

Becoming Familiar With the Presence of God

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining awe and reverence for God's presence, lest we become too familiar and lose our sense of wonder and amazement at His power and majesty.

Duration: 52:20

Scripture: Matthew 10:37, Matthew 12:50, Mark 3:31, Luke 8:21, John 14:15, Romans 12:2, 1 John 2:17

Topics: "Presence of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of accepting Jesus Christ as one's savior. He encourages the audience to make the decision to follow Christ and assures them that it will be the best decision they ever make. The preacher also highlights the violent nature of the cross, explaining that it represents the passion of God to save humanity. He emphasizes that the message of the cross should not be watered down or eliminated, as it is the only way to salvation. The sermon concludes with a passage from Mark 3:31, where Jesus declares that those who do the will of God are considered his family.

Transcript

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This recording cannot be posted on any website. However written permission to link to the Times Square Church homepage may be requested by emailing info at [timesquarechurch.org](mailto:info@timesquarechurch.org). Other recordings are available by calling 1-800-488-0854 or by writing to Times Square Church Tape Ministry, 1657 Broadway, New York, New York, 10019. Mark Chapter 3 please if you go there in your New Testament and while you are please again special welcome to all of our visitors here in the main sanctuary or if you're visiting in the annex tonight.

Trust that you've already been blessed this evening by the presence of the Lord touching your life. We thank God for that with all our hearts. Mark 3, I'm going to speak tonight on becoming familiar with the presence of God.

Becoming familiar with the presence of God. Father I stand before you as always in need of a quickening and anointing power of the Holy Spirit. I have nothing apart from what you give me.

I am nothing apart from what you make me. I'm asking you to quicken my physical body and my heart and my mind and animate me tonight. Lord even the expressions that come through this body let them be the expressions of your heart.

Animate my voice Lord I pray for the grace to truly disappear that you may appear. Hide me tonight Jesus that your name might be lifted up and truly glorified among your people. Thank you Lord that you still see fit every time we meet to walk among the candlesticks of the testimony of this church that you've established at this time in this city.

I pray God that you give us hearts to hear this word tonight. I know I have your word. I know I've been at your throne.

I know Jesus that you want to speak something to us. I pray God give us the grace to hear this. Give me the ability to speak it simply that every man may understand it.

I ask this in Jesus mighty name. Mark chapter 3 and verse 31. There came then his brethren and his mother and standing without sent unto him calling him.

And the multitude said about him and they said unto him behold thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. But he answered them saying who is my mother or my brethren. And he looked round about on them which sat about him and said behold my mother and my brethren.

For whosoever shall do the will of God the same is my brother and my sister and my mother. I want you to travel with me for a moment tonight to a scene as if it is a play. Although this is a reality this actually did happen.

But please go back with me if you will. Two thousand years ago Christ Jesus the son of God is sitting in a house. And there are people sitting around him and outside of that house are a group of people who are calling to him.

Now to the most who might be present at this particular scene the people outside of the house appear to be those closest to him. They are in fact the closest to him they are his family. The scripture tells us in verse 21 that when his friends and the word actually in the Greek New Testament is kinsmen.

When they heard of it they went out to lay hold on him for they said he is beside himself. There are people outside of the house they are calling to him they're calling for him. And to all the casual onlookers this is really his family.

As much as perhaps tonight we are considered the family of God. These are his blood relations. Mary is there his mother.

Possibly James Joseph Simon and Jude his brothers are there. And maybe some sisters and they're gathered outside. But they are gathering and they've come for a reason which they most likely believe deeply is justified.

In verse 21 it says and when his kinsmen heard of it they went out to lay hold on him for they said he is beside himself. And in the original text whether you and I like it or not it says they said he has lost his mind. You know some of the early writers had an incredible difficulty with this.

An incredible difficulty with the fact that Mary his mother and his brothers who were the closest physical people. Family wise to him on the earth could actually be outside a house where he is calling to him. Not really because they're seeking him as Lord.

