

The Hand Writing on the Wall

by Brian Long

Brian Long's sermon explores the story of Belshazzar's downfall as a warning about pride, sin, and the urgency of repentance before God's judgment.

Duration: 56:17

Scripture: Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:21-22, Matthew 5:27-28, Matthew 7:23, Matthew 25:32-33, James 2:10

Topics: "Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the brevity and uncertainty of life, drawing from James 4:14. He compares life to a vapor, a fleeting moment that quickly disappears. The preacher also shares a powerful story of a man who was about to commit suicide but had a life-changing encounter with God. The man's realization of his sins and his cry for mercy led to his salvation. The sermon concludes with an invitation for anyone in need of Jesus to come forward and receive salvation.

Transcript

It's great to be with you friends again. Tonight, we're going to turn to Daniel chapter 5. The fifth chapter of Daniel. And we will begin reading in verse 22.

But before we actually read our text, I want to give you a little bit of background as to what's going on here in Daniel chapter 5. In Daniel chapter 5 we read about a man, a king by the name of Belshazzar. And Belshazzar was the son of King Nebuchadnezzar. Now that King Nebuchadnezzar has died and gone on, Belshazzar his son rises to the throne and he becomes king of the Chaldeans.

Belshazzar was a man who had no fear of God. He lived according to his own will, according to the lust of his flesh. He lived for the moment with no regard for eternity.

Belshazzar was a man who loved to drink. He loved to party. In fact, in verse 1, it tells us here in chapter 5 that Belshazzar had just thrown this huge party with a thousand of his lords.

And also at this party, according to verse 3, were all of his wives and concubines. So he was a very immoral, sinful man. In the midst of this big party, in all of the dancing and drinking and the idolatry, and all the carrying on that's going on here, Belshazzar takes one step further down into his sin and degradation.

I guess the party wasn't wild enough for him yet. It wasn't wicked enough for him yet. And so Belshazzar commands that the vessels that belong in the house of God in Jerusalem, these were sacred vessels,

cups if you will, that were to be used in the house of God.

Belshazzar commands that those vessels be brought to him because now he wants to drink from them. He wants to get drunk from vessels that belong in the house of God. He was a wicked man.

And I want you just to see from that how sin always takes us down. Sin always takes you further than you want to go. It takes you one step lower.

It always leads to grosser darkness until ultimately it leads you to death. Well, that's what he does. They bring the vessels to him and they begin to drink out of these vessels that belong in the house of God.

And they start praising all the gods of silver and gold. They're worshiping idols. But then suddenly, in the midst of this huge party, everybody stops.

And they stop because a hand appears over here on the wall. And the hand begins to write something on the wall that nobody can understand. They don't know what it is.

This hand writes three words. *Mini tiql yufarsin*. Well, how would you feel if a hand just appeared all of a sudden and began writing on the wall over here? You don't know where the hand came from and you don't know what to make of the writing on the wall.

You can't understand it. King Belshazzar became absolutely terrified. He didn't know who was writing on the wall.

He didn't know this was the hand of God. And he sure didn't know what it meant. So he calls for all of his astrologers and the magicians and all the wise men and he says, if anybody can tell me what this writing is on the wall, he said, I'll clothe you with scarlet, I'll put a gold chain around your neck, and I'll make you third ruler in all of my kingdom.

He was so terrified, the Scripture says, his face turned pale. He began to shake and tremble. His knees began to buckle and knock together.

And he became even more terrified because when all the magicians and astrologers came, none of them could interpret the handwriting on the wall. He's just about to lose it when the queen steps up and says, wait a minute, Belshazzar. I remember a young man by the name of Daniel.

He has the Spirit of the living God in him. And when your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, was alive, this man, Daniel, used to interpret dreams for him. Bring Daniel, the man of God.

He can tell you what's written on the wall. So they sinned for Daniel. And Daniel comes to interpret the handwriting on the wall, but before he does, he looks Belshazzar straight in the eye, and he rebukes him for the same sin that was in his father, King Nebuchadnezzar.

And that was the sin of pride. In essence, Daniel says, Belshazzar, don't you remember how your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, exalted himself? He became proud and puffed up, and God had to remove him from His throne because of his pride. That same pride is in you, Belshazzar.

Now listen to what the handwriting on the wall says. First of all, MENE. M-E-N-E.

And that's where we're going to start reading. We need to read our text before I get ahead. Daniel chapter 5, verse 22.

