



Message **Transcript**

Do I Have Your Attention Yet?

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Lord, we give you all the praise and glory and honor. Lord, thank you for allowing us to gather corporately and do what you've commanded us to do and that is worship your Holy name. Lord, you tell us in your word that we should not stop meeting together but we should continue to do it and all the more as we see the day approaching and Lord, that day is approaching quickly and so we say, come Lord Jesus. Lord, we look forward to the day where we see you, where you take us home to be with you forever and Lord, until that time we wanna live for you. So Lord today be helpful to us from your word Lord, so that as we hear you, Lord, that we would respond to you in the way in which you want us to respond. And so now for all God's people gathered wherever you are who desire to hear the living and active word of God and respond by faith to everything He shows you would you agree with me this morning that you're ready by saying the word amen. Amen.

One of the greatest sporting events in United States history was in 1980 when the United States hockey team defeated the Russians. I remember I was a little boy at the time I was about 10 years old so you can do the math as to how old I am right now but I remember Al Michaels announcing it, it was such a big deal, it was during the cold war and the unique part about that victory was that the United States hockey team at the time were non-paid athletes, they were nonprofessional athletes, they were just a bunch of college guys, none of the pros played in the Olympics and the Russian hockey team, the USSR hockey team was the number one team in the world. They were beating all of the professional teams in the United States. The United States didn't have a chance they were the underdog of all underdogs. As a matter of fact it was such a

significant event that a movie was made about it called "Miracle" many of you have probably seen the movie. And one interesting thing in that story as you study these young boys who are about 19 to 22 years old that are playing for this team, there's a situation where they're playing in a hockey match prior to the Olympics and as they're playing their coach, Herb Brooks is looking down the bench and realizing these young guys are just having fun they're checking out girls in the stands, they're just happy to be playing hockey and all these different things that are going on and so after the game, the coach says to them, you don't wanna play during the game, we'll play now. And so he gets them on the line to just run sprints. I guess you don't run sprints on ice you sprint sprints on ice and they're sprinting back and forth and he would just blow the whistle they have to sprint down and sprint back and he would tell the coach, the assistant coach, send them, again, again, again, you get the picture when you watch the movie that these guys are about ready to die. I mean so much so that the assistant coach when he tells him again, gets to the point where he won't even blow his whistle he's like, come on Herb that's enough you're hurting these guys too much. When these guys had first met taking you back in the movie a little bit, he asked him where they were all from and I put, my name is so and so and I play for Boston. My name's so and so I play for the university of Wisconsin. My name's so and so here's the school I play for. And in that moment when he's about ready to send them again when these guys are dying, one guy stands up and he says, my name is Mike Rizoni and he said, who do you play for? And he said, I play for the United States of America. And the coach said that's all and walks off the ice and all the guys collapsed. And what was he

trying to do? He was trying to get their attention that who they were playing for for the United States was greater than playing for themselves. He was trying to get their attention.

Spiritually do you know that God is trying to get our attention right now? I mean I've entitled this sermon, Do I Have Your Attention? All you need to do is look around the world, all you need to do is read the news you're gonna see fires, you're gonna see famines, you're gonna see earthquakes, I mean there's people that want water to come put the fires out, there's people on the South of our nation that has tropical storms that are coming in that don't want them to come. You got political uprising, you have civic unrest. You have people upset about education, masks, all sorts of different things. It's a polarizing time and I believe that anytime we go through seasons like that, it is God screaming at the world saying, do I have your attention? Do I have your attention? Are you looking to me? And see the question for us as believers in Christ is are we really giving God our attention? Are we really responding to God for what He wants us to hear because oftentimes in situations like this, really all that we're praying for is get us out of this situation and let life go back to normal and as long as I can have my life back the way it was, I'm totally cool. But I believe God wants something more from us individually and corporately.

And to take a look at that today, I want you to open your Bibles up to 2 Chronicles 7 and ask yourself, does God really have your attention? 2 Chronicles 7, if you turn there, the book of Chronicles first and second Chronicles was originally just one book, Chronicling from Adam all the way through the Babylonian captivity and as

you read through these texts, they're fascinating about what was going on in Israel at different times and in chapter seven, the completion of the temple has just taken place. Solomon, the third King, who was David's son is built, has built a temple for the Lord and God is coming to dwell in His temple in front of all Israel. As a matter of fact, in chapter seven starting in verse one, just to give you a little context, here's what happened. It says now, "When Solomon had finished praying, "fire came down from heaven "and consumed the burnt offering "and the sacrifices and the glory of "the Lord filled the house." Picture that. Awesome. I mean awesome. So awesome verse two the priest could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house.

Can you imagine God's glory being so present here today we couldn't even make it into the building. There's too much of God here. I mean the priest can't even get in to officiate. "And the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down "and the glory of the Lord upon the "house bowed down on the pavement with "their faces to the ground and they worshiped "and gave praise to the Lord saying "truly he is good, truly his loving kindness "is everlasting." I mean imagine coming to church this morning for those of you that are in attendance and the presence of God was so strong and you had seen fire come down from heaven, none of the pastors were able to get into the building to do any sort of service and all of us just stood in the parking lot and got on our faces and worshiped and said, He's awesome, His presence is awesome. That's what was going on because God dwelled in His temple. We see the sacrifices that are offered which were myriad and then they start dedicating the temple and God begins to speak

to the people giving them warning of what's going to happen as a nation if they don't obey.

