

Grammy Nominee Amazes by Performing This Hillsong Hit

Grammy nominee Tori Kelly performs an acoustic cover of Hillsong United's hit song "So Will I (100 Billion X)" in a new music video. Kelly partnered with YouVersion to record the song as well as create a custom Bible plan through YouVersion's popular app. Watch the video to see her worship.

Judah Smith: Why Your Dreams and Fears Don't Matter as Much as You Think

Judah Smith says he wishes more preachers would say "It doesn't really matter." His remarks—based on the book of Ecclesiastes—come as part of a sermon series at his church, Churchome, about the things he wishes more preachers would say.

"How many things if we could add them up just in this room, let alone people watching on the app or in Seattle right now, can you imagine—[are] there 10,000 things that really don't matter collectively that we are all worked up about?" Smith asks. "I just wish more preachers would tell people in the church, 'Hey, I'm really sorry you're worked up about it. It doesn't really matter.' I don't think that's going to go over well. I don't think preachers—they may not be liked. But I wish Christians would tell Christians more, 'Hey, man, it

doesn't really matter.'"

Smith says that while there are plenty of meaningful things in the world—people, namely—the book of Ecclesiastes points out that there are also many meaningless things in the world. It reminds us that while we will live forever, our life here on earth is fleeting and short-lived at best. Because of that, many of our fears, desires and dreams are ultimately meaningless from an eternal perspective.

"The world has beauty, but the world has meaninglessness," Smith says. "We have to face it. Maybe we don't have to preach on Ecclesiastes every time we get together, but there are times it is important for us to say 'This is what the world is.' Furthermore, it helps us. Ecclesiastes is there to help us understand how God intended us to relate to this world. Furthermore, it sheds greater light on why He put us in this world."

So how then should we live? Smith explains in this sermon. Watch it here.

WATCH: Grammy Nominee Leads Crowd of Young Adults in Pure Worship

Tauren Wells recently led a crowd of young adults in a live worship performance of "Great Are You Lord." Wells performed last week at the 2019 Hope & Life Conference at Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas.

During the middle of the set, Wells pulled out a Bible and

read from Psalm 150. He then exhorted the youth assembled: “You may not be holding a guitar, you may not be holding a drum, but if you inhale and you exhale, you realize you have the instrument that you need. Because the Scripture says let everything that has breath—let everything that has breath—praise ye the Lord!”

Wells has been nominated for five Grammy awards and won four Dove Awards, including for Best New Artist. He was featured in the January 2019 issue of *Charisma* as one of the nine Spirit-filled voices you need to know in 2019.

Why T.D. Jakes Almost Quit the Ministry

Bishop T.D. Jakes told Steven Furtick he almost quit ministry for good—but then he had a life-changing encounter with a woman who reminded him of the real reason for his ministry. During a conversation with Furtick at Elevation Church, Jakes explained that the major media attention nearly forced him to quit being a pastor.

“I almost quit,” Jakes said. “I’m a country boy. I’m from West Virginia. I don’t know nothing about this big time stuff. I never even asked to be big. I wanted to be effective, not famous. Famous is the consequences of being effective. I didn’t know nothing about being famous and I didn’t like it. So there I was. And when you’re first new, everybody attacks you first and figures you out later.”

He says he was “viciously” attacked in the press and decided

he was through with it all.

“The first time I was in the *Washington Post*, the article was so vicious it made me nauseous,” Jakes said. “I was so shocked that you could say that stuff about somebody you didn’t even know based on assumptions and a little bit of this and a little bit of that, then they’d piece it all together and you don’t get to say anything back. So I decided I don’t want this. ... Nobody knew it because preachers can override their feelings and function. I had preached at places on fire, but inside I wanted to quit. I told God, ‘I’m through with this. I’m not going through this. I don’t need this.’”

One night after preaching, Jakes had an encounter with a woman who changed his life.