But they really believe he's lost his mind. Some of the early writers of this scripture had such difficulty with this. That one of the original parchments as it is from which our modern Bible translations have come.

Were so troubled by this verse that they eliminated it. They virtually erased it from the word of God. But how many know tonight you can't erase the word of God.

No matter what you try to do it it will still appear again on the page. God intended it to be there for a particular reason. When you read the commentaries it's rather humorous.

When you read for example Hendrickson's pulpit commentary. They don't really know what to do with this verse of scripture. They make excuses for Mary.

And say well obviously Mary is there because others have convinced. It doesn't say that in the scripture. It just says she's in the crowd who thought he'd lost his mind.

But they say well Mary must have been there because he was neglecting his bodily needs. He was as it is seemingly obsessed with ministry going day and night. Crowds pressing around him probably not eating enough.

And she was very concerned about him. So here is Mary with the others outside of the house. As if Mary is incapable of making a mistake.

And didn't need a savior like every other person in the world. But the reality is they thought he had lost his mind. There's really no getting around this.

Jesus himself said it clearly. And I believe he spoke it from experience. In Matthew 13 57 he said a prophet is not without honor.

Save in his own country and in his own house. He knew what it was like to be without honor. These people outside his family appear to be calling with concern.

But you see here's the reality. They've become too familiar with the son of God. They've been with him in the house every day.

They've seen him come home. He's worked in the carpenter shop perhaps in the early years with his father Joseph. They've sat at the table.

They've talked with him. He has been among them. They've become very familiar with him.

As a matter of fact they've become too familiar with him. This is a problem that recurs not only in this day but it recurs in our day. In every generation seemingly sometimes those who know him the most are those who can become too familiar with him.

They can come too casually into his presence. They can become too acquainted with him being there every moment. And you see this is a condition that affects those that are closest to him and have known him for the longest of time.

Familiarity can produce a loss of awe. You remember when you first got saved and you came to the house of the Lord and you were awestruck. And you would sing a song like we sang tonight.

I am a friend of God. And you were just awestruck that God would even want to be my friend. You'd come into the house of the Lord with a trembling in your heart.

Every time you opened your Bible it was as if you'd found this incredible treasure that the world seemed to be oblivious to. But you'd found this thing. As if you dug in the sand somewhere and you'd found this hidden treasure.

And every time you opened the lid you were going deeper and deeper into some incredible gems of truth that were revolutionizing your life. And there was this sense of awe. First of all that God Almighty himself would even consider you or me to invite us into his presence.

I remember in the early years when I first knew him. I lived with this sense of awe. I lived with it from morning to evening.

Sometimes I would walk down the hall in my workplace and you know when you get that kind of trembling feeling that just goes through your body. Just the sense that I would just realize God lives in me. Not just invited me into his presence.

But he lives in me. He's changing me. I would wake up in the morning and realize that I was not the man I had been the night before.

I was not such a magnanimous change that everybody around is just standing in absolute awe of how my life is changing. But I know inside I am changing. Image by image, line by line, step by step.

God is changing me from the inside out. And I lived with this sense of awe. I remember going into the house of the Lord and sometimes I could hardly wait for the service to end so I could truly worship him.

Because I lived with awe. And it seemed sometimes, I remember in the early years I'd walk into some places that I attended in fellowship and everyone was so casual in his presence. Talking about things that seemed to indicate that there was no sense of awe that they were about to meet corporately as it is in worship God.

They're invited into the presence of God. Talking about cars and oil changes and all types of foolish things. And yet in a moment we're about to as it is appear before the throne of God.

I know this is only symbolism but we're about to worship the one who really does sit at the right hand of almighty God who is the head and we are his body. But over time familiarity comes into the heart. We get used to God's presence.

We get used to him always being there. I see Mary and Jesus' brothers get up and Jesus is just there every day. He is going about although it must have been hard to be a brother of Jesus.

