

# THE RESTORING POWER OF GOD'S WORD IN COMMUNITY +++

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Good morning, church. This whole series, we've been talking about not alone. And it is continuing to build upon itself, and I hope you're seeing this. We began with the reality that sometimes we feel alone and we can get so far into a thought that we're alone and we're distant from God that we become despondent and we don't see any way out for our community.

And there was a reminder for us in that, that sometimes God calls us in those moments and those seasons that we need to go and gather with someone, and sometimes that person is a paid professional that helps us see our way out of the forest. And I want to invite and encourage you once again throughout this message and beyond this message that if you ever get to where you say, I can't see a way out, whether it's in your personal life and being despondent or depressed or anxious, or whether it's in your marriage or in your parenting or in your next stage of life, there is people that want to help you. And we have had a wonderful benefactor and others who've given to our benevolence program, so if there's a cost issue, we can take care of that.

Our core counseling has new counselors and seasoned counselors that are there, and there is space and opening. So don't go alone, because God doesn't want you to, and you don't need to. There's no hurdles that are there. And so go to our core counseling.

We've also seen over this series the importance of having a friend that's not just our spouse, but a friend that we can confide in, that loves us enough to celebrate with us and loves us enough to walk in a valley with us and loves us enough to sometimes rebuke us and remind us of the will and the way and the plan of God for us. We also discovered how important it is to also be gathered with good community and choose friends that are of good character and who are noble and who will not tell us what we want to hear or what their desires are, but instead will speak what is good and where God wants to lead us.

And all of that comes to a culmination today and next week of how God continues to pull us into greater community beyond ourselves and beyond our understanding. I was reading a story recently about a sailor out of California who was heading out onto his voyage, and it was about a 30-mile voyage that he was going to sail, and he was sailing all by himself. And at some point, there should be a picture of him sailing coming up so you can just kind of see, but he's all by himself that's happening out there.

And as he's going along on this voyage, he just feels a slight wind come up, but it's nothing that he's concerned about. And he's heading down the coastline, and the wind is kind of coming, and he makes a couple little variations in his course charting, and he feels good. And it's getting to be about that time where he knows, okay, I should be able to see the harbor off into the distance, and I should start getting ready to go.

And as he sets out onto the bow of the boat to look for the harbor, it's not there. And he begins to have this moment of panic-strickeness, and he's like, where's that harbor? It should definitely be there. And he looks, and he checks his coordinates, and he checks the GPS, and he realized he is tens of miles off course. And his concern is he knows that where he's going, if he keeps going, he's going to head into a rocky area that will be dangerous to not only his boat, but his own life.

And notice this, there was no storm that came up. There was no calamitic event that pushed him off. There was no, the winds gusted and blew. There was no, that the boat had a problem. It was just something simple called a drift that happened. And now he was going to have to work hard. He was going to have to reconnect. He was going to have to go against the current.

He said, I just felt like I have to do this, but I don't want to do this, and I don't know if I can do this. Have you ever found yourself drifting in life? Like just a little course correction of a drift. Do you ever feel like God is distant from you? Do you ever feel like the things that God calls you to do are impossible? Like forgiveness, reading his word, coming to church on a regular basis, engaging in worship, sharing your faith, tithing.

Are there things that you just kind of sit there and say, I want to do this. I want to, I want to have this. I want to be a good husband. I want to be a good wife. I want to be a good parent. I want to be a good worker. And you have all the intentions of doing these things.

See, here's the deal. Nobody wakes up and says, today, I'm going to flip the world upside down. I'm going to totally go off course with my life. No one does that. It just happens. You want a strong marriage, but your marriage has drifted to despondency and friendship. And it's because life got busy and you stopped investing in dating one another.

You want a parent, or as grandparents, your children, to have a solid faith foundation because you know what it is to know Jesus. And you want to make sure that what really matters is they live for eternity with Jesus. And that's our desire as parents. But schedules and sports and life replace a faith foundation formation.

