

1. This morning before we get into the message, I want to take a few minutes to introduce you to the newest member of our leadership team.
2. I say new with a chuckle. She actually started the first of January, and with all that has been happening in our world, I didn't get around to properly introducing her until now.
3. Cassie Richerson will you join me on stage? Cassie's title is Ministries Coordinator.
4. She has been asked numerous times. What does that mean? What do you do exactly? And those are really great questions.
5. Cassie has been filling a gap in the church, but even more a gap in my leadership.
6. It's interesting, of all the things that we as pastors take on, sometimes it is possible to forget one of the primary reasons God gave pastoral leadership.
7. That reason is made clear in the book of Ephesians. **Ephesians 4:11-13** So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12** to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
8. According to that scripture, what I see as one of my main callings from the Lord is not to do all the work of the ministry, but rather to equip God's people to do the work of the ministry.
9. My job is to equip you. And if I don't do that well, then the body of Christ suffers. The body of Christ won't be built up. It won't be unified. And it probably won't be very mature. So, my job to equip others is vitally important.
10. I have realized for some time that I was missing the mark in this area. And along the way I have had some wonderful people try and make me feel better by encouraging me that I can't do everything. And they are absolutely correct in that assessment.
11. But that doesn't take me off the hook. Paul doesn't tell the Ephesian church that pastors should equip God's people for works of service if they have time. It was just the command to do so.

12. And so, Cassie has been filling a valuable role for me and the church for several months. She's been filling that gap.
13. She has helped me evaluate things that we are doing well, and she has helped me see some areas where we could improve. And she has come up with ideas on how we can improve.
14. So, her role as Ministries Coordinator doesn't mean that she leads or does all the ministries of the church. Her role is to help others to lead so that we, all of us, can do the work of the ministry.
15. Her primary focus is to invest in volunteers so that they can be successful and effective at carrying out the work of the ministry.
16. So, we chose three areas in which she is to focus. Areas where I have not been leading very well.
17. And our goal is to stop doing certain things that were not working, and instead start doing things that will work.
18. And so, her and my theme has kind of been the words "No More".
  - No more fumbling around.
  - No more life sentences.
  - No more floundering.
19. I'm going to touch on what that means, and Cassie is going to share with us why she is passionate about those areas of improvement.

### **No more fumbling around.**

1. People who volunteer for ministry deserve to receive help and ongoing training. We want to equip you as a volunteer so that you can be the most effective.
2. I have been terrible at that.
3. But Cassie's degree is in human development, and so developing ministry volunteers is right up her ally.
4. Cassie, why are you passionate about providing ongoing training for volunteers?
5. The next area where we are saying no more is...

### **No more life sentences.**

1. People who volunteer for a role in ministry shouldn't feel like they are going to be stuck there for the rest of their lives. A life sentence. They need to know that there are seasons of life and seasons of ministry, and that is ok to move around to best fit those seasons.
2. I have been terrible at asking someone to do something, and then just kind of leaving them there until they just want out.
3. Cassie has been working on developing a system where it is ok to try a ministry out, and if that area just isn't a fit for you, then you can try somewhere else and no one will look down on you. You don't have to be stuck.
4. Cassie. Why are you passionate about helping volunteers find that right fit for them?
5. The third area of no more is...

### **No more floundering.**

1. In order to do ministry and do ministry well, our volunteers need ongoing tools and resources.
2. As volunteers go about serving in ministry, they need to know that as they face challenges, there are resources and tools available to help them navigate those challenges.
3. I'm not sure I have even been very good at pointing out where the toolbox is.
4. Cassie. Why are you passionate about helping volunteers find the tools and resources that will give them a chance for success?
5. I know that has been a broad description of Cassie's role, but I think you get the idea that our goal is to help you as a volunteer be as effective and fulfilled as is possible.
6. Cassie would love to talk to you about some of the things she is working on.
7. If you have questions about volunteering or anything else, she is doing, she will be available after the service today, or she is normally in the office on Tuesday and Thursday.
8. Thank you, Cassie.

