

WHEN THE ALTAR BECOMES HOME

FORMED IN THE SECRET PLACE WHEN EVERYTHING IS SHAKING

TEXT: ROMANS 12:1–2

HONOR & GRATITUDE

BEFORE WE TALK ABOUT FIRE, LET ME GIVE HONOR WHERE HONOR IS DUE...

TO PASTOR SHANE & MRS. PAM

THIS ISN'T JUST A STAGE, AND IT'S CERTAINLY NOT JUST A MIC—IT'S A SACRED SPACE WHERE LIVES ARE FORMED, FUTURES ARE SHAPED, AND TRUTH IS THUNDERED FROM HEAVEN.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST. FOR BELIEVING IN ME WHEN I WASN'T SURE I BELIEVED IN MYSELF.

YOUR CORRECTION, YOUR COVERING, YOUR CONSISTENCY—HAS MARKED ME.

TO MY WIFE, LINDSEY

YOU ARE THE QUIET STRENGTH BEHIND EVERY LOUD MOMENT.

YOU'VE STOOD IN THE SHADOWS OF STORMS AND HELD THE LINE WITH GRACE. I LOVE YOU.

TO MY KIDS

YOU ARE MY LEGACY. EVERY MESSAGE I PREACH IS A SEED I HOPE YOU'LL ONE DAY LIVE.

THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME THROUGH EVERY VERSION OF WHO I'VE BEEN.

SETTING THE ATMOSPHERE

- I'VE DREAMED OF THIS MOMENT... BUT TONIGHT ISN'T ABOUT MY DREAM—IT'S ABOUT HIS DESIRE.
- I'M NOT HERE TO IMPRESS YOU—I'M HERE TO INVITE YOU. INVITE YOU TO THE ALTAR
- I WANT TO PEEL US BACK LIKE GOD HAS BEEN PEELING ME... SACRIFICE IS BLOODY, IT'S MESSY.
- THIS IS NOT A PLATFORM—IT'S AN ALTAR.
IT'S NOT ABOUT HYPE—IT'S ABOUT HOLINESS.
IT'S NOT A SHOW—IT'S A SUMMONS.
- IN A WORLD FULL OF DISTRACTIONS, GOD IS STILL WHISPERING, TO COME BACK —
“COME BACK TO THE ALTAR.”
- LET'S GET HONEST TONIGHT: WE'RE DROWNING IN CONNECTION BUT STARVING FOR COMMUNION.
- AND IF WE'RE BEING REAL—MANY OF US HAVE TRADED THE SECRET PLACE FOR THE SPOTLIGHT.
- BUT GOD IS CALLING US HOME —
- BACK TO FIRE. BACK TO INTIMACY. BACK TO THE ALTAR.

PRAYER

TITLE & TEXT TRANSITION

SERMON TITLE: *WHEN THE ALTAR BECOMES HOME*

SUBTITLE: *FORMED IN THE SECRET PLACE WHEN EVERYTHING IS SHAKING*

- THE LORD GAVE ME A WORD FOR TONIGHT. NOT JUST A PHRASE—BUT A BURDEN:

WHEN THE ALTAR BECOMES HOME.

NOT A VISIT. NOT A MEMORY. A DWELLING.

- IN A CULTURE THAT'S CONSTANTLY SHIFTING, THE ALTAR REMAINS THE ONE STABLE PLACE WHERE TRANSFORMATION STILL HAPPENS.
- LET'S READ THE PASSAGE THAT ANCHORS THIS WORD:

- **ROMANS 12:1-2**

*"I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD,
THAT YOU PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY,
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.
AND DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED
BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND,
THAT YOU MAY PROVE WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND
PERFECT WILL OF GOD."*

- THIS ISN'T CASUAL LANGUAGE.

THIS IS SACRIFICIAL LANGUAGE.

PAUL ISN'T GIVING ADVICE—HE'S ISSUING A **SUMMONS** TO THE FIRE.
AND THAT FIRE STARTS HERE... AT THE ALTAR OF CONSECRATION

THE ALTAR IS A PLACE OF CONSECRATION

- CONSECRATION MEANS FULL SURRENDER. IT'S NOT "SOME OF ME"—**IT'S ALL OF ME.**

PAUL DIDN'T JUST WRITE ABOUT SACRIFICE—HE LIVED AS ONE.

