

[Music] I don't even know if I believe I don't even know if I believe I don't even know I believe everything you're trying to say to me [Music] well um sorry to disappoint you I know many of you expected the lights to go up and you were going to see Larry right here um back from his sabbatical Larry is back from his sabbatical he's been in the office all week um but on Friday um got a phone call a text message from Larry saying that he had tested positive for covid and it was pretty sick so we sent out some social media posts trying to

let people know uh what to expect and so we were scrambling a little bit at the last minute this week Paul and his family are away on a vacation much needed vacation Paul's done an incredible job leading through this summer and taking a load of the preaching yeah and so it's been a great summer so um Larry sends you greetings he wants so bad to be here to preach this morning and it just did wasn't safe and he wasn't feeling great and so uh we've invited a long um old time friend of Waterstone to come Preach Today um Matt Ellis is with us uh Matt was on staff

at Waterstone he's going to talk a little bit about that um wow man wow you're a celebrity or something I don't know um but Matt was on staff at Waterstone he has a great uh story to tell he left Waterstone 15 or so years ago and was a pastor at Hope Crossing for a number of years now he's doing a lot of work uh ministering to some Churches and smaller churches and transitioning helping do some interim preaching and things like that and so uh would you please help me welcome Matt Ellis this morning to the

stage thank you good morning sorry you're so disappointed I figured I would shave my head so I kind of had that bald Larry look so I could trick you guys 'cause I was growing it out this week and then I figured 'cause I could grow it out any time I was going to grow it out this week but anyway I wanted to you know do the Larry thing uh Waterstone has been so important in my life over the years uh mentors and friends in in times of hard times and in Good Times you have been there for me thank you I just was thinking about it this morning in two weeks it'll be 22 years

since my wife and I um were married over in the activities room you call it now the old Sanctuary uh man this place has been so incredibly important to us you know the real reason that Larry called me is because I owe him a favor uh years ago 14 years ago uh it was uh December 20th on a Sunday morning uh very early just approaching 7:00 I

was supposed to preach at my church and uh I called them I said Larry you got 3 hours to prepare a message can you come preach for me because right now I'm taking my wife to the hospital she's having a baby so my youngest son was born and

he had three hours to prepare and he came and just did an awesome job and I told him he had to wear a tie so he did he wore a jacket and a tie when I usually preach in jeans and a t-shirt um so anyways I'm returning the favor Larry gave me about 24 hours so uh um thank you Larry for the 24 hours sorry about the 3 hours um a little bit about what Carrie and I and my family have been doing over the last I don't know 16 17 years since we left Waterstone I was a lead Pastor for 12 years I was an internal Pastor for a little while and my wife and I now work with a Ministry

called strength in Hope and this has kept us busy for the last three years strength in Hope a big part of our ministry is coming alongside missionaries North American missionaries who are overseas and um also coming along side Pastors in churches that have experienced hurt post-covid how many know uh Covid really did a number on our missionaries our missionaries uh were hurt their Ministries were hurt many of our pastors are still hurting some would say the Fallout still has not fully happened with the hurt that happened during Co and let me uh paint a picture just a little bit

if you remember during co uh you know we churches some Churches had a choice are we going to meet are we not going to meet are we going to wear masks are we are we not going to wear masks and in some weird mix of stuff it kind of became political and the pastors stood in the middle and if the Pastor said we're going to meet then some people in the church said what's the matter don't you love people why are you going to meet and if some people that didn't want to meet because they wanted to just this tension right if we

meet then it's because we don't love people if we don't meet it's because we don't love Jesus and the pastors stood in the middle and not only that in the last 10 years and even in the last five years our culture has radically shifted for the most part our institutions and individuals in our culture we've abandon truth we don't believe truth anymore there isn't truth and every Sunday your pastor whether it's Larry or Paul comes up here in in in a world that is abandoned and doesn't love doesn't even believe in truth anymore in that world Paul gets

