Touched By God — Delivery Transcript

Daniel 10:1–14 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, February 28, 2021 · *The Reward*

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If you have your Bible, we're in Daniel chapter 10 this morning, so you can turn it there. And we're in the middle of a series, or actually we're near the end of a series entitled The Reward. And the song we just sang is actually a good example of those times in your life where you're in need of a miracle and only God can do what it is that you need done. And so you pray and pray and pray and then God works a miracle and he really does prove himself to be this way maker, miracle worker, light in the darkness, this amazing, amazing provider.

And it's easy in the Christian life to focus more sometimes on the way making of God than it is the way maker. It's easy to focus more on the gifts of God than the giver. The deliverance instead of the deliverer. And so what we've been doing in this series is trying to orient our heart towards God Himself, not the things that God does, the prayers that God answers, but rather God Himself, because He is the reward. He is the true prize. As the psalmist says, "Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you."

I'm not praising your steadfast love. I'm praising you, because if I get you, I get all of those things. And we've looked at different encounters that people have had with God in the Old Testament. We've looked at this idea of prayer from Jesus in the New Testament and how to pray in a way where we experience the presence of God. And this morning we're going to look at another encounter between God and a person in the Old Testament. And the title of the message is "Touched by God." And I really believe given some of the things that we're facing as a nation, some of the things we're facing as a culture, and even in this local church, some of the things that we as individual believers are facing in our lives.

As a pastor who knows somewhat about what things are going on in the lives of— not a majority, but I'd say a good number of people in our church are going through very difficult challenges in their life. And in order for us to overcome some of those challenges, we need a fresh touch from God. We need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the life of our church.

If you think— what is this, February 28th? So we're about to get to March. Was it March— what— that we shut down last year?

Does anybody remember March 16? So it hasn't even been 12 months yet since the world changed with the shutdown of COVID-19 and the impacts of COVID, it has crippled so many people. And while in Texas we haven't felt it as severely as other places in the United States, there are still people who have lost their livelihoods, who've lost their businesses, who have lost their jobs and income, and they have been crippled by COVID-19. We've been locked in our homes, many of us for countless numbers of months. Some of you are watching this online because you're still locked in your home out of wisdom because you're high risk or for whatever reason.

We have been forced to watch unhealthy amounts of television and Netflix and Hulu and streaming services. I don't know what else to watch, so I'm watching the kind of junk movies I don't even like watching just because I'm out of movies and everything else. And not just that, but we have been exposed to kinds of violence and murder that is just not common. Leading up to 2020, we saw viral videos of people being murdered like Ahmaud Arbery. We saw killings of George Floyd put on repeat over and over and over and over again on social media and cable news.

We have seen cities destroyed, burned to the ground. We have seen racial divisions in our country re-inflamed, and we are now more divided than I have ever seen us be before as a nation. Of course I'm only 35 years old, so, you know, it might have been worse in the sixties, and many would say that it was, but there are challenges. Our politicians have divided us. And not only that, the reason they were able to divide us is because we have been consumed with politics. Politics has overtaken us like a cancer.

Everything is political now. You can't get away from it. There used to be safe havens like sports or other things where you could kind of have a conversation with somebody and it not turn political, but now everything is political and because everything is political, we're divided because our politicians and our two-party system has effectively not only said, okay, we disagree with that side, and that side sees things differently, but that side is evil, that side is bad because they disagree with my view. We have been consumed by conspiracy theories even in the church.

Christians are getting caught up in all kinds of conspiracy theories. I don't know how many new prophets I've seen on YouTube who are predicting the end of the world and here's how and here's why, and most of them got it wrong on most of the things that they were predicting. We are in a pickle. And then even people in the church, you can point to the culture all day long, and there's a lot of things in the culture that are bad. But even Christians in the church have drifted from a walk with God and communion with God in a meaningful spirituality where they are in communion with God and walking in obedience to his designs

and they have separated themselves from God, they have separated themselves from the church.

It might have started out innocently enough, you know, you shut the church down. We said the church is not essential, and as a result of that, we are reaping the demonic influence of shutting the church down. And many people have not been able to find their way back. And it's just easier to sleep in on Sundays. It's just easier to not watch. It's just easier to live my life separated from God. I like the pleasures of a godless lifestyle. I like the independence of not having to do what I think God wants me to do.