Can you imagine? He never tells a lie. He never disobeys his mother and father. And can you imagine being there and having your mother or father say, why can't you be like your brother? How utterly hopeless.

That would be. But familiarity produces a loss of awe. I think of Mary for example who is outside the door.

And if we believe the scriptures she's at least in the crowd who appear to think that he's lost his mind. And in Luke chapter 1 verse 30 Mary had a word. And this word came from an angel, a messenger of God.

And the scripture says the angel said to her in Luke chapter 1 verse 30. Fear not Mary for thou hast found favor with God. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and shall call his name Jesus.

And he shall be great and shall be called the son of the highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Now can you imagine how Mary must have felt? She has an absolute word that you are about to conceive a son. Being a virgin not knowing a man this is going to be miraculous. She had to know it was miraculous.

And he's not only just a son but he's the son of God. And he will be given. Now she's familiar with history, the history of Israel.

She knows David was a great king. She knows that God gave the promise to David that of his lineage was going to come. A redeemer as it is for the people of Israel and eventually of course for all of humankind.

She must be at least in measure aware of this. And she's given this word of God. And not only that she's told that he's going to reign forever.

And there'll be no end of his kingdom. Not just a kingdom that's going to be temporary. It's not going to last just 33 years or such like on the earth.

But it's going to be an eternal kingdom. You would think there'd be a sense of awe. In her heart that would just simply never leave.

In verse 35 the angel and said and Mary asks in verse 34 how shall this be seeing I know not a man. And the angel answered and said to her the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee. The power of the highest shall overshadow thee.

And therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God. She has conceived without the help of man. She knows that this is a miraculous child.

She's fully well aware of this. She's given a word the word comes to pass. Just like you and I. Folks you have conceived in a sense.

You have changed. Since you came to Christ there have been things born in your life that you know didn't come from the help of man. I know there are people in this sanctuary tonight that without Christ you'd be insane.

Without Christ you'd be a pathological liar. Without Christ you'd be immoral and stuck in a cesspool of immorality. But Christ came to you.

And sovereignly and miraculously he has changed you from the inside out. People will say to you or close to you how did this happen? How did you change? All you can say is I don't know. I don't know I got a word from God.

And God came and made the word in my life a reality. Oh folks if this doesn't produce a sense of awe that we have the living God who created this universe within us. Recreating us in the very image of his son Jesus Christ.

Then we are in danger of becoming familiar with him. I think of Joseph who had undoubtedly told her the word that came to him in Matthew chapter 1 and verse 21. Joseph was given a word.

He was going to put Mary away when he found out that she was with child. But a messenger again came to him and told him that you're going to have a son. And that Jesus is going to save his people from their sins.

Now Joseph had to have told her this. Mary knows that Jesus is going to be placed on the throne of David. He's going to be called the son of the highest.

He's going to rule and have a kingdom that never ends. And he's also going to save his people from their sins. Now his brothers and sisters.

These are the brothers and sisters of Jesus. If they had not witnessed it would have at least heard of his miraculous power in John chapter 2 at the wedding feast of Cana. When Jesus turned water into wine because there was a need at this particular wedding.

Now we find his kinsmen the closest to him outside the door. Calling to him. Feeling that it's their duty to stabilize him.

Isn't it amazing? We've got to stabilize Jesus. He's lost his mind. Jesus come to us.

Come home with us. We need you. And it appears to be holy.

These appear to be the people that are the closest to him. But in reality they want to take him home and stabilize him. Now you'd think they were without the knowledge of scripture at this point.

You don't have to turn there but in 2 Samuel chapter 6. You hear the story of a young man called Uzzah. Now David had determined to take the ark of God and take this ark of God into the center of Jerusalem. Now the ark was only a representation of God.

And David knew that it was God's desire that his people embrace him right in the very heart. Of where he longed to dwell within them. And David heads out and there's an incredible procession.

They are singing and the scripture says with all of their might. They're dancing and shouting and doing all kinds of things. And the ark had been sitting in the house of a particular man who had sons.