And thou, His son, O Belshazzar... This is Daniel speaking to Belshazzar. He says, Thou, His son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knew all this, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven, and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines have drunk wine in them. And thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know.

And the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified? Then was the part of the hand sent from Him, and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written. MENE, MENE.

TEKEL, EUPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing. MENE.

God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL. Thou art weighed in the balances, and are found wanting.

PEREZ. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet and put a chain of gold about his neck and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be third ruler in the kingdom.

In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about three score and two years old. Daniel told Belshazzar exactly what the handwriting on the wall meant.

First of all, MENE. Belshazzar, your days are numbered. God has numbered your days.

And your days are over. Secondly, TEKEL. It means weighed.

Belshazzar, you will be weighed in the balances. God's balances. And you're going to come up short.

You're going to be found wanting. And then the last word was PEREZ, which is singular for Eupharsin. It means divided.

Your kingdom will be divided and given to someone else. And it was given to the Medes and Persians. And verse 30 tells us that that very night, Belshazzar was killed.

And the handwriting on the wall came to pass. I'm sure in the midst of this large party, he had no idea that that would be his last party. That that very night he would breathe his last.

He had no idea that that was his last night to live. But the Lord took his life. I want to ask you a very serious and sobering question tonight, folks.

Have you seen the handwriting on the wall? Have you seen that your days are numbered? That God has numbered our days? Every single one of us has been given this precious gift called life. It's a gift from God. And every breath we have in our body has been given to us by God.

God has numbered your days. It is God who chose the day you would be born. And it's only God that knows the day that you will leave this earth.

Life is a precious gift from God. And how many of us who are getting older, it seems more precious. It seems like it's going even faster.

What does the book of James say? James chapter 4 and verse 14. Notice what James says. Chapter 4 verse 14.

He says, Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow, for what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. The living Bible says, How do you know what is going to happen tomorrow? For the length of your lives is as uncertain as the morning fog. Now you see it, and then you don't.

Life is fleeting. Life is short. Life is a gift from God.

James says it's like a vapor. It's here for a moment, and then it vanishes away. Like a flower fading in the field.

Like little bubbles that a child blows up in the air, and you see them just for a moment, and pop, they're gone. Our life is brief. It's short.

It's a gift given to us by God, and only God knows the number of our days. That makes life precious. C.T. Studd used to say this, Only one life will soon be passed.

Only what's done for Christ will last. Life is precious. Your days are numbered.

My days are numbered. And then what happens next? It's the handwriting on the wall. The next word is teakle.

You'll be weighed in the balances, and you'll be found wanting. Hebrews 9.27 says, And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. Belshazzar would die that very night, and he would be brought before the judgment of God, and he would be weighed in the balances of God, and he would come up short of God's glory.

He would be weighed and found wanting. But my question tonight is, have we seen the handwriting on the wall? First, that my days are numbered. Secondly, that all of us will appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

And those who do not know Jesus Christ will be brought before the great white throne judgment. The Scripture says, at the great white throne judgment, heaven and earth will pass away. They will flee from the face of the One who sits upon the throne.

God is a holy and just God. And I want you just to follow me on a journey tonight, just for a few moments, I want you to follow me. Fast forward time, because the Bible says it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.

Every single one of us will one day face death. None of us is exempt from that. That's an appointment we all have.

And we don't know when. Secondly though, every single one of us will one day stand before the throne of God. We will stand at the judgment seat of Christ.

Those who don't know Christ will stand at the great white throne judgment. And picture with me if you will tonight, the balances, the scales of God's judgment coming down right here before us. Okay? They're the scales.

You're brought before the throne of God. And God calls your name. It's time for judgment.

You're weighed in the balances. He calls your name. You step in one side of the balance.

And on the other side of the scales, God drops the heavy law of His ten commandments. He starts with the first commandment. Commandment number one.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. How will you do when you're weighed against the first commandment? Jesus clarifies this commandment in the New Testament when He speaks to the expert in the law and He says, the first and greatest commandment is this, that thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. How do you do, my friend, when you're weighed against that first commandment? Do you love Jesus supremely? With all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength? Do you love God more than anything or anyone in life? Do you love Him more than father or mother? Do you love Him more than wife or husband? Do you love Jesus more than your children or your grandchildren? Do you love God more than your home, more than your hobbies, more than your farm, your land, your RVs, your TVs, all of these things? Do you love God supremely? And if you say, yes, I love God with all my heart, the question is, have you always loved God this way? Truth is, every single one of us has broken that first commandment.

