

Loving Jesus

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the necessity of loving Jesus above all else and the implications of that love in our lives and ministry.

Duration: 58:38

Scripture: Psalm 107:4-9, Psalm 107:13-14, Psalm 107:17, Psalm 119:97, John 21:15-17

Topics: "Loving Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of loving Jesus wholeheartedly. He urges believers to prioritize their relationship with Christ above all earthly possessions and relationships. The speaker also highlights the need to reach out to the younger generation and bring them to Christ, rather than writing them off. He references Psalm 107 to illustrate how God delivers and leads those who cry out to Him, and encourages believers to align themselves with God's purposes and be where He is working.

Transcript

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John Chapter 21, if you'll go there please, in the New Testament. Loving Jesus. Father, I come before you today, God, and I thank you for the quickening power of the Holy Spirit.

I thank you, Lord, that you'll quicken my mind and my physical body, and you'll quicken the hearts of the hearers that you have brought together in this house, at this time and in this hour. And, oh, Jesus, speak to all of us. God, help us to understand who you are, what it means to be your people.

Take us beyond the normative. Take us beyond, oh, God, any understanding that falls short of the glory that you've called us to exhibit in Christ. And, Father, I thank you for the enablement.

Lord, anoint this word. Challenge us through it, oh, God. Challenge my mind and heart.

And, Father, let us hear and understand. Lord, I ask today that the kingdom of darkness and suffer great violence in every heart, every life, every weapon of the devil formed against the people of God would be demolished by the simple preaching of the word of God. And I thank you for this in Jesus' mighty name.

Amen. Loving Jesus. John chapter 21, beginning at verse 15.

So when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He said unto him, Feed my lambs. He said unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.

And he said unto him, Feed my sheep. And he saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me? And Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee.

And Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

In this spake he, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Now, if I were to ask you this morning, before even getting into this word, Do you love Jesus? I think the majority, obviously.

There might be some skeptics or agnostics here today. But the majority would say, Yes, I do love Jesus. And if I were to ask you, Well, what is the evidence that you love him? It would be interesting, I think, the responses that we would get today.

Some would say, Well, I've come all the way from Connecticut. That should be proof enough that I love him. Others from far reaches of New Jersey and the far boroughs.

It's taken you a long time to get here. To many, it would be just simply, Well, my presence ought to be proof enough that I love him. I have an affection in my heart for him.

I want to be where he is. I love to hear his words. And so I must love him.

And in this particular situation, in John chapter 21, After Christ had been crucified, the disciples went out fishing. And they saw him on the shore. And John, the beloved disciple, said to Peter, It is the Lord.

Now, Peter, the scripture says, put a fisherman's coat about him. And he didn't wait for the boat to get to shore. He just simply dove in.

And he swam to shore. And, of course, Christ had made a small lunch for them on the shore. And what a wonderful reunion.

Now, you would think the simple act of swimming so ferociously to shore would be evidence enough of the love of Peter for Jesus Christ. If you would read the whole thing in its context, we would think that just showing up the way he did would be sufficient evidence. Why would Christ even have to ask him, Do you love me? Incredible when you think of it.

And sometimes we get the impression that just showing up is enough. We've just shown up. And we've had to swim a long distance to get here.

And we've had to go through a lot of difficulty. And here we are now in God's presence. We do love Christ as much as we think we do.

And it should be evident we love the Lord. Why would he even have to ask if we do? And I can see this joyful reunion. There's a little, of course, a bit of trepidation because there's always some questions in the hearts of the disciples.

And all of a sudden, after the meal and after this wonderful reunion, I can almost sense the tenseness in the air when Jesus turns to Peter and asks him, Do you love me more than these? That's an incredible thing. There's a these in that first question. Now, when we first look at this, I remember when I first got saved, I used to feel, well, Jesus obviously asked Peter if he loved him three times because he denied him three times.

It's almost as if every sin we commit is marked against us. And so, okay, you love me, I'll knock off the first time you denied me. And you love me the second time, so I'll knock off this.

It's almost like a balancing act. Okay, now you said you love me three times. Now I'll forget about the three times you denied me.

Unfortunately, that's not the correct interpretation of this. You see, he asked him three distinct questions. This was not the same question three times.

These are three very, very different questions. And you'll see that as we begin to discuss this. Peter, do you love me more than these? And Peter says, Lord, you know I love you.

It's incredible when you think of it. It's like, what more do I have to do? I've almost drowned trying to get to you. I went away.

I know I failed you. I've wept bitterly, but I'm here. And when others forsook you, I haven't.

I'm back. And surely that must be evidence that I love you. But Jesus says, no, do you love me more than these? Now, the Bible purposefully doesn't tell us what the these are.

And we're left to our imagination. So if I'm thinking about being around the shore, I can think of the leftover food. There's leftover muffins.

