking you're Peter and you're actually Simon. So you need this message today. But Simon did a lot of what we do. Think about it. He saw the power of God in operation and he wanted it. Well, my God, most of y'all would have never got touched if you wouldn't have saw it and wanted it. That's part of the process, amen? So he sees it and he wants it. And then he goes up and he offers money.

I mean, this book essentially alludes to the fact that you can sow physical seed, financial seed, and reap supernatural harvest off of it. It's not completely out of bounds for what even the scripture teaches. So it's not. So he says this stuff,

and then here's the other thing. He wasn't insincere when he realizes that Peter does not like what he said to him. Like, if Simon walked away with anything, he went, I don't think that guy liked what I just said. He asked him to pray for him. How many insincere people stop, go, my bad, please pray for me that none of that happens?

So he's responsive to some degree in a sincere way. But here's what he did. He never looked toward Jesus. Jesus is not in the equation. He looked toward his own ability to gain it. He wasn't actively trying to receive the Pentecostal experience. He was trying to write a check and get it. And so at the end of the story, you've got Simon who's standing there with a pen in his right hand, a checkbook in his left hand. And Peter basically tells him, hey, you can go to H-E-double hockey sticks. Tells him off. Didn't even say the word and y'all are quiet in here.

Good grief, y'all watch TV worse than that, Lord. My God. But it's because Simon tried to earn it. And hear this, you cannot earn the Pentecostal experience. You cannot work your way into it. This is important for us to know because, see, I struggled to receive. And one thing that I learned early in my journey spiritually trying to receive the supernatural things of God is that most Pentecostal solution to that problem is to try harder. We'll push, we'll pray until something happens. We'll fast and we'll sow and we'll dance and we'll shout and we'll clap and we'll run and we'll march and we'll do all of these things trying to get something to happen.

But in reality, Jesus has to be the source. You have to receive it. That's a good place to say amen, because I'm right, amen. Go ahead and just toss me one. So Jesus must be the source of our Pentecostal experience. That's number one. Number two, Jesus must be the highest. Jesus must be the highest. In Acts chapter eight, verse 23, right there at the end, it comes off like an insult, what Peter says to him. But look at this, Acts chapter 18 — I'm sorry, Acts chapter eight, verse 23. It said — can you guys give it to me so I can see it? I don't have it here.

There it is. "For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." It sounds like he's just kind of telling him off, but that phrase right there, gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, it actually means something. It's a Jewish idiom. In Deuteronomy chapter 29, it talks about a poison that goes down into the belly, a gall, and that becomes bitter.

> **DEUTERONOMY 29:18** ESV
>
> 18 Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit,

It's a root of bitterness. It is the result of worshiping idols. It's the result of idol worship. And sometimes what can happen is we can prioritize the Pentecostal experience or the effects of a church like ours or the things that we do or the activity going around to the point that we completely ignore Jesus altogether.

And that becomes more important than Jesus, to the point that I have had people say to me since I've been here, "We know you like to preach on Jesus, but" — and then fill in your favorite Pentecostal expression, whether it be altar calls, tongues and interpretation, prophecy, whatever you like, longer worship, flowing in the spirit. Everybody got their own little thing that they're chasing after. I've been asked about shofars, tambourines, flags, all of it. Jesus is a side note. And you may think to yourself, that doesn't happen. Folks, more than you would imagine, we treat Jesus like he's a secondary thing.

When he's the King of Kings, we treat him like he's an option. When he's the Lord of Lords, we treat him like he's a mascot, when he is the creator of heaven and earth. And then we wonder why whatever we're doing — because here's the thing, I'm all about the altar call. I'm all about laying hands on people. I'm all about the supernatural experience. When? Something follows it. Too many of us have Pentecost that falls off in the parking lot. We have a little, we do our little thing and we get out there and it's gone. And usually the reason is that Jesus is either not the source or he's not the highest.

In Numbers chapter 21, there's a story where the Israelites are out in the wilderness and suddenly these little — the Bible calls them fiery serpents — come out and they start biting the people and they start dying because the venom is killing them.