And when weighed in the balances, we come up short. We're found wanting. But the law gets heavier because down comes commandment number two.

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not bow down to idols. And someone says tonight, well, I'm glad that I haven't broken that one.

I've never bowed down to an idol. But listen, before we flatter ourselves and say, well, at least I'm not guilty of idolatry, I want to say to you that you don't have to go to a foreign land, a heathen country, to find idolatry. There's a whole lot of it right here in America.

Bowing their knee, bowing our knee. Listen, anything you love more, fear more, desire more than God becomes an idol in your life. Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image.

You shall not bow down to any idol. Jesus said this, remember, you cannot serve two masters. You will love the one and hate the other.

You'll be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. You can't serve God and money.

He said wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And the truth is, there are more today in America who bow their knee to the gods of silver and gold and mammon and money and materialism than who bow their knee to the almighty God who gave them life and whose breath is in their hand. Weighed and found wanting.

You're in the scale. Weighed against the first and second commandment and down comes the third commandment. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

For the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Do we realize what a serious sin this is? To take the name of the God who loved you, who created you, and to tag it on with the four letter cuss word. Have you ever done that in your life? Blasphemy is what God calls it.

And how serious is it? God says He will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Or perhaps just as bad, we have taken that holy name of God and we've used it irreverently, we've spoken it flippantly and we're weighed and we're found wanting. First commandment, second commandment, third commandment, fourth commandment.

You shall remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. But the New Testament tells us in Hebrews chapter 4 that Jesus Christ is our Sabbath rest and therefore, under the new covenant, every day is to be kept holy. But while every day is to be kept holy, man will not even set aside one day, the first day of the week, Sunday, to come together with the people of God and to worship God and to keep it holy.

Sunday comes and a man goes fishing. Sunday comes and another man goes hunting. Sunday comes and someone would rather watch TV.

Someone would rather go shopping. Loving the pleasures of this world rather than lovers of God. How will you do when you're weighed against the fourth commandment? Will you be found wanting? Fifth commandment, honor your father and your mother.

Thou shalt honor your father and your mother. And God does not say, as long as you agree with them, as long as they do everything right, no, no, He says, honor your father and your mother. How many of us have ever disrespected, disobeyed, dishonored mom and dad? You're weighed and you're found wanting.

Commandment number six, thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not murder. Thou shalt not kill.

You say, there's one I know I haven't broken. And God says, step into the scale. And you step into the scale and down comes commandment number six, thou shalt not kill.

But as you step into it, Jesus reminds you of what He preached on the Sermon on the Mount. And that is, if you've ever had hatred, angry at your brother without a cause, it's the same as murder. And no murder has eternal life in him.

You've broken that law. The sixth commandment. And down comes the seventh.

The seventh commandment is, thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not commit adultery. And Jesus reminds us in the Sermon on the Mount, you have heard it said of old, thou shalt not commit adultery.

But I say unto you, whosoever shall look at a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery already with her in his heart. Has any sin today so plagued and infected mankind like this one today? With the flood of filth that's coming through the computer today, I speak to men constantly about this sin. And who are in bondage to this sin.

The flood of filth that's coming through the television set. Living in a world, in even a church where women have no concept of modesty. And the sin of sexual immorality is binding, is laying hold of men and women by the hands and feet and dragging them to hell faster perhaps than anything else.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 4. God says marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. That's the word of God.

God will judge. He says in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, don't be deceived. Fornicators, adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Weighed against the seventh commandment. Weighed and found wanting. Then comes the eighth commandment.

Thou shalt not steal. But remember, God's standard is perfect. It's righteous.

It's just so if you've ever stolen anything, as little as a penny, one cent. You're weighed in God's balance. You're judged as a thief.

Weighed and found wanting. The ninth commandment says, thou shalt not bear false witness. In other words, you shall not lie.

Have you ever told a lie? Truth is, we all have. Tragedy is, the scripture says, in Revelation chapter 21, that all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire. The tenth commandment.

Thou shalt not covet. You shall not covet your neighbor's house, your neighbor's wife, his donkey, his ox. Thou shalt not covet.

