

Fresh Faith | The Bridge Between

Petie Kinder | Ephesians 4

What's good, church? How are we today? At our other campuses, whether you are Downtown, at North, West, or watching online we are thrilled to have you with us today. If you are here for the first time, we are super excited to have you with us. My name is Petie, one of the pastors around here.

If you have a Bible or a Bible App on your phone, go ahead and grab it and get to Ephesians 4. If you don't have a Bible or a Bible App you can download our Traders Point Church App and it will take you there to the sermon notes as well.

We're here in a really exciting week in the life of our church. We are five days away from the party of the year—special needs prom is on its way. It's about to be killer. If you're not signed up to serve yet, you are missing out. I've never met one person who regrets being a part of prom. It's just an incredible opportunity to experience something you've never experienced outside. It's the best party in Indianapolis the whole year. There is still time to sign up. That's coming up this Friday night.

Then we've got Growth Track every single week now. If you're new, if you want to get connected, just jump on Growth Track. It doesn't matter if you are here for week four and it's your first week. You can just jump in on it right now on week four. It's about 30-40 minutes right after the service. You can leave your kids checked into Kids' Ministry. It's the best way for you to start getting connected and growing around here. So Growth Track, make sure you don't miss it.

Ephesians 4, I want to kind of give you the bottom line up front, here is what we're going to tackle today. If you are here and you've ever felt like following Jesus was difficult, today is for you. If you ever felt like it was a struggle and you may actually not be that good at it, today is for you.

If you're here and you wouldn't consider yourself a follower of Jesus, that is perfect and you are here on just the right day. This is going to give you an inside peek, kind of a sneak peek, as to what it is like to be a Christian today. Sometimes the idea we get in our head of what it is like to be a person of faith is different than what it is in reality.

Before we jump into Ephesians 4, if you really want to understand Ephesians 4, you've got to understand something Paul, the guy who wrote this letter to the church in Ephesus, experienced before he wrote this letter. Paul actually spent some time in this city called Ephesus before he wrote the letter, several years prior.

He actually spent a couple of years there and in those two years he saw some things happen he could not un-see. He saw some miraculous things happen, and actually Paul spent two years there intellectually contending for the message of Jesus. It says he actually taught in a public lecture hall for two years.

What he is doing is trying to setup intellectually what it means to follow Jesus. Why is Jesus worth our time? Why is Jesus worth our attention? But inside that intellectual contending for the gospel, for the message of Jesus, there were all these other things happening, all these miraculous things happening. Peoples' lives were being changed in such a way that no one could intellectually explain. It was different.

So when you combine those two things together—the intellectual contending for the message of Jesus and the miraculous life change no one could explain—those two things together could produce some really incredible results.

Paul saw something incredible happen in the city of Ephesus citywide. He saw an event. He saw something happen that he couldn't un-see, and it would shape him forever. When he thought of Ephesus and these people there who were following Jesus, he would think about this crazy experience. It's not in Ephesians 4, but it is in Acts 19. The verse will be on the screen.

“A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored.” Across the city people were like: Man, I just respect and I'm starting to honor the name of Jesus. I'm starting to have this reverence and fear of God. It swept over the whole city.

Then he started seeing things happen individually. It says, “Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices.” Now here is the specific event he saw. He had seen too much after he saw this. “A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars.”

Now pause. I know where your brain is. I know if you are here you might be skeptical you are like, “Here we go. The Bible is in Harry Potter land now.” You are like Hogwarting that thing. “What is going to happen here?”

You understand... When you study first century you see sorcery was this way of understanding, like a philosophical viewpoint of the world. They believed they could manipulate the spiritual realm to their benefit.

It's actually no different than what you would find in the self help section of our book stores like *The Power of Positive Thinking*. We don't know a lot about it, but we think it might work. We don't know. So there are books written about it. This was a whole way of life for people.

