



Message Transcript

Generational Secrets

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Pastor Jeff:

Father in heaven, we gather before your throne just as your body, a group of people that love you, that want to honor what you honor and love what you love. And so, Lord, today we pray for the life of the unborn Lord, because we know that children are a blessing of the Lord and they're an inheritance and we love children. And Lord, would you just help us as a people to make right decisions? Lord, this is a politically charged issue. It does not need to be. There are all sorts of things involved in this, and I get it. There's unforgiveness, there's anger, there's hurt, there's pain, there's all these things, but at the end of the day, we're talking about the life of the unborn. And Lord, we know through history when you're going to do something great that the world wants to get rid of kids.

Lord, in the days of Moses, when you sent him, the Pharaoh wanted to murder all the boys under the age of two. When you sent Jesus into the world, King Herod wanted to murder all the boys younger than two. Lord, we're living in a culture right now that wants to terminate the life of little boys and little girls that you have intended destiny for. And so, Lord, we pray for you to move. We pray for our involvement in that as a church and as individuals who love you and how we can best serve you. Lord, we also pray for those who actually have babies that say, "I don't have means for this." What do I do that we would stand firm and help them Lord, that we'd adopt or come alongside and help? Lord, I also pray for those who have had abortions, who have felt the shame, the guilt and the pain and feeling like maybe I made a mistake or I'm unloved.

Lord, would you just extend your forgiveness so richly today and just pour out your grace in such a powerful way that they would know you never have stopped loving them? And then, Lord, just for all those who are just unsure about this issue, that they would look into your word. Lord, we live in one of the most pro-abortion states in the entire country. Lord, we'll do our part. We'll honor you, we'll worship you, we'll get involved, we'll speak out. We'll sign documents, we'll do whatever we can. We'll vote right. But Lord, at the end of the day, you've got to move because Lord, this is a heart issue. Lord, change the heart of our culture, not just here in Denver and in Colorado and the United States. Change your heart around the world that we would love what you love and hate what you hate.

And Lord, may this just not only be a day we recall that and bring that to mind, but may this be the heart of our culture that we love you and we believe children are a blessing from you. God, we give you glory, honor and praise. Thanks for hearing our prayer this morning, Lord, as we get ready to hear your living and active word, we ask you to speak because we believe that every time that your word is faithfully and accurately proclaimed that you do speak. So, Lord, be helpful to me as I preach and be helpful to us as we hear that we can clearly hear the voice of Jesus. And so now, for all those who have gathered who desire to hear the Lord Jesus Christ speak directly to you, who will believe what he says and who will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word Amen?

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Jeff:

Today, I want to talk to you about generational secrets. Our culture is somewhat fascinated with our ancestors and who's gone before us. And you can take a DNA test now and you can find out more about who went before you and maybe you can discover that somebody in your family line was a math genius or a military hero or something else and you just say, "Oh, that makes sense." Or what nationality they were and how it all came together? But isn't it interesting as you get older, there's some things even as you get older that you just kind of wish your family would've told you? "How come I didn't know that?" I was down in Florida about a year ago and I was talking to my uncle about a severe pain I'd had in my foot and I stayed up all night one night just writhing in pain.

My wife made me call the emergency room and they called back and told me what they thought I had. And I hobbled in the next day, took some medication and I was fine. And I was telling my uncle about this and it was the worst pain I'd ever had in my life. And he said, "Well, I've had that. Your grandpa had that." He goes, "Of course, you're going to have that." He goes, "There's a pill you can take once a day and you'll never have any more pain ever again." And I said, "Why are you telling me this now? Why'd you keep this a secret?" I mean, if I would've only known, I would've never had to have gone through that. And that's just a health issue.

But what about when it comes to spiritual issues? I think there's some generational secrets for the church that they're not hidden, they're not being held behind the curtain, so to speak. They're laid bare in God's word. They're right there for us to see it. Yet so often the churches, "I didn't even know that. I didn't know God could do that." Today, I want to talk to you about four generational secrets that if you believe and put into practice, you will see revival in your generation. That's what I want to talk about. I've been a believer for about 34 years, and it's rare when I've been in a prayer meeting where somebody didn't pray for revival. I mean, just by show of hands, who would like to see revival? Everybody. Oh yeah, praise the Lord. But how do we see it? I mean, I've been praying for 34 years. Is this something we pray about?

And if we get enough prayers up, then like 50 years from now, maybe God will do something. Or was it just in the time of Charles Spurgeon or was it just in the time of John Wesley or was it just the Welsh revival or was it just the Apostle Paul? Was it just different generations? And we look back historically and say, "Wouldn't it be great if, but we know he is not going to, but we should probably pray." I mean, what if in our generation, what if this week, what this month revival broke out? Would you want to be a part of it?

Congregation:

Yes.

Pastor Jeff:

Most Christians would say, "Absolutely." How do we see it? I don't know. That's

what I want to talk to you about today. I want to talk about four generational secrets that if you put into practice, you will see revival in your generation. Young people listen up to me, you'll see it in your generation. Older people like me, listen up. We'll see it in our generation. I want to pass the baton to the next generation, but not just because we built something. I want to pass the baton of a spirit-filled on-fire church that is seeing God do miraculous things. And if you're curious what those secrets are, God's going to unveil them this morning to you.

We're going to be in Ephesians Chapter 3. Ephesians Chapter 3 starting in verse 14, and we're going to read through the end of the chapter, then we'll unpack it together. And just so you know, the Book of Ephesians is really broken down into six chapters. First three are all about God's glory and salvation and everything he's done to save mankind and what he's willing to do. And in the next three chapters, four, five, and six, he talks about how do we live it out? If we're really saved, then how do we walk out our salvation? But nestled in between that section is a short prayer that the apostle prays inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that's what we're going to take a look at today. And here's what he says.