And one of the sons his name was Uzzah. And this ark I don't know in what part of the house it was in. But every day Uzzah no doubt could go in and view the ark.

The ark was just there. The ark was a fearful thing because to look into the ark you know historically meant to die. The ark represented the very presence of God.

The provision of God. The protection of God. The fighting power as it is of God was all in this ark.

Even the Philistines the enemies of Israel were terrified of the ark of God. And this young man Uzzah as I can see him getting up in the morning and going for breakfast. And walking in the dining room and there's

the ark of God.

And it's in the house for a season. And he just becomes very familiar with this ark in the house. One day King David comes and says we're going to take this ark and we're going to bring it into the very heart of Jerusalem.

Now David wasn't studying the scriptures and decided to do this according to the ways that seemed right to man. It was prescribed that only the Levites could carry it and it had to be carried in a certain manner. But they had lost the fear of God.

There was a loss of the sense of the awe of the written word of God. And the instructions of God. So they decided to carry it on an old cart or a new cart rather with oxen pulling it.

And as they headed out this young man Uzzah and his brother Ahior are part of the parade. And the oxen appeared to stumble. And Uzzah reached out to stabilize the ark.

And when he reached out to stabilize the ark God killed him. Right on the spot. And that was the end of the parade.

The parade was over. The Bible says that David feared God. Not only feared him he was angry with God that day.

And he considered what God had done a breach upon Uzzah. And he made a statement. He said how can I bring the ark home to me if this is the way God deals with people.

But I think of this young man tries to stabilize that which is only a representation of God. As if God has to be held up. As if God is going to fall.

Can you imagine? The God who created the universe. By the words of his mouth. He created a billion galaxies.

All things that exist are created by him. Nothing that exists was created without him. And here is little Uzzah who lives on this speck in the universe called the earth.

Thinking that he's got to put out his hand and give stability to God. But now we have at the door of this house a people who are not trying to stabilize something that represents God. They're trying to stabilize God himself.

You see because they felt God had lost his mind. Yet the human heart has an incredible ability in its fallen nature to justify even its deepest rebellion against God. It's amazing how the human heart can justify foolishness.

Now some claim that their concern was for his personal well-being. And as I said earlier that may be true. But I believe it's more than that.

You see in Mark chapter 2 and in verse 5. Jesus started to make some claims. It was fine. I suppose to come home and find that the housework was done in a miraculous amount of time.

Chairs seemingly made and tables made with a craftsmanship that was perhaps known to few. Water turned to wine. It's fine to have a Jesus that does miracles.

But now he's beginning to make some claims that are coming to the ears of his family. In Mark 2 verse 5 he says, When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts and saying, Why does this man thus speak blasphemies? For who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.

But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. He said to the sick of the palsy, I say to thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go thy way into thy house. Now Jesus is making some claims.

He claims that he has the power to forgive sins. In effect, in the minds of the people he's making himself equal with God. But only God has the power to forgive sins.

In chapter 2, again in verse 28, if we follow the sequence of Mark, Jesus says, Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath. I'm not going to go into the whole scenario. But basically he says, I'm not only the one who has the power to forgive sins, But I'm Lord of the Sabbath, I'm Lord of all the religious traditions, I'm Lord of everything.

Now he has placed himself on a collision course with a social religiousness which would not tolerate his words. And his family knew it. And I believe they feared for the safety of God, of Jesus.

They feared for his safety. Does he not realize that the things that he is saying are, We agree that he should reign. We agree he should have the throne of his father David.

We agree he should have a title as magnanimous as son of the highest. But he's making claims that are going to get him killed. This society cannot tolerate these words.

And so those who are closest to him, fearing, as Uzzah did, That he's going to fall down, somehow this is a mistake. He's lost his mind. Does he not realize he's going to get himself killed? So they come outside the house, they're calling to him, Deciding that, listen, we've got to take him home and reconfigure him.

