

If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab them. Luke, chapter 18, is where we're going to be. I'm going to do some work before we get there, but that's where we're going to land and hang out, so go ahead and turn there.

It's good to see you. If you are in Denton or Dallas, let me say hello and introduce myself. My name is Matt Chandler. I'm the lead teaching pastor here at The Village Church. If this is a resolution for you and you're kind of new here, let me try to explain what's going on. About 40 times a year, this is what you're going to see: me, on the screen. The rest of the year, you'll hear primarily from your campus pastors or other pastors on staff there in Denton and in Dallas.

If you get a chance today, or you're interested in the next couple of weeks, ask around at how this occurred. It wasn't kind of colonialism. We weren't trying to put our brand all over the Metroplex. Through a lot of prayer and a lot of fasting, God just kind of made a way in Denton and in Dallas for there to be a representation of the kingdom of God via The Village Church in these locations, so ask around. It really is a spectacular story.

When it comes to teaching on prayer, it always feels a bit awkward to me. It's not that the Bible doesn't have a lot to say about prayer. It's just that we already know we should and are frustrated that we don't enough. Am I right? So it becomes difficult to teach on because you don't want to do a drive-by guilt. I don't want to get up here and tell you what you already know. The Bible says we should be doing this, and we should be engaging in this, and we should be walking like this.

I don't feel like I could teach on prayer in such a way that anyone in this room would go, *Do you mean we're supposed to talk to God?* I just don't know that would happen. Now maybe that's true for some of you, but on the level, for most of us, that's not surprising. We know. In fact, as long as we have been coming to church, we have known we are to pray, and we, at some level, have been frustrated at our level of prayer. So let me tell you my hope.

My hope is to try to move us a little bit away from discipline and into delight, because I think the best motivator out there isn't discipline, but rather delight. If you delight in something, you'll be far more apt to be disciplined at something, rather than just trying to create discipline in your life in hopes it will bring about delight. Now are you with me in the difference between those two? If you love something and you

love doing something you're much more apt to do it and actually build things into your life that enable and empower it. If you don't delight in it, then regardless of what kind of discipline you put in place, you're going to stumble, fall, fail, and give up.

So your resolutions, if you made them...how different are they from last year's? Some of you, straight, erased the 1 and just put a 2. Same resolution, same goal. Right? If *discipline* is driving the ship, you're going to fall short, but if *delight* is, man, you'll do what you delight in. You'll chase what you delight in. You'll walk in what you delight in. The things that stir up your affection and stir up your heart... You have filled your life with those things.

The goal today is, at one level, pretty epic and really impossible for me to do, but I've earnestly prayed that the Holy Spirit would do a work among us, and I want to try to move us just a little bit out of discipline and into delight. Delight doesn't take the place of discipline. It just empowers it. Are you with me? It's not that we aren't disciplined people. That's never going to happen. You're not going to accidentally grow in godliness. Discipline is going to be there, but the fuel in discipline has to be delight, or you're simply not going to make it. So I want to try to remove a major obstacle of delight in the hope that our discipline in prayer will grow.

I was in Chattanooga, Tennessee, this past week. I don't know if you've ever been there. It's kind of nice. It's not awesome, but it's not Dallas. I went to Chattanooga, and there was a hill there. I don't know if you've ever seen one of those. I got to see that. I was teaching a bunch of college students. I hopped on a flight very, very early yesterday morning. In fact, Shea Sumlin, who was with me, got up at 4:00 Central Time to catch our flight and get back here because of the time change. I got home to Dallas at 8:15 am. That's when the plane landed.

I went home, walked into my front door, and heard, *stomp, stomp, stomp, stomp, stomp, stomp, stomp!* My oldest, my daughter who is soon to be 9, Audrey, ran, leapt like some sort of monkey into my arms, wrapped her legs around me, gave me a hug, and then began to verbally vomit onto me all that had occurred while I had been gone. So I asked her about what she did and what she had been doing, and she told me, and we had this great little conversation there as I came home.

I know some of you who have teenagers. You're like, *Drink deeply of that well, bro. It's about to dry up.* Hey, that's not where I am. That's where you might be, or have been, but that's not where I am. I'm in the, "Daddy's home; jump into the arms" stage. You let me have that. She jumped in my arms, and then she was trying to do kind of Rocky Balboa sit-ups, and we had a good time.

