# Just Ask! — Delivery Transcript

**Luke 11:5–13 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, February 21, 2021** · *The Reward*

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Thank you for leading us. Are you glad the Lord is faithful? You glad the Lord is good? I know I am. It's been a trying week. Many of you lost power. Many of you— well, we all pretty much lost water unless you were one of the preppers among us, which if you are, come see me after the service. We need to talk. It's been a trying week, but I really am thankful that we get to worship together this morning, especially in this time in the Word, as we've been singing and now get to transition to a time where the Lord speaks to us through the Bible.

And I mean, I'm the one talking in a way, but really, if the Lord does what I hope he does, it's not me you're hearing but the voice of the Lord. And so let's turn our Bibles to Luke chapter 11, if you have one with you. If you don't have a Bible, the scripture should be up on the screen here in just a little bit. We've been in a series entitled The Reward, and really the reward in life is not something God gives. We're thankful that God is good and that He's faithful and certainly when we pray and God answers our prayer, that is obviously a reward in life.

But when Jesus talks about getting into the closet in secret, and our Father who sees in secret will reward us, the reward is not necessarily something God does or some prayer God answers. The reward is God Himself. And one encounter with the living God can change your life. One encounter with God can change our church. And when the Spirit of God falls and the Lord really moves in a special way, He can accomplish more in one day or one moment than incremental organization as a church can accomplish in decades. Fifty years, we'd still be trying to accomplish what the Lord could accomplish in one day.

And so we've been looking at the scripture of what does that look like when God comes down, when he reveals himself in that kind of way. What does revival require? What precedes revival and this refreshing and receiving the reward of God himself? And this morning we're going to be in Luke chapter 11 as we take this theme a little bit further. And

honestly, it's one verse that I want us to camp out on. We're going to read the whole section and put it in its context, but this one verse is a verse that I really wish every single person in our church would memorize.

Or if you're not one of those memorizer types of people, at least commit it to memory where you're vaguely familiar with it so that the truth contained in this verse is something you carry with you day in and day out. It's an unbelievable promise from the Lord to us about how to receive his presence and his power in our life on a day-by-day basis, how to live with this reward that we've been talking about over the last couple of weeks. So let's pick it up in Luke chapter 11, verse 1.

It's essentially Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer. And he gives the Lord's Prayer a little bit differently, but then he gives a parable on how to pray the Lord's Prayer and then why we should pray that prayer in that way. Let's pick it up in chapter 11, verse 1. A couple of things I want to point out just right off the front. It says that "Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.'" Now I think what's interesting, you've got Jesus praying in a certain place.

I've always talked about in your devotional life you need a time and a place and a plan. If that was true of the Lord Jesus, it's certainly got to be true of us. And not only did he have these times when he would get away to pray, his prayers were so powerful and so meaningful that his disciples, when they watched the way that Jesus prayed and they watched what happened when Jesus prayed, they said to themselves, I want that in me. They never asked, Jesus, teach us to perform miracles. They never said, Jesus, teach us to cast out demons, although I would want a course on that.

I don't feel comfortable in that. And yet they knew how to pray. They'd been praying. They were committed Jews, but they wanted to pray like Jesus prayed. And so he said, I want you when you pray to pray this way. And so verses 2 to 4, he teaches, this is in your notes, Jesus teaches us what to pray. He teaches us what to pray, and it's really summarized in that first line, "Father, hallowed be your name." He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'" Now if you memorize the other Lord's Prayer, you'd notice this one's a lot shorter. So you go, why didn't I memorize that one first? So maybe you're thinking that. All the essentials are basically there. You got the first part talking about the kingdom of God and the name of God, and then this bottom part with the kind of menial realities of life, of daily bread and forgiveness and protection from temptation.

And we talked about that last week, so if you want to listen to that message you can. I'm more interested in what Jesus does after this, after he gives them the content of what to pray. He tells them how to pray, which I think is instructive for us. He says in verse 5, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'?"

Will that friend not "answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'"? But I tell you, verse 8, "though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs." Now that's just a 10-letter word for consistency, this prevailing request, kind of like a kid who won't let you alone when he wants a glass of milk at the end of the night.

Can I have a glass of milk? Can I have a glass of milk? Can I have a glass of milk? He just pesters and pesters and pesters until you finally say, I heard you fine, I'm going. I'm going. That's impudence. That's this kind of boldness, this kind of— without gall, I got no shame in my game, kind of just give me what I need, give me what I need now. Because of that kind of attitude, this friend will get up and give him what he wants. Not because he's his friend, but because of that.