- **THE ALTAR DEMANDS DEATH BEFORE DESTINY.**

- THERE IS NO FIRE ON WHAT HASN'T FIRST BEEN LAID DOWN.
- "YOU CANNOT KINDLE A FIRE IN ANY OTHER HEART UNTIL IT IS BURNING IN YOUR OWN." — **AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO**
- **QUOTE:**

- *"IT IS NOT OUR BODIES GOD WANTS MOST—IT IS OUR WILLS. BUT THE WILL ALWAYS DRAGS THE BODY WITH IT."* — JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, 4TH CENTURY

TRANSITION: BUT THE ALTAR ISN'T JUST ABOUT WHAT DIES. **IT'S ABOUT WHO WE MEET THERE...**

THE ALTAR IS A PLACE OF COMMUNION

JOHN 17:3 — "THIS IS ETERNAL LIFE: TO KNOW YOU... AS THE ONE TRUE GOD"

- GOD DIDN'T DIE FOR OUR PERFORMANCE—HE DIED FOR **PRESENCE**.
- **WE WEREN'T SAVED JUST TO SERVE—WE WERE SAVED TO COMMUNE.**
- "UNION WITH CHRIST IS THE SOUL'S HIGHEST GLORY AND JOY." — **BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX**
- WE PROTECT OURSELVES FROM INTIMACY. **WE MASK OURSELVES FROM GOD.**
BUT **THE ALTAR IS WHERE HE INVITES US TO BE KNOWN AND STILL WANTED.**

TRANSITION: BUT COMMUNION WITHOUT **COVENANT** WON'T CARRY THE WEIGHT OF FIRE.

THE ALTAR IS A PLACE OF COVENANT

- THE ALTAR IS NOT CASUAL—
IT'S NOT A PLACE FOR SPIRITUAL FLIRTATION OR TEMPORARY EMOTION.
IT'S NOT A DATING SITE—IT'S A MARRIAGE ALTAR.
A PLACE OF TOTAL COMMITMENT, WHERE YOU DON'T COME TO TEST

THE WATERS,

YOU COME TO DIE TO YOURSELF—AND RISE IN HIM.

- IT IS WHERE HEAVEN'S ETERNAL "YES" IN CHRIST MEETS YOUR EARTHLY "I SURRENDER."

NOT A NEGOTIATION, BUT A UNION.

- ORIGEN SAID, "WHERE THE SACRIFICE IS, THERE GOD IS."
IN OTHER WORDS, GOD INHABITS SURRENDERED PLACES.
HE MEETS YOU WHERE YOU LAY IT ALL DOWN.
- IN COVENANT, YOU NO LONGER LIVE FOR YOUR OWN NAME—
YOU TAKE ON HIS NAME, HIS IDENTITY, HIS CAUSE.
YOU SURRENDER YOUR PAIN, YOUR PAST, YOUR PRIDE—
AND IN EXCHANGE, RECEIVE HIS HEALING, HIS WHOLENESS, HIS HOLINESS.
- THIS IS NOT A TRANSACTION; IT'S A TRANSFORMATION.
THE ALTAR IS NOT THE END OF DESIRE—IT'S WHERE TRUE DESIRE IS REFINED, CONSUMED, AND MADE ETERNAL.
- ROMANS 12:2 — "...BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND..."
- THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT BEHAVIOR—IT'S ABOUT BELONGING.

TRANSITION: AND WHERE THERE'S COVENANT, FIRE MUST FALL.

THE ALTAR IS A PLACE OF CONSUMING FIRE

HEBREWS 12:29 — "OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE."

- FIRE DOESN'T FALL ON CHARISMA—IT FALLS ON CONSECRATION.
- THE FIRE OF GOD ISN'T TO ENTERTAIN YOU—IT'S TO INVADE YOU.
- "LET YOUR HEART BE THE ALTAR AND YOUR PRAYER THE FIRE. GOD WILL CONSUME THE OFFERING." — GREGORY OF NYSSA

- WE WANT TRANSFORMATION WITHOUT COST.
BUT IF THERE'S NOTHING ON THE ALTAR—THERE WILL BE NO FIRE.
- ROMANS 8:26 — “THE SPIRIT INTERCEDES... WITH GROANINGS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS.”

