

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Grace Unleashed

PART

22

TITLE

Making The Best Use Of Time

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:15-21



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If you have with you a Bible, if you want to head over to the fifth chapter of Ephesians. We're in a series. It's called Grace Unleashed, how God literally pours his grace out to us and then through us. What we've been doing is walking verse by verse through this book. We're up to chapter 5 verse 15.

Even before we read it though, I want to show you a really cool picture. Several weeks ago, we brought about 32 students up on this stage and we prayed for them to actually send them out. They went to Portland and they went to Toronto. Here's the teams if you want to see them. We had been praying and have been praying that God would use them, as they go to love and to lead and to share the gospel with people. There's two church plants that we as a church help support, pray for, and send lots of teams to over the last several years. This was the most recent installment of that partnership. You sent them out. We, as a church family, prayed for them, and we prayed very specifically that God would move in their life to help these churches, but also to share the gospel. That's exactly what they did.

They lived and loved people in such a winsome way. God did a miracle. In fact, I'm certain that he did more than I can see, but I want to show you one more really cool picture. Right in the middle of this picture, there's the guy in a black coat. This is James. James trusted Christ this last week with our team. We prayed very specifically that God would lead us to people who would be open to the gospel. As you hear his story, which I'm not going to tell you now, God had literally been working in his life for weeks and even months, about life and about its meaning and why we're here and what's happening in my life. God literally took our teams that we sent and James, and they intersected. They met, and they shared the gospel, and he trusted Christ. This is one of your new brothers in Christ. Isn't that cool? It really is cool.

So many things to be grateful for. These are the first two of currently 18 mission trips that will be sent out this year, all around the world. I'm just so encouraged. If you would, let's bow and let's give thanks. Father in heaven, we thank you. We thank you for James. Thank you for not only his life, but for every single person who heard the gospel. We thank you God for what you're doing in those churches that we love and that we partner with. We thank you for their leaders. We thank you for the people. We pray that you would strengthen them even this morning as they meet.

God, we pray that you would take all those seeds that were sown, in the lives of so many people, God, over the next weeks and months, maybe even years, that you would send more people to water those seeds with the gospel and to reinforce that message. We pray, God, that many of these individuals who heard the gospel that they would eventually turn from sin, that sin of believing that they can save themselves, and that they would put their trust in Jesus Christ alone. We are grateful for what you did.

Now we pray, God, as we ... Lord, as we open up your word, as we read from it, we pray, God, that you would address our life. This passage, which you write so perfectly, speaks about our time and about how we need to redeem it, make the most of it, so that we can live for your kingdom, and that we can withstand before you one day without shame. I pray, God, that you would speak through weakness, would you address each one of us right where we're at. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

The Bible in your hand tells us that God is eternal. It says a lot more about who God is in the Bible, but one of his attributes that we learn about is that he's eternal. What that means is that God never wears a wristwatch, and the main reason is because time is in his hand, it's not around his hand. He's not bound by time. He's not in a hurry, ever. Time is in his hand. He owns time, if you can think about it that way. What it says is this, is that the owner of all time in the world has literally entrusted to each and every one of us a limited amount, a portion of time to live on this earth. He's called each and every one of us to manage that time as a gift and to manage it wisely.

It's interesting as we live and as we feel the frailty of our own life and even mortality. We're all confronted with that reality every single day, and that is that one day we will not wake up, we will not be on earth, that we will die one day. It causes us to want to sometimes slow time down, maybe even stop it. There's various moments where it's more natural to want to slow down time. Finals week is not one of those. We just wish we could just skip ahead of that week, but there's certain times in our life where we just say, "Man, wouldn't it be cool if we could just stop right here?" When you're really exhausted and it's your first full day of vacation, and you look out and you see a beautiful beach or a mountain, and your phone isn't turned on, and you don't feel the weight of your lawn that's growing back at home that needs to be mowed and all the responsibilities, and you think, "Man, wouldn't it be cool if this was life, if we could just stop right here and just be here for ever?"