He says, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through his spirit in the inner man so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and that you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge

that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to him who was able to do far more abundantly beyond all we ask or think according to the power that works within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

And that's how he prays. And in that, there are several things we could unpack. As a matter of fact, the longer I've studied it this week, we could spend weeks on this passage, but I want to highlight four generational secrets that every generation God is willing to move if we get these things right. And the first is this, "In every generation you need to understand, that's the current one we're living in, the ones behind us and the ones coming forward. And every generation God uses prayerful people who are humbled with gratitude for the gospel." God uses prayerful people who are humbled with gratitude for the gospel. Notice what he says. For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father. For what reason? Well, it's interesting. If you go back to Chapter 3:1, he says, "For this reason, I, Paul," and then like every good preacher, he just starts talking about something else. And what he's been talking about as this book has been unfolding is God's glory in the gospel.

That is God's design, that God is the one who saves mankind, that God chose us in him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight, that God came for mankind, that Christ died on the cross, that he's given us every spiritual blessing in Christ. And now, whether you're a Jew or a Gentile, everybody can hear the good news. And moreover, as Paul says, for this reason, I'm ready to tell you, well before I tell you that he says, "And God has entrusted me with this gospel to go and

tell other people and I'm overwhelmed with the goodness of God and I'm so humbled that he's chosen me and I have such gratitude for the gospel. It's for this reason, I bow my knee before the Father."

And notice what he says. He doesn't say, "I bowed my head." I mean, when we were growing up, I mean some of you heard this, bow your head, close your eyes, fold your hands, and that's the praying posture. Here's what he says. Most Jews stood when they prayed. I want men to stand in every church raising holy hands. It was normal for a Jew to pray. There's no specific posture that you have to pray, but when he says, "I bow my knee," he's saying this, I'm so grateful for the gospel of Jesus Christ and his saving of me and not only that, but he's willing to put me on mission for the whole world that I'm going down on my knee and I'm going to posture myself before him so that my God knows that he is worthy and I'm needy.

God uses peripheral people like that. Now why is that so important? Because the gospel is so tarnished in our society. We think it's simply a creed. It's not a creed. The gospel is not primarily a creed. I believe in the Apostles Creed, but it's not primarily a creed. The Apostles Creed supports the work. It's not a primarily a creed. It's the work of our Lord Jesus Christ and what he did. It's not simply words to recite, it's a relationship to cultivate. The gospel is not, "Hey, did I pray this right? Did I say these words right? Am I doing it right? Hey, are you sure I'm saved?" That's not the gospel. The gospel is about a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, that you went from being dead and you've been transferred into the kingdom of God's beloved son and you have an eternal relationship with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords Jesus Christ. That's

the gospel.

Or think about it this way, it's not a religion to adhere to. "Are you a Christian?" "Yeah, I'm a Christian." "How do you know?" "I go to church. I'm a good person. I prayed a prayer. My pastor preaches the word, the worship's good. I'm there pretty much every week. I'm in a cadre, I serve." You can bust hell wide open and do all those things. It's not a religion to adhere to, but it's a God to worship. I quoted John Piper, I may have quoted this in the last two weeks, but I'm going to quote it again. When we talk about evangelism of proclaiming the good news, he says, "Evangelism exists because worship does not." In other words, the purpose of evangelism is not seeing people get saved so they go to heaven, the purpose of evangelism is so that those who are walking in darkness, worshiping their own gods, worshiping the devil, worshiping themselves, worshiping this world would turn from their worship and begin to worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you're sharing the gospel, it's not about, "Pray this prayer. Do this thing, then you go to heaven like me." It's "I'm worshiping the God of the universe. You are not, but if you do, you can receive the forgiveness of your sins and be totally cleansed." That's the gospel. And here's the problem, here's the problem. We've turned the gospel into religion. So, when you ask people do you believe the gospel, they think of a moment in time, "Yeah, I believe it. I prayed the prayer I got saved," and you very well may have. If you've repented of your sin and you've placed your whole faith in Jesus, yes, you are saved, but that's the beginning of the gospel. That's

new birth. The gospel continues that God is purposely trying to sanctify you and glorify himself in and through you and prepare you for the glory that is to come. It's not that it was done, it got started right there so that you could grow in Christ.

So, when does the gospel become insignificant to a believer? Never. It's what you should be most thankful for today. Listen to me. I know some of you are here and you have marriage problems and you wish I was preaching on marriage. I know some of you are here and are single and saying, "Where's my spouse? When's he going to do a message on that?" I know some of you are here with a financial crisis. "I wish he was preaching on money and how God provides." That's not what you need. You need to understand the most central message to your life anytime, whether you've been a believer or you're not a believer, is that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. That is the centrality of the gospel. And no matter what you're dealing with, if that isn't foundational enough to humble you and to cause you to give God great thanks, nothing else will matter in your life. You'll never get anything else right.

Paul said for this reason, for what reason, Paul? That God would choose me. Why did God choose you? It's not because you're good. The Bible says there's no one good. No, not one. The Bible says that you are all by nature children of wrath. God didn't choose you because you were good. God chose you because of his grace. God chose you because of his mercy. If you think I thought growing up in the church for 18 years when I wasn't saved thinking that I was, that God loves me and I know that because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, and I'm told to believe that and I have no other things to believe. I guess I can believe that, then I guess I'm a

Christian. And why wouldn't I be? Because I'm a pretty good person and compared to most of the people I hang out with, I'm probably a little bit better. That's how I viewed salvation.

And it wasn't until I had a view of myself and my sin and my humanity that when I truly heard the gospel and I was mad, people were telling me the gospel because I was telling them, if what you're saying is true, that means God would forgive axe murderers the same way he would love me. And they were saying, "Yeah, that's exactly what I'm telling you." I'm like, "That made me even more mad. I've tried. I'm a good person." They're like, "That doesn't matter." And when I understood my sin and understood God's grace, I wept for two hours. Like how come I didn't know this? And it's never left me. It's never left me. I'm still humbled by the fact that God could save someone like me. I'm still thankful for the fact that God could save someone like me.