And it was fun at first and it was fine at first, but now you're starting to feel the brokenness and spiritual devastation that comes from doing life your way instead of God's way. And many people, and even in our own congregation, are reaping the whirlwind of sowing to the wind. So we need, when I say we need a fresh touch from God, I mean we need a fresh touch from God. Culturally, nationally. And even at a local level in our local church, we need a fresh touch from God. And so what we're going to do this morning is look at an individual who found himself in an eerily similar set of circumstances.

He is a guy by the name of Daniel. You guys remember him from the story in the Old Testament about Daniel in the lions' den? Anybody hear that one growing up? Daniel in the lions' den. Daniel was taken captive by the Babylonian Empire at a very young age. He was probably around 12 to 13 years old. The Babylonian Empire, the way that they would do it is they would overtake a nation and then they would take the cream of the crop of that culture, and they would take those people and put them in positions of privilege and power in the Babylonian Empire, and they would cause them to assimilate into becoming Babylonian.

So they take Daniel and some other Jewish boys and they try to assimilate them into becoming Babylonians instead of Jews. They give them new names. Daniel's name was changed to Belteshazzar,[1] and they try to get them to eat the fine meats and the diet of Babylon. They try to get them to worship the Babylonian gods, and many of the Jews who were taken captive by Babylon, assimilated into the culture and became one with the culture, but not Daniel. He remained steadfast. He was faithful to God. You talk about the Daniel fast.

In early chapters of Daniel, he gets thrown into the lions' den because he refuses to pray to King Darius.[2] And when we meet Daniel in our chapter, Daniel chapter 10, he's about 90 years old. Okay, he is an old man. I said that in the early service and somebody came up and said, I'll take offense to the fact you said 90 years old is old. And I was like, it is old, brother. I'm sorry. I mean that's old. That's probably why he wasn't going back to Jerusalem because he couldn't like move his limbs.

He's so old. So he's an old man, he's been faithful to the Lord, but he is crushed in his spirit, and the reason why he is so crushed is because he sees the spiritual apathy and devastation of his people. The people of God who were supposed to worship God no longer— they didn't even have a desire to return to God. A new king comes into town, Nebuchadnezzar is gone; King Cyrus is on the throne. He's the Persian king of the Persian Empire. He's kind of taken over things at that time in the chronology of things.

He says to the Jews, You can go back to Jerusalem, you can go back to the temple, you can worship your God and only a handful of the Jews said, okay, we'll go. Everybody else said, no, we like it in Babylon. We like the American dream. We like the pleasures of a godless society. We like life separated from the church. We like doing life on our own terms in our own way. It's better this way. We like the independence. We like the freedom. And Daniel can sense the devastation that's about to come because of that spiritual rebellion.

And so he cries out to God for a fresh touch. He said, God, will you help us? Will you come through? Will you deliver us as a people? And what he does in preparation for this fresh touch from God, I think is instructive for us as we pray. A similar thing because we find ourselves in a similar situation. So let's pick it up in Daniel chapter 10, starting in verse 1. You get that kind of summary statement in verse 1. King Cyrus is on the throne. "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar.[3] And the word was true, and it was a great conflict.

And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision." So Daniel's going to receive a vision. We're not going to talk about the vision today because, number one, it's really long, really complicated, and nobody agrees on what it means. Number two, we're focused on how he got to that place where he did receive the vision, and I want us to look at that more than I do the vision itself. If you want a preacher who will tell you all about the end times, you can just come see me on Monday.

You get the summary statement of verse 1. Then in verse 2 we kind of get to the gist of the matter, what's going on in his life. It says, "In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks." You might circle that word mourning. It's an intense emotional laboring of brokenness over the spiritual state of his people for three weeks, 21 days. "I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks." When he says I didn't anoint myself, that means he didn't put oil on his skin or on his head.

It's basically like saying I didn't take a shower, which would have made him one stinky guy. "On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, that is the Tigris, I lifted up my eyes and looked. And behold, a man clothed in linen with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves." Obviously he has this encounter with— we don't know what. Some people think it's a pre-incarnate encounter with Jesus Christ before he takes on flesh. It's possible. It's similar to Revelation chapter 2, or the language in Revelation chapter 2. Others would say it's just an angel. But before we get into the details of that experience I want you to notice what Daniel does to prepare himself for that experience.