Then Jesus says, I want you to pray like that. Look at verse 9. "I tell you, ask"— you ask— "and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened." So the point of the parable is obviously to pray with persistency, to be consistent. Don't just pray once and I'm done. If you have a need, you need a breakthrough from your heavenly father, you have something with which if this does not happen, then nothing else is going to happen— don't be discouraged.

Just because God seems to say no in the moment, don't let that be the final word. Be consistent. Be persistent. Prevail in confident prayer before your heavenly Father. And I think that's the point for a couple of different reasons. One, he uses three different words to say the same thing. Ask, seek, knock. He uses them, and if you're looking at this in the original languages, they're what's called a present-tense verb. And in Greek, a present tense oftentimes meant continual action. So it's like this idea of keep on asking. Ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking.

And then I think it points to prevailing prayer because he says them in verse 9, and then he says the same words again in verse 10, and the words build an intensity. First you start by asking. If asking doesn't work, you start seeking. If seeking doesn't work, you start knocking. And so this idea is just keep on keeping on, keeping on until the breakthrough comes. That's

how we've got to pray. Then Jesus in the remaining verses tells us why we should pray in that way. And that's really the point that I want us to focus on this morning.

Verses 1 to 4 tell us what to pray. Verses 5 to 10 tell us how to pray. Verses 11 to 13 tell us why. The reason, Jesus says, is because "what father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" Obvious answer is no good father would do that. So "if you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

That's the verse I want every person in our church to commit to memory. I wish you could live with this verse on the top of your mind, day in and day out. If a good dad, an earthly dad who's evil, meaning you're sinful, you're not perfect like God is perfect, if you know how to give good gifts to your children, as imperfect as you are, then how much more so does the Heavenly Father, who is the epitome of Fatherhood, who is the perfection of all truth, goodness, and beauty, how much more so would our Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

Now that kind of throws people for a loop. What do you mean, the Holy Spirit? I'm praying for a new house. I'm praying for a new car. I don't need the Holy Spirit. And yet Jesus is saying, when you talk about prayer, you want to pray the way I pray? You want breakthrough prayer. You want prayer that creates a communion with God that's unique and special to what you've seen between me and my Father. You want prayer that God answers, then you need prayer that is focused on the kingdom of God, the hallowing of God's name.

You need prayer that takes your mundane realities of daily food and forgiveness of sin and protection from temptation, that all of those are targeted towards the kingdom of God advancing in your life and the name of God being hallowed in your life. If you pray that kind of prayer with persistency and keep on keeping on, you need to know you have a Father in heaven who loves to answer that prayer by giving you the Holy Spirit. Really, the Holy Spirit is the way that God answers all the petitions in the Lord's Prayer.

It's through the Holy Spirit that the name of God is hallowed in our hearts. It's through the Holy Spirit that the kingdom of God advances on the earth as it is in heaven. It's through the Holy Spirit that we receive forgiveness of sin. Conversion, conviction, repentance, all of that is motivated and prompted by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is the presence of Christ that walks alongside of us, giving us provision for the things that we need. It is the Spirit of God that enables us to resist temptation and to grow in sanctification and holiness.

The Father loves to give the Holy Spirit, so pray persistently. The key takeaway, the point of the whole section, is that we should persist in prevailing confident prayer to God for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit because He's a good Father. We are his children, meaning we

are dependent upon him. We cannot do it in ourselves. We don't have a Holy Spirit button that we can push to get a fresh dispensation of the Holy Spirit. That is something only God can give, and he only gives it when we ask.

But when we ask, he loves to answer that prayer. He loves to give the Holy Spirit to people who will ask him for it. So what I want to do with the time we have left is to try to convince you why we need the Holy Spirit. And to persuade you that there is a direct connection between a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in your life and in my life and in our church. There's a connection between a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit and prayer. Not just any prayer, not just— what do they call them— breath prayers or minute prayers.

Persistent, dedicated, confident prayer to God as a good father who wants to give the Holy Spirit. I'm going to show you this in the Old Testament. If you look through the Old Testament, every time there's a spiritual renewal in the Old Testament, there's a connection between the spiritual renewal that takes place and a season or a time of intense prevailing prayer. You see it in Joshua 24. He has led the Israelites into the new promised land. It was a season of blessing and plenty, and as a result, many people drifted away from the Lord.

