

Message Transcript

FIGHTING WORDS | I'VE GOT A WORD FOR YOU | DAVID NASSER |
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I know you are looking at me and you are like, "You don't look like a guy... You are from Iran." Even when I was in Iran, I was born in south Iran. So, I've always been a red neck. So, I'm a southerner.

And so I just want to go ahead and name this thing right.

Fighting Words Y'all

Right, so there it is. Y'all just makes something better, doesn't it? It feels like somebody just put some butter in it. Not even butter—bacon. Somebody just bacon wrapped the words Fighting Words. Right? With y'all. Isn't everything better with bacon? That may be why so many people are so mean in the Middle East. If you couldn't eat bacon, wouldn't you just want to blow things up? Sorry. Sorry.

Anyway, buckle up. I'm just getting started. Alright? So, the name of this message is Fighting Words, Y'all. Because, y'all, this is important in that this isn't about us watching them. This isn't just about us learning from Jesus and the church 2,000 years ago. This is about us.

This is about y'all. This is about what God wants to do in Indianapolis through six different campuses in Indy and beyond. Your mission statement as a church is: Taking Ground For The Kingdom Across Indy And Beyond. And so this is about y'all and not about them. This is about all of us. This is us looking at our baby picture, as Christians, 2,000 years ago and then going, "Man, nothing has really changed since those days."

So, I'd love for this to be not just so much fighting words, and we glance and we get a window into their lives, but fighting words about: How are we supposed to gain ground? How are we supposed to fight?

But I want to clarify and say, this isn't fighting words where like the church is fighting against the world, but this is fighting the good fight for the world. And our weapon of mass, our nuclear bomb, our weapon of gaining the most ground is this reality that God has given us, more than anything else, His love to bear. We're going to talk about that.



So, yes. This is going to very much feel much in alignment with your Vision Statement. Your Vision Statement is a wartime mentality vision statement. I mean, have you ever thought about that? Your Vision Statement, as a church: Taking Ground. Taking Ground sounds like war mentality. Because we are in a war. We are fighting. Right? A good fight.

And as we have fighting words, fighting posture, this is us fighting for those who are lost so that they can find Him. This is for fighting marriages. Right? Fighting for marriages to stay intact. Fighting for children who are prodigals to come home. This is Good News. Amen? So these are fighting words.

But they are also fighting words because we are going to look at a Bible verse that Charles Spurgeon literally identified as bloody words. He called them bloody words—Charles Spurgeon did.

Not because he was British and he was throwing the word bloody in the mix. Right? To like give it some umph. He called it bloody because he literally says, Charles Spurgeon says, about the verse we're going to look at, "When people heard Jesus make the statement that He made," that we're about to read, "it literally cost Jesus His blood upon a cross." People heard Jesus say about what we are about to read and they said, "We have to silence Him. This is too much."

And so, it's not even what happened then. Today the underground church in Iran, the underground church in China today, so many people in the Kingdom would tell you these words are just as controversial, if not even more, today than they were back then.

Now, that I have your attention, let's look and see what Jesus has to say. Red letter words here, bloody words, in John 6:35. Jesus said—are you ready for this?

"I.."

Stop. Stop. Before we go any further let's just inch in, let's just dip our foot into this incredible reality that the I in this is a reminder of who is saying this.

Have you ever thought about this reality? The source of a promise is the power of a promise. The source of a promise says everything about the power of a promise. Some people mean well when they say it. They are not lying a lot of times.

Some people mean well when they go, maybe somebody told you, "Hey, I think we got all of the cancer out. And I think it's gone." But it wasn't gone. They meant well, but they didn't know for sure.



Or maybe they meant well, maybe somebody meant well when they were divorcing, and you were the teenager and your dad looks at you and he said, "Look, I'm divorcing your mom, but I'm not divorcing you. I'm always going to be there." And then he wasn't there.

Or maybe your boss came up to you and said, "Hey, I think your job is immune to the economy post pandemic. You know, we've had some layoffs but you're going to be okay." And then you weren't okay.