Because this society is not going to be able to tolerate this. He's presenting himself as exclusive. He's presenting himself as the only way to eternal life.

He's calling himself God. He says he has the power to forgive sins. They know the religiousness of their day.

They know the venom of the religious leaders of their society. They know he's on a collision course with death if he keeps on this particular pathway. And in their hearts, just like so many that are familiar with him today, They say, oh Jesus, is it not more reasonable that you make yourself a little more palatable to the masses? Why do you have to be so exclusive? Why do you have to say these things? All you do is anger people.

Come home with us and let us help you. Let us instruct you. Let us reconfigure you a little bit.

Help round out some of the rough edges. There's got to be a way to say this without offending so many people. And isn't this where we are today? So many who are considered his family coming to the house of

God get embarrassed at Christ.

Embarrassed at his words. Embarrassed at his exclusivity. Embarrassed by his cross.

Embarrassed by his blood. Can you see them apologizing outside the door? Can you see Mary and his brethren? All you know he's tired. He's been neglecting himself.

He's just obsessed with this ministry. We know what he said. But good people and those who follow religious traditions go to heaven too.

God knows when they die if they're good. Today we have entire groups claiming to be his family. But they're removing the cross.

They're rejecting the blood from the theology of God because it's too violent. It's too restrictive. It's too exclusive.

Calling to him. Coming to the house and calling to him. But ashamed of his words.

Ashamed of the things that he had to say about himself. Ashamed of his mission. Which was a violent mission.

It was an exclusive mission. It was a mission that sent him to a cross. Undoubtedly, Mary and the others feared that Jesus might be killed by a people who'd not be able to conform him to their own perceptions of God.

They would have known that the end of his road was a cross. And the rage of a religious crowd who'd rather destroy the very image of God than bend their knees to his lordship. And that's where this world is today.

They would rather destroy the image of God than bend their knees to the lordship of Jesus Christ. But I remind you that one day every knee is going to bow. And every tongue is going to confess.

You see, beloved, the cross is violent. It is violent and you can't escape it. But in the cross we see the passion of a holy God.

Pouring out his wrath on his own son. That you and I might be saved. You see, if you only see the violence and don't see the passion, you've missed the message.

And many today in the church of Jesus Christ are trying to eliminate the violence. And in eliminating the violence they have lost the passion. It's the passion of God that sent his son to a cross.

It's the passion of God that caused him to become a man in the first place. It's the passion of God that sent him on a collision course with his own fallen creation. Because he was not willing that any should perish but that all should come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

He didn't hold back. He didn't try to sanitize his message. It was exclusive.

He made it exclusive. Because there's no other way you can be saved but through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. It's violent.

And beloved we must never run from it. We must never be embarrassed by it. It's violent the cross.

But it's the violence of a man who would dash in front of a speeding train to save an insane man who was bent on suicide. It's that kind of violence. It's the violence of someone who would cast himself into frigid water.

Knowing that certain death awaited him so that some who had fallen in through their own carelessness might be saved. It's the violence of a man on a narrow mountain ridge in order to save a man who was gripping on in his last moments of life. It's the violence of a man who would kill his own son to get to a complete stranger not even sure that that man would take his hand.

It's that kind of violence. It's a violence so passionate for your soul so filled with the love of God that the human mind cannot comprehend it. God killed his own son not even sure that you would take his hand.

So much he loves you. And his own son came to fulfill his will knowing that the end of his life was a cross. Knowing it was to endure the wrath of his father and the separation from God his father that he had never known for all of eternity.

It's a love so beyond our ability to understand it. It's a passion that despises the shame. And one day sits at the right hand of God with his own redeemed.

It's the passion of a Christ who didn't turn. In his journey. He didn't try to sanitize the message.

That there was only one way. That you and I could be saved. He had to endure the wrath of God.

Jesus hears these people crying. Outside of the house. Come to us.

He knows why they're there. He's God. He's omniscient.