“I was mad inside,” Jakes said. “I was hurt. And I stayed up in the fellowship with the pastors because I didn’t want to go back to my room and sulk in my own sorrows. And they said, ‘There’s a lady downstairs waiting to see you.’ The service was over. The fellowship was over. The pastors were starting to leave. I was trying to out-wait her. I thought she’d give up and leave. And when I finally came down the steps, she was there. And she was just a willowy bit of a woman, and she said, ‘Bishop Jakes,’ she said, ‘I’ve been in the hospital.’ She said, ‘I was pregnant in my fallopian tubes, and the baby died in my tubes. And I was carrying around a dead baby. And the toxicity from the baby almost killed me.’ But she said, ‘The only thing that kept me alive was hearing you preach.’”

Jakes, visibly moved to tears, explained what happened next.

“She said, ‘If you hadn’t been preaching to me every day, I swear I would’ve died,’” Jakes said. “Then she looked at me and she said, ‘It’s for us. It’s not for them. It’s for us.’ It hit me so hard. I didn’t even get her name. I got her card and cried all the way back to my room, because she reminded me why I was there.”

Watch the full video interview with Jakes here. His conversation about nearly quitting ministry begins at roughly 1:05:00.

Cindy Jacobs: The Lord Gave Me Prophetic Strategy to End the Conflict in Venezuela

On *The Jim Bakker Show*, Cindy Jacobs said God gave her prophetic strategies about how to end the conflict in Venezuela between President Nicolas Maduro—seen by many in the international community as a human rights-violating dictator—and rebel insurgent forces. Jacobs suggested that U.S. President Donald Trump should launch a military invasion of Venezuela with the cooperation of neighboring Colombia in order to overthrow the Maduro regime.

“Most intercessors don’t know how to pray strategically,” Jacobs said. “We met with a roundtable of Latin American prophets a few days ago in Bogota and we have—all over the world—there are prophets that are meeting. Like, there’s one for Europe, one from Australia, one for Canada, these round tables. As we were meeting with all these people, the Lord began to give us strategies about Venezuela. In other words, if the Colombian military went in with the U.S. military, I think that thing could fall like in a day or a few days. I mean, it wouldn’t be a long, drawn-out thing. So we need to pray for the President of Colombia, because Trump would go in. And he’s quite a good guy, this [Ivan] Duque [Marquez], this President of Colombia.”

During the interview, Jacobs also said that God told her America would enter a season of hyperinflation—like the economic crisis Argentina is currently going through—and said that she prayed for Argentina’s economy to collapse so that they would undergo revival.

“Probably 10 years ago I was pumping gas and the Lord said to me, ‘America is going to come into a season of hyperinflation,’” Jacobs says. “I didn’t know what hyperinflation was. ... We’ve already had it. We don’t realize how much inflation we’ve already suffered.”

Later, Jacobs added about Argentina: “I prayed that the economy of Argentina would collapse, and then God gave me a second word, OK? And the second word was that if they will start there will be a great prayer revival and it would be a miracle how they get out of that economic problem.”

Argentina—which was once one of the richest countries in South America—has seen inflation rise over 50 percent in the last year.

Watch the full clip [here](#).

Charismatic Pastor Cautions Against This Bad Approach to Sharing the Gospel

Rev. Mike Pilavachi, co-founder and senior pastor of Soul Survivor Warford in the United Kingdom, recently explained how to evangelize—and how not to evangelize—in a sermon. Pilavachi uses his own early days as a Christian as a cautionary tale.

He says he had a radical conversion and became obsessed with trying to lead others to Christ. He bought a bunch of gospel-themed stickers from a local Christian store and started posting and sticking them all over his town, hoping to saturate his city with the gospel. Then he overheard a fellow believer complaining about the mystery person who was annoying the town with gospel-themed vandalism. She called him a “bad witness.”

Pilavachi says that his experience shows in many ways, the church has driven people away from the gospel—rather than toward it—through misguided evangelistic zeal. Evangelism is important, but it’s important to do it the right way—and no one offers a better model than Jesus himself, Pilavachi says.

“We’ve also got to be the gospel,” Pilavachi says. “We can’t just preach the gospel and not be the gospel, because people listen to who we are, not just to what we say. ... The point isn’t how they respond. The point is that we show the love of Jesus. Some people will respond, and some people won’t.”

Listen to his message and hear how Jesus embodies true Spirit-filled evangelism through his encounter with the woman at the well.