So all the people who were living this way, teaching sorcery and practicing it, and trying to get others to do it, they started following Jesus. And not only did they start following Jesus, but

they took an extreme action to ensure their loyalty to Jesus. They took all their books worth several million dollars—this was not like when you’ve got books you don’t read anymore and you take them to Half-Priced Books and get a quarter for them—several million dollars worth of books and they brought them out into the public.

They were like: I don’t want to sell them on Craigslist, not on Ebay, and I don’t want them in circulation. I don’t want them in my closet and I don’t even want to touch them anymore, because it’s not the way, it’s not the truth, and it’s not the life.

And they publically burned several millions of dollars worth of books, to ensure they would never go back to their old way of life. And Paul, once he saw that, couldn’t un-see it. It was an extreme act of devotion, an extreme act of faithfulness and it would influence what he says in Ephesians 4.

Now let’s jump in with that as our setup. I need you to help me preach this today. Look to your neighbor and tell them, “Let’s go.” That was weak. Are you kidding me? I said I need help today. Turn to your neighbor and say, “Let’s go.” That’s much better. Are you all crazy? You are all crazy.

Ephesians 4:17 starts like this, “With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.”

Now I know if you are here and you wouldn’t consider yourself a follower of Jesus you’re like, “Wow, is that how you guys think about the culture outside of people who follow Jesus?” That’s a scathing review. That’s no joke. Those are some serious words.

But you need to understand that it is very, very important for all of us—believers and non-believers in the room—it is important to remember who Paul is writing to. Paul is writing to people who love Jesus. He is saying: People who love Jesus, you should act like people who love Jesus. You shouldn’t live like the culture around you. You’ve been taught different. You should live like a follower of Jesus.

Paul wasn’t talking about people outside the church and saying: You sinful people. Stop doing what you are doing and come over and do what we do. You bunch of sinners. I think sometimes we get that mixed up in the church. Paul was saying: People who love Jesus, you should act like people who love Jesus.

When you get that order wrong, you start focusing on all the things you’ve done wrong and all the things you need to do you are not doing. If you go there first before you start with Jesus, all kinds of things get messed up.

You see, if you are here—no matter which campus you are at right now—and you don't believe in Jesus, you don't need to worry about all the commands and the dos and the don'ts that the New Testament teaches. All the things God says you should and shouldn't do, wait on that.

You first and foremost need to consider Jesus. Jesus is the one you should focus on because you need to understand who Jesus is and why he loves you and just how far he went to show you how he loves you. Once you understand that, once you understand just how much he is desperate for a relationship with you and you start to love Jesus, then all the other stuff will fall in place.

Then you start to understand the commands of the New Testament, the things you should and shouldn't do in the Bible are actually not random. They are not arbitrary. It's not as if God is this father in the sky who is just randomly parenting his kids saying: I've got some pet peeves. Do these things, and don't do those things like the flavor of the day.

Honestly, sometimes I parent my kids random and arbitrary. I remember the other day I was talking to my seven-year-old son Emmet. I said, "Emmet, turn the TV off. Video time is over and screen time is done."

He was like, "Dad, I just started five minutes ago." I was like, "Because I said so, screen time is over." I had no good reason to do that. I just wanted to flex my parental muscle a little bit, kind of keep him in check, and let him know who was boss. I had no good reason for that other than the fact that he already had enough screen time at age seven to last a lifetime. He's okay. I had no reason. I'm sure Emmet left that like, "I don't know why I'm not doing this, but I'm okay. Let's go."

Sometimes we feel that way about God when we get the order wrong. Why would I obey that? No, no, no. It all makes sense when you start with Jesus, with his love because then you understand he is a good father. What he asks you to do and not to do is out of his love. He wants to protect you.

One pastor put it like this, "Sin breaks God's heart because sin breaks people." Sin has consequences, negative effects on the quality of your life, your heart, your soul, and your mind. It causes pain, and many of us in the room can attest to that.

If you don't believe in Jesus, just start with Jesus. Let all that other stuff happen at the right time and in the right place once you understand who he is.