So often people write a check with their mouth that bounces later on. Right? They get new information, things change, they have to kind of renegotiate the whole terms of it all. But has it ever occurred to you that nothing ever occurs to God? God doesn't write a check with His mouth.

God doesn't make a promise and then later on He has to cut back and go, "When I said that I didn't know that there was going to be a pandemic. When I said that I didn't know the circumstances of your life. And so, we need to go back and rethink the terms." When God makes a promise, you can bank on it. Amen?

So, if you are taking notes, before we go fast forward, just know that the I in this is who is making the promise. It's God. So, this is a God-sized promise, beloved. Do you see it? And so God is the One talking and that elevates the conversation here. We really lean in and say, "Who says this?" and the God of this universe, God Himself, Jesus Himself says, "I..." And then He takes this one more word, "Am."

"I Am..."

The statement that we are about to read is one of the seven great I Am statements that Christ makes in the Galilean tour (we call it) 2,000 years ago where Jesus said: "I am the bread." "I am the light." "I am the door." "I am the Shepherd." "I am the resurrection" "I am the true vine." "I am the way the truth and the life."

Over and over again, 2,000 years ago, Jesus comes on the scene and He said, "I am the great I Am. I am all of the prophecies of old come into fruition. I am the King you've been waiting for. I am the answer to every single question that you have in your life. I Am."

When the people 2,000 years ago heard Jesus say, "I Am," they never even had to have Him finish the sentence. They were like, "Who does this Jewish carpenter think that He is that He would have the audacity to utter out loud the words that are only reserved for God to be able to utter that out loud?"



And Jesus is saying, "Yes, these are words reserved for God. I am God. I am who you've been longing for. I am who you have been waiting for." So Jesus says, "I Am." And then He says this. He says:

"I Am," you ready for this? "the..."

The. The. Some of you are like, "Hurry up bro." No. Slow down here.

You ever go to a restaurant and they charge you like twenty six dollars for an appetizer and they call it carpaccio? The other day we got wagyu carpaccio. I think carpaccio is Italian for expensive. Alright? Because you get like four ounces. When you get four ounces of something you don't gulp.

This is wagyu y'all. This ain't hamburger meat, baby. This is wagyu. This is good. Listen. Take it slow. "I," is God. "Am," is the promise maker who doesn't know how to make a promise that doesn't come into fruition. And then He says, "I Am the," the means an exclusive reality about Himself.

I was preaching this sermon at a buddy of mine's church, Josh Howerton's church in Lakepointe a couple of weeks ago. And as I got done with the second service, I walked out to the lobby just to meet some folks and this English teacher walks up to me and he goes, "Hey..."

I wish he would have come to me earlier. I'd already preached two and I only had one left. He comes up to me and he goes, "Hey, did you know that that word the is a definitive article?" And I was like, "I do now." And he was like, "Do you know what a definitive article is?" I was like, "No." And he goes, "It's interesting that you were just kind of banking that on the the (t h e). In a world full of indefinites, it's good to have Jesus be so definitive."

And I was like, "Man, that is so good." In a world full of question marks, in a world full of fog, in a world full of, (is it or is it not?), in a world full of a lack of clarity there is so much clarity right here. Jesus said, "I Am the," This is like fighting words, y'all.

Nobody is pushing back if Jesus is an a. If you are like, "Hey, it all works. It's all good. It's all relative. Choose your flavor. It's all good." It's like if you were like, "Hey, in a world of religions, I'll go... All kind of breads out there. They'll all satisfy. They'll all give you spiritual calories. You know?"

"You've got Judaism. And then you've got Islam. It's all just a bunch of different bread. Our Jewish friends have pita bread, you know? And our Muslim friends... Pick pumpernickel, whatever you have. Pick your flavor. It all works."



No. Jesus comes on the scene and He says, "Everything else, everything else is either false bread or temporary bread. I am the only bread that will satisfy." Man, all of a sudden people are like, "Does that mean that this is exclusive? It's not inclusive." And the truth is, it's both at the same time.

It's exclusive in that He is the only. If there were other religions, if there were other routes, then why did Jesus die on the cross? He wasted His life on a cross if there would have been alternatives that would have worked. But then Jesus comes on the scene and He says, "The."