But Jesus won't even let us stop with the tenth commandment. He says in the New Testament, a new commandment I give you, that you love one another. That you love one another as I have loved you.

That you love one another. How will you do when weighed against this commandment? You shall love one another. Is love reigning in your heart tonight? For your brother? For your sister? Is love reigning in your heart tonight for the church? For God's people? Is love reigning in your heart tonight for your wife? For your husband? Is love reigning in your heart tonight for your enemies? That is the standard of Christ.

That you love. How many will be weighed in the balance? Tikal was the handwriting on the wall. You're weighed and you're found wanting.

You come up short. We fall short of the glory of God. And if someone so prides themselves, that's to say, well, I've only broken one.

Or I've just broken two or three. Listen to what the Scripture says in James again. Chapter 2, verse 10.

For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of breaking them all. What will you do when you stand before the throne of God? What will you do when you stand before the One whose eyes are like flames of fire? Whose face is brighter than the sun? I speak to people, men, who really have this mindset, out of sight, out of mind, as if God doesn't see what goes on behind closed doors. I tell you, as long as you stay in your sin, be sure your sin will find you out.

He sees it. Nothing is hidden before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. And all of that is brought before God.

And you're weighed in the balance and found wanting. If you die in your sins, you will face God in judgment. If you die in your sins, you will end up in hell.

That is the absolute truth of the Word of God. No one can die in their sins and end up in heaven. They will end up in hell.

You say, if that's the case, who has any hope? Folks, that's why the Lord Jesus Christ came with this message. What was the message that He preached? Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel.

He says, repent. He says, I tell you, nay, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish. What did He tell Nicodemus? He said, Nicodemus, who was a religious, moral man, He says, verily, verily, I say unto you, Nicodemus, except you be born again, you shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

You must be born again. You must repent. You must be born again.

You see, there is none righteous, no, not one, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Every single one of us, apart from Christ, weighed in that balance of God's holy and righteous judgment will come up short. We will be weighed and found wanting.

It's like breaking and someone says, well, I broke those commandments, but that was when I was little. That was a long time ago. Listen, if I threw an egg down here and that egg splattered, who of us could put that egg back together perfectly like God made it? None of us could.

And once you break the commandments of God, once you've broken His law, you cannot repair it. Someone says, Brother Brian, how do you do when you're weighed in those scales of God? When you're brought before God and you're weighed in the balance, how will you do? You know what I would tell you tonight? Apart from Jesus Christ, I'm weighed and found wanting. I've broken every single one of them to my shame.

But if you ask me at the same time, are you ready to stand in that balance before God? I would tell you a thousand times yes. I'm ready to stand and be weighed in His balance. And this is the only reason why.

Because when God calls me to stand in the balance, and all of His law and righteousness and justice and perfection and holiness is placed on this side, and I step on this side, I step in. But I don't step in alone. Somebody else steps in there with me.

And His name is the Lord Jesus Christ. Folks, you have to see. You have to get rid of any kind of inkling of an idea that you can be good enough to work your way to heaven.

That you've been able to keep the commandments and so as to earn God's favor and merit. You've broken His commandments. And your only hope is the Lord Jesus Christ.

My only hope is the Lord Jesus Christ. My only hope is that at the judgment of God and I'm standing there, I'm found hidden in Christ. Washed in the blood of Christ.

Clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Jesus made it so clear when He said, that He said, I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

It's all of Jesus. It's all of His righteousness. Peter said in 1 Peter, he says, to you who believe, Christ is precious.

You know who Jesus Christ is precious to? It's the one who is known that their sins have separated them from God. And this Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, became man. And He came to this earth.

And He lived a perfect life. And He went all the way to a cross to die for sins that He never committed. He died for sins that I committed.

And He died for sins that you committed. He died in our place. To you who believe, He is precious.

It breaks me time and time again when I think of what my Savior went through, especially in the Garden of Gethsemane. I can't hardly read about the Garden of Gethsemane and Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane without weeping, without my heart rending when I see that my Savior, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ in that Garden, His soul was in such anguish because He knew what laid ahead of Him. He was going to have the sins of the entire world placed upon Him.

He was going to have to drink the cup of the wrath of Almighty God that we deserved. And that's why He said to His disciples, Peter, James, and John, follow Me up here. And He says to them, now you stay awake and watch and pray.

Pray. My soul is troubled, He said, even to the point of death. Pray.