> **NUMBERS 21:4-9 ESV**
>
> 4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people
> became impatient on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought
> us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless
> food." 6 Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of
> Israel died. 7 And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord
> and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.
> 8 And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he
> sees it, shall live." 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would
> look at the bronze serpent and live.

Little things coming out, getting them. And so the Lord goes and prays — or the Lord, the Lord goes and prays, which the Lord did pray in the Bible, just so we're clear. But Moses goes and prays and he says, Lord, I need to save these people. What are we going to do? And the Lord gives them a plan.

He says, I want you to go create a bronze serpent, lift it up on a pole. And when you lift that up, have the people look at it; whoever looks at it will be healed. So it's what, in the Assemblies of God doctrine and our fundamental truths, we would call divine healing. It is a supernatural effect of the power of God. That's what he tells him to do, lift it up. It's a powerful, powerful moment. But here's the thing. If you go over to Second Kings chapter 18, this is what happened in Hezekiah's day.

> **2 KINGS 18:4 ESV**
>
> 4 He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the
> bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was
> called Nehushtan).

It says he removed the high places. Hezekiah did this. "And broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah.

And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made. For until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it. And it was called Nehushtan." So in one moment, it is a conduit of the power of God. And you fast forward sometime later, and we don't know how long they've been doing it, but the text tells us it had been going on for

a while. The people of Israel are making offerings to it. So it's something that God used, but it's not God. And yet people are worshiping it. They're bowing down at the altar of this thing. And here's the interesting thing.

We know that the purpose of the bronze serpent wasn't even to heal the people. It was a prophetic symbol. Jesus tells us this in John chapter three, that the Son of Man must be lifted up as the serpent in the wilderness.

> **JOHN 3:14** ESV
>
> 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

So it's a prophetic symbol to point to Jesus. Now here's what's interesting. Everybody worshiping that bronze serpent would have told you, this serpent is not God. This serpent is not Jehovah. Jehovah is more important than — Yahweh is more important than this serpent. Our ultimate allegiance is to him. In fact, the word Nehushtan, what it means is just bronze.

So the people are calling it and saying, hey, it's just bronze, while they worship it, while they bring offerings to it. And so out of one side of their mouth, they go, yes, Jesus is the most important. And out of the other side of their mouth, they say, but you know what we really need? To do X, Y, and Z every week, to have this kind of service, to do this kind of service, this kind of thing, to see this in services. You think I'm wrong. Folks all across America and our churches, you know how people in our churches judge whether or not the anointing is on a church? How often they see tongues and interpretation happen.

Preach Jesus every week, but we ain't seen tongues and interpretation in a year. Well, is Jesus being preached? Is Jesus the highest? Is Jesus the most important? Or is that something that we just say, but really we only care about this stuff? It's not about Jesus, it's about the songs we sing. I came through a time when they were writing books called Worship Wars. Do you remember that book? Did you ever hear of that? Worship Wars, they wrote it around the time Brownsville broke out, because people were fighting over whether or not you could have guitars or you had to use hymnals, amen.

And so people were fighting, because it's something else. I say this, but really this. Isaiah chapter 29 says this: "The people draw near to me with their mouth and they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

> **ISAIAH 29:13** ESV
>
> 13 And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,

Are we an openly Spirit-filled church? Do we believe in the power of God in this church? Is your pastor a Pentecostal preacher? But I'm going to tell you this, we believe in being a Jesus-centered, Spirit-filled church, hallelujah, amen. I'm going to walk the pews in a minute. Oh, I call them pews, my church is coming out in me, amen. So number three, number three, number three, Jesus must be our friend.

Jesus must be our friend. In John chapter 15, verse 15, Jesus said, "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing, but I've called you friends."

> **JOHN 15:15** ESV
>
> 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

I've called you friends. And what I mean by this, and I'm playing with the words a little bit this morning, is that we have to participate in the process. On one hand, we have to receive it. Jesus has to be the source. Jesus has to be the highest. But when it comes to the Pentecostal experience, being an openly Spirit-filled church, we also have to participate in the process.

We have to participate with the Lord. It took me years to get the thing. We call it the baptism in the Holy Ghost. Because Jesus said, I'll baptize — or John said of Jesus that he'll baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire.