I was at a festival one time and I went to go speak at it and before I got there they asked me to send in the Bible verse for the Jumbotron at a racetrack. And I sent this Bible verse. And they guy in charge of the festival called me and he said, "Hey, you are going to do this in a few days. We love having you. We want to have you back over and over again. But this being your first time, we just need to get acclimated with one another. I have a little concern."

He said, "You sent your Bible verse." He said, "You put John 6:35." He said, "I just read it. Man, you've got to understand us and our context." He said, "I know you live east of the Mississippi, but west of the Mississippi things are different. We've got all kinds of people coming. People who don't share our faith, don't share our beliefs."

He goes, "You know what? We are a Christian festival but we've got Buddhists and we've got Mormons, and we've got Catholics, and we've got Baptists, and we've got Methodists, and we've got Muslims."

And he goes, "We've got Atheists and people who don't know what they believe." He goes, "I know you don't mean it, but when you read this in a little while, in a couple of days, 'I Am the...' it's going to offend a lot of people. And I know that's not what you mean."

And I said, "I'm so glad we're having this conversation because that is exactly what I mean. And I'm not trying to be offensive and I'm not trying to be rude. I want to honor you and tell you I don't get to re-write the Bible. Jesus said, 'I Am the...'"

And the good news of that is that a Muslim can hear it and it's not like you don't get in. It's like Jesus has created the path by which you can come in. Him. And so He's not saying this is exclusive and not inclusive. He's saying, "There is only one way but it's inclusive. Come. Come to Me all who are weary and hungry and I will give you rest. Come to Me all who are hungry and I will find you in a place where you take of Me and you're going to find satisfaction."



John Piper says it this way. Here's what John Piper says. He says, "How do you honor a fountain? You know how you honor a fountain? You drink. You bend down and you trust it and you drink from it."

Jesus is saying, He's saying, "All of the fountains of the world will not bring you satisfaction, but I will. All the bread in the world will leave you wanting, but I won't." But even Him just saying, "I Am the bread and other religions don't work," He says:

"Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never go thirsty.'" John 6:35 (NIV)

He's not just pushing up to other religions of the world; He's pushing up on anything that we have ever elevated beyond where it needs to be elevated. I've been married for over 30 years to the same sweet white girl from Alabama. Her name is Jennifer Nasser and I love me some Jennifer Nasser. The other day we were at a store called Buck Mason in downtown Nashville and she went in to try this little dress on. She came out and when she came out I went, "Mm, mm, mm," or something like that.

And the lady working there, she wasn't looking at my wife, she was looking at me, and I was just like, "I will never get over the fact that I am married to her. She is more beautiful than she has ever been. She's so made." I was just going on and on and on about my wife.

The lady working there was like, "That's incredible." She was like, "How many years have you been married?" I'm like, "I'm telling you right now, it gets better and better and better." I love me some Jennifer Nasser. I've told her before, "If you leave me, I'm going with you. Just so you know."

And I say that to say... I mean I love her. She's so much more than a Green Card. That's a side benefit. I love this woman. And I say all of that to say—I say all of that to say, don't miss this, "She makes a phenomenal wife, she makes a horrible god." She's just a girl. She's just a girl. She is not the bread of life.

I love my kids. I've got some amazing kids. My son, Rudy, we adopted from Guatemala when he was eight years old. I tell you that part because today when he wakes up, do you know what his day job is? He helps kids in the foster care system who need to be adopted by Christian families to belong to.

So, a former orphan is helping tons and tons of kids to not stay orphans. I'm so proud of him. I love him. He's one of my best friends. I freaking love Rudy Nasser. He's also given me two grandbabies with one more coming in three weeks. How do you like them apples? Right?



My daughter, Grace, is in her second year in law school. She's a baller. Loves the Lord. Can you tell that I'm smitten with my kids? My kids make wonderful kids; they make horrible gods.

Why am I telling you all of that? I'm telling you all of that because some of you are like, "Amen. Hallelujah. Buddhism won't get you there." And then all of a sudden some of you have elevated God and country and faith and family, and it's not that you are anti God, it's just that you have a top shelf in your life and top shelf living is like Jesus and America and my family.