Now God all throughout the old Testament, specifically in Leviticus and Deuteronomy had instructed them if you do what I command, blessings will come your way. If you don't do what I command curses will come your way. Those were specific commands to the nation of Israel, to the Jewish people and as God has established His presence in the temple, He's going to remind them of His promise. So in second Chronicles, chapter seven, starting in verses 13 and 14, here's what he says. He says, "If I shut up the heavens "so that there is no rain, "or if I command the locusts to devour the land, "or if I send pestilence among my people "and my people who are called by my name "humble themselves and pray "and seek my face and turn from "their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven "will forgive their sin and heal their land." How many by show of hands, how many have heard that verse before? I'm gonna read it again. "If I shut up the heaven so there is no rain "or if I command the locusts to devour the land "or if I send pestilence among my people "and my people who are called by my name "humble themselves and pray and seek my face "and turn from their wicked ways, "then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin "and will heal their land."

Now here's what we're gonna hear in this text when God is trying to get our attention we're understanding this, why is God doing this? Why is God trying to get the attention of Israel? Now oftentimes we have to be very careful when we take an old Testament passage and apply it to us here because a lot of times what people will say

is here's what it means, if bad things happen in America and all Christians in America pray and humble themselves, seek His face and turn from their wicked ways then God will heal America. That's not what the text says. The word America is not in the text did you see it in your Bible? It's not there. Here's what God was saying to the entire nation of Israel you're my people. You're my people because I chose you by my grace to be a light to all the nations of the world. I'm dwelling in your presence and when you see things like pestilence or the crops being devoured or things not working, then I have a plan for what you should do. And He gives them this instruction so that He would heal the land of Israel.

We can't just take the promise to Israel and make it a promise to America because we happen to live there but what we can do is we can take the principles that God is sharing and apply them to us. For instance, anytime we read an old Testament promise, we have to say is it true in the new Testament? Do we see that played out in the new Testament? For instance here's what it says in 2 Corinthians 1:20, "For as many are "the promises of God in him," that's Christ "they are yes." So oftentimes an old Testament promise is fulfilled in Jesus for instance, in the old Testament if you sinned, you were to bring an animal to the temple to have it sacrificed on behalf of your sin because why? Blood needed to be shed to cover your sin because sin is an abomination to God. Does that apply to us today? Yes and no. I mean if you sin grievously, you look at porn on the internet or you're sexually immoral you're not like, man, I got to go buy a sheep, right? I mean, that's not what you do. Why? Because in Christ the promise has been fulfilled because once and for all we read in the new

Testament that Jesus Christ was the atoning sacrifice for our sin. So what the old Testament did as a promise for Jesus who was to come, we have Christ so through His blood we're completely forgiven when we confess our sins. Amen. So the application is different because it's in Christ, right? So when we see an old Testament promise, we have to see if it's fulfilled in Christ.

So for instance, I just preached through the book of Philippians. Philippians 3:3 says, "For we are the true circumcision." In the old Testament circumcision was important for the male children on the eighth day to be circumcised as a covenant between them and the Lord. What does Paul say in the new Testament? We. Who's we? Jews and Gentiles. Who's we? Male and female. Who's we? We all who have trusted Jesus are the true circumcision. Cause why? Cause we've been circumcised in our hearts. Our hearts of stone has been removed and we've been replaced with a heart of flesh that can love the Lord Jesus Christ. So we had to be careful in the old Testament, we don't throw the old Testament out and say, it's no good but we had to be careful we just don't take it and apply it to us because for instance in this text, I still believe Romans 11 teaches that God still has a plan for the nation of Israel and they're gonna be grafted back in. So we can't just throw away Israel and say, oh, that's just for us. It's not just for us but the principles that God was teaching Israel are still true for us and you'll see that played out.

So why is God getting our attention? If you're in a season like I am where you're looking around the world and saying, God, I think you're trying to get our attention. There's absolutely no doubt in my 50 years of life nearly that you are purposely

believer and non-believer trying to get us to look up at you. Why would God do that?

And the texts really gives us four reasons.

And the first reason God desires to get our attention is so that we will represent Him in our worship. God is trying to get our attention so we will represent Him in our worship. Notice what He says, if I shut up the heavens so there is no rain or if I command the locusts to devour the land or I send pestilence among my people, what does that mean? God is saying I'm in charge of the whole world. Everything that happens I'm in charge of. Now most of us because we don't farm don't think about the weather the way farmers think about the weather. I rarely think about did we get enough rain? Are we doing enough stuff? I mean I realize we live in a desert so the answer is usually, no, we didn't get enough rain but if you were farming, you would be asking this question. I have a cousin who lives in West, Texas her husband's a cotton farmer, there's not a time we talk to them on the phone or go visit them that we don't talk about the weather all day. We need a few, we need a little more rain we've only got a half an inch in the last month. We need this, we pray for rain, pray for rain. Why? Because their livelihood is dependent upon the climate. For most of us it's not. So we can read that and go God, you can do this, you can do this now we get, we hear the pestilence part and we're like, yeah, maybe let me just tell you something about COVID-19 God's not surprised by it, He's not afraid of it and He doesn't want us to live in fear. I'm just telling you God's in control, it's not as if it happened and God said, oh, what are we gonna do? Say, I'm sending it to get your attention look to me. And I want you first and foremost to realize when you see pestilence in your land, you see civic

unrest, political unrest, everybody's unrest, everybody's mad at everybody you can't even go to a store without somebody getting mad at you just for standing in the wrong place. When you see all that, I'm trying to get your attention so that you will represent me in your worship. That's what He's saying. He says, when you see all these things and notice what He says and my people who are called by my name.

