

Getting Through Dark Days

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of hearing God's voice in difficult times and warns against the dangers of false voices and false prophets.

Duration: 41:12

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 24:11, John 10:27

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Gods Presence"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of hearing the voice of God in our lives, distinguishing it from false voices and the need to trust in God's plans even in times of displacement and uncertainty. It highlights the consequences of living in sin, the necessity of repentance, and the assurance of God's presence and provision in challenging times. The message encourages believers to trust in God's promises, stand firm in faith, and live a life that brings honor and glory to God.

Transcript

Jeremiah chapter 29, gonna begin reading at verse 4. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon. Build ye houses and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them. Take ye wives and beget sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters, that ye may be increased there and not diminished.

And seek the peace of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof you shall have peace. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, let not your prophets and your diviners that be in the midst of you deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. For they prophesied falsely unto you in my name.

I have not sent them, saith the Lord. For thus saith the Lord, that after 70 years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word toward you in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Now folks, it's imperative in our generation, it's imperative that everyone who belongs to the true church of Jesus Christ learns to hear the voice of God in these days. It's not optional for you and I to be hearing other voices. When I speak of the last days, I'm speaking in two contexts.

I'm speaking of the last days that are spoken of in Scripture and whether or not we are actually there, we will soon know. But there's also another last day. There was a last day that came to the people of Israel in Jeremiah's day.

They had been brought into a place of incredible blessing. They were warned by the prophets, the true prophets of God, that to live in compromise in this place and to live with a just standard expectancy that God is always going to be there in spite of how they were living, in spite of their relationship with him, in spite of how they were treating their fellow man, was a fallacy. It was elusive.

It wasn't essentially true. And so the last days of that particular season of peace came to an end. And there are times, there are seasons where things change.

In one hour everything can change. The Bible seems to indicate very clearly in the Old Testament that there's an hour coming that everything is going to change. Now folks, that's a particular period in time according to the Scriptures, but it can happen to you today.

You can leave this sanctuary today and in one hour after leaving here everything in your life can change. A phone call, a report, a vehicle accident, something can happen. It doesn't have to be a calamitous event.

Everything in your life can change in just a moment of time. And how many people can even testify to that very fact here today that you're saying, Pastor you're speaking right down where I've had to live. I remember the moment that a report came to me and in just a moment of time everything I had leaned on, everything I had trusted in, all that I had built, all that I thought was going to give me security, all that I thought would give me an expected or happy end to my life came crashing down all around me.

Some news, an event, a doctor's report, something came my way and all of a sudden in a moment of time it's all over. And there will be voices that rise when these moments come. Voices, Paul says, that will come from without.

Voices that will come from within, imitating God. Some of it will be your own heart, some of it will be your own fears, and some of it will be false reasoning sent by the devil himself to destroy your standing in difficult days. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 24 and verse 11, in the last days when everything in the world starts to spin into turmoil, many false prophets shall arise and deceive many.

There will be voices because there will be a multitude of people who never learned to hear the voice of God, never understood how God speaks, and so they will become prey to anyone and everyone who stands up and says, here's what the Lord is speaking. We're living in that in some measure today. Now in contrast to this, Jesus said in John chapter 10 verses 27 and 28, my sheep hear my voice and I know them, and the word know means I'm intimately acquainted with them.

They know me and I know them. They hear my voice, I know them and they follow me, and I give to them eternal life. They will never perish and neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

If you love God today, if you know you love God, if you're not playing some religious game with God today, you know that you can take this to the bank. When you can't take anything else to the bank, you can know you can take this to the bank. When you can't get anything else out of the bank, you can draw this from the very heart of God.

I will speak to you, God says, I'll give you eternal life. You will not perish and nobody can take you out of my hand. No false prophet, no demonic voice, no fear of your own heart.

I'll put you in a place of such security. You'll know you're in the hand of God. You'll have this sense walking down the street that I'm not alone.

God is walking with me. I'm not having to sustain myself. God is sustaining me.

I don't have to get through the storm. God's voice is calming the storm and making a way through impossible waters. Praise be to God.

Folks, it's quite often at the most difficult hours of time that we see the power of God like we've never seen him before. When the children of Israel stood at the banks of an incredible and impassable sea, when an army pursuing them bent on destroying them, that's when they saw the power of God. That's when the waters unfolded before them on each side and God created a path straight through the waters for them to the other side.