Because if you notice in verse 7 it says, "I, Daniel, alone saw the vision." The other men who were with me, they did not see the vision. So they were not prepared in the way that Daniel was prepared. And so what did Daniel do to prepare his heart for a fresh touch from God? And the first thing he did is that he prepared his heart for a fresh touch from God by welcoming or expressing what I'm just going to call a holy discontentment with what was. It says that he was mourning.

He wasn't kind of flippantly praying. He wasn't, you know, kind of somewhat interested, somewhat disinterested. You know, things aren't where they should be, but it's not really my place to judge. It's not really my place to say anything. I'm just going to kind of do— it was a total brokenness over the status quo of the people surrounding him and even of his own life. He was mourning, and that holy discontentment was accompanied by acts of self-denial. Acts of self-denial. So he began to fast and pray for twenty-one days. And he didn't fast completely.

It says that he fasted from meats and wine and fine delicacies and anointing himself with oil. So he only ate fruits and vegetables. Some people refer to this as the Daniel fast, and so if you can't fast from food, this is a pretty good fast to do where you only eat fruits and vegetables, which means I would only eat fruit, because, no, who wants to eat vegetables? But it's a pretty decent fast. The point is that he denied himself the physical pleasures that he typically accustomed himself to. And the reason why is that he was creating hunger, physical hunger pains in his life to deepen his spiritual hunger for God.

He created physical hunger pains in his life to deepen his spiritual hunger for the Lord. And this is something that every one of us should learn how to do if you want a fresh touch from God in your life. Sometimes we have a tendency to gorge ourselves on spiritual junk food like social media and Netflix and Hulu and going out on the weekends and alcohol or whatever the case may be, maybe even something more significant like drug use. We numb our soul and we kind of deaden our spiritual sensitivity because we don't like what we see and what Daniel is doing is saying, I'm not going to do that.

I'm not going to gorge on the spiritual junk food to make myself feel better about what's going on in my life, but I'm going to refrain from those things to deepen my awareness of my spiritual need and to deepen my spiritual hunger for the Lord. When's the last time you, as

an individual, practiced a little bit of self-discipline in your life so that you could deepen your commitment to the Lord, and so that you could express sincerely your genuine discontentment with the spiritual status quo of your life or of our culture.

When's the last time you did a fast? Whether it was a social media fast or a fast from meats or wines, or you did a fast from alcohol. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with drinking alcohol in moderation, but maybe it's become a thing for you where you need to refrain from it for a season as a way of saying to God, I want you more than I want this. I want a fresh touch from God. That's one of the things that Daniel did. And one of the things I want to encourage us to do, one of the things that's on the church calendar every year is a holiday called Lent.

Anybody heard of this before? Lent. The Catholic Church practices it. It's 40 days leading up to Easter. So this year it was February 17th or 18th. Okay, so we can't do Lent. You know, darn— that's a long time anyway. Who wants to do 40? But we're— what are we, like 30 days away from Easter or so? I don't know how many days. If you did 21 days, if you started on March 14th, that's 21 days leading up to Easter. Consider fasting from the Lord or consider fasting from the junk food in your life, spiritual or physical, as a way of deepening your spiritual hunger for the Lord.

And you don't need to do it legalistically, you know, we don't need to become monks about it and measure our love for the Lord by how much we remove from our life. And you don't need to broadcast it, okay? We're not going to do it as a church and everybody celebrate what we're fasting from. Jesus says, when you fast, let it be done in secret. Okay? Anoint your head with oil. Don't let anybody know that you're fasting. But it is one of the ways that you can prepare your heart for a fresh move from God is by removing pleasures of this world to create spiritual hunger in your heart.

The second thing that Daniel did is he looked up and he expected God to move. In verse 5 he says, "I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold." You're never going to experience a move of God in your life unless you're looking for it. He's not going to take you by surprise. You've got to ask for it. You've got to look for it, and you've got to believe God wants to give it. I really believe this. Every person has as much or as little of God as they want to have.

I used to sometimes think that God would just kind of choose who he did and who he didn't anoint. But the more I think about it and the more I study the scriptures, I really believe God is looking for people who would say, give me a fresh touch. He's looking for people who would say I want the fullness of God in my life. He's looking for people who would ask for it, who would believe that he wants to give it if they would just ask for it. So we saw this last week in Luke chapter 11, that if an earthly evil dad knows how to give good gifts to his children, how much more so does your heavenly father want to give the Holy Spirit to those who will persistently ask?