> **MATTHEW 3:11** ESV
>
> 11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

And I was saved in an environment where I didn't struggle to believe that. I saw supernatural stuff. I was open to supernatural stuff. I wanted supernatural stuff. I kept going to the altar trying to get it and coming back empty-handed. And so I struggled for years. And what I found was that most of the time, it was just try harder, push harder.

And I never wanted to fake it. So I resisted that instruction. Because if I was going to get the baptism of the Holy Ghost, if I was going to speak in tongues, it wasn't going to be me. It wasn't going to be me. I was getting the real thing. I was either getting the real thing or I was getting no thing. Maybe that will explain a little bit about my personality type, to let you figure out why I'm not messing around on this. I'm serious about this. The fire of God consumes me on this issue because I've seen the effect of the real thing. But what I didn't understand in my mind while I tried to resist being the one making it happen, I was under the impression that the Holy Ghost was going to do something in my life or in my body that was so overwhelming that I could no longer function.

So what I was prepared for when looking toward the supernatural experience is I was looking for the Holy Ghost to kind of kick me in the chest. And what I found out, it's less of a kick in the chest and more of a tap on the shoulder. Now, are there kick-in-the-chest experiences? Yes, and they're the ones we love to tell stories about. So everybody's under the impression that that's the only way that it happens. But a lot of times the supernatural experience is a — and you know it's there. You just gotta turn around to it. You can't just stand there with a tap forever and not do anything.

And so when I found out that I have to participate in the process, I was able to step in and receive. And I'm going to tell you that we're going to keep harping on this idea that we're going to have the real thing, but we also have to participate in the process. I had a preacher say something to me one time. He said, I don't know why we keep going around and preaching out of 1 Corinthians 14 in Pentecostal churches that everything needs to be done decently and in order when there is no chance ever of things being done out of order in that church.

> **1 CORINTHIANS 14:40** ESV
>
> 40 But all things should be done decently and in order.

I'm okay in the pursuit. If things get a little wonky and we have to pull it back, I actually am okay with that. I know I don't come off that way. What I'm trying to do is just shake — they call it a sorbet, it's a palate cleanser. I'm just trying to shake y'all loose of some of this stuff that you might've been holding on to. But I'm okay if it goes a little far and we got to pull it back, I'm cool with that. If I don't like it, you won't wonder about it for long. Amen. I had a lady come in here a few weeks ago and asked me if she could do a bunch of stuff.

And that conversation only took about 35 seconds. Nope. I'll be clear with you. I'll tell you exactly where I'm at. We're not going to be — don't worry, we gonna be good. Everybody said, we gonna be good. But you have to participate in the process. But on the journey there, we're going to pursue the real thing. We're going to pursue the real thing. We're going to pursue the real thing. Over the next two weeks before our Vision Sunday, next week I'm going to preach on how to open a flow of Pentecost in your life. I'm going to preach how to get the power moving next week. The week after that, I'm preaching on tongues.

I'm a tongue-talking, Spirit-filled, weird Pentecostal. Amen. I'm thinking about preaching the message in tongues. And those of you who need to get it, you'll get it. Amen. But we're going there. Then the week after that, I'm going to do Vision Sunday. And then we're going to get back and I'm going to be talking about prophecy and a bunch. We're going into the deep end. So don't let today make you think. But I want to make sure that we're going after the real thing and a Jesus-magnifying thing. I've seen in Pentecostal churches for so many years where people will — it's almost like our language gives it away and nobody's listening to the obvious clues.

We talk about God. We talk about the Holy Spirit. And it's like, we don't even talk about Jesus unless he's mentioned in a song on the screen. And Jesus is like the thing. He's the one. He's high, holy, exalted, the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning, the end, the first and the last, the one who was and who is and is to come.

> **REVELATION 22:13** ESV
>
> 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

His eyes burn like fire and his feet are burnished bronze.

> **REVELATION 1:14-15** ESV
>
> 14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

And they tried to kill him and they couldn't keep him in a hole. He busted out. He's sitting at the right hand of God. And he's, I feel like, kind of been stretching his legs, ready to come back.

