

Reveal
Where are you?
Pastor David Brown
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Let me ask you a question. Have you ever been lost? Not spiritually lost, have you ever been just lost? That horrible feeling when all of a sudden you realize that you don't know where you are. I know the guys in here, I'm one of you, and I've never really been lost. I've been confused a little, but I've never been lost and I tell my wife I've never been lost, I'm here. If I was lost I'd be out there. I always find my way and I always seem to, but there's been some times in my life where I've got that yucky feeling inside and look around and say where am I? I remember I grew up in East Texas and so the woods around East Texas we knew really well, we played and hunted in them it was fine. My wife had a trailer on the lake at Coletto Bend and I remember going there with her and I went out hunting one morning before it was light and I'm out there and man, it's a great place, it's beautiful and I get up to go back to the trailer and I start walking and I get temporarily confused. So I see a creek so I start following the creek. Well I walk for about 30 minutes and I am nowhere near anything that looks familiar and I remember one of the things that they told me whenever we were in the woods, they always said you need to STOP which was an acronym for sit, think, observe, and plan. You start getting kind of anxious when you're lost and you start hyperventilating and going in circles and it's a proven fact when you're lost you will travel in circles for some reason so I didn't want to do that so I sat down and I prayed one of those prayers, God I got to get out of here. I'm getting a little bit scared. As I'm sitting there I began to look and in the distance I see some power lines and I know that if you walk to the power lines there is going to be a big cut out area where they've cut all the trees out and I know if I follow the power line eventually it's going to cross a road. When you get to the road eventually that is going to lead to a house; I'm going to be okay. So I finally calm down and followed the path and found the opening and as I follow the opening I got on an open road and I thought, this is where I'm supposed to be and I walk straight in the house and everything was fine. That feeling of being lost is a horrible feeling and you want to stop, sit, think, observe and plan to be able to get out of that.

I'll be honest with you, about six weeks ago Cory came to me, and Cory's our executive pastor, for those of you who don't know. He's been with us 12 years. For the last 3 years, he has been in charge of the organization of the church completely. For the last three years I've been able to go from running the organization and I've been able to worry about spiritual leadership only. I've been able to lead and feed which are the things that I am supposed to be able to do. Lead spiritually and feed the people who come on Sunday. That is what my goal was while Cory ran the entire organization thing. Our church is way too big to lead spiritually

and organizationally at the same time so when he came to me and said I want to take a job at DBU, I felt a little lost. What are we going to do? God this is the worst time possible. Are you sure this is in your plan? And as I stopped and thought, observed, and began to plan I began to see God's hand. In March, our worship pastor left and he'd had been here 12 years and we thought, what are we going to do, how are we going to fix this, how are we going to replace him and God raised up people in our church and they did an incredible job. I mean, not anything against Gary, I love Gary to death and he's still a great friend of mine, we didn't miss a beat. These people from our church rose up, several of them, and all the people you see on the stage, in particular Nathan Powell, Anna Marie and Roger and several others. Lee took a big role in the worship. They stood up and did an incredible job. God has led us to Becky Middleton who you can see is incredibly talented. When we were looking for this position we wanted somebody who was incredibly talented and creative, but we also wanted someone who was good with administration. You don't usually find that. If you're a talented person, you're usually flaky, but we ended up finding that person. A person with a business degree who was completely, incredibly organized that had a wonderful voice and talent and one of the things I've always looked for is I want someone that if everyone couldn't get here today because it was raining, the one person we paid could get here and they could lead without anybody else and that's what we have. If everybody doesn't show up, she can have a guitar or piano and lead us so we're excited about that. With Cory leaving, I've begun to see the same thing happen and when it first happened I started looking, God, who is going to take his place? One of the problems with someone taking his place is we've got to trust him. He's got a big job and trust doesn't come easy and then on the other hand he's also got to understand our passion and our vision because those of you that have been at other churches know this already; we're kind of different. Have you noticed? We're a little unique and so we were really afraid who we could bring in and God began to lift up people from inside our church and we thought, yeah that will work really wonderfully. We have Janie Moses that has been over the money and been the treasurer for twenty years and now she's going to step in and she's going to be more of the executive and look at and manage the cash flow. Stacie has been Cory's assistant. She's been writing checks, coding the checks, doing all the work and we are moving her to financial secretary where she does that all by herself. Then we needed somebody to do the new building and maintain this building and I have a good friend, Mike French over in Ennis, he's been managing properties and been building for the last twenty years and so he's stepping in part time to fill the gaps that Cory was leaving behind to give us the time to not be lost. To give us the time to find the executive pastor that fits in with the DNA of our church and so God always has a plan for us and so with that in mind we know as a church that God wants us to fully devoted followers and so the question is how do you get people down the avenue; how do you find out where they are? We could ask you but you'd lie. I don't mean that rude but today if I walk up to you and say, how's your relationship with Jesus, what are you going to say? It's

