Extreme Times Require Extreme Measures, Part 2

INTRODUCTION
1 Samuel 13:14 is a passage that we look at all the time at IHOP-KC. It’s a critical one. It’s God’s description of the heart of David. We’ll look at it for just a moment and then take off from there. The Lord described David as a man after His own heart. He was a man after His own heart, and it’s more than that. This is Samuel the prophet talking to the rebellious king Saul. Samuel the prophet is talking and he says, “King Saul, God is seeking for a man. He has already sought for him and found him. God calls him ‘a man after God’s own heart’” (1 Sam. 13:14).

Beloved, let’s stop for a moment. It’s a stunning concept that God is searching for a type of a person on the earth; that God sought for David and found him. The finding is easy to believe: the fact that God was longing, seeking, wanting a man or a woman, or a people with the makeup of David’s heart. God is still looking for such a people. You know the verse: “The eyes of the Lord [search] to and fro throughout the whole earth” (2 Chron. 16:9). God is searching in Asia; He’s searching in East Africa; He’s searching all up and down Latin America. He’s searching in the remote regions of Canada. He’s searching in Iceland for men and women with a heart like David, a people after His own heart. The eyes of the Lord are seen as searching the earth. Jesus even affirmed that Himself in John 4:24. He says, “My Father seeks for worshipers who worship in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:23-24, paraphrased)—in other words, the heart of David.

Beloved, Jesus said, “I want to tell you firsthand, My Father is searching out a quality of heart response towards Him in the earth.”

THERE COMES A TIME IN OUR LIVES WHEN THE STORIES AREN’T ENOUGH
Beloved, I want the Spirit of God, the spirit of grace, to find me. It’s not enough that David did it. It’s not enough that the heroes of church history did it. Some years ago I read a bunch of biographies, and I remember I slammed my hand down on the desk. I read all these biographies over a few-year period of the great men and women of God. They did this, they did that, they had the anointing, the breakthrough, they had this and that. I was thinking, “Yes, yes, yes, yes.” I told all their stories. I was about eighteen or nineteen years old at the time, and I told them all to the high school and the college ministries in which I was involved. I told the stories of J. Hudson Taylor and C. T. Studd. I got all the stories. “They did this and that! They did this and that!”

There was a moment in time when I said—and I know that it was by the gift of God, by the anointing—“Why not me?” There was a moment when the stories weren’t enough. I said, “Why not me?” It was one of the most anointed moments of my early young adult life. I remember it vividly. It shocked me when I said it. It was one of those gifts of God. He shoots the arrow to you, hits your heart with it, and it comes out for the first time on your own lips and it shocks you. Has anyone ever had that happen? It’s all the gift of God. It was the Lord’s heart. The arrow struck me and I said, “Why not me? Why just tell stories the rest of my life? Why not tell my testimony, instead of just tell stories? Why not tell what’s happening in me?” I remember it so clearly, and in those days, well, even today, I don’t hear the voice of the Lord very much, but it shocked me.

The Spirit of the Lord spoke. This word came to me so clearly. The Lord said, “I will, if you will.”
This word came to me, and I was in a group of people. We were on fire for the Lord, but we didn’t believe in the gifts of the Spirit. I was radically against tongues and healing, and all of that stuff. The Lord spoke anyway; sometimes it just happens that way. I was preaching against tongues on the university campuses. I was really disturbed by the charismatic stuff, because I thought it was a real distraction. We were all going after revival, and I remember the Lord spoke to me. I didn’t have any theology for the Lord speaking to me, but He did anyway. I said, “Lord, why not?” Even that was the Lord’s word. It just came through my lips. It was for my own heart.

The Spirit of the Lord rested on me, which was unusual, and the Lord said, “I will, if you will.”

Beloved, there’s a moment in your life where hearing the story about another place isn’t good enough. Hearing the story from another generation isn’t good enough. I love the story of the early apostles, but that’s not good enough for me. I love what Peter, James, and John did. I love what David, and Elijah, and Moses did, but, “What about me?” I don’t mean that I want a ministry like theirs. That’s not my point. I want to move in, near to the heart of God. They were weak and broken, sinful men like me. If they can qualify, I can qualify. Beloved, I’m not talking about me having their anointing, or their mission, or their mandate. I don’t mean that. I’m talking about having a heart experience of intimacy with God like they did. All of us can move into this. Some of you in this room, it has never dawned on you; it has never connected with you. You’ve become addicted to other people’s stories. You’re so thrilled, hearing them and retelling them. It’s great to hear them and retell them; I still hear and retell stories of others, but it has never connected with you: “Why not me? Why not me?”

“Well, Lord, I’m just so weak and broken and goofy, and ew.”

The Lord says, “So were they. It’s not about how great they were; it’s about My anointing on weak people.”

It’s a critical hour when it connects: “Why not you?”

The Lord spoke and said, “I will, if you will.” I knew what that meant. The Lord said, “I’ll meet you if you’ll rise up and come after Me. I’ll meet you. I’ll meet you beyond anything that you can imagine.”

That was almost thirty years ago. I began to dedicate my life from that time on to a life of prayer and fasting and going hard after God. Maybe I was nineteen; maybe I was twenty, I don’t know. I remember it was in the college ministry years, because I was telling all the stories and reading the biographies.

