

“Why Could We Not Cast Him Out?”

By Chris Ulrich

Sunday, July 8th, 2018

Thank you, you may be seated. It's good to see everybody here this morning, and definitely a beautiful summer day. I'm sure that we all noticed that. How many were here last week? And, heard our general pastor—how many was not here last week? Okay. What I want to do, I want to actually do a little revisiting of that. I think it's worth our time. We're just kind of coming down from the emotion and enjoyment and the time of our international conference which we had down in Virginia, here, a couple of weeks ago. So, Pastor Paine and his wife, Debbie, were up here last week, and kind of unexpectedly, but, it was just a good time to hear them, to see them, and he gave the sermon last week, and I want to touch on just a couple of things. And, I know that we've actually heard some of these things talked about this morning, as well. But, one of the questions he asked us was, “Have you ever felt or heard God speaking to you?” And, it's something we've heard before. I mean, it's not something we've never heard in our life, especially if we've been a Christian for any period of time. But, it really got us to thinking about how that something that's an ongoing relationship with God. That's something that keeps us going. That's a sustaining part of our life. So, he read from Acts chapter ten—I'm not going to revisit that entire passage, but, I remember him asking a question while he was up here, and as he had mentioned, and his wife had talked about, they've been married forty-three years, this year, which, definitely an accomplishment in this day and age. All credit to God. But, also to their efforts. But, one thing he talked about, one thing he asked, he said, “Have you ever fallen out of love?” And, he wasn't necessarily referring that in the context to his wife, but, he was talking about that relationship, it could be with his wife, it could be with God, it could be with a family member, but, it was a thought-provoking statement; it was a thought-provoking question. He shared a little bit about some of the people that he went to school with, and, he said there was one guy in particular that they've been out of school for many years, probably forty-five years, I think he is what I recollect, and he asked this guy, about, “Well, do you keep in touch with some of our former classmates?” And, the guy was like, “Yes, I do. And, it takes a lot of effort, but, it's worth having that relationship.” And, one question he asked was, “Do we realize how important our relationship with God is?” And, ultimately, when we tie in those things, and we realize that, yeah, it's good to have relationships with people, and family, and everybody else, but, we need to have that relationship with God, first and foremost. That needs to be our top priority. The Bible talks about loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). One last statement he made, among other things, but, he said, and this ties into today, I know there's been some things mentioned about prayer and fasting, but, he said we can't have our prayer life be only rare or only occasional. It's not something—and there was some correction, and, there was some admonishment, and, there was some rebuke, but, it wasn't a blast, it wasn't something where you can't get back up, or we can't get this right. Because, there are things in our life where we do fall out of love, whether it's with God, or whether it's a family member, or whatever the case might be. But, I want to ask Jesse Rairdon to come up. He's going to read a passage here, which is going to really start off our message today. The passage is found from the Book of Mark, chapter nine, verses seventeen through twenty-nine. It's a bit of a lengthy passage. This is really the highlight Scripture from the message today. But, I'm going to ask Jesse if he could read that passage, please.

Mark 9:17-29 *And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they*

should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Thank you, Jesse. If you could just bow your heads in a word of prayer, today. God, we just come to You, and we open up our hearts, and we open up our minds, God, we open up our souls to You, Lord. God. And, we ask if You would pour out Your blessing, pour out Your spirit, Lord God, upon this time, Lord God, and we know that You've already done it, Lord God. We know we've heard music, God. We've heard sharing time, Lord God, and God, there's a sweet spirit in this place, Lord God. And, it only comes from You, Lord. It's Your power, God, it's Your Word, Lord God, that we look too, Lord God, for guidance and understanding. We're not looking at the newspaper, we're not looking at different books, we're not turning on the TV, we're not going to the internet for our guidance, Lord God. We trust in Your Word; we thank You, God, to know Your Word, but, we ask right now to be able to learn more, Lord God. We ask, God, that You would give us what we need, God. I ask that You'd pour out Your spirit, Lord God, and bless all of us here, and I ask that You bless me, Lord God, as I give this message, Lord God. We just want to thank You, God, and we just want to ask that lives would be changed for the better, Lord God. We want to ask that there is something that changes in our life, Lord God. And, that's an ongoing thing, that's not just we hear something, and then we just go about our business. Lord God. We don't want to be just hearers of Your Word, but, we want to be doers, Lord God. Faith without works is dead, Lord, and we know that, and we want to continue in that. We want to have a plan to continue in You, Lord God. We want to have a plan to stay. We just want to ask all this in Your name, Jesus. In Jesus name, amen.

