

Wake Us Up • September 28, 2025

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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- Pray for Godly boldness in everyday life.
- Pray for a steadfast commitment to Christ.
- Pray for unity among believers.

Scripture Reading:

Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him."

John 6:53-56 (NIV)

This is the Word of the Lord

Bryan Jones

A. Wake Us Up

1. Wake up to the RIGHT MOTIVES.

(John 6:26)

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for Me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill."

John 6:26 (NIV)

Now, in 2016, as you may know, the Chicago Cubs won the World Series. It was absolute chaos in Chicago... Here's the thing: People I had known for years, who never talked about the Cubs, started cheering and acting like die-hard fans! Really? You've never talked about the Cubs, ever... but they followed when it was easy, when it worked...

But the moment they aren't good or become like Clemson.... people just fall away. Sorry, too soon. 😊 ... Gamecock fans don't think I'm rooting for you; you just haven't been good enough to make fun of. Now that I've offended the whole room...

This is what Jesus sees in John 6: people are there, and they don't have the right motives... He sees they are there because they want something from Him, not Him. They want bread for their stomachs, not the bread of life for their soul...

Jesus cares about your motives:

- **In Following Him**

Tim Keller makes it clear that we all start following God because we want something from Him, but there must come a shift where we follow God for who He is!

Do you go to God to get things, or do you go to God to get God? This was Satan's point about Job... a man of God in the Bible... Satan says the reason he follows you is because he has everything.

Listen, you must make up your mind now why you follow God. The amount of people who have lost a job, lost a loved one, had setbacks in their life and decided to give up on God is overwhelming to me.

About once a month, in this room, I will just ask God, *Is there anything I want more than you? Is there anything that has more of my heart than you?* I will ask him to change it, and he does.

You know, I had a season of anxiety... and my mom said *Hey, that was my favorite season with you...* (Glad my suffering was such a blessing) She said that's when we got closest and I realized that with God, pain can either draw me closer to Him or push me further away...

I also realized that for years, I had this thinking that I would follow God as long as nothing bad happened... throughout the years, Jesus challenged my motives... so, the moment something bad happens, people can go: *Where is God?* ... like jobs, family, and Satan will do that...

And if he gave you no other blessings, would you still follow Him? These are the kinds of things we all must wrestle with.

But another area where our motives matter is the church, Jesus' bride.

- **In Church**

What are your motives for coming to church?

Jim Caviezel was an actor who played Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ*. I watched an interview with him about how he felt after taking that role. He lost opportunities in Hollywood because of his faith... now it outrages us that he would be canceled. We live in a cancel culture where if you say one wrong thing or do something someone doesn't like, they give up on you.

And then we bring that into the church. We think that because we add an amen or a Bible verse, we are justified in canceling churches because they don't say or do what we want.

Now what I'm about to say, I say with seriously the most amount of love... but I want to speak to something I never talk about...

The number of people I've met throughout the years who say to me, *I'm here from another church because they wouldn't do this, or they said this, and I didn't like it...* is alarming. And if you are here from another church... let me tell you I love you and I'm glad you're here, but we all need to be reminded that church isn't all about our preferences and beliefs.

Now you know I love you, right... Seriously, this church, for the most part, gets this right... But I was thinking about the different things in my years of ministry that people have left the church over... that they've told me...

- There are too many people getting baptized on a Sunday; it isn't reverent enough.
- I'm leaving because you changed the logo.
- The worship leader on stage was too into it, and it made me feel uncomfortable.
- You don't sing enough old songs.
- You don't sing enough new songs.
- You sing the same songs over and over.
- I'm leaving because you closed off the balcony. I've sat there for years.
- You took the grand piano off stage. I'm out.
- You let a woman teach. You don't let enough women teach.
- You didn't say this about Israel, do you not care about God's chosen people?
- You don't preach verse by verse like my favorite pastor does.
- You don't preach enough topical series.

- The volume is just too loud.
- The volume isn't loud enough; I can't hear in the back.
- If you don't tell people to wear a mask, I'm leaving. Are we a church that cares about the community?
- If you don't tell people to keep a mask on, I'm leaving. Are we a church that has faith?
- You don't tuck in your shirt; don't you have more reverence for God?
- You don't have an American flag on stage. You don't have a Christian flag on stage. Do we not care about the country?
- You made a comment that felt political. Leave politics out of it. You don't talk enough about politics.
- You let a non-Christian take communion, that's not biblical.
- You don't have gluten-free communion, why wouldn't a church of our size have that? It's not acceptable.