Sometimes I think we feel that when we fall in love with somebody. We think, "Wouldn't it be amazing if we could just stop time right now? Everything else can keep moving, but in our lives, we're just going to stay at this point where we're just in love with one another." Sometimes I think we feel it when our kids, when we see our kids getting older. I remember years ago when our third son, he was asleep. I went into his room, and like filling up most of the bed. I'm like, "Stop already! Stop growing. I just want to stop time."

Then there's times when you look into the mirror and you see the aging process in your own life and you see how long you've lived. You start thinking about how long you have left. It's natural to want to slow down, if not stop, time. Yet, you can't do so. What we understand about time is that time is more like a huge locomotive that's stuck in gear. You think about this picture, and you think about that in terms of the idea of time. If this was in first gear, there was nobody there, it's absolutely stuck, and it just keeps barreling down. It's not rushing. It's just methodical. It's just moving. You can try to stop it, you can try to stand in front of it, but you simply can't do that. That's not what God allows us to do with time. There's nothing that you can do to bring that last 10 seconds back into your life. It's gone. It just keeps moving.

Since we can't stand in front of time, and since we can't stop time, what God does is he invites us to get in front of that time and to redirect the track into areas of priority and importance, so that the time can be spent, so that that time, as it barrels down, as it's slowly, methodically moving through our life, is that we're able to take that gift, manage it in certain areas, so that that time can be used for eternity. That time can be used for good. The question is, "Where do we build that track?"

What we find here in this passage is God giving instruction to you and to me where we need to lay track down so that when we stand before God and we're out of time on the earth, we can look back at how we invested this time on the earth and we can stand before him unashamed. This is what Paul says. Paul's writing believers in Ephesus. This is what he says, starting in verse 15. He says, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."

What has God done? What do we see here that God has done to give us instruction on how to make the most of our time? The first thing I want you to see is that God invites us to understand his will. He invites us to understand his will for our life. You see that on the heels of chapter 5, verse 10, when he says, "Try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord," he's just coming off of a section where he's calling us to live in love. He's calling us to live in purity, and he's calling us to live in the light, to be children of the light. He says, "Try your best to discern what is pleasing the Lord with your life."

On the heels of that, he comes and we find here in verse 17, he says this. He says, "Don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." Did you know that God has a plan for your life? He has purposes for your life, and he has literally created you in such a way to fulfill those purposes. Not only that, but he wants you to know what those purposes are, even though sometimes we get confused about how to identify what they are.

Years and years ago, when our boys were little, we were in the family room and I was sharing with our boys about this very thing, that God has a plan for their life. We were talking about the fact that God has plans for everybody's life. Then it was bedtime, and I said, everybody up, and everybody goes up except one of my sons. I didn't ask if I could share the story so I'll ... it's one of the three, okay. He stays down. He was super quiet during the whole thing. You can just tell that he's thinking. He turns around and he goes, "Dad, how in the world am I ever going to be able to discern or know what God's will is for my life?"

What I told him was this, and so I'm going to tell you. What we're going to do, is that we're going to follow the clues, because God has given clues. I want to show you what some of these clues are. The most important clue that God gives to every single one of us to understand what God's will is for our life, is he gave us a bible. He gave us the word of God. It's the complete revelation of who he is, who we are and how we're supposed to live in his world. It gives us clarity of what's right and what's wrong, but he also gives us understanding of what is the priority, meaning under the umbrella of saying, now this is righteousness and outside of this, this is sin, so we're going to live in this. There's all kinds of things that you can put your hands to, that you can put your heart to, that's not necessarily sin, but is it the best use of your time?

What God does is even in the context of what he calls righteous, he says, I want to prioritize for you the most important things in life. In the bible, it's interesting, he doesn't use the word priority. In the bible, its equivalent is the word seek. I will seek the Lord with all of my heart. What's he saying? I'm going to prioritize knowing God, being with God, looking to God more than anything else. Perhaps the most famous seek passage in the whole bible is when Jesus said in Matthew chapter 6, he says that, "The Gentiles seek after all these things." He's talking there about what we wear, what we eat and what we drink, the basic components of life.