And I love this country and I love my family, but look. Christianity is not about top shelf living where on the top shelf you put a few things that are really coveted. Christianity is you put Jesus on the throne. And on a throne there is room for one.

So, the kindest thing, the kindest thing I can do for my country that I love, because I love this country, the kindest thing that I can do for my wife, the kindest thing I can do for my best friend is not to put my kids or my friends or my country in a position where they will surely disappoint. It's cruelty to elevate them to a place where they cannot really deliver.

So, because Jesus loves us, He's not in competition. He's saying, "If I am your everything, if I become your great ride or die, if I become your greatest obsession, if everything else, compared to Me, is a distant second, if I am your everything, everything else will finally lock and load and make sense." Does that make sense?

The greatest gift I can give my wife is to put her in her proper place. If there is anything I can do to be a patriot to this country it's to put it in its proper place. The greatest thing I can do for anything in my life, for my best friends, is to put them in their proper place. Because one out of one people will fail you. Have you noticed this? But Jesus never will.

So, Jesus comes on the scene and that is what He is saying. This is why Billy Graham called this Bible verse the gospel in a nutshell. This is why it is everything that Jesus was saying. He was saying, "Make Me your everything. And if I become your everything, then all of a sudden anything else begins to be seen through that lens and it begins to finally make sense."

Now, what is interesting about this, however, may be hidden in plain sight for some of you. It's that Jesus makes this statement in John 6:35. Alright? He makes John 6:35, He declares the message of the gospel in John 6:35. And what is so interesting is Jesus says what He says in John 6:35, but if you back up, if you have a Bible and you spell the gospel accounts. Right? Matthew, Mark, Luke...



If you go back and you turn back one page, what is so interesting about John 6:35 is that if you back up just a page or two, you realize 24 hours before Jesus said that, about a day before He said what He said, the message, which is the gospel, Jesus the day before found a ton of people who were hungry and He gave them a ton of physical bread.

Think about it. If you go back, you might go back and realize, "Wow, that John 6:35 moment that we just kind of broke down together and looked at together, that's the text." But the context of it is the day before, 24 hours before, Jesus walked into what we call in Bible language the feeding of the five thousand. Any of you remember that story? We have six campuses, some of you are watching from different campuses, just wave at me if you know when I say this is the story called the feeding of the masses, the feeding of the five thousand.

Now, I didn't know that story. Nobody flannel-graphed it for me, you know, in kids' camp growing up. I was 18 years old the first time I ever read this in my Bible, brand new Christian. And I never will forget. I called my youth pastor and I said, "Hey, I'm reading in my Bible, bro, and there is a story in here about Jesus feeding five thousand people with one basket. And there are leftovers. How does that work?" I said, "Is that true?"

And he goes, "No, it's not true that Jesus fed five thousand." I said, "That's good, That's just creepy. That's just weird for us to say that we believe that." And he goes, "No, no, no. Let me clarify." He goes, "David, if you go listen to some of the other accounts or read them," he goes, "you'll see that this happened. But it wasn't just five thousand. It was five thousand men. And with those men came women. And with those men and women came children." And this is before birth control, so basically Catholic numbers, y'all.

And so he said, "We believe, conservatively, most theologians, that a minimum of fifteen thousand people were there on that mountainside." He said, "If you know this story and you believe this story, I believe this story to be true."

What happens is Jesus comes on the scene and there are fifteen thousand people who are there. And if you know the story, you know this. The fifteen thousand people who are there have realized, all of a sudden, that they had forgotten to bring anything to eat. Nobody packed a lunch. And fifteen thousand people are looking at each other and they are going, "Did you bring anything?" "No, did you bring anything?" Fourteen thousand nine hundred and ninety nine of them are unprepared.



And there is one teenaged boy who has packed a lunch. Let's just call it. Probably a homeschooler. Alright? So, he's packed a lunch. They are so good. Always being prepared. So, you've got this one kid. He's got plenty for himself. Nowhere near enough for anybody else. But instead of hoarding what did he do? He's hospitable. He shares.

