

# Finding Life Beyond the Grave

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the necessity of a personal, transformative relationship with Jesus Christ beyond mere acknowledgment of His resurrection.*

**Duration:** 44:04

**Scripture:** John 20:1

**Topics:** "Personal Salvation", "Spiritual Transformation"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of going beyond a casual observance of Christianity to a personal, life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. It highlights the need to move from simply agreeing with the facts to surrendering to God, experiencing His mercy, and being transformed by His power. The message calls for courage to respond to God's call, to acknowledge Jesus as Master, and to embrace a new life in Christ.

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## Transcript

Finding Life Beyond the Grave. Now folks, today in Jerusalem, if you and I were there, there's a garden tomb just outside the city, and in that garden tomb there will be tour guides, and I can just see, because I've been there, I can envision the lineups of people coming to the garden tomb. They're going to be walking in, they're going to inspect what those who have some history of knowledge of the area do honestly believe that they have found the exact location of that tomb.

There's a lot of evidence to prove that, and people by the hundreds, I don't know if they can get to the thousands because of the narrowness of this tomb, but they will vie for a position to get in there, look at the place where it is assumed by some historians that Jesus laid, they will examine it, and they will leave. There will be some kind of an experience of the heart in doing this, but they may not really find or understand the full implications of what really transpired there. It may never become personal.

It might just simply be a historical journey, and it's like that today also in many churches throughout the world. Many people are going to make their pilgrimage, as it is, to the house of the Lord and come in, and they view the pastors as tour guides. There will be historical evidence presented in various ways about the tomb, about the crucifixion, about the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

They'll walk away, and there'll be a measure of agreement with these truths, but it may not be life-changing. And folks, if it's not life-changing, then you've missed the whole point of what this is all

about, why we've even gathered, why these kinds of songs can be sung in this house today. John chapter 21, beginning at verse 1, "...and after these things Jesus showed Himself again to His disciples at the sea." Oh, John chapter 20.

I'm sorry, I've got the wrong chapter. John chapter 20, verse 1, "...the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher," that means the tomb, the grave, "...and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher. Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter and the other disciple," which would be John who's writing this, "...whom Jesus loved, and said unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they've laid Him.

Peter therefore went forth and that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher. So they both ran together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, and yet he went not in.

Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She said unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. And Jesus said unto her, Mary.

She turned herself, and said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Now this story, I'm going to look at this particular passage of scripture as a type of so many that are hurrying to church to see and hear again the details of how Jesus Christ, after having been crucified for sin, rose again from the dead. They will even hurry to get there on time to get a good seat.

Verse 4 says, They ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the sepulcher. And knowing it was going to be crowded, and knowing this was in some cases your pilgrimage to the house of God this Easter season, many people, you came here with great haste, and you wanted to get, I'm sorry for those that are standing, and for those are standing in the annex, but you made a great effort in many cases to get here to hear about these events once again. And there's even a measure of humility involved.

In verse 5 it says, And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, and yet he went not in. And to come to the house of God, it is a measure of humility. There's somewhat of an acknowledgment in your heart that there's something good here.

There's something about God here, and the humility is evidence that you changed your conversation in many cases the moment you walk through the door. You stop speaking like you normally do. You started being cordial to people.

You're nice to everybody. You walked in, and there's a measure of humility. There's a stooping down as it is, because you really can't get into the presence of God in arrogance.

The Lord says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. And he stooped down, and he looked in, and saw and heard clear evidence of a dead man rising to life again. But then the verse 5 says, But he went not in.

There are a lot of people who want to hear this truth, and they want to see it, and they find a measure of comfort in knowing that it is indeed a reality, but they don't go in. They don't want to go any deeper into the matter than a casual looking at the facts. In Luke chapter 7, there was a Pharisee who invited Jesus Christ to his house, and Jesus sat at the table.

Can you imagine? This is a religious man, and he has God Almighty in the form of his son sitting at his table. It's at this place that a woman comes into the house, washes his feet with her tears. She's so thankful.