TRANSITION: BUT THE FIRE ISN'T JUST FOR YOU—IT'S MEANT TO SEND YOU.

THE ALTAR IS A PLACE OF COMMISSIONING

ISAIAH 6 — “HERE AM I. SEND ME.”

- ISAIAH'S LIPS WERE TOUCHED BY FIRE—BUT ONLY AFTER HE WAS WRECKED BY **REVELATION**.
 - THE ALTAR CLEANSSES YOU... THEN IT **COMMISSIONS YOU**.
 - IDENTITY IS REVEALED AT THE ALTAR—AND ASSIGNMENT IS RELEASED.
- “THE ALTAR IS WHERE THE SPIRIT BIRTHS THE CALL AND SEALS THE SURRENDER.” — A.W. TOZER
- EPHESIANS 1:18 — “THAT THE EYES OF YOUR HEART MAY BE ENLIGHTENED...”

TRANSITION: BUT THAT KIND OF FIRE DOESN'T LIVE OFF MOMENTS—IT LIVES OFF RHYTHMS.

THE ALTAR IS A PLACE OF CONSISTENCY

MATTHEW 6:6 — “GO INTO YOUR ROOM... SHUT THE DOOR...”

- THE FIRE DOESN'T FALL ON THE ALTAR ONCE—IT MUST BE TENDED DAILY. THE SECRET PLACE ISN'T A LUXURY; IT'S A **LIFELINE**.

- JESUS DIDN'T SAY **IF YOU PRAY—HE SAID WHEN**. AND HE DIDN'T SAY *IN PUBLIC*. HE SAID *IN SECRET*.

- **THE SECRET PLACE IS WHERE REAL FIRE LIVES.**

- IT'S NOT IN THE SHOUT, THE SONG, OR THE STAGE. **IT'S IN THE SILENCE. THE STILLNESS. THE CONSISTENCY.**
- YOU DON'T STUMBLE INTO FIRE—YOU **SCHEDULE** IT.
YOU DON'T INHERIT DEEP WELLS—YOU **DIG** THEM.
YOU DON'T BURN WITH BORROWED OIL—YOU **CULTIVATE YOUR OWN**.

- **TRANSFORMATION ISN'T A SPARK—IT'S A SUSTAINED FLAME.**

- LET'S BE REAL—JESUS WAS PERFECT. SPOTLESS. SINLESS. FULLY GOD.
AND YET, HE OFTEN WITHDREW TO LONELY PLACES TO PRAY.
- **HE DIDN'T PRAY OUT OF WEAKNESS. HE PRAYED OUT OF DEPENDENCY.**
IF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, NEEDED THE SECRET PLACE...
HOW MUCH MORE DO WE?

- **LUKE 5:16** — *"BUT JESUS OFTEN WITHDREW TO LONELY PLACES AND PRAYED."*

MARK 1:35 — *"VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING... JESUS WENT OFF TO A SOLITARY PLACE, WHERE HE PRAYED."*

- THIS WASN'T RANDOM—IT WAS **RHYTHMIC**.
BEFORE MIRACLES, HE PRAYED.
AFTER CROWDS, HE PRAYED.
WHEN NO ONE WAS LOOKING—HE WAS PRAYING.

- **THE ALTAR IS NOT FUELED BY INTENSITY; IT'S FUELED BY CONSISTENCY.**

REVIVAL DOESN'T COME TO THE MOST GIFTED—IT COMES TO THE MOST FAITHFUL.

- **COLOSSIANS 3:2–3** — *"SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE... FOR YOU DIED, AND YOUR LIFE IS HIDDEN WITH CHRIST."*
- WHEN YOUR LIFE IS HIDDEN IN CHRIST, THE SECRET PLACE ISN'T OPTIONAL—IT'S **OXYGEN**.

THE SECRET PLACE IS NOT THE BACKUP PLAN—IT'S **THE BATTLE PLAN**.