I said, “OK! ‘I will if you will’? Is that how it works?”

I didn’t hear anything else but just that one sentence. “OK, Well, let’s do it then! Let the games begin! Let’s do it! What do I do now?”

I began to search the Scriptures, and it’s so absolutely simple. People live dizzy for decades: “I don’t know what to do! I don’t know what to do!” Beloved, there’s no secret: fill your mind with the Word. Feast on the Word, and salt it with a small amount of regular fasting. Salt that feast of the Word with fasting; say yes to God and say no to sin. Beloved, just get in the chariot and it will take you right to where you belong. I’m serious. It’s no more mystical than that. Fill your mind with the Word, throw some fasting in on a regular basis, say yes to obedience and no to sin. When you fail, get up and run back into obedience with confidence in mercy. Begin to
understand the heart of God, the intimacy, the bridal message, the Fatherhood message that gives you confidence to keep returning when you stumble; just put on the seatbelt and you’ll end up at the right place in the will of God. This isn’t about men and women in history that hear well; it’s about a God who talks loudly. It’s not because I’m a good learner; I’m not a good follower, He’s a good teacher. He’s a good leader.

I call Him “the God of the big target.” He makes the target so big. It’s like this 100-yard target, this giant target, bigger than this building right there. It’s two feet away from me. I’m all spun around and dizzy. The Lord says, “Now, just walk.”

I hit it! “Bull’s eye!” It’s a 100-yard target, though. Then we go tell the story. We go tell the story, “I hit the will of God.”

The angel says, “There’s a really big target, little man, and you were really dizzy when you hit it,” but it’s true. I want to take the mystery out.

IT’S NOT SO FAR AWAY; IT’S NOT TOO MYSTERIOUS
Moses was the first one who said it in Deuteronomy 30. Paul quoted it in Romans 10. It says, “It’s not so high that someone has to go to heaven. It’s not so low that someone has to descend to the earth. It’s near to you. The word is near you, even in your mouth” (Rom. 10:6-8, paraphrased). Paul is quoting Moses (Deut. 30:11-14). What he means is this: you don’t have to climb up to heaven in some angelic visitation to know how to go forward. No one has to die and come back from the dead, descend to the lower parts, return, and tell the mystery. Moses said, “It’s in your mouth. It’s right there. It’s so close to you.

Just start praying and you’ll say the words accidentally: “I love You, God.” There it is; there it is: you said it. “I want to do what You want me to do.” Oh, you said it again; the mystery is over. It’s so simple. It’s costly in the natural, but it’s very, very simple.

Fill your mind with the Word, particularly with the revelation of God’s emotions. That’s what we’ll talk about in a moment. Beloved, I profoundly believe in regular fasting as normative Christian living. The Church has—it’s been well-meaning, it’s been accidental, it hasn’t been malicious, but the Church has been telling lies for years. They’ve been telling the Body of Christ that they can get healed apart from prayer and fasting as a lifestyle. They’ve told them that their heart can enter into the highest things that God has apart from a lifestyle of prayer and fasting. That’s a lie. It’s not a malicious lie, but it’s a lie nonetheless. The people all come broken and bruised, and all beat up, with layers and layers of pain. We tell the people, “We do these things and the pain will go away and you can get healed.” You can only get partially healed, unless that person with his or her own heart says yes to the arena of communion with God, with fasting as a lifestyle. It’s an absolutely critical part of the Sermon on the Mount, as Jesus explained in Matthew 6. All throughout the New Testament that’s a part of the lifestyle of an abandoned person. We’ve promised them the anointing, and we’ve promised them healing, and we’ve promised them that the Church works apart from prayer and fasting. Though it’s innocent, it’s still a lie. The full healing, the full anointing, and the full function of the Church only, only, works in a context of fasting and prayer as a lifestyle.

You say, “How much?” I don’t know. It’s different for every person. It’s different in every season. Some seasons it’s more, and other seasons it’s less. For one person it’s more, for another it’s less. I don’t administrate that part. I tell you, right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is teaching Christianity 101: fasting,
prayer, and giving to the poor. It’s essential and foundational and fundamental. We’ve relegated that to the ranks of the radically committed. It belongs in all the new believer’s classes. It belongs in all the seeker-sensitive churches. It belongs in all the beginning ministries: prayer, fasting, and giving to the poor. The heart can’t be healed unless it engages with God at those levels on a regular basis. We can get a little healed; we can have a small amount of church, and we can have a small amount of anointing. We’ve gotten so used to a little: the small amount of heart healing, the small amount of anointing in ministry, and the small amount of church life is so much better than the man down the road. We think it’s so good, so we have conferences on it. We take our little; we’ve disconnected from what God wants to give us in fullness. Our small amount of healing is so much greater than the no one getting healed down the road. Well, we should have a conference on it. I mean, we have a little to say about it with our small amount of anointing, and our small amount of church life.