But for Christians in the room, it's a different deal. For Christians in the world he says: Don't live like the culture around you. And if you're like me, I can attest that is way easier said than done. Way easier said than done. And Paul is about to explain why that is. Paul is about to explain why it is so hard to follow Jesus and what we can do about it.

We're going to spend the rest of our time in these next five verses. Let's read them together starting in verse 20. "But that," his scathing review of the culture around them, "isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy."

Paul says: You should throw off your sinful nature, your former life, and put on your new nature. It's like Paul is saying: This following Jesus thing ain't easy, because it's not automatic. There are some things you've got to do.

By show of hands at all of our campuses, how many of you drive a car that has an automatic transmission? By a show of hands at all campuses, how many of you drive a car that has a manual transmission, a stick shift? What are you doing? I love you but why? Why are you doing that?

I love driving with some of my friends who have a stick shift. It's just so fun to watch. Everything is moving. The foot over here is moving, going down. It's always doing this and they are switching hands. It's like a full body workout driving one of these things. You don't have to do that. Technology did its thing, it's automated.

You know what you could do with your free hand? You could hold a cheeseburger while you are driving. You could drink a soda. Don't text and drive, but you could do so many other things. But you keep going. It's alright.

But Paul is saying: Following Jesus isn't automatic. It's actually a little more complicated than that.

As I was studying this passage and thinking through what God wanted to speak through me, and it's actually this passage and some that are similar to this written by Paul, I studied some of these this summer in some time with the Lord. And I was asking God two questions that you should ask whenever you read a passage of the Bible.

What is God saying to me?

What am I going to do about it—how am I going to respond?

I was asking God, "What are you saying to me in this," and I felt like God kept giving me this visual to help me understand what Paul is talking about here. The visual, I remember drawing it out in my journal, was of like two islands. Over here on this side you've got the old place you used to live, your old life. This is the place you grew up in, your former residence. This is how you used to live before Jesus.

It's a lot of what Paul is talking about in his review of the culture. We mostly live for ourselves. We mostly live for our own happiness and goodness, or at least the happiness and goodness of the people closest to us and in the end it affects our happiness and wellbeing.

A lot of us made a lot of mistakes along the way. We've hurt a lot of people in the process of living for ourselves and doing whatever we wanted to do with our lives. In the end with your old life, you were in charge. And you, meaning me and all of us, we all made a mess of it.

Whether you actually have painful decisions you made that people know about, or you were just like a good boy or a good girl and you built a super-thick sense of self-righteousness and pride, which you realize is just as dangerous as some of the overt stuff everyone sees, either way we were messed up. Either way, we sat in this old way of life, this former way of life, and none of us were satisfied. None of us felt like it was enough. Surely there has to be more to life than this.

Now because of Jesus, because of what he did for us when he died on the cross and he resurrected from the grave, and the life he gives us for those of us who put our trust in Jesus and decided to follow Jesus, he gives us a new island to live on.

He gives us a new place to go. Life over here, when you're following Jesus, is incredible. It's amazing because you wake up every day and are like, "My goodness, my sins are forgiven. It doesn't matter how bad I screwed up yesterday, I've got a new start today." Every day you have a clean slate. Every day you wake up with hope, with joy, with peace. It's unbelievable and you start to see life from a whole different view. It's so incredible.

And it doesn't mean the bad stuff doesn't happen to you. It just means that when the bad stuff happens to you there is a different way to handle it, a different way to work through it, and a new perspective on life. It's so much better, right?

The problem is you would think the moment you decide to become a Christian... The moment you decide to start following Jesus you would think there would be a simple change of address form. You used to live here. Then you heard the message about Jesus and started to follow him and now you live over here.

Some of you can remember your baptism and how amazing that was. You came out of that water and people were cheering for you. And all of heaven was celebrating that you had given your life to Jesus. In that moment you thought, "There will never come a day when I don't live for Jesus," until you woke up the next day.

And you think it would be just that easy, right? You think it would be automatic, but it's not automatic because what happens is between the island of our old life and the island of our new life there are some bridges. There are some bridges that connect the two and take us back to our old way of life.