Yeah, I know you need a little more money. Everybody does. Yeah, I know you wish your marriage was a little bit tighter. Everybody does. Yeah, I know if you're single, you wish Mr. Right or Mrs. Right would come along. Every single person believes that, wants that. But I'm telling you this, before you start asking God for those things, will you get down on your knees today and thank him that he saved you? Have you ever thought what salvation brings? The Holy Spirit inside of you, God's complete eternal forgiveness, your future is eternally set. God's willing to walk with you all the days of your life, the Holy Spirit indwells you. You get to know God personally. I mean, those are just five things out of a million that are going on and we don't even stop to say thanks. We're like, yeah, I got saved 34 years ago. It's pretty cool. Are you

kidding me right now?

What else is more glorious in your life today than the gospel of Jesus Christ?

What? There is nothing. And if you want to see God move in a generation, he's looking for those who are saved, who are humble and grateful for the salvation that they share. And not only did God save you, he wants to do a work in you. And not only does God want to do a work in you, he's going to choose you who are dead, who are rebellious and evil to go take the message of God's love out to people who are dead and rebellious and evil. Our God is incredible. Why would he do that? Why would he choose me? Why would he choose you? So, for this reason, I get low. I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

Let me say about the word father. We've got all these people trying to change genders all the time. The father has always been father. The Trinity God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We don't understand what a father is by looking to a godly man, godly men look to the father who has always been to the father to understand what being a father means. Meaning, even if you're in a family and you would say, we have an absentee father or our father isn't with us, you have a father. He is a father to the fatherless. He's a good, good father. It's the one from which every family derives its name because he is the creator of all things and everything he creates is good. He's our father.

So, for this reason because of the gospel, I bow my knee and I tell him, "Thank you Lord Jesus." That's what the gospel is. We know that he can save anyone

anywhere at any time and we're grateful for that, but he also saved me and he also saved you if you've repented and believed. I mean, when you think about the gospel, think about how intentional it was. God the Father sent his son to be the savior of the world. He left heaven and all of his glory to come here for you. He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on the cross. He was merciful that while you were rebellious and dead in your sins and going the opposite way of God and blaspheming him, he died for you. He was gracious enough because he has enough power that no matter how grievous your sin is, he forgives it all.

And he's relational enough that it's not just doing a deed for you so that you can get to heaven and stand off in the corner. He wants to have relationship with you. He wants to speak to you. He wants to know you. He knows everything about you. He wants you to know him. I mean, when I think about the gospel, it's inconceivable. No man would ever make it up. No man has ever tried to make it up. Every religion in the world other than Christianity is about what man can do to get right with God. "The seven steps this way, the five steps that way. You got to do this, the spiritual life..." It's all what we can do to make whatever God we've made up in our mind like us. The gospel of God, the gospel of the Bible, the gospel, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is that you couldn't do anything. You are the problem. You rebelled against God. You're a sinner. You're already dead.

The wrath of God is already on you and he's angry with sinners every day, but even though he's perfectly holy, and even though he is perfectly just and even though he is perfectly righteous and even though he's willing to send anybody to hell who

rebels against him, he sent his own son in your place because it was the only hope you would ever have. And he had him spit upon and mocked and beaten and hung on a cross till he bled out his last breath while he was praying for the disciples and all future disciples who would believe he died, he was buried in a grave. But good news, he rose three days later. He began to offer life to all who would repent and believe. And even if you're dead, you can turn to Christ. Now, let me tell you this. Because in church, if you ask somebody if they're saved, everybody's going to tell you that they're saved. "Of course, I'm going to save." "Why are you saved?" "Because I prayed this prayer." "Why are you saved?" "Because I go to church." "Why are you saved?"

A better question to ask is when did your allegiance of worship change? That's a better question. Then you can't say, "Well, I grew up a Methodist." I did and I went to Lutheran grade school, so I was doubly covered. You can't just say because I'm Methodist or because I'm Lutheran or because I'm Baptist, because I'm Presbyterian, because I'm Catholic, because I'm this. Okay. Whoopity doo! That's just worshiping your religion. When did your worship change? When did your eyes go unto the Lord and say, "I want what he wants and I want to love what he loves and I want to hate what he hates." And it won't be perfect when you're born again, but there'll be a desire inside to have relationship with that God. Here's my [inaudible 00:19:53]. When did that happen? Because there's a moment in time where that happens.

Well, I really even had that experience. Well, if you've been worshiping this world and you've been worshiping your own self and you've been worshiping your wants and you've been worshiping your desires and all your habits and all your hang-ups, when

did that change? "Well, I stopped drinking." You can stop drinking and still go to hell. You can stop swearing and still go to hell. You can stop any bad behavior and still go to hell. When did your allegiance change? When did you want to worship the Lord? That's the question. Not how many times have you prayed the prayer. Every kid in a Christian school has prayed the prayer to get saved 4,000 times. When did your worship change? When did you want the Lord? When did you want him to come and dwell your life? When was it going to be no longer about you? And I don't care about my life. I just care that I'm in Christ and I want Him.

In every generation, God uses prayerful people who are humbled with gratitude for the gospel. Are you humbled by what God did for you? Are you gracious? Are you thankful? Did you thank him today for saving you? I mean, did you thank him today that your eternity's set? Because if you don't, you'll start thinking about all the problems in this world and they're myriad and there always will be. But my friend, if you're saved and you can get down on your knees and you can say, "God thank you that in the middle of all this, and I don't even know how all this is going to work out, but I'm yours and I know the one who controls all history and I'm so grateful that you would choose someone like me. Thank you, Jesus." Your whole day will change. I promise you.

And if you want to see revival take place in every generation where there are people who are humbled with gratitude for the gospel, God begins to move. Another question about where your worship is. You can ask yourself this rhetorically, where do you spend your time? Where do you spend your money? Where do you spend your energy? Where do you spend your concentration? What do you talk about all the time?

Is it Jesus or something else? That's a pretty good indicator because everybody in America would say, "Well, I've been to church. I'm saved. I love Jesus. I believe he died and rose from the dead." But they've never given their heart to him. You do not want to appear before the throne of grace without having worshiped him on this side of heaven. Give your life to him today, please. In every generation God uses prayerful people who are humbled with gratitude for the gospel.