Everything she's ever wanted, everything she's ever longed for, everything she's ever needed, every measure of love she's ever looked for in this world, and all of the misguided adventures she'd ever taken, it was all found in Jesus Christ. And this is a phenomenal worship service. A one-person worship service is happening, and the Pharisee and those sitting with him began to say to themselves, Who is this that forgives sins also? The word also is in there.

In other words, they said, We know God forgives sins, but who is this that also forgives sins? Because he had told the woman, Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you. John, again, chapter 20 verses 6 and 7. It says, Then came Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and he saw the linen clothes lying, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. You know, I haven't verified this personally, but I have been told that this was a sign in Middle Eastern culture.

If the master of the house was away momentarily, but planned on returning home for supper, that he would take his headdress, and he would fold it in a very prominent place, so that when his servants came, it would be a sign to his servants, Prepare supper for me. I'm going to be home by the end of the day. Praise be to God.

And this is a man who goes a little farther than the first. He goes a little deeper into the mystery of this tomb as it is, and he discovers deeper evidence of somebody having done something with purpose and forethought. In other words, just the fact that the headdress was wrapped, folded neatly, and placed in another place beside the garment, is evidence that there was thought involved in this.

It was not haste. And it's clear evidence that somebody didn't come and just steal the body and take it out of the tomb. For if this man had stopped to really think at this point, somebody who was just coming to take a body out of a tomb would not have taken the time to do these things.

No, there's purpose, and there's forethought in this. And verse 8 says, The other disciple came to the sepulcher, and he saw and believed. Well, what did he believe? Verse 9 says, He didn't even know yet that Christ must rise again from the dead.

He agreed with the facts. I want to tell you something with it. All the love that I have in my heart this morning, you can be here listening to my voice.

You can love this worship. You can love these songs, and you can agree with all of the facts, but that's not conversion. That doesn't mean you're going to go to heaven.

That doesn't mean when you stand before God one day, and if he were to say to you, why should I let you in? Well, I went to the tomb. I saw the linen garments. I understood, and I did believe that you were raised from the dead.

Isn't that good enough? But it's not good enough. It's not conversion just to agree with the facts. In John chapter 3, a leader, a religious leader of the people called Nicodemus came to Christ at night, and he said, Teacher, we know that you're a man come from God, for nobody could do the miracles that you do unless God was with him.

We know. But you see, agreement with the facts is not conversion. Jesus looked at this man, and he said to this man, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

You've had a natural birth, but now you need a spiritual birth. You need to be born of the Spirit, and this man had such a hard time understanding this. He said, well, what do you mean born of the Spirit? How do I get born again? Do I go back into my mother's womb, he said, and be born the second time? And Jesus said, no, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

He said, a man who's born of the Spirit is like the wind, he said, you can hear it, but you don't know where it's come from, and you don't know where it's going. You see, Christ was trying to tell him a natural man. He charts his own course.

He can tell you, this is where I've come from, this is what I've done, and he's got his whole life planned out, and this is where I'm going. This is what I'm going to do, this is what I'm going to be. He said, a man who's born of the Spirit, no, he is carried not by his own plans, not by his own strength, he's carried by the power of God, and he's led by the will of God.

He has entered into another life, or may I put it another way, another life has entered into his, and he's carried by the power of God. He becomes a new creation, Paul says. Oh, praise God for this truth, praise God.

I sat in church when I was 24 years of age, and I heard these truths, and folks, I honestly agreed with them, but I wasn't born again. I'd never ever known that this could be personal, and never understood that the resurrection of Christ was so that I, through having believed that Christ took my place on the cross, could also have this new life. The same Spirit, the Bible says, that raised Christ from the dead could also come and quicken my natural body.

I would be made into another person. I would be recreated from the inside out. I'd be given, as the Bible says, a new mind, a new heart, and a new spirit, and as God lives, I can stand here today and tell you this is the truth, this is a reality.

I'm not standing here, and this choir is not standing here singing, bringing you just something of the facts, something of history. I'm bringing you a living relationship with God. I found Him.

I know Him in resurrection life. He has changed my life. He has changed my heart.