That's who we're talking about. When I first went into ministry, I went right out of high school, and it was 2004, into 2004. And I went to a church in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Okay, not far from here. Pascagoula don't have a lot to offer, but some of the best fried chicken I've ever eaten is at Wayne Lee's Grocery Store. Shout out if y'all want to sponsor our

church, amen. I'm telling you, it was great. But Pascagoula don't have a lot to offer. And there was a church there, First Assembly of God. The church had fallen on really difficult times. A new pastor had come in.

The church was running 12. He came in, he got it up to about 120, which is a miracle. Because this guy was 26 years old. Not only had he never pastored, but he had never worked in a church full time. He had been like an auxiliary youth leader that wanted to go into ministry. And I think, honest to goodness, the Mississippi District Council was kind of like, well, it can't get worse, you know? And so they gave him the church. This was a church under district supervision. There was no vote. They put him in the church at 26 years old. I went to work with him and he's actually done really amazing things, much credit to him.

But the difficulty for us in that season there was getting the church through some of its history and some of the Pentecostal dysfunction that had gone on. To the point — the story I'm about to tell you is a hundred percent true. A pastor who had been there formerly, he was preaching one Sunday and he had rigged up pyrotechnics inside of a fern. They had plants on the stage. And so they had some ferns on, and he had rigged up pyrotechnics inside of the fern. And he had a trigger to set off the pyrotechnics. And while he was preaching, the fern caught on fire.

And that was the plan, by the way. And he took out ads in the newspaper. I'll tell you how long ago this happened, amen. But he took out ads in the newspaper and he ran ads: revival has broken out, come to First Assembly, the church with the burning bush. I have been fortunate that I have not seen with my own eyes a lot of Pentecostal dysfunction. But I do watch in small ways people consistently trade the power of God to transform, to touch, to heal for just little idols that we make and little things that we think are so important. And you may not have a fake fire on the stage, but have you trusted something as a fake fire?

Have you come to church and accepted a placebo that it might be cathartic, it might feel good in the moment, but you know, and I know, you're walking right back into the same thing. And we don't have to have fake burning ferns when there's something that can get on this house, that the prophet Jeremiah called it, he said, it's like a fire shut up in my bones.

> **JEREMIAH 20:9** ESV
>
> 9 If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

I was reading in 2 Corinthians 2 this week. I just, God just met me at the end of the week. I've had a miracle week from heaven. The church is on the verge of breakthrough and you don't even know about it because I can't tell you anything till February 1st, and just, God is moving.

But at the same time, I feel the weight of it. I feel the heaviness of it. I read Paul was saying, you know, I'm just, I'm overly transparent. I'm going to stop doing that when it starts working against me, amen. But I was reading and Paul said it. He said, I had an open door for effective ministry and yet my spirit was not at rest. I thought, Paul, I feel that. And then he tells what it is. He says, it's because I didn't know where Titus was.

> **2 CORINTHIANS 2:12-13 ESV**
>
> 12 When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord,
> 13 my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

And it's kind of how I feel, man. There's an effective door for the gospel. I'm feeling everything and then I'm feeling everything.

And I'm reading through this writing of Paul and he gets in there and he's talking about the challenges of this, this navigating what you need versus what you want. I came out of last week's service — strongly, the Holy Ghost is in this room right now. I came out of that service last week fully considering, fully weighing the option of backing off on every plan that I believe I have gotten from heaven and just sing a little song, preach a little message, come to the front for a few minutes and we get out of here and I don't ever hear another word. I really thought about that.

Paul writes in Second Corinthians. He says that it is the love of Christ that controls us. It controls us. He's talking about his ministry. And he says, I have to manage this tension between the ecstasy of God. He calls it in the ESV — they try to say it sanitary, but what he says is, I'll be beside myself unto the Lord, but I'll be in my right mind for you.

> **2 CORINTHIANS 5:13-14 ESV**
>
> 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;

I'm telling you, when you get the fire of God on you, you'll have this thing burning that pulls on you to certain levels in certain places. And it's an ecstasy with God. And yet you have to tether, to hold on, to be in your right mind, to serve people and help people.