Number two is this. I'll give you a second generational secret. In every generation, God uses prayerful people who are strengthened with power for Christ's indwelling who are strengthened with power for Christ's indwelling. Notice what he says. He says that every family in heaven on earth derives his name. And then he says this in verse 16, "And that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through his spirit in the inner man so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Now, notice this, "That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory," okay? He doesn't say out of his riches in glory. He says according to, that's a really big deal, and here's why. If I were a billionaire and I was giving out of my resources, I could give you \$10 and I'm giving you out of my resources.

If I give according to my resources, if I give according I'm a billionaire, I'm going to bless you like a billionaire blesses. You're about ready to get lavish gifts. Amen. When he's praying for the church in Ephesus and when we're praying for every other church, and I prayed this for us this morning, he's praying that God would lavish you. By the way, how much does God have? He has it all. I mean even when God lavishly

gives out of everything he has, how much has he lost? Nothing. He has infinite resources. Amen. And so, here's what he's praying, "I pray that God would give to you according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." I pray that he would lavish you so much with what? To be strong and strengthened with power in the inner man. What does that mean? It means that you would know the power of the Holy Spirit in your life, that you would make room for the Holy Spirit to work.

It means this, when God saved you, he wants you to be strong and capable to accomplish everything he wants to accomplish in your life. See, here's the mystery of the gospel. The mystery of the gospel is this. It's not about you giving adherence to a creed or adopting certain behaviors, it's when you repent and believe the Holy Spirit comes to indwell you on the inside. Colossians 1:27, it says, "The mystery of the gospel, what was unrevealed in the Old Testament that's now revealed is Christ in you, the hope of glory." The mystery is that the Holy Spirit lives inside of you. And the purpose of the Holy Spirit's ministry is this, primarily the Holy Spirit's ministry is to make Jesus Christ look good. It's to magnify the Lord Jesus Christ and to manifest the Lord Jesus Christ's presence. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is saying, I want Jesus to look awesome. And guess where the Holy Spirit resides? In you.

So, what's he praying for? That you would have the ability and that you would have the strength to let God do with you everything God wants to do with you. It means what he created you for. He's giving you the resources to accomplish everything he created you for. I'm praying that you would allow the Holy Spirit to make a pathway for you to receive all of God's goodness in your life. See, here's the truth. At the

moment you repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have all of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't come piecemeal. He's a person. I mean, if the only part of him came that'd be bad as a person, all of him comes to dwell on you. The question is, does the Holy Spirit have all of you? Does the Holy Spirit have all of you? And that's what he says. He says, "I'm praying that the Holy Spirit would do such a work in your life to make you capable and able for all God has so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, so that by believing in him, Jesus would have full reign over every area of your life."

He's not specifically just talking about the moment you get saved here because for every single believer Jesus is in your life, he's talking about the ongoing dwelling presence of the Lord. When I got saved, I read a little booklet and I don't know who to give credit to, but it was called My Heart, Christ's Home. And it walked through the understanding that now that Jesus is in your life, he wants to go into every area of your life and every room in your house and not just sit in the foyer and wait for you to invite him. He wants everything as I've said here in the pulpit before, he didn't come in to just be a resident, he came in to be president. He wants an all access pass into your life. So, when he comes into your life, he doesn't just want to guide you to church. He does. But he also wants to be in your dating life if you're single.

And he also wants to be in your married life if you're married and he wants to be in your parenting life if you have children and he wants to be in your work life if you have a job. He wants to be in your decision-making process over all the decisions you're making. He wants to be the central locus control of everything in your life. So, when Christ dwells in your heart through faith, the heart is the center of all things. Is

Christ central to every decision that you make? Here's my prayer, I'm praying he would be. I'm praying there's no holding back. And yet for many Christians, here's what they tell God either in their actions or even with their words, God, I'm so glad you're in my life and I'm so glad I'm saved. And Lord, you can have every area of my life, but you just can't touch.

And then they start making a list. You can't touch my family, you can't touch my kids, you can't touch my spouse. You can't touch my health. You can't touch my finances. You can't touch my job. You can't touch my future. You can't touch my goals, you can't touch my, and all of a sudden Jesus is just sitting there in the foyer of your life. And yes, you're saved and yes, you're forgiven, but you're not filled to the full because you refuse to let Jesus Christ be the Lord of your life. And here's the prayer and I'm praying it for you that Jesus Christ would be able to indwell your heart by faith. I mean, just think about it in the natural today. If Jesus Christ was going to manifest himself and come back fully, bodily and physically, which one day he is, but if he was just to show up at your house today and start walking through.

He is just going to start in your foyer and he is going to say, "Hey, I'm just going to walk through your house. I want to walk through your family room. I want to walk through your bedroom. I want to walk through and look at what you're looking at on the history of your computer. I want to see what you're watching on tv. I want to see who you're hanging out with. I want to see all the pictures on the wall. I want to see what's going on in the bathroom. I want to go every single room." Here's the question, is there anything you need to change? Because if there is, that means Christ is not dwelling

fully in your heart by faith, change it. And it's not about you going and changing things. Let me be crystal clear on this.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is not about you hearing what needs to change and then you taking copious notes and then trying to change it because the Bible makes clear, "Apart from him, you can do" say it with me, "nothing." You can't fix you. Apart from Christ, you're dead. How do I know? You're so bad at fixing you that God had to slaughter his son? You can't fix you. What you can do is get before the Lord and saying, "Lord, I can't fix this. I can't make it right, but I want to love what you love and I want to hate what you hate. And would you come into my life and change my orientation the way I think so that I want to do what you want me to do? And Lord, you show me what you want me to do and you show me what changes to make. I'll make them for your glory." That's what it means for Christ to dwell in your heart through faith.

He came in to take over. He came in because he wants you. Many of us would raise our hand this morning and say, "I want to see revival. I just don't want Jesus to have every area of my life." Well then, pass it on to the next generation because you're never going to see it. You can mouth the words that I love the Lord when your heart is so far from him. One of the reasons we don't see revival in our culture is that the church is so sick. There's nothing wrong with the church per se, but there's wrongness with the people in the church that are unwilling to let Jesus Christ have full reign of their lives. I don't want them to have full reign in my life because you know what I want? I want the American dream and I want to do what I want to do and I want to marry this

person. I want to live this life and I want to do these things and I want to have this kind of money and I want to do this kind of thing. And Jesus, if you can squeeze yourself into my life, cool. And that's why those generations never see revival.