Bless his holy name. Now there's a legitimate question that arises in everyone's heart, and that simply is this. With all these voices speaking today claiming to speak for God, how can I know which one is actually the voice of God speaking to me? I think many in the church today, especially if you're a gospel surfer, have come to the place of saying, would the real Jesus please stand up? Who's speaking for God? Because there are seasons where false voices can get away with their falseness and even appear to have something of stability behind them, but when everything begins to shake, that's when you and I need to know that we're hearing the voice of God.

We need to know it's not our own heart speaking. We need to know it's not Satan himself animating some minister who appears as an angel of light, leading us into something that's going to bring us into destruction. Number one, how can I know? I'm going to try and make this as simple as I can.

How can I know that it's the voice of God speaking to me? Number one, the voice of God will never promise you peace when you are living in compliance with any value system of a society that is under the judgment of God. In other words, if you are embracing the same values as the society around you which has come under God's judgment, God will not promise you peace. Listen to what Jeremiah said in chapter 14 verse 13.

He said, Then said I, O Lord God, behold the prophets saying to them, you shall not see the sword, neither shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place. Now this place was a land under judgment and Jeremiah knew it and he's trying to warn the people. This place is is not going to make it and everybody who's part of it in a sense, everybody who's embracing these same values of this society that's come under the judgment of God, there will be voices telling those who are exactly the same as it is in their heart as the perishing society around them that in this place you'll have peace, in this place you'll know God, in this place you'll have prosperity, but Jeremiah said what do we do? God I see something coming.

I see a calamity. Jeremiah saw an army coming. He saw the temple being in a sense destroyed.

He saw such heartache and hardship coming and he knew that Satan had put false voices right smack in the middle of the people. People whose value systems were so entrenched with a perishing society that there was really no differentiation between the church and what we would call the world, but it really

means those who are living in rebellion to God. There was there was so little differentiation and then there are voices rising and saying you're going to be fine here.

Oh folks I've been there. I've sat in services over the years where I've cringed to see false prophets standing and telling people who are living in absolute rebellion to God you're going to have a wonderful miracle ministry. You're going to be an incredible evangelist.

You're going to be a wonderful prophet telling these people. I remember sitting in the service one time I saw a young couple come up to one of these false prophets. This is years and years ago long before I ever came to New York City and telling this couple.

I knew in my heart they're living in fornication. I knew it as soon as I saw them. The Holy Spirit spoke it to me and here's this false prophet telling them you're going to have a miracle ministry.

You're greatly beloved and all of this just absolute foolishness in the house saying to them you'll have peace in this place. They're living in the same value system as a perishing society around them. Even secular observers now agree that America is suffering the judgment of the all-consuming self-focus and greed which has crept unchecked into our institutions.

Now folks I'm not the only one saying this. Brother Dave is not the only one saying this. The pastors here are not.

Just read the paper. Analysts, pundits today, newscasters are saying it's greed. They're all using the same word.

It's greed crept in, unchecked, unabated and it's bringing the whole country into a tailspin. Not only the whole country, the whole world because of greed is going into a financial tailspin that's going to affect so many people all around us. But I want you to tell me then how does any church which embraces the same value system escape the same judgment? Paul says to Timothy in 1st Timothy 6 10 the love of money is the root of all evil which while some coveted after they have erred or been seduced from that's what it means the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

If you go back to verse 5 in that chapter Paul says to Timothy men who are destitute of the truth have risen up and they preach that godliness is a means to acquire financial gain. You tell me if the Lord is judging a society that is failing because of greed you tell me how the church that espouses the same value system is going to escape this judgment. They're not going to escape it.

That's why in verse 11 Paul says to Timothy but thou oh man of God flee these things. I'm not saying we don't need money to pay our bills. Don't misunderstand what God's put on my heart today.

The issue is the love of money. It's the focus on money. It's using God's name to acquire money.

Everything is about money. It all goes to money. It's the love of money.

No God says we're to love him first with all our heart soul mind and strength and our neighbor as ourselves which means the resources that come into our hand is are then used for the purposes of God. For the glory of God to reach and touch a society that's in such desperate need as we see today. Number two the voice of God will challenge sin.

Let me say it again the voice of God will challenge sin. If you are living in sin you better not be comfortable in this house under the preaching that comes from this pulpit or we have failed you and we have failed God. The voice of God will challenge sin.

Sin is anything in this Bible that stands in opposition to obedience to a holy God. Sin is willful rebellion against God. If you are here today men who are in this sanctuary and your lips were touching the lips of an adulteress last night you dare not touch the communion cup in this house.