For King & Country Teams Up With Secular Hip-Hop DJ for New Song

Grammy-winning duo For King & Country recently teamed up with a couple of unlikely collaborators—indie-pop band Echosmith

and producer Timbaland—for a remix of their hit single “God Only Knows.” Timbaland is a secular producer, rapper and DJ who has worked with Jay-Z, Ludacris, Rihanna, Drake, Justin Timberlake and many more.

It’s unclear at this time how exactly For King & Country got connected with Timbaland, but you can watch the official lyric video for the new remix [here](#).

Andy Stanley: ‘Part of the Bible Is Obsolete and Outdated’

Pastor Andy Stanley recently defended his claim that parts of the Old Testament were rendered “obsolete and outdated” by Jesus’ new covenant. Stanley’s new book *Irresistible* debuted to some controversy last fall, but the megachurch pastor sought to clarify his position during an uncut interview with 100 Huntley Street’s Maggie John.

In the video, John asks Stanley how to properly read the Old Testament.

“Our tendency because of the way we’ve been given the Bible is we want to make God’s activity in the Old Testament fit with the Sermon on the Mount’s ‘love your enemies,’” Stanley says. “When you read the Old Testament, it’s like, I don’t see a lot of enemy love going on. Well it’s not because it was two different gods. God didn’t change. The covenants changed. It’s a brand-new covenant. But to get to the new, we had to go through the history of the old. So we read the Old Testament

in light of God's faithfulness to His people. God is a God that keeps His promises."

He continues: "But what we can't do is take the promises that God gave to Israel and sanitize them and kind of dust them off and twenty-first-century them, and somehow make them fit with Jesus and make it all blend together. Now Christians do that all the time. And I don't think there's any great harm done necessarily. But again, my concern is not for the people who are in. My concern is for the people who are trying to come back or the people for whom the gospel is so muddy or muddled for them based on Christians doing all kinds of crazy things based on their understanding of the Bible."

Stanley cites Hebrews 8:13, which says, "By calling this covenant 'new,' he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear" (NIV). In the video interview, John asks Stanley about his use of the word "obsolete."

"I think if the average evangelical pastor got up and quoted those verses in Hebrews without telling people they were in the Bible, they may lose their job," Stanley says. "But it is right there. ... [Hebrews] is written by a Jewish person who says that covenant that you grew up on is obsolete and outdated. Which means, one of the authors of the Bible said part of the Bible is obsolete and outdated. Now there are people watching this interview that think I'm making that up. They've never seen those verses. But it's so consistent with what Paul taught. It's so consistent with the Sermon on the Mount."

Stanley affirms there "will always be a place" for the Old Testament, but asserts that the new covenant is superior and has replaced it.

"Why would you reach back to an inferior covenant with inferior promises when God has given you a better covenant

with better promises?” Stanley asks. “...Of course there will always be a place for every part of the Old Testament and the old covenant within the Old Testament in our Christian preaching and teaching and application. But again, understanding the context is very important.”

John then points out to Stanley that some pastors may interpret his words as verging on heresy. Stanley says he’s certainly heard those criticisms before.

“I’ve been called a heretic,” Stanley responded. “And privately, not publicly, I always say every church reformer started as a heretic. Just remember that. Martin Luther, John—that’s the first time I’ve said it out loud in an interview. I’m not claiming to be a reformer. Really, this is so not about me. None of this is original with me. I mean, this has been said by so many people so many times, but unfortunately these conversations oftentimes get buried in theological context. So I’m trying to bring what I think every Christian should understand about their own faith to light.”

Watch the full video interview [here](#). The section quoted here begins roughly 27 minutes in.

What Happens in the Spirit Every Time Jesus’ Name Is Declared

Kyle Winkler says that the reason God has roughly 300 different names throughout Scripture is because each name invoked a different nature or aspect of His personality. But

because Colossians 2:9 says “For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body,” Winkler says that means every time Jesus’ name is declared, so is every other name of God.

“All those 300 different names that I’ve been mentioning—all of those things and so much more is packed into the person of Jesus,” Winkler says. “This is why, when Jesus showed up to a scene, He didn’t have to say anything special. He didn’t have to do anything special, but things just automatically obeyed His command.”