Now specifically at the time that was written, who were God's people? The Jewish nation, the entire nation. My people called by my name. Who are God's people today? Everyone who has trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. You are His people and guess what that means? You represent Him. You represent Him, right? The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 says that we are new creations, that the old is gone behold all things have been made new. God recreated you from the inside out the moment that you trusted Jesus and on the inside you're fundamentally different than you ever were before. You've been given a new name, you are now a saint by new birth into the family of God and guess what God says in 2 Corinthians 5:20, we are His ambassadors. You know what an ambassador does? An ambassador represents the president of United States at least from the United States, an ambassador for Christ you are a personal representative of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and you need to remember that while your feet are still on this planet and while you're still breathing that you represent Jesus Christ in everything you think, say, and do.

And that's why God's trying to get our attention because for many of us, we're pretty cavalier when it comes to our worship because we think worship is an external thing that kind of works its way into our heart. Like if I just go through the motions, if I

go to church sometimes, if I sing some songs, if I pray a little bit, if I read my Bible, then I'm a true worshiper, do you know you can do a lot of activity and not be a worshiper of the Lord Jesus Christ? See, worship always starts on the inside. There's several different definitions of worship, the way I'll define it this morning is this I define it as a worship is an inner passion of God's infinite worth that is externally expressed. Worship is an inner passion of God's infinite worth that is externally expressed. It's when what you think about, dwell about, meditate on is the infinite worth of the Lord Jesus Christ and all He's done on your behalf and on behalf of the world and you love Him so much it bubbles up in you that you have to give an external expression as to what's truly going on in your heart. Here's what false worship is. False worship is when your inner passion is for something other than Jesus and that gets expressed externally. If your inner expression is sinful, if it's sexual immorality and you feed that inner passion, it will express itself externally. If your inner passion is greed it will express itself externally whatever your inner passion is, will express itself externally. When you hear people talk passionately about something it's because inside of them there is passion about something. If bitterness and unforgiveness is your inner value, it will express itself externally. Whatever you focus on on the inside is truly what you are worshipping.

And God sends different things to get our attention not just individually, but corporately. And I believe around the world, He's shouting through a megaphone right now like hey, look to me, especially those of you who represent me I want all your worship. Remember the rich young ruler story? This guy comes to Jesus and says,

hey, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? He said why do you call me good there's no one, but good. There's no one good, but God and Jesus then tells him what he must do. And what does he say? I've done all these things since I was a kid. Do you see the irony in that? He comes to Jesus saying how do I get eternal life good teacher? And he's like, I'm the only one that's good so I'm the only one that can do it but here's the commandments he's like, I'm good too I've kept them all my whole life. Wrong, you kept none of them. See our worship is when we give allegiance to the God who has gone on a rescue mission for us do you understand that?

Here's the question, where's your allegiance this morning? What gets expressed out of your mouth, your hands and your heart, because of what you're meditating on inside? God is getting our attention because He wants all of it. The rich young ruler ultimately walks away from Jesus. Having been a quote, good guy, having kept all the quote, commandments and Jesus lets him go and He says how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom. Why? 'Cause he didn't have an allegiance for God. He had a lot of external behavior but nothing on the inside. God wants to get our attention because He's not just looking for outward expression.

Now certainly in the Bible we're told to give outward expression. You heard the worship team talk this morning about singing a new song, Psalm 90, Psalm 96:1-4 talks about sing a new song to the Lord. I mean there's nothing wrong with singing out but do you know you can sing out to the Lord and still not be worshiping the Lord? You can be going through the motions. See what you find out is that worship is that inward

passion of God's infinite worth that's externally expressed. It's like when the two men were on the road to a mass walking with Jesus and at the end of the conversation, they said this, were our hearts not burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road. What was happening? There's this inner passion being stirred for God that ultimately is externally expressed. So if you come to worship and there's no burning passion, you'll look around and say, why do people raise their hands? Why do people clap? So showy. No if your passion is for Jesus you can't help but do it. Those same people would be the same people to go to mile high stadium they're like, yeah. Well why why'd you do it there? Why not at church? Well because the Broncos are more important to me is their ultimate answer. You can go to a rock concert with all pagans 'cause I like going to them and when you do, you will watch worship from pagans who will raise their hands and scream and shout because of inner passion in their heart towards something other than Jesus.

Here's what God's saying, would you please give me your full allegiance of your worship? I want 100%. I want all of it. Now, some of you say, well I'm already saved so He got it all, no you're saved so that you can give God 100% of your worship. So ask yourself this question, is there anything in your life that's getting in the way of Jesus? Is there anything in your life that's getting in the way of your worship?

Now, one step further. Think about worship this way, in the old Testament God dwelled in a place where you went to experience Him and only priest could get into certain areas and only the high priest could get into the Holy of Holies. Where does God dwell today? Went from heaven to a tabernacle, to a temple where's He at now?