You dare not touch it. If you are a thief don't think for five seconds you're going to steal your way into heaven. It's not going to happen.

The Word of God says you will dwell outside of the city. If you are covetous the book of Corinthians says very clearly that the covetous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Paul says don't let anybody deceive you.

That means people who love money more than they love God. That's what covetousness is by definition. You dare not sit in sin in the house of God and be in comfort.

The voice of God will challenge sin.

Jeremiah said in chapter 23 verse 17 they meaning the false prophets say still unto them that despise me the Lord has said you shall at peace and they say to everyone that walks after the imagination that means the stubbornness of their own heart no evil shall come upon you the Lord says I've not sent these prophets but they've ran I've not spoken to them but they've gone to the people saying to them they're speaking in my name but if they had stood in my counsel the Lord says if they had truly heard from me if they had stood in the place where I'm speaking they would have turned the people from their wicked ways they would have turned them from their sin God help us to have preachers again that stand and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ the economy doesn't separate from God sin

separates men from God if you are coming to Christ you have to repent which means turn from your sin there has to be something in the heart that says I'm not playing this kind of a game I'm coming to God and I'm going to turn from sin I'm going to trust God for the power to turn from sin what I see in this book I'm going to obey it by the strength of Christ within me I'm going to walk with God I'm going to walk in newness of life I'm going to be a living testimony in the midst of a darkened generation that Jesus Christ is alive he is sitting at the right hand of all power he does give a song and he does give a step he does give assurance to those who belong to him praise be to God I will come to God with my struggles I will come to God with every battle that comes into my life I will cry

out like David did in Psalm 18 if the assemblies of the ungodly make me afraid even if hell seems to be on every side I will call out to God and he will come and strengthen me praise be to God to live as a Christian is to live a supernatural life not a natural life it's to live in a completely other realm it's to have a totally different value system it's to be delivered from the corruptions of this world and brought into the value system of an incredible kingdom that has never an end to it it's we leave the beggarly things of a perishing planet and we embrace the heart of God which is for fallen men fallen women fallen children that they might know that there is a Savior who loves them Malachi in his last chapter when he describes the end days that we very well may be living in today he

says now we call the proud happy we call those that work wickedness set up and those that tempt God and tempted God means they're always looking for a sign that God is alive that's tempted God folks it's

looking for a sign we have multitudes whenever a sign of any sort arises anywhere even if it's an absurdity they will travel there because realistically they really don't believe God they really have never found Christ really don't have a solid relationship with God and so they will run and they're running under the guise of pursuing him is really tempting it it's one more time the Pharisees saying show us a sign and we will believe that you are God Jesus said I won't give you on any other sign but the sign of the Prophet Jonas and that's the fact that Jesus died Jesus rose again by the

power of the Holy Ghost and those who belong to Christ have been raised from the dead by the same spirit it's the only sign that I need I don't care how many people are doing what any part of the globe I have every sign I need right in my own heart and right in my own life praise be to God praise be to God once you get a taste of Christ I gotta stop shouting I just say go with me to Jeremiah chapter five somebody start thinking I'm mad mad at you I mean it's Jeremiah chapter five verse 25 your iniquities have turned away these things and your sins of withholding good things from you for among my people are found wicked men they lay wait as he that sets snares and sets a trap and they catch men as a cage is full of birds so are their houses full of deceit therefore they're become great and

waxen rich their waxen fat they shine yea they overpass the deeds of the wicked they judge not the cause the cause of the fatherless yet they prosper and the right of the needy do they not judge in other words their gospel is really only about themselves become wealthy they have no heart for the poor shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord verse 29 shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this a wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land the prophets prophesied falsely and the priests bear rule by their means it means they lead in the flesh and my people love to have it so and what will you do in the end thereof what will you do that's the question Jeremiah asks when the end of all things as they have been up to this point in your lifetime comes what will you

do and Jeremiah is asking it rhetorically because he knows there's going to be panic he knows there are going to be people listening to voices the false prophets they offer here's here's why the devil sends them they offer an elusive future in a place that's about to experience the judgment of God they they say peace when there is no peace they say prosperity when there really is nothing coming that's of that nature they offer everything and all that you could ever hope or dream for in a place that's about to be judged by God that's what false prophets are all about and they will rise they always do rise just before judgment it's one of the most ominous signs the judgment is coming when you see the rise of false prophets especially all claiming to speak in God's name and then after