If I had the time today, I'd stand here. I could stand here all day and tell you what God has done. I could stand here and give you evidence as clear and irrefutable of how He gives a new mind, opens prison doors, changes your heart, gives you abilities that are impossible for you to ever have apart from another life being lived out from within you.

I know Jesus Christ is alive because He lives in me. Praise God. John chapter 20 again, verses 11 and 12.

There was another person, the third person, says, and Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher, and she saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. You see, Mary is not a casual observer. Mary is there saying, I want God.

I want God. I hope that's in your heart today. Everybody that's in this house, I hope you're here on more than just a casual search, because if you're on a casual search, you've come to the wrong place.

The living Christ is in this house. The living Christ is priesthood. The living Christ is sung about.

The living Christ has been experienced by many, by thousands who attend this and other churches that are similar to this one. She's got this stirring in her heart, and as she looks in, and if you have a heart for God today, and you begin to look in, the first thing you're going to see is mercy. It's an amazing thing.

She saw where the body of Jesus had been laying, and where He had been laying. There's an angel sitting at either end of that slab of stone, as it is, one on one side and one on the other side. She was looking at a type in the Old Testament of the mercy seat.

God prescribed a construction of a testimony in the Old Testament, and it was at this place that He would meet with the people. It was an ark, and inside of the ark was Aaron's rod that budded in the Ten Commandments, and there was manna, which is a type of God's life, and God's provision, and God's law, and above all of it was a mercy seat. And the mercy seat, above that mercy seat, the Shekinah glory of God stood.

If you came into that presence of God with willful sin in your life, you died immediately. It was a terrifying and a fearful place, hidden behind a very, very thick curtain, and only at certain times and seasons could those who had, the high priest had to sacrifice an animal first to pay the penalty for his own sins, and then he went in behind. He must have been a fearful moment, because the high priest would have a rope tied to him, and if he was not a holy man and went into that place, he'd die on the spot, and they'd have to pull him out from underneath the curtain.

You didn't mess around with God then, and you don't mess around with God now. The high priest went in, and he took the blood of the atonement, and he put it on the mercy seat. Now, God received that blood of the atonement as a, the price that was paid.

An innocent lamb, an innocent calf or goat had to be sacrificed, and the blood of that animal was put on this mercy seat, and God received it as payment paid for the sins of the people. But it was not a permanent sacrifice. It had to be repeated every year, every season, and in the case of the individual, virtually almost every day.

There was a river of blood that historians say coming out of the Old Testament temple. It was a system of works that no man could fulfill. Nobody could keep the law.

606 laws you had to keep, and the scripture said if you broke one, you broke them all. Can you see the discouragement that would have come to so many people's hearts? Constantly going to the market, constantly buying another goat or another lamb or a dove if you were poor, constantly going back into the temple. Your conscience never purged from the reality of the failing and frailty that was within you, and such a hopelessness, and all that system did was create an understanding in the people that we can't do this.

It is impossible. We can't do it. Peter called it a yoke.

It was a system that just evolved eventually into hypocritical religion, and when Jesus Christ came, the very mercy seat of God himself, when he came, people were just so entrenched now and doing things their own way they were not able to hear it, and they ended up despising the mercy of God, and when Mary looked into that tomb, on that mercy seat in the Old Testament tabernacle were two angels, two cherubim, one on one side, one on the other side. Their wings touched and reached towards each other. Their faces looked towards each other, and they would have their heads bowed in reverence, and it was in the middle of that mercy seat that the blood of that innocent sacrifice was put for the atonement of all sin, and when Mary looked in, she saw an angel sitting on either side.

Folks, it was the mercy seat she was looking at. When you look in to the things of God, and you look in with a sincere heart, the first thing you're going to find is mercy, mercy, mercy. God is merciful.

God sent his son 2,000 years ago, and he sent the innocent Lamb of God to a cross. He was crucified, beaten, spit on, rejected, whipped, and hung on that cross until he died. His side was pierced with a spear, and folks, he was laid on the mercy seat, and his blood, the Bible tells us, was received by God once and for all for the sins of all who would come to him.