We're still friends, right? You know I love you.

Even this week, I saw people from my old church publicly posting about the church because they didn't say enough about Charlie Kirk's death... I saw someone else say their church said too much...

Listen, I want to be clear: If the church isn't preaching the word of God and being faithful, leave. But sometimes, we cancel church because of our preferences ... and we can make God's bride all about us. That's not okay. It's not about us... it's about God.

Showing up to church is half the battle, but how you show up is the other half...

One of the biggest revivals happened in Scotland, a place called the Hebrides... and I read a great book on it... they had a pastor named Duncan Campbell come and preach. God swept through the place like a hurricane... what floored me in the book is the church almost didn't invite him to come because he wore black shoes and at the time they believed brown shoes were more reverent and he was a little too progressive... their opinions almost caused them to miss the Holy Spirit.

So, what should be our motives showing up... Love God and Love people... which means my preferences and yours don't fall in there... It's about keeping Jesus in the center.

2. **Wake up to BOLDNESS.**

(John 6:48. C/R: John 6:51-56)

Being bold without discernment:

1.) Endorse everything

2.) Cancel Everything

Israel- bomb them.. that doesn't feel right.

This is why we need to be rooted in spirit to discern what to call out...

But let me say this, the thing we should be boldest about is Jesus... always the gospel.

The other day I was running around our parking lot... I will usually get here early, spend some time with God, run, and then shower... so last Thursday I was walking around praying... I was listening to some worship music, and the presence of God just fell over me, so I went over to one of the parking lot spaces, knelt down, and began worshipping... my first thought is... there are a bunch of people walking. This is a bit awkward. I almost stopped worshipping... then this deep thought hit me... who cares... and I got on my knees and went full charismatic. I'm weeping, and the presence of God fell over me. I finished, and because I was facing the road, I thought... I bet no one saw. I turned around and there was a woman walking her dogs... and she was like, *Hi...* I'm like, *My allergies are sure bad today 😊*... and then another woman

was just watching me... and then I ran into someone at the church that day, and they were like... *Hey, I saw you in the parking lot.* You know, sometimes it feels like people are watching you because they are... but who cares... this is a cultural moment for boldness...

- We need masculine men who aren't afraid to say I love you to their kids, masculine men who won't cheer at a football game, then stand idly as we sing praises to God.

- We need people who stop worrying about what looks odd to the crowds and start living boldly for Jesus Christ.

- We need Christians who stop giving more loyalty and devotion to being politically correct and just say what's true.

- We need Christians who will love people enough to say there is one God and he shed every last drop of blood so we don't have to live separated from him!

We need a revival of boldness!

Everyone talks about how loving Jesus is, and he was... but you know what else he was... Bold... He spoke up and he wasn't silenced...

"I am the bread of life."

John 6:48 (NIV)

It's so easy to miss the significance of this simple statement...

Here's what you gotta know: At this time, the people were studying the scriptures of Moses because there was this feast, Passover, where they would remember how God dealt with the Israelites.

One of the verses they would have been studying was in Exodus 3... Now, you may be familiar with this passage, but this is a story about a man named Moses in the middle of the desert who comes across this burning bush....

Now here's what's interesting... many scholars suggest this would have been the first time Moses had ever encountered God... so, in this encounter, he asks a very simple question... *WHAT'S YOUR NAME?*

Interestingly enough, Jesus would use this phrase *I am* 86 times in the New Testament... Why? Because he isn't interested in fans. He's interested in Followers.

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

John 6:51-52 (NIV)

Bandwagon fans don't like these kinds of statements... but Jesus doesn't stop there, he keeps going...

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him."

John 6:53-56 (NIV)

Jesus isn't afraid to offend people... this was shocking, it was graphic, and it was just bizarre. And if it sounds odd to us, imagine what it must have sounded like to his followers...

Consumed by me... you eat something... he's saying you need to be all in.