He's inside every single believer. In first Corinthians it says for we are His temple. Where does He dwell? In us. May you've heard people say stuff like this don't talk that way in church. Don't do that we're in church. You shouldn't speak that way you're in church. Don't run we're in church. I mean, you ever hear stuff like that? It's not where you're in, church is the gathering of God's saints that have a passion for him that realize we're His temple and we as His people are gathering so we can see the expression of what His temple looks like expressed in and through one another. So the question is not what do you do when you go to church, how do you behave when you go to church, how do you dress when you go to church, what do you look like in church? The question is in every part of your life is Jesus Christ central to your worship. Worship is not necessarily a place you go worship is the life that you live. Everything you do is worship and you're either worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ, or you're placing your worship in something else.

That's why when we get to the book of Colossians that we taught this last year we see in Colossians chapter three, what God calls worship. Listen to these words, Colossians chapter three says it like this, "Whatever you do in word or deed "do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ "giving thanks through him to God the Father." Verse 23, "Whatever you do, do your work "heartily as for the Lord rather than for men." In all that you do let Jesus Christ to be central. It means you can play sports and let Jesus Christ be the Lord. It means you can have a job, let Jesus Christ be Lord. You can be married, let Jesus Christ be Lord. You can be a parent or a child Jesus Christ can be Lord. You can be a student Jesus Christ can be Lord. You can do all the

above and something else is the lord of your life and you're an idolater.

And I'm telling you, there are a number of Christians and I don't know how many are listening to me that fall in that category that would say truly the inner passion in my life is something other than Jesus. What I like to read about, what I like to study, what I like to talk about, not really Jesus I like Jesus, I like that I'm going to heaven but there's something else and here's why God's getting your attention, He's saying this, in this season will you give me all your worship first and foremost? Can I be number one? Can I sit on the throne of your life? Can you not just honor me with your lips, but can your hearts be filled with me? So this is a time to take inventory, right? It's a time to go before the Lord and ask the Lord, hey, do you really have all of my worship? Is there anything in my life that needs to change? It's a great opportunity to do that. It's hard to do but it's an important thing to do 'cause God is looking for those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. And if the Lord is not on your life, a lot of good things can be on the throne of your life. Sports can be on the throne of your life. Money can be on the throne of your life. Family, friends, kids, hobbies, activities, leisure activities, travel outdoors, all those things come first and then Jesus gets the scraps. And God is saying to every one of us I don't want your scraps anymore I wanna be first. I wanna be number one. God's saying if my people who are called by my name, the ones who are worshiping me, the ones who represent me, it means this everywhere you go you're a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ. As if God is saying from heaven through you this is what I look like. This is who I am. This is how I speak. This is how I act. Watch him, watch her that's what worship looks like. And most of us would cower

in fear if we truly believed that and God's saying no, I'm trying to get your attention 'cause I want you to realize you represent me in your worship and in your allegiance.

Number two, He says this God desires to get our attention so that we will seek His presence in humility, that we will seek His presence in humility. If you understand who you are as a worshiper, if my people who are called by my name, then do this humble themselves and pray and seek my face. The old testament word for face truly means presence. It means God's presence. Why doesn't it mean face? Because God is spirit He doesn't have a face. Jesus Christ has a face He's the God man but the father doesn't have a face and the Holy spirit doesn't have a face and if we're gonna seek His face, you never see His face. What we're talking about is God's presence.

Now when I talk about God's presence, think about this, Psalm 139 says God is everywhere. You say why do I need to seek His presence? God is everywhere. He's right here, He's over there, everywhere I go there God is. His presence is everywhere, true and He's in my heart so everywhere I go there God is. But when I'm talking about presence I'm talking about God's manifest presence. I'm talking about those times where you're experiencing the intimate relationship that God wants you to have with Him. Not just going through the motions saying theologically I know God's everywhere I know God's in me, but I have a relationship with Him. There's a difference face to face than just knowing someone's around. For those of you parents you know the difference when you're talking to your kids and sometimes you have to say to your kids, no, no, no, no look at me, look at me. I need you to, I need to see your eyes, right? You know there's a difference between if you're single and you see somebody that hey, I might

wanna date them someday versus being face to face because when you're face to face, you get to look into the eyes of their soul and they get to look into the eyes of yours.

When you come face to face with God in His presence, you become intimately acquainted with God in a way you weren't intimately acquainted with Him before but guess what? He gets to pierce and look in and through you in a way you didn't know before. See God knows everything about you. There's nothing God doesn't know about you. God knows things about you you don't even know about you. But there's a lot of things you don't know about God, God's eternal and He's infinite and He's good and He's Holy and He's righteous and He's true and if we took every one of God's characteristics and pass them out to hundreds of you this week and said, hey, just write a paper on everything you learn about this topic on God, you get, goodness, you get mercy, you get faithfulness, you get truth, all these, you couldn't finish it in a lifetime. That's how infinite He is. And the more time you spend with Him, the more acquainted you become with Him.

See, God doesn't just want your lip service God wants your heart. There's a difference between waking up in the morning and quote, doing your quiet time. Got it in today, 15 minutes, got it in. That's different between I met with God this morning and I met with Him until I encountered Him. Wives you know the difference I mean, you wouldn't want your husband going to work, I got my date in last week, I'll get it when I want in this week, you would wanna know that that date meant something. I spent time with my spouse, got to know her better she got to know me better, right? God wants

your heart. When you're seeking Him, you're seeking His face, you're seeking His presence and notice what He says seek my face it means that the Christian life is not passive. You cannot grow in Christ by being passive. You cannot grow in Christ just by saying I'll come to church, it's a good church oh, I'll find a place you know, kind of sit where it's comfortable, I'll sing some of the songs. No you need to find a place where you're seeking the Lord on your own and you're seeking a place to serve Him and use your gifts and you're seeking a place to love Him and you're seeking other people that love Christ and you're in community with them in some way because you're pursuing because you know first and foremost, your worship of God is the number one thing in your life.