You want purpose in your life. You want to be able to look back and know what your meaning is. But it's easier to choose comfort than to choose the hard now. Or you want to say, yes, I'm a person of integrity and of character. And when people know me, they know I do the right thing. And when even those aren't watching, but yet there's subtle compromises in our daily living.

My daughter gave me the TV and Netflix just happened to be on her account, right? Or the taxes came through and, oh, I forgot to report that income. Or it's only a white lie. It's actually better if they don't know the truth because it won't cause issues. And so there's no harm. No one gets hurt in this little life. We find ourselves constantly doing that.

And here's the truth. Sometimes you can have everything around you and yet still drift. On the outside, it looks like we're going the right direction. Everything seems fine. But the current and the decisions and the small decisions that we make just lead us to drift.

And what it means is you don't drift because you chose the wrong destination. You drift because you stop checking your heading. Stop checking in. You stop looking and saying, is this really where we're supposed to be going?

And today, and I need you to read across all campuses, the words in yellow with me today, we're going to discover that when we drift, we're not alone. And what we do is we course correct with the word, worship, and walking with God. Can we say that again? The word, worship, and walking with God.

Whenever I have someone say to me, pastor, my life's kind of a mess. They never say it that way. They go, I just don't feel great right now. Or they say my marriage isn't good. They say, you know, being a parent is really hard. Or they say, you know, I just don't feel like God cares.

I always ask them, let's see who moved. And then I say, what does your word look like? Like tell me about your scripture life. And generally it will be like, well, I sometimes read the scripture, like occasionally, but it's just really hard. And I don't know that I always understand it. And then I tried one time to read Leviticus.

Or then I'll say, what does your worship life look like? I go to church occasionally. Or yeah, I go, but I check out. Like sometimes I'm scrolling on my phone. Sometimes I just like to sit in a corner. Sometimes I fall asleep during the message. Not your message, Pastor, but others.

And I go, yeah, I get that. But then I'll say like, what about your community? Do you have godly people that you talk with, that you're in small, small group, or we call them connect groups? Like, do you have people that you surround yourself with? No, I don't really anymore.

And every time someone's drifting and they feel distant and despondent with God and with whatever part of their life is a good and godly part of their life—marriage, parenting, purpose, integrity, character—I always can tell you that it will be one or all three of those things will be apart. They'll be lacking.

And what I say is, I remind them, God never moved. You did. And it wasn't overnight. It was one degree off course that over time put you in a completely different direction than you wanted your life to go.

I don't know what happens to you, but it happens to me occasionally. I'll be in the car and the GPS will say, like, go this way. But I kind of know which way I'm going, but I don't fully know where I'm going, so I need my GPS on my car.

And I'll be like, I know it's this way, but it will have me get off or turn on a different street. Does that happen to anyone else? Yeah. Oh, yeah. Right.

Here's what I find myself doing oftentimes, and I feel decent because Michael Scott did the same thing on an Office episode. So what I find myself doing is I find myself going, I don't know why the GPS is wrong right now, but they're wrong. So I'm going to keep going this recalculating, recalculating, and then probably like 10 minutes into my drive, I realize, oh, GPS knew what I didn't know.

There's generally an accident and there's a lot of traffic. And now I'm like 30 minutes in standstill traffic. Or there's construction, and that construction means that that lane is closed, right? And I find myself going, if I had just listened to the GPS, I would have been fine.

You see, every one of us drifts in our life. And I want to ask you right now at all campuses, I want you to think about right now for a just maybe 10, 15 seconds, faith, marriage, parenting, purpose, integrity, next stage, right? Morality, whatever. Where in your life right now are you drifting? Where do you feel that you're off course?

So let's get back on course. And let's start right now by discovering God's Word. In 2 Kings 22, 8-10, Hilkiah, the high priest says to Shephon, the secretary, I have found the book of the law in the temple of the Lord, and he gave it to Shephon who read it.