up here Larry gets up here every week with a few um notes scribbled on a piece of paper and often times they're hurting and they're bleeding because of church hurt and they say there is truth and the culture throws its darts at the pastor consider the pastor in his role he's got to be a husband he's got to be a father he's a counselor he is a Visionary he uh sometimes has to set up the chairs in the activities room sometimes he has to vacuum he has to lead a staff he has to uh lead staff meetings and be an organizer and he has to go home at night

and love his family and his kids and his wife the weight of pastoring a church the weight of being a lead Pastor is heavy it's heavy and let me read you a few statistics about pastors and now these are actually old these first few ones are pre-covid uh pre-covid 2013 uh the Duke Divinity School uh clear health in initiative clear Health Initiative they said that uh pastors uh have double the rate of depression than the average person pastors have double the rate of depression that was in 2013 here's another one uh Protestant clergy have the highest overall

work-related stress and next to the lowest in personal resources to cope with occupational strain this is from the Journal of pastoral care in counseling from 2002 I remember several years ago I was a lead Pastor maybe eight or n years ago and it was a particularly hard time in my church it was a turnaround church and it was hard and I was taking arrows from church people all over the place and I was at the gym I had my headphones in and I was listening to a training and speaker was talking and he said uh well he quoted Peter Ducker some of you might

know Peter Ducker is an author in management leadership Guru and they quoted him and Peter ducker says uh um out of the four uh most difficult jobs to have in America Pastor is one of those and I remember just I couldn't um control myself I just the tears started flowing and I had to go home because somebody recognized somebody recognized how hard it is and what I was going through I say this to encourage you to encourage your pastors pray for your pastors got one more statistic here this is recent 2024 from the Barner research group 40% of pastors right

now in 2024 spring of Well Spring of 2024 40% of pastors are at high risk for Burnout and compare that to the statistic from 2015 where they said 11% of pastors are in high risk of burnout times have changed and you know what the church your pastors need you now perhaps more than ever and you know what you've been given a gift see Ro

of leading the church and holding up this this beautiful messy thing it wasn't just supposed to be for the lead pastor and it's not just supposed to be for the paid clergy and the paid staff it's supposed to be for all of us to

share this load is for all of us to share and when we share the church is a beautiful thing each one of us has been given a unique gift and when you use that gift others benefit it when you use that gift the church is strong when you don't use that gift there's something missing when you don't use that gift people hurt um if you got your Bibles I'm going to be um speaking from First Corinthians today we're going to be in chapter we're be in chapter 12 so if you want to turn there with me before I do that I got one more thing I want to recommend a book some of you um you

got your uh I usually when I preach and I talk like this at a church I bring a stack of books to give away but I didn't have time Amazon Prime wouldn't deliver these overnight and so uh everybody get out your phones your phones I know you have the Amazon App I'm gonna wait till you have your phones out go to the Amazon App here's the book I think we got a picture of the book it's called Uh pastors are people to what they won't tell you but you need to know I'll tell you I will tell you I just told you and

there's more in this book what um you need to know you guys are so great because you leave your cell phones in your car I always make my kids leave the cell phones in the car for the church right that's what you're doing you left them in the car right go buy this book it's like under 10 bucks and read it as a gift to your pastors into to your pastor staff okay all right uh let's read this passage and we can move on uh 1 Corinthians 12: 3-7 now there are a variety of gifts but the Same Spirit there are a variety of service but the same

lord and there are a variety of activities but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone to each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good each one of us has been given a unique contribution anybody follow baseball much nobody nobody follows baseball I don't ah there's one back there uh you ever heard the name Jeff matthys Jeff matys he was a catcher and in the late teens so just a few years ago 16 2016 17 18 19 he became a free agent and he was the most sought after free agent every team wanted him but it didn't make sense on paper his batting average

was uh 198 that's pretty low uh he was old in fact he was ancient for uh for Major League Baseball in his late 30s he was ancient but he was highly saw everybody wanted him because he made the team better pitchers said this about him they said he makes me a better pitcher see he had this way of catching and I don't quite get it I was a catcher when I was a little guy but I still don't get this but apparently he had a way of leading a pitch and if it was a ball he could make it look