PRAYER, FASTING, AND GIVING: THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
Beloved, the new believer’s class, basic Christianity, is prayer, fasting, and giving. Matthew 6 is absolute foundations class 101. We teach our fourteen- and sixteen- and eighteen-year olds: “You have to live in intimacy with God. Feed your spirit on the Word. Live in the grace of fasting. You can figure out how much you want to do it. You have to give yourself to God in obedience. When you sin, rise up in confidence and run into God’s heart. Receive your forgiveness and start again. Push delete and go hard a minute later.” We have a bunch of fourteen- and eighteen-year olds who think fasting and prayer is normal. Do you know why? Their mom and dad and everyone around them in our little IHOP-KC world think it’s normal. It was always supposed to be this way. We’re pretty bad at it, to be honest. It’s like Marci said: our prayers aren’t really anointed. A whole lot of things aren’t very anointed. I could give the list of about twenty things that we’re not very good at, but we’re saying yes in our spirit.

You don’t have to move to Kansas City to do this. Go do it in Chicago. Go do it in New Orleans. Go do it where you do it. Get in a group of three of four people. You need some friends to do it. I just want to say this again; I feel compelled. You can get a small amount of healing at the heart level apart from prayer, fasting, and giving. You can get a little, you really can. You get more than the group down the road. You can get a little anointing in your prophetic ministry, your healing ministry, your preaching ministry. You can get a little more than the man down the road. You can get a certain amount of church life, a little more than the church down the road. Never, ever did the Word of God suggest that you can have the main flow of what God is after, disconnected at the heart level from those three basic activities. King David was totally committed into this. So were the apostles. It’s so normal in church life; there are places in Asia, there are places in Africa, where this is so normal.

THE GRACE OF GOD GIVES US CONFIDENCE IN LOVE EVEN IN OUR WEAKNESS
We have signs and wonders. Of course, the theory is that the reason they have signs and wonders in Africa is because they don’t have doctors. They need it and they have the faith, etc. That’s probably partly true; but I think that explanation is peripheral, secondary. The truth is, they have signs and wonders in Africa because they have multitudes of people who live lifestyles of fasting and prayer and giving to the poor, even though they don’t have much to give. They do the Sermon on the Mount. I don’t think it’s because we have doctors in America, therefore we can’t have healings. I believe it’s because we have so much entertainment and recreation that we don’t have a hungry spirit. It’s not about doctors. I think we can have doctors, and still, I’m expecting our healing rooms to have cancers falling off regularly, even with doctors still in our city. The doctors aren’t our enemy; it’s the lifestyle of entertainment, the false understanding of the grace of God. It’s the understanding that the grace of God is to give us confidence while we live carnally. It’s not! The grace of God is to give us
confidence while we’re seeking God. We discover our weakness, and we have confidence to run into His heart, and the grace of God gives us power to live abandoned lives in the Holy Spirit.

This false doctrine of the grace of God says, “Hey, all those things you’re doing to go hard after God, that’s all just religious,” I’ve been hearing for years. When you talk about fasting, prayer, and radical giving to Western Christians, the first word you hear—it’s an age-old argument—is, “Religious! Religious! Religious!” It’s false; it’s an accusation of darkness. It’s not religion, though people can do it with a religious spirit. What they’re really saying is, “Ouch! Leave me alone! I don’t want to hear that conviction! I don’t want to be like you; I want to live like I want to live. I have to dismiss that testimony of radical Christianity.” They dismiss it with a claim, “Religious spirit! Religious spirit! Religious spirit!”

They live with a dull heart. They live spiritually bored. They live with piles of pains and hurts added up one on top of the other, all kinds of spiritual confusion, barrenness in their ministry, and powerlessness when they lay hands on the sick. Then they say, “Well, at least I’m enjoying grace. I don’t want to be religious.”

I’ve heard that for so many years. I said, “Oh, my goodness.” At first when I was a younger believer and started going after this, I was kind of thrown back by it, because I thought, “Oh, wow, all the old men say that’s religious.” I’ve been doing it for enough years, and I want to tell you it’s the grace of God. It’s the Word of God. It’s normal Christianity. It’s where the end-time church is going, for sure. We don’t have to live confused about it. The grace of God isn’t a special American commodity to give us confidence to live carnally, disconnected from God, with the assurance of, “Everything is OK.” That’s not the grace of God that Jesus died for. The grace of God does give us confidence when we discover our weakness. We’re going hard after God. Our own pain, our own immaturity, rises up and hits us in the face like a storm and knocks us down, and we need confidence to rise up again and run back to God’s heart.

Yes, we need confidence, absolutely. Not confidence to live a passive lifestyle thinking that it’s normal because all the other Christians are doing it and having fun about it. Beloved, we’re going after this thing. I don’t mean we here in this little place in Kansas City. There’s a cry all over the earth of men and women. There are millions who are saying yes and crossing over the line to live lives of abandonment to the Holy Spirit. There are millions of them. Don’t buy into that old Elijah lie, “I’m the only one.”

The Lord said, “No, Elijah, there are 7,000; you just don’t know where they are.” It’s a little group here and there. Beloved, there are millions going after this thing, millions who are doing it.