judgment has come as in Jeremiah's day they offer a message of speedy return to that which may not be regained in our lifetime when judgment finally came they said you're not going to be swept to Babylon don't listen to Jeremiah there's there's there's no hardship coming our way the temple is still here it's always been here it's just peace and prosperity that's all that awaits us then when Babylon came to the gates and began systematically to take the people into deportation then the false prophets not only worthy now in Israel they were now even in Babylon and their message was now well it's here but it won't be for long we're going back shortly folks don't unpack don't do anything here just live longing and looking back at the past and that's exactly what false prophets are all about

that's the strategy of Satan is to keep you and I in a continual state of uncertainty caught between an elusive future and a vanishing past Satan comes and he promises a future that's not going to happen and when it doesn't happen he promises a past that's not coming back and so here are the people there's only one objective in the devil's mind if you've ever heard me hear me this morning if you've ever trusted that I

hear from God trust and hear today there's one objective and here it is it's to so inundate you with false promises that you will eventually come to the conclusion that God can't be trusted that's the issue that's why the false promises of the future that's why the promises of a past that's not going to be regained coming back to keep you in a place of not knowing of not

understanding of no certainty of always shifting of this lack of trust in the heart so that you will eventually cast off your confidence in Christ in the hour of your greatest trial that's what the devil's motive is in raising up the false prophet is it finally when calamity comes and the promises are going to the back to the way it used to be don't happen the promises of future haven't materialized the people finally say well who can we trust I thought God was speaking to me and none of this is happening in my life so therefore God also can't be trusted let me just read this to you in Hebrews chapter 10 listen to what the writer of Hebrews says in chapter 10 in verse 34 you had compassion on me in my bonds and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods knowing in yourselves that you have

in heaven a better and an enduring substance cast not away there for your confidence which is great recompense of reward he says you have need of patience after you've done the will of God that you might receive the promise just a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry now the just shall live by faith but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him we are not of them that draw back into perdition or lostness but of them that believe to the saving of the soul the Lord says in Isaiah chapter 30 in verse 15 for thus saith the Lord God the Holy One of Israel in returning and rest you shall be saved and in quietness and confidence shall be your strength in quietness and in confidence stand still the scripture says and see the salvation of the Lord now

we're not talking about something that's just in the future something you can see with your natural eye the salvation of the Lord is in you the salvation of the Lord is upon you stand still God says stand still you're not called to fight this battle in your own strength stand still and see your enemies fall at your left hand and at your right hand stand still and see the provision that I promised to those who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness stand still and watch the provision come to you stand still and I'll be able to speak to you to the deepest recesses of your heart I'm not here I'm not offer you peace in places you shouldn't be in I'll challenge your sin and when you turn from us the end result of turning from sin is joy unspeakable joy and full of glory David said

in Psalm 23 verse 2 he makes me to lie down in green pastures he leads me beside the still waters in God's people what will be the difference between the people who don't know God and the people who know God in this generation let me tell you the one major difference the people who know God will be led into green pastures means pastures of tender grass they'll be led into places by the tender voice of our Savior they'll be given promises of comfort reassurance that no matter what we have to face God will be with us there'll be a quietness and a confidence in the midst of all the people screaming into their cell phones in Wall Street there will be people who are walking on God's street and there will be a confidence and a quietness in their heart this is what Jeremiah says what is

Jeremiah's advice to the people what does he tell people about to be displaced well what does he say when calamity comes what what would you think the voice of God would speak to the people now here it is again we started there that's it the Lord of hosts the God of Israel to all that are carried away captive whom I've caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon point number one nothing comes our way that God hasn't allowed for a specific reason you're not in the hands of the devil you never were you never will be you're in the hands of God he said listen I've allowed this to happen and there's a reason it's

happening part of it is trust our hearts have got to learn to trust God now here's what he says now he's talking to God's people in Babylon it's an amazing thing he says

build houses live in them plant gardens eat the fruit of them take wives beget sons and daughters get wives for your sons give your daughters to husbands that they may bear sons in other words have a family learn to bottom line folks bloom where you're planted no matter where you end up no matter what city you find yourself in there's going to be some displacement in our generation some of you are going to end up in Oklahoma you're gonna end up in places that you never thought you're gonna go what's the Word of God you're gonna say God what are you speaking what's your word what's your word a lot of a lot of false prophets will be around saying New York is going to rise again you'll be back on Wall Street before you know it it's a pass it may never come back to you no matter what you've