like a strike and he truly did make pitchers look better and he had a way of calling plays like nobody else everybody wanted him he had this unique contribution that when he contributed teams won everybody here has been given a gift what the scripture calls a manifestation of the spirit of the Holy Spirit we've all been given a manifestation of the spirit so that when we offer that gift to the church people know that God just showed up this word manifestation a manifestation of the Spirit uh let me illustrate what this word

means so if I was in a dark room it would be with my wife in the dark room and we didn't know each other was there and she took a flashlight and turned it on all the sudden her presence would be manifest like I would know all of a sudden oh there she is this is what the scripture is saying each one of us nobody got skipped each one of us has been given a gift and when we use it people know God is real and people know God is with us he shows up and it is the holy spirit it says here it is a spirit empowered gift there's power were there uh let me illustrate further

I've got this uh 20 gauge shotgun shell I've also got a pocket full of shot from a 20 gauge shotgun now if I was to take this handful of shot goes inside this 20 gauge and if I was to throw it at the wall it just bounce off it probably wouldn't even chip the paint right Wayne probably chip the paint but in here when I pack all the shot in there and there's gunpowder there then there's power and if I was to take my 20 gauge shotgun and shoot it at the wall there'd be a hole in the wall because there's power behind that that's what the scripture is getting at it's so actually just

uh don't worry it's just uh ChapStick really it's not live ammo in case I drop it not going to hurt anybody but that's the what the spirit does my first time back to Waterstone in a long time was around Easter and I hadn't you know like I said I hadn't been here in a long time we showed up and um I'm going to tell another story about that later but I'm share this part now we walked in and worship was already going because we always

come to the 10:15 service my family right on time for the 10:15 service every Sunday watch for us well we came in late and worship was

going and Maddie was up here and I've never heard Maddie before and Erica was up here and the band and there was power Maddie's got a gift God the Holy Spirit looked down the corridor of time and knew that you would be a people that wanted to worship and he empowered Maddie with this Holy Spirit and she man it was she's empowered each one of us maybe we haven't found it yet each one of us scripture says has that kind of gift some of you might remember and man every time I think about this this comes back to me back in uh 2008 uh the end of the uh American Idol it

was the closing um you know the last episode of 2008 and all these gifted singers came on stage like all the finalists and I don't really ever didn't wasn't used to watching American Idol but we so happened to turn it on and they were up there and they sang Shout to the Lord anybody remember that it was awesome I mean just watching it like you these there there's a power there these people have been gifted power every one of us has been given a unique gift that when we offer it people go God is

here and the whole church benefits when I was just a kid I was 11 years old my dad he took me fishing in the San Francisco Bay we lived in California and he gave me this gift I was the one he took I had five brothers and sisters and it was me that he chose and we went fishing and I think I got a picture up there of the fish we caught 30 lb striper bass and a 25 pounder and we had lots of fish and we brought them home dad fed them in the back yard and there was so much meat we were filling you know those little one gallon bags full of meat and uh we to put them

in the freezer and Dad handed me a bag full of meat and he said go take this to mom so she can cook it for dinner and I said Dad that's a lot I don't think I can eat all that tonight I love fish I don't think I can eat all that he said but you have five brothers and sisters and me and Mom and you're going to share that we're going to share I didn't want to share there I thought the gift was for me and I'll never forget and I don't remember if my dad said it this way but it was the spirit of what was going on and maybe he said it but he said yeah I gave you that

gift and now I'm going to give you the gift of knowing what it feels like I'm going to give you the gift of the joy that will come when you share your gift with the people you love and we all sat around the table that night and I still I Still struggled I was 11 forgive me I still struggled but this is what God our Father does he gives us a gift not just for our benefit but for the benefit of those around us every one of us even the most ordinary amongst us has been given a gift I love this story I hope I get it right I just heard last night of one of you an

ordinary one of you that God has given this Incredible Gift he was telling me because I asked about his life and uh his name is Steve petti and just an ordinary guy and was a builder for a lot of years or an architect or something worked in the construction trade and hasn't been doing that for a long time but God uh give him this this gift that he can share vision and he can be passionate he's got these great ideas and he's got these great connections and knows how to find funding and knows how to get a building project going and so he was telling me

about this building right here being built his vision for this building and the team that is surrounded him because of this the Empower empowering of the Holy Spirit he was able to share this Vision it's going to be a place for Senior Living okay senior living that's pretty common senior living but he also is bringing in um young adults with uh developmental disabilities to bring those populations together so they can love and they can serve each other Steve's just an ordinary guy but when he starts talking and when he starts casting