Whoever confesses me, he said, I will in no way cast you out. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

When you look in to the mercy seat, you see the mercy of Almighty God through his Son, Jesus Christ. Praise God. The writer of Hebrews chapter 9 verse 12 says, By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Hebrews 7 25 says, Wherefore he's able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them. He ever lives at the right hand of God. He ever lives to speak your name to God the Father.

He ever lives for you to come to him and bend your knee and say, Lord, I don't want it. I don't want a tomb tour this Easter season. I want a living relationship with the living God.

Jesus said, Then you've got to acknowledge that I died for you in your place. You've got to admit that you need a Savior. You've got to bend your knee to a holy God.

You've got to confess that you're a sinner, turn from your sin, and I will stand, my sacrifice stands as the payment for all the wrong things you've done against the holy God. And the evidence of that, when you come to a true relationship with God through Jesus Christ, is that the Holy Spirit, the third person of God, will come upon you. The Spirit of God will come and make up his residence inside of you, and you will be changed into another person.

Don't take my word for it. Take God's word for it. You will be changed into another person.

And as you behold the mercy of God, as you behold the promises of God, you will be changed from image to image and glory to glory, the Bible says, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. You will have a new mind, a new heart. There'll be no man will be able to take away from you that experience, because you will have the inner life of God within you.

Praise be to God. If I could get a hold of you today, every person that's hearing my voice, who's not given to walking with Jesus Christ, if I could, I'd grab a hold of your jacket and I'd shake you right now and say, What are you doing? Just casually looking at this tomb. What are you doing? Just considering these.

What are you doing making this just a once-a-year practice to come to the house of God, when Jesus Christ died to save you from hell itself, and to give you eternal life in heaven, and to recreate you into the image of God on the earth. What are you doing? What are you doing? Oh, have the courage to go deeper. Have the courage to go deeper, my friend.

Don't sit on the outside. Don't just pretend to be humble. Don't just look in, agree with the facts, and walk away.

But have the courage. Have the courage to look deeper into the tomb. Have the courage to look deeper into the resurrection of Christ.

And then the writer of Hebrews says, We have a high priest who became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, who does not need daily as those other high priests to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's. For this he did once when he offered up himself. Matthew 27 tells us that at the last moment on the cross, he cried with a loud voice.

I've always had a sense in my heart that when he cried, your name was part of that cry. It was a cry so loud. It was a cry so deep.

It was a cry so otherworldly, that a Roman centurion, hardened by years of crucifying people and watching them die, so hardened that they could just roll the dice as it is at the foot of the cross, and gamble for his and other people's garments. So indifferent to death, but suddenly he heard a cry. And the cry was so profound, so deep, so other than anything that can be produced through the life of man, that he said, Surely this was the Son of God.

And I've always believed that your name was in that cry. God knew you were going to be born into this world. God knew you were going to live here.

God knew you were going to be in this church today. He saw this moment from before the foundation of the earth. He knew it.

He saw it. It was all in his mind. Nothing caught him by surprise.

And there was a cry. There always has been a cry in the heart of God for you. My friend, don't go to hell while Jesus Christ is crying your name.

Don't go to hell. Don't neglect the love of God. Don't walk away from this great salvation.

He died to take your place, so that you don't have to suffer an eternal punishment and separation from God. Oh folks, look deeper. Look deeper.

Have the courage, even now, just utter a small, simple prayer. There are many here who have resisted God for years, but just have the courage to utter a small prayer and say, Lord God, is this true? Is it possible this is true? Is it possible it's not enough just to come to church a few times a year? Is it possible, God, that agreement with the facts is not enough? Is it possible that this has got to become a personal relationship with you? That's the prayer I prayed in 1978. And I pulled my car over this side of the road on May 12th at just past 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and I prayed.

I said, Lord God, if this is true, if what I've heard is true, then I ask you to come into my heart and be my Lord and my Savior. I don't want to miss heaven. I don't want to miss God, what you've got for my life, and I don't want to miss eternity.

And God took me there at that prayer. Praise be to God. There's no formula to this, folks.

It's an issue of the heart. You've got to want him, and when you want him, he starts to open up an understanding of his mercy. When he cried that cry on the cross, the Scripture says the veil that separated God from man was ripped in the temple, and it was thick.