Then Shephon, the secretary, went to the king and reported to him, your officials have paid out the money that was in the temple of the Lord and have entrusted it to the workers and the supervisors of the temple.

And then Shephon, the secretary, informed the king, Hilkiah, the priest, has given me a book. And Shephon read from it in the presence of the king.

And here's what we know. And first of all, let's understand who is this king? It's Josiah. So Josiah is now the king. And let's also understand a little bit about Josiah.

The kingdom has been adrift. It's gone. And they're just living on their own as their own people by their own rules and their own ways. Right? They're, they're, they're living in the aftermath of Rehoboam.

And here's Josiah, ready for this, eight years old, and the king. He hasn't even hit teenage years yet, right? And now he's told, we have found in the temple, this word, the word, the book of the covenant was not destroyed by enemies. It was neglected by their own people.

It was in the temple the whole time, the, the way to get back on course through the word and the way of God, the will of God was in the temple the whole time, but no one wanted to open it. No one wanted to read it.

This is my mom's family Bible. She discovered this years ago when she was touring a house that once belonged to her grandfather. And she said to the owners of the house, if you ever get rid of this Bible, I would love to have it. And a few days later it showed up in her mailbox.

Now when you open this Bible, it opens right away and it says that it was printed in 1870. And then underneath says president William Harding. So this Bible is 156 years old, but also if you open this Bible, the pages are pristine as if they've never been read. There's no writing in it. There's no records with the exception of my mom writing in our records.

And I thought about what this Bible has been through as it sat in the home of my great grandfather. And I thought about it as it was sitting there in world war one. I thought about it as it was sitting there in their house in the great depression of the 1920s. I thought about it as it was sitting there and my great grandfather at 50 years old died and left behind a 21 year old widow and her only son.

I thought about it as it roared through into the dust bowl in the great depression. I thought about it as it roared through world war two. And yet in the midst of all that chaos and all the personal chaos of their lives that we know nothing about, this word was neglected. It was nothing better than a lamp stand, a coaster.

And I thought, yeah, look at this big Bible that we have. But it didn't help.

You see, we can walk around saying we have all the right things and have everything that's necessary and we can walk spiritually dead and alone when life and community is all around us.

And I want to say, I think some of us are doing that right now. I think some of us are here spiritually dead and alone. Your life's adrift. Your marriage, your parenting, your purpose, your integrity, it's gone.

And God's calling us not because he's saying someone has destroyed the word that can be a point for you back to get on course, but he's saying stop neglecting it. Stop neglecting the word of God at work in your life because its promise is that it won't come back void.

Stop neglecting true, wonderful worship of God, not just on Sunday for an hour, but every day that this is the culmination that sends you forth in worship and praise.

You see, revival begins with the rediscovering of the scriptures. It's not about programming. It's not about politics. It's not even about charisma.

And I want us to remember revival is such a buzzword right now. Don't get lost or hyped into the whole thing of like, oh, here, we want to do a spiritual revival. Let's go and just, just open up a church and, and play music and just see people show up and never leave.

That's a revival that's happening in our midst. That's not a revival. It's a good thing for sure, but it's not what brings a revival.

What brings a revival is a yearning and a discovery and an engagement back into the Lord, the will and the way, an ongoing living relationship and worship of who God is. That's a revival.

A revival isn't about acoustical, nice, soft, wonderful, meditative music, nor is it about big band. And if you're running around and saying, it's this type of music, an organ or a contemporary or traditional or this or that, that's your personal preference. That is not a law of God.

What a revival is, is us getting back to living out every single day as the temple of God, worshiping God with our whole heart, soul, and mind. Being engaged. That when drift happens, that we go back to the manual and we chart the course and we yield our lives to his will and his ways over what the world would tell us to do, over what our own minds and our own hearts that are sinful in their nature tell us to do.