**GOD WANTS HIS CHURCH TO LIVE IN NORMATIVE CHRISTIANITY**

I love the story of what’s happening in Nigeria. They told the story in several Christian magazines this year, and I love it. A man started a church-planting movement, and in 1980 it had a few churches and about 5,000 people. This young man in his twenties took it over. The older man passed it on to him and the younger man took over. The young man had a vision for fasting and prayer. He was only maybe twenty-five; I don’t know, he was somewhere in his twenties. Now, twenty years later, he has taught on fasting and prayer and abandonment to God and he won’t back down. If I remember correctly, they’re starting three churches a week and there are five million in their movement. When a church grows from zero to five million in twenty years, we know it’s a megachurch. Five million in twenty years! And the majority are new converts.
When they had their annual conference, they went out and bought a huge lot about a mile wide and put wooden benches on it, because the conference takes place outdoors. They don’t have the kind of setup like this. They put benches on it that stretched for half a mile back. There are three million who come to the conference every year. I’m sure they don’t do registration and all that stuff, but three million people from the movement attend. The movement is right in their land. It’s not even from all over the earth; it’s right in their land. Babies come. I’m reading this thinking, “What about the hotels?” They sleep right there. Whatever seat they get, they have it for the four days. I mean, it boggles the mind when you think about all the domestic dimensions of this. But they do it anyway. They have signs and wonders and the power of God.

One thing that they were focused on this last year is that God would release the grace of fasting to the Western church, the church in America specifically. It’s like their prayers went up and God shot a thousand arrows to the earth. I said, “God, I want one of the arrows to strike IHOP-KC in Kansas City.”

Beloved, God wants His church to live in normative Christianity. It’s not OK that most of our leaders in the Body of Christ are still addicted to some kind of low-level substance abuse or pornography. There’s so much immorality, there’s so much addiction, in the leadership of the Body of Christ! It goes all the way from low grade to high-grade addictions and involvement in all kinds of things. The prayer meetings are empty, the altars are empty, the sick stay sick, there’s division everywhere. My point is not how bad that is; my point is how much we have that God will give us. He really will give this to us. There’s a day and a moment and an hour where we say, “Why not me? I’m a weak, broken person. I’m a candidate for the grace of God.”

God is seeking; He’s searching. His eyes are going to and fro. His eyes are searching through Asia, and Africa… He found a bunch in Africa; He found a bunch in Asia. He looks at Latin America and says, “Oh, I’ve got some!” He’s looking everywhere. Lord, I want to be one of those men!

You don’t need money; you don’t need an education; you don’t need to have friends, you don’t need to have a mailing list, you don’t need to have a platform ministry. All you need is a heart that says yes and you’re in. You don’t need anything. You need nothing else besides that. But in order to sustain it, you’ll need a few friends. Make sure it’s not the friends that are talking you out of it. So many of you go back home and your friends say, “Well, that was neat. Settle down; you’ll be OK in a little while.”

It’s OK to have friends like that, but don’t give your heart to their council. It’s not OK for you to settle down and be like them. It’s not OK. If they’re moving in the power of God, then maybe they have something to say. If they’re not, don’t listen to their council about how to get the power of God.

**DAVID WAS A STUDENT OF THE EMOTIONS OF GOD’S HEART**

God sought for a man, a man after His own heart. Turn to Psalm 27. David was a man after God’s own heart. I love to say this in two different ways. He was a man after God’s own heart in two ways. First, he was committed to obey the commands of God’s heart. We know that. David was committed to obey the commands of God’s heart. That’s very important, but let’s lay that aside for a moment. I’m not in any way minimizing it, but I only have a few more minutes, so I want to focus on one thing, on one specific thing here. In the second sense—catch this—David was a student of the emotions of God’s heart. He was a man who studied the emotions of God’s heart.
There’s a lot to say about that subject. David was more than a man committed to obey; he was a man committed to study a certain thing: the emotions of God’s heart and the beauty of God. The beauty of God is beyond His emotions. At the very pinnacle of His beauty are His emotions. If I had fifteen extra minutes, which I’m not going to take, I would prove from the Scriptures why the ultimate of God’s beauty is the reality of what burns in His emotions. When you study the beauty of God, you study the emotions of God, at the very pinnacle of your study. The beauty of God is more than His emotions, but at the very pinnacle of the study of the beauty of God is the study of God’s emotions.

David was fifteen and sixteen years old, playing his little guitar, his little harp, on the back hills of Bethlehem. He looked up and said, “Oh God.” He saw what God did, and David asked a question. What God did wasn’t enough. He looked at the “what” of creation, and he said, “Wow!” He looked at the hills, and the mountains, the ocean. He looked at the “what.” David went further; he sought the “why” behind the “what.” “Why did You do this? What were You thinking? What were You feeling when You made the heavens and the earth and the stars and the sky? What were You feeling when You made humans?”

It’s not just the “what” of creation; it’s not even the “what” of His redemption. There’s something else; there’s another question: it’s the “why?” Why did He send Jesus, and why did Jesus come? What burned in His heart that made Him say yes to this invitation of the Father to become man and to be crushed by the wrath of God? What moved God to create? What was moving in Him before creation that made Him create? David became a student of God’s emotions. He wanted to know the “why” behind the “what.”

I look at the way that the Lord leads human history, and it’s a fascinating study of the beauty of God to look at history, to look at His leadership, what He allows and what He doesn’t allow, but the big issue to me is, “Why are You doing this? Why are You leading this way?” There’s always an emotion burning in God that’s the answer to that question.