The Bible says He walks a little farther in the Garden and He fell on His face. And He began to pray three times. He said, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.

What was the cup? It was the cup of God's judgment and wrath that you and I deserve. And He would get up and He would find His disciples sleeping and He would go back and pray again. The Bible says He prayed with such earnestness that He literally sweat great drops of blood.

He so loved us that He was willing to go all the way to the cross and be crushed for our iniquities. I want you to see what Jesus Christ did in order to be able to stand in that balance with Him, hidden in Him. Look at Isaiah 53 and what our Savior endured.

Isaiah 53, verse 4. It says, Surely He, that is Christ, surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray.

We have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth.

He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shears is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Now, He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of My people was He stricken, and He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death, because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He hath put Him to grief when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin. God could not just overlook our sins.

God had to judge our sins in order to remain just. And He judged our sins on the perfect sacrifice of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. A lamb led to the slaughter.

A lamb without spot and without blemish. Jesus went all the way to the cross and became an offering, a sacrifice for our sins. And that's why any idea, any belief that says, yes, I'm going to heaven because I've been a good man.

I'm going to heaven because I've kept the Ten Commandments. First of all, you haven't kept the Ten Commandments. But whatever your goodness is, put that up against the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

That is an insult to the gift of God, brothers and sisters. You cannot add anything to Christ. Christ is the fulfillment of the law.

Christ is the end of the law. Look at this with me in Romans 10. Romans 10.

Paul says in the first verse, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

For Christ is the end of the law. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. He's the fulfillment of the law.

And when you're placed in Christ and Jesus lives in you, in the person of the Holy Spirit, you don't need a book of 600 laws. Because the Holy Spirit leads you, guides you. There's 101 things you will never do because Christ lives in you.

He's the end of the law. He is everything. Jesus is everything.

Thanks be to God that when I stand before God on judgment day, I am standing hidden in Christ. Just as if I were to hide my hand in my Bible. You can't see it.

You see my Bible. Through faith in Christ, when we're brought before God, we are hidden in Christ. We are clothed in His righteousness.

But what about Belshazzar? He died that very night. He was weighed in the balances, and when he stood in God's balance, he stood there alone. Do you know how many, and maybe someone here tonight, if you were to die right now, would stand in that balance alone? It would be one thing if Jesus were to say, a few will say to me in that day.

Or maybe some will say to me in that day. But He didn't. He said in Matthew chapter 7, many, many will say to me in that day, but Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and cast out demons in Your name and do all these wonderful works in Your name? And what did He say? Depart from Me.

Ye that worketh iniquity, I never knew you. They're standing alone. This is the most terrifying thing.

The most horrifying, terrifying, tragic day of your life, if you don't know Jesus Christ, is when you stand before God, and He says to you, Depart from Me, you worker of iniquity, I never knew you. But Lord, My name was on the church roll. I was a member of that church.

Depart from Me. I never knew you. But I was a good man.

Ask all my neighbors. Listen to what they said at my funeral. I was a good person.

Depart from Me. I never knew you. But I gave money to the church, and I was always there, and I did all...
Depart from Me.

I never knew you. The only one saved is the one who has forsaken all hope of saving themselves and has cast themselves on the mercy of Jesus Christ to wash away their sins and to save their soul. Those who are hidden in Christ alone, trusting in Christ alone, plus nothing.

It's all of Jesus. It's all of Him. And only Him.

There's only one way for us to be made right with God, and that is through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and faith in Christ. You know, you've probably heard someone say, Do you know Jesus? Do you know... We ask that a lot. Do you know Jesus? I want to pose a question to you, Knight, that's even more important than that, that you answer.

Not just do you know Jesus, but this is the most important question. Does Jesus Christ know you? Does Jesus know you? Because He's saying to those on that day, I never knew you. We never had a relationship.

You never came to faith in me. You never became born again. I never knew you.

Does Jesus Christ know you tonight? Does He know you? When He knows you, He knows you by name. He talks to you. He walks with you.

You talk to Him. You love Him. He is precious to you.

Those who know Jesus love Jesus. Those who know Jesus, Jesus Christ is precious to them. They've been to that cross.

Have you been to the cross tonight? I love the story about an Olympic diver. This was years ago. His name was Charles Murray.

The story is told that Charles Murray, a friend of his had been witnessing to him for several months, but Charles kept resisting and rejecting the Gospel. No matter how much his friend would plead with him, he would just reject Christ, reject the Gospel, and walk away. He was an Olympic diver and he'd won all these awards.