And you can't make anybody have that desire it has to come from your own heart. You have to want it. David said in Psalm 27:8, when you said seek my face, my heart said O Lord your face I will seek. David loved being in the presence of the Lord, seek Him, seek Him, seek Him. In the book of Isaiah 55:6, we read about what it looks like to seek the Lord. It says, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, "call upon him when he is near." New Testament translation, Matthew 6:33 "Seek first the kingdom of God "and his righteousness and all these things "will be added unto." Seek Him, seek Him, want Him. See for most of us, we really don't want God we just want God to do stuff for us that's to our liking. You didn't hear what I said. Most of us as Christians we really don't want God that's not enough as a matter of fact, we really don't care if we get God as long as God makes our circumstances better. See God cares that you want Him and if you have Him, no matter what your circumstances are, everything is

better. But for most of us, maybe I'll seek God as long as the election goes my way, as long as I still can take vacations, as long as my kids are okay, I'm good I don't really need God. And God says I'm trying to get your attention to recognize you completely need me. You're totally dependent upon me.

And that's why prayer is so important because when you pray, here's what you're declaring. I'm dependent upon you, Lord I need you Lord and I didn't realize how much I need you, but I'm telling you that I need you. One of the reasons that our prayer requests go unanswered just so you know is because we're really not praying what God wants we're only praying what we want and we expect God to do what we want. And then we say the Bible is wrong. God, you said in your word ask whatever you wish and it will be done and I was asking for this new car and I was asking for a date and I was asking for a lot of money and you didn't give it to me. Wow your word is really wrong. Well read the word. If you abide in me and my word abides in, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. What is He saying? If you seek me and if you know me, you will pray the prayers I want you to pray to get done what I want to get done in the world and I'll always get done what I wanna get done in the world. And I will use you and your prayers to help me accomplish what I wanna get done.

Seek His presence in humility. Now why humility? Well, James chapter four tells us because what? God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. It's not just the God gives grace to the humble what does God do? He opposes the proud. Now be careful here, okay. Because some of us will say, I used to be really prideful. Like 15 years ago, I had some pride and I repented and I'm good now. Okay. If that's you,

you're super prideful. Okay. Pride is like bad breath you gotta take care of it every day or it's gonna come back and you'll be the last person to know that it's there. That's what pride is like. So we have to go before the Lord and seek the Lord and ask the Lord, not if I'm prideful, but Lord where am I being prideful? Where am I making my life about me? What relationships am I preferencing me? How do I want my outcomes to come ahead of yours? Lord, you have to show me 'cause I'm so blind to my own sin I don't even see it.

And here's the truth about sin it's true of me and it's true of you. It's way easier for me to see sin in others than in myself, way easier because I can be objective with you I can be subjective with me. That's not really sin for me I mean like I'm okay with that I feel good about that. It may be sin but I can rationalize my sin just like you can rationalize yours. That's why I have to spend time with Jesus and not rationalize anything and seek Him in humility and say, Lord, just call me out I'm exposing my heart to you you're the light of the world my eyes are the windows to my soul look deep into me and purge me and change me and grow me 'cause I need what you want and in this season of uncertainty, in this season where God is wanting to get our attention, here's what He's looking for, He's looking for a group of people and individuals who will go after Him with their whole heart and say, God, you have my full allegiance and I care more that you are seated on your throne and I'm living for your authority and I'm going after you and I wanna be used by you in this season Lord, use me for your glory. I'm seeking your face, which tells me this how are you doing in that?

I mean, just think about the amount of time you spend doing things during the day. What gets your greatest allegiance and how much time do you really spend, seek how much time do you really spend seeking Jesus? Maybe compared to I don't know, Netflix compared to television, compared to social media, compared to friendships, compared to going out to eat, compared to sitting around and talking, compared to complaining, compared to any number of other things, sports, hobbies, leisure activities, travel you, I mean, where does Jesus come? Like if we were to just objectively look at your life, you were to objectively look at mine, would you say, wow, Jesus is definitely a priority. This woman, this man, they are seeking after God. They want what God wants. And here's the truth where you don't have that repentance comes in where God gives us the gift to reorient and realign our life so that He gets our worship and that He gets our hearts and that we seek Him.

This is why for me as your pastor I will tell you first Tuesday is the most important meeting of the month I'm gonna take a little time of refreshment, but I'll be back here on September 1st to be here for first Tuesday 'cause it's that important to me. I'm not gonna skip first Tuesday unless I absolutely have to for some reason why, because gathering with God's people in humility to worship Him and seek His face is the most important activity that we can ever do as a church. Thanks for the three of you that believe me. It's true. Most of us don't believe that that's why we don't come. I'm telling you if God's people that are called by His name at BRAVE church would make first Tuesday a priority and be here at 6:30 and say the only thing we're here for God is to worship you, to seek your face, to humble ourselves you can speak to us any

way you want we'll do whatever you want God would work in a way we've never ever seen before, amen. So it's an invitation, not demanding it I'm not gonna call you on the phone if you didn't come and say, where were you? It's for those that love Jesus. It's an invitation for those who love Jesus. It's posturing ourselves in a place of dependence and reverence and awe.