Vision I take my wallet I want to write a check because I know the holy spirit is behind him and he was telling me I haven't I haven't built stuff for a long time and um you know it's really just not me and just so humble and I know what that's like when God uses you and the spirit shows up it is not bring pride in you it doesn't it is incredibly humbling and just a little heads up for you when you speak to your pastor after the service If he if he says you know you want to tell him good job and he kind of downplays it and poo poos it

it's because he knows it's not him he can't take credit particularly when he's saying what the scripture says and the Holy Spirit comes and just ignites it he can't take the credit he's not being you know standoffish he just he doesn't know how to respond because it wasn't him it was the Holy Spirit each one of us has been given a unique gift

that when we use it people know there is a God and when we use it the whole church benefits when we don't use it the whole church suffers uh let me keep reading 1 Corinthians 12:14 through 20 for the body does not consist

of one member but of many if the foot should say because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body that would not make it any less part of the body and if the ear should say because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body that would not make it any less part of the body if the whole body were an eye where would the sense of hearing be if the whole body were an ear where would the sense of smell but as it is God arranged the members of the body each one of them as he chose if all were a single member

where would the body be and as it is there are many parts yet one body skip down to verse 26 if any one member suffers all suffer together if any one member is honored all are honored together it takes all of us we all have unique gifts to contribute to the health of the whole body I have a friend volunteer at my church maybe this was 7 years ago or so and she would come on Fridays and she would she would mow the lawn and one weekend I was gone my family was away and I would have never let this happen yeah she was going to mow the lawn using

a lawn mower that we weren't going to maybe I should be careful how I talk 'cause well the case is closed but anyways the end of the story is she's wearing sandals and she ends up cutting her toe off on the church lawn mower so I called my friend who was an orthopedic is an orthopedic surgeon and he's one of the best and I'm like Josh this is no big deal right a toe big toe in fact I've already got a call in I got the hookups I know somebody who makes Prosthetics she can you know you might know her too she's going to make her a toe she's

going to be all right J says uh well um you know what's going to happen is she's never going to be able to wear sandals again serves are right I said serves are right she never wear sandals again uh soon her knee is going to start giving her pain and then uh maybe it'll take a few months or a few years but then um her hip is going to give her problems and then her lower back and then her neck and then maybe she will even have migraines like all because of the big toe it's because how the body was built in the skeletal structure you need your big



toe when you don't have your big toe everything is affected everything hurts you're not healthy like you once were when you refuse to use your gift and jump in the whole body hurts and when the whole body is hurting we got to do something that's a sick church when you're not serving the body it becomes a sick Church anybody ever smash their thumb I smashed my thumb a few times I couldn't even sleep at night I couldn't put my socks on I couldn't tie my shoes I couldn't fasten my belt it's

just my thumb but when the thumb hurts the whole body you got to everything has to adjust when you don't use your gifts the whole body suffers there's two types of cultures that uh anthropologists and people who study culture two types of culture and maybe you've heard this there individualistic culture and there's what call is called collectivist culture and people that come from collectivist culture they find their identity in the whole Us in North America we're typically individualistic and so if I was

to ask you about yourself you would respond well you know I grew up in in Denver and I went to this high school and I got this degree in college and I got married and I got this a master's degree and here's are here's my accomplishments and here's what I like to do in the weekend you would talk about you when I was in the South Pacific and I was in living in this collectivist culture and I would ask somebody about themselves and their response was like this uh um well I belong to this Village and last year our soccer team won the championship of all the you know soccer teams