But I'm telling you church, the day the church bows its knee to Jesus and say, "I'm so humbled and grateful for the gospel and I want to be strengthened with power so I can be able and capable to do everything Christ wants me to do. And Christ, you can come in and you can have everything in my life. Any blessing you have, I hold with an open hand. Any trial I go through, I'm going to thank you for that you entrusted me with this great trial. And look, I just want to honor you because I want to see more and more people know you." When a whole church begins to act like that, God begins to move. That's why Philippians 4:13 is not a verse about the American dream. It's a verse about letting Christ be all that he wants to be in your life. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

1 Corinthians 16:13 says, "Be on the alert stand firm in the faith. Act like men. Be strong." That's strengthening myself so Christ can be all in all. Let all that you do be done in love. Or how about 2 Corinthians 4:16? I'm paraphrasing here becoming a life verse as I get older though, "Outwardly we are wasting away. Inwardly, we are being renewed day by day." Where's the spirit's power? It's in the inner man. The gospel is not about something external that you're going to do. It's not about your lousy commitments that you're going to break this week. It's not about God, I'm going to do this and you never do. That doesn't change you. It's what's in the inner man and the inner woman that says, "Holy Spirit, would you come and change my life? Would you

let my life be a representation of the risen manifested Lord Jesus Christ? So, when people see me, they see you. You can have it all and whatever you tell me, you have full reign. In every area of my life, I hold it all with an open hand."

When a church does that, that's when we begin to see revival. Friends, we want to be a prayerful people because nothing happens without prayer. We talked about it last week. My house shall be called a house of prayer. The primary ministry in any church's prayer. If there's no prayer, nothing else matters. If there's no prayer, you're going to turn the church into something that was never intended to be. We talked about leadership seminars and entertainment centers and counseling centers and therapy sessions and social networks and all. That's not what the church is. Church is a house of prayer so that God can get his work done and his people, but if we don't care about prayer and we don't care about the gospel and we don't care about Christ doing his work in us, it doesn't matter what else we do.

These are the things that God wants us to understand. Let me give you a third generational secret. In every generation, God uses prayerful people who are overwhelmed with wonder for the fullness of God's love. God uses in every generation prayerful people who are overwhelmed with wonder for the fullness of God's love. Listen to what he says at the end of verse 17. "Now that Christ is dwelling in our hearts, he says, and that you being rooted and grounded in love," rooted as an agricultural analogy to say that you're rooted, grounded is the idea of an architectural understanding of being secure. It's that you'd be established in the love of God, that you would know the love of God so much that you would build your foundation of your

life upon the love of God. That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge that notice this, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Who here wants to experience more of the fullness of God? "Oh, I do, I do." That you would have that, that you would be established and that you'd be rooted and that you'd be grounded in the love of God. That you know the height and the depth and the breadth and the width and the length of the love of God that you know with so well that would surpass all understanding. It means this, you should be overwhelmed by the love of God. You should be overwhelmed by him. His love for you should overwhelm you. And if it doesn't overwhelm you, you either don't understand God or you don't understand you, how is it that a perfect, holy, righteous God who always makes the right decisions in every single way, could tolerate even one person that rebels against him and one person that lives for themselves and one person that goes against him and one person that speaks bad about him. How could he even do that?

The Bible answers that question through his son Jesus Christ. That's how. He made a way. He made a way. If you were alive today, and maybe some of you are because somebody laid down their life for you, you would think about it every single day. If you're a Christian, you're alive today because Jesus Christ laid down his life for you. Make no mistake about it. It should cause you to be overwhelmed by the love of God. I mean, I think in our generation we make God's love way too pragmatic, way too pragmatic. Yeah, God loves, and I love too. As a matter of fact, I think I'm more loving

than God because I would never send anybody to hell and God would, so I'm probably more loving than God. We say ridiculous things like that or we think ridiculous things like that.

God is awesome. He's overwhelming. I mean, think about places that you've been that you've just seen in the natural where the heavens declare the glory of God. I've been to the Atlantic and Pacific and Indian Ocean. I've been, "Whoa, they're huge. I've been to the mountains like you have. They're overwhelming at times to see how incredible they are. I've been in the Alps and said, "Wow, it's incredible what God's done." I've been to the Grand Canyon and seen what the flood carved out. And I'm like, "Whoa, it's massive." But when we see God, we don't realize he's bigger than that. He's greater than that. We put God in this small box and say, "Yeah, God's love. I mean, that's his job. I mean what God's supposed to do and he's supposed to love me, therefore I can just do whatever I want. And I guess when I die and I get to heaven, he'll just love me."

You're wrong. You're wrong. I'm telling you on the authority of God's word. You are so wrong. And it pains my heart, especially during these 21 days of prayer and fasting as I've been praying these cards and praying for you who are interceding for people and praying for the names that you put on those cards, that God would bring them to faith in Christ. Because here's the truth about the gospel, God is not asking you to join a church. He's not asking you to gain religion. He's not asking you to jump through emotional hoops. He's not asking you to be all emotionally. He's not asking you

to turn into somebody else. He's saying, "Your dead and you're lost and I'm holding you accountable because you've rebelled against me and I'm asking you to repent of your sin. Leave it behind. Come to me to get your life because I am the way, the truth in life. I'm asking you to give your allegiance of worship to me. Will you do that?" That's the gospel.

And here's the truth. Anybody, anywhere, at any time can come to him. But please don't think falsely that if you're a good person or that you're an American or that you've tried hard or you try to keep the 10 Commandments, that you're going to appear before the Lord and he's going to welcome you into His kingdom because he's not, and all you're going to hear is "Depart from me, you worker of iniquity. I never knew you. We don't have a relationship. You never worshiped me on this side of heaven. I see your church attendance. That doesn't do anything for me. You're dead. You need to be made alive by me." That's the call. You should be overwhelmed. Are you not overwhelmed that God would pick you? Are you not overwhelmed that you're in His grace? Are you not overwhelmed that he loves you with an unconditional love and no matter what you do, he never stopped loving you?