He says, "The Gentiles," now that's a reference, not to a nationality of people but to people that are far from God. He says those that are from God, what they do is they spend all their time thinking what am I going to wear? What am I going to eat? What am I going to drink? How can I accumulate things? Because that's what life is all about. He says, "But your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first," prioritize first, "The Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all of these things will be added to you."

What we find here is that God is laying down breadcrumbs. The first breadcrumb in the bible is he says, now this is righteous and this is sin. Then he says, now in the world of righteousness, now he says I'm going to give you priority. I'm going to encourage you to invest your life and your gifts and everything in you, including your time, and I want you to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. Invest your life in the kingdom that's going to last forever.

We have those several breadcrumbs, and then all of a sudden he goes, but I'm going to give you more. There's more clues. The bible says that when we trust Christ, that we're filled with the Holy Spirit, that God's Spirit literally comes and lives within us, and the Spirit does several things, but I want to talk about two of them. He confirms and he convicts. He confirms. It actually says that he convicts us of righteousness. What that means is when we're doing the right thing, God's Spirit speaks his pleasure into our heart. That's why if you've ever been really kind of generous or you've served someone, in your heart you just feel like this is right. Well that's God's Spirit saying this is right. I'm proud of you. This is obedience. It feels good because I feel good in you.

But he also says that he convicts us as sin. That's the word conviction. When we get off course, well God by his Spirit, he convicts us so that we know that we're getting off course, so that we'll get back on course. The third bread crumb is a calling within his word for us to be sanctified. What that means, is that in any big decision you have in life, you should be asking the question, at the end of the day, this decision needs to propel me towards being more like Christ. If me joining this firm or moving to this city or coming to this church actually leads me to be less like Jesus Christ, then I know that that's not his plan.

If you're dating somebody, and that someone is not inspiring you to be more like Christ, it's not his will. It's not. He wants you to become more like Christ. When you stand before him, all of your decisions, do I go to this city or this city for the job? You ask. If it's at possible to understand, which one of these options, with the people that I'm going to be working with, is going to inspire to be more like Christ?

Well the fourth bread crumb that he kind of lays down for each and every single one of us are gifts and interests. He's created you special. He created you with specific gifts and interests that other people don't have. Some of you kids, you're in school right now or perhaps you're out of school, and you've concluded that you're not very intelligent and the reason is because when you went to school, you didn't do so well. The problem with our school system is they only test three areas of intelligence, but there's lots of areas of intelligence. There's relational intelligence. There's spatial intelligence. There's musical intelligence. There's all kinds of things above reading, writing and math.

You have gifts. You have abilities, and I want you to know something. Your maximized gifts are more in line with God's purpose from your life than marginally improved weaknesses. What are you good at? What do you think about? What do you naturally drift toward? You need to understand, that's a part of God giving you clues to understand that within righteousness, seeking his kingdom, using your life and all your gifts for his glory, he intends to use those gifts. If you're good at math, there's a good chance you may be an engineer or something like that.

Those gifts can be used for his glory. That's what he intends, for every single one of us. Another clue is he gives us friends. Friends that can confirm what we think our gifts are. They observe our life. We all need a good friend because we all get a little distorted in what we believe is our gifts, so we need someone in our life to say, you know what? You're okay with that, but what you're really good at, what I really see you doing in life is something like this. Then one other clue that he gives is opened and closed doors. You walk through life, and all of a sudden a door is closed. You don't get into the school that you wanted to go to. You say, that's terrible. No. God just says that's not my plan for your life.

It's okay. Now, it's never just a straight line. We never just walk with the Lord, well here's his will. I'll just walk ... No, we're bumping back and forth and we're stumbling, but God uses all of these clues to keep us marching. So Providence, look. Let's follow the clues right now to discern his will for our lives. Whatever it is, would you look at those clues? Would you identify, say okay God, this is what I see? I want to invest my life for you. The first thing you have to understand is what does he have for you? He's created you with intent. You've been written into the story, and that really gets into the second point which is really, really important.