They got spiritually sick and apathetic. And so Joshua was trying to renew the spiritual vitality of the people of God. And before that happened, it says in 24, verse 1 of the book of Joshua that he gathered the tribes, the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel, "and they presented themselves before God." That's Old Testament speak for they got together and prayed. Basically saying, Lord, here we are. We know that we're in a mess. We need you to do what only you can do. We need you to have a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

And because they did that, the covenant was renewed. There was a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit and God's people were revived. You see the same thing in the book of Judges. Actually, you see the judges over and over and over again. God's people do what's right in their own eyes. They get in a bad place, spiritually dry, spiritually in the desert. Then they pray to God to give a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit with a spirit of desperation and dependency. God raises up a champion who leads them into that new season of renewal and refreshing.

You see it in the dedication of the temple when Solomon— you see this verse quoted all the time, the "if my people who are called by my name." How many of you have seen a poster with that on it somewhere? "If my people who are called by my name"— it's kind of like a name-it-claim-it. All we got to do is get together and pray, and then boom, we're going to get a lot of rain. And actually we did get some rain because of that, but is that what that's talking about?

Well, this is when Solomon was dedicating the temple. He's got this unbelievable prayer of, God, would you rend the heavens? Would you fill this place with your presence? But he knows as he's praying this prayer that the people are spiritually dry. The people are spiritually apathetic. The people are disconnected. And so he reminds them, if we want God to fill this place, my people who are called by my name have to humble themselves. They have to pray, seek my face, turn from their wicked ways, and then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land.

"Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place." Now, that prayer prayed in what place? That was the temple. We don't have a temple anymore, all right? We don't pray to the temple in Jerusalem, there is no temple in Jerusalem. We know from the New Testament, Jesus is the temple. We pray to Jesus, we pray in Jesus' name. So this is not some verse we can name and claim and apply to ourselves because it was a specific promise to a specific people, but the same God who answered that prayer is the same God who lives today.

And when we pray in Jesus' name and we humble ourselves in Jesus' name and we cry out in desperation, Jesus, would you grant a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit— He is faithful. When we are humble and dependent and crying out in desperation for that, He is faithful to give it because the Father loves to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask, but we have to ask. That's the point. Two more things. First Kings chapter 18, you've got this contest between Elijah and the people who had drifted off into worshiping Baal, who was an Old Testament god.

So they had this contest. Let's see which God answers our prayers. So the people who are worshipping Baal were praying for Baal to answer this prayer, and then Elijah got over there, and after they had failed to see their God demonstrate power and do what he said he was going to do. Elijah prays. First, before he prays, he gets all the wood. He says, drench down all the wood with water. Make it as impossible as possible for God to answer what I'm about to pray. And then when all the wood is drenched in water, he prays, God, would you come down and burn up this wood to demonstrate you are who you say you are?

And the Lord answered the prayer, the fire came down and burnt up the wood. And as a result of that season of prayer, that act of prayer, the Lord revived the hearts of the people of Israel and they turned from worshiping the Baals. You see the same thing in the book of Nehemiah after they erect the wall. They have a season of covenant renewal, and that covenant renewal process is preceded by intense, prevailing, confident prayer for God to pour out the Holy Spirit. Every spiritual awakening— here's the point— every spiritual awakening in the Old Testament is preceded by a season of dedicated, intense prayer for God to move.

He doesn't move if we don't ask. That's the point. Same thing in the New Testament. In the New Testament there is a connection between prayer and the Holy Spirit. You see this especially in Luke's Gospel when Jesus is baptized. None of the other gospels mention this, but in Luke chapter 3, when Jesus is baptized, it says that the Holy Spirit descends like a dove. But before the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, Luke points out, Jesus "had been baptized and was praying." It was as he was praying that the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form.

Same thing: Luke, who also wrote the book of Acts. Jesus has been crucified, buried, he's risen from the grave. He's ascended into heaven. He tells the disciples before he ascends into heaven, wait for the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes, you're going to be empowered to be my witnesses— Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. So wait until you get the Holy Spirit. So it says that the disciples of Jesus were waiting, and they were waiting in the upper room. And while they're up there in the upper room, what were they doing?

This is Acts chapter 1, verse 14: "All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers." In other words, the whole congregation was getting together to pray. Because the Holy Spirit didn't come unless and until they prayed. There's a connection between prayer and a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in your life. What happens in Acts chapter 2? The Holy Spirit falls like tongues of fire. 3,000 people get saved in a day. It's this unbelievable birth of the church, unbelievable move of God.