And Jesus doesn't need his fish and bread to do what He's going to do. But Jesus allows him, gifts him, he gets to be in on the miracle. And the little boy brings his fish and his bread to Jesus. Jesus takes it and the next thing you know, poof, He multiplies. And Jesus meets their needs.

Now, don't miss this. Most of them are not there because they believe Jesus is the bread of life. They are there because they wanted Jesus... They wanted the handout bread. They wanted the hook-up, not the bread Himself. But Jesus doesn't survey them and say, "Who's really bought in?" Jesus finds fifteen thousand people who have an immediate need, an immediate need, and Jesus says, "Hey, there are fifteen thousand people who are here who are hungry," are you ready for this? And He just simply says, "Let's feed them. Let's feed them."

It is interesting to me that I am in the pulpit of one of my very favorite communicators, one of my favorite preachers, Aaron Brockett, and that I'm giving you this little nugget right here. This little moment that the greatest preacher of all time... That wouldn't be Aaron Brockett, it wouldn't be David Nasser, it wouldn't be Matt Chandler, it wouldn't be Levi Lescovey, it would be John Implicudario, it wouldn't be Louis Gigliotta... I mean all of these are great. Alright? Aaron Brockett right on top.

But I'm just saying to you, the greatest preacher of all time, the undisputed champion, has to be Jesus. Right? Ain't nobody better than Jesus. Because sometimes you go, "Man, Aaron has good timing." Jesus had perfect timing. "Aaron has good content." Jesus had perfect content.

You know why Jesus had perfect content? Jesus had perfect content because He made all content. The Bible says, "In the beginning was the Word." Now, in the beginning, before there was a beginning, there was an un-began One who began the beginning. Before there was creation, the uncreated One created all creation. Jesus gets to take credit for content and creation. Jesus is creative.

So, the greatest preacher of all time, the greatest preacher of all time, walks into a moment where there are fourteen thousand nine hundred and ninety nine people who don't have enough. One who does. And in that moment they are hungry. And He doesn't go, "Somebody with black on lead a few songs. And then hand Me a mic." The greatest preacher of all time finds fifteen thousand hungry people and He said, "Let's eat." He refrained from preaching.



And then the next day, the people who He met the need for the day before wake up and when they wake up they are physically hungry again. So, they go looking for the guy who fed them the day before. And that is when they run into John 6:35.

I call it the one, two punch. Here's another way to say it. It's the mash-up, it's the mash-up of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Right? The Great Commandment, love well; the Great Commission, go tell.

So, what does Jesus do? He would say, "Hey." The way that you serve up the words of Jesus is the way of Jesus. What we see here is we see that the message and the method work in sync with one another, synthesis.

Jesus comes on the scene and He says, "Here's how you earn the right to speak that kind of prophetic truth into lives. To use your church's language, this is how we take ground for the Kingdom. We take ground one small step, or giant step of kindness at a time. And we earn the right.

People go, "What just happened here? Why do you care? Why do you love? Why are you kind? Why are you serving?" And all of a sudden, when we do all of that with intentionality, we're taking ground in the sense that our strategy is that we're going to love ridiculously and then we're going to proclaim radically. And it's going to hold weight.

One time I was at an event in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. It was a group of about 500 people. They had come from Memphis, Tennessee to Gatlinburg, Tennessee to this retreat—a three night event. And we got done with the event. We had taken over this Day's Inn. We kind of hijacked this Days Inn with 500 people, just about every room. And we were meeting in this tiny little room at the bottom, this little conference room.

And the last day of the event my wife Jennifer and I were leaving. We were finished. We were on the top floor. We got our roller bag. We go and we get in the elevator. We were the only two in the elevator with our bag. The elevator goes down one level and it opened up. And the cleaning lady comes on. I knew she was the cleaning lady because she had the cart and the apron and everything.

And as soon as she comes on, she's not looking at us, she's looking at the door, and we realize that she is crying. She's in the elevator and she's crying. And so my wife mouths to me, "Say something." I mouth to her, "You say something."



