

"Rise With The Tide"
April 28, 2024 | Pastor John Stickl

This life is yours. And may my heart only burn for You, Jesus. So wherever you are right now, maybe, can you just take a big deep breath in. And just become aware that God is here. And He is with you. Oh, and He is for you. And He sees you. And He loves you. And He knows what's best for you. Because He is a good shepherd that is leading you into green pastures. And beside still waters. Remember, church isn't church if we don't meet with God. And so we don't just sing songs and go through the emotions, we become aware that He is here. And over these past few weeks, there's been this beautiful Spirit of revelation and repentance in our church. The Spirit of revelation, revelation is something you didn't see, but now it's uncovered and you see it. And repentance, it's changing my thinking. Turning from one way towards another of turning away from dead works and of faith towards God.

And this week as the pastors were praying for you, we just felt like we weren't supposed to rush on, but that we needed to stop and take a moment to give some time to respond to the Spirit of revelation and repentance that's been at work. You see, repentance is a great gift to the people of God. We often keep our distance from it because we allow shame and guilt and condemnation to get all swirled up in it. But when we confess and repent of our sins, there is a cleansing and a renewal and refreshment that comes from God. In fact, Acts 3:30, 3:19 says, "Repent then and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out. The times of refreshing may come from the Lord." When there is a Spirit of repentance and revelation at work in our lives, refreshment comes from the Lord.

And sometimes we just have to stop and acknowledge there are things in my life that need to be confessed and repented of. Sins and broken thinking, ways I've been acting, ways I've treated the other people even in this room, how I view God's Word, things I've kept, things I've kept in the darkness. And Satan wants to do everything he can to keep it in the darkness. And Jesus is graciously drawing you into the light. And if you say, "Confession and repentance, I don't know how to do it." You just talk to God about the brokenness and the bad thinking of your life. And you offer it up to Him, and you repent, you ask for forgiveness, and you receive His grace and His mercy. And you allow Him to cleanse you, wash you, and make you pure. And I think sometimes, as the people of God, we just want to move on to the next thing. But it's so good to sit in a little bit of godly sorrow. Like Isaiah who says, "Woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips." Or David when his sin is exposed and he is broken and humble before the Lord. Or Peter who hits his knees and says, "Away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." Or when the first gospel is preached and it says, "They were cut to the heart and said, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'" It's the prayer that I've been praying for our church all year long is that we would be cut to the heart and respond with confession and repentance in Jesus' name.

And so for the next few minutes at whatever campus you're at, can you just take some time to confess and repent of where your life has missed the mark? Of where you're not embracing the revelation that He has entrusted to you? Of, maybe, where your life is not arranged around Jesus and His way, but around the world and its way? For the next few minutes, can you just trust the Spirit of conviction and the Spirit of grace that wants to convict us and show us where

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we're off, but wants to give us a grace that not only forgives us, but empowers us to live a totally different way. Let's not rush on, but let's, let the Spirit do what He wants to do. So Spirit of conviction, Spirit of grace, come bring Your light into our darkness and give us godly sorrow, humility, and honesty. May we respond to Your Word and Your presence and Your Spirit in this moment.

So, does He have it all yet? It's a good song to sing, but what are you still holding onto? What are you still holding onto that God's asking you to let go of? So you can feel the tide of the kingdom rising. And as it's rising, if you hold on to the things He's asking you to let go of, you will drown yourself. But if you will simply let go of that which He is asking you to let go of, you will rise with the tide and He will take you to new places in Jesus' name. And so, Jonathan, can you guys all come back out? Because I want us to sing it again. Because I think there's an invitation in this for you and for me, and I just don't want you to miss it, and I want you to just do church. You're hearing me week after week after week for like these last two years doing everything I know how, because I don't want to see you drowned. I want to see a rise to a new place in God, the world is winding down, but the kingdom of God is winding up. And we live too much like the world and call it the kingdom. And so there are things that I'm over there praying for you and I'm just like, we just haven't let go of them yet. And what we all want to do is jump into this part three of meditation. I do too, I worked on it all week for you, but it doesn't matter if I'm not willing to first let go of that, which I already know I need to let go of. Okay, so I'll be real direct on some of these. Pride. Some of you, you are shackled to the anchor of pride. It's time to humble yourself before the Lord. Sexual immorality. Doing sex your way instead of God's way, man, it is dragging you down and it's killing you. It's time to let it go in Jesus' name. Greed. Some of us, our whole life, two hands on the bucket of money, and God saying "It's time to confess and repent." Not just say it, but actually live according to what I now say. Fear. Some of you are being drowned by fear. Rebellion. The spirit of, "I do what I want, when I want, how I want, nobody tells this guy what to do." That's killing you, because the kingdom is a kingdom of submission and surrender. A total disregard for the ways of Jesus. Some of us, it's like holding on to 50 pound anchors. And the interesting thing is, you're not shackled to it, you're holding onto it. And Jesus is just saying, "If you just open your hands, and this one, I will bring you to the surface and I will show you a measurably more than you can ask or imagine." This is what a different way looks like. You can't say a different way, but still live the same way. A different way means pride has to go. A different way means rebellion has to go. A different way means worldliness has to go. A different way means the language that I've been using has to go. A different way means the thoughts that I've been thinking, they have to go. And God is just inviting me to open up my hands and His grace will do all the work. So, so with, oh, just nothing but love, and hope, and compassion for your life, I want to invite you, to just try the confession and repentance experience one more time. I want to invite you to, just, one more time before we build the song up and start singing it, just like, now. So just close your eyes and just ask the Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, what am I holding onto that's not of You? That's drowning me? That's what I want to confess and repent of. And I want to open up my hands to You. And I ask You to lift me up. Wash me anew and take me to a new place. Don't miss the moments