wonderful, great, hallelujah. You're not going to tell the truth and we understand that so we could go and count everybody, which today would not be a good day to do that, but on most days that would be a good thing to do. We could count the number of people involved in our programs, count the people who came to our worship, we could count the people baptized and go, yeah, we're doing wonderful, but really is that a heart reflection? Is that a heart or are we just putting on a good show? That doesn't help us either so we come across a tool that we believe is going to help pinpoint where are church is spiritually and if we can pinpoint where our church is spiritually then we can lead you to be that fully devoted follower. We can move you along the avenue in a much better way. So today I have a short video I want you to see about how you get online and take the survey at www.knowgrowserve.com. It took some people twenty minutes; it took some people an hour. It depends on your ability to read and answer and it also depends on your ability to sit and to pray and to answer correctly. I want to remind you, it's completely anonymous. No one will know who filled it out so this is a great opportunity for us as a corporate body to find out where we are spiritually but it's also a great opportunity for God to reveal where you are personally. The survey opened up yesterday and will only be open for two weeks and so in the next two week period we need you to go online and go through it. We need at least twenty percent; we'd love to have 50 percent of the people fill out this survey for us to help us know where we are corporately.

Now with that in mind I want to ask you this morning. If we could reveal your spiritual life right now, if we could rip the curtain off of your spiritual life, where would it be? Where in your personal life today, if we could expose it for a second, where would it be? This morning I want you to pray and look inside and I want you to ask yourself, where am I today in my relationship with God. Where am I today in my walk with God? Now, here is the problem that we run into when we ask this question, most of us in our culture and our time think we're pretty good people. It's true. When we look at ourselves we say, I'm basically a good person and you're basically a good person, we're all basically good people and we don't need to get real worried about the problems in our lives because we're all good people. The problem with being a good person is good is a relative term. Good is a relative term much like pretty. Pretty is a relative term. You may be the prettiest one in the room until someone walks in then all of a sudden you're not so pretty. You may be the smartest one in the room until somebody much more intelligent walks in the room and all of a sudden you're not quite as smart as you thought you were. Take the word strong. You may be a strong person, but it's relative. I have a ten year old that is strong; I mean he is strong for a ten year old. He'll hit you and it will hurt even at ten years old. I would put my ten year old in the ring with any other ten year old. I'm telling you it'd be a fight and it'd be one you'd want to pay for because he's going fight. He's got older brothers and he's mean. He would probably do really well against most ten year olds in that ring. But, he gets in that ring with me and we decide to fight, it's not going to last very long. I'm going to kick him, knock him out and go get a coke; it's over because strength is relative to

the other person in the fight. Pretty is relative to the other people in the room. Smart is relative to the other people in the room and I want to point out this morning that good is relative until somebody walks in that has never lied; until somebody walks in who's never done anything shady; until somebody walks in that's never lost their temper or caused a problem or had one sin in their life. When they enter the room, guess what happens to your good? It becomes filthy rags. The Bible says all the righteousness you have, all the good you have in yourself, when Jesus enters the frame, guess what? It all goes out the window. It's called holy; when you encounter a holy God, the goodness you have falls away, it's gone; there's nothing there. You look around this room and you'll probably find somebody that you're better than and if you can't find somebody than you're better than you are probably in prison. You're always going to find somebody that you're better than if you compare to the people around you, but when you compare yourself to a holy God you always come up short. So this morning I want to find out what is your current reality. If you're going to stop for a minute and think, I want you to observe, if we pulled off the cover of your life, what would we see? For many of you today, if we pulled off the exterior, pulled off the smile, pulled off the pretending, if we pulled off the hypocrisy we find that your life was full of trash. Let's be honest, this would be your life, just one big garbage bag. You've got all this garbage in your life and you're trying to hide it and cover it and trying to make people not see it but you know it's there. Now let me remind you of something quickly those of you that have come in to our church today who don't normally attend, those of you that are seeking God, those of you who are trying to find God, we got no problem with you bringing garbage in. In fact we invite you to come with all your garbage, that's okay, that's not a problem for us. We believe that Jesus has called us to reach people and those people don't come in all cleaned up and ready to go. Probably a lot of churches expect people to come in to be ready, committed Christians and that's not the way Jesus did it. Jesus called people to come in with their problems, with their garbage, with their pain and to be honest with it and open with it and if you're here today and you're starting to see God, bring your garbage. We're not going to judge you, but let me encourage you, if you already know God and you've known him for awhile, God wants to do something with that garbage. He doesn't want you to just sit there stinking it up; he wants to clean it out of your life. Last week we talked about justification, being saved, it's nothing we do, it's completely meritless grace, but then I talked about the word sanctification which is the growing process and holiness; becoming holy like God is holy and I had some people angry with me last week. I got an email that this guys not going to come to the church anymore because I dare say that you have to do something to be godly. See, he wants to live his life full of garbage and let God's grace cover it every day. He doesn't want to change his life, he doesn't want to be a new person, and he just wants God to cover it. I want you to know today God wants to take that and cleanse it that's what holy is about. Here's the problem, here's a verse in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 and it describes our day. It says, but mark this; there will be terrible times in the last days.