So, if you've ever seen someone do something, or you've ever heard somebody say something that you couldn't do, and you wondered why you couldn't, then this message is for you. I realize that's a pretty broad statement, and I suppose our minds could interpret that to mean a lot of different things, but, it could mean musicianship, it could mean salesmanship, it could be tradesman skills, it could be computer skills, teaching, the medical profession, or any number of talents that we see around us. And, sometimes people just seem to make it look effortless. It seems like it was just as though they just had that natural ability from the get-go. I know I've been in that boat, and I would imagine a lot of us have been in that same boat, as well. But, those statements are not made to provoke anybody to jealousy, or to be envious of anybody, or covetousness, because we're not really talking about possessions right now. This is about obtaining gifts from God that are there for the taking, for everyone that's willing to do what it takes to get them. And, it's going to take an effort. We can't just sit down and expect to be poured out, all these different gifts from God, without being receptive, without making an effort, without doing something. And, I get that blood was shed, and that was a priceless thing. Christ died on Calvary for our sins, for our life, that we might be able to receive that salvation. But, we also have to look at it like what are we doing from that point forward? What are we doing after we receive that? And, regardless of how we look at the scriptural account of this demon

possessed young man, and what Jesus declared what we must do in order to have the power, prayer is not an option. Can I say that again? Prayer is not an option. Prayer is what actually got us to find the truth of God in the first place, prayer is what gets us in the faith, and prayer is also what keeps us in the faith. It's not an option. But, what I mean by that, in the context of prayer and fasting, that's two separate actions, which, they can be, prayer is a salvation matter, and it's always going to remain that way. We're not going to get saved without it, we won't stay saved without it, and thank God, God does hear our prayers. But, fasting is different. Fasting is not mandatory, and fasting is not necessarily a salvation issue. Now, it's been talked about. Pastor Lee had mentioned it, here, just a little bit ago, about we're going to take some time for prayer and fasting over the course of the next six months. And, there's some specific things that have been highlighted, as far as what victories we want to see. So, some might say that what I just said, as far as fasting not being an option, as far as a justification and to declare themselves off the hook, but, before we do that, let me explain a few things. First of all, fasting might not be something God is laying on the heart of everyone. Now, some might say, "Well, that's me! That's me. God's not laying it on my heart. I'm not going to do it." Okay, but, I will give a couple of examples here, because, now we're talking about real specifics, and where we live. So, God might not be laying that on the heart of a seven-year-old child; I'm not saying he won't. But, when you really think about it, logically speaking—or, somebody who's ninety-five years old, or, somebody that's basically taking medication—I know that, personally, there was a time that, I broke my wrist back in 2004, and, so, now I had to have surgery, there's different medications you have to take, in order to stave off any kind of infection, so, I had to weigh that up. And, it was one of those things where you're supposed to have some sort of something to eat while you're taking the medication for whatever duration of time that that's the case. So, then you think about these examples that I gave, most people don't fall into those categories, realistically speaking. But, again, there are times and circumstances that, that that is the case, but, I will say that God will still bless us. But, then it's a matter of, okay, when we're off the medication, when we start the healing process, or when we get older, and we're in, as they say, like, "I'm in my fighting shape," or in the prime of our life, because that's where most people really live. And, then, it's a matter of looking at it like, "Okay, well what is expected of me?" So, this sermon today is not just about fasting. But, it's been talked about. But, I would still strongly suggest looking at it, as far as biblical examples, as far as what people did, as far as what it entails, how God blessed those people, how long they did it, what the results were...

Part one of the sermon today is what we willing to do.

Part 1: What Are We Willing to Do?

I'm going to read from the book of Isaiah, fifty-eight, versus five through eight. And, it is an account of fasting, not necessarily an example of someone, or a length of time that they did it, but, I believe it's worth our time. So, from the Book of Isaiah, fifty-eight, verses five through eight:

Isaiah 58:5-8 *Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.*

So, these are, kind of, some Old Testament references, as far as, and it could be a little bit—not, as they say in today's terminology, as much, but, the effect is still the same. And, the effort is still the same. Because, then, it's not a matter of saying, "Oh, well, I don't understand, so I'm not going to do it, because I'm off the hook, because I fall into those other categories that he just mentioned." Well, okay, then it's a matter of going back and saying, "What are we willing to do? How much effort are we trying to put forth into this?" I'm going to—you don't have to turn to it, but, it's a very short passage, because I want to tie in prayer to this as well. In First Thessalonians, five, seventeen, it's probably one of the shortest passages in the Bible, but, it makes sense. It says:

1 Thessalonians 5:17 *Pray without ceasing.*

So, I want to tie that back to the fasting, because, think about this: it doesn't say fast without ceasing. Thank God it doesn't, because we'd probably all be gone after whatever length of time you think you could actually handle it. But, again, this is not a competition; it's not to try to break records, or "Well, okay, these people fasted forty days; I think I can go forty-one." if you want to try that, be my guest. But, I don't think that, really, that's the goal here. The goal isn't to try to break records, or get our name in lights. The goal is to be blessed of God. And, I know that what I just shared, as far as, part one being, "What Is It We're Willing to Do?" I want that to kind of sink in, because it really has to come back to is: this life I have in God. We pray to find the truth. We pray to stay in the truth. Well, what's it going to take, then, as far as, to maintain that, as far as to be blessed of God mightily, to have a strong, ongoing relationship with God that lasts a lifetime? Pastor Ulysse was up here, about a month and a half ago, and one statement he made that stood out a lot to me was, "I remember when I first got baptized," this is his statement, "I knew that the plan was for life." This is a plan to stay in the faith. This isn't something where, something better is going to come along. You search, and search, and search and you find it, and it's the pearl of great value (Matthew 13:45-46), and, then, suddenly, it's not worth that much. How did that happen? This persuasion comes not from God that calls us (Galatians 5:8); that is a passage. So then it's a matter of, going back, examining ourselves in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5), reevaluating it, looking at it, "Well, what do I have to gain? What's at stake here? And, what do I stand to lose?" So, I want to give the title of the sermon now, after just having mentioned what part one is. The title of the sermon is a simple one, it comes right from that passage, it says, "Why Could We Not Cast Him Out?". So, what are we willing to do when it comes to those components of self-affliction, because that's what they really are. Prayer and fasting are a form of self-affliction, and they're not—neither is easy to do, but, there's no big mystery about doing it. And, those of you that know me, know I like to have good, clean, wholesome fun, but, I'll tell you this much, prayer and fasting is not fun. It is not fun at all. It's hard to do, it takes an effort, I mean there's times where you feel like—I remember going through boot camp, for you guys who are there on the military base, and, I remember, I felt like I was absolutely stripped down to my absolute soul. Standing there, and I'm like, "Oh my God." Because, you can't sit there and say, "Oh, I want to go to this right now. I want to go read the paper. I want to go watch TV." It's like, "No, you get in line, you stay in line, you do what you're told." It's that kind of discipline. And, it's—but, yet, you look at the reward for it. You look at the reward for putting up for it for whatever the period of time is, and you see how your life gets better and better as a result of it. And, that's the same way in God. We have that discipline, we do these things, God asked us to do these things, and I'll just say this much: God is expecting us to do these things regularly, and, again, you look back at that passage, "Pray without ceasing." So, how's that for encouragement? I know it doesn't really sound like it's all that much encouragement, but, it's because we're enduring things, we're doing the things that God called us to do to get us, to get our mind away from the way that the things world are. It's a matter of looking at it like, "Okay, well, why is God doing this?" I'm not going to turn to it, but, I'm going to