And when it's the real thing, it's not running around the room. And I'm about running around the room. I feel like taking off right now, but that's not what it is. It's great. It's fun. But it's when you come under the weight of this balance. There's a fire. It's in me. I've been baptized in it. Woo, woo. Thank you, Holy Ghost. I know I've lost 75% of you, but there's 25% of you in here who are just under the anointing right now. I'm talking to you about the real thing. I'm not talking — there's more than a little shindig and then let's go to the buffet. There's more than a little spin around and then head out of here.

I believe over the next 10, 12 — I'm hoping the Lord lets me get to the other stuff if I got to preach at some point. But since I've been here, I haven't had a moment where I really didn't know how long I was going to go. And I'm still figuring it out because I just got this stuff in. I could preach for another three hours on what I'm preaching right now. And I'm going to spare you that. But listen, over the next 10 weeks, I think there's going to be something that hits this church. It's going to be strong. But let me just warn you. You think you've seen the dividing line so far?

I feel the spirit of the prophet on me. You think you've seen the dividing line? The cross is a stumbling block.

> **1 CORINTHIANS 1:23** ESV
>
> 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

And when the power of God breaks out, this is what you need to hear. Jesus is not only the source of Pentecost, but like the bronze serpent, the supernatural experience is meant to point back to him. See, the Pentecostal experience comes from him so that it magnifies him. I'm about to throw gasoline on everything we've been doing. So I need you to do some stuff. I was talking to Miss Lois about it this morning. Pray for your church and pray in the spirit for your church.

Pray, the best is yet to come. But the Bible says that after you've suffered a little while, then I'll establish you.

> **1 PETER 5:10** ESV
>
> 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

And I'm telling you, I'm ready. I feel the anointing. It's easier when I'm up here in this moment to say it, but I'm going to tell you right now, everybody in this city needs to hear me: I'm coming. I want the harvest. I want souls. I want to see this church grow, but I want to see this region changed. And I'm not backing down, in Jesus' name. Stand to your feet all across this room. Hallelujah. Thank you, Lord. Makala, will you turn that music up just a scootch?

Everyone lift your hands all across this room. Hallelujah. I just want to take the next few seconds in this service. And right where you stand, I want you to do business with the Lord. I think it serves us all well, but there's a handful of you that it would be prescription level, that you need to ask the Lord to purge you of a tolerance for anything that has a placebo effect in your life, for anything that stands in the place of the real fire, for anything that you accept as enough when enough is no longer enough, because you need the power of God. Just hands lifted, open your mouths, open your hearts to the Lord.

Ask him to come in and purge you of any acceptance of something that's an instant substitute when there's a homemade Pentecostal experience for you. God, purge us of compromise. God, touch us with a fresh fire in this church. Father, we don't need a fern fire. We need a fresh fire. We don't need a pyrotechnic fire. We need a Pentecostal fire. Father, we don't need a fire that we're just satisfied with, but a fire that is Spirit filled, that gets down into the bones of who we are, that is hard to separate the passion in our hearts from our own flesh. God, touch us in such a deep way that transformation is inevitable.

Miracles are inevitable. Power is inevitable. That it flows out of us, that a sensitivity to the spirit of God and the anointing is so strong on us. Woo, thank you, Lord. Shanda rasitya lalavaka. Holy Ghost. I'm expecting great things.

02

Preaching Notes

Before You Preach

This message opens a five-week series on the church's fifth value: we are openly Spirit filled. The congregation has spent months on the cross and the finished work of Jesus, and some are wondering whether their pastor is Pentecostal at all. Answer that question plainly at the start: yes, fully, and the cross came first on purpose.

The tone is celebration with a warning. Celebrate the power of God, the altar, the laying on of hands and the gifts. Then warn, with a smile and without backing down, against the substitutes: what we can do on command, what we can have every week, what feels good and changes nothing. Keep coming back to the controlling image: homemade mashed potatoes or instant.

The three points come out of Acts 8 and build on each other: Jesus must be the source, Jesus must be the highest, Jesus must be our friend.

Introduction

We are a church that believes in the power of God. Have the congregation say it with you.