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self control, brutal, not lovers of good, treacherous, rash, conceded, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Have you watched the news? Is this not what we are? Let me tell you the scary part of the verse, having a form of godliness but denying that power. He's not talking about the world in the last days; he's talking about the church. He's talking about church. He's talking to the church looking any different, talking about the church not bringing all their garbage in, talking about the church being filled with this, all the things that aren't godly. Pretending to be godly, pretending to be holy, pretending to be what God wants them to be but we hold on to our garbage and we never take the steps towards spiritual maturity to be holy the way God wants us to be. That's why we've got to move on in our lives and so you reveal today, if God reveals to you today that you're life is full of garbage, he's saying don't be happy with that; clean it out. Get rid of it. Maybe some of you've worked on your garbage but you've gotten to the point in your life and you've got things pretty well in order except for one thing so today if we were going to reveal your heart we would see one sin that you just keep recycling over and over and over and over and you pray and say God, please forgive me and I want this out of my life and God I don't want to deal with this anymore. I want to be the person you want me to be, but you hold on to that one sin. That's where a lot of Christians find themselves. A lot of Christians find themselves trapped. In the Christian life what Satan does is you know you're trying to get your life worked out, you're trying to get things together for God but then all of a sudden Satan gets a foothold. Let me tell you what a foothold is. A foothold is not that he just dangles a carrot in front you. A footholds not you just kind of get away accidently in to sin. A foothold is a place that he knows that whenever you start getting on track, whenever you get things together, whenever you start getting on fire for God and excited about what God wants to do in your life, he puts his foot right in the middle of your back and he presses against you and he puts you on the ground and he defeats you because he has the stronghold, he has a foothold and you enter into that foothold, you enter into that stronghold and he destroys you and you get up and there's guilt and there's remorse and there's pain and you never get rid of the stronghold in your life and so he's got this stronghold in your life and he's holding on to you and as much as your trying you fail time after time after time after time and pretty soon you get so defeated with this recycled sin that you say I just give up, I'm going back to the garbage because I don't feel so bad over here. And you know what I'm going to do, I'm going to look around and I'm going to find somebody with a bigger bag than I have then I'm going to be okay. God has something more, God has something exciting for you; see what God is looking for is God says that he is a consuming fire. In the book of Hebrews he tells us that he is a stable, consuming fire and what does a fire do? It consumes us; it takes over every part of us. It just burns us out from the inside out, it just gets all of the mess out of our life and that's what God is saying. God is saying your life needs to be consumed and yes in your life there are problems, yes in your life

there is pain, yes in your life there are struggles, yes in your life you're going to be faced with all kinds of things in your life and what I want to do as your God is I am a consuming fire and I just want to burn them up in your life. I want to take everything that life has thrown at you and I want to burn it up. When you light gas have you ever seen what happens? Have you ever lit a bunch of trash on fire using gas? Woo its fun! I lost all my eyelashes one time! Because that fire consumes garbage in our life and God is saying I am a consuming fire and if you will open your heart to me, I will burn it all off, I will get rid of it, I will destroy it, and I will end it in your life. I will be a consuming fire. I will get rid of all the impurities and I will make you the man or women that I want you to be and here's the other exciting thing about when you catch fire, when you let God burn all that out of your life. Have you ever seen a wildfire? Have you ever seen fire just jump from house to house or from tree to tree? You see the fire's in California how they spread quickly and how they can't be contained. We all love to watch fire, we all have it in our house most of us contained in a box because fire is fascinating until it gets loose and when fire gets loose it takes over and consumes everything and that's what he's saying today in the life of this church, in your life he wants to consume the garbage and he wants to set you on fire so you run out through the fields, you run out through the world, you run out through your family, your friends, your neighbors and you go this is who God is and they catch fire because you're on fire. That's what we're looking for, that's what we want.

How do you know that you're consumed and on fire? There's two parts of it. Word and deed; two parts of the gospel. We get caught up on one side or the other and a lot of times we get confused. Many of you want to do the deeds, you understand the deeds so you want to go to downtown Dallas and you want to feed the hungry and then you want to sanitize your hands and run back to your house or you want to go to Mexico and you want to build a church for those poor people and then you want to come back to your house and live your comfortable life and you want to be freed from the guilt of having these good things and so you go to the less fortunate and you do good things. But there's more, yes deeds are important, in fact there written in the Bible but the word is also important. So of you say send me anywhere in the world but don't make me tell my neighbor that they're lost. Send me anywhere in the world but don't make me have to talk about God at work. I don't want to be that religious nut. I'll go into any neighborhood, just don't let me go across the street because I don't want to be embarrassed. Ladies and gentlemen, to be on fire for God the deeds are in your life, love one another, care for one another, and be there for one another, it's all there. It also talks about other things that you're to do with your life, other verses in the word, in John. We'll start in Matthew 5. In the same way let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to God. God wants us to be on fire and show the good works that he has for us. And it says love one another, the deeds go on in Romans, How will they know unless someone is sent. They go together and so today I want you to be consumed by the fire of God and I want you to carry that fire and I want it to be out of control and I want your neighbors and

your family and your friends by word and deed to know that you belong to him. Our church wants to reveal where we are spiritually but to do that, each one of you has to take the veil off and find out where you are. Why? Our lives are to give glory to God. At the end of the day that's all we're about; giving glory to him. Where are you in the process today?