Birthed out of a prayer meeting. And then you get to Acts chapter 4. We don't know how many years transpire, probably a good number of years. The church is exploding. They are moving like gangbusters. The religious establishment is trying to wipe them out. There's religious persecution, there's political persecution, Peter and John[1] get arrested, they get beaten for the cause of Christ, they get threatened with their lives. And instead of shutting up, they say, we're going to be glad to suffer for Christ. You're not going to shut us up unless you kill us.

And they go and attend a prayer meeting. It says in Acts chapter 4, verse 31— right after they had been arrested, they go into this prayer meeting, "and when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness." There is a connection between a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in your life and your prayer. There's a connection between you being willing to ask for the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit being given.

It's not something you say, well, God knows I need it. Or I have it in my life. I'm a Christian, so I know he's in there somewhere and I just got to make do with what I got. We all know you can have the Holy Spirit but not experience the fullness of the Spirit because of whatever

reason in your life you've gotten tired, you've gotten spiritually apathetic, there's sin in your life. But you have a heavenly father who is delighted to give you a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit if you would just ask.

Every major spiritual awakening in the Bible— I could point to this in history if we had time. Every spiritual awakening is preceded by a season of intense prayer. I love what Martyn Lloyd-Jones says. He says, "The inevitable and constant preliminary to revival has always been a thirst." Mmm. I was thirsty. "Has always been a thirst for God." That really underwhelmed the point I was making, but "the inevitable and constant preliminary to revival has always been a thirst for God." It's true. And look at what he says. He says, "a living thirst for a knowledge of the living God, and a longing and a burning desire to see Him acting, manifesting Himself and His power, rising, and scattering His enemies."

What happens to us though is God blesses us. We have a season of plenty. We have a season of wealth and prosperity. And then we get high on the hog, we get a little bit entitled. We presume upon the grace of God. There's nothing like money in the bank and things going well in your life for you to slip into what's called the flesh, where instead of living by the Spirit of God and the power of God and with the presence of God, you begin to kind of separate yourself from God because he costs too much, he requires too much.

I'm going to do my own thing in my own way. Put God in my Sunday box and put the rest of my life in my every other day box. And over time you drift away from the Lord and maybe, yeah, you're still getting things done. You're still going to church, you're still doing the basics and the bare minimum. It's kind of a discount approach to Christianity, but you have no power, you have no joy, you have no peace, you have no real sense of God in your heart or God in your life or God moving through your life.

Our problem is we have to get ourselves into a place where we realize just how desperate we really are. As Lloyd-Jones says, at first we persist in thinking that we can set the situation right if we just write a new book or preach some better sermons, or start some new mission work, start some new program, and that will stem the tide of the enemy, but we realize at long last it's not working. He's talking about preachers right there. Preachers have this just like every other person has this. You can sense that there's a powerlessness in the church.

You can sense that there's something off. Something's dead spiritually. So you think, well, let's just start this new program or let's get a new preacher. Hopefully nobody says that here, but we need better sermons, we need better music, we need better programming, we need better X, Y, Z. And we think maybe that'll stem the tide, maybe that'll turn the corner. To get out of preacher world, you think to yourself, well, maybe we just need another marriage study, maybe we need another book on marriage. Maybe we need to see a different counselor.

Maybe we need another book on parenting. Maybe we need to read this magazine, do what this article says. Maybe we need, you know, you got trouble with your son or daughter, you got problems in the workplace, and think, I need to read another leadership book, or I need to improve in this, that, or the other thing. And those things are helpful as far as they go, and I'm all about programs, and you got to have programs, and I'm all about that, but that's not the problem. If there's death, if there's spiritual death in your life, in your marriage, in your career, in your workplace, if there's spiritual lifelessness, the only one who can bring a resurrection to that death is the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's God Himself. He's the one who plants the flag and says, no, we're going this other direction. You can read all the books you want to read. You're never going to move unless there's a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus is saying it's available to you. You have a heavenly father who wants to give it to you, but you've got to ask. And not just any asking, not I deserve it, God, you know I need it. A kind of asking that is humble, that is desperate, that comes to the Father and says, I have nothing to give my friend.