It was a huge, thick veil that hid this kind of glory of God. And this veil, it was ripped from the top to the bottom. It stood extremely high.

It had to be the hands of God that ripped it open. It has been the heart of God to come to you as part of his creation that fell when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. It's been in his heart to come and get you and bring you home.

Oh God, help every person who's here today is hearing the sound of my voice. I beg you, my friend, don't end up in hell when you're hearing such words as these today. The veil was rent.

The Scripture tells us the earth quaked. The earth shook. God is in control of everything.

The power, the passion of God for your soul shook the earth. Do you know how much he wants you home with him? Do you know how much he wants you back, away from a life of sin, away from living under the judgment of God, away from living in a place where you have no eternal hope? The Scripture says graves opened and saints who were asleep rose up and went into the city. I see it as almost as if God says, I'm just so longing for my church.

I can hardly wait. It's just like passing by the graves. They came out of the grave.

Those who already knew God had walked with God and that's when the centurion said, truly this was the Son of God. John chapter 20 verse 13. The next thing she saw was a man alive from the dead.

He was living in a body that the more casual observers had possibly passed by without further consideration. And they said unto her, verse 13 says, woman why weepest thou? She said because they've taken away my Lord and I know not where they've laid him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing and knew not it was Jesus.

She thought it was the gardener. He said, woman why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for? And she supposing him to be the gardener said unto him, sir if you've borne him hence tell me where you've

laid him and I'll take him away. Here is the risen Christ.

And she looks at him and thinks he's a gardener. And there's something in this. Because the risen Christ lives in a body.

He lives in an ordinary body. He lives in a body called his church of every race, every culture, every nation. If you don't know God and you wonder where he is.

Look around you. Look to your left. Look to your right.

He lives in a body. He lives in an ordinary body called his church. And so many people don't consider it.

This man, this body is alive as it is because of the power of God. And the church is alive because of the power of God. How many people does the Lord have to put before you before you will believe that he is alive? How loud do I have to preach? How long do I have to share? How many scriptures do I have to unfold before you will believe that what I'm telling you is the truth? Christ is alive.

Christ lives inside of me in the power of the Holy Ghost. He has a body. We're not just singing songs.

We have the third person of the Trinity of God inside of these physical bodies. Jesus said, one of the disciples said, show us the Father and we will believe. Jesus said, if I've been with you so long and yet you still don't even know me.

He said, I and my father are one. And some here today are saying, show us, show us. If you could show me the risen Christ, I would believe you.

Well, Christ lives inside of us. He does not just at the right hand of God. He's also in the body.

He has a body. And when we believed in him, the day that you and I believed, he came into us in the power of the Holy Spirit. The third person of God lives inside his church.

And we are changed by the power of God. We are changed. And the Lord would say to you today, what more do I have to do that you would believe? How much more do you need to see? I know some people are so religiously dull that God could set before them thousands of witnesses of transformed lives and yet they would still not believe.

We could have this entire choir testify. You wouldn't believe what's singing on this platform. Where people have come from.

The jail sentences that have been commuted as it is. The lives that have been absolutely transformed. The unspeakable pain that has been healed.

The prison doors that have been opened. We could stand here all day and all week and all month and tell you these testimonies. But it's of no avail if you will not recognize that Jesus Christ is alive and has a body in the earth.

Praise be to God. Mary saw him. Mary recognized this man who was standing and she said, if you could tell me where he is, I'll take him away.

She just wanted him and she said, I don't care even if he's dead. I found I would, I was so abused by the world and by life and circumstance that a dead Jesus would give me more comfort than the living world

around me. This woman had suffered at the hands of a world that is living in rebellion to the ways of a holy God.

She said, I want him. I don't, under any circumstance, I want him. There are no terms and conditions on this.

If you just tell me where he is, I'll take him away. I'll take him away. And if you can hear, you can take God with you today.

You can take him with you. If you will give your heart and life to Jesus Christ, not only will he forgive your sins, but he said, I will come. He said, I knock at the door of your heart and whoever opens the door, he says, I will come in and sit down with him.