He knows everything. He knows they've come because they are fearing that he's lost his mind. He knows that they're trying to prop him up.

Make him a little more appealing to the masses. He knows it. In the original text one of the commentators says that he turns to the people in the house with irritation.

It's his own family outside. They should know him. They should know him.

It seems sometimes that the people of the world are completely at ease with the claims of Christ as they're presented. It seems to be his own family that have so much trouble with it. Isn't that the way it is in America today? We see his own family coming to the house calling his name but just absolutely offended with his words.

And trying to create this sanitized Jesus that everybody will find easier to accept. And one commentator at least says he turns with an irritation. There's a sense of irritation in his voice.

He said, behold your mother and your brothers are seeking you. And he said, who is my mother? Who are my brothers? And he looked around about on them which sat about him and said, behold. My mother and my brethren.

For whosoever shall do the will of God. The same is my brother and my sister and my mother. You see here's what I see as the sense of this verse.

He's saying I'm on a journey. I'm on a journey. And my journey is to do the will of my father.

And I'm speaking for him and I'm making a clear declaration. Of the gospel. That is according to God.

And whosoever is not ashamed to come with me on this journey. This is my mother. These are my brothers and sisters.

They're not ashamed of me. They're not ashamed of my words. They're not ashamed of the cross of Jesus Christ.

They're not ashamed of his claims of exclusivity. They're not ashamed of the blood. They're not ashamed of the violence.

Of God's wrath that he poured out on himself to save a sinner. They're not ashamed of Jesus. They feel no need to make apology for him.

And in fact they are on the same journey. That he is on. In some measure to be despised and rejected by a society and even a church age.

That is ashamed of Jesus Christ. They're ashamed of his words. They're ashamed of how he has presented himself.

And feel the need to take him home. May you and I never, never, never, never. May we never.

Lose the sense of awe. At who Jesus is. May we never become familiar and casual and careless.

In his presence. For Times Square Church. My heart's cry is God help us.

God help us to preach the gospel. God help us to live the gospel. God help us to walk with Christ.

God help us to go into the workplace. And when everybody snickers and sneers at the exclusivity of Christ. We're not ashamed of it.

This is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. But to we who are saved it is the power of God.

Never ashamed. Remember Jesus said if you're ashamed of me and my words. I will be ashamed of you.

Before my father. In heaven. This is speaking about the claim of Christ.

Who Christ is. He met with us tonight again. He always does.

He walked the aisles as we worshipped. And you could sense the pleasure of God. I guess the question.

I have to ask my heart. Yours. Are we too familiar with his presence? Why are we calling to him? Are we calling because we want to walk with him? We want to as he invites us.

Take up your cross. Follow me. As I follow my father.

Or are we looking for some kind of a sanitized Jesus? A little more easy to digest. I don't know about you. But I'm going with him.

I'm going with him. If you are not saved tonight. I want you to know that God passionately loves you.

He. Allowed fallen men to. Spit on.

Kick. Mock. Beat.

And bruise. Beyond human recognition. His own son.

Because it was the punishment that you deserved. And I deserved it. For our rebellion against a holy God.

The things that we have done. That according to the law of God. We should spend eternity in hell.

Apart from God. And deservedly so. God would be completely just.

But he's a God of great love. And. We can't really see that love until we see the cross.

The cross is the expression of God's love. There is no greater expression of God's love than the cross of Jesus Christ. Where we see God doing something that.

To our natural minds is almost inconceivable for God to do. He had never been separated from his own son. You and I don't even understand the word never.

But he had never been separated. You look in the scriptures and Jesus. Is identified as the one who was daily his delight.

The one who was. Co-creating everything. As part of the triune and the inseparable God.

Inconceivable that God should pour his wrath out on his own son. Only a love that you and I will never comprehend could have allowed God to do that. Could have made him do that.

If I were God I probably would have just. Just taken this whole thing and this whole. World and just blown it into space somewhere and started again.