And the elevator is going farther down and we realize we were about to lose the moment. So, you know how all of the buttons in the elevator are push buttons except the one red button that is a pull button? Out of panic, I just reached around the cart, the cleaning lady's cart, and I just pulled it.

And the elevator stopped. She's startled. And she turned around and looked at me. I said, "I'm so sorry I startled you." I said, "Listen. My name is David. This is my wife, Jennifer. We just noticed that you were crying. We don't want to lose this moment." I said, "Is there anything we can do, ma'am? I know it sounds like you're having a tough morning. Are you alright?"

And as soon as I said that she looked at me and she goes, "Are you with these people?" And I go, "What do you mean?" She goes, "These people who have taken over this hotel for the past three nights." She was talking about this youth group, these 500 people who had basically taken up all of the rooms. She was like, "Are you with them?"

And I thought, "One more lady in the service industry brought to tears by a youth group gone wild." And so I go, "No ma'am." And she goes, "Okay, I'm sorry to be emotional. I just came to work today and I found out that they are leaving."

She pulled out a wad of cash. She said, "This is eleven hundred dollars in tips and I haven't even been able to make one bed all week. I go into the rooms; the beds are already made. It's almost like we had an easy week off. The towels are hanging up to dry. It's been amazing."

She was like, "All of us are just so blown away by these teenagers, these college students. And they even know my name." She goes, "I forgot my nametag and they know my name. No one ever learns my name. And I just came to work today and I found out they are leaving and I don't want them to leave."

And then I interrupted her and I go, "Before we go any further, I do want to clarify, I am with them, actually." And she goes, "Okay." And she said, "What is wrong with them?" And I loved her lingo. She didn't have church lingo. You know. She wasn't like, "I lean in." She didn't get it. She's literally initiating the gospel conversation with us. She said, "I've seen a lot of youth groups. I've never seen any youth ministry. I've seen a lot of believers, but these people are unbelievable. These teenagers are not natural, they are supernatural."



And then my wife, who is an introvert, finally speaks up. She goes, "I can tell you exactly what is the matter with them. Jesus Christ is what is the matter with them." And she goes, "The reason why they know your name is because God knows your name. They are not over tipping you out of pity, they are over tipping you out of honor. They want to honor you and thank you for what you are doing. They are coming along side this weekend. They want to leave it better than they found it."

And she says, "Speaking of honor, speaking of sacrifice, speaking of giving, can I tell you who is the great model for that?" She pivots right into Jesus language, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He lived a perfect life. Then He died a sinner's death." And she starts explaining, "God so loves you that He gave His only Son that if you believe in Him you will not perish but have eternal life."

And then the next thing you know, the lady puts her hand over, my wife puts her hand over the cart between us. Their hands are on a stack of towels. And my wife holds her hand and she leads her to the Lord.

I finally release the button. We go down. The elevator doors open up. We walk into the lobby and I'm like, "This is my new sister in Christ." And all of these teenagers in the lobby start singing Happy Birthday because she was reborn. Now I tell you all that not to say Jennifer and I did something awesome. What I'm telling you is it was teed up. We we're on the one yard line and just didn't need to fumble. Why? Because for three nights she saw Christians not contradict the songs they were singing in the gatherings with the life that they were living that complimented.

Does that make any sense? They were gaining ground, taking ground. Why? One kindness at a time. Romans 2 says this, "Kindness leads to repentance." That's how great this went. Kindness. Hospitality. Graciousness. The people of grace were grace full. And all we had to do was just point to Jesus. She could seriously see because she'd seen the way of Jesus so the words of Jesus had weight.

Now, this is personal for me. I was a Muslim. As an eighteen year old one night a buddy of mine invited me to church. I was getting stoned with a buddy of mine. And I wasn't even a good Muslim. And my buddy, who wasn't even a good Christian or a Christian, out of pity invited me to church. He was literally handing me a joint, "Come to church with me."



And on a Saturday night I told my buddy there was no way my Muslim father who was more devout than me was going to let me go to a Christian church. And he kept on me to at least go ask him. So, on a Saturday night I walked into my house. I'll never forget. My buddy was standing at the door to make sure I was going to ask my dad. I walked down the hallway and I knocked on my parent's bedroom door and I said, "Dad, I know you are going to say no. Just say no loud enough so my friend can hear. He wants to know if tomorrow I could go with him to a Christian church."