the whole league we won okay that's great tell me about you H well our village grows the best corn on the whole island best corn all right tell me about you and see it's this C of this thing I remember one time I um came home to my little Hut I was living in I came home with a watermelon on a Sunday afternoon I was so hungry for watermelon they have big great watermelons the kind that still have the seeds and so they still have flavor you know the ones today don't have seeds and they just taste like water well these ones were big and sweet and juicy and so on my way home from

church I got this big watermelon and I took it into my kind of a dorm room Hut and I had a knife that I got from the kitchen and uh um nobody was around and I was going to eat this whole thing myself as soon as I cut into the watermelon I'm not kidding soon as I cut into the watermelon at my door and I open the door and there's like 12 of my neighbors there hey we got a watermelon I guess we do so I start slicing it up and soon

30 people are there and they're all there to eat my watermelon with our watermelon that's collectivist culture and that's what the

church is we're in this together and when one of us wins we all win and when one of us hurts we all hurt and when you don't show up with your unique contribution we all hurt God has given each one of us a gift a unique contribution 1 Corinthians 12:12 let me read this again for just as the body is one and has many members and all members of the body though many are one body so it is with the church uh so it is with Christ I'm sorry so it is with Christ but isn't that interesting because I'd

expect the end of that sentence to say so it is with church but it says Christ and there's some deep and mysterious there's some theological thing going on here that I'm not really going to get into because that's Larry's job with you but there is something mystical going on here he seems to be talking about the church but then he's talking about Christ and he's still talking about us because there's this whole holy thing that church is it's human and it's divine and it's the human and the Divine come together and the human hurts people

and the human hurts us and the human hurts its pastors and the human pastors sometimes hurt you but then there's this Divine peace that brings healing that brings hope our spirit empowered gifts is where Christ shows up you see the church is this beautiful thing isn't it you're going to be hurt if you stay around long enough but stick around because if you stick around long enough you're going to be healed love the church such a beautiful thing such a beautiful thing you know our response when we're hurt typically our response is I'm out of here I've struggled with that

the last few years I've struggled with that I'm out of here those are the people that hurt me but the same people that have hurt me so bad have brought healing I love the church uh just a little bit of my story of church hurt and church healing you guys are involved at every corner I was serving as a children's ministry person at a church just down the street um and I did something stupid kind of a stupid youth pastor thing and uh it eventually led me to losing my job I had to do with the gorilla costume at 3 in the morning and a group of kids that I thought

the room I was running through I thought it was uh at 3 in the morning I thought it was Junior and senior um High boys Junior and Senior High School boys that's the room I was going to run through well in the end I ran through the room of fifth and sixth grade girls and that cost me stupid youth pastor prank one of the board members at the church in the Fallout he said to me he said no one's ever going to want you in ministry again why don't you go work construction some more I think that's where you should be and this was somebody

I respected deeply and been a part of my life and in that Ministry there was there was great fruit it was great fruit that hurt the church hurt me and it was a few weeks later I was here this church in the tower room some of you know where that is and I was sitting with I'm going to name some names probably most of you won't know Patty Thompson Dave Reeves and maybe Shelley Ivy and some a few other staff members and they were interviewing me for a position here and I said to them I need I need to I need to tell you this story so I told them the

story and part of me was like they're going to I'm putting I'm putting the knife on the table and what they're going to do is they're going to just like that board member they're going to right and at the end of the story they laughed and they said you're the kind of youth pastor we need here and the church brought healing because those people in the tower room they tapped into something some power there was some power they saw my uh my hurt and my hopelessness and the power of the Holy Spirit was in that room and they spoke life into me and they said

you're not done yet God is not done with you and it brought healing few years later I was uh here maybe five or six years later and more than that seven years later uh I was the Middle School youth pastor and then the high school youth pastor positioned opened up and it was my kids that I had followed through and all the kids that were in high school at this point were my kids that I had in middle school and I wanted to be the new high school youth pastor I wanted that I thought that's what I was with a youth pastor I thought that's what I

