2026-11-04 Points

Title: Lukewarm No More: A Call to Surrender, Repentance, and True Discipleship

Sermon Summary: This sermon delivers a direct and personal challenge to professing Christians who have grown comfortable in their faith without truly surrendering to God. Drawing from his own story of church hurt, spiritual wandering, and eventual genuine conversion, the speaker exposes the dangers of a lukewarm Christianity that prioritizes comfort over true discipleship. He identifies three essential pillars of the Christian life -- reading Scripture, prayer, and fasting -- and argues that neglecting these practices leaves believers spiritually weak and vulnerable to deception. He calls out the modern Western church for preaching a shallow gospel that avoids hard truths, fails to make disciples, and produces Christians in name only. Central to the message is a call to understand true repentance not as a verbal apology but as a complete transformation of heart, mind, and action. The sermon urges believers to read the Bible not merely to understand right and wrong, but to know God personally and build a genuine relationship with Him. Lukewarmness, the speaker warns, is not a private matter -- it has consequences for everyone around us.

Key Points:
- Every believer is engaged in a three-front spiritual war involving the heart, the mind, and physical action, and most people never move beyond the first battle, which is the battle of desire
- Pride and self-centeredness are at the root of spiritual lukewarmness, and we must choose who we serve -- God or self -- because no one can serve two masters
- The three essential pillars of the Christian life are reading Scripture, prayer, and fasting, and all three work together and reinforce one another
- Fasting is not optional for the serious believer; it is expected throughout Scripture, modeled by Jesus himself, and directly connected to spiritual power and growth in faith
- True repentance is not merely saying sorry; it is a complete change of heart, mind, and direction -- a turning away from sin and toward God that

results in genuine transformation
- The modern Western church often preaches a shallow gospel that avoids calling out sin, produces emotionally stimulated but spiritually undisciplined believers, and fails to encourage personal study of Scripture
- The most dangerous attacks on the church come from within, through false teachers and twisted doctrine that sounds just close enough to the truth to go undetected
- The assembly of believers is important and commanded, and forsaking it comes at a cost to spiritual growth and accountability
- Reading the Bible to know God personally, rather than simply to understand rules, is the difference between religious knowledge and genuine relationship
- Lukewarmness is not just a personal spiritual failure -- it affects those around us, drives people away from God, and can cause lasting damage to others who are watching how we live

Scripture Reference:
- Matthew 6:24 -- on the impossibility of serving two masters
- Matthew 6:21 -- on the connection between treasure and the heart
- Matthew 4:1-2 -- Jesus fasting forty days in preparation for temptation
- Matthew 6:16-18 -- the expected practice of fasting, framed as "when you fast"
- Matthew 9:14-15 -- Jesus indicating his disciples will fast after he is taken away
- Matthew 17:17-21 -- the disciples' inability to cast out a demon and Jesus connecting faith and fasting to spiritual power
- Matthew 18:20 -- where two or more are gathered in his name, he is present
- Matthew 7:15-16 -- the warning about false prophets recognizable by their fruits
- Hebrews 10:25 -- the call not to forsake the assembling of believers
- Psalm 122:1 -- expressing joy in going to the house of the Lord
- Psalm 51:17 -- God's regard for a broken and contrite heart
- Jeremiah 6:13-15 -- the condemnation of prophets and priests who deal falsely and are not ashamed
- Acts 3:19 -- repentance as turning to God so that sins may be wiped away
- Acts 20:29-31 -- Paul's warning that savage wolves and false teachers will

arise from within the church
- 2 Corinthians 7:9-10 -- godly sorrow producing repentance that leads to salvation
- Isaiah 55:7 -- the call for the wicked to forsake their ways, turn to God, and receive pardon
- 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 -- God provides the growth; we plant and water
- Jude 1:3-4 -- the call to contend for the faith against those who twist grace into a license for sin
- Ecclesiastes 1:17-18 -- the sorrow that accompanies the increase of wisdom
- Revelation 2-3 -- Jesus addressing and warning the seven churches

Stories:
- The speaker shares his own testimony of growing up in church but never truly knowing God, being shaped by distorted versions of Christianity including a judgmental God without love, an all-loving God without accountability, and a prosperity gospel that equated sickness with lack of faith
- He describes years of walking away from God, pursuing worldly pleasures, and suppressing his spiritual unrest until reaching a breaking point and crying out to God on the floor of his closet in desperation, where God met him and impressed upon his heart the three pillars of reading, praying, and fasting
- He recounts the unexpected loneliness that followed his genuine conversion, finding that even among professing Christians, true surrender was isolating and that many who called themselves Christians showed little evidence of real change
- He reflects on a period of resentment toward the lukewarm church, followed by the conviction that he himself had not long before been doing the same thing -- checking spiritual boxes without genuine relationship or surrender
- He references his brother as someone who went through similar or worse church hurt and spiritual struggle, noting that lukewarmness in the church has real consequences for real people who are watching and being shaped by what they see