enjoyed in this society it might be gone forever no the Word of the Lord is where I've allowed you to go bloom there dig down deep there he goes on and he says listen he says seek the peace of the city whether I've caused you to be carried away captives and pray the Lord pray unto the Lord for it from the piece thereof you shall have peace pray for the city wherever I call you pray for that place if you end up in Poldunk Alabama pray for that place if you're in a town of 35 people if it's a cultural context it's sort of the box you don't know how without God you're even going to survive pray for the people of that place live there live as a person of God live as a man of God live as a woman of God live as a person who has confidence in God no matter where you go no matter what happens

live a life that brings honor and glory to God David said he took me out of the miry clay he put my feet upon a rock he put a new song within my mouth many will see it and they will fear and they will trust in the Lord there's a song of praise that comes from confidence it doesn't come from anything else praise be to God praise be to God God has to have a people in this generation that say though the mountains be shaken out of their place though the seas overflow their borders I will not be afraid I will trust in God my confidence is in God God will not fail me God will not forsake me God will give me a testimony in the midst of my enemies David said he prepares a table for me in the midst of my enemies even if I'm living in a society in a place where everyone seems to be living apart

from God I will live for God I will sit down at a table of strength and sustenance day to day and I will live a life that gives glory to God then suddenly one day suddenly one day I'll be building planting I'll be walking down the aisle with one of my children giving them away in marriage suddenly the trumpet of God is going to sound praise be to God the dead in Christ shall rise first I do hope with all my heart they have time to get to this church before we go with them but the dead in Christ those who died in Christ will rise first would it be awesome to see the Saints of all ages from New York City come walking in the sanctuary giving glory to God for what he has done then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them and so shall we ever be with the Lord

hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah so shall we ever be praise be to God praise be to God just a little season just a little time just a little bit of a valley we got to go through but on the other side of this valley just over the hilltop praise be to God there's a land of glory there's a place where our song of praise will never die where we never thirst we never hunger we never have to shed a tear we don't have any evil neighbors there's nothing around us to disturb the peace of God in that place just around the corner folks just a little more just a little more don't cast away your confidence in God in this last hour of time don't cast away your confidence in God Paul said in Philippians 4 I've learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content whether it's New York State New

Jersey Pennsylvania Idaho Delaware whatever state you find yourself in God said like Paul say I've learned to be content no matter where I am I've learned he said I know how to be a beast I know how to abound I everywhere and in all things I'm instructed both to be full and to be hungry to abound and to suffer need verse 13 he says I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me praise God I can do it I can do it Paul said I've walked it I've I've experienced it I've known that I've learned it I've gone through storms I've gone through trials I've gone through betrayal I've crawled out from under a pile of rocks I've been at the mercy of hostile crowds I've been in jail with nothing more than a piece of paper and a quill in my hand I can do all things through Christ who strengthens

me don't let the devil tell you you can't if Christ is in you you can you will you'll make it to the finish line praise be to God I'll see you there if I can't see if I don't ever see you again on this side I'll see you at the finish line praise be to God give him a shot of praise in this house give him glory hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah I am persuaded neither death nor life nor angels nor powers nor principalities nor things above nor things below nor height nor depth nor any other creation can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus I am persuaded I can do all things not most things not some things not a few things all things through Christ who strengthens me I can do all things the end of one thing is not the end of everything it's

just the end of one thing it's the beginning of a whole lot of new things behold God says I make all things new I am a new creation in Christ I live day to day experiencing the mercies of God I look forward to tomorrow I don't know what tomorrow is going to bring but I know the God who's already in tomorrow praise God therefore we will not fear praise God praise God praise God praise God hallelujah let's stand I'm not going to give an altar call right now but I want you to give God praise with everything is in your heart today the Holy Spirit has been speaking to you today I I have to warn I have to warn every willful sinner in this house that if you don't turn from your sin you will not inherit the kingdom of heaven you'll never be able to stand before the throne of God and say I wasn't

told I wasn't warned you were warned today you cannot be a fornicator that means have sex outside of marriage on an unrepentant basis and obtain the kingdom of heaven you cannot love money more than God and go to heaven you cannot hate your brother and go to heaven you cannot slander the righteous and go to heaven you cannot live in these constant patterns I'm not talking about seasons and times where people fail and fall there's mercy for that but there's repentance before there's mercy there's a heart that says God I'm going your way I'm sorry for sitting against you and I'm not going to live in sin anymore and it's a choice that you have to make how shocked people are going to be that are sat under the ministries of these positive message people to find out they've been outside the