**The Word of God Overflows with Revelation of the Emotions of God**

I want to encourage you to do something. I’ve done it, and I will do it forever. I’ve only done it in an introductory way. I’m not by any means impressed by how much I’ve done it. I want to do it forever. I started in Genesis, some years ago, and worked all the way through Revelation. I noted every verse on the emotions of God in the whole Bible. I’ve done it several times through the years. You know, I did it, and I didn’t fully finish it. Then I did it again, and again, etc. Over the years, I’ve been studying the emotions of God. I start in Genesis and mark down every verse that denotes an emotion of God: anger, joy, gladness, pleasure, on and on and on, right down through the ranks, from Genesis to Revelation. Beloved, the Word of God is absolutely overflowing with revelation about God’s emotions. The emotions of God, I believe is the most neglected subject in the kingdom of God. It’s the subject of God Himself. The work of the kingdom, the ministry of the kingdom, the mandates of the kingdom, all the different strategies to do this and that, so much is being preached on in the kingdom of God—except for the God of the kingdom, the very heart of God Himself.

David was a student of God’s emotions. I’ve been a student of God’s emotions in an introductory kind of way. I want to study it for billions of years. I’ve devoted my life. We raised up a Bible school basically around the subject of the emotions of God. We call it “the Bride of Christ,” or “the Father heart of God.” It really is the forerunner message. The Lord put it on my heart to raise up a Bible school focused on the subject of the
emotions of God. We do more subjects than that, but that’s the very core of it. That’s the very core of IHOP-KC.

We have people who say, “We want to come and join IHOP-KC. We want to come and learn how to do that thing that you guys do with the singers and how they do all of that.” They want to learn the mechanics, they want to learn the model, and that’s good. Learn the model. We teach them the model in about five hours.

I said, “The model isn’t the hard part. The model isn’t the secret behind anything happening. It’s the study; it’s the lifelong fascination with the emotions of God that’s the power in the most introductory way, because we only have a small amount of power in what we’re doing here. It’s power, even a little. It’s the engine behind the whole thing.” Or, let’s put it this way: “It’s the fuel for the engine—the study of the emotions of God, the encountering of God’s heart: feeling it, understanding it, and making it known.”

WHAT WAS ON THE HEART OF THE MAN AFTER GOD’S HEART?
King David spoke here in Psalm 27:4. Earlier Chris DuPre was singing this song that he wrote on this subject. I want him to come and we’ll proclaim it. This is one of the most precious verses in the whole Word of God in the Old Testament, because this is the man after God’s heart; the man God said had a heart after Him; and here he’s telling us what’s in his heart. Isn’t that an amazing verse? Without Psalm 27:4, we would have lost a very great gift from God’s hand.

God says, “That man has a heart after Me.”

OK, the next question is, “Well, what was it?”

“Well, He had a unique commitment to obey Me.”

“OK, was there anything more?”

“Yes.”

David says it of himself. Look at this. He said, “One thing I desire. I will seek all the days of my life to gaze on the beauty, to encounter the beauty of God” (Ps. 27:4, paraphrased). Beloved, this verse is so filled with meaning. There are so many principles in this verse. David’s preoccupation was the beauty of God.

THE BRANCH OF THE LORD WILL BE REVEALED IN HIS BEAUTY
Again, the beauty of God is more than God’s emotions. The very pinnacle of God’s beauty is the subject of His emotions. Again, I could show you that from the Scriptures if I had more time. I’ll just leave it by saying that right now, I want to behold; instead of the word behold, put the word encounter. I want to study, encounter, feel, and be lost in the beauty of God. Look at Isaiah 4:2. At the end of the age there’s a prophecy. At the end of the age, the Messiah, Jesus, will be revealed across the earth in His beauty. On the Holy Spirit’s mind at the end of the age is the subject of revealing the beauty of the Branch of the Lord. He’s called the Branch of the Lord. The Branch of the Lord is the Messiah. That’s one of the Old Testament designations of the Messiah who was to come. All over the earth, the people of God will be captured with the beauty of the Branch, the Messiah.
Isaiah later says, “In that day, behold my eye will see the King in all of His beauty” (Isa. 33:17, paraphrased). Beloved, the Holy Spirit is emphasizing the subject of God’s beauty to awaken in us a heart like David. He beholds the beauty. Look here at the beginning of Psalm 27:4. He says, “One thing I have desired, that one thing will I seek.” Here’s the subject: “I have desired.” Beloved, this touches emotion. This isn’t some sterile, academic exercise. He says, “I desire, I desire.”

“David, hey! What’s going on in your life? Aren’t you like the main king in the Middle East these days?”

“Yes, yes, I have a pretty good army. The Lord helps us a lot.”

“Don’t you have a big government? Aren’t you like the president of that nation?”

“Yes, I’m running the government and I’m running the army.”

“Wow! Is that your lifelong dream?”

“No! No! No, it’s not!”

“I mean, David, you have one of the most powerful armies in history up to this point in time. You have a great nation. Wasn’t that your boyhood dream? We heard about Samuel; didn’t he anoint you when you were a boy, about sixteen or seventeen? Was that your dream?”