- WE'VE GOTTEN SO GOOD AT PUBLIC FIRE, WE'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO TEND PRIVATE FLAME.
WE'VE GOT REVIVAL NIGHTS, BUT NO PRAYER MORNINGS.
WE'VE GOT SPIRITUAL HUNGER, BUT NO SACRED HABITS.
 - **PREP FOR CLOSING**
 - BUT TONIGHT—GOD IS CALLING US TO BUILD AGAIN.
TO SHUT THE DOOR.
TO SILENCE THE NOISE.
TO MAKE THE ALTAR NOT AN EVENT—BUT A **LIFESTYLE**.
 - “THE ALTAR OF PRAYER IS NOT A SPECIAL PLACE, BUT A HABITUAL HEART POSTURE.” — ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN
 - ...MEANING – PRAYER ISN'T JUST SOMETHING YOU DO AT A CHURCH SERVICE **OR IN A CRISIS**. IT'S A **CONTINUAL INNER ORIENTATION** TOWARD GOD. A HEART THAT LIVES BOWED LOW. A SOUL THAT STAYS TURNED TOWARD THE FLAME.
 - IT'S NOT ABOUT A LOCATION—**IT'S ABOUT A LIFESTYLE**.
 - AGAIN... **YOU DON'T VISIT THE ALTAR. YOU BECOME ONE.**
 - **OBEDIENCE LAYS YOU DOWN.**
 - **DEATH BREAKS YOU OPEN.**
 - **DEVOTION KEEPS YOU BURNING.**
 - THIS IS THE ALTAR LIFE. WHEN IT BECOME HOME & WHERE WE BIRTH REVIVAL.
 - FRESH BREATH. FRESH WIND. FRESH OIL. WHERE OLD BECOMES NEW AND WE TRANSFORM INTO OUR INTENDED IMAGE.
-

(QUE ADAM & WORSHIP TEAM) CLOSING:

ALTAR INVITATION: WHERE IS YOUR FIRE?

- FIREFIGHTERS HAVE A TERM THEY USE ON THE RADIO WHEN A BLAZE IS NO LONGER CONTAINED—WHEN IT’S BROKEN THROUGH WALLS, TAKEN THE ROOF, AND THERE’S NO PART OF THE STRUCTURE LEFT UNTOUCHED.
THEY SAY, “*THE BUILDING IS FULLY INVOLVED.*”
- THAT’S WHAT I BELIEVE GOD IS CALLING US TO TONIGHT.
NOT A FLICKER. NOT A FLARE-UP.
FULLY INVOLVED.
- **WHEN THE FIRE OF GOD TOUCHES YOUR LIFE—REALLY TOUCHES IT—IT DOESN’T JUST WARM YOU, IT CONSUMES EVERYTHING.**
ADDICTIONS BURN. SHAME BREAKS. PRIDE MELTS.
NOT BECAUSE YOU TRIED HARDER—BUT BECAUSE **THE FIRE OF HIS LOVE LEFT NOTHING UNTOUCHED.**
- THIS IS NOT BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION—IT’S A HOLY COMBUSTION.
AND...
- I HEAR HEAVEN SAYING TONIGHT:

“I WANT TO MAKE YOUR LIFE FULLY INVOLVED IN MY FIRE.”

- WILL YOU COME TO THE ALTAR AND LET HIM CONSUME IT ALL?

MAYBE YOUR ALTAR’S GROWN COLD.

MAYBE YOUR FIRE HAS FLICKERED UNDER COMFORT AND DISTRACTION.

MAYBE YOU’VE BEEN PERFORMING INSTEAD OF SURRENDERING.

BUT JESUS NEVER LEFT THE ALTAR. HE’S STILL CALLING. IF YOU’LL REBUILD THE ALTAR, HE’LL RELIGHT THE FLAME.

TONIGHT WE DECLARE

I’M HUNGRY FOR MORE OF HIM.

I DON’T WANT SECONDHAND FIRE.

I WANT MY OWN ALTAR.

I’M DONE WITH COMFORT.

I’M DONE WITH PERFORMANCE.

I WANT UNION.

I WANT FIRE.

I WANT JESUS.