But instead of saying no, my dad said yes. And let me tell you why. What I didn't know was that these Christians from this church, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, had been coming to my father's restaurant. My father had opened up a French restaurant. I know that sounds confusing, but stay with me.

So, my dad had opened up this restaurant and two weeks prior to that Saturday night this guy named Aubrey Edwards and a few other Christians from his church had come to my dad's restaurant and they'd seen how he was short handed on wait staff. And instead of complaining about the bad service, they got up, rolled up their sleeves, and waited on tables at my dad's restaurant.

And they went back the next day and did it again. And then they went back the next day. They cleared their life out and just became... This guy led worship. Not with a guitar in his hand, with a mop in his hand. He was taking ground. And they invited my dad to choir practice and then people signed up to become waiters and bus boys at my dad's restaurant for free. And for two weeks God had used kindness to massage my dad's heart.

Fast forward, two weeks later I had no idea any of this was going on. I'm a little half-baked and I go, "Dad, can I go to church?" And instead of saying no, my dad said, "What is the name of it?" It was the name of the exact church that people had been helping him. And my dad said, "You can go there, but only there."

I am standing here because the church did the one, two punch we talked about. The hero of my story is a church that showed up. And then I got to go to church. Eight weeks later I gave my life to Christ. Two weeks past that I went to get baptized. I know we are doing baptisms today. The night that I got baptized was the night I got kicked out of the house for getting baptized. That's why I don't even understand someone saying to me, "I don't think I'm going to get baptized." Why? "I don't want to get my hair wet." I'm like, "I got kicked out of the house."



Man, why would you not want to put on display and lead others in worship by saying I'm not ashamed to let people know. This is a symbolic reality of like I was buried with Christ. I was raised to walk in newness of life. What He did in me internally is intimate but it's not private. Personal but not private.

I got baptized. I came home. I got kicked out of the house. Five months after that my sister called one night and my sister had become a Christian. Five months after that my mom called me one night and she goes, "Tonight I become a Christian." I was like, "Why are you yelling?" "I want your father to hear because he's not kicking me nowhere." That's how she rolled. Five months after that my brother, Benjamin, became a Christian. And then two-and-a-half years later the Lord saved my dad.

Trace it all back. Trace it all back. A bunch of Christians showed up. I'm not a result of like, "Man, look at their impressive LED screens," or How cool their lobby presence is or "Don't they have the boogiest coffee in town on a Sunday morning?" I am a living product of like people showed up, showed kindness, earned the right to speak prophetic truth into our lives. You can do the same. What He did before He modeled for us today. This is how we take ground. That word y'all.

Can we pray together just with your heads bowed? First and foremost if you don't know Him, today might be the day that God sent you an Iranian missionary from the 10/40 Window to Indianapolis to ask you, "Do you know Him?"

If you've never given your life to Christ, here in just a second we're going to pray a sinner's prayer, a prayer of confession and salvation. And if you want to agree with me in this, you can give your life to Christ. And how beautiful would it be for you to follow immediately in believer's baptism?

It might be today you are hearing this and you are saying, "David, I've never really been baptized. I'm a Christian. But today, in the clarity of this moment, I just want to make sure that I'm stepping into that moment in obedience. I want to do that."

Maybe today is really an action point of, "I have a David Nasser in my neighborhood. There is a co-worker that I have been thinking about. How do I reach them for the gospel. And today I'm energized with this reality that I can love well so I can go tell."



So, Lord Jesus, let's just pray right now, I'm thankful for who You are. I want You to be my Savior. Step out of heaven and step in to my life. Save me from me. Jesus, I know You are God. I want You to be my God. I'm a sinner. I can't save myself. But what You did on the cross is more than enough. You are the sacrificial Lamb. You who knew no sin became sin so that I could be the righteousness of God. I receive that right now.