Watch it here.

Why This Popular Megachurch Pastor Almost Gave Up His Ministry

He may lead one of the largest Assemblies of God churches in the country, but John Lindell still remembers when he failed the test of faith. Lying on the floor of his tiny office, staring up at the ceiling, he breathed out one final prayer of desperation. It was January 1991, and Lindell was neck-deep in a disastrous church-planting tenure in Overland Park, Kansas, with only eight people attending after 18 months. Five of them were his own family members.

“God, I came here,” Lindell prayed. “Now I’m financially ruined and ministerially ruined.”

For years, Lindell believed that all it took to grow a church was faith and hard work. *If you just work hard, do the right*

things and preach the Word, he told himself, you can build a church.

Lindell didn't believe that anymore. He had reached his breaking point.

"God, I quit," he said. "And just so you know I'm serious, I'm calling the district superintendent. I'm going to tell him too."

Lindell called up the Assemblies of God district superintendent and explained he needed to abandon Calvary Community Church, the church he had founded. For months, the denomination had partially funded the church, and Lindell admitted they were wasting their money keeping Calvary open ("I'm sorry for taking [that money] out of a good church," he said). The superintendent graciously accepted Lindell's resignation.

That day, Lindell told God, "I don't think even You can build the local church here."

The very next Sunday, a new family came to Calvary Community Church. The Sunday after that, another new family joined the church. Next, Lindell's next-door neighbors got saved. Then his neighbors across the street got saved. The church's weekly Bible study grew so large it outgrew its space twice. Over 100 people attended Sunday services. Today, Abundant Life Church—as Calvary was later renamed—still serves the Overland Park community as a viable, healthy church.

But it was too late for Lindell. He had already resigned and packed his bags—physically and emotionally. He felt like a failure—and worse, he knew he had failed God's test of faith. He told his wife that unless he got a new pastoral job soon, he would go back to law school—his original career path before God called him to ministry.

So Lindell was surprised to receive an invitation to interview

for the pastoral role at James River Church in Springfield, Missouri. In fact, based on Lindell's account of his interviews, it sounds like he spent most of his time explaining why he shouldn't be hired.

"If you're looking for a guy who's got a big burning vision for Springfield, or you need somebody who's going to put the jumper cables on the car and start it up—a fiery kind of person—I'm not that guy," Lindell told the church council. "I'll work hard, but I'm tired. My wife's tired. We're a little bit burnt out."

The next morning, Lindell went out to breakfast at Steak 'n Shake with one of the council members.

"Listen, I think you're making a mistake," Lindell told him. "I feel like a failure, and I think I'll hurt the church. I just don't want to hurt what you've got going on here."

The council member considered Lindell's words, then replied, "John, I don't think you're a failure. I think you can be good for us. And we can be good for you. I hope you'll come."

"The power of a statement of encouragement changed the course of [my] life," Lindell says. "Because on that one statement, I said, 'OK, I'll come.' I look back on that, and I think, *Man, a breakfast at Steak 'n Shake directed the course of my life.* I came to James River, and it's been an incredible ride."

Today John and Debbie Lindell serve as co-lead pastors of a church of thousands, with four campuses across southwest Missouri. James River Church is one of the largest Assemblies of God churches in the United States. The church has spawned countless church plants, charities and conferences. In 2010, *Outreach* magazine listed James River as one of the fastest-growing churches in America. And Lindell knows none of that is because of him.

"People can look at James River and think, 'Oh wow, this guy

was a big visionary and had a lot [of success],'" Lindell says. "Vision plays a big part, and I understand that, but the bigger story at James River is that God sometimes sovereignly for His own will and good pleasure does things that defy human qualification or human quantification—He just wants to do something to show Himself powerful. ... He's the one who builds the church. And I think God honestly had to burn that into my heart to prepare me for what was next at James River. Because I'm under no illusions that I can go, show up in another city and have another James River happen."

For Lindell, James River Church has been his second chance at the test of faith. As a result, he's passionate about sharing the grace of God with anyone who will hear it. And grace is the subject of his new book, *Soul Set Free* (Charisma House).