He's going to call us to be urgent. This is what he does. The second thing is this, is that God urges us to be careful, to carefully redeem our time. God urges us to carefully redeem our time. Now around here, you guys know that we love basketball. If you don't love basket, well I'm just sorry, okay? This is just the time, okay. It's interesting, in basketball, and in most sports, but it's obviously in basketball, is that we really care a whole lot about what happens in the last two minutes. The same thing can also happen in the Super Bowl. You guys remember, right? There was, the ball got fumbled by Brady, and everyone said, all right, well that was it. Isn't it interesting though that each team received a certain number of times when they possessed the ball? And that happened to be just one of them. Had that happened in the first quarter, we probably wouldn't have thought so much about it, but because it happened when it happened, we all think, now that was the reason they lost, or that was the reason that they won.

The same thing happens in basketball. Isn't it true that a bad pass turnover, with 10 seconds left and the game is tied, feels worse than two minutes into the first half, when all the game is in front of us? Now I tell you all that because what you see here from verse 15 to 17, Paul, he's intense. He almost sounds like a coach in the time out, when the game is on the line with two minutes left. He's barking out instructions, really short instructions. He's saying, guys, every possession matters. Be careful. Be wise. Don't be foolish. Follow the plan. Keep going. Then he tells us why.

He says the days are evil. He says we are living in the last two minutes. Things really are breaking down. Prisons really are fulls, and hospitals really are overcrowded and homes really are breaking and people all over the world, they're dying without Jesus Christ, any knowledge of him. He says think about this. It is time to be sincere. It is time to be serious about how we spend our time. You see God has given us the only news that can bring out restoration. It's called the gospel. The gospel begins with creation, that God created a good world and then he placed us in that good world, to live. He gave us one instruction, and after perfect obedience from every created thing, humanity looked at God with his one instruction, and we said, no. No. Going to do it a different way.

The bible calls that sin, and we broke fellowship with God. There's nothing that we could do to restore that relationship. It began fragmenting all the other relationships of our life. So God loved us so much though that he said I'm going to restore what you can't. So he sent Jesus Christ from heaven to earth, and Jesus lived a righteous life on the earth. He died on a cross in order to pay for our sin. He was buried in a grave and then he rose from the dead. He became the victor over death and sin and evil. Then he gave you and I an invitation. That was if we would not trust in our own righteousness and in our own effort and our own merit, but if we would trust in his accomplishments, that we would be forgiven of our sin, that we would be saved, that we'd be brought into a relationship with him.

Now why is that so important? Because Paul is looking at a people in Ephesians that are surrounded by people that are going to go to hell if they don't hear the gospel. It's so possible for believers to be living their life under the umbrella of righteousness, meaning it's not sin. It's just not serious. It's not all that important. It's not prioritized. We're just squandering moments of our life, and yet it's the last two minutes. Things are really important right now. Lives will be literally determined where they're going to go forever, and we're here right now. They're here right now.

He says, look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise. What's he saying? He's saying guys, the locomotive is moving. Your life is a vapor. It's so limited. So walk carefully. I think he says walk carefully because it's our nature to be wasteful when we perceive excess. Have you ever thought about this? If your team in the second half is up 30, and there's a fast break and your point guard throws it behind the back and it goes way up into the stands, it's a horrible pass, you don't go, you don't freak out. You're like, oh well, whatever, it's just 30. Why? Because we perceive excess. We're going to win this anyway, so let's have some fun with it.

We do the same thing with the word. You come in here, and a lot of us, right, we're like, oh it's another one of these things. Another one of these, we call them sermons. He's just going to get up there. He's going to read it. We're going to see it again, and then we're going to go to a life group. This is kind of what we do, but isn't it interesting that because of that, because we just assume another one's coming, that so many things that we hear, we let pass through our fingers as if they're not all that important. They fall to the ground, thinking I'll just pick them up next time. That's not a big deal.