And so you got to look up and you got to ask for it. And I really believe with all of my heart God wants to do something special in our congregation in the coming days that He wants to do something fresh, something new, something meaningful, and as amazing as that move of God is going to be, some of us are going to miss it, because we weren't willing to put in what's required to prepare our hearts for it. We'll be just like those guys in Daniel chapter 10. They saw something.

They were afraid. They had an uncomfortability because God was moving and they couldn't really see or understand. So they ran and they fled, but Daniel was able to see because Daniel was prepared. The question is not, does God want to move? Of course he wants to move. The question is, are we ready to receive it? Are we ready to welcome it into our life and into our church? Are you ready to receive it in your life? Sometimes God lights a fire, but we stand too far away to actually get warm.

Because we know if I get close to the fire, if I get close to what God's doing in my life, it's going to expose things in me I don't want to deal with. It's going to expose things in me that I want to keep hidden. It's going to require me to give up things that I don't want to give up. And you're right. You can't have a fresh move of God in your life and it be free. It's going to cost you something. But the point is, whatever it is you're going to lose in relation to what it is that God wants to give, it's nothing compared— nothing compared to what you gain.

And so let's prepare ourselves spiritually through holy discontentment and a heart full of faith that God wants to move if we'll be ready to receive it. Daniel gets this fresh touch from God in verse 8 of Daniel chapter 10, and like all encounters with God, it leaves a mark. He says in verse 8, "So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me." I love this next part. He says, "My radiant appearance was fearfully changed." This is Daniel bragging on his good looks at ninety years old.

I was a radiant, handsome young man, 90 years old. But then I saw the Lord and it was fearfully changed, "and I retained no strength. Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground. And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, 'O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.' And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling."

I love how Daniel describes this encounter. I don't know if you noticed it, but in verse 9, he is face down on the ground. His radiant appearance has changed. And so he goes from this godly man full of righteousness, praying for a fresh touch from God, and then he actually experiences God and he's laid out on the ground. There's no sense in which his righteousness gave him the credibility to stand before a holy God, just like Isaiah was. He was, woe is me, I'm undone. I cannot stand before a holy God in his presence.

He's face down on the ground. But then in verse 10 it says that this angel comes and he touches his shoulder. And Daniel goes from being on the ground face down and asleep to on his hands and knees. Did you notice that? From face down on the ground to hands and knees. And then from his hands and knees, this angel speaks a word of God's love to Daniel. He says, O Daniel, man greatly loved, get up, stand up. Because I've got something to say to you. So he goes from face down on the ground to hands and knees to standing up.

And I don't want to play fast and loose with the text too much, but I think that is capturing in physical form what happens spiritually any time you encounter God in your life. When you become a Christian for the first time, all of those are requirements. You go from a place of humility and brokenness over sin to a place of yieldedness and surrender. God, I can't, but you can. Would you come and live inside of me? I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. I make him my Savior and Lord. And then you stand up and you commit your life to Jesus Christ.

Where you say go, I'll go. Where you say do, I'll do. Every encounter with the good Lord looks like this. Jesus encapsulates it in the Beatitudes. He said, blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn. So, those who are face down on the ground, aware of their sin and broken over sin. And then blessed are the meek, those who surrender their heart and their mind and their bodies, all of who I am is surrendered to the Lord. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Why? Because they'll be filled.

And they'll be able to stand up and receive the word of the Lord and respond to the love of the Lord. And really, for Daniel, he receives this word, O Daniel, man greatly loved. That's something, because of what Jesus Christ has done on the cross, that's something every single one of us has said to us by our Heavenly Father. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world"—you could put your name in that blank. God so loved Wes Terry. God so loved Tim Bosley. God so loved Lupe Gonzalez. You put your name in the blank.

You have been loved by your Heavenly Father. And unless and until you're ready to respond and receive that love and rest in that love, you're not going to get a fresh touch from God. It takes two things. You've got to, number one, get face down on the ground. I'm far worse off than I could have ever imagined. My sin, even my righteousness on a good day, it's not enough to commit myself to the Lord. So I'm humbled, contrite over sin, but I also receive the love of the Father. And even though I'm far worse off than I could have ever imagined, I'm far more loved in Christ than I could have ever dared hope.