And that's what you would do too. If you're honest tonight. Why should you.

Could you conceive. Of having an ant colony at home. A little aquarium with a pile of ants in it.

You reach in one day. And they all start biting your hand. And you know they have to be destroyed because of what they've done.

But instead of destroying them you kill your own son. It's something like that. But it's much deeper than that because God created us out of his heart.

Which is a heart of love. Inconceivable to God. That he should have to cast us into eternity away from him.

For all of time. So he takes the punishment of our sin. Upon himself.

Not even sure. That you would take his hand. Could you imagine.

You imagine if you end up in hell. People that are here tonight think about this you end up in hell. And you were here.

And God stretched out his hand to you and you had a choice and a chance. To go to heaven. You had a chance to be forgiven your sin you saw clearly the love of God.

You understood what the cross was all about. But in your heart you said oh ho hum. This is not the Christ. That I came to hear about. I came to hear about a Christ who makes me successful and prospers me. Gives me my slice of the pie of status wealth and power in society.

I didn't come to hear about a Christ who killed his own a God who killed his own son. That I might have eternal life. And so you'll you'll you carry on on your shopping journey to find a Jesus that is palatable to you.

But the Christ you're hearing about tonight is the Christ of the Bible. This is the Christ of Scripture. And he holds his hand up to you.

And offers you forgiveness. He offers you forgiveness. I can't fathom having been in this church and ending up in hell.

I can't fathom it. For all of eternity remembering this night. When God held out his hand.

And you refused him. And instead you chose to drown. You chose to let the train hit you.

You chose to fall off the cliff. When all the time God's hand was stretched out to you. To give you life.

I pray with all my heart tonight. Pray with all my heart. That if you're going to go to hell it better not be on my watch.

I pray with all my heart. Pray with all my heart. That you have the sense to realize that God is speaking to you tonight.

The sense to realize that you can be forgiven your sins. And know that you're going to heaven. Oh but if I receive Jesus.

I mean my family's going to laugh at me. People on my job, I go to the construction site tomorrow. They're just going to say, oh you're one of those crazy Jesus nuts now.

Who are my brothers? Who is my mother? It's those. Who do the will of God. There's no easy way around this.

There is no palatable Jesus folks. I'm afraid for society. That is dying in its sin.

There is no palatable digestive Jesus. The gospel is still the gospel. I would be a liar if I told you tonight that you receive Christ.

And you'll be rich, wealthy and happy. You just might be rejected, scorned, despised and hated for years to come. It is certainly possible.

But you will be in heaven when this is all over with God. I'm going to ask right now. Right now.

And in this church we never ask anybody to bow your heads and close your eyes. If you're going to receive Christ, you do it publicly. You do it openly.

Because if you start this thing in a closet, you're going to stay in a closet. I'll tell you something. Jesus died on a hill with a loincloth, apparently naked as per his generation.

Shamed for all the world to see. And he did it for you. The least you can do.

If you're going to receive him, you can do it publicly. It doesn't matter who's on your left and who's on your right. Christ died for you.

And when you receive him, you do it publicly. I did it publicly. I came down an aisle in a church, not quite this big, but fairly large.

There was only two of us, I believe, that day. But I didn't care. I was going to do it publicly.

Give my life and thank God. That's all I can say. Thank God to this day.

Thank God. Thank God. If you're a sinner tonight.

And you're not sure that you're going to go to heaven when you die. Matter of fact, after tonight, you're fairly sure you're not going to go. And you'd like to know that you're forgiven.

Raise your hand. Do it. Go ahead.

High. All over the sanctuary. Raise it up high.

Balcony. All over the place. Raise it.

Keep it up. Now, for those who raised their hands, we have many people in the balcony and the education annex. I know there are some of you there.

For those who raised their hands, we're going to stand. I'm going to ask you to come forward. I'm going to pray a prayer with you.

I will not ask you to do anything stupid. We will not embarrass you. This is about eternal life.