Here's what I thought of. Knowing I was going to be preaching this, and having my mind kind of on the texts we were going to be in, I was struck by the fact that my daughter, who I believe is spectacular... We have a lot of fun together. In fact, she was just backstage with me and we were goofing around. We like to do that kind of football jump-up-and-bounce thing, except she's 9 and I'm 37. I outweigh her quite a bit. We were kind of playing around backstage before I came out here. We have a great relationship.

But here's what I know. I'll be straight. She's in here. There has never been a day of her life where she has obeyed all the rules of our household and all the expectations of our household to the T. There has never been a day. She has never made it a day without falling short of our expectations as Mom and Dad and the rules we've set forth in our family, and yet when I come home, she runs down the stairs and leaps into my arms.

Now here's what I contend. I contend that my daughter still wants to hang around, still wants to talk, still wants to play, and still wants to jump up into my arms, even in the midst of her shortcomings, because she can feel and she knows I delight, love, enjoy, and am so glad she's my daughter. She can feel it. Do I get grumpy? Yes. Sometimes, do I just want to be left alone? Do I just want to close my eyes for a second? Yes, but can she feel, overall, I have a legitimate and honest delight in her? Absolutely, and so she wants to come. She wants to talk. She wants to play. She wants to be around, because she can feel the delight.

Here's what I contend. The main issue in our prayerlessness is we have a problem believing and grasping that God...now follow me...likes us, enjoys us, and delights in us! Now hear what I'm saying. I don't think we have any problem at all with the high-level, kind of junk drawer, "God loves us." I don't think we have any problem with that. I think if I were to sit down with you and we were to drink a cup of coffee (especially today), and I asked you, "Do you think God loves us?" I think you would go, "Yeah. I think he loves us."

But if I could drill down a bit and I could start to ask, not about *us*, but about *you*... If I could start to ask about you, not you years from now, but you right now... If I could sit down across from you, coffee in hand, and ask you, "Do you think God delights in, rejoices in, and enjoys you right now?" I think if you were honest, that one would be harder to answer. I've said this for years. This will not be anything new if you have history here.

I do not think you struggle with believing God likes you 10 years from now, because you, 10 years from now, are awesome. You, 10 years from now, are not struggling with the same things you are today. You, 10 years from now, are bold in evangelism and passionate in prayer, and you've memorized the Torah. You, 10 years from now, are *legit*. But you today... Surely, God is not delighting in you today. Surely, if God does love you today, it's only because he knows what you're going to be 10 years from now, so he'll put up with it

like a parent changes a diaper. "I know one day you won't do this, so I'll deal with it." Surely, at best, that's how God feels about you today.

I believe there are multiple reasons for our prayerlessness, but I think the predominate one is in the deepest part of our being we just can't imagine that he delights in us, rejoices in us, loves us, and is for us. It's just hard, and I'll tell you why it's hard. If you have ever betrayed someone, if you have ever lied to someone and they know, or if you have ever fallen short (if we can just use that language) of someone's expectation of you... What's our response? Avoidance! Our response to that is avoidance.

If I fail you, if I let you down, if it becomes public between you and me that I have wronged you, then I'm going to avoid you. If you're going to the 9:00 service, I'm going to the 11:15 service. If you're going to this spin class, I'm not going to the gym anymore. This is the game we play. We play a game of avoidance because, *I am ashamed that I have fallen short of whatever I promised to do or whatever your expectations were of me to accomplish. I've fallen short of that, and so I'm just going to avoid you.*

Can I tell you my great fear for all of us? My great fear for all of us is that we would love the *idea* of Jesus but not really love Jesus. We'd love the *idea* of grace, we'd love the *idea* of worship, we'd love the *idea* of intimacy with God, but we wouldn't actually love God. Now if you took that grid and you put it on any other area of life, you'd see how silly it is. If you loved the *idea* of food, and I was like, "Let me buy you a steak," and you were like, "Well, I don't really ever eat..."

"I just thought you said were a bit of a foodie."

"No, I am. I love the idea of food. I love the idea of tastes and flavors that collide. I love all that stuff."

"But you don't eat?"

"No, not really. I just drink protein shakes." This would be that kind of foolish.

"I love the idea of relationships and intimacy."

"Well, are you in any intimate relationships?"

"No, not really. I just like to read about them, study them, think about them, and wish I had them, but I'm not really... I mean that's risky, you know. I could be trying to cook and cut a finger. I could overcook it. I could get into an intimate relationship that went wrong."