One night, Charles Murray was laying in bed and the conviction of the Holy Spirit had come all over him and he could not sleep. And he began to toss and turn and roll around in his bed. He thought of all of his accomplishments and how empty he still was on the inside.

He was lost. He couldn't sleep, so he got up out of bed and he thought, well, I know what I'll do. I'll go for a dive.

And because he had special privileges to the university pool in that city, he got in his car and he drove to the pool. And that night, the moon was out and he went to the university pool and the ceiling had glass panes in the top. So he didn't even turn the lights on.

He just walked in. He walked, crawled up the ladder, went all the way up on top of this high, high dive. He stood up there on the high dive and he turned around backwards.

He got ready to make his dive. When he did, he stretched out his arms like this. And when he did, because of the moonlight shining through the panes of that ceiling, he saw his shadow against the wall in the form of a cross.

And all of a sudden, in one instance, it hit him like an arrow to his heart. All of the sins he had committed against the God who created him and loved him so much that he gave his only son to die on that cross in his place. He went under such conviction, he began to weep.

Instead of diving, he made his way back down the ladder and he knelt beside the pool and he cried out to God for mercy. Jesus, save my soul! Jesus, forgive me! Jesus, I'm lost! And Jesus Christ came. He saved Charles.

He forgave him of all of his sins and somehow he knew it. After he finished praying and he lifted up his head and wiped the tears out of his eyes, he looked at the pool. He looked closer because the moon was shining in just right and the pool was bone dry.

They had drained it the day before for repairs. It was the cross that saved his life. It was what Jesus Christ did on that cross that saved his soul.

Folks, if you've never come to the cross, if you've never come to faith in Christ and what He did for you on that cross, you will face the holy wrath of Almighty God. Come to the cross. You know what the cross says? It's the greatest symbol of God's love on the earth today.

The cross points up saying that the love of God reaches higher than the highest of heavens. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. The cross points down saying there is no pit so deep that the arm of God cannot reach you.

That's what the Bible says. God's arm is not too short that it cannot save. Neither is His ear too dull that He cannot hear.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God. No matter how deep that pit is that you are in, call out to Christ and He can reach you. The love of God goes deeper than the deepest hell.

Higher than the highest heavens. And it is farther and wider than the east is from the west. In fact, the Scripture says, through faith in Christ, you put your faith in His blood, God removes your sins and removes them as far as the east is from the west, never to remember them again.

The cross is the symbol of God's love. God's love for you. How do we know the love of God? Hereby know we the love of God that God gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, and He laid down His life for us.

Romans 5 verse 8 says, but God committeth His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. I want to ask you again tonight, because we're going to have an invitation tonight. Do you know Jesus Christ? And does Jesus Christ know you? This is something you cannot afford to be wrong about.

You cannot afford to wonder about. You have to know that you know that you know in your heart of hearts that Jesus has saved you. If He has not saved you, today is the day of salvation.

Tonight is the night of salvation. Tonight is the night that you can call upon Him. This is what the Bible says.

Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. That can be you tonight. That can be you tonight.

That this very night, Christ saves your soul so that on judgment day, you stand before God, hidden in Christ, saved, forgiven, washed clean. But I want to ask you who know you're saved tonight. Who do you know tonight? This ought to break us and compel us to prayer and compel us to go.

Who do you know tonight that if they were to die tonight, would die without Christ and would stand in that balance all alone, weighed against God's judgment, and hear from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, depart from me. Ye that work iniquity, I never knew you. Here's what I think about sometimes.

The Bible says that Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats. Sheep on His right hand, that's those who know Him. Goats on the left.

Can you imagine on that day of judgment, brothers and sisters, those of you who are Christians, looking across there and seeing those who Christ put on that side, who don't know Him, and they see your face. I think of this. They look me in the eye and they say, Brian, why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you tell me? There's people right now, if Jesus were to come, if we were to fast forward time, and today is the day of judgment, they're standing on this side.

Have you told them? I'm not putting false guilt on you to say God's called you to tell every single buddy in Ingram, every single soul in Lady Smith, but God has called you to tell somebody. And you know who it is. And when God puts somebody across your path and God puts somebody on your heart, brother and sister, remember this day.

Remember that judgment day is a real day. It's coming. And they will be weighed in the balances and they will be found wanting, except they have Christ.