He says, I will come into your life. I will change you from the inside out and you and I will begin to walk together. You can take him with you folks.

You don't have to take a church bulletin with you as evidence that you were in church on Easter Sunday. When, why would you do that when you can take the living God home with you? And she said, if you've taken him somewhere, tell me and I'll take him away. And then Jesus turned to her and said, Mary, that same cry that possibly was in that loud voice on the cross, if you will open your heart, you may today for the first time ever hear God call your name, your name.

Individually, he doesn't, he doesn't call, just collect, just masses. We do live to see these moments in the church when dozens will come and surrender their lives to Christ. And, but you have to understand that you are so precious to God that even if you were the only one that would ever come to him, if you were the only one in 2,000 years, you are so precious to him that he still would have come and died on the cross to save you from your sins.

And he knows you by name and his whole focus and affection is on you. And if you can open your heart to him, if you want him for the first time in your life, you will hear God call your name. It's a calling so deep, it's so profound that I can't explain it to you.

It's something you have to experience for yourself. I'll never forget the first time I truly felt God call me and speak to me. Up to that point in my life, it was always something outside, it was always some kind of an observance, some kind of thing you had to do, some kind of place you had to attend.

And the first time I ever heard him call my name, oh my. And as soon as he, she heard him, her response was, Master. He calls us into the fellowship of the salvation he won for us on the cross 2,000 years ago.

That's his part. My part is to call him Master. That means you are my Savior, you are my Lord, you are my God.

I give my life to you, I receive into my heart the forgiveness that you are stretching out your hands and offering to me. I give you the rights to my life, I give you my future, give you my heart, I give you this body. Lord, you promised to come in and dwell me, and you promised to make me into another person.

You promised to heal the wounds of my heart, give sight to my poor blind eyes. You promised to open every prison door and set me free. You promised that I would be come a partaker of the treasures of everything that is mine in Jesus Christ.

You said that you would, you would take me places I could never go, and you'd make me into the kind of a person I could never hope to be in my own strength. And so I call you Master. I call you Master.

I call you Master. I call you Savior. I call you Lord.

I call you the King of my life. The choice is yours. There are three people I discussed here today, and I use them only as types because all three eventually became followers of Christ, of course, but as types.

You can bow a little bit, observe, say this is nice, and there's some truth in this, and go your way. You can go a little deeper and see some facts, and actually be perplexed by the facts, and maybe they even bring you into a deeper measure of agreement, and you can even believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, but it can make no difference to you at all personally for eternity or for time. Or you can do like the third person.

You can have a heart that says, God, I want you. I don't fully understand everything, but God, I want you. I want you with all my heart.

I want you with all my life. I don't want to be separated from you. And then suddenly you see the Lord saying, I don't want to be separated from you either, and it's the first time you'll ever hear God call your name.

Today I'm going to give an altar call. Now this is what an altar call means. An altar call means that to receive Christ, you're going to make a stand as it is.

You're going to do it publicly. He died publicly for you, and you are going to publicly step forward, standing at this altar, and you're going to say, today I've heard this, and I want something deeper than just a casual relationship with God, and I want something deeper than just knowing the facts. If this is true, what you've shared with me today, and I believe it is, then I'm coming to give my life to Jesus Christ.

I'm coming to let him come into my heart and make me a new person. Listen to me carefully today. Men who are here today, you can become a new father today.

You can become a new husband. Now even if your children are not under your roof anymore, you can still become that father that they've always longed for. You can be transformed by the power of God.

Women the same. God can bring you to a measure of life and faith that you've only ever dreamed was possible. Young people the same.

Don't live your future for yourself. It's pointless, especially in this hour that we're living in now. Live your life for the glory and for the purposes of God.

If the Holy Spirit is drawing you, we don't manipulate people in this church. I'm not going to play on your emotions. You have to make this decision yourself.

You are coming to confess your need of a Savior, and you are coming to give your life to God. You're coming to learn who God is. You're going to be, if you are making a sincere commitment today, that means you're going to start to read this book.