Right? I think this is where some of us are. We love the idea, but we don't love Jesus, and it's a miserable exchange. So my hope (it's not going to take long; we're just going to kind of full-frontally assault this thing) is to try to remove this question of...*Are you and God cool?* from the equation in the hopes that by biblically seeing God's delight in you and his invitation for you to come, the barrier of, *Let me just do what God wants me to do and leave him alone*, might be removed.

Jesus has not come so you would do what he says and not walk with him and know him. In fact, some of you are exhausted and weary because this is the type of faith you're trying to live out, and it's not Christianity. I just have three things here, two before we get to Luke 18. Luke 18 is absurd, but we'll get to it. Let me try to deconstruct this: *God doesn't delight in you. God doesn't love you. God just wants you to do what he says and stay out of his way.*

First, let's just start with the obvious one. He saved you. Now it's really important that you understand how salvation occurs, because if salvation occurs because you did it, then that has no implications on God's affection or love for you. It puts all the weight of the exchange on you. Yeah, Jesus died, but you're the one who put your faith in Jesus. Again, I say this a lot here, that's a great idea that just lacks a lot of biblical credibility. In other words, that would be a great idea if it wasn't for what the Bible actually taught.

If you are a believer in Christ, if you've been given a new heart, if you are regenerate, born again, God did that. You didn't do that. God did that. For the argument of, *No, I clearly got out of my aisle. I walked down. I shook the pastor's hand, and I repeated after him*, I will contend until the return of Christ or my death that God gave you faith in your chair which led you to get out of your chair. You walking the aisle and praying that prayer didn't save you. The act of salvation occurred that got you out of your chair. Are you with me?

That was what moved you, because death doesn't choose life. It's dead. God saved you. What makes it even more astonishing, if we look at it biblically, is when all of that took place. Some of my favorites: Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 4. You can stay in Luke 18, but Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 4 really talks about before foundation of the earth was laid. Before the earth was, God chose us in him (him being Jesus) to be holy and blameless in his sight. Let's do a little bit of work here.

God (all-knowing, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God) has always been and will always be all-knowing. He can't be surprised. No blind spots, no surprises. God, before he created the foundation of the earth, knows you. Not just *us*, but *you*. Before the foundation of the earth was laid, he decided that in Jesus Christ, you were going to be holy and blameless in his sight. To question the affection of God for you is to question the cross of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:29 is another great text that talks about just how thick God's love is for you. In Romans 8, verse 29, it says, **"For those whom he foreknew..."** This could be translated "foreloved." **"...he also predestined..."** Don't worry about that word. It just means predetermined. Those whom he foreloved, he predestined to...what? **"...to be conformed to the image of his Son..."** So before anything was, God had decided that in his foreloving, predetermining plan, he was going to rescue you, save you, and conform you to the image of Jesus Christ.

Now that is profound, because all of that is taking place in light of a knowledge of every act of rebellion, every wayward thought, every God-belittling moment of your life in perfect view of our omniscient, omnipotent God, and still, he says, "No, I love him. I love her. I'm going to rescue them. I'm going to save them. I'm going to make a way for them." God himself puts on flesh and blood, empties himself, and comes like a servant to save and seek out those who are his children. Throughout the Scriptures, the Scriptures want to communicate for us God's deep and unshakeable love for those of us who have been called according to his purposes.

The prophet Zechariah says those who touch you touch the apple of his eye. God, speaking through the prophet, says of the covenant community, "The one who touches you touches the apple of my eye." I don't know if you use that phrase. I don't. This is this idea of delight. "You are my covenant people." You are as his sons and daughters, his adopted sons and daughters, the apple of his eye. Do you hear the rejoicing in that? Do you hear the delight in that? Again, what you need to be thinking on this entire time we're together today is... You need to drill down that this isn't, "*We're* the apple of his eye." It's, "*You're* the apple of his eye."

You have this evidence that he came and he rescued you. Look at me. He didn't have to do that! How many people simply don't care? How many people are completely indifferent? How many people do you know who are completely indifferent to the claims of Jesus Christ, who are completely indifferent to the things of God? It's not even on their radar. They couldn't care less. No idea of their need and no desire to know any different. Not aware of whether or not they're living fulfilled lives or not. Just kind of day in, day out, checking their Facebooks, doing their jobs, trying to be good people, and just completely unaware of the heights of Christian delight in God.