He's come from a long journey. I have nothing to give him. And I know you're a good father, and I know I'm 100% loved as your child because of what Jesus Christ has done for me. And so not because I deserve it, not because I've earned it, but because you're a good God who wants to give good gifts to your children, because you want your kingdom to come, because you want my son or daughter to come to faith in Christ because you want the church to be a beautiful bride, would you give us the Holy Spirit?

Would you grant a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Would you resurrect my lifeless marriage? Would you bring home my wayward child? And you have a father in heaven who loves to answer that prayer. The crazy thing is, it's not something you can just plan or organize, though. It has to be birthed out of a time of need, which is why I really believe the Lord has invited us to experience this unique thing. 2020 was, you know, tough. It was hard on a lot of people. 2021 hasn't been too much better.

We've been stripped of our confidence in so many other things. The things that we used to think would get us through didn't get us through. Even if you haven't been stripped of everything, you've at least been shocked into seeing that the things that you were depending on aren't that dependable. And what an opportunity for us to be reminded of how helpless we really are and how faithful God really is. And to humble ourselves to pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit and for us to see something special from the Lord.

I love what Martyn Lloyd-Jones says. I've been reading his book on revival. He says the Lord can accomplish more in a moment than 50 years of incremental organization can accomplish. The Lord can accomplish more in a moment. One encounter is all it takes. And so the question is, will you pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Are you to that place yet? Have you gotten to the place where you say, I don't need another book, I don't

need another program, I don't need another X, Y, or Z. Those things are great as far as they go, but I need a resurrection.

I need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I need God to do something only God can do. I'm at my wit's end. Are you there as an individual? Are we there as a church? Will we see God do something as a result? What I want to do with the rest of our time is to tell you why I think we need this. You know, the church has money in the bank. We, as of last week, are finally meeting budget. Hallelujah. Thank you, Lord. We could coast and go as long as we want to go and probably you know ride this thing out for another 50 years.

But there are things that the Holy Spirit does that only the Holy Spirit can do. And I promise you would much rather be a part of a church, or have the kind of life, in which the Spirit of God is moving than the life in which the Spirit of God is not. The first thing the Spirit of God does, this list, by the way, is not original to me. I got this from J. D. Greear, but they're all biblical. So first thing the Spirit of God does is he brings conviction of sin and empowers genuine repentance.

This is from John 16, verse 8. Jesus is promising the Holy Spirit. He says, when the Holy Spirit comes, he will convict— "he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." It's the Holy Spirit of God that makes sin taste bitter in your life. Otherwise, we all know sin tastes pretty good. But it's the Holy Spirit who says, no, it's got a bitter pill. It's a bitter end. It's the Holy Spirit that opens up our eyes to the beauty of Christ and the sufficiency of his righteousness. It's the Holy Spirit that makes judgment feel imminent.

This is why, by the way— maybe you know somebody who sat in church their whole life. They never became a Christian. Week in and week out, you know, you'd listen to a sermon and go, man, that was the most amazing sermon. They sit there with their arms crossed and, you know, grunting. They're only there because wife's dragging them there or husband's dragging them there. Then one day it's like a light bulb comes on. They run down the aisle. They cannot get saved fast enough. And you think to yourself, what in the world happened to that person?

The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicted them because the Holy Spirit is the one who brings about conviction of sin. He's the one who creates genuine repentance. In fact, one of the signs that you as a Christian are full of the Spirit is that you will be quick to repent. You will be quick to keep your list short of sin in your life. You'll be quick to confess sin. It's a sign that you're full of the Spirit. The second thing the Holy Spirit does is he fills our heart with awe and fear of the Lord.

What I mean by awe, you have a sense of awe of the Lord when your knowledge about God is swallowed up by an experience of God. Knowledge about God is swallowed up by an experience of God, of his presence. It shifts from academic and intellectual to spiritual and

emotional and personal. God's not just an idea. He's not just a theory out there somewhere. He is palatable. He's whatever that word is. He's there. He's concrete. He's right in your midst. We've lost that. We've lost the fear of the Lord. We've lost an awe of the Lord.

God is awesome. You see this in the early church in Acts chapter 2. After the Spirit of God falls, you have this little summary statement of what the church looks like. They "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Circle that there. The prayers. "And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles." They were just enraptured by the presence of God. The Holy Spirit is the one that does that. We've all attended church services in which the Spirit of God came in a special way and you were wrapped up in the presence of God.