Illustration: the pedometer. A friend's father-in-law, a retired coal miner and one of the dearest men you will ever meet, could not pronounce anything. When his doctor told him to walk more, the family bought him a treadmill and a pedometer, and one day he was heard shouting across the house, "Where's my peter meter?"

Share a recent testimony of God moving in the church. (When this was preached, someone who had heard the previous week's message on the anointing for favor saw a stalled business deal break open, a $50,000 miracle by Monday afternoon.)

WE ARE OPENLY SPIRIT FILLED

This series takes up the fifth value of our church: **we are openly Spirit filled.** This will not be a closeted Pentecostal church. We are not going to lock the Holy Spirit in the attic like a crazy uncle we only let out at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Some have wondered why a Pentecostal preacher has spent his first months teaching instead of running Pentecostal ministry. Here is the reason. When the Lord sent me to this church, He said, "Make sure the foundation of that church is strong before you do any Pentecostal ministry."

I am a Pentecostal preacher with a Pentecostal ministry. I enjoy all of it. But I followed the Apostle Paul's lead. The Corinthian church was the most dysfunctional Pentecostal church in the Bible, and this is how Paul addressed it:

> **1 CORINTHIANS 2:2** ESV
>
> [2] For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Notice the words "I decided." It was a decision. We could preach any topic in the Bible, and we could run around the room and shout our heads off. But in this season the decision has been to lay a foundation on the finished work of Jesus Christ, so that we can move forward into real Pentecostal power: the power of God touching your life. The cross, the cross, the cross, and from here on out, still the cross.

HOMEMADE OR INSTANT

Illustration: the KitchenAid mixer. Most of us have put off a purchase for years, finally bought it, and wondered why we waited. For me it was a KitchenAid mixer. (When this was preached, a mixer was given away on the spot to someone in the congregation who did not have one.)

The mixer changed one thing in our house in particular. My daughter is a very picky eater who eats about seven foods. I love potatoes, and once I had the mixer I started making homemade mashed potatoes: Yukon Golds, butter, heavy whipping cream, maybe a few chives. She tried them, and you could see the change in her. I have seen the same effect on people when they receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The problem is that homemade mashed potatoes take work: peeling, washing, two pots, a mess. You cannot make them every day. So my daughter found instant mashed potatoes, and now she eats them all the time. But we can all agree that instant mashed potatoes are an insufficient substitute.

I worry that in the Pentecostal church we trade the authentic move of the Holy Spirit for something we can have more frequently, more conveniently and more predictably. It looks like mashed potatoes, but it is not mashed potatoes. It has the form, but not the power.

In churches like ours, we can accept the things we can do on command. I can shake on command. I can fall on the ground without anybody's help. The question is whether that is the instant response or the homemade one. Was the Holy Spirit on it, or was I just doing what I thought I was supposed to do?

This is not a young preacher who dislikes Pentecostal expression. I want it all. I love seeing people touched by God. But I have seen the difference between someone who fell on the ground and someone who got knocked on the ground, and that trade is unnecessary.

If you want the real thing, say, "I want it."

The Text

> ACTS 8:14-24 ESV
>
> 14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." 24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

1. Jesus Must Be the Source

When it comes to the Pentecostal experience and Pentecostal expression, Jesus must be the source.

Give Simon the benefit of the doubt for a moment, because Simon did a lot of what we do. Some of us have read this passage thinking we are Peter, when we are actually Simon.

- **He saw the power of God and wanted it.** Most of us would never have been touched if we had not seen it and wanted it. That is part of the process.
- **He offered something.** Scripture does teach that we can sow and reap, so even that is not completely out of bounds.
- **He was responsive.** When he realized Peter did not like what he said, he asked Peter to pray for him (Acts 8:24). Insincere people do not usually do that.

But here is what he did: **he never looked toward Jesus.** Jesus was not in the equation. Simon looked to his own ability to obtain it. He was not trying to receive the Pentecostal experience; he was trying to write a check for it. The story ends with Simon standing there with a pen in one hand and a checkbook in the other, and Peter's words could not be sharper: "May your silver perish with you" (Acts 8:20).

You cannot earn the Pentecostal experience. You cannot work your way into it.