There are some thoughts that enter our mind and lead us back to our old ways. There are some actions we take, some opportunities, some temptations. There are some relationships, some things in our lives that connect us back to our old way of living.

And we spend much of our lives as followers of Jesus walking this bridge back and forth. We have a sinful nature Paul says that draws us over here. And we have a new nature in us through the Holy Spirit that pulls us over here. And we spend a lot of time going back and forth, back and forth between our old and our new.

For instance, think about money for a second. Money is a huge stressor for all of us, for so many people at different points in life. As a follower of Jesus, it's just different. As a follower of Jesus you realize you don't have to worry about money because God says if you seek his kingdom first, he will take care of you.

That does not mean you're going to be rich. Don't let a preacher tell you that. That does not mean you're going to have the exact quality of life and the exact standard of living you want. Don't let a preacher tell you that. It just means you're going to have what you need, because your heavenly father is there for you and he's going to take care of you. He is going to give you what you need. He is watching out for you.

It is so amazing to be freed from that worry. And you start to view money, not as this thing that makes you sleep well at night, this weird snuggly thing you've got going. No, money is a tool you can now use because you don't have to worry about it. You can use it as a tool to show generosity and love to other people. God's been awful generous to you, so now you are free to be generous to other people and show God's love in that way. It is incredible.

The problem is there are bridges that lead us back to our old way of thinking about money. You get that bill that comes in the mail and you're like, "Whoa, I wasn't expecting that one. How am I going to pay for that?" You go through that unexpected job loss and you're like, "Man, I am so worried about money."

Or your stocks take a hit. Your retirement is coming up and you are thinking, "How am I going to handle this?" And all of the sudden those bridges bring you right back over. You are living the way you used to live. You are stressed and worried, so you do what you used to do in your former way of life.

Again, this doesn't affect how God loves you. You walk the bridge and you come over and God loves you. His love for you does not change, but your quality of life changes. Because you start thinking, worrying, and stressing and you start going back and working extra hours and putting in overtime. You are doing what it takes to get the promotion, doing what it takes to get the bonus, doing what it takes to earn because on this side, in this old way of life, if you don't look out for you nobody is watching out for you. It's just a new way of living.

We could talk about sexuality. We're going to hit all the big ones today—money and sex, back to back. Think about sexuality for a second. As a follower of Jesus it is this amazing thing where you have been freed from your sexuality being the thing that defines you. You want to talk about the primary difference between a person of faith and the culture around us? You are not defined by your sexuality.

In fact the heroes of our faith in the New Testament, Jesus and Paul, were single men who lived the life of celibacy. You have that example to follow and you have the power from within because of the Holy Spirit to control your urges, control your desires and not live like the culture around us.

If you are married, and even if you are not married, you see it. You know sex is such an emotionally significant, spiritually significant thing in your life that if you use it in the wrong context, it is dangerous. It lands people in counseling all the time and it brings baggage into your life and pain into your life.

But you realize in the proper context, like what God said it should be in, within the context between a man and a woman in the midst of a committed covenant—like when you stood before man and God in a covenant and said, “I do, forever”—within that context right there sexuality can serve to strengthen that commitment. But outside of that, it is dangerous. But you've got the strength to live in purity.

Oh man, there are some bridges. There are some bridges that lead you back. You get on social media, on your phone, on the computer and you are two clicks away from being right back where you were. Thinking, “Man if I don't gratify these desires and I don't do something with this I'm never going to be okay. How will I ever feel love? How will I ever feel accepted? How will I ever feel fulfilled and satisfied?”

Even though you remember on this side that sexuality does not fulfill you, it does not satisfy you in the end, you know because you've been over there that the only thing that satisfies you is a relationship with God. You've experienced it. But you come over here and run into a cheap substitute for sex. You get caught up in porn. You get caught up in hooking back up with old flames from high school and college through social networking.