It's interesting that you go to places of the world though where it's not in excess and there's very little waste. I remember being in Zimbabwe 20, 25 years ago, or so, and preaching a sermon, and I finished and I thought, man I probably went a little too long, which never happens. It was a joke. Anyway. I finished. I pray, like, we normally shut down a sermon, a little invitation, pray, and I go sit down. Nothing happens. They're just sitting there. I'm like, I don't ... Someone will do something eventually and so the pastor walks over to me, and he goes, "Um, what are you doing?" I said I'm done. He goes, "No, you're not done. They want more. Just start again. Just do another one." So I literally, I walked right back up and I said all right, turn to, and I just went to another sermon. Why? Because they never get it. They never hear it.

The same thing with time. We think of time as if we're in a big swimming pool full of little plastic balls and every one of those balls is like a minute. We look around, we're just swimming in it. We're throwing them in the air. They just feel like there's so many of them. Friends come over, and we take them like water, and we throw them out at each other. We're just having fun, and little minutes are just flying everywhere. We're told that underneath the pool there's a drain. Very slowly, methodically, these minutes are falling out but we don't see them. It just feels like there's minutes everywhere. Look at all ... We need to just enjoy all this time and use it however we want, and then all of a sudden you look around and you go, "Wait a minute. It seems like the pool is a little bit lower." This is exactly what happens with time.

If we're not absolutely careful with our time, we will find that it is leaving without our eyes even seeing it. We are very wasteful, when we perceive that there's excess. So what does he say to us? He says make the best use of the time. It's a financial term. It means to redeem, literally redeem your time, for something of equal or greater value. If you could see the value of one hour of your life and how few there actually are left, you would take that hour and say, now what is the best way that I can spend this hour, to make the best use of it.

It's interesting that the word that Paul uses for time here is not *chronos*, where we get the words like, a actual time unit like minutes or seconds or hours. It's the word *chairoi*, which is the word for a unit of opportunity. When we say we had a great time together, what we're talking about is an experience that we enjoyed together, not necessarily, man that was 37 and a half wonderful minutes. That's what we mean by that. This is what he's saying. He's saying make the best use of those units of opportunity. Why? Because they're like windows. They're open for a time but they close slowly. There are people in the hospital today from Providence. We have a window of opportunity to care for them when they're there, but if we don't, that window closes.

There's unbelievers in our neighborhood. We think, oh they'll be there forever. They won't. That window closes. Families get sick or moms get sick, and we think, oh I should bring a meal over to that family to really love them and care for them, but it's interesting that windows close. One day she won't be sick, they won't need a meal. If you don't take it at that point in time, that opportunity is lost. There's a time to go on a mission trip, but you know, there will come a time where that window for you, it closes. You'll never be able to do that again. What is he saying? Take those moments of time that you have. Invest them. Invest them. They're so important. Redeem that time.

So, application. Let's redeem our current windows of opportunity. What is before you right now that you see as an opportunity? What's something that you think, you know it'd be really good for me to blank? That would really encourage them. I could pray for them. I could call them. I could go share the gospel with them. I could make a meal for them, and right now, this week, say that has to fit. I have to direct the track so that that train of time can intersect with their life so that I can meet that window of opportunity.

The third thing I want you to see, you find here is that God compels us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the third point. God compels us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As he sees time coming and he sees the world in a mess, he says, this is how I want you to lay down track, and he says, look, you can know my will, and you can redeem the time, but I want you to know something. You'll have no fire in your belly, and you'll have no strength for obedience, if you're not filled with the Holy Spirit. He says it this way in verse 18, "Do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit."