Fighting against the whispers of Satan that just want to lie with things covered to look like truth, but they'll devour us.

Josiah in 11 through 13 hears the words of the book of the law and he tears his robes because he's cut to the heart. He knows they haven't been living the way.

And he gave the orders to Hilko, the priest, to Akim, the son of Sheffin, to Akbor, the son of Micaiah, to Sheffin, the secretary, and Esaiah, the king's attendants.

And he said, go and inquire of the Lord because he didn't feel worthy to come before God. And so he said, go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all of Judah.

And all about what is written in this book has been found because great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because those who've gone before us have not obeyed the words of this book. They've acted, not acted in accordance with all that is written here concerning us.

And here's what this great king does is he says, I'm going to own our part and even the parts of others before me. He doesn't play the blame game. He's not going to walk in the path of Adam when God says, Adam, where are you? The woman you put me here with the woman and you did this.

I'm not playing the blame game. I'm going to step up and say, this is on me and this is on my forefathers and this is on our people. And we are convicted in this. And we will repent from this and we will reform and we will revive what it is to be the people of God, the community of God. And we will do this together.

You see, you see very different results of two different kings. Remember Rehoboam. He was the king that said, I'm going to take pride. I am the king. Let me puff my chest and I will oppress the people.

You think it was bad under my dad, wait till you see me. And you got Josiah who walks and says, I'm going to be humble. Oh God, you are the God and we neglected you. We moved and we will repent and we will turn back in the midst of your drift.

Are you blaming someone else? Is it always someone else's fault? Is there someone else that made you do something, which you only have the power of one, which means it's your control, how you respond to anything.

You see, our human nature wants to blame. We want to take our pride and we want to say we're fine. But when we're like Josiah, we'll be convicted. We repent, we reform and we renew and we revive wherever we've drifted to get back onto course.

And what we learned from Josiah is personal repentance can shift your entire direction. This one King's response changed the course of the history of his people.

What happens in your marriage, in your parenting, in your desire for a life of godly purpose? What happens in your living out your character integrity? If your response comes from conviction and repentance, renewal and revival.

What happens when you don't blame, but you own? When you recognize and you reform and you come to live the word of God, that you become Christ and his bride, the church in your marriage, whatever role you are, husband or wife, or that you as a parent raise your children in the ways of the

Lord and they're lying down and then they're rising up and then they're walking and in their laughter and in their leisure and fathers, you don't exasperate your children.

What happens when your life purpose isn't about getting as much as you got and isn't about living as comfortable as you can be, but it's about changing the course of eternity for everyone that God has entrusted to you and that you see everything as a gift to be a wise steward and a faithful manager of?

What happens when you do the right thing every time, even when others aren't looking, just simply because it's who God has transformed you to be?

You will change the course of your history. You will change your legacy.

And in 23, one through three, Josiah calls all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem and he goes up to the temple of the Lord with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets and all the people from the least to the greatest.

And he reads in their hearing the words of the book of the covenant, which had been found in the temple.

And the king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord to follow the Lord and keep his commands, his statutes, his decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. And all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.

This is why I love our baptism Sundays. And I love the opportunity we have to remember our baptisms publicly.

It is a public confession that reminds us that we are called, that God has made a covenant with us in baptism, that God has promised that he will be our God and we will be his people.

And we have promised to live as his people, to put off the old self of Adam and to walk in the newness of life.

And if you are on a drift today and have never publicly remembered your baptism, I want to invite you to do that.

And this is happening in churches all around the world where churches will have fonts in the front. And as they come into worship, they publicly mark themselves in the sign of the cross, remembering who they are as they walk in.

And we have this opportunity. And so, so if you're in a drift right now in any part of your life, that part that you said in your head, and you're ready to renew and to hear the word of God, as Josiah proclaimed it to the people of God and said, we are going to walk in this covenant, do that.