where God is at work. This is one of them. The window is open, go through it. Let go of what you're holding on to. Spirit of conviction, Spirit of grace, come move in this room, come work in my heart. You're knocking, I choose to open up the door, come in and shine some light on some of the things that I just quickly pass by. You can trust in His goodness. And you can rest on His grace. Let the tide of God lift you up.

I never want to sing songs that I don't mean. Unless I know I don't mean it yet, but I want to mean it. That's called faith. Faith is, I know I don't mean it, but I want to mean it. So I'm going to sing it and I'm going to speak it, I'm going to declare it. Religion is, I sing it and I don't want it. And I don't want to want it. I want Jesus to have it all. All of my life. His Word is a fire; I want it to burn my life down. I want it to burn my life down. That the only thing that remains is Him. I want it to burn our church down to the ground that we might rise to the new life that we have in Christ. I want it to burn, I want it to, every idol we have, every ministry that's not of the Lord, every method that we use that's no longer of Him, every program that we put our trust in instead of the person of Jesus. I want Him to burn down all of our thinking of what church is supposed to be like. And if it doesn't check these three boxes, it wasn't church. I want Him to burn all of the idols that we, that we build, sometimes in this room, and at our own seat. And we declare it as "church" and "good church" and "what I need." And "this is what I expect." And "I've come to be entertained" and "come to consume." I know that's nobody in this room, but it needs to be burned down in Jesus' name. The whole lukewarm, apathy, walking like a zombie through life, it's just not okay anymore. I get it, that was COVID. That was like five years ago. It's time to move on in Jesus' name. It's time to move forward to the new things that He has created and called us to do. It's time to stir up the coals of revival and like, wake up to the life I have in Christ and this different way that He invites me to live. I'm so tired of, of being, being here for an hour and then going out and living 167 hours like the world. And then coming back for an hour and going back to the world. It doesn't work. Destroys your soul. Exhausts you. I think there's a whole lot of things in our life, including our own church, that Jesus is asking us to put on the altar. Are we willing to do that?

I mean, you remember the story of Abraham and Isaac? Abraham waits 25 years for this promised child, 25 years. And God gives him Isaac. He's the love of his life, the most important thing to him. Everything in his life is arranged around Isaac, because through Isaac, all the promises that God declared to Abraham will come to pass. And then one day, God says to Abraham, "Abraham, I want you to go and sacrifice your son to Me. Abraham, I want to see if you love Me or Isaac more." And so Abraham goes on a three-day journey up the mountain. And he takes his son, the thing he loves the most. But he has such a faith and a trust in the goodness of God that he sets his son on that altar. And when he is about to take his life, the Lord speaks and says, "Stop. Now I know that you love Me, because you have not withheld your one and only son for Me." What is it that we're holding back from God that He's asking us to put on the altar? Maybe it's sin in our life that we want to continue to live in. But maybe it's a good thing that's become a bondage thing that He's asking us to surrender. That's "Jesus, have it all." "Jesus, have some" is, "Oh, Jesus, I'm not going to give You Isaac, but I'll offer You