Now the bible says that drunkenness is a sin, but he's not talking here about drinking at all. He's using it as a comparison. All of us know what happens when someone drinks too much. Is that drink, it has a controlling effect over the person, to the place that I can control not only what we think, but what we say and what we do, and even if we cry or if we laugh. It has an influence over every part of who we are, and he's using that as an illustration to say, look. God by his Spirit is living within your heart, and if you'll give yourself over to that Spirit, that the Spirit will have a controlling effect over you, not only your life, but your words and your mind and your inclinations and your emotions. He will control you in such a way that people would be benefited.

When I think about the bible, I think about the big story. It's remarkable to me how God progressively draws closer. When he says here be filled with the Holy Spirit, I think he's reaching where we're at right now, which is so much closer than where the bible starts. In the Old Testament, what you see is that God is literally dwelling above people. He's high on the mountain. He said you can come up to the mountain but don't put your foot on the mountain. If you do, you'll die. You're unholy. I'm holy.

You can come to the temple, but you can't come into the holy of holies. You look up, if you need directions, look up. There'll be a thing of fire in the sky.. it's very dramatic, and we think boy, they had clear direction from God. Yeah, but God was very far from them. He's closer than where they started in sin. God was definitely drawing close to them, but he was above them. When we get to the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, God's not above, he's among. It says the word of God, what did it do? He came and dwelt among us. Jesus Christ took on flesh. He was living among us now. We're camping with him. We're touching him. We're near him. We're seeing him. While Jesus was on the earth, he says guys, it's going to get even better.

John chapter 14, Jesus says I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth, you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. So the rest of the New Testament is what the whole bible has been waiting for. That is now God is not dwelling above us or among us, but in us. Directing us, controlling us. So the question, Paul knows, Paul knows exactly what's taking place in Ephesians chapter 1, verses 13 and 14, he says, to these believers, "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance."

He's talking to the church, that he's already affirmed that God's Spirit is living within them. How can he tell them, now be filled with the Holy Spirit? He can say that because though the Spirit dwells in them, every single one of us can live in such a way so that the light and the presence and the fire of the Spirit is diminished in our lives. It's sort of like a flame. In fact, the bible even sort of describes him as a flame. You've seen fire. There's one on the screen that you can look at. Every single fire needs three ingredients, not only to start, but to sustain. It needs oxygen, it needs fuel and it needs heat. You remove any one of those three and that fire will immediately go out. It must have all three.

Well when we live with our back to God, it says that we quench the Holy Spirit. Now he never goes out completely, but we do not get to enjoy his light or heat. We're removing one of the needed ingredients in our heart for him to burn bright and hot. But when we live unto the Lord, facing him, wanting to be with him, seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness, it's like adding oxygen and fuel and heat to a fire that's already growing.

You say, okay, how do we do it? How do we do that? It sounds great Brian, so how do I do it? How ... I want to go be filled with the Holy Spirit. That's the, what do they call it? The finite verb. The thing that, do this. It's an imperative. Be filled with the Spirit. Go do it. How do you do that? Not a single one of us can go grab the Holy Spirit, put him in our heart and fan him. How does that work? Well the bible tells us that, in fact I won't even say the bible tells us. It's, Paul tells us exactly what to do next. He says when you feel within your heart that God's Spirit is there, and yet he's not burning bright, what you need to do is to fan that flame. How we fan that flame is he gives us four very specific instructions. In the Greek they're called participles.

Now, it's in English too, right? It's a word of speech, but the fact is that most of us, we've forgotten what a participle was a long, long time ago, okay? A participle simply helps you get the verb done. That's all it does. They're usually -ing words. You can see the ones here. Addressing one another with spiritual songs and hymns, that's one. Number two, right, is singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. Number three is giving thanks always, and number four is submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. In other words, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are inclined to address one another with singing. We're inclined to sing to the Lord. We're inclined to give thanks, and we're inclined to submit to one another. What's interesting is that when we are submitting and thanking and singing and addressing one another with songs, it says it's as if one is feeding another and that fire gets brighter and hotter by the day.