You get caught up in all kinds of crazy stuff. You end up living with your boyfriend or your girlfriend because it makes financial sense. Oh also, the sex is good. Come on. You know we take these bridges and then we cross right back into our old way of life.

We could keep going on and on and on, but the truth is we spend so much of our Christian lives just going back and forth, back and forth. It's like we don't know who we want to be. We have our nature that pulls us over here and we have our sinful nature that pulls us over here. We just don't know where to go.

And the unfortunate reality is that many of us are getting our Fitbit steps on with this bridge. We're getting so many steps in that our Apple watch rings are closing left and right man. And we've got that move goal, we've got that exercise goal but it's wearing us out. It is wearing us out.

There are too many of us at every campus who are exhausted. We don't have a fresh faith. We've got an exhausted faith. We've got a discouraged faith. We think like, "I'll never be able to do it." All of us are so ashamed that there are even bridges in our life. We think, "I've been following Jesus for too long to still be walking across that bridge. I'm so ashamed." We're discouraged. We're exhausted. We're tired, but this is what we do.

And Paul seems to think in Ephesians 4 that we are not powerless in this. Paul seems to believe there is something we can actually do about it. Right? He says: There are some actions we can take. Throw off your old nature—that's on you, that's on me. Put on your new nature—that's on you, that's on me.

Remember Paul is operating on this memory, this experience he had where he saw men and women burn millions of dollars worth of books to be sure they did not go back to their old lives.

And see, when I was journaling through this and letting God work me over in this, there were some things in my life I knew he was telling me to change. I'll give one of them to you. There is a way I felt God telling me I was coping with my feelings, coping with sadness, some things I was doing to medicate that... I know this is going to sound funny but I was eating my feelings.

I don't know if you all can relate. You have a bad week? Get that box of zebra cakes out. Had a bad week, I'm going to crush all those M&Ms though. It's going to be good. It sounds funny, but God was very convicting to me in that moment. And you can substitute what I just said with any hard drug, any alcohol, any entertainment.

I was doing something to cope with my emotions, something to cope with my negative reality that was not good for me. It's not who God has called me to be. God wants me to turn to him when I'm not having a good week. God wants me to turn to him when I'm feeling depressed. God wants me to let him comfort me, and him teach me, and him guide me, and him correct me.

He doesn't want zebra cakes to be my counselor. He is my counselor. God wanted me to turn to him. And here's the reality that God was pressing on my heart. "Petie, if you want to be the man I've created you to be stop going back to your old life, you've got to burn the bridges. You've got to be done with them. You've got to burn the bridges because they are entirely optional."

Most of the bridges in our lives, that we walk back to our old life, they are there by your choice and my choice. We can burn the bridges. Paul remembered these guys taking extreme action burning their books. So there is no chance... Paul wrote in Romans, "Give no provision for your

flesh.” Give it no chance to walk back. Don’t give it anything to walk across to your old self. Burn the bridges.

The question to you is this. If I were to give you a can of gasoline right now and I were to give you a lighter and I were to douse a bridge with gasoline and burn it down, and that would be the difference between you living a life that God’s called you to live or you continue to walk back and forth on the bridge, what would the bridge be that you need to burn down? What is the thing you need to get rid of in your life? It’s there by choice. You don’t have to have it in your life. You can burn that bridge to the ground. You can do whatever it takes to make sure you never go back to your old ways.

Is it a toxic relationship in your life? Is it a friend that when you call them, when you go and hang out with them, you always end up gossiping again? You always end up slandering everyone you know. And you end up leaving that conversation every time or that hangout every time just feeling horrible about yourself, knowing that’s not who God has called you to be?

Guess what? You can burn the bridge. You being in that relationship is entirely optional. That is your choice. And if you can’t handle it, if it leads you back to your old way of life, you may need to burn the bridge.

Is it a significant other, a boyfriend or a girlfriend that you’ve been living with? You’ve been with them for a long time and you love them, but you’ve probably been with them long enough to know they are who they are. And you also know they are leading you to a way of life that is not what God has called you to. God’s called you to live over here so maybe you need to take extreme action and douse that bridge with gasoline and burn it.