Will you go? Will you pray? Will you intercede? Will you love them enough at least to tell them the truth of the Gospel? Let's stand together tonight and bow our heads in prayer. Father God, You are a holy God. You are a holy and righteous God.

You are a just God. And You hate sin. And Father God, I thank You for making it so clear to us in Your Word, Lord.

You've not hidden these things from us. You've made them so plain. The judgment day is real.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. That the great white throne judgment is real. And tonight I pray, Father, because I don't know the hearts of these men and women.

Only You do. And I pray, Father, that if there is one soul here tonight who if they were to die tonight would stand in that balance all alone, I pray tonight that they would see the cross. More yet, Lord, that they would see You, Jesus.

The Son of God who became man and who died on that cross shedding Your precious blood to wash away all sin. There's not a single sin here tonight that You cannot wash away and cleanse if they will come to You. And Father, I pray tonight if someone is here tonight that doesn't know You and is not saved, that

tonight they would come and call upon You, Jesus, for salvation.

We thank You for making it so simple, so simple that a little child can understand I've broken the law of God and Jesus paid my fine. Jesus, forgive me. Jesus, save me.

I pray tonight, God, that somebody would pass from death to life, that somebody through faith in You would be born again and brought into Your kingdom. And then I pray for those of us, Lord, who know that we know that You live in us, that we are saved. I pray, Lord, that You would stamp eternity on our eyeballs.

I pray, God, that we would forever live with this conscious awareness that the judgment is real, that there are souls who are lost. And I ask You to pour out upon us a spirit of prayer, of grace and supplication, God, that we would begin interceding like we really believe there is a hell and we really believe that there are souls who are going to hell without Christ. God, I'm asking for Your burden tonight and I'm asking You to put at least one person on the heart of every believer here tonight that doesn't know Christ, that we may begin praying, interceding, and ultimately going to that person and loving them enough, Lord, that if they were to go to hell, they would have to jump over us.

They would have to leap over us, Lord, to get there. Help us, God, to be Your mouth, to be Your hands, to be Your feet, to carry the love of Christ, the Gospel of Christ to those who are lost. Father, I'm asking You to put an urgency in our heart.

These earthquakes, the earthquake that hit, that affected my hometown this morning, is a wake-up call from You. You give us these signs, Lord, that You're coming and You're coming soon. And it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment, and judgment is real.

Help us tonight, I pray, God. Help us to respond to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Johnny, you come and lead us in a song. Friend, if you're here tonight and you need Jesus Christ, I'm going to ask you to do something very simple. Step out of your seat and come down here to the front.

There's an empty pew here where we can get on our knees. Why do I have to get on my knees, Brother Brian? Humble yourself before Almighty God. God resists the proud, the Scripture says, but He gives grace to the humble.

Will you get on your knees before the God who so loved you He sent His Son to die on a cross to save you? Get on your knees and cry out to God. Is there someone here who needs Jesus? That's the first appeal. I'm going to ask you to be bold.

I'm going to ask you to have the courage to come forward. As He begins to play, you step out of your seat and you come forward. We're going to pray together.

We're going to pray together. And I tell you, you can know tonight not to leave this place until you know without a shadow of a doubt that Jesus has washed your sins away and that you've passed from death to life. That you're saved.

That you can stand with confidence and boldness and thanksgiving on judgment day. Is that you tonight? Step out of your seat and come here. Come to the front.

Give your heart to Christ. He is mighty to save. He is mighty to save.

Will you respond to Him tonight? Thank You, Jesus. Thank You for giving people a heart for the lost here tonight, Lord. Come, if God's put someone on your heart, come to pray.

Father God, there is nothing more important than Your glory. That You receive great, great glory, O God. And we know that You are glorified when souls come to Christ.

When sinners put their faith in Jesus Christ, Your only begotten Son, that You gave as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. God, we want to be all about Your glory and the souls of men. And I want to thank You, Father, with all of my heart for those who are kneeling here tonight.

And I kneel with them, O God. I want to thank You with all of my heart, Lord, for stamping eternity on our eyes and making the judgment day real to us, O God. This is a very real day that will take place.

And time is so short, Lord. And we sense an urgency in our heart. And I thank You, Lord, for putting people on our heart right now who need You.

Lord, we know so many of them, they're blind, they're in darkness. Some of them are in the grip of the devil himself. Strongholds, chains, darkness.