“No! That’s not my dream! No! Here’s the thing that I desire and dream about. I’m lost in it! This one thing I desire, and I’m alive for one thing: the beauty of Yeshua, the Messiah. He’s coming! I’m lost in a preoccupation with Him! Yes, I’ve agreed to be king, and yes, I’ve agreed to lead the military. That’s my work, but that’s not my main thing. I desire something else! I have a dream. It’s not about an army! My dream is being a lovesick worshiper, lost in the beauty of God! I desire! That’s my dream; that’s what drives me! That’s my secret; that’s my power. That’s what I do every time I get a chance!”

David would say, “I desire this! I do the other things, but this is what I desire!”

**THE GREAT CRISIS AT THE END OF THE AGE IS A CRISIS OF PASSION**

Beloved, this is the secret. The great crisis at the end of the age is a great collision; it’s already now upon us and it will intensify. The question at the end of the age, “How is the human heart satisfied?” The very core of the crisis is the question, “How does the human spirit become satisfied? How is the human spirit fascinated?”

Because if you can answer the way the human heart is satisfied and fascinated, you have the key to the end of the age in the spirit.

The kingdom of darkness says, “We’ll fascinate the human heart in sexual perversion, and occult power, and all kinds of other dimensions. They’ll be fascinated with murder, with occultism, with immorality.” The perversion is exploding. The devil is going after the fascination of the human spirit.

The Holy Spirit says, “I take My stand: they’ll be fascinated by the beauty of the Branch. I will fascinate My people with the Son of God.”
THERE’S ONLY ONE WAY TO FULLY SATISFY THE HUMAN HEART

The subject at the end of the age is: “How is the human heart fascinated?” Beloved, this is where the subject of fasting comes in. I’m not talking about a distant, remote, discipline of fasting. I’m talking about a fasting that’s energized by active intimacy with God; a fasting that’s empowered by touching intimacy with God, because that kind of fasting enlarges your capacity to receive revelation of beauty. This is not the kind of fasting where you check the day, you hang in there, and you fight through it. I’m talking about a fasting where our spirit is energized by the revelation of intimacy. That kind of fasting runs along the lines of the revelation David had.

Beloved, I’m telling you, I know for sure where the human heart is satisfied. It’s satisfied in gazing upon beauty with a lifestyle of fasting that enhances your ability to receive the beauty, and a life of obedience. David was the great warrior king, the great warrior. Beloved, I want to be a warrior in the spirit. I want to be a warrior in the spirit. The great warrior king was a lovesick worshiper. You’ll be so much more effective in your warring if you flow out of a foundation of intimacy as a lovesick worshiper. It’s not like you get locked away in a room and you forget everyone else. You go get locked away in that room, you encounter Him, and you’ll be so energized to bring Him to others.

David said, “I desire.” It’s more than, “I desire.” He says, “I seek it.”

A lot of people will come to a conference like this or those in other places, and they’ll say, “OK, my desire is stirred up a little.” They buy the tapes, they even get the video, and show them to their friends. But they don’t seek anything afterwards. They say, “Boy, that was a good memory. I remember that one class when Gary Wiens was talking. It was so good. Wow.”

Beloved, it’s not about remembering that one session. It’s about them translating it into a lifestyle of seeking: rearranging the way you spend time, rearranging the way you spend money, rearranging the way you do recreation and entertainment, rearranging the way you carry your heart in secret before God. That’s the seeking that we’re talking about. Hearing the vision will do nothing for you if it doesn’t translate into a new lifestyle of seeking. You’ll spend money differently; you’ll spend time differently. You’ll feed your spirit on different things. Your entertainment will be different. Your entertainment will become substantially related to the revelation of the beauty of God, rather than recreation and entertainment around the world. I’m not against recreation and entertainment. I believe some of it’s edifying, and some of it’s just relaxing, and some of it’s this, that, and the other. But we’ve overdosed. We’re so satiated, we’re so stuffed with “good things,” even things that aren’t sinful. I’m talking about legitimate things. We’re so stuffed that we have no appetite left for God.

“Well, I never saw anything with pornography in it. I never actually stole any money. I wasn’t blatantly covetous. I wasn’t mean. What do you mean? They were all legitimate things that I filled my soul with.”

Beloved, you fill your soul with them and you have no more appetite. Your appetite is diminished. Your appetite is destroyed. You’re satiated, you’re stuffed, and there’s no moving in your spirit towards God. It’s the legitimate things that are crowding out our hunger right now. We have to translate this desire into a lifestyle of seeking. It changes the way you spend time on Monday morning, Monday night, Tuesday morning, Saturday morning, Thursday afternoon. It changes the way our calendar looks and the way our checkbook looks. It changes the way we relax; it changes the way we have entertainment. It changes the way we have downtime. It changes the way we live.
WE WANT THE FULLNESS OF WHAT GOD WILL GIVE THE HEART IN THIS AGE

Look at this: David said we seek “one thing.” Look at the focus. Here’s the thing that’s so attractive about David’s life to me; I want to be a man like this, I want to be in the midst of a people like this, and I know that the kingdom of God is going to be like this. This was David’s confidence. David knew who he was. David knew what he wanted and David knew how to get it. There was a beauty about David’s life; it was his confidence. I want to say this to men and women of God who have touched this reality of David: you know what you want. You know what you want. We want the fullness of what God will give the human spirit in this generation. I don’t want a respectable ministry just so long as it’s a little better than the group down the road. Beloved, I’m consumed with going for everything that God will give the human heart. I want to expend all of my strength to go after it.

