

## Summary

This sermon launches the church's 'Awaken' season - a month dedicated to prayer and fasting for renewal in the church, revival in the city, and awakening across Middle Tennessee. Using the recent power outages in Nashville as a metaphor, the pastor explains how we can lose spiritual power gradually over time, just as we know when we have physical power or not. The message centers on Jesus' response to the question about the greatest commandment in Mark 12:28-34, where Jesus gives two interconnected commands: love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. The pastor emphasizes that these two commandments cannot be separated - how we love people reflects how we love God. He calls for a spiritual audit of our hearts to identify what we might be loving more than God and where we might not be loving others as we should.

## Intro Prayer

Father, we thank You for bringing us together today. As we begin this time of discussion, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to be honest with ourselves and with You about the condition of our hearts. Give us the courage to examine our lives and see where we need Your power and love. Holy Spirit, guide our conversation and help us to encourage one another as we seek to love You more fully and love others more deeply. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Ice Breaker

Share about a time when you lost power at your home (whether recently or in the past). What was the most challenging or surprising thing about that experience?

## Key Verses

1. Mark 12:28-34
2. Deuteronomy 6:4-5
3. Leviticus 19:18
4. 1 John 4:20

## Questions

1. The pastor mentioned that 75% of people in Nashville identify as Christian, but only 25% are considered 'practicing Christians.' What do you think accounts for this gap between belief and practice?
2. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Which of these four areas (heart, soul, mind, strength) do you find most challenging to surrender

fully to God?

3. The sermon included several audit questions for our hearts. Which of those questions was most convicting or challenging for you personally?
4. Why do you think Jesus connected loving God and loving our neighbor as the two greatest commandments? How are these two loves interconnected?
5. The pastor said 'there is a war going on for our hearts.' What are some things in your life that compete for the devotion that should belong to God?
6. How can we practically love our neighbors as ourselves in our current cultural climate where people are so divided on many issues?
7. The scribe told Jesus that loving God and neighbor is 'more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.' What does this teach us about the relationship between religious activity and genuine love?
8. Jesus told the scribe 'you are not far from the kingdom of God.' What do you think it means to be 'not far' from the kingdom, and how can someone move from being 'not far' to being 'in' the kingdom?

## Life Application

This week, conduct a personal 'heart audit' using the questions from the sermon. Choose one area where you realize you're not loving God fully or not loving others well, and take one specific action to address it. This could be repenting of something that has taken God's place in your heart, reaching out to someone you've been avoiding, or serving a neighbor in need. Also, begin praying daily for the 8-15 people you'll list in your Awaken prayer bookmark.

## Key Takeaways

1. We can lose spiritual power gradually over time, just like physical power, and we need to stay connected to the right source
2. The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength - giving Him our whole devotion for our whole lives
3. Loving God and loving our neighbor are inseparably connected - we cannot truly do one without the other
4. Desperation for God leads us to do things we've never done before, like fasting and prayer
5. An honest audit of our hearts reveals what we truly love most and where we need God's power to change

## Ending Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for this time together and for Your Word that challenges and encourages us. We confess that we often love other things more than You and fail to love our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us and give us new hearts that beat with Your love. As we go into this week, help us to be honest about the condition of our hearts and courageous enough to make changes where needed. Fill us with Your Spirit so that we can love You with everything we have and love others with Your perfect love. Use us to bring Your light and power to our community. We pray for renewal in our church, revival in our city, and awakening across our region. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.