I struggled to receive. And the most common Pentecostal solution I was given was to try harder. We push, we pray until something happens, we fast, we sow, we dance, we shout, we clap, we run and we march, all trying to make something happen. But Jesus has to be the source. You have to receive it.

2. Jesus Must Be the Highest

Look again at Acts 8:23. Peter tells Simon, "For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:23). It sounds like a simple insult, but the phrase carries meaning. It echoes Deuteronomy 29, which warns against a heart turning away from the Lord to serve the gods of the nations, "a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit" (Deuteronomy 29:18). The bitterness is the fruit of idol worship.

We can prize the Pentecostal experience, the effects of a church like ours, the activity and the expressions, until we ignore Jesus altogether. People have said to me, "We know you like to preach on Jesus, but..." and then filled in their favorite expression: altar calls, tongues and interpretation, prophecy, longer worship, flowing in the Spirit, shofars, tambourines, flags. Jesus becomes a side note.

He is the King of kings, and we treat Him like an option. He is the Lord of lords, and we treat Him like a mascot. He is the Creator of heaven and earth.

I am all about the altar call, laying hands on people and the supernatural experience, as long as something follows it. **Too many of us have Pentecost that falls off in the parking lot.** Usually the reason is that Jesus is either not the source or not the highest.

THE BRONZE SERPENT

> NUMBERS 21:4-9 ESV
>
> 4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people
> became impatient on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you
> brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this
> worthless food." 6 Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that
> many people of Israel died. 7 And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have
> spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." So
> Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and
> everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole.
> And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

In the wilderness, fiery serpents bit the people and many died. Moses prayed, and the Lord told him to make a serpent of bronze and set it on a pole, and whoever looked at it would live. In the language of the Assemblies of God's Fundamental Truths, this is divine healing: a supernatural effect of the power of God.

Fast forward to Hezekiah's day:

> **2 KINGS 18:4 ESV**
>
> 4 He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan).

In one moment the serpent was a conduit of the power of God. Later, Israel was making offerings to it. God used it, but it was not God, and the people worshiped it anyway.

The bronze serpent was never the point. It was a prophetic symbol pointing to Jesus: "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14).

Everyone bringing offerings to the serpent would have told you it was not God. The name they gave it, Nehushtan, sounds like the Hebrew word for bronze. "It's just bronze," they said, while they bowed before it. Out of one side of our mouth we say Jesus is the most important. Out of the other side we say what we really need is X, Y and Z every week, this kind of service, this expression.

Across American Pentecostal churches, people often judge whether the anointing is on a church by how often they see tongues and interpretation. Is Jesus being preached? Is Jesus the highest? Churches have fought "worship wars" over guitars and hymnals. It is always something else.

> **ISAIAH 29:13 ESV**
>
> 13 And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,

We are an openly Spirit-filled church. We believe in the power of God. And Jesus must be the highest.

3. Jesus Must Be Our Friend

> **JOHN 15:15 ESV**
>
> 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Playing with the words a little: friendship means participation. On one hand, we receive. Jesus has to be the source, and Jesus has to be the highest. But being an openly Spirit-filled church also means we participate in the process with the Lord.

Illustration: a tap on the shoulder. John said of Jesus, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11). I was saved in an environment where I believed that, saw it and wanted it. I kept going to the altar to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit and kept coming back empty-handed for years. Most of the advice was

"try harder, push harder," and I never wanted to fake it. If I was going to speak in tongues, it was not going to be me. I was getting the real thing or no thing.

What I did not understand was that I was waiting for the Holy Spirit to do something so overwhelming that I could no longer function, a kick in the chest. What I found was that **it is less of a kick in the chest and more of a tap on the shoulder.** There are kick-in-the-chest experiences, and they are the stories we love to tell. But often the Spirit taps you on the shoulder, and you know He is there. You have to turn around. When I learned that I had to participate, I was able to step in and receive.

Receiving is not passivity. Refusing to fake it does not mean refusing to respond.

On order. A preacher once told me he did not understand why Pentecostal churches keep preaching that "all things should be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40) in churches where there is no chance of anything ever getting out of order. In the pursuit of the real thing, if something goes a little too far, we will pull it back, and leadership will be clear when that is needed. But we are going to pursue the real thing.