GOD KNOWS THE MYSTERIOUS OPERATIONS THAT WILL LIGHT OUR HEART

I’m sure about what I want. I’m sure about how to get it. I don’t mean I know all the secret information, here and there. It’s prayer, fasting, and giving. I’m telling you, that’s it. It’s Matthew 6. I will live life of prayer. Some of it’s worship, some of it’s prophesying, some of it’s intercession, some of it’s silence, some of it’s contemplative. Some of it’s meditation on the Word. You can call that prayer. It’s all those things where my spirit connects with God. I know it involves fasting, and that it involves using my resource to care for the poor, whether they’re saved or unsaved. When you touch prayer, fasting, and giving, it engages your heart at another level. It jolts your heart. It moves it in ways that you can’t predict or even define, but it does. God knows the mysterious operation of the human heart. He knows that if we do those three things our heart will be jolted, rearranged, the emotional chemistry changed. He knows that. He doesn’t explain it to you; He just says, “Do it.”

But the Church in the Western world doesn’t do it, and they live with a locked heart. “Well, Jesus, if You would have explained why we do it…”

Jesus says, “You do it, and you’ll discover as you do it why it’s important.” It rearranges the way your heart works on the inside. Prayer, fasting, and giving isn’t something that we do for God, it’s something that we do to enlarge our capacity to receive freely from God. Prayer, fasting, and giving isn’t something that I do heroically because I care so much and no one else does. It’s something that I do as a human that realigns my inner man to receive more. I love to feel fascinated. I love it. I love it.

I remember when I first left the Church. I was pastoring a church of a few thousand members. I had pastored it for eighteen years. I was talking to my two sons. This was three years ago. One was eighteen and one was nineteen. I said, “OK, I’m resigning from the church.” We had a little trailer, the one that we’re about to get out of in July to get into our new building. We had five staff members, five nineteen-year olds. It was the old man and a few eighteen- or nineteen-year olds. I said, “We’re going for it. We have a vision.” There were about five or six others with us; maybe ten of us. I said, “I’m going for it.”

I said, “Here’s what I’m going to do. I will commit myself to fast x-amount, several days a week, and I will be in the house of prayer x-amount, this, that, and the other. I’m resigning the church. I will do this and that.”

My two boys looked at me, and one of them said, “Why? Dad, why don’t you just stay as head of the church?” He was kind of giving me a way out.

I said, “No, no, no, no, I want to go there.”
He said, “But there’s no one in that trailer.”

I said, “Oh, they’ll be there. Don’t worry about that.” I said, “The angels are there anyway, and so is the Holy Spirit.”

They said, “Yeah, yeah, we know all that, but Dad…” They were kind of sitting me down and having a father/son talk. They said, “Dad, are you sure you really want to do this?” Their eyes got big and they both gave me some reasons why I needed to think it through, get it confirmed, call Paul Cain and check with him. They said, “Once you announce this, it’s really going to happen.”

There are several reasons I was doing this, but this was a dad thing. I told them, “There’s really only one thing that I’m doing it for.”

They said, “What?”

I said, “I love pleasure.”

They said, “What?”

I said, “I love pleasure! That’s why I’m doing it. I love it.” I said, “That’s the place that I feel most pleasure, when I do this stuff.” Because I had been doing it for a few years before I did it full time. I said, “Oh, I want more. I’m addicted to this. I need more pleasure.”

They were eighteen and nineteen. They looked at me. I said, “Boys, I’m not like you guys. I have so much more desire for pleasure than you do.”

They both looked at each other. I said, “I need a lot more than you do.” I said, “You guys are easily satisfied. I’m not. I have a raging desire for pleasure in me.”

Their eyes were getting big and I said, “That’s why I’m doing it, because I’m finally getting to be plugged in from now until the second coming, or until I meet the Lord. I can’t wait.”

They both said, “OK?” They walked off into the sunset. Who could guess what they said? We’ve joked about that conversation before, because when they asked me “Why?” I already had the setup ready for them. It’s true, it’s true. We’re a people of one thing.

Beloved, we know what we want. This isn’t just an IHOP-KC thing; that’s not my point. I’m talking about a reality in the Spirit, not the mechanics of a ministry. I’m talking about a reality in the Spirit. We’re people of one thing. The power comes when you become a person of one thing, when you know who you are and you know for sure what you want and you know for sure how to get it. All of the emotional resource that you waist by juggling all of the options creates a unity with the Spirit, and there’s a power on the inside of you. We diminish; we lose so much of our emotional resource juggling options. “Well, I could be this. I might be that. I could be here, but so
and so said that I’m that and I might not be that. I think I’ll try it this way, but if it doesn’t work, I’ll try it that way.