## Message.

1. This morning we will continue with our series **Fan the Flame/Feed the Fire.**
2. Paul told his spiritual son Timothy in his second letter to Timothy chapter 1 verse 6 to fan into flame the gift of God inside him.
3. So, were talking about practical things we can do to feed the passion and the fire in our relationship with the Lord.
4. The last two weeks we have touched on reading God's word on a regular basis and how reading fans the flame of our faith, as long as we read for the goal of knowing, and not necessarily understanding.
5. Reading to know God and to know truth.
6. Just to be clear. God is not against our understanding. God is not purposefully trying to keep us in the dark or confused.
7. When I say don't make it your goal to understand but instead to know, I am not advocating staying ignorant or unlearned.
8. I am not suggesting that we engage in mindless Christianity. That's how cults get started.
9. What I'm suggesting is that what fans the flame and feeds the fire of our faith is not necessarily understanding. It is in knowing.
10. Knowing God and knowing truth.
11. When we seek to know God and know truth, when the rains come down and the floods come up (from our song last week), the foundation of our life and faith is firm and established. It can't be easily moved or swayed.
12. But when we seek as our primary goal to understand God and truth, every time we experience something we don't understand, which for me is multiple times a day, then every mis-understanding threatens to rattle and shake our faith.
13. **I'm not asking you to ignore understanding, I'm asking you to put understanding in the proper place.**
14. When faced with difficulties and trials, and delays in promises that we don't understand, it's ok to admit, hey God. I don't understand this. But if you stop at, I don't understand, and don't move past to what you know, you will remain stuck in a place of cold confusion.

15. But when we move past understanding by saying, God. I don't understand what I am going through. But I know you and I know the truth of your word.
16. I know that according to your word you love me, and you are continually working things out for my good.
17. I know the plans you have for me are to prosper me and not harm me. Plans to bring me a hope and a future.
18. I know that you created the heavens and the earth, and if you can hang stars in space on nothing, I know you can help me through this thing.
19. That's building our faith on what we know rather than on what we understand.
20. The next activity that will help fan the flame of our faith, is prayer.
21. **Prayer fans the flame and feeds the fire if,** (everyone say if) if we pray in such a way as to relate to God on his terms.
22. Prayer is not meant to be technical. Prayer is meant to be relational.
23. I am going to give you three steps this morning to experiencing a prayer life that ignites your faith. But the steps are not meant to be a blueprint (followed exactly) as much as they are meant to be a guide for relating to God as your heavenly father.
24. In all the bible. In my opinion, more than any other, the one person who prayed in such a way so that when he was finished his faith was fueled was David from the Old Testament.
25. We see examples of how he related to God in prayer through the book of Psalms.
26. Of the book of Psalms, at least 73 of them were written by David. And several of those 73 are prayers that David prayed, often times attached to music that would make them easier to remember.
27. I want to focus on just one of those psalms, Psalm 3. It is titled Save me, oh God.

**TEXT: Psalm 3:1-8 A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.**

LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! **2** Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." **3** But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. **4** I call out to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy mountain. **5** I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me. **6** I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side. **7** Arise, LORD! Deliver me, my God! Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked. **8** From the LORD comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.

**TITLE: Ignite your prayer life.**

**INTRO:**

1. The setting of this prayer is found in verse one. A Psalm of David when he fled from his son Absalom.
2. If you'd like to read the historical account of what happened, you can look later at 2 Samuel chapter 15.
3. Let me give you the quick notes version.
4. For 4 years, David's third oldest son Absalom conspired to take the kingdom away from his father.
5. For 4 years he stood at the entrance of the city gate and day after day he flattered people so as to win their favor, so that when he attempted his coup, that everyone would be on his side.
6. For the most part it worked. Absalom puts together a group of soldiers and starts marching toward Jerusalem to take the kingdom from his father, David.
7. When David hears what's happening, even though he was a mighty warrior, he fled for his life because he knew the threat was serious.
8. When Absalom arrives in Jerusalem, he does a pretty hurtful, antagonistic thing.
9. He sleeps with several of David's secondary wives, in a tent, on the roof of the palace for everyone to see. The message to his father was extremely clear. I despise you so much that I will humiliate you in front of everyone.
10. Then Absalom sends an army after his father to have David killed.
11. So, this is the backdrop when David prays to God. And the purpose of the prayer was also clear. Oh my God. Save me.