But not you. You know. Even in your frustration of knowing all that God would have you be, and not being there yet, you know. God did that. God turned on your heart to that. He turned on your mind to that. The evidence of God's delight in you is seen most clearly and most perfectly in your salvation because of the work and person of Jesus Christ.

I know some in here are going, *Yeah, man. I mean, I get all of that, Matt, but I am a mess. I just don't think... Even being here... This is our first time we've been here, really, since Easter. We're just going to try it again, but I feel awkward being here. I just know who I am. I'm looking around and I'm just really doubting that the other people in this room have the kind of marriage I have, have the kind of secrets I have, and have the kind of issues I have.* I'm glad you're thinking that, because it leads me to the next text.

I've loved this text for a long time, but always for different reasons you might think. Matthew 11:28 is a well-known text for those of you who have church backgrounds, and it says this. This is Jesus talking. He says, **"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."** Some of you have the version that says, **"Come to me, all who are weary..."** Some of you may have memorized it that way. *Weary* and *labor* are kind of the same word.

Labor has the idea that you work so hard that you're exhausted, *weary* being that exhaustion that comes from the labor. Don't get confused about...*How can the Bible say labor and weary and still be the Bible?* It's the same idea, the same word. This is an uncommon invitation. Christ, Jesus Christ, says, "Hey. If you're exhausted, if you're bitter, if you're lonely, if you're angry, if you struggle, if you are socially inept, if you have no people skills, if you can't figure it out, come here." What an invitation!

See, sometimes I've loved this verse because I've grown weary. Sometimes I've loved this verse because I've been tired. Now when God put me together in my mother's womb, he put an inordinate amount of optimism in there. I mean, I'm a hopeless optimist. *It will work out. It will be fine. It will be great.* I'm intrinsically wired that way, but I have had seasons where I've just grown extremely weary, and in those times, I've loved this invitation.

But the invitation itself is profound, because what we do in our culture, more often than not, is say, "Look, bro. You have some people skill issues. Go to some sort of program. Go to some sort of group. Go to some sort of place. Figure out how to interact on a level that is acceptable, and then you and I are cool. You're just a little too bitter for me. You're just always complaining, always pointing out what's wrong, unable to rejoice in what's right. Why don't you go get better at that, and then we can do life."

But that's not what Jesus is doing here. Do you hear it? "No, come to me. Are you a train wreck? Come here! Are you broken? Are you stuck in lust? Are you stuck in anger? Are you stuck in fear? Get over here!" Then there's this great exchange occurring. "You come to me with your weariness. You come to me with your labor, and I will give to you, in turn, rest. I will give to you peace. You give to me the struggle. I'll give to you the rest. Get in here. Come over here."

You have to hear this invitation as it relates to prayer, because the invitation isn't, "Start doing what what's right." The invitation is, "Come to me. You're not doing what's right. Come to me." The solution to what ails us, what weighs heavy on us, and what exhausts us is not us trying harder at overcoming those things, but rather us coming to Jesus, walking with Jesus, and being in a relationship with Jesus that overpowers our affection for the struggle.

I think it's really important for you to dial in and understand when it comes to sin, and when it comes to loneliness, and when it comes to despair, the way we get out from under those things isn't to work really hard to not be struggling with those things anymore, but really to use our energy and vitality to chase after, to know, and to see Jesus as more lovely than those things. Then as Jesus becomes more lovely, these things lose their power. As Jesus becomes more spectacular, this is our choice over this. *Why would I choose this when I can have this? Why would I want that joy when I can have this joy?* It becomes a delight issue.

"Come to me," he says. "Come on. Are you busted up? Are you broken? Get in here. Get over here." If you would be in here today and you'd just be like, *Man, I don't know, Matt, if church is for me, because of this, because of this, and because of this.* Jesus is going, "Oh, you're all jacked up? Oh, no, it's for you. Oh, you're a mess? Come on. Get in here. Come here. Give it to me; I'll give you rest. Give it to me, and I'll give you peace. Give it to me; I'll soothe your soul. Get in here."

That brings us to the absurdity of Luke 18. We'll pick it up in verse 1. The Scriptures are going to be really clear why Jesus is telling this parable. You don't have to do a lot of work. This is not one of those texts that you need commentary, you need to know the Greek, or you need to figure out some sort of culturally relevant, first-century fact, because he's going to tell you. Now there's going to be some of that I'm going to unpack here, but right out of the gate, he's going to tell you, "This is why I'm telling the story. This is what the story is about." So let's look at it.