I mean, that is God's love. I mean, you think about it like this. I mean, it says in Psalm 7:11, "The Lord's angry with a wicked every day." Ephesians 2 says, "We're by nature of wrath." That's how we all start out. And yet God's love is greater through the cross than all of that. I mean, we should be overwhelmed at the thought of who Jesus is. I remember when you think about it, when Moses was at the burning bush, he was overwhelmed when he saw the 10 plagues being rained down, he was overwhelmed.

When he saw the Red Sea part, and then swallow up Egypt, he was overwhelmed.

When he spent 40 days in the mountain, he was not only overwhelmed, but his face glowed because he had spent time in the presence of the Lord.

Or what about Isaiah in Isaiah 6? When he saw the Lord high and lifted up, he was so overwhelmed that when he saw the beauty of the Lord and the train of the Lord filling the temple with glory and all these spiritual beings hovering around, he was like, "Whoa, I'm ruined. I'm totally a sinner. I'm a man of unclean lips. I come from a people of unclean lips. What am I doing here?" And God's grace sends a being to come down and touch his lips and make him cleanse. And when he gets cleansed from what he's not, and then he hears the voice of the Lord saying, "Who will go for us?" He's like, "I'll do anything you want. I mean, there's nothing I won't do for you." He's overwhelmed. Or what about John, the beloved disciple? The one who's laying his head on Jesus's chest at the Last Supper, the night Jesus was betrayed. I mean, they're buddies, they're tight.

But when John saw the resurrected Christ in the Book of Revelation in his vision, he was so overwhelmed, he fell at his feet as though dead. He's overwhelmed. That's the God I'm telling you about. Are you overwhelmed by this God? Because you should be overwhelmed by this God. He talks about the breadth and the length and the height and the depth, have you already thought about that love? How broad is the love of God? I mean, we think our world's big. We think the United States is big. If somebody bikes across the United States, they're like, "Whoa, they did a great thing." Think of how many galaxies there are that we don't even know about yet, and our God stands

outside of all of that that he created in six days and all of that is small. That's how broad the love of God is.

Or how long is it? I'm not a mathematician, but I know it goes from eternity past to eternity future. And that's a really, really long time. It's always been, and it will always be. That's how long his love is. What about the height of his love? It's all the way to the heavens. All the way to heavens. And what about the depths of it? It was all the way to this earth and to a cross where he covered the sin of the world with his blood for the forgiveness of everyone who would believe. How big is this love? I mean, I love seeing young people in our church that are engaged and they can't take their eyes off each other and they're texting all day long. It's like, "It's been three hours since we've talked." And I'm like, "Get over it. You'll be all right." They're enamored, right? That should be our love for our God if we really knew what he was doing. The fact we're all still breathing is the love of God.

The fact we're blinking every six seconds so we have moisture in our eyes to see that's God. The fact that your heart's beating, the fact that you have lungs, you have kidney, whatever you have to sustain you, that is the love of God in your life. Any blessing you have in your life, any resource you have in your life, any relationship you have in your life, that's the love of God. He's the provider of all of it. Have you stopped to thank him for that? You should be so overwhelmed you came into this world naked and unable to do anything. So, anything you have is from him. I mean, when God's people begin to pray like that, in every generation, when God's people begin to pray like that, that's when God begins to move.

When they're saying, "Lord, we are so grateful and humbled by the gospel, and Lord, would you move in our life?" We want to be strengthened with power so that Jesus Christ can have his full way with us. So, when we're sharing the gospel and the lost person says, "Well, what's different about you besides the fact you go to church and I don't?" Because we all do the same things, that's not what it is. It's Christ richly dwelling in me and growing in me so I don't look like I used to look. And then I'm just overwhelmed with wonder. I'm like, this is way too big for me. I can't even imagine. I mean, there's not even English words for this, and I want the full measure of that. I want more of the love of God. I want to experience more of the love of God. I mean, that's the God that picked me. That's the God that chose me to be holy and blameless in his sight before the foundation of the world.

Are you kidding me? That God that knows everything about me and every sin I've ever sinned would still say, "Come." Are you kidding me right now? It's overwhelming. But then, let me give you the fourth. It's even greater. These have to be foundational for the fourth secret to work, by the way. Because there are so many people that say, "I want revival, but I'm not going to be thankful or gracious for the gospel and I'm not really humbled by it. I want revival, but I really don't want Christ to have full reign in my life. I want revival, but I'm not really overwhelmed by God." Well then good luck bringing revival. You got nothing to share with anybody. But you start being enamored with that God, then we're ready for number four.

God uses prayerful people in every generation who are expectant with desire for

God's greatness through his church. He uses prayerful people in every generation who are expectant with desire for God's greatness through his church. Now, if you only know a couple of verses from this passage, these are probably the two that it makes for a great plaque, and you should have this up in your house somewhere, but we need to understand what it means. He goes into a benediction, he says, "Now to him who was able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

Now, think about this first, not to him. Who is this all about? What's the goal of our prayer? We said we want to fall more in love with Jesus. What's the goal of praying for salvation? What's the goal of being thankful? What's the goal of letting Christ rule in our heart? It's not so we get more stuff. It's not so we get more wealthy. It's so that, what? It's so that he will be more glorified, now to him, who is able. How able is God? Just out of curiosity. I've heard four answers so far. How able is he?

Congregation:

Unlimited.

Pastor Jeff:

With my God, all things are possible. That's how able he is. He can make the sun stand still. He can heal sickness on the spot. He can deliver demons and then go fleeing like that. He knows every star by its name. He knows every galaxy by its He knows stuff we don't even comprehend, even exists. In the deepest part of the ocean,

there's some creature that we haven't even discovered yet, and he knows all about that and how long it's been living and what he did when he created it. He can do all things. So now to him, who is able to do what? Far more abundantly than all we ask or think. Now, time out, time out. What can you ask God for and what could you think? I can think of a lot. I can imagine a lot, can't you? I mean, I can imagine all Christians staying together in their marriage and loving one another.

