

The Altar Before the Assignment

Before the minister serves the people, the minister must serve the Lord.

Laying the Foundation

Minister of Gift

Gift can move a room, create a moment, operate, and open doors. However, gift alone cannot sustain.

The Danger: Being gifted but not governed, anointed but not anchored, used but not formed, visible but not submitted.

Minister of Word

Word can build a people, create longevity, and firmly govern. It establishes an unshakeable foundation.

The Safety: The Word will keep a person from being completely destroyed by the very door their gift opened.

The Great Danger

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*People have learned how to serve the work of
the Lord while becoming strangers to the Lord
of the work.*

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THE ULTIMATE QUESTION: CAN YOU MINISTER TO THE LORD?

Order of Operations

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul..." (Acts 13:2)

- They ministered to the Lord **before** they were separated for the work.
- Sending came out of profound service. Apostolic movement came out of priestly ministry.
- A minister who does not know how to attend to the Lord will eventually use people as their source.
- The pulpit was never designed to be your altar. The altar must exist first.



ancient scroll on a wooden table with dramatic lighting

The Posture of Nearness



Samuel's Posture

Prophetic authority was born in priestly attendance. Before confronting kings, his ear had to be trained by laying down near the ark in the presence.



Sons of Zadok

They kept the charge of the sanctuary when Israel went astray. Guarding the holy things qualified them for divine nearness, not just functional activity.



Pure Motives

Activity does not equal nearness. God is calling ministers beyond simply working rooms, requiring a mouth and a heart that are equally near to Him.

Service vs. Presence

Martha's Burden

Martha was in the house with Jesus, but became troubled and agitated because her serving was disconnected from sitting.

Service without the altar leads to frustration, obligation, and resentment toward those who choose presence.

Mary's Choice

Jesus declared Mary chose the "good part."
Service is necessary, but presence is absolutely needful.

Work matters, but worship orders the work.
The humility to sit before you stand gives serving its ultimate purity.

The Hidden Life

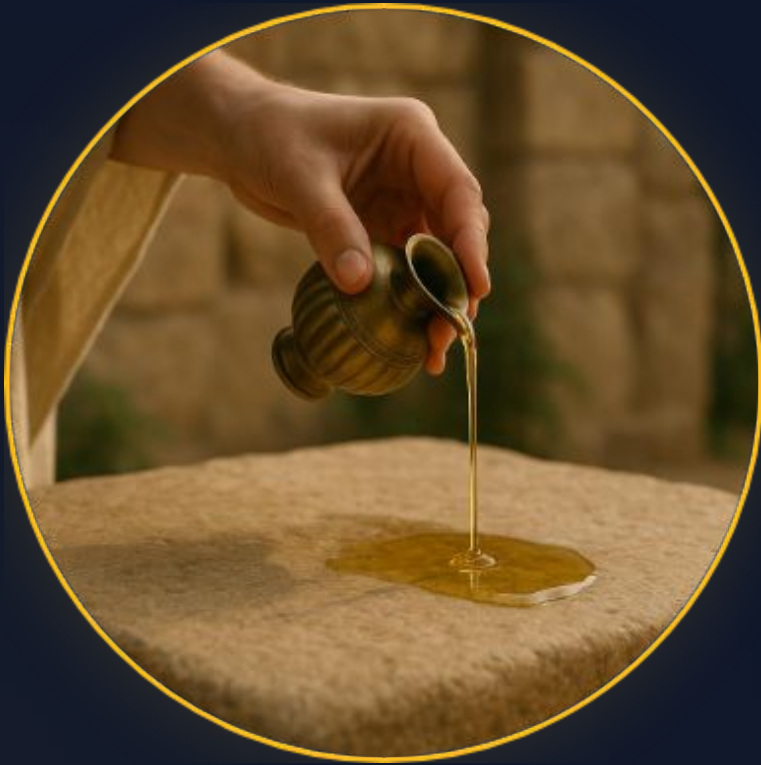
Ministry becomes theater if the secret place is neglected. The closet is where motives are examined and ambition is crucified.

Can you pray, worship, and serve when nobody is watching?

When nobody is clapping, pulling, or affirming, real ministry begins. God Himself becomes enough audience for your obedience.



Consecration & Presentation



A Living Sacrifice

You cannot call yourself a minister and keep areas of your life off the altar. Ministry to the Lord requires presentation of your whole life, habits, and ambitions.

Preparation itself is ministry. Repentance, purging, study, and hidden obedience are all vital altar work before the assignment ever becomes visible.

Abiding vs. Straining

"Abide in me, and I in you." (John 15:4)

- **Straining** says, "I have to make something happen." It relies on forcing doors, faking fruit, and performing for validation.
- **Abiding** says, "I must remain in Him." Fruit is the natural, effortless evidence of remaining connected to the vine.
- Even good works become incredibly dangerous when they detach you from the true vine. The altar must always precede the assignment.