I'll just simply pray a prayer. And when you pray it with me, you're going to know that you have eternal life. Now, please, folks, as we stand, those who raised their hands, come meet me right now.

Make your way here. And we're going to pray together. Then I have a second altar call.

So please hold still the rest of this church. This is a momentous time because angels in heaven are rejoicing. A fine young man, just a fine young man.

Thank God. Thank God. Thank God you're coming.

Thank God. Make your way here. In the balcony, there's still more people making their way here.

That's the greatest decision you'll ever make in your whole life, sir. I don't know if you've got children at home. Do you have children at home? No.

Well, if you did, you'd be the best dad they ever had. There'd be a gift tonight. You're going to be a wonderful man of God.

I just see it. God's going to touch your life. All of you here, this is the beginning of a new life in Christ.

To know your sins are forgiven. To know you're going to go to heaven when you die. Hallelujah.

God bless you. Welcome. Welcome.

In spite of your struggles, you're welcome. Jesus will help you. He'll set you free.

He'll give you a brand new life. Thank God you made a good decision. I'm not trying to embarrass you, but you made a good decision tonight.

Oh, bless God. Oh, bless God. Can we just thank him now? Can you just take a moment to pray? Oh, Jesus, thank you.

Oh, God, I praise you. I thank you, Lord. Thank you.

We bless your name. Bless your name. Hallelujah.

We give you praise. Jesus, son of God, thank you Lord. Thank you mighty God.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God. Thank you.

Thank you, Jesus. You wonder why we're so excited. You know, the Bible says the angels in heaven are rejoicing right now.

I know you find it hard to believe, but it's true. They're rejoicing over you because God died for you. He died for you.

He died for you to give you everlasting life. We're going to pray a little simple prayer. And this is there's nothing mystical or magical about this prayer.

It's just me helping you to understand what it means to be saved. If you pray this truly from your heart, the Bible says that God will give you the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is God. He will actually come and live inside of you.

It's what he did for me years ago. And you will have an ability to cry out, Father, to God. I know that's a hard thing for many of you, but you will.

God says, I will. I will be the cry in you. You'll know you're a child of God.

You'll know you're forgiven in heaven after you pray this prayer. There's a gentleman here. You've got to be 65 at least anyway.

There'll be no record of all your sins. No record. Now, you could have been in jail.

You might have a rap sheet and long as your arm, but there'd be no record. It's gone. The Lord says, I will.

I will cause myself to forget. It'll be gone. Covered.

That's when you hear these. When you hear us say in the church, your sins will be covered in the blood. That's what it means.

The shed, the shedding of Jesus blood on the cross is the covering. It's the price. It's paid.

The debt is fully paid. God says, I accept this sacrifice of my son, and you have believed that he died in your place. Therefore, I accept you as I accept him.

It's really that simple. Hallelujah. Pray with me.

Will you? Jesus, I'm a sinner. Jesus, I'm sorry that my sin sent you to a cross and you suffered a terrible death in my place. I don't want to live in sin anymore.

I want to live a life that will bring glory and honor to your name. Amen. I also thank you that you loved me so much that you were willing to die for me, that you might have me back with you again for all eternity.

I believe, Jesus, that you are the son of God. I believe that you died to pay the price for my sin. I believe on the third day you rose from the dead as living proof to me that my confidence in you is not in vain.

You will also receive me. You will make me alive again, and you will receive me one day into heaven where I will live with you forever. Tonight, I believe that at this very moment, because of your word to me, I am saved.

Say it again. Say it again. I'm saved.

Saved. Saved. Saved.

Saved. I'm saved. You can shout it.

You can cry it. I'm saved. I'm saved from my sin.

I'm saved. I'm a new person in Christ. I'm saved.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

I'm saved. I'm saved. It's going to get down deep with you.

You're going to understand that I'm saved. I'm not going to hell when I die. I'm going to heaven.

I'm saved. Saved. I'm saved.

I'm saved. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. This is the conclusion of the message.

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