Is it a crew of people who always invite you to hang out and every time you hang out with them, every time you say yes, it is so fun and incredible but you always end up staying out a little too late and drinking a little too much? And you end up regretting it? It’s your choice. You can burn that bridge to the ground.

Is it something you’re consuming right now? Is there something in your fridge? Is there something in your pantry? Is there something in your beside table, and when life gets hard you’ve not turning to God, you’re turning to that and it’s leading you right back to your old way of life? It’s in there by your choice. It’s optional. You can burn it to the ground. You can give your flesh no option to go back to that.

I think for many of us, and I know this is not a fun one to talk about, for many of us it’s the almighty phones that we carry around with us and are obsessed with. And I’m right there with you. I think we’re going to look back in a few generations and look at a whole bunch of us who never realized the full potential of who God wanted us to be because our nose was buried in a little tiny screen.

I'm clapping because I'm talking about myself. You know it's optional, right? You know you don't have to have a smart phone. It's not this obligation as an American. It's optional. Like for some of you guys, maybe keep your phone because you need it for work but some of the apps you have on your phone are actually the bridges that are taking you back to your old self.

For some of you all Instagram is the ultimate app that leads us down some horrible roads. I love Instagram. I'm on there. I love it. But you know that for some of us, when we start looking at other peoples' profiles and other peoples' pictures we just go right back to that comparison trap. And all of a sudden we're back over here and we feel horrible about ourselves. Our life is garbage, our marriage doesn't look as good as theirs and their kids are more well-behaved than ours. Literally, all you are seeing is that person's highlight reel. We all know that right?

Just yesterday my wife posted some pictures of our kids on Instagram. And we were at a pumpkin patch. A pumpkin patch, it's fall Indiana stuff—awesome. And it looked incredible. They were so cute and everybody was smiling.

You know what? In reality it was just okay. It actually wasn't that great. It was cold and muddy. The pumpkins were a bit overpriced. The kids didn't have that great of a time. They were all miserable. They looked like they were smiling because I bribed them with screen time. Smile and you get screen time. They looked perfect and then they went back to whining and complaining. It was not that great. It is a highlight reel.

Some of these apps, we are so caught up in them and we think we have to have them. How could we exist without them? But it is the bridge that is leading us back to our old selves. Some of us have got to real about this.

It is unbelievable how pornography is killing the church in America, not just men but women too. It's not just a male thing. It's because it is too easy. You are a few clicks away from it. You've a couple of taps on your phone from it.

And I believe Paul would just say: You need to take some extreme action and you need to burn some bridges. You need to do whatever it takes to give your flesh no option, to give your sinful nature no option, to go back to your old way of life.

I'm not actually going to burn this thing to the ground. I thought about it though #preachinggoalsburnstuffonstage. I'll get there. Today is not the day, but I really wanted to. Maybe another time.

But you've got to burn the bridges. That's something you can do. Once you do that, and some of you in the room are doing that, you understand that you can burn every bridge in your life that is leading you back to your old ways, and yet there are still some bridges that remain. There are some bridges we cannot burn.

And Paul knew that. If you go back to Ephesians 4, sandwiched in between the put on your new nature, throw off you old nature, put on and throw off the things you can do—sandwiched right between is verse 23. It says this: “Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.”

There are some bridges you cannot burn, and you’ve been trying for a long time. You can do all kinds of things to ensure you don’t go back to your old sinful nature. But there are some bridges like the bridge of pride where internally you just think you’re the stuff. You can’t stand it when other people get recognized and celebrated because, “Do people not notice me?” You can’t burn that bridge. Only God can break your pride. That’s a bridge only God can break down.

Some of us have an envious or lustful heart. We’re never content with what we’ve got. You can do all the wise financial planning in the world, but you can’t change a heart that is not content. You can’t change a heart that constantly looks to other people and says, “I wish I had what they have.” That’s something only God can do.