You're going to let God begin to govern your life. You're going to yield the rights to your life to God. And I want to promise you something.

It is a phenomenally fantastic life to live for God. I'm going to stand in a moment, and if the Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart and you're being drawn by Him, have the courage. Have the courage.

I think it takes a whole lot more courage to go to hell than it does to respond to this altar call. Have the courage. Don't worry about what other people think.

What does it matter? This is about heaven. This is about eternity. It's about freedom from sin.

It's about new life in Christ. It's about an incredible journey with God. Have the courage to slip out of your seat.

Make your way to this altar. Annex two as well. Make your way to the altar, and then we're going to pray together.

And the Bible says there's going to be rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents, over one person who has the courage today to make this decision. God will forgive you, and you will be changed by the power of His Holy Spirit. Let's stand together, please.

Just make your way. Make your way as we sing. Get out of your seat.

Make your way down here. There's no sin so deep you can't get forgiven. No struggle so powerful that you can't get free.

Join this young lady who's come. God bless you, young lady. Make your way down, those that God is speaking to.

Just join these that are coming. Remember, He gives grace to the humble. Praise God.

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

Thank you, God. To the last place, I'd known Him to be. Every promise He'd once spoken seemed only for me.

I don't know just how it happened, but in the midst of all my pain, softly, sweetly, I heard Jesus calling my name. Calling my name, calling my name, never with soft, sweet refrain. Through the tears of darkness, badness, I'll never be the same.

Since the morning I heard Jesus calling my name. You'll never be the same again. You'll never be the same again.

The Lord, if you are sincere in this prayer today, He will receive you to Himself. And mercy is the foundation of that, of how He receives you. He will forgive you of all the ways that you have offended God and man.

He will forgive you. And then He will teach you and guide you and give you power over your former lifestyle, over your former pattern of doing things. That quick temper, that selfish nature, that lying tongue, that lustful heart, He'll give you power over that.

As you grow in the knowledge of who you have become in Christ, you'll become a new creation. In a year or less from now, you'll be testifying. You'll be telling people, maybe less than that, maybe two weeks down the road, I don't know.

You'll be telling people, all I can tell you is that I was blind and now I see. I was lame and now I'm walking. I was selfish and now I care.

I was evil and now there's a goodness of God is in my life. That's all you'll have to say because that's the whole story. Praise God.

And God says, I'll take you now and I'll fashion you into a man or woman that brings glory to me, God says, to my name. Because there'll be a work done that you won't have. You won't have a... There'll be no method to this.

It's faith in God that has produced it. If you are sincere in the prayer, in the NX2 as well, those that have stepped forward there, but if you are sincere in this, the Lord will receive you today. You'll have an inner witness in your heart that you are a child of God and it might be the first time ever you've heard God call your name and you've really known that He loves you.

Let's pray this together. Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. I've sinned against heaven and against the earth.

I thank you, Lord, that you came to the earth and you took on yourself the punishment I deserve for the way I have lived. I'm deeply grateful, Lord. And now, Lord, I open my heart.

I ask you to come into my life. Be my Lord and my Savior. I give you the right to my life.

I ask you to change me, make me a different person than the person I have been. Give me the courage to follow you and to obey you, to put away evil things all the days of my life. I want to live in such a way that men will look at my life and they will see you, Jesus, and you will be given glory by my mouth for the things that you have done.

I believe that you are the Son of God. I believe that you died for my sin. I believe that on the third day you rose again by the power of God as living proof that my trust in you is not in vain.

I believe that I, too, will be brought out of death and into the life of God, not only on the earth, but forever. I believe, Lord, that you have received me. You have forgiven me.

I am your child. I receive that of a grateful heart in Jesus' name. Lord, let me pray for you now.

Lord, I pray that you seal now this faith with the power of the Holy Spirit. God, lead every person at this altar into their new life in Christ. Lead them into the anointing and the fullness of God's Holy Spirit.

And, Lord, I thank you for it with all my heart. I thank you, God, that they have found life today beyond the grave. I praise you, God, with everything in me.

Thank you, Lord.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18908.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/qTX6GVfDC3s.mp4>

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