kingdom of heaven the whole time how shocked so many will be how sad what an awful day that would be to ever come to the place of thinking I can live in sin and somehow go to heaven that's the ultimate of deceptions folks today if the Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart if you can hear God's voice the Bible says don't harden your heart the Lord said through Jeremiah said I know the plans I have for you there's thoughts of good and not evil to bring you to a desired end the desired end is God's first and your second but God says I have a place I want to take you to in me but it requires an honesty with God in the annex in the main sanctuary if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you today and I'm not going to grease the slide for you to get to this altar you're gonna have to step out and say

I'm living away I shouldn't be living and I'm coming today to say God my life is yours I'm coming to give you my life see a lot of times preachers will stand and they'll give a second and third altar call and really

it's just so the proud can slip out of their seats and somehow shuffle in unnoticed but today it's very definitive and I really don't care if there's only three people here as long as it's sincere but the reality is God you've spoken to my heart and I'm out of this society I'm out of the value system of this society I'm out of the way people live here I'm out of this whole thing that's coming under the judgment of God and I'm going with Christ and I've suffered the reproach let them laugh if they want to laugh I'm going with God I would rather be standing in a desert and have

the peace of God in my heart that in the midst of a screaming multitude who don't even know who God is anymore I'm gonna ask you to with an honest heart today if you're not saved you are welcome to come you've never really given your life to Christ you're welcome to come the Lord will receive you but if you're not living right and you know it you just you're not living right and you know you're not living right nobody needs to convince you you already know what the Bible says this altar is open for you while we worship you'll have an opportunity to walk out of here clear and clean forgiven and with a hope for the future I'm gonna ask you to step out in the balcony you can go to either exit the main sanctuary slip out of your seat come if the Holy Spirit is telling you you should now I

know I know that many of you at this altar today here and in the annex when there is repentance there's a deep sense of unworthiness comes into the heart I'm not worthy to be called by the name of God I'm not worthy to be in church I'm not worthy to sing the praises of God because I've not lived in a manner that's glorified God but there's a story in the New Testament that puts an end to you walking out the door carrying that sense of unworthiness with you this prodigal this this faraway son who knew better but lived in a way that dishonored God and dishonored his own life and the testimony of his father came back and all he had in his heart is I'm just so unworthy only to be met by his father who wouldn't even answer him didn't even respond to his testimony of unworthiness but put a robe

on him cleansed him if we confess our sins the Bible says he's God's faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness is it any deeper than that no that's as deep as it gets but it's it requires an honest heart it's it's the game player can never lay hold of this it requires an honest heart it's it's the man or woman says I I'm coming home and I'm to whatever that means I'm just coming home to God and then he puts a ring on his hand says you're not a slave in my house you're my son you're my daughter you have the authority of the father and puts a ring and if you can let God do that today if you can let God cover you with this the righteousness of Christ if you can let him empower you again because he says I will empower you I'll give you authority over the

things that once had authority over you and you don't walk out of here a servant to sin any longer you walk out of here a son a daughter of God you you walk out of here with spiritual authority then he then he puts shoes on his child's feet which says to me we're going somewhere together we got a journey to go and and on that journey you're not going to have you're not gonna have all the answers but you're gonna have one thing that this world needs God is good my father is good he is merciful I I was a mess and he touched my life and I was a slave to sin and he broke the chains off of me and he's given me hope and a heart and then he brings him into the house and throws a party now that's not our view of God but that's who God is Jesus Christ is talking about himself his father talking

about the very heart of God kills the fatted calf and then strikes up the band says okay get everything tuned up and then when the older son came says there was music and dancing I mean it doesn't get any better than that you say what is my part in all of this okay you've got to let God put the robe of righteousness on you've got to open your hands and let him put the ring on you got to lift up your feet and

let him put the shoes on that's your part now I'm gonna ask the choir to sing a song we sing a song the Lord is blessing me right now and as we sing that I'd like those at this altar to lift your hands in faith let God bless you oh don't lift them halfway lift them lift them lift your hands to God let him put the robe let him put the ring let him put the shoes on your feet receive the

blessing of God receive the forgiveness of God today receive a future and a hope let's praise together let's praise God together you too lift your hands let God bless you

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