Luke 18, starting in verse 1. **"And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought..."** What's that next word? **"...always to pray and not lose heart."** Let me chat here. On your little prayer guide, what it says is, "A season of prayer." Now that was poorly worded. It's my fault. You don't walk into a season of prayer. The Scriptures are clear that we are to **"...pray without ceasing..."** (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We are to continually pray.

So if all of this month is us going, *This is the month we pray as a church*, then we are way off the rails. My hope for January is to try to remove obstacles and get us focused on prayer in the hopes and earnest expectation that it would overflow out of this month and go well past a Wednesday night at Bent Tree, where all the campuses come together, and following prayer nights on Wednesday nights, and a guide,

and it would train you and teach you to consistently and constantly come before the God who delights in you so much.

Jesus says, "Hey, I'm telling this parable so you know you ought to pray always and not lose heart." Now let's look at the story. Verse 2. **"He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man.'**" That's a hard dude. I've known people who haven't feared God, and I've known people who have no respect for other people but themselves, but the combination of those two is something quite spectacular.

Verse 3. **"And there was a widow in the city..."** Let's contrast these. A woman in the first century was viewed as below a second-class citizen. Even lower than that, a widow could die. Her means of work and her means of gathering food are all removed from her when the husband dies. If the husband doesn't die with quite a bit of resources to extend to his widow, or if the eldest son doesn't like Mama, the woman is in a lot of trouble, which is why you have the biblical command to care for widows and orphans in their distress. It's a legitimate distress.

Now you have a woman who is a widow (a woman's word was not admissible in a court of law) who is now engaging a judge who has no respect for man and no fear of God. You have a gnat and a lion. That would be the best way to think of it. Verse 3. **"And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward..."** After what? After she had come to him several times. **"...but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice..."** I love this next line. **"...so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming."**

Verse 6. **"And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge says.'"** Listen to verse 7. Verse 7 is where it turns. **"And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"** Now you have, really, this invitation to the children of God that no father on earth ever extends to his own physical, biological children.

The invitation in this story to us as children of God, from God the Father, is, "Pester me! Bother me! Don't quit asking! Don't quit coming! I'm not like this unrighteous judge. If he can be pestered into doing something, and yet I delight in you, and you are my children, why would you think twice about continually coming before me?" No father has ever said that to his children. "I know I haven't answered yet, but just keep asking me. You'll just bombard me, day and night, and never get off of it."

Don't we, as fathers, go the opposite way? "Ask me one more time." Don't we? We absolutely go the other way, but that's not the way Jesus is trying to get our minds around God's delight in us. In fact, you heard, once again, that term that so many people get frustrated by. He was like, "No, you're God's elect! Why would God, after electing you, after saving you, after rescuing you, then want to render you outside his presence?"

"Get in here," is the invitation, once again. "Pester, bother, never let up, and keep asking. If that works on an unrighteous, disrespectful pagan, how will it play out with me, who delights so much in you?" Now there's another piece here, and we have to talk about it because it's real life. He says he tells the parable for two reasons. He tells the parable so we would know we can always pray, and we should always pray, but he also says we would pray and not...what? **"...lose heart."**

Everyone in this room, I believe, would have a story where they really prayed, and they really cried out to God, and there was this thing they wanted. It wasn't a bad thing. It wasn't selfish. It wasn't, "Please God, let the 'boys win tonight.'" It wasn't that kind of thing. It was rich and weighty, and it looked like it was tied to things God would like. We've prayed for a family member. We have prayed for salvation of a friend. We have prayed for a sick, sick loved one. We have cried out and asked God to work, and it just seems like it just hasn't been answered and he's not listening, and so we have a tendency to lose heart, and we're confused, and maybe we even feel betrayed by God.

I think the reason Jesus ends this text, "Nevertheless, will the Son of Man find faith on earth?" is because we're being let in on some really deep waters here. Here are the deep waters. We are simply far too ignorant to understand the will of God. We don't have enough information. We don't have enough facts, and so our role as children of God is to trust the sovereignty of God as it expands out so much farther than our own understanding.