You can’t change a heart of anger. No amount of wise decisions will change the fact that you snap on your kids, you snap on your spouse, you snap on your friends when you are tired. That’s an attitude and a heart issue that only God can change.

And I’m just telling you God can do it. What you can’t do, he can. I think there would be no prayer God would rather hear from his people, from a beloved son or a beloved daughter, than an honest prayer of humility that says, “Jesus, I love you and I’m doing everything I can to follow you. I’ve doing everything I can to burn every bridge that will lead me back to my old self. I’m burning them all down. I’m working hard. I’m doing everything I can.”

You know that’s what a fresh faith looks like, right? A fresh faith is not like a brand new shirt or a brand new pair of shoes and you’re like, “It’s new, unused and looking good.” No, a fresh faith is dirty. It’s nitty gritty. It’s nose to the ground hard work and doing the things nobody likes to do to ensure you don’t go back to your old way of life. A fresh faith is hard work like that.

For a follower of Jesus to come and say, “God, I’m doing everything I can. I’m doing everything I possibly can in my power to throw off my old nature, to put on my new nature, but God there is still this bridge and I can’t burn it. God I need you and I can’t and I believe you can.” You come up to God and ask that. There is not a prayer that he would love to answer more than that.

I think some of you have been trying to burn down the same bridge over and over and God wants to say to you today: Stop trying and let me do it. Come and ask me to change your heart. Come and ask me to fix what you can’t fix on the inside.

Jesus would say it like this in Matthew 7. “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”

We just need to get more serious about asking our heavenly father to do what only he can do. And do what like the prophet Isaiah says in the Old Testament, "Give the Lord no rest." Pray and give him no rest until he completes the work within you. And he will. He's promised it. He who began a good work in your will complete it, will finish it. He promised he will.

You've just got to ask God to burn the bridges you can't.

I know there is someone in the crowd right now at every campus. You've got that thing in your heart you know you are supposed to burn, but you can't do it. You've got the action step you know you have to take, but you are super scared. You know the bridge in your life you need to burn, and you don't know how that will be overcome. You've sitting there thinking, "I can't do this."

I want to tell you that you can, but it means so much more when the church says it. I want to do something a little out there right now. I want you to see that God has already worked in the lives of tons of people across this church at every campus. So I'm going to ask you church to bear witness to the work of God in your life.

I'm going to ask you to do something crazy at all of our campuses right now. If he has freed you from addiction I want you to stand to your feet right now and bear witness to the work of God in your life.

If he saved your marriage I want you to stand to your feet right now and bear witness to the work of God in your life.

If he has freed you from the grips of greed I want you to stand right now and bear witness.

If he has changed your complaining heart and given you an attitude of gratitude instead I want you to stand to your feet.

If he's give you the strength to walk through difficult circumstances you had no idea how you would get through but with his strength you did it. I want you to stand up.

If he's led you through the pain and bitterness of infertility of a miscarriage I want you to stand up and bear witness to God in your life.

If he's guided you through watching a child wreck their life and you say, "I know what it is like." If he's walked with you through a divorce and he's given you the power to forgive and move on bear witness to the work of God in your life.

Church, look around you and I'm telling you right now if you lack courage let us give it to you. If you lack courage, let us loan you our courage and tell you what God has done in our life. Because what you can't do, God can.

So let's pray right now for a breakthrough. Let's pray that God will do what only he can do.

Jesus, we love you. We thank you for saving us like you did. Thank you for your love and your grace. Thank you for new life that we don't have to live like we used to live. We get a new start every day. God, we want so badly to live in that new life, to never go back. We know you have given us our assignment, each and every one of us. We know what we are supposed to go burn, the bridge in our life we are supposed to get rid of.

So we are going to do it. We stand before you God and we commit. We're going to burn that bridge this week. We're going to do what it takes to make sure we never go back to our old selves. God, we ask you to do what only you can do. We're praying for breakthrough in our lives. Change our hearts from the inside out. We need you right now and we believe you can do it.

It's in Jesus' name that the church prays together. Amen.