And I have a Father in heaven who loves me and forgives me and will adopt me and accept me, and he will use me. And so I'm going to stand up face to face and receive my orders, receive my commands from the Lord, and I'm going to live my life for God. That's what a fresh touch from God looks like. And have you ever received that kind of touch from God in your life? I'm not saying you can't receive it at a young age. I mean I got saved at a young age and those things were in place in some way.

But I wonder sometimes if we've sold too much for too little and we've made salvation as simple as praying a prayer at the end of a service or reading a tract and mentally assenting to the tract, and okay, now I'm saved. And so you look back to some prayer that you prayed 40 years ago, but your life has no mark on it whatsoever of true conversion. There's no sense in which you have a holiness about you or a grieving over sin. There's no sense in which you feel the presence of Christ on a day-by-day basis.

And your confidence in your salvation is on some words you said, not some abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in your life. If I was to get up this morning and walk to church, and let's say for whatever reason there's an eighteen-wheeler on Pioneer Drive and boom, I get ran over by the eighteen-wheeler. And I get up and dust myself off the ground and I come into church and I say, hey everybody, I got ran over by an eighteen-wheeler today. You would all go, yeah, right. Of course you didn't, because you wouldn't be here.

Because if you get run over by an eighteen-wheeler, it's going to leave a mark. And who are we to think that we can encounter the living God, the creator of this world, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and it not leave a mark? And again, I'm not saying you can't encounter him at a young age, but if you've lived your whole life and there's never been any fruit whatsoever, there's never been any brokenness over sin. Another way to say it is the way to have confidence and assurance of your salvation right now is not to look to some prayer you prayed in the past, but to look to whether or not you're trusting in Jesus Christ right now for the forgiveness of sin and to receive the love of God.

And so have you ever had that true encounter? And if you have not, and the Holy Spirit's working in your life on a day like today or days in the past, why not respond to him? Don't let your pride of what people are going to think keep you from responding to what you know the Lord wants you to do. Or maybe you're like a lot of people, you said a prayer when you were a little kid, but you didn't really get it. You didn't really come to faith until you were 18, 19, 27 years old.

And that's when it clicked. But you got baptized as a baby, and so you need to be biblically baptized. I hear this story all the time, but you've allowed your pride and fear of what people are going to think about you to keep you from doing what you know the Lord wants you to do. And it's keeping you from a fresh touch from God because the one area where God says, this is where I want you to obey, you say, no, I can't do that. Have you received a fresh touch from God?

When's the last time you experienced this kind of touch from God that renews and restores and strengthens and replaces what the locusts have taken away? This is what we need more than anything else. We need a fresh touch from God. We need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The last thing I want us to see is, before Daniel receives this fresh touch from God. I

think we get a little bit of insight into one of the reasons why he received it, and it's because he prayed fervently without giving up.

Look at what the angel tells him in verse 12. Then the angel said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words." It's unbelievable. There is power in the words of your prayer. There is power in prayer. Then he says in verse 13, this is mind-blowing. He says, your words were heard, I came because of your words, but "the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes"— that Michael, he's one of the chief archangels in the Old Testament— "came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days.

For the vision is for days yet to come." This is crazy. So first off, you get this idea that there's power in prayer. Daniel prays. God hears his prayer on the first day. It's unbelievable. He hears his prayer on the first day and sends this angel to go and answer the prayer by giving Daniel this vision. So there is power in your prayer. You need to know that. Sometimes we give up praying because we don't think there's any power in our prayer. We say things like, well God is sovereign and He's going to do whatever He's going to do and it's all fixed and so why pray?

Because it doesn't really matter what I say, God's going to do it anyway. That's not true. The Bible says in James 4, "You do not have, because you do not ask," which means there is power in your words. Prayer is a means through which we move the hand of God. So you can either ask for God to move and see God move because you asked, or you cannot ask for God to move and see God not move because you didn't ask. You want a breakthrough in your marriage? It's not enough to just say, well, God knows I need a breakthrough.

You've got to pray for it. You've got to ask. Use your words. There's power in your words. Second thing this shows us is it pulls back the curtain and it shows us something about the spiritual warfare of Daniel's day and our day. One of the reasons that Daniel's prayer was not answered on day one is because of the spiritual warfare going on in Persia. Do you notice what he says in verse 13, I came on day one, God heard on day one, but I got held up by the prince of the kingdom of Persia.