Practical Application



Prayer: Moves beyond simply asking. It requires adoration, repentance, listening, and absolute surrender.



Worship: Practiced without an audience or a stage. Worshiping faithfully in the hidden, uncelebrated places.



Fasting: Telling the flesh it is not the lord; sharpening spiritual sensitivity and removing the distraction of appetites.



Study: Devotional reading before sermon prep. Allowing the Word to judge, wash, and heal you first.



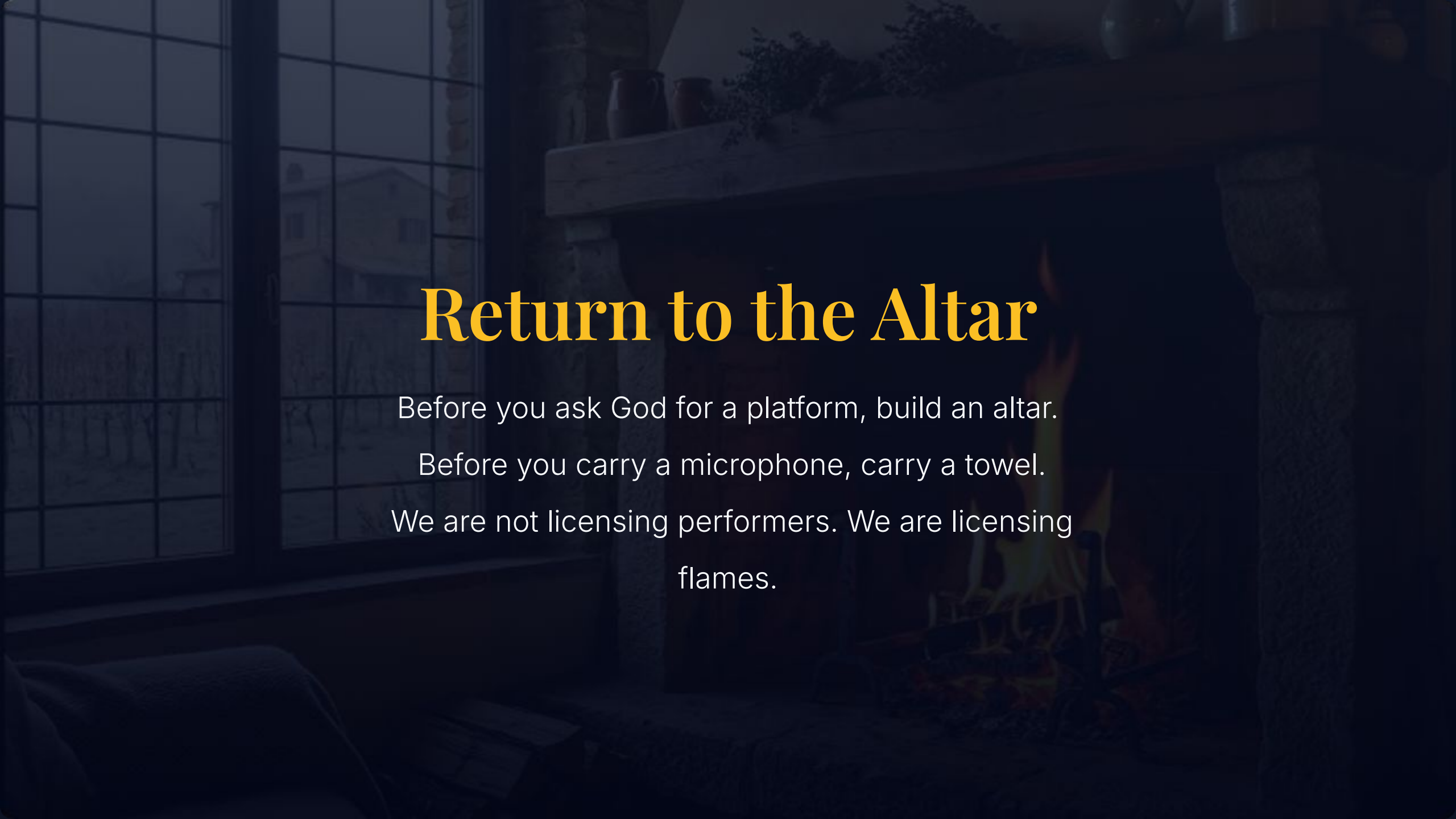
Obedience: Quiet faithfulness in small things—apologizing, showing up, forgiving, and submitting to process.

The Call of Isaiah

The Order of the Altar: Vision, Conviction, Cleansing, Commission.

- Isaiah encountered the glory of God and immediately became aware of his own uncleanness.
- Before he could say, "*Here am I; send me,*" he first had to cry out, "*Woe is me.*"
- The burning coal touched his lips before the commission reached his ears. His mouth was purified before his message was released.





Return to the Altar

Before you ask God for a platform, build an altar.

Before you carry a microphone, carry a towel.

We are not licensing performers. We are licensing
flames.