Think about this... Jesus has 20,000 people there, and he's okay pruning them out, challenging them, and sending them home... because he's not interested in fans; he wants followers, disciples...

Two Pitfalls to Avoid:

- 1.) Silent on Gospel: Sometimes, we can be so afraid to speak up because of how others will respond that we stay silent... I also think it's important to point out that some people are incredibly outspoken on justice issues or politics, but they never post about Jesus and the gospel... so we can't be silent on Jesus.
- 2.) Jaded: When you speak about Jesus, you will find some resistance. The challenge is to keep our hearts pure because if you lose your heart, you lose the love of God... and that can happen.

Jonathan Edwards... tripped someone... and he said, *Let's pray...* and I said, *You pray, I'm going to kill him...* and we prayed... and he gave his life to Jesus two years later... I worked with Jonathan years ago.

Hell is a real church, and there are a whole lot of people who are headed there. If we get jaded or if we get caught up in justice issues, we can forget that this matters most. Lost people matter to God. You have never looked eyes on someone who doesn't matter to God...

But we must speak up... we can't let fear keep us silent... we forgot the gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing... The gospel says you can't do anything for yourself. You are not intellectual, wise, or strong enough to rescue yourself, and that will always be offensive to some people.

I think sometimes we try to wrap everything in such a nice little bow, and it doesn't work like that. Your job is not to convince people of Jesus; that's the Spirit's job, but your job is to be bold...

The spirit cannot convince others if the church isn't bold, if the church remains silent. And let me say, sometimes, we forget how crazy and radical the gospel is... and we try to water it down....

Let me remind you, we believe in a virgin birth, a woman, Mary, became pregnant from the Holy Spirit... Jesus, the Savior of the world, was born in a manger in the middle of nowhere, with some barn animals... and then he lived in obscurity for thirty years... then all of a sudden he showed up in his community and he was like: *Surprise! I'm God. Just been waiting for the right moment to tell everyone...* he assembled some followers who all betrayed him at his death... He was crucified and killed, but miraculously rose from the grave three days later, which no one in all of human history has done but him... and if you believe in him now, here in Simpsonville, the Holy Spirit will come and live inside and guide and transform your life...

I'm convinced of two things... It's a crazy story, and it's 100% true... my job isn't to convince you of it, it's to be bold in sharing it... and that's your job...

If this cultural moment has shown us anything ... people are hungry, and you have the answers. Why stay silent? Someone will resist you, I promise. But be bold. God will use it!

3. Wake up to COMMIT. (John 6:66-68)

From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God."

John 6:66-68 (NIV)

Think about it, 20,000 people following Jesus, and now all of them leave... literally years ago, when someone told me they were leaving the church... I thought Jesus lost more... WWJD.

But if you're a disciple, following Jesus was the thing. People were amazed that you were connected with God, and now it's like, *Oh, you're one of those Jesus people. So, what does Jesus do... He looks right at Peter and says, Make up your mind. It's time to decide if you're in...*

First, he says, in effect, *Lord, we have been thinking about it. We have investigated the alternatives. You're not easy to live with. You embarrass us. You frighten us. We don't understand you at times. We see and hear you do things that simply blow our minds. You offend people whom we think are important. You tell too many stories. We have looked at some alternatives, but I want to tell you this, Lord: we have never found anyone who can do what you can do. To whom shall we go?*

Don't ride the emotions of last week because emotions will fade, but commitments don't... I was asked a question during marriage counseling. They said, *Why do we make vows? ... I said, Anyone can be married on their honeymoon... but it takes a commitment down the road...* Feelings in anything will fail... but today is the day when some people need to say, *I'm all in...*

I'm going to show up to church, no more excuses on the weekend.

I'm going to stop making excuses about my feelings. Each morning, I'm going up to seek him.

I'm going to stop making excuses about being bold... I will pray out loud with my family, invite others to church, and speak about Jesus.

You have to make these commitments now.

SENDING PEOPLE HOME... Quantity does not interest him; it is quality that makes the difference.

JESUS WANTS FOLLOWERS. FANS WILL NEVER CHANGE THE WORLD. THEY WILL NEVER RISK THEIR LIFE.
FANS WILL ALWAYS PLAY IT SAFE.