Sometimes the answer to your prayer will be delayed because of the spiritual warfare in your life. Which means you've got to persist in prayer without giving up. I think sometimes we think about Satan and demons and do we really believe in that? That seems backwards and old-fashioned and third-world country. Satan is either totally mocked and ridiculed in a culture or he is unduly feared. In our culture, he's unduly ridiculed and mocked. We don't believe in Satan, we don't believe in demons, we don't believe in spiritual warfare. But here

very clearly we see one of the reasons that our prayers are delayed and unanswered is because of the spiritual warfare going on in our life.

And I wonder how many of us would have given up on day 20. How many of us would have given up on day 10? Well, I prayed and prayed and prayed, but God didn't answer, and so I guess it's a no. Why did you stop? Is it ever right to stop persisting in prayer? You do have Jesus say things like, don't use many words in prayer. You do have Jesus in the garden: Father, not my will but yours be done. He does it three times and he's done. But in my mind, unless God gives you a definitive answer because of his providence, a clear no, then we should persist in prayer until he says, yes, or until we get an answer to the prayers that we're praying.

And sometimes the reason God delays is because of the spiritual warfare going on around us. Which is why persistent prayers are what is in order. Persistent, prevailing prayers that do not quit. You got prayers for your marriage, don't quit on day 20. You got prayers for your prodigal son or daughter? Don't quit on day twenty-one. Every time God makes a move, Satan makes a counter move. Just take it to the bank. In your life, in this church, every time God wants to do something and does do something, Satan's going to make a counter move to resist it.

If you want Jesus in your life, you got to know everywhere Jesus is, demons follow. So you can either have the presence of Jesus in your life and deal with spiritual warfare and spiritual opposition, or you can reject the Spirit of Christ in your life and not deal with it. The devil doesn't bother people who aren't fighting against him. But we cannot win a spiritual battle with human weapons. We cannot and must not. We've got to pray. We've got to persist in prayer. This was the whole point of last week, Luke chapter 11, where Jesus gives the parable about the friend who had no loaves to give his friend at midnight, so he goes to his friend and says, friend, lend me some loaves.

I don't have anything to give to my friend. And he kept on asking and he kept on seeking and he kept on knocking and it says because of his impudence, because he wouldn't stop, this kind of bold, confident request— that's why the friend gave him what he needed. And so I say to you, ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking. Everyone who asks receives. If your earthly dads who are evil know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more does your heavenly father love to give the Holy Spirit to those who will ask?

So persist in prayer, prevail in prayer for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. You want a breakthrough in your life, whatever that issue is, and if we want to see a fresh touch from God in our church, we've got to persist in prayer. Some prayers are only answered through persistent prayer. Just like Jesus when he cast out a demon that the disciples couldn't cast out, and the disciples say, Jesus, why were you able to cast it out? He said, this kind only

comes out through prayer. He had something they didn't have, and that's what we need to receive.

Christians need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I need it. Our church needs it. And it's not to say that we lose the Holy Spirit as Christians. Okay, I'm not what you'd call Pentecostal in my theology. I don't think you can lose your salvation. I don't think you lose the Holy Spirit. But I do think we can grieve the Holy Spirit. And one of the things that 2020 revealed in my life and maybe yours, and I know it did in our church, is it revealed ways in which we had grieved the Holy Spirit of God, ways in which we had leaned on our own flesh and our own understanding.

And we had leaned on worldly solutions to spiritual problems, and we had looked to politicians and to economists and to sociologists to deliver us from the cultural spiritual decay that we see all around us and we didn't trust the Lord. We weren't leaning on the Lord and we weren't praying for the Lord to do what only he could do. So one of the things I think Jesus is inviting us to as a congregation is to persist in prayer for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for a fresh touch from God, and in whatever way you may have grieved the Holy Spirit in your life.

Whether it was through a lifestyle decision or just a sense in which you gave up hope, maybe it's a root of bitterness, maybe it's anger, maybe it's unforgiveness, maybe it's a relationship that needs to change, but the fear of changing that relationship outweighed your fear of the Lord and your willingness to do what you know God's called you to do. And so as Griffin comes back up and we have a time of response, I just want you, right there where you're seated, to make that chair an altar before the Lord.