I know they put Your body in a tomb and three days later the tomb couldn't keep You. You conquered the grave. And I want that resurrection power. Step out of heaven. Step into my life and save me. Amen.

Let's just stand and celebrate the Lord together.



And here's the biggest picture. When He says, "I am the bread of life," He's saying this. Your soul was created to be satisfied in something that world cannot offer you. The fact that you and I get physically hungry, guess what? It is like a daily hunger. It's a daily sign. It's a daily trigger from God to show you, guess what? To prove how much you need Me.

It's meant to be a signal or a parable for your spiritual hunger. That's how God set it up. You don't just have temporal needs. You have eternal needs. He did not just come to hand out bread; He came to be bread.

Let me close with this. Let me close with this for anyone who is considering Jesus. But for all of us, what's the biggest need in your life right now? It is your marriage? Is it your finances? Is it your health? Is it your prodigal child? Is it the diagnosis you're scared of? The loneliness you feel that you can't shake?

I'm not minimizing those needs, but if we can extrapolate those to the end, they all have temporal consequences. I'm not going to minimize that. But I want to gently push on something. The biggest need in your life is not the most painful one, not the most prominent one, not even the most pressing one. The biggest need that all of you have in this place is the most permanent one.

The Bible is clear. How you and I respond to the bread of life, how you and I respond to Jesus, will have permanent consequences. Hear me out. I know I was fun and I was laughing, but I'm going to get serious right now. This is important.

I just got the worst text that you could receive. Today, right before I walked on stage, a friend of mine, young, just passed away. He's got a one-year-old. Just passed away. So, this is like life is a vapor. This is how we respond to Jesus. I'm grateful. I'm going to grieve. I'm going to cry. I'm going to talk to his family. But my hope is also in the fact that I will not grieve like those without a hope. I will see him again with Jesus.

Here's the point I'm trying to say. This matters. The bread of life, He's the bread who offers you eternal life. He gives you eternal satisfaction. He gives you eternal life. He gives you what your soul truly needs.

If you want to put your faith in Jesus you need three things. One: you need to acknowledge that hunger inside. What do I mean by that? I gave my life to Jesus in 2011 and I was fairly popular. I was fairly a college athlete. I had a bit of clout. You know what I'm saying? But guess what? I was empty. All success without Jesus—it was empty. There was no substance in it.



You are here today and you need to be honest; you are treating Jesus as an accessory. Here's what you need to be honest about. Everywhere else that you are going will not satisfy. Only Jesus will satisfy. And you know that relationship is keeping you empty. You know that person you keep going back to is leaving you empty. You know putting that job above God is leaving you empty. Acknowledge that that hunger is there. Don't fool yourself. You're hungry. You need Jesus.

And then you've got to believe that Jesus is actually, truly the answer. Here's what wrecks me. On the cross. Jesus, the bread of life, the One who said, "Whoever comes to me will never thirst," being hung and dying on the cross, He said two words. He said this, "I thirst."

He said, "I thirst." What does that mean? The One who satisfies every hunger, guess what? He took on the emptiness of all of humankind, the emptiness that we feel with life without Jesus. That's what sin is, it separates you from God. He took all of that in one moment.

You know that emptiness you feel after you sin. All of humanity, the billions and billions and billions of people, in one moment Jesus experienced that on the cross. He experienced emptiness for a moment so you will not have to for eternity. Believe that. Believe that He is the answer.

Then the last is you confess. You confess that He is the Lord. If you are here today and you want to give your life to Jesus I'm going to lead you in a prayer of salvation. Every head bowed. Every eye closed. If you want to receive the bread of life, this is serious, eternity hinges in the way you respond.

If you are here today and you want to receive Jesus, on the count of three, if you want to be led in a prayer: one, two three lift your hand up all across this place, all across this place, all across this place. Awesome. Awesome. Awesome. Awesome. Awesome. Awesome.

Repeat after me, everyone in this room loud and proud, but especially those who lifted up their hand.

Dear Jesus, thank You for choosing me. Thank You for saving me. Today I confess with my mouth and I believe in my heart that you are Lord, You are risen from the grave. Today, I believe and I receive the bread of life. Amen.