We live like a blob of confusion all the time, even in the kingdom of God. Beloved, I want all of my emotional resource focused in unity with the Spirit. I tell you; it’s the way to live. It’s really the way to do it. I did IHOP-KC because I love pleasure. I loved to feel God. I love it. I want to do this to the end. I recommend it to all of my friends. Figure out ways to fast and pray more, fill your being with the knowledge of God’s emotions; speak it, sing it, tell others about it, pray it over the sick, go for it, get lost in the Spirit.

Beloved, we know who we are. Why are we walking around in the church, in the ministry, all confused with so many options? Your problem is your options. Burn the bridge. Put your hand to the plow. Don’t go back. I committed myself to a certain number of things before our team and our staff, and my family. I said, “I’m doing, a, b, and c until the second coming, or until I meet the Lord. I’m not experimenting; I’m going. It’s over. The bridge is burned. I’m never going back to so, and so, and so.” My point is not to be heroic; that’s not my point. My point is to do something that works on the inside. The way that it works is when you become focused in truth.

**BURN YOUR OTHER BRIDGES AND COMMIT TO THIS ONE THING**

Earlier we looked at Mary of Bethany in Luke 10. Jesus said, “This one thing. She has chosen the good part” (Lk. 10:42). This is the great Evangelist saying, “She did it right.” He looked at Mary and said, “No one will steal this from you. No one will take this from you.” That was an actual prophecy. He said, “No one will steal this reality from you. Your heart is locked, you’re in it for good, and you’ve done well to choose it.”

Our options are wearing us out. Our options are causing us so much emotional fatigue. We’re trying to figure out how much we can play in the world and still get a respectable anointing. It’s the wrong approach. I’m not trying to figure out how much I can play and still have something respectable in the ministry. I’m trying to figure out how much God will empower me to be abandoned into one thing. That’s where the power is in the inner man. It really is.

We’ll end with Jeremiah 3:14-15. “‘Return, O backsliding children,’ says the Lord; ‘for I am married to you . . . And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jer. 3:14-15). “I will give you men and women like David,” is what He’s saying. By the way, this is a prophecy for the end of the age for the people of God. “I will give you shepherds according to My heart who will feed you on understanding and knowledge, because I, the Holy Spirit have fed them on understanding and knowledge—particularly knowledge of God’s heart.” That’s what He goes on to say in Jeremiah 9:23; you can jot that down and look it up later. Jeremiah 9:24 tells you what kind of knowledge. It’s the knowledge of God’s heart. Beloved, here’s the good news: God is raising up shepherds in this time of history who have a heart like David. Yes, you’re committed to obedience, and yes, you’re committed to become students of God’s emotions. You may be eighteen, you may be eighty, but you’re men and women who are going after the beauty of God. You’re men and women after God’s own heart, like David. In Ezekiel 37 and in several other places He says, “like David.” He actually includes the name David in the promise.

Beloved, all over this room there are men and women; some of you are in the Simeon Company. You’re in your fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties. Maybe you’ve already retired from the marketplace. Beloved, God says, “I
want you to be a shepherd of My people.” Look at what He says in verse 14, He says, “I’m married to you.” He says, “I burn with desire as a bridegroom. I love you like a bridegroom; therefore repent.”

You know how God is going to return Israel back? When He says return, He’s speaking to the nation of Israel at the end of the age. Israel will return by the bridal revelation. They’ll return by the revelation that God wants to be married to them. They’ll return when they see a God who burns like a bridegroom. Then they’ll be under the leadership of shepherds who have the heart of David, who feed the people on what they’ve been fed by.

Beloved, are you feeding your spirit on this stuff? Are you feeding your spirit on intimacy with God, the Father heart, and the Bride of Christ? I don’t mean you take a session, or read a book once or twice a year. I’m talking about feeding your spirit. I mean abandoning yourself to the subject of the beauty of God.

MINISTRY TIME
Amen. Let’s stand. I’ll have the worship team come up. I just want us to connect for a minute. Men and women who are called to full-time ministry—I know that we’re all in full-time ministry, but I mean it’s your primary occupation. You’re saying, “I want to get lost, I want to devote my life like David to the beauty of God, to the Bride of Christ. I want to say yes to the grace of fasting. I want to do this thing!” You’re in full-time ministry, you or your spouse, or both of you. You’re saying, “Yes, I want to do the fasting thing!”

Because I tell you, the fasting thing enlarges your capacity to receive. It’s critical. Someone lied to us and told us it was optional. It’s critical. It’s mandatory to go up higher. It’s mandatory. I promise you that it’s mandatory. In the Bible and in history it has been proven.

If you’re saying yes to these things and you know that you’re called to the full-time ministry, to be a shepherd, whether local, or trans-local, whatever type of ministry, I want to invite you to come forward if you would like prayer. I’ll have the IHOP-KC staff pray for you. I need a few men to stand behind them.

This is a song that the Lord gave Chris some months ago. It so embodies what we’re about here at IHOP-KC. This is your confession; this is your repentance and your confession, some of you. By saying it the positive way, you’re all but confessing it. You’re saying, “This is it, Lord. This is where I’m going from now on.”

Beloved, I know who I am. I know where I’m going, and I know how to get there! Let’s do it together! Let’s go after this thing! Let’s get rid of the options! This one thing!