I can imagine that all children who are conceived would come out healthy and be birthed. I can imagine a culture where we don't only say in God we trust on a dollar bill, but the whole nation turns and says, "In God we trust." I mean, I can think that, and here's what the scripture says, and my God can do far more abundantly than that. Now, I've quoted this before and I don't know who to give credit to for the quote, "But why do we ask such small things from a God who can do all things?" Yes, when my foot was hurting all night long and I couldn't even stand on it, God cares about the pain in my foot. God cares about the smallest micro detail because he's a loving God.

But he also cares about the world and maybe our prayers are just a bit too small. Maybe we hear about the great commission. "Yeah, that's probably good. I should probably make some disciples." What if that was the centrality of your life was the gospel and making disciples, which by the way, regardless of your vocational call, it should be. If you're single, if you're a stay-at-home mom, if you're a working dad, anything you are, you're an employee, you're an employer, the gospel central making disciples is primary because that's what you're going to answer for someday. Not to him, who's able to do far more abundantly than all we can ask or think, what does it

say? According to what? The power that works within, where?

Congregation:

Us.

Pastor Jeff:

Us. How is he going to do it? I'm praying for revival and God's going to send his spirit wind and he's going to do it through us. He wants to work in us. He doesn't want you to pray these paltry prayers that just get him to kind of do something outside of you. He's saying, "You are my temple. You are my vessel. You are the one I want to work with. You must be grateful and humbled by the gospel. You must want Christ to have full reign in your life. You must be overwhelmed by my love because you are the vessel I'm bringing revival through."

Congregation:

Yes. Yes.

Pastor Jeff:

You already said, how does the power come through prayer? I pray that you would receive spiritual power from the Holy Spirit. Verses 20 and 21 that we just read, "That people say now to him who can do far more abundantly." Oh, praise the Lord. He can totally do that. Without prayer, it ain't happening. It's never happened without it. Prayer is central to everything God wants to do. "Hey, pastor, why would you schedule 21 days of prayer and fasting? Why are you doing 21 days of prayer in the fall? Why do we have first Tuesday every single first Tuesday of the month? Why do you praise

the staff every single month? Why are you going to add more days?" Because prayer is where it all happens. It's central. He wants to work in you and me.

By the way, when he's prompting you to change something in your life, it's not because he thinks you're bad and he wants you to be good. That's not why he's doing it. When he's giving you conviction of sin, it's not like, "You better get that right so you can be right with..." It's not why he's doing it. He's trying to get you right so he can use you on his mission. "Well, why can't I do that? And why can they do that?" Because God said no for you and he's trying to use you on mission. Would you relinquish that and let him have full reign of your life for the sake of the gospel, for Christ's sake? Please? How come they don't have to do it? Because he's not speaking to them about that, he's talking to you. That's what it's about.

And he's able to do far more abundantly than all that we could ask or think according to his glorious power that works within us, those who are prayerful, those who are humbled, those who are gracious, those who have Christ in us, those who are overwhelmed by his love, that's who he wants to work through. I found it interesting planting a church. Someone told me, "Well, this guy's a businessman. This guy has a lot of money. This guy has a lot of influence." To which my response is always on the inside. "Yeah, I don't care. I care about this." And if this ain't happening, they're not going to help us. I'm looking for godly men and women and boys and girls that place Jesus Christ at the center. And notice what he says when you do, to him be the glory.

Now, I want you to see this in your Bibles. I want you to read these three verses.

[inaudible 00:49:12]. To him be the glory, where? Read those next three words in the...

Congregation:

[inaudible 00:49:16].

Pastor Jeff:

Okay. These three have Bibles. So, we're going to read it again. It says in the church. Where is this going to happen? In the church. Say it again, in the church. I'm so tired of listening to people saying, "The next revival is going to come through businessmen. The next revival is going to come through this parachurch ministry. The next revival is going to come through a bunch of individuals. The next revival is going to come..." The next revival and every revival, it's always going to come through the church. The church. Where do you get that? My Bible. It's the church of Jesus Christ. And let me just say this. There are too many believers that talk too bad about the church. When you talk bad about pastors, you're talking bad about the church. When you complain about leadership, you're talking bad about the church.

When you don't serve, you're talking bad about the church. When you're not involved, you're talking bad about the church. When you complain about worship, you're talking bad about the church. When you talk bad about a pastor, you're talking bad about the church. The church is the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. He loves his church. Listen, he came for his church. He saved his church. He died for his church. He rose for the church. He's coming back for the church. Make no mistake about it. "Well, I love Jesus. I just don't love the church." Then you don't love the Jesus of the Bible, period.

"I don't need to go to church. I've already read the Bible." You're wrong. And I'll tell you this, I love my wife. She's not perfect, but she's awesome. But I'll tell you this, I don't like people that would talk bad about her. And if you talk bad about my wife, we may have some words or I'm not going to ever listen to you again. You can't talk bad about the church and expect God to do great things through his church. So, if that's you, you need to repent today. Stop it forever and honor the Lord and thank him for his church. By the way, there's no perfect church. There's just the perfect God that's the head of it because the church is just made up of sinners.

And by the way, while I'm on this topic because I'm ranting, I'm going along. No church ever hurt you. There might've been sinful people in the church that hurt you. There might've been some bad decisions in a church that hurt you. There may have been some people that didn't do things right that hurt you, but the church didn't hurt you. Jesus didn't hurt you. And by the way, he uses all that for his glory to grow you anyway, so let's talk good about the church. Am I being clear? Okay.

I am preaching to myself because for years I was one of those guys. I loved Jesus. I loved evangelism, I love mission. I was just going to church and I wouldn't see what's wrong with this and God and I had about a 15-year conversation until I repented and then said, "Okay, fine, I'll plant one and give the rest of my life to it." I love the church. You are the church. We're building one another up in love, and that's where his glory reigns is in the church and where? And in Christ Jesus who is the head of this church and the head of every church. And what does he say? To all generations, forever and ever. Amen. When I read this passage and I think about prayerful people

who are seeking the Lord and wanting Jesus to do everything and are overwhelmed by his love, here's what I think.