And to ask the Lord if you've grieved the Holy Spirit in your life and ask him any way that you have contributed to grieving the Holy Spirit in our church. Something I've been doing in my own life. I want to invite you to do the same. The thing about the Holy Spirit is He doesn't force Himself on anyone. He's not going to invade your life against your will. He's not going to invade our church against our will. He comes in when we ask. And so right there where you're seated, let's bow our heads and close our eyes and ask the Lord for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Personally, there in your life, whatever it is you're dealing with— maybe things going on in your workplace, things going on in your relationships, a prodigal son or daughter running from the Lord. Ask for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't come unless we ask. And the other thing about the Holy Spirit is when you receive him into your life, you don't get to tell him what to do. You don't get to boss him around and say do this and do that. He leads and we follow. So would you ask the Lord to give you the humility you need to not only receive the Spirit into your life, not only to receive the fullness of God into your life, but to be able to walk in that fullness because you're willing to follow the shepherd instead of lead.

You're willing to follow instead of lead. If you're watching this online and you're not a Christian, and the Lord's been moving in your heart to surrender your life to Jesus Christ. You can indicate that by going to the link on the bottom of your page, broadview.life/next. If you're here in person and you want to respond to the Lord, you can come up at the end of the service or you can go to that same link and express whatever it is God's doing in your life. If you're a member of our church, I want to challenge you to do something before we leave.

This is between you and the Lord. I'm not going to be looking. But if you're willing to be one of those people who would say, Lord, you can cast your burdens on me, I'm willing to do whatever it takes to have a heart prepared for a fresh touch from God. And I'm willing to do whatever it takes to persist in prayer until we see a fresh outpouring of God in this local church. If you're willing to do that, I'm not looking, nobody else is looking, would you just raise your hand and put it back down?

It's just a visible physical way of saying to the Lord, I'm in. I want more. I'm dissatisfied with the status quo. I'm not content with things the way they are. I know you want to do something bigger, something better. And so you can count on me to pray until we see it happen. I really believe the Lord wants to do something in our church, but it won't happen if I'm the only one praying for it. It's going to require enough people who catch a vision for what God wants to do.

And so if you are willing to raise your hand just now, I want to encourage you to come back on Mondays as we pray, Mondays at 6 o'clock to seek the presence of God, to ask the Lord, what do you want to say to us? What do we need to hear as Broadview Baptist Church to walk in what it is you have for us? And I want to challenge you to persist in prayer every day for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. If there's a way that we can pray for you, if you want me to join with you in a certain prayer for a breakthrough in your life, you can indicate that by texting our church phone number.

325-692-2360. You can certainly, if you're here in person, come up to me after the service. But what is the Lord asking you to do right now? As you listen to his still small voice, what is he calling you to do? And will you have the courage to respond with a yes? Even if it's not immediate, even if it doesn't fix all my problems when I leave this building, I'm willing to do what you're asking me to do. Father, we thank you for this time. We thank you for the example of Daniel praying persistently, fervently, without giving up.

And would you teach us to pray in the same way? As Americans, we are so used to microwave this and instant that. And we've lost the art of prevailing prayer, of being persistent and praying until we see the breakthrough. So would you fill us with your Holy Spirit? Would you give us the courage and the discipline to say no to the flesh and to feed the spirit and to walk by the Spirit? For those who are not Christians, Lord, who are surrendering their heart to Jesus for the first time this morning, would you give them the

courage to publicly profess that by telling somebody, putting it in the comments or texting our church phone number.

And I pray especially, Lord, for those who need to be baptized, whether they got saved today or later on in their adult life and they need to make it public through baptism. Would you give them the courage to step out in faith and do what you're calling them to do? We thank you. We know your word does not return to you void. We believe by faith you have accomplished in us what you want to accomplish through your word. Will you give us the power and the courage to walk in obedience to what it is that you've begun in us, that we would finish out to completion what you started.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Belshazzar"; Daniel's Babylonian name was Belteshazzar (Belshazzar was the later king of Daniel 5). Source: Daniel 1:7; Daniel 5:1 (ESV). ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "King Nebuchadnezzar"; Daniel was thrown into the lions' den under King Darius the Mede, after the decree forbidding prayer to anyone but the king. Source: Daniel 6:6–16 (ESV). ↩
3. Transcript note: read as "Belshazzar"; the verse reads "Belteshazzar." Source: Daniel 10:1 (ESV). ↩