"I felt like I failed the test of faith in Kansas City because I got to a place where I didn't believe God could build the church," Lindell says. "It really speaks of God's willingness to bless us beyond what we can imagine and to let people who have failed the testing phase experience His work, as He gives people a second chance," Lindell says. "Because He's the God of the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth chance."

Amazing Grace

In *Soul Set Free*, Lindell dives deep into the book of Romans to understand the truth of grace. The book mirrors Lindell's own sermon style, highly exegetical and Bible-driven. When Lindell first came to James River Church, the council questioned whether churchgoers would accept exegesis. But Lindell says God has always drawn him to preaching straight from the Bible.

"When you take people through the Word of God over time, you're teaching them to study the Bible," Lindell says. "You're spending way more time getting ready to preach than

you are thinking about what to preach. Because, honestly, I know next time I get up to bat, I'm going to be preaching from Romans 13:1, because that's where I left off. ... It forces the preacher to preach on topics he wouldn't normally preach. It gives people a more balanced diet. And I think it teaches them how to study the Word of God, [which] develops a depth in the congregation that I think few things will. I'm not saying James River is the deepest church there's ever been, but you can see a depth in the people that come just because they've heard significant theology presented and have had to wade through it and process it. I think that has a real strengthening effect on their lives."

Romans was actually one of the first books Lindell preached through when he came to James River.

"I did it in 16 weeks, which isn't what I would call a profound look at the book," Lindell says. "As I grew in understanding, in the Lord and in my ability to research, I thought, 'Man, I need to do Romans over, because when I did the first time, it was certainly not adequate.'"

What he discovered rocked his world. Though he was comfortable discussing grace, Lindell realized the truth hadn't sunk into his spirit—he was still living from a works-based approach to righteousness.

"I'm a disciplined guy, so in order to feel good about my walk with God, I've got to do certain things," Lindell says. "I've got to read my Bible, and so I read my Bible. I read the Bible through every year, and I have since I was 20 years old. ... But it's like 'If reading it through once a year is good, then probably reading it through twice is going to be even better.' Maybe three times will be even more. Because when you're motivated by works righteousness, it's never enough. You're never going to do enough. You pray an hour? Well, you could have prayed two hours. Did you fast for a week? You could have fasted two."

He thinks so many dechurched Christians are people who got trapped in this fallacy and burned themselves out. They couldn't keep up the pace of good deeds. They grew tired of feeling guilty and inadequate. They lost the joy of the Lord.

"We're like the Galatians," Lindell says. "'Having begun in the Spirit,' Paul says, 'are you now trying to perfect yourself by human effort?' I think that's where a lot of people are. For most people, what happens is they read a statement like Romans 8:1, one of the greatest statements in all the Word of God: 'There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.' But here's the way most Christians interpret it. They won't say it. But practically, this is how they live it: 'There is therefore now less condemnation.' Because they don't understand grace. They don't understand the scale, the scope, the enormity. They don't understand the great love the Father has for them."

Lindell certainly didn't. Though he loved Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, his negative experience with his earthly father darkened his perception of God the Father.

"My dad didn't know the Lord until late in life," Lindell says. "My dad was a hard-working man [and] a tremendous provider. But ... my dad had his hands full [managing the family farm], and I didn't really like farming. So relative to me, my dad was a good dad, but he was a distant dad. You know, I think [most] people transfer their encounters with their earthly father to the heavenly Father. I'm not going to say everybody, but again, in my experience, I think a lot of people have struggled in processing the Father's great love for them. Because they frame the Father or view him through the lens of their earthly father, and no earthly father, including me, can measure up to that kind of scrutiny."

In *Soul Set Free*, Lindell hopes to reintroduce believers everywhere to a God whose love is extravagant and boundless. That means expanding our conception of what grace entails.

“A lot of people understand grace as God forgiving our sin, and that certainly is a glorious truth relative to grace,” Lindell says. “But that is only a part of the magnanimous love and provision of the Father. I mean, the forgiveness—not only of every sin we had committed when we come to Him, but every sin we would ever commit. In that moment of our justification, He forgives everything we will ever commit or have committed. That is unbelievable. Then He clothes us in the righteousness of His Son, so that when He looks at us, He sees us—with our faults, with our failings—as righteous as Jesus, and then from that begins His work in us.”