ask you to think about, in Isaiah fifty-three, it's a prophecy about the life of Christ. Now, the prophet Isaiah preceded the life of Christ by probably 700 years—I think historians have proven that that's approximately the time frame—so, there's a passage, and I hate this verse, I say that tongue and cheek, but, it says, “But, it has pleased the Lord to bruise Him.” (Isaiah 53:10) Because, I thought it times, that can't be for me. That can't be for us. It's only Christ. He only wants to bruise Christ. And, God says, “Oh, is that what you really think?” because there are times that we are going to be bruised. There are times that it is difficult, but, it's for a good cause. So, here's the reward of our sacrifice. The results are some of the greatest spiritual and physical blessings that we could ever possibly imagine. We have a clean mind. We have a single mind, power over temptation, power over the problems and the confusion in this world. Manifestation of the fruit of the spirit, which, by the way, is going to be our theme for July. I know we're in July, but, anyway, just think about that as we continue in the month. And, the manifestation of the presence of God. It gives us an ability to do our jobs better. I've seen this work. It gives us more creativity. I've seen that work. It gives us more strength to endure and give us a realization of victory, real victory in Jesus Christ in this present world. I'm absolutely 100% convinced that the power of prayer and fasting works. And, it also gives us the power to cast out demons. Because, if you think about what we just read earlier, you rewind the tape a little bit, and you think, okay, well, what was it, because I have to say, I feel like one of the disciples. How come I couldn't do it? How come I couldn't cast out this demon? And, then He says, “Oh, faithless generation, bring him to Me,” goes through what He says. And, then He shows it to them, and then He tells them what it takes to actually do it. And, so, I'm sure some of them were thinking, “I can do it.” But, there may have been some that were thinking, “I'm not going to do that. I'm not willing to do that.” Then, it comes down to, “Okay, what are we willing to do to save our soul? What are we doing, what are we willing to do to have the power of God in this life, over the nonsense, the confusion, the ridiculousness, how many other adjectives can you use to describe the course of this—even in this country, this state, the world, whatever it comes down to, every time you hear something on the news, or you read something on the internet, or some other flare up of some nonsense, or some mass shooting, some terrorist attack, or some clash between protesters, and, this, that, or the other? And, after a while, it's like, “Where do I fit in? Where do we as individuals fit into this equation?” It's the power of God. It's only the power of God. I remember Pastor Lee shared a couple of months ago, he said, he named off of whole bunch of things happening in the news, and things happening, and it's not like it's all of a sudden happening, all of the sudden. A lot of it has to do with immediate access to the new cycle, they call it. Like, the twenty-four-hour news cycle. So we're exposed to it immediately, as soon as we can get a message up on your phone, “Oh, well, well, this is happening here,” or whatever the case might be. But, he talked about, he said, “What's causing all of it?” sin.” Sin is what's causing it all. And, I remember hearing that and I thought, “Absolutely, positively, 100% right.” So, having said that, they are challenging times that we live in, but, I would also have to say that there's been challenging times that happened before. This isn't something out of the blue, that all of a sudden we're all just sitting around peacefully, and then the next thing you know, some guy's shooting 59 people in Las Vegas, or somebody's running over people in France with a truck, and killing 80 people. Stuff like that that's, that affects us. We hear about those kind of things, or, like, you have drug cartels all over, but, you know, sending every drug under the sun, because basically that's what they do. That's how they found themselves. That's how they keep the power. That's how they keep instill people, instill, instill entire communities and countries with fear, so, then, you think, “Okay, where do I fit in with this?” again, “Where do I fit into this equation?” it's the power of God. But, if we know our history; we look at like some of the things that have happened in the past, and we think about they've been harder. You read about the great depression, or you look at, like, the things that happened in World War I or World War II, and, I know, brother Alex and his mom are here from what used to be the former Soviet Union, and this is a historical fact about the number of people

that were killed in the Soviet Union in World War II. It's twenty million! This country lost five hundred-thousand, which, that's a lot, but, then you think about how that country was just absolutely devastated. Absolutely devastated. Then, the guy who was in power at the time, he takes all the military, and he starts putting them in prisons up in Siberia. And, it's the things like that where it's like it makes you think, "Oh, there is evil in the world." There is evil in the world, and it's still there, and it was there before, and it will be there until Christ comes back. So, it's not a new thing. But, then, you go even further back. You go back to the time, if you ever read about the bubonic plague. So, you hear about those things, or you read about them, and, it makes us think, or some of these other diseases—and, this isn't all about all the diseases, or anything, the smallpox, or scarlet fever, or yellow fever, or things that—thank God for the medicine that's eradicated a lot of these things. Because, I would have to say those are medical breakthroughs that God's given us to be able to overcome those things, but, then, the next thing you know, you have an AIDS crisis, you have an Ebola crisis, and, yet, it goes back to where are we at in that equation? It goes back to the power of God. I'm going to ask brother Cedric Christian, who, Malcolm had spoken about him, he said, "There's a guy from Jacksonville!" He's up here for the week, and, so, Cedric, welcome, glad you're up here from Jacksonville, Florida. He and Pat Taylor head up our fellowship down there. So, if you could read from the Book of John, chapter one, verses six through thirteen, please.