And the reason we have a hard time doing that, I think in the history of the church, the pendulum swing sometimes I mean, if you study the history of church, sometimes God is like this King, judge, mad God, He's gonna smote everybody that doesn't do it just His way and then the pendulum swings over this way and Jesus is your friend and your buddy and don't worry about how you live you're going to heaven anyway and there's this real tension right in the middle where God is completely holy, just, righteous and true, He hates sin, He's angry with sin every single day, He wants his people to be humble and repent and at the same time through Jesus Christ, He's our friend and He loves us and He's compassionate and He's merciful and He's slow to anger. And He's all those things all wrapped up in one that's what makes him God.

But I would say in our generation we kind of swung the pendulum a little too far over here where most of us think, well, everybody sins, Jesus and I are cool, He's happy with everything in my life. If you say He's happy with everything in your life, I challenge you this week get before Him spend a little time and say, God, are you happy with everything in my life? Or is there anything you'd have me change? You may be surprised at what you hear if you're really asking. See God wants your heart of worship. God wants you to seek him in humility and posture yourself before Him

showing your dependence.

And then third God desires to get our attention so that we will repent of our sins. I mean this really goes in order as we worship the holiness of God, as we seek His face, the more time you spend with an eternal, Holy God, the more you're gonna realize you're not where God wants you to be and although you're clothed in His righteousness as a Christian in practice, you're not quite there yet and God is getting your attention so you can walk. Notice what He says, my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways. That's the part we don't like, okay, God fine I'll worship you, I'll seek you as long as you don't make me feel bad. As long as you don't ever ask me to change. As long as I can keep the major that you have me in college. As long as I can date the person you want me to date, as long as I can do what I wanna do. As long as I get the free time I get to have, as long as you're not gonna ask me to serve in the church, as long as you're not gonna ask me to love other Christians, as long as I continue to do whatever I want I will seek you and worship you.

Now see if you worship Him and you seek Him, they're gonna be things about your life He's gonna show you that aren't aligned. God wants you to turn from your wicked ways. You say I'm a Christian I would never do anything wicked. It just depends on how you read the Bible. I've been a Christian for 30 years and I'd like to have some do overs. I wish I could tell you since I've been a pastor I don't do any of that stuff anymore. I'd like to have some do overs.

See here's my question, when was the last time you repented? I mean let's talk about repentance for just a second 'cause most people think repentance is God's really angry and then you have to pretend that you're upset too. God's really angry so today, okay, God, you got me I'm sorry, I won't do it again knowing by the time you get to the parking lot you will. I mean some of you that are struggling in the same besetting sins can be sitting here listening to my message and say I know I need to change and I wanna change so God either you change me or by the time I get back to my dorm room or by the time I get back to my house or by the time I wake up tomorrow morning it's not gonna change. And actually I'm thinking about sinning the same sins that I always sin and it sounds kind of fun to me 'cause you're not a worshiper of the Lord and you're not seeking His face. You can be a Christian without worshiping the Lord and seeking His face. Isaiah prophesied what Jesus confirmed when Jesus said they were the religious leaders of the day Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you people, you honor me with your lips but your hearts are far from me. You can come to BRAVE Church and honor Jesus with your lips while your heart is far from Him. God wants you to repent.

Now repentance comes from a Greek word, metanoia, which means a change of mind. Change of mind means it changes your attitude, your actions, your belief and everything else. He's changing your mind. Romans 2:4 says it's the kindness of the Lord that leads us to repentance. It's God's kindness, He loves you enough that when you get around His holiness, that He has the ability to show you your sin in a way that you know you're wrong and do it in a way with incredible love and mercy and in a way

to know that you don't have to stay there anymore. That's what repentance is.

Repentance is not your commitment to God to change knowing you're never gonna change, repentance is God's kindness that reveals His holy standard, our sin and His grace all at the same time, the Puritans called it the gift of tears.

Here's my question. When was the last time you repented like about anything? I mean this is just rhetorical question just for you to consider, when was the last time you repented about anything? What'd you repent about this week as you spent time with the Lord or this month or this year? Well I repented like 20 years ago, I got saved. Really? You see I find the longer I spend time with the Lord and the more I'm in His presence and the more I know His holiness, I don't belong there and I feel like Isaiah, when he says I'm ruined, I'm a man of unclean lips from a people of unclean lips and yet when I experience that, I feel God's mercy and grace saying, yeah, you're wrong and I love you and I forgive you and I will grow you.

See God's grace is not just forgiveness God's grace Titus 2:11 says is the power to change us, the power for us to say no to ungodliness and to live upright lives in this present age. It's quiet in here on purpose because anytime we talk about the holiness of God, there should be a sobering spirit that comes across us because we all know we don't measure up. I mean imagine being in the presence of God and all of His holy angels and cherubim and seraphim and everyone is perfect and you show up there for the meeting right now. Are you ready? Cause there'll be terror on most of our hearts. Yeah, you're forgiven by the blood of Jesus I don't wanna scare you if you've trusted in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins you've been washed, you've been

cleansed you're a new creation, He will accept you He loves you so don't hear me say God's going to reject those who trust in Him. No one can snatch you from His hand but just because He loves you doesn't mean you're called to be cavalier about your sin practices that God's calling for your worship and your seeking of Him and guess what? When He shows you things in your life, repent. Repentance doesn't mean I was wrong doggone it I got caught I'll try harder. No, repentance is you're right I'm wrong I will call this sin by its name knowing that I can't change me, but Lord, I want you to and whatever you show me I need to do or what habits I need to put in place or the people I need to bring around me I don't care I just wanna grow in your grace. That's repentance.