12. The level of stress and distress David was facing was more than most could endure. But it wasn't the first time his life had been threatened.
13. And even though these events shook David, he knew not only where to turn, but he knew how to relate to God in such a way that his faith was built, and he was encouraged.
14. I want to break David's prayer into 3 parts. In his prayer he was...
  - RAW with his emotions.
  - REMEMBERED the greatness of God.
  - REJOICED in God's protection.

### Raw.

1. Do you want to pray effective prayers that fan the flame of your faith? be raw with your emotions. Don't sugar coat it. Be real with God. God can handle it.
2. Psalm 3:1-2 LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! 2 Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him."
3. Notice with me the two phrases of verse 1 don't end with a question mark.
4. He was not asking God how many his foes were, and how many had risen up against him. He was informing God.
5. Allow me to put it into my own words.
6. Hey God. This is bad. This is so bad in fact that I can't even calculate in my mind how bad it is.
7. How many enemies do I have? I don't know. So many I can't count.
8. And God. These enemies are telling me that you aren't going to help me.
9. The reality is that if you read 2 Samuel 16 as he fled people were throwing rocks at him saying you deserve this. This is all happening to you because you are such a terrible human being that God has had enough.
10. You talk about circumstances that shake your faith. That's my definition.
11. These events cut David to the quick. And he was real and raw with God about his emotions and how this was affecting him.

12. But notice also, of the eight verses how many of them David spends talking about the problem. Two. Two verses talking about the problem. Being raw with God. But in verse 3 he...

### **Remembered.**

1. Remembered what? The greatness of his God.
2. Psalm 3:3-4 But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. 4 I call out to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy mountain.
3. In his prayer times David had learned something extremely valuable. I don't need to ignore the problems that I'm facing. But if I dwell on them too long, I'm going to get depressed.
4. David was a guy who was prone to very low emotions and focusing on the problem too long didn't help solve the problem, it actually made the problem worse.
5. So, David had learned to make a choice. And that choice was to remember what God had done in the past, and how great his God was.
6. Forgive me for beating a dead horse, but David refused to get stuck on what he didn't understand, and instead he chose to focus on what he knew.
7. What did David remember that he knew about God? You are a shield around me. You are the one who lifts my head high. And you are the God who answers me.
8. Prayer that focuses too much on the problem and not enough on the greatness of God is harmful prayer not helpful prayer.
9. If you want to ignite your faith, you better move past the problem as fast as possible and remind yourself of who God is and what he has done for you.
10. Yes, be raw with your emotions. But as quickly as possible remind yourself of the truth of the God you serve.
11. And then the third thing David had learned to do was...

### **Rejoice.**

1. Rejoice about what?
2. Don't miss this. What I'm about to show you is one of the keys to igniting your faith in prayer.



3. David did not rejoice because his circumstances had changed. He rejoiced because his perspective had changed. (repeat)
4. Psalm 3:5-6 I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.  
6 I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side.
5. I'm going to lay down and go to sleep in the middle of all this mess, and I'm going to wake up in the morning refreshed?
6. Why. Because my problems are over? Because the circumstances have changed? Because it all makes sense now?
7. Nope. I'm going to lay down and sleep well, because even if 10,000 soldiers surround me on every side, I rejoice in the fact that it is the Lord who sustains me.
8. Things haven't changed. His perspective has changed.
9. If we want to ignite our faith we can't wait until things look better or we feel better to rejoice in God.
10. We rejoice because God's got this. Whether we feel like he's got this or not.

#### Conclusion:

1. Well isn't that being fake? Not at all. That's not fake, that's faith.
2. Fake looks like this.
  - Oh. I don't have any problems. Everything is great.
  - I've got this Lord. I can decide this for myself. Thanks though.
  - Man, I praise God that everything is just what I want it to be.
3. Faith is...
  - God I'm hurting.
  - But I know you can be trusted with my pain.
  - So, thank you in advance for helping me through this.
4. As we prepare to close this morning, can we put into practice how David related to God?
5. If you don't have anything weighing on you then just praise the Lord.
6. If you do have a circumstance or situation you are dealing with, then Let's go to the Lord.

7. Be raw and real with him. Tell him how you feel. Tell Him if you're scared.
8. Remind yourself of who God is. Who does his Word say he is? Remind yourself of what God's like. Do that until your perspective starts to change.
9. Rejoice in his care and keeping of you.
10. End by praising the Lord all together.