Powerful Prayers

Lindell believes that the biggest factor behind James River’s growth—besides God’s sovereign move—is the church’s weekly prayer meeting. In January 1998, Lindell started inviting the church to meet and pray on Wednesday nights. Over two decades later, the meetings are still going strong. Lindell estimates that probably 40 percent of his church attends the weekly meeting—and almost every regular James River attendee would call the Wednesday prayer meeting the church’s most important service.

“As you pray, there’s an accumulating weight of grace that builds up,” Lindell says. “It’s almost like a reservoir that fills that eventually begins to breach the dam and gives you a breakthrough power. And so I thought like this: *The longer we pray, the longer we’re at it, the more powerful the church is going to be and the more we’re going to see God’s power.*”

His theory held true. Through 21 years of diligent prayer, Lindell says his church has seen God do incredible things.

“When we started the prayer meeting, interestingly enough, salvations increased exponentially,” Lindell says. “Baptisms increased exponentially. Holy Spirit baptisms increased exponentially. There was a weight of the Lord’s hand and a

grace on the church that really ... took us from being an ordinary church to being an extraordinary church in some really significant ways. The prayer meeting is the engine that drives the ship of James River.”

One significant fruit of the meetings was the success of Cherish Kids. This project was spearheaded by Debbie Lindell, who serves alongside her husband as co-senior pastor of James River Church. Since its founding 10 years ago, Cherish Kids has championed foster care and adoption. Because of the prayers of the church, over 5,000 kids have been placed in foster and adopted homes throughout Missouri. In fact, the program was so successful that state officials reached out to the Lindells and asked them to duplicate it in every state county.

“Now we can train churches to raise up foster parents in every county in the state,” John Lindell says. “It’s an unbelievable thing. State officials [said,] ‘Tell us what you need. Tell us where the roadblocks are. We’ll take care of it.’ That’s almost unheard of.”

He recommends similar prayer meetings to pastors at any church.

“If I were going to advise any pastor anywhere what one thing they should do, I would say, ‘Get your people to pray regularly,’” Lindell says. “Make it an emphasis: ‘Once a week, we are going to gather in the name of Jesus. We are going to pray and ask God for the impossible, believing He’s going to do it.’”

When an entire congregation believes for the impossible, God makes the impossible possible. Lindell says he’s seen it happen again and again at James River. One year, during a Fourth of July festival, massive thunderstorms threatened to rain out the event. When the storm reached the county line, Lindell says he watched on the Doppler radar as the storm

split in two, went around the church, and re-formed on the other side. Another time, a popular rock radio station incredulously noted a downpour on one side of the highway overpass, but on James River's side, it was completely dry.

"The big debate [in our community] was, 'Can Christians really change the weather?'" Lindell says. "People would ask me, and I'd say, 'Listen, I can't change the weather. I can pray, and God can change the weather.' We know that Elijah prayed and it didn't rain, and he prayed again that it would rain, and it rained. So the Scripture clearly says that's within the boundaries of things we can pray about. And God hears and shows Himself powerful. But that became almost a known thing: If James River prayed for the weather, there is a grace on the church to do that."

The Lindells can further point to incredible event turnout, miraculous building projects, financial provision and even supernatural healings. And Lindell knows it's entirely the result of God's grace—because he's seen the fruit of his own strivings. On his own, he was a failure. But when God's grace is upon a ministry, no one can argue with the results. That's why he'll always encourage his church to keep pressing in with prayer.

"I told the people this when we started the prayer meeting," Lindell says. "I said, 'Listen, I'm not doing this as a fad. I'm not doing this to see if this works. I'm doing this because this is the character of the Lord: that after we've been here for 300 prayer meetings in six years, it will be impossible for the Lord to look down from heaven and not answer. God is going to say, 'These people were here when it was hot. They were here when it was cold. They were here when they were tired. They were here when they had other things they could have been doing. And I'm going to hear from heaven. And I'm going to answer their prayers.'" {eoa}

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