The road ahead. Name the coming weeks: how to open a flow of Pentecost in your life, then speaking in tongues, then Vision Sunday, and after that prophecy and more. We are going into the deep end, and we are going after the real thing, a Jesus-magnifying thing.

TALK ABOUT JESUS

In many Pentecostal churches our language gives us away. We talk about God and the Holy Spirit, and we hardly mention Jesus unless He is in a song on the screen. But He is the One: high, holy, exalted, "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 22:13). "His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze" (Revelation 1:14-15). They killed Him, and the grave could not hold Him. He is seated at the right hand of God, and He is coming back.

A Fern Fire or the Real Fire

Illustration: the church with the burning bush. Straight out of high school, in 2004, I went to work at a church in Pascagoula, Mississippi that had fallen on hard times and was recovering from some Pentecostal dysfunction. A former pastor of that church had rigged pyrotechnics inside a fern on the platform and set it off while he preached. Then he ran newspaper ads: revival has broken out, come to the church with the burning bush.

You may never have seen a fake fire on a stage. But have you trusted something as a fake fire? Have you accepted a placebo that felt good in the moment, maybe even cathartic, while you walked right back into the same thing?

We do not need a burning fern when there is a fire that can get on this house, what Jeremiah described as "a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jeremiah 20:9).

THE WEIGHT OF THE REAL THING

Paul knew the tension of ministry. "Even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there" (2 Corinthians 2:12-13). Elsewhere he speaks of "a wide door for

effective work" (1 Corinthians 16:9). There can be an open door and a heavy heart at the same time.

Be honest about the pull to back off: to sing a little song, preach a little message and send everyone home. Then answer it with Paul:

> **2 CORINTHIANS 5:13-14** ESV
>
> 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;

When the fire of God is on you, there is an ecstasy with God that pulls on you, and there is a tether that keeps you in your right mind to serve and help people. The real thing is not just running around the room. It is coming under the weight of that balance. There is more than a little shindig and then off to the buffet.

Conclusion

You think you have seen the dividing line? Christ crucified is "a stumbling block" (1 Corinthians 1:23), and when the power of God breaks out, the line will be clearer still.

Jesus is not only the source of Pentecost. Like the bronze serpent lifted up, the supernatural experience is meant to point back to Him. The Pentecostal experience comes from Jesus so that it magnifies Jesus.

Ask the church to pray for their church, and to pray in the Spirit for it. The best is yet to come. After we have suffered a little while, the God of all grace will "restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish" us (1 Peter 5:10). Declare a heart for the harvest: souls saved, the church growing and the whole region changed.

RESPONSE

Have everyone stand and lift their hands. Invite them to do business with the Lord right where they stand. For some it is prescription level: ask the Lord to purge you of a tolerance for anything with a placebo effect in your life, anything that stands in the place of the real fire, anything you accept as enough when enough is no longer enough.

Pray:

- God, purge us of compromise.
- Touch us with a fresh fire.
- **We don't need a fern fire. We need a fresh fire. We don't need a pyrotechnic fire. We need a Pentecostal fire.**
- Let it get down into our bones, so that transformation, miracles and power are inevitable, and a sensitivity to Your Spirit rests on this church.

03

Scripture List

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

Read

Read aloud in the message.

ACTS 8:14-24	14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." 24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."
2 KINGS 18:4	4 He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan).

Cited

Named or quoted along the way.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:2	2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
DEUTERONOMY 29:18	18 Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit,

NUMBERS 21:4-9	4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." 6 Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 7 And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.
JOHN 3:14	14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
ISAIAH 29:13	13 And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,
JOHN 15:15	15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.
1 CORINTHIANS 14:40	40 But all things should be done decently and in order.
JEREMIAH 20:9	9 If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.
2 CORINTHIANS 2:12-13	12 When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, 13 my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.
2 CORINTHIANS 5:13-14	13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;

Alluded to

Drawn on without naming the reference.

MATTHEW 3:11	11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
REVELATION 22:13	13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."
REVELATION 1:14–15	14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.
1 CORINTHIANS 1:23	23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,
1 PETER 5:10	10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

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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