When's the last time you repented and repentance doesn't mean that you go on Facebook or social media and make a big to do about it. Usually when I see that, I'm like, that's not repentance. When God shows me things in my life the last thing I wanna do is go broadcast it to a bunch of people. I'm just thanking God in private. Maybe over time I can share. Maybe there's a couple of people I can talk to about it and say hey, I want you to know here's what God's doing in my life and I want you to pray for me cause I really need this but it's not something that I'm broadcasting like I'm a special person cause I repented. It's not fun to repent and yet it's cleansing to repent. When's the last time God called you to repent and see, we have a problem in our society, we have a problem like personally we like to say well I'm okay, because a lot of the big sins I used to sin, I don't sin them any more so I'm okay. BRAVE Church let me tell you something even for all of you who are believers who have trusted in Jesus Christ alone

for the forgiveness of your sin by His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead you're not okay cause you still have a sin nature inside of you that wars against you every day and a world that wars against you every day and an enemy that wars against you every day you're not okay.

And for those I'm okay if you say you're okay, that means I can stand in the presence of God's perfect holiness and not feel anything wrong with me. You're not okay. It means there's things in your life that if you'd open up your heart to that God in His grace and His mercy would grow you in. So we say I'm okay I wanna tell you you're not okay. And then on a corporate scale, here's what we say well, those sins over there, those are none of my business. I can't talk about those. I'm not, that's not what I'm singing they need to figure that out for themselves that's not my business. Let me tell you something, Christian, yes, it is. Yes, it is. Our job as Christians is not to be the Holy spirit in everybody's life and run around and tell everybody that they're wrong but when we see another believer not living up to the standard of God, there is nothing wrong with coming alongside of that believer in love and in mercy and in grace to interject truth that God is not pleased with their behavior. That's not un-Christian that's godliness.

Have you ever studied the life of Jesus Christ? The perfect God in flesh, the God man, what did He do? Did He ever lower His standard on sin? Did He ever do that for Gentiles? When there's a woman caught in adultery, that's brought to Him did He tell her I'm really sorry you got caught, don't worry about it everybody sins, everybody's sexually immoral a little bit. Is that what He says to her? No as a matter of fact, He

says to all the men that are gonna stone her, whoever is without sin go ahead and cast the first stone and from the oldest to the youngest they drop it. Then He looks at the woman and He said where are your accusers? And she says well they're all gone. He goes then I don't condemn you either. So just go live however you want. Is that what he says? No He says this go and sin no more. Did He call it sin? Yes. Was He confronting her? Yes. Did He do it in mercy and grace? Yes.

See, we're afraid to talk about sin in our culture. We're afraid to tell people that abortion is wrong and that marriage is between a man and a woman and that drunkenness is wrong and drug use is wrong and sexual immorality is wrong and masturbation is wrong and all these things because we don't wanna interfere and make people mad at us. Those aren't my standards those are God's standards, right? We're not called to be silent about God's standards. We're not called to fix anybody else. We're not called to shout at people. We're not called to tell them they're horrible people, but we are called to keep the standard. I mean Jesus was with white collar criminals like Zacchaeus in Matthew and loved them. He was with down and outers. He went through Samaria on purpose to talk to those that Jews would have been considered half breeds. He was with everybody. He never lowered His standard and He never changed His love. He loved everybody even the Pharisees that wanted to kill Him every time they saw Him. Loved them, right but didn't change His standard.

We're called to do the same and see here's the challenge, it's easier to look out in the world and see all the sins in the world say these things need to change. It's much

more difficult to get in front of the Lord and say, Lord, before I complain about anything else I see in the world, what would you like me to change? Well what's in my heart that's not fully aligned with you? And before I open my mouth about anything else, I want you to open your mouth about me because I wanna be holy before you and where there's anything wrong in my life I'll repent.

In the old Testament book of Proverbs it tells us how to do this in Proverbs 28:13 it says, "He who conceals his transgressions "will not prosper but he who confesses "and forsakes them will find compassion." The new Testament equivalent is 1 John 1:8-10 which says, "If we say we have no sin, "we deceive ourselves "and the truth is not in us but if we confess "our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins "and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It means we're called to speak up. It means we're called listen up. It means we're called to set God's Holy standard. And then we're called to act in faith.

Now let me just stop here for a second this is heavy I realize it's heavy because God's trying to get all of our attention. We always think that the problems in the world are somebody else's problems. That group of people over there, that organization, that political part, it's not their problem, judgment begins at the house of God it's our problem. And one of the reasons that God is not working in your life individually or corporately is when God's people don't let Him be worshiped first, God's people aren't seeking His face and God's people aren't repenting of their sin. That was true for Israel and it's true for us. You wanna see God go to work three clear steps, but they're not easy because it forces us to remove things that are hindering our worship of God, our

desire to seek Him and our willingness to repent when we're not aligned with Him.