Tonight, God, help us to intercede. Pour out Your Spirit upon us, Lord, as we intercede for them. Help us, O God, to pray.

Just have a moment just to pray. Just intercede for those that God's put on your heart. Cry out to God for their souls.

Thank You, Jesus. We'll pray and intercede tonight for this little town of Ingram. Father, I thank You so much for the blessing of the sister who shared with me tonight, who's got a burden.

She's got Your heart for this community of Ingram, Lord God. She started a prayer meeting. You've burdened her heart for lost souls.

And I want to lift up Pam to You tonight. Brothers and sisters, join me as we intercede for Pam. We pray, Lord God, for You to strengthen our sister with power from on high.

God, we pray that You would continue to give her Your heart and Your compassion for the community. We ask You to join others with her, perhaps some here tonight who will join with her and begin praying and interceding for this little community of Ingram. Father, I pray that You would birth a prayer meeting, starting right now tonight, Lord, that a prayer meeting would be birthed in Ingram.

Lord, that You would pour out upon them a burden that comes from You. Pour out Your Spirit upon them as they intercede for the lost in this town. God, I pray that You would give them boldness and courage, having prayed, having been filled with Your Spirit, to go out to each home, Lord, give them creative ideas on how to reach out with the love of Jesus, to get outside of these walls, to knock on doors, to see someone standing outside their house, and to simply speak to them, Lord, to open our mouths and to proclaim the Gospel.

I ask You, God, to help Pam not to grow weary in well-doing, Lord, but to persevere and to pray through. And all who will join her in this prayer meeting, to persevere and to pray through until we see souls come to Christ in Ingram, Wisconsin. Father, we pray that You would tear down strongholds tonight.

God, we pray for these strongholds that the devil, the grip that he has on people, on families, on homes, we pray tonight, Lord God, that he would lose his grip, that the light of Your presence, Lord, would pierce the darkness and push back the darkness of Ingram. Tonight, as we join in one accord, O God, we're sensing, Lord, we're sensing that there is an oppression over that community, over this community, and God, we're asking You, Lord, to rebuke the devil away in the name of Jesus and to make people in the community conscious of God, conscious of Your presence, O Lord. Let them somehow know, God, let them, like that Charles Murray who could not sleep, we're asking You tonight, Father, to so move in this community that people have trouble sleeping, that they become uneasy in their soul, they can no longer be comfortable.

I pray, God, that Your conviction would come down so strong they can't drink it away. They can't numb themselves out. They can't do anything, Lord, until they see You, Jesus, and come running to the cross.

Lord, we know You came to seek and to save that which was lost, but we feel in our hearts, Lord, we're weak. We need You to do it. We can't do it in our flesh except You anoint us and empower us with Your Spirit from on high.

Lord, we're feeble, but we have faith in You, Jesus, to give us what we need. We have faith that Your grace is sufficient for us, O God, and that Your power is made perfect in weakness. And I pray, God, that You would send out a remnant from this church to walk into the streets of Ingram.

And, Lord, whatever it be, if it's a home Bible study, if it's a prayer walking, whatever, Lord, speak to their hearts. Speak to their hearts to not only be hearers of the Word, but doers also, because judgment day is coming. Thank You, Father.

We need Your grace. We thank You for Your mercy. We thank You for Your patience with us, Lord.

We thank You for Your great love for us. And, Lord, I'm expecting You to do great and mighty things in this community. I'm expecting You, Father, because You are able to do exceeding, abundantly above all we could ask or even imagine according to the power which worketh in us.

And that is the power of the Holy Ghost. Thank You, Father, with all of our hearts, in Jesus' name, Amen. Now let's rise and let's worship.

Can we worship tonight as we go at least two songs, brother? Because I feel, you know what, brothers and sisters, sometimes it's through praise. Psalm 8 says that out of the lips of babes, children, God has ordained praise to silence the avenger, to shut the mouth of the enemy. When Paul and Silas were in prison, what did they do? They lifted up praise to God.

When Jehoshaphat didn't know what to do and all these armies were coming against him, what did he do? He said, God, we don't know what to do, but our eyes are upon You. And they begin to sing and to praise God. And I tell you tonight, I sense that there's heaviness, there's a resistance, and we need to praise God through it.

Can we do that? Lift your voices to God. Lift your hearts and your hands to God in praise.

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