So what happens here is Josiah, this great king, leads one of the most spiritual awakening reforms in all of Israel's history.

He destroys pagan altars. What altars need to be destroyed in your life? Is it an altar of pride or of ego? Is it an altar of anger? Is it an altar of you know everything? Is it an altar of contentment? Is it an altar of contempt? What is the altar that needs to be destroyed in your life?

What are the idols? Because he destroys idol worship and he says, no more will we worship idols. What are the idols in your life? Are they your children? Are they your grandchildren? Are they money? Are they your job? Are they your retirement? Are they your future? Are they your security? Are they, are they all the things that you want? Are they keeping up with the Joneses?

And he cleanses the temple. What needs to be cleansed in your temple? This is a temple. Is it pornography? Is it lust? Is it despair? Is it anxiety? Is it gluttony? Is it slothfulness, laziness? Is it gossip? Is it bitterness?

And he eliminates occult practices. Where is Satan whispering to you the ways of the world?

And finally, he restores the Passover observance that they are the people of God, who the blood of the lamb has overcome them and has passed over them and their households because they are the people of God.

Is your household known as a person of God?

And then what's sad about Josiah, neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did with all his heart, soul, and strength.

I can't help but when Jesus said, you shall worship the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind and all your strength, that Josiah was in the back of his mind and that as the people heard that, they would have thought the great King Josiah.

You see, there's another sailor in California who also set out on a different journey, but the same.

And as he went out at night, there was a wind that came up and he thought he was fine. He made tiner adjustments.

But then when he looked out to see where the harbor was, he wasn't anywhere near and he had a moment of panic, but then he collected himself and he returned to his charts. He returned to his coordinates. He returned to his training and he said, I can do the hard work in this.

And as he turned on that hard work and as he fought against the current and as he fought to go in the distance, all of a sudden he saw a light and it was the lighthouse.

And he went and he said these words. That moment I turned back toward my heading. I realized the light had been there the whole time. I was never abandoned. I was just off course.

God has never left you. He's calling you to return to the direction.

He's calling you to recognize when you're off course and to get back to the word of God, to be a part of the community that is gathered and to be a part of the covenant that has been renewed.

Josiah had this moment and Jesus gave us this reality and his empty tomb, the resurrection of Christ, tells us that the light of the world has never left us and that darkness will not overcome him and it will not overcome you.

No matter how far you've drifted.

No matter how much you've done.

No matter where you're at.

He's always saying you're not alone.

Come home.

Come home.

So are you feeling distant from God?

Is your marriage in despair?

Are you tired of parenting your children?

Are you feeling purposeless?

Are you doing things you know you shouldn't?

Today hear this.

The answer is not try harder.

You can do this.

It's come back to the word who became flesh and dwells with you.

Turn to a community that wants to gather you.

And if needed, see one of our counselors who wants to love you.

Today we're giving copies of the Bible away.

If you don't have one, get one in our next steps room.

If you know someone who's hurting, maybe they're talking divorce.

Maybe they're talking about just the exhaustion of parenting.

They're not sure what it's going to be like.

Maybe they're saying, I hate my job.

Maybe they're just always in a non-contentment.

They're saying, I need to move.

I need to do this.

I need bigger.

I need better.

Give them a Bible and remind them of the opening words.

It says, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

It's always been there, shining bright.

And discover what Josiah discovered.

God isn't waiting at the finish line for you.

He's right there in the middle of the drift with you.

Ready to guide you back and to do the hard work with you.

To walk with you, before you, behind you, beside you, and to carry you.

Welcome home.

Please rise and pray with me at all campuses.

So God, thank you so much that your son has given us the light of the world, that you never moved, but you've always been there, that you walk with us every step of the way.

So God, just continue to embolden us.

And in the midst of our drift, let us not neglect that word, but instead, let us open that word and be engaged in that word, to worship and to walk with you and with those you've entrusted to us.

And all God's people everywhere said, amen and amen.