was so good at and I got lots of affirmation there and Nick called me in his office Nick was the former lead Pastor here for 35 years and he called me in his office and said Matt you're not the guy that hurt and several the staff members affirmed that and it hurt the church hurt me it was just a week later I was in his office again kind of working out

details and he asked me he said well what do you want to be what do you want to do I was like well now that you've said I'm not a youth guy I don't know maybe I'll buy a FedEx route I looked into it

and So my answer to him was well I want your job I want to be a lead pastor and he looked at me and he said you know Matt I see that in you here's what we're going to do in just a few months you're not going to have any more responsibilities with the youth finish that finish that well I'm going to keep paying you I'm going to keep you around I'm going to teach you how to preach I'm going to teach you how to lead I'm going to help you find your role I'm going to help you find that place where the Holy Spirit has empowered

you I'm going to walk alongside you and since then that was 17 years ago I meet with Nick regularly he hurt me the church hurt me but I stuck around and the church healed me recently again I was hurt by the church without getting too much into the story a group of people that I had ministered with for 12 years they affirmed me they affirmed me in what was next for my Ministry they strongly affirmed me and they said great things and there was one guy that was on my team that for some reason got we got sideways and I

don't even understand uh he said to me and it meant this guy means a lot to me he said to me if we affirm you in your next phase of ministry I prayed about this Christ would be sad last week Paul talked about spiritual abuse somebody in power spiritually you know God told me hurt I learned the word recently betrayal trauma hurts a few months ago uh we were at a place where we needed another church again because I was done serving as interim pastor and we needed another church and there was this poll

in me and this push and this pole to come back to Waterstone I didn't want to because it's kind of like that 30-year-old that comes back to live in Mom and Dad's basement I didn't want to be that guy I don't remember why we came that more what pushed us over to come probably because my kids were already back involved here some in the youth ministry and so in one sense my wife dragged me back and I'm just going to sit in the back I'm not going to see anybody um you know I talk to anybody and um I'll go that was hurting I was hurting isn't that crazy just pause right here

isn't that crazy how the voices we remember and haunt us are those two voices in my life whenever I'm with my counselor you know laying on her couch those guys come up right is that crazy how that's what we hang on to that hurt is what we hang on to never mind all the positive stuff all the positive voices anyways here I am walking up the sidewalk coming into water stone head hanging low hurt and there's a familiar Embrace that I hadn't had in years and a familiar voice and a kiss on the

cheek she said I miss you she said I love you how many Have Been Kissed by birdie Wilton and in that moment there was power there was healing because God looked down the corridor of time and he knew that we would need a birdie the Holy Spirit gave her a gift and when she uses that gift there is power to bring healing each one of us has been given a unique contribution and when we use it the whole church benefits and when we don't use it the whole church hurts maybe you're here and you don't know what your gift is let me give you just a few application

points of maybe how you can learn and you can find what that gift may be first of all ask people around you that know you what am I good at what am I passionate about what that when I do it there is there was a supernatural power behind it what is that thing ask people second thing try some things out when I was in the sixth grade and I was playing baseball I really hated I was just doing it because I thought that that's what the cool kids who got all the girls they played baseball so I played baseball I was really bad at I would

fall asleep in the Outfield you know and I would be picking flowers and uh so the coach tried me out at different positions and he put me at Catcher And at catcher you're in every play and I was decent at playing catcher just like that you can you can um try different positions to serve the church try different places ask somebody try different things um the third thing is uh ask yourself this what has God made you good at how has he skilled you second thing is uh um what is it that uh makes you passionate what makes your fist pound

the table and you're like man something has to be done about this what have other people affirmed you in and what are the opportunities I promise you there's a lot of opportunities around here find your gift the church needs you your pastoral staff needs you when you're not engaged Everybody Hurts So it is with Christ the verse says so it is with Christ uh you know Community this is where trauma is heal healed in

community isn't it true that often times we get hurt and we just want to get out of here but Community is where trauma is