John 1:6-13 *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Thank you. So, how do we know when we have the power of God? Don't answer me, just yet. What is the indicator? Don't answer me, just yet. We will get to that participation point, here in a moment. But, I'll say this, and we've already talked about it a little bit, is, without the power of God, we're not going to last very long in Christianity. And, I firmly believe, in this world, without getting swallowed up by the ways, without allowing those things to infiltrate our heart, infiltrate our life, cause us to love the world, love the ways of the world, and, like it talks about in First John, about, love not the world, neither things that are in the world. All that is in the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, it's not of the Father, but, it's of the world (1 John 2:15-16). But, if we don't have the power of God, it won't be long. And, I say that, not as a condemnation statement, but, more because I've felt it. I felt, when I got in a little bit weaker, and I start to get a little bit worldly. And, I'm not talking about sin the sin which is unto death, I'm talking about sinning but, then, repenting and realizing, "What am I doing? Why am I allowing the ways of the world and the things in the world to influence me in ways that now it reflects in our life?" The Bible says from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Matthew 12:34). Well, once you have these ungodly influences, the next thing you know, things come out. They manifest themselves because that lack of prayer and fasting, has manifested itself. But, I want to now take a few minutes, and ask everyone here, now that I've mentioned that about what are these indicators, what are ways that we can prove that we have the power of God. Because, to say, "I have the power of Christ," it's not just some cute expression. "I have the power of God," prove it. We have to prove it. We have to prove it to others, we have to prove it to ourself. Ultimately, we have to prove it to God, because God's going to be the judge.

And part two of the sermon today is, "Power to Become the Sons and Daughters of God."

Part 2: The Power to Become Sons and Daughters of God

So, now I'm going to ask for participation. I'm going to ask if you could stand up and share—I mean, you know, nothing lengthy, I'm not looking for a testimony, but, I want to hear some things; it could be a one-word statement, it could be a statement, it could be just sharing a few things that prove that the power of God is in your life. So, I'm going to ask, right now, if anybody would like to stand up, and, raise your hand:

Ed Howes: Say no to the power of temptation

Alex: Say no to addictions.

That's a big one in this day and age. I already talked about the drug cartels that are just funneling tons, and tons, and tons, and tons of illegal substances in this country. And, it's happening in other countries, too; it's not like the United States is the only problem with a drug addiction epidemic. Anybody else?

Jason: Say yes to God and surrender.

Sister Lena: Being able to forgive.

Amen. Amen.

Mary Ogden: Standing in the gap.

Amen.

Beverly Hutchinson: Shining your light for God.

Cedric: Make peace in certain situations.

Phil Russell: Knowing the Word of God.

Amen.

Steve Nelson: Love one another.

Rebecca: Letting things go, let God.

Pastor Lee: Learning to love.

Sonia: Spirit of conviction.

Mike: Being led of God.

Corrine: Giving us the strength.

Amen. Okay, I'm going to—I want to read a few passages. While preparing, I firmly believe that these things will tie into what everyone once responses were, but, I wanted to read these after hearing from everyone. The first one is going to be from the Book of Second

Corinthians, two, verses eight to eleven. And, I'm going to read a couple of things. I'm going to ask Rob Severance if he could come up here in a moment.

2 Corinthians 2:9-11 *For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

So, some temptations and sinful lifestyles are pretty obvious to observe, but, that's always the case. Verse eleven is a key verse here, because it's critical, very critical that we understand what Satan's devices are, and aren't just walking around with any degree of discernment or an ability to recognize, because Satan is subtle. You look in the Book of Genesis it says that the serpent was very subtle (Genesis 3:1), and then you had the deception of Adam and Eve, and that's where they fell out of the garden of Eden. So, it was from the very beginning, the subtleties that we see. From the Book of Hebrews, chapter five, verse thirteen and fourteen:

Hebrews 5:13-14 *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

So, I get that everybody has a starting point in Christianity. I had a starting point, you had a starting point, and not everybody's been around for years to be able to use meat, as they say, the meat of the Word. And, we still need the milk of the Word for spiritual nourishment. But, God's going to give everybody a level of understanding, and more so, if we're serious about it, and more so if we do fast and pray and seek God. Rob, I'm going to ask if you could come. This is going to be our last passage from the message this morning; it's going to be from the Book of Luke, twenty-one, verses twenty-two through twenty-six, if you want to follow along:

Luke 21:22-26 *For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

Thanks, Rob. I want to focus on the last verse, but, I wanted to have the entire passage read so that the full effect of the end times could be understood. This isn't the only Gospel passage which talks about the end times. There is one in Matthew that goes, probably more extensively, but, this particular verse, twenty-six, stands out a lot. Because, we've heard a lot about living on the last days, and all the turmoil and everything else associated with it. And, I'm not here to add anything or give us another reminder from the standpoint that I have anything new to add. It's the reality of those of us who believe the Bible, that know it's coming. But, the Bible does say this, it says no man knows the date nor the hour we're in the Son of Man shall return (Matthew 24:36/Matthew 25:13). So, if anybody ever tells you, and I'm probably talking more to those who, maybe, are a little bit less familiar with the Bible, if any man ever tells you that they say they know when the day is coming, tell them that's not true. Because, the Bible says no man knows the day or the hour, wherein the Son of Man shall return. But, I want to highlight that last verse, again, because men's hearts failing them for fear, and that's not gender

specific, it's men and women. And, how it affects us. Because, it can affect us if we're not careful. It can affect us if we're not studying the Bible. It can reflect us if we fail to watch and pray. And, that does include fasting. If we're not diligent about our Father's business, if we're not—as Christ said, watch and pray, for you know not the day or the hour wherein the Son of Man shall return. We're not impervious to the problems of this world, just because we're born-again believers. In fact, we're the ones who are seeing the decline of society more clearly. And, I want to say that again, we are the ones that are seeing the decline and the decadence and the perverseness and whatever else, other way you want to describe the decline in morality. We're the ones that are seeing this. We're seeing the hatred brewing, the buildup in—there's no civil conversation or discussion anymore, as people on different ends of the political fence, I mean, it's out the door, at least that's the way the media portrays it. Now, I'm not saying you can't have a civil discussion with somebody, but, I've seen, at times, where it just seems like it's reaching boiling points, but, again, this isn't like this is never happened before. Some of us are old enough to remember, this is the year I was born, but, there was a democratic national convention in Chicago in 1968, where, it was absolute mayhem! But, you know, that was the same year Martin Luther King was killed in April, Bobby Kennedy was killed in June, so now you've got a boiling over in that summer, of just, you had two pretty well-known and respected leaders in this country, that were assassinated, just a couple of months before. So it turned into a bloodbath down there. So, again, it's not as though something like this has never happened, were you've seen protesters, or fights in the street, and will it get worse? The Bible says, "Because of iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matthew 24:12) When you take that love of God out of the equation, there's no standard left. There's nothing to—it's like, you sit there, and you say, "Okay, every law that exists," I'm talking about moral laws, "Are from the Ten Commandments." I'm not talking about business law, I'm not talking about financial law, necessarily, I'm talking about thou shalt not kill. That shall not steal. Armed robbery, murder, thou shalt not commit adultery. I mean, you know, all these things are tied to that is what it was based on, initially, but, then when we as a nation get further, and further, and further, and further away, everything gets watered down, you start bringing in all these different laws. I'm not here to talk about that, but, it's the power of God, that's the only thing that's going to keep us. That's the only thing that's going to give us the power to have the sanity to be able to make it through another day. But, I wanted to share just one last thing as I close here in a moment: We're the ones that God is counting on to be the light of the world. That was the theme of our conference, "You Are the Light of the World." And, I heard some different things shared—and, actually, one thing one guy shared with me, and I believe this is true, I don't think he just randomly saw this, but, if you're in a pitch black area, like, let's just say, there's a place in Germany, it's called the Black Forest, so, it's extremely dark, because of the colors of the pines, I believe, I'm not absolutely sure, but, let's just say, at night time. So, this brother had told me, he said, "If you light a match and there's no other light, no moon, no stars, no spotlights, no houses, you can see a match from twenty miles away." And, I believe that. Now, let's just say it's only ten miles, and I'm not here to argue about, like, the validity, or lack of it for that particular statement, but, I believe that there is some, there's got to be some truth to that, but, here's what it comes down to: The take away from me from that conference was, God is counting on us. We are the light of the world, and it is an extremely dark place, and it is worsening. I hate to say it, I'd like to say, "No it's getting better, everything's fine. You know, everybody's going to get along. You know, we have nothing but great hopes and things to look forward to." I'm not saying the end is coming tomorrow; it might. It might be one hundred years; it might be two hundred years. That's not for us to know, except God alone. God alone. And, ultimately, to have that power of God, to be able to shine that light, and to be able to overcome that darkness, it's going to take, what is it we're willing to do? It's going to take fasting and prayer, and what are we willing to do about it? God bless you, and thank you for your time.