So the applications that I want to give you, we're going to end here. I just want to work through each one of these very, very quickly. The first thing is this, is let's address one another with singing. If we really want to fan the flame of the Holy Spirit within our heart, and each other's hearts, he says we need to sing together. Some of you have wondered, well I get the whole bible thing, but why do we sing when we come to church? Well this is why. He says one of the ways that we serve one another is we address one another with truth-filled songs. People see us and they think, that person really believes what she's singing. You see, what takes place is, every single one of us, for where we're at, we all come in here. You may not know this, but maybe a person two or three seats from where you're at right now has cancer. And they need you singing because when they see you singing, all of a sudden, they're filled with the Holy Spirit who gives them comfort.

It may be that someone here is mired in sin. They came in, there's no way that God could ever forgive me, and all of a sudden, we sing songs of forgiveness and you look over and you see someone singing. You think, wow, that person really believes what they're singing. So you see what he's saying? He's saying there's a whole ... It's actually fascinating. He doesn't start with sing to the Lord. He actually starts with the horizontal before the vertical. He says we have a part to play in each other being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is why we sing.

Some of you come in here and you're just, I'm not much of a singer. I don't like to sing. Listen, friend, we need you to sing. It's just not about you. It's about all of us. That's why we call it a church. We come together to strengthen one another. So he says address one another with spiritual songs. The second thing, let's sing to the Lord with our heart. There's also a vertical spiritual impact. How many times have you come into a church with a cold heart, right? You're driving here. The kids are fighting. Spouse may be rude. Maybe your parents are impatient with you, as you're getting dressed. You come here and you have a hard time finding a parking spot, and you think, is that building still not done? I got to walk all the way down to the DOC? Then you got some happy, chipper worship pastor, who goes, oh everybody let's sing together, and you're like really? Really? Now? We're going to sing?

Isn't it interesting how we sing a little different at the end of the service than at the very beginning. It's fascinating. Why is that? It's because we've listened to truth. It's because we've thought about God. It's because ... What he says is this, is when that fire is dim, one of the ways that we can fan it is that we can sing to the Lord.

The third thing we need to do is give thanks to God. If you feel the fire of the Spirit is dim in your heart, one of the things you can do is take stock of your life, and start to give thanks for everything that you see that is better than spending forever in hell. Because the bible says that all of us have sinned and fallen short of his glory and he says that the wage of sin is death. That's what we deserve. So anything better than that is something for us to say thank you for.

The fourth thing is this. He says, let's submit. Submit to one another out of reverence to Christ. See, when we demand our way and we promote ourself and we push people down and we assume the higher chair, what we're doing is pouring cold water on the Holy Spirit within our heart. You have to understand that the Holy Spirit is never going to rejoice in behavior that caused Jesus the son of God to hang on a tree. He's never going to make us happy when we're sinning, and the reason is because our sin is what put the second member of the trinity on a tree.

But the opposite is also then true. That is when we are taking the low place and serving other people, when we're conscious of the most amazing act of submission and humility in the history of the world, that Jesus would live and die for us, and we transfer that into a position where we serve one another, and we care for one another out of reverence for Christ, what it says is it's as if we're taking a great big fan, and we're just fanning that flame within our hearts so that we can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

At Providence, one of the most amazing things that takes place when we're filled with the Holy Spirit is he bears fruit in our life, naturally, of love, joy, and peace and patience and kindness and goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. So I urge you to understand what the will of the Lord is, and then take that time that you have been made a manger over and invest it for eternal purposes and be filled with the Holy Spirit, so that you have the fuel and the fire to be able to give your life to it, okay? Let's pray together.

Father we love you. We thank you for your kindness to us. We acknowledge that without your Spirit, even what we do next, will be futile. So I pray that as we sing to you, as we sing to you, that you would help us to address one another in song. That you would help us to make melody to you from our heart. That you would help us to give thanks for what you've done in our life, and that you would help us to submit to one another out of reverence to Christ. So we acknowledge you, and we love you, and we pray this in Christ's name, amen.



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