Now can I unpack for you why certain things happen and certain things don't? Man, I have warded on my knees, fasted, cried out, and begged God for the lives of certain people who were sick, and they went on home. And then I have pled, asked God, and fasted for him to rescue others, and he has healed them outright. Did I pray harder on one than the other? No. Did I want one more than I wanted the other? Not that I can think of.

Were there just not enough people with me when I was praying? No, it was very similar. There is a mystery to prayer we're going to have to grow comfortable with. Is God sovereign? Over every cell in the universe, over every atom that exists, he is sovereign. *So why pray?* Because God has ordained to accomplish his will through the prayers of the saints. So we join God in the work of God by asking God for what God has asked us to ask of him. Are you with me?

We come, and we come boldly. We come boldly. We approach the throne of grace confidently. *But why?* It's because we're loved. We're delighted in. We are his children. He has commanded us to bother him, to keep asking, to keep pestering, to keep pressing in and pleading, and then trust him, trust that he's working, trust him that he's doing things, trust him that he is accomplishing things for our joy and his glory to go far beyond our understanding or reach.

I don't know how you work. I don't know what your hopes are for you in 2012, or what your hopes are for your family. Here's what I can tell you, at the age of 36, that I'm very, very confident in. Some of you are about to have a great year, and some of you are about to have the worst year of your life. Some of you are going to have really high highs and really low lows this year. Most of us are going to just have kind of that year where there are good times and there are bad times. There are good seasons and there are difficult seasons. But my hope for you isn't that you get into the gym. The gym will be miserable this week. It will just be absolutely slammed.

The irony is...just give it a month, because unless delight is driving the discipline, it doesn't last. You might eat a little better over the next week or so. I don't know what your dreams are for you or what your plans are for you this year, but I can tell you where my heart is for you. My heart, for you, and for me, and for us as a covenant community is that understanding the delight God has in us, based and built on Jesus Christ, would lead us to boldly approach him and to saturate our lives with glad submission to our good God, and that we would be a place marked by our fervency in prayer and our absolution in regard to trusting him.

We'd be marked by that when people talked about, "What are the people at The Village like?" People would say of us, "Well, I'll tell you what. They are in love with the God who loves them. Man, they pray. It's crazy how they pray." That we might join God in the work of God for our delight and for his glory, and that we might spend our lives, and that we might spend 2012 to that end, would be spectacular.

Now do me a favor. Why don't you bow your heads? Close your eyes. You don't have to close your eyes. It just helps most people concentrate. I just want to close out our time together today with maybe just some practice. For some of us today, the thing we need to pray about right now is the reality that we really don't delight in God. We have a hard time believing he delights in us and he loves us, so why don't you spend just a minute or two here asking God, asking the Holy Spirit to move in your heart, to move in your mind, that the reality of his love for you, the reality of his delight for you that is seen so clearly in the cross might be awakened in the deepest parts of your being?

Maybe others of you are walking in ongoing, unconfessed, secret sin. You have not confessed to God your rebellion against him, and so maybe you take this moment just to ask for forgiveness and ask that the Lord

would restore to you the joy of your salvation. Maybe you've just refused to accept his forgiveness. Maybe you would just spend a moment or two asking the Holy Spirit to stir up your heart, to stir up your mind, that God would grant you belief, that God would ignite in you a passion, that you might get to look at this space, these next few weeks and next few months as a moment when God did a significant work in your life.

If you're unsatisfied in your relationship with Jesus Christ, that's something to really cry out about. That's something to really plead with the Lord about, to ask him to increase your affection for him. Ask him to increase your delight in him. Ask him. This doesn't bother him. This isn't like a game you have to play with some other human. He already knows your heart. To be honest about your heart is of no offense to a God who already knows your heart. Secrecy is a myth when it comes to God. So why don't you spend the next moment just kind of pouring your heart out, wherever you are, to the Lord? Then I'll pray, and we'll begin to get after him in song.

Holy Spirit, will you move among us? For some of us, like the disciples, we're just crying out, "Teach us to pray," so I pray there would be an honesty, a grittiness, and an openness for you to just stir up in our hearts legitimate praises for what you have done and legitimate desires to grow more fully in delight and love for you. I personally pray for an awareness of our rebellion and sinfulness that leads to a deep delight in your forgiveness and grace. I just don't know you can delight in forgiveness and grace if you don't know you're guilty to begin with, and so will you do that work in us? Where there is no salvation, I pray that you would grant salvation. Help us, Holy Spirit. It's for your beautiful name, amen.