It wasn't something I just know, something I experienced. The third thing the Holy Spirit does is he transforms your appetites. He transforms your appetites. When it comes to physical taste, we see this all the time, how people can go from hating the way something tastes to loving it. They say that there are people out there who used to not like ketchup, but then they love ketchup. That's never happened to me, but I heard it's out there somewhere. To me, one of the things that changed: I used to not like the smell or the taste of curry.

But then we went on a mission trip to India and guess what there is to eat? Nothing but curry. It's curry everywhere. Every dish is curry, and Pizza Hut, which has curry sauce. Ugh, it's curry, curry, curry. But I tell you what, after a week in India, curry's not so bad. I kind of like the curry. It's not that bad. Well, what happens in your physical taste spiritually takes place through the Holy Spirit. Philippians chapter 2 says that we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God— "it is God who works in you, both to will and to work," which means the Spirit of God changes your appetites.

People talk about Christianity in terms of it's a have-to religion, like I don't want to be a Christian because then I'd have to not have sex till I get married, or then I have to go to church all the time. I have to, have to, this, that, or the other thing. But that's not what Christianity is because Christianity teaches that when you become a Christian, the Spirit of God lives in your heart and he changes your wanter. He changes the things that you desire. Now you want to go to church.

Now you want to stay pure sexually. Now you want to be generous. You have a desire to be with the people of God. You have a desire to love the things that God loves and to hate the things that God hates. That's something that the Holy Spirit does in your life. And if you're to the point in your Christian life where you're struggling to obey the Lord, you're struggling with following God's will for your life. And it's not some big season of suffering, but just regular acts of obedience. And you're finding it very difficult.

That's a symptom that the Spirit of God is not fresh, that you're not walking in the fullness of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God changes the things that we desire. He changes, he's the one that creates the change of mind that's required for repentance to take place. Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of direction. How do you get your mind changed? It's changed by the Holy Spirit. He's the one that births a desire for love and joy and peace, and patience, and kindness and goodness and gentleness and self-control and all of the fruit of the Spirit is birthed in us by the Holy Spirit, which is why we need a fresh outpouring of the Spirit of God in our life and in our church.

Two more things. The Holy Spirit is the person who manifests God's supernatural power. 1 Corinthians chapter 14 talks about a Spirit-filled church. What does a Spirit-filled church look like? And one of the things that is characteristic of a Spirit-filled church is miraculous displays of God's power. One of the reasons I'm wanting us to have these Monday prayer meetings is because I'm convinced if we will seek the Lord and really pray in faith, that he may demonstrate his power in supernatural, miraculous ways. That people could have sickness and cancer or disease of some sort, and that when people pray, we see God healing in miraculous ways in response to that faith and that prayer.

1 Corinthians 14 talks about a guy, an unbeliever, who walks into a worship service of a Spirit-filled church. And the people in that church are so full of the Spirit of God that they have this supernatural insight into what's going on in that person's life. And the words that they said to him and the prayers that they prayed for him, he was all of a sudden struck by the fact that you people are God's people. God is in this place. It says that he falls to his face and he worships God and declares "that God is really among you."

Don't you want to be part of a church like that? Where people come in, people who are unbelievers, who are outsiders, and they say, man, there's something special here. God is here in a way that he's not in other places. Supernatural displays of power. Then the last thing the Holy Spirit does is he empowers the church through the giving of gifts. We call these spiritual gifts. It's a unique gift that the Holy Spirit gives to every Christian. And here's what this looks like when it's working the way it's supposed to work and you belong to a church that's full of the Holy Spirit, then everywhere you go in that church, it's like you're bumping into Jesus Christ Himself.

I go to my small group, I put out something I'm going through, and the words I hear back are the wisdom of Jesus Christ. I know it's coming through that person or that person, but it's actually the Lord because they're full of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's actually speaking through them and is encouraging me and giving me wisdom and helping me navigate this very confusing time in my life. Or you're in the hallway and you got a little discouraged look on your face and someone puts their arm around you and prays for you and the way that they pray the words that they pray, it's like they read your mind because they're full of the Spirit

of God and they were able to encourage you with the very encouragement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so everywhere you go in this church, you're bumping into Jesus. Wouldn't that be amazing? Wouldn't you want to belong to a church like that? Where every person you bump into is so full of the Holy Spirit, it's like you bumped into Jesus Christ Himself. That's what the Holy Spirit does in the church. That's why he's given us spiritual gifts. And when every member is doing its part and we're all full of the Spirit, that's what the church looks like and feels like, which is why we need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

But He'll only come if we ask. It's one thing to know we need it. It's one thing for us to possess it in a general sense as Christians. But for a fresh outpouring, we have to ask for it. And not just any asking, but a childlike desperation. A childlike confidence and a childlike persistence. Like a kid bothering their dad for a glass of milk before they go to bed. Father in heaven, would you pour out your Spirit in this place? Would you pour out your Spirit in my life? We're starting these prayer meetings on Monday nights for this reason, to have a whole service dedicated to persisting and prevailing prayer to our Heavenly Father.