But if you'll do that then we get to see number four, that God desires to get our attention so that He will operate to the full on our behalf. His promise to Israel was this, if you'll do these things then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. His promise was to national Israel that if all of Israel would get on their face and say we're wrong, we've given worship somewhere else instead of giving it to you, we've given it to ourselves, we've given it to other gods, we've given it to foreign gods we repent, we want you, God, God says, I'll come in and heal your land. Now there's no promise to America in this text but I just wonder, I just wonder what would God do if every Christian that was called by His name would humble themselves and seek His face and give Him worship and repent of their sins, God would do immeasurably more than all we could ask or think according to His glorious power that's at work within us.

Do you know God can do way more in our world than what He's currently doing? The reason we don't think God is that good is because we're not that good and we're not that aligned. If every Christian called by the name of Lord was aligned with the Lord, God would do so much more in and through us that we will look around and be in awe. And see here's the problem, we don't realize that even as believers when we're living in sin God's not listening. Isaiah 59:1-2 says, "Behold, the Lord's hand "is not so short that he cannot save "nor his ear so dulled that he cannot hear "but your iniquities have made a separation "between you and your God and your sins "have hidden his face, his presence from you "so that he does not hear."God heal our land. You're not living for me. God fix my family. You're not living for me. God heal my disease. You're

not living for me. God makes sure the right person gets put in office so our church can still be established. You're not listening to me. I mean, do you know that God does not act just because you go through a religious activity God acts when your heart is totally aligned with Him and what He was saying to Israel, who He constantly was wooing back to Himself, who then would wind out of control He's doing to the church today I'm trying to get your attention church before you point all the fingers ask yourself this am I number one in your worship? Am I number one in what you seek? Am I my number one in your alignment that you're willing to repent and align with me. cause if you do, I will do things that you never dreamed I could do.

Well, what could God do? Anything Luke 1:37 says for nothing will be impossible with God. Matthew 19:26 says with God all things are possible. There's nothing that God couldn't do if we sought him and all the things we stress about, worry about, get angry about, aggravated about God's willing to do but here's the problem there's a lot of good churches out there so don't hear me wrong cause when I say what I'm about ready to say, I am not trying to be disparaging there are a lot of good churches out there, but there are myriads of them that don't lift up the Lord Jesus Christ. Myriads see who is central in the church? It's not the pastor. It's not the preacher. It's not the staff. It's not the people. It's Jesus Christ. Did you hear what I said? It's Jesus Christ. It's the allegiance of Him. And if there's churches that put Him on the pedestal, God's for them, I'm for them. If they don't put Jesus on the pedestal, I'm not for them 'cause God's not for them. Church is not a place for religious activity it's a place for Jesus Christ to rule and reign. He is the King of Kings He is the Lord of Lords and He is

worthy of all of our praise and respect. Amen.

- [Congregation] Amen.

I think the only reason God is handcuffed is because of us it's not that God can't do it it's that He doesn't do it because we don't really want Him to work through us. See we make things pretty simple at Brave church we talk about worship, the word, prayer and evangelism, why? Because worship of the Lord makes Jesus Christ central. The word makes Jesus Christ obeyed. Prayer is what makes Jesus Christ sought and evangelism is what helps Jesus Christ to be shared. It's that simple. It's all about Jesus. Amen.

And here's the truth I mean, as you hear a message like this, it's pretty easy to say, oh, that was a tough one that was a hard one, yikes planning to work on some things. That's not what the message is. The message is if there's any place in your worship, if there's any place in your seeking after God or there's any place where you're not willing to hear from Him, would you please repent? I mean for some of you, you know what the exact thing is even while I'm speaking I don't even have to name the sin because the Holy Spirit has been nudging you with His elbow, poking you in your heart telling you everything it is. For some of you it's break up with your boyfriend, break up with your girlfriend. For some of you it's quit being so greedy about money. Quit worrying about what job you're gonna have someday. Quit worrying about all these other I wanna be first in your life can I please be first? That's what He's saying. Will you give Him the allegiance of your life? If you do either individually or corporately,

God will do things among us beyond what we could ever ask or think according to His glorious power that is at work within us.

Because if I ask this question, who wants to see more of God in our culture? Who wants to see that? Just by applause, who wants to see more of God in our culture? The challenge is the way we see more of God in our culture is we let God have more of us. So I'm just gonna have you stand right where you're at and as we go before the Lord in prayer, I'm just gonna ask you to be sincere with Him not to speak out loud He knows your heart, but just respond to Him the way He's called you today.

Lord Jesus, we come before you and Lord, we ask you to move among us. Lord, we ask you to do what only you can do. So Lord be gracious to us in this moment. If you've never trusted Jesus and you know you're a sinner and in need of His grace, you can pray like this, dear Jesus, I know I'm a sinner, but I believe you died on the cross and rose from the dead for my sin. Right now, I repent of my sin and I confess you as my Lord and savior, come into my life and dwell. And Lord for those of us who know you, we heard you today, we're hearing you right now, Lord you're not looking for our lip service, you're not looking for our commitments, you're not looking for our promises of, oh, I'll never do that again Lord, you're looking for our repentance. Lord you're right I'm wrong name the sin, call it by name, ask the Lord to help, He will. And Lord, even as we go from this place, we pray your favor and your blessing all over us. We give you all the glory and honor in Jesus' name. Amen.