healed you know Jesus uh was betrayed by church people he knows Church betrayal he knows what it's like to be betrayed by those that are close to you Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God that is coming he spoke of healing he spoke of restoration he spoke of the coming Holy Spirit he said he's going to send the Holy Spirit and he died on the cross and when he died on the cross he did it for it was his gift to us to bring healing to bring hope and then the resurrection proving that he was God and then 40

days later on the day of Pentecost the Church of Christ was born the Holy Spirit a bunch of ordinary people just ordinary people and the Holy Spirit came empowered them and gave them gifts and on that day 3,000 people came to know Christ and then uh people were healed and incredible Miracles happened in the book of Acts because the Holy Spirit came and that was 2,000 years ago and you know what that that church the Holy Spirit ignited 2,000 years later here we are and the spirit still empowers us and the spirit still

gives gifts and a church still needs that that thing that you have to offer Church Still also hurts don't be surprised because it's human but the church still heals as well your Divine man manifestation it may help to bring somebody else healing I love the church why bother because the church is still God's vessel for 2,000 years it's been hurting people and for 2,000 years it's bring healing to people I love this line the church is the Hope For The World you've heard that church is the

hope it still is the church the church still is the Hope For The World the human peace and the C this is why we can say it because it's a Divine thing Christ is the Hope For The World Church is still the hope for the world even for those that have been hurt it's a hope for the world uh just a few years ago last thing I'll be done uh few years ago I went to this pastor's conference and there was 1500 pastors and it was the first time this particular group of pastors met and they're all young like all under 40 and it was the first time that they

had met since Covid so in three years they had not met and this group of pastors was you could feel the heaviness in the room they had been bruised and beat up they were

bleeding some of them had lost half their congregations some of them had lost congregants to covid some of them had lost family members to covid some of them had totally lost their churches and lost their jobs some of them had merged together this was a group of hurting people and you could feel it in the room well together we all stood up and sang this song and it's the song king of

kings and we're about to sing it in a minute and as this group of pastors sang it was so powerful because it is the story of the church this song is the story of the church and there's this line that you guys know it talks about the resurrection and you all cheer but then you get quiet again there's this other line and it goes like this and the Church of Christ was born and the spirit lit the flame and that group of a hurt bruised the pastors that afternoon lit up and my knees got weak I had to sit

down because here we are the church is still alive after all that the church is still here the Gates of Hell won't Prevail and so when we sing that song in a minute yeah we're going to cheer at the resurrection but then we're going to cheer when we sing and the spirit lit the flame and we're going to look at each other and we're going to say that's us and we're still here today that's us we're going to shout okay remind me of my charismatic days that's us we're going to do that you're with me it's us still hurting still bringing healing still The Hope

For The World God created us God created us to be with him it's our sins that separated us paying the price of sin Christ paid the price of sin for us it should have been us on the cross Christ stepped forward and said I will go I will represent them and so on the cross the punishment for our sins was put on Jesus that means that that we don't get punished in the end we ask for forgiveness and we trust what Christ did on the cross see the other world religions are like this there's this big scale in the sky and if in the end your good deeds outweigh the bad Deeds you

get to have a relationship with God and you get to make into the kingdom of God that's not the gospel the gospel says you can't earn it Christ did it for you that's the gospel it's part of the Gospel so if you're here today and you have not trusted your whole life with what Jesus did on the cross maybe you're trusting your religion maybe you're trusting if I just show up enough if I just read the Bible enough that's not going to do it Jesus did it on the cross he said it is finished if you're here today and you have not trusted Christ with all that I would love to talk with

you I would love to pray with you after the service if you're here today and you want to pray about finding and discovering your gifts we're going to have some prayer people in the corners over here after the service or maybe even during the song um they're going to be available to pray let me pray with us father thank you for the cross thank you for the church that brings healing father reveal to us the gifts that you've given us that the holy spirit is behind reveal to us the power behind what you have given us show us what it looks like to love and to serve you

and your church with the gifts that you've given us father fill this room now let us know your presence Let each one of us leave knowing that we've had an encounter with you as we celebrate at right now your church filled with the Holy Spirit empowered by the Holy Spirit Holy Spirit Light the flame amen