I really get the sense that God is inviting us to press into this arena as a church family. And every single person in our church has as much or as little of God as we want to have. And he's offering us more if we'll step into it. But here's what it's going to cost. Every spiritual renewal is characterized by prayer, but it's also characterized by repentance. It's characterized by a change of mind that produces a change of direction. And even now, as I've been preaching, the Holy Spirit may have been moving in your life to say, this is available to you, but this has to go.

This has to change. Maybe you're watching this online and you're not a Christian, and so the Spirit of God is inviting you to be part of the family of God. But he requires repentance. This has to go. You have to stop being the boss of your life. You have to stop trying to save yourself. You have to stop trying to deliver yourself from these functional hells through this thing or that thing or the other thing. These functional saviors you've gotten for yourself, whether it's money or drugs or sex or whatever the case may be.

If you'll repent, if you'll humble yourself, pray, turn from your wicked way, he'll hear from heaven. And he can heal you and he can save you. And as an unbeliever, if you're doing this for the first time, this is what the Christian life looks like day in and day out. And so what I want us to do as we close is to spend some time allowing the Lord to search our hearts for any area that needs repentance. And to bring that before the Lord and to confess and say, Lord, would you cleanse me and heal me?

The second thing I want us to do before we take the Lord's Supper is I want to really challenge you and invite you to join me in asking the Lord for a fresh outpouring of the Holy

Spirit. I love our church. I don't think our church is dead by any means. But we are not where we could be. We're not where God wants us to be. He's inviting us to take a step towards something better, something more. But we've got to humble ourselves and be hungry, spiritually hungry enough to ask for it.

And so I want to challenge you now as we respond to the Lord to pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And I want to challenge you in the coming weeks and months, because this isn't something we're just going to do today and we're done. Prevailing, confident prayer, childlike faith, persisting until God answers the prayer. Keep on asking. Keep on knocking, keep on seeking. And in that process, God will purify our hearts, He will bring things to mind, He will expose sin that needs to be repented of. He will expose areas of idolatry, areas of spiritual compromise areas of apathy.

And day by day, month by month, he will begin to purify and strengthen and renew. And before you know it, you'll be in the midst of a personal revival. And when enough of us do that important work, we'll begin to see the Lord do something very meaningful and special in our church. And maybe, just maybe, God will decide, I'm going to take this people at this time. And I'm going to do something special. And I'm going to do more in a moment than what 50 years of incremental organization could accomplish.

I'm going to demonstrate my power in a special way. But it's only going to happen if we ask. And so with your heads bowed and every eye closed— those of you watching online, right there where you're seated in your room or living room or truck or wherever you are, respond to the Lord by allowing him to bring to the surface any hidden sin, anything you've been trying to hide from yourself. Just say, Lord, would you show me? Show me your glory. Show me my sinfulness. Show me your glory. Show me my sinfulness.

Some of you know immediately what it is. You walked into the room feeling conviction over it. And the Holy Spirit's inviting you to repent of that right now to make today the day where you leave it at the foot of the cross and you don't pick it up again. Some of you may have been like me and you've grown cynical. Maybe you're just tired, you're worn out. You've lost a vision of what could be or what should be in your life. You've been doing the status quo, you've been coasting. But you've gotten to a place where it's just not what you know the Lord wants for you.

And so would you ask the Lord to birth in you a spirit of prayer, of confident, prevailing prayer? Say, Lord, I want to desire you. I want to be aware of my need for you. Would you open up my eyes? And if the Lord so moves, the last thing I want you to consider responding to the Lord, would you ask him for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in your life? And would you ask him for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our church? If you're a member of our church, especially if you're a leader, small group leader, a deacon.

Lord, we want something more. We want a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Peter and James"; the apostles arrested in Acts 4 and then released to the prayer meeting of Acts 4:23–31 were Peter and John. Source: Acts 4:1–3, 13, 19, 23 (ESV). ↩