this ram." "I don't want the ram, I want Isaac. And the reason I want Isaac is, because Isaac has your heart, and what I want is your heart." So you might be like, "Jesus, I'll give you this," but He's like, "But I want this. Because this is what has your heart and I want your heart." See, that whole story is a picture of the Father and Jesus. He offered His one and only Son. Now we know that He loves us, because He did not withhold His only Son from us. Jesus, have it all, because Jesus gave it all. And we never have to question if we're worth it, if we're loved, if we're wanted, if we're seen, if following Him is a life worth living, because He already offered Himself up for us. Jesus gave it all. That's the only reason we can say, "Jesus, have it all." Because I know He is trustworthy. Because if He would not withhold Himself, will He not then, in Him, give me all things? "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not..." Ah, He gives me all that I need, exactly when I need it, and withholds no good things from those who love Him. I don't know, maybe this is my way of just saying to you, Valley Creek is on the altar, in Jesus' name. And we're not interested in the past, or in what everybody else is doing. We're interested in what God's doing. And we're interested in the kingdom. And we're gonna do things like memorize Scripture. So if that's like, "Hey, not interested in that," I totally hear you. I just wanna be super clear to you. To be like, in Jesus' name, have it all. Have it all. I don't wanna do Circles, and serve teams, and Serve the City, and weekend gatherings, and teach through messages, and do all the things for us to just live like everybody else. Live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Count yourself dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ. Live as though you are a beloved son or daughter in Jesus' name. And don't drown yourself as the water is rising. Let go and go to a new place in God.

See, today is great church. This is not what we were supposed to do. It's great church. You're like, "Hang on a second. I need to know what's in there." Okay, maybe next week. The whole point is, here's the deal. We, I think we forget that we're a people on a journey with God. And a people on a journey with God aren't in a hurry, because they go at the pace of God. I know some of you are getting tired of standing, I'm just about done. We're not in a hurry. So here's the good news, everything that's in the deck, it'll be in the deck next week, too. But let's not miss what God wanted to do today with a Spirit of repentance. A Spirit of revelation in the air. And here's the deal. Even if you let go of one weight and not the other, you're already a little higher. And now I'm just going to be praying for you that the Holy Spirit will use that visual image in your life over the course of this next week and month to show you, where am I holding on as the water's rising that I need to let go of? It's great, let go, great. Just so we all know, none of us are done letting go. You're like, "Oh, I did it. I'm good." No, I have things I need to let go of. You have things. And every time you let go, you rise a little higher. You rise a little higher, and you rise a little higher. And this is what a different way looks like in Jesus' name. If today was your first time with us, welcome to the heartbeat of our church. We have a real interest in meeting with God, because we believe that God is real, that God is good, and that God is here And we are willing to put anything on the altar to say, God, whatever You want to do, I just want to meet, I just want to know You, I want to meet with You, I want to become like You, I want my thoughts to be filled with You because You are good, and You are good to me.

So we're going to call it there today. You are welcome to stay. You are welcome to come up and get prayer. If you feel like you haven't let go yet, don't leave. We've got time, sit down, pray. Come up and ask somebody to help you. Whatever that looks like, let us love you. As we've been working the last two weeks, our practice plan has been to memorize and then meditate on Psalm 23. My encouragement for you is this. Make sure you -- I don't want to say it. Here's what I want to say. Make sure you've put all of your heart effort into memorizing Psalm 23 for next week. And we're going to do something together with it. My encouragement for you is like, that is a great repentance step of faith to say, "Okay, God, I can do this." The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. You can do it. You can do it. You can do it. In Jesus' name. For those of you that want to give, you can give it boxes on the doors on the way out or online. Some of you, that was the thing you just let go of, the love of money. Now, repent and give to God because that's what He says we're supposed to do. Can't be any more clear and direct for you than that, right? I mean, or you can choose to hang on to it and let the water keep going. That's -- this is what I'm trying to say, right? Don't just rush out of this building and go on about your day. Have a conversation with someone because God tells us to love one another and serve one another, especially in the body of Christ. So be the body with the 15, 20 minutes where we're leaving in service. Some of you, that's what you just let go of. Is that this place is actually a spiritual family, not just a religious community where I come and go, makes sense? These are the kinds of things that we're talking about that are so normal in the kingdom, so normal in Scripture, and they should become so normal to you and me as the people of God.

I pray, that in some way, fire was lit in your life in some way to be like, the old is gone, the new has come, a different way in Jesus' name. Here we go, next week, Meditation, Part Three. We'll keep moving on. We're not in a hurry because we want God. Valley Creek is on the altar. So Jesus, I just say to You, have it all. Have our church, have everything about us, have our lives, our minds, our hearts, our souls, our energies, everything we do and say, Lord, may You have it all. Our jobs, our families, our homes, our finances, our futures, our freedom, everything. May You have it all, because you gave it all. So You are worthy of it all, in Jesus' name. Everybody said, amen. Amen, I love you. Have a great week.