Why not this church? Why not us and why not now? Why are we praying for revival like it's a future thing instead that we'll never see? Why don't we pray for revival now? God, change us now. Revive us now. So, we're ready if you ever did any. Now. This is free of charge. I'm about ready to tell you. I hate it. I'm just a local church pastor that has a lot of opinions, so I'm stepping away. I hate it when new coaches take over a team and they start talking like this. "You know what? We're in rebuilding season. We're going to rebuild for three years and we're going to get this, and in five years," stop it. I like the guy that takes over the losing team and says, "This year, we're competing for the Super Bowl. This year, we're going to have the right team. This year we're going to..." I'm like, "I'll follow that guy."

I'm your pastor under the lordship of Jesus Christ. This is the season. This is the church. This is the time. Don't wish you lived anywhere else because God chose your days and he chose your seasons and he has you here. And I'm telling you, listen, we have the potential to see the greatest revival the world seen through his church now. I believe it with my whole heart. If I didn't, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing. "But Jeff, haven't you seen the politics?" "Yeah, I've seen it. I don't pay much attention to it." "Jeff, haven't you seen what's going on in education?" "Yeah, I see it." I see this, "And I know if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways and pray to me, then I will hear from heaven. I'll

heal their land."

I can do it. The only thing that's hindering me from doing everything you say you want to see is you. So, will you please align your life with me so I can work through you and change this world? That's the gospel. That's why we pray. That's why when I go to prayer meeting, she's like, "Do you have a prayer request?" "Yeah, this is boring." I can't get it. I am not about that. I'm about this world transformation through Christ's church because he chooses broken dead people that he's made alive by the gospel that still aren't perfect and still aren't put together and are still a work in progress. And he says, "I'll use you all to change the world. The church is the greatest institution on planet earth." Those aren't my words. Those are Jesus' words.

So, what would happen if we prayed like that? And I would tell you, I see sparks like that happening already because God's doing things in our church. When Jesus came in the gospels, he did three things. He saved people. He healed people. He delivered people. When he rose to heaven, he said, "I'm sending you the Holy Spirit. You'll do in greater things than these." And what do we see? More salvation, more healings, more freeing. My Bible says in Hebrews 13:8 that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. So, everything Jesus has always done, he's still always willing to do. And in our church, you'll see it next week, we're still seeing people saved that have testimonies, that have turned from their sin and their deadness and turned to Christ in relationship.

We're still seeing healings. I told you a story last week about one of the [inaudible 00:55:08] we prayed for, for somebody that was incurable, that was totally

healed. And we're seeing freedom, we're seeing deliverance. Last week, after service, after 10:30 service, Pastor John and I were talking with a young couple here and I have permission to share this story. And she started telling us about a trauma she went through about four years ago. And ever since that trauma, she's not been able to sleep through the night once. And she began to describe the dreams she was having and they were so horrific.

As I was listening to her, I'm like, "Man, that's demonic." I mean, that's demonic in every way. I said, "Do you want that to be gone from your life?" And she said, "Yes." And so, Pastor John and I just began to pray and God revealed to her some unforgiveness she had, which was given the enemy rights to camp there. Even though she's saved, she was forgiven, but she wasn't free. And we tore up those agreements through unforgiveness where she forgave those people.

And then Pastor John and I just prayed some simple prayers over her asking those unclean spirits, those demons to be gone and they can never come back. So, I saw her this week. I've seen her about five or six times I think in our prayer meetings, and I asked her, "How are you doing?" She said, "This is the first week in four years I've slept through the night every single night." But more than that, as we were talking, I'm like, "Hey, what else have you noticed?" And she said, "Well, everybody at work's asking me what's different about you? You're glowing." And she says, "I can sleep." Well, what changed? Jesus. God's still doing all those things. And it's not freaky.

If you watch stuff on tv, a lot of that stuff's freaky. I don't like it. It doesn't

represent Jesus Christ. Yelling at people, throwing people down. That's not Jesus. That's not what he does. But his power through his church is exactly what Jesus does today. That's what I want to be a part of. That's why you're here at Brave. That's what you want to be a part of. Does that mean God answers every single prayer in the exact way we want? No. It just means that he's able and he has a perfect plan for each one of us, and there's more of him that you can experience.

Would you stand up with me? As we get ready to pray? I know our elders are coming forward. Some of our prayer team will be forward to. I've enjoyed praying over these prayers. You can feel free to write down more prayer requests this week as we pray. Also, praise reports tell us, I love praising God through this. I'm going to pray for you, and I'm also going to pray today that if you've not given your life to Jesus Christ, make today your day.

Father in heaven, we give you all glory, honor and praise for who you are. Lord, we thank you for your living and active word. And Lord, we ask you to move mightily at this time. Lord, we believe that you are the way maker, the miracle work of the promise keeper, the light and the darkness. Lord, we believe that you're the same yesterday, today and forever, that you're doing all these things. And Father, I just praise you for who you are. If you're here today and you've never trusted Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, and you want a relationship with the God of the Universe, you can pray like this. Lord, right now, I just want to turn from my sin. I see that you're God, I want to turn from that. Repent is what it's called. And I want you to come into my life. I want you to be my Lord and Savior. I confess that you're my lord's

ever come into my life.

Believe that that's sincerely what you prayed and that you've invited Christ in that you are born again. You're a new creation. Father, I pray you'd fill all of us a fresh with your Holy Spirit, that you do work here today, that you remind us how powerful prayer is and why it's so difficult to do, because there's so much power in it. Lord, use this church to bring you great glory that we would see revival in this generation because these secrets that we think are kept secret, they're really ones you're just shouting at us saying, "Hey, live these things out. I'll show up in more and more power." God, we give you all glory, all honor, and all praise made. May this time of prayer and worship be for you, in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. Can we give God praise this morning for who he is?