Perhaps there's leftover fish. And perhaps Jesus is pointing to these and saying, do you love me more than the provision? Is it more than just the provision that I give you that causes you to come to me? Do you love me more than these? I think of maybe the boats and nets because he'd gone back fishing again with the other disciples. And Jesus is perhaps pointing, gesturing to the nets and the boats and said, Peter, do you love me more than these? Are these the basis of your security? Is your love for me conditional on your possessions? If it doesn't go beyond this, Peter, I feel Christ is saying you're going to miss the high calling that I have on your life.

You've got to look beyond just the possessions. And the these, I wonder, could it be the other disciples that were there on the shore at that time? Could it be his friends? If Christ were to ask us here today. I know there are people in this sanctuary this morning that are in relationships, perhaps with an unsaved

person.

And Christ legitimately says, yes, you've come here and perhaps you've gone to great length to get to this house. But do you love me more than these? Do you love me more than these things that are gripping your heart, that are going to divert your affections in the long run if you don't put them away? If you don't have your love relationship with me in its right priority, you're going to ultimately lose the mark of the high calling that I placed on your life. Paul says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:9, he said, God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Now, beloved, there was a purpose for your life. God ordained a purpose before the foundation of the world. Now, I don't understand all of these mysteries, but I do know the Scripture clearly says that God knew you were going to be before you were.

Before your mother and father were born, he knew you were going to be. You're not a happenstance. You're not some kind of fluke of nature that came into the world and now God has predisposed us or obligated to love you in spite of your struggles.

No, God knew and God allowed you to be born. That's an amazing thing when you begin to realize it. And even before you were conceived, he had a purpose for your life and he had a plan for your life.

And he supplied grace. That means he supplied his own strength, his own character, as much of himself as you're ever going to need to accomplish that purpose. He gave to you before you were even born.

Oh, beloved, when this finally dawns on your mind and your heart, when it finally gets into you, there's such a shout of glory that comes into your soul. Say, God, you ordained a purpose for my life and you opened the supply through Jesus Christ for everything that I will ever require to fulfill the purpose that you've given to me. Nothing can stop what you've destined to do in my life.

Not angels, not powers, not principalities, not anything present, nothing to come. Nothing can separate me from this love and this supply you have for me in Christ Jesus. I am already more than a conqueror through Christ.

It's amazing when that begins to get into your heart. And Peter said, Lord, you know, I love you. You know, I love you.

Then Jesus said something very interesting. He said, feed my lambs. Now, later on, he's going to talk about the sheep.

But now he talks about the lambs. He says this food is for the young ones. You've got to teach the young ones to press beyond the love and the trust of material things and earthly relationships.

You've got to teach them to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things that they require are going to be added to them. You've got to teach them, Peter, that man will not live by bread alone, but they will live by every word of God.

And the word live means they will be caused to live by every word of God. They'll be quickened to the inner man by every word of God. This is lamb's food, Peter.

This is food for those that are babes in Christ. Oh, it's so tragic today that many who are born of the Spirit into the kingdom of God have to run through this gauntlet as it is of false preachers of the gospel who are sent to ensnare them with the love of material things. And this is a gospel that is permeating much of the airways in America today and the Western world.

And this is a snare to the souls of the young because they don't understand that with their hearts divided, they will never fulfill the calling of God that is upon their life. They will run around confessing possessions for the rest of their life and miss the very purpose of God that God has ordained from them before the foundation of the world. Feed the lambs.

Feed them, these young ones. Tell them. And in order to feed them, you and I have to go there.

We have to be a people who love Christ. We have to be a people who can honestly say to our own children, we can say to those we preach the gospel to, we can say to those that we associate with, I love Christ more than my possessions. I love Christ more than any earthly relationship that's going to stop the plan of God from being fulfilled in my life.

I love God. I love Him with all my heart and God knows it. And beloved, let me tell you something.

The unsaved know it too, no matter what we confess with our lips. If our hearts are divided, those around us know it. They know it.

Half of the world is laughing at much of the gospel that is on the airwaves today. The unsaved know it. They instinctively know what it means to be a Christian.

Isn't it amazing? Then Jesus goes on and He asks Peter a second question now. He says to him the second time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me? And the word lovest is agapeo in the Greek and really it indicates a direction of the will. It means finding one's joy in something or someone.

It's the word that's used in John 3.16 about God's love towards men. When the Bible says, God so loved, that's agapeo, God so agapeo'd the world that He gave His only begotten Son. God so found His joy in a renewed relationship with His own creation.

God so was moved. It speaks of Jesus in the New Testament. It says, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.

The joy was not just the fact that He was going to be raised from the dead. The joy in God's heart was fellowship with you and I for all of eternity. Having you and I bought back.

And God so had a... the direction of His will was so towards us that He gave His only begotten Son. And this is the question that Jesus is now asking Peter. He says, Peter, is your joy found in me? Is your joy found in me? Am I the source of that joy? You can always tell a Christian or pastor or preacher if they truly are just religious or if they have a born again relationship.

Those that are gods love Jesus. Jesus is on their lips. Jesus is in their mind.

Jesus is in their heart. They find their chief joy and delight in knowing Him. It's all about Him.

It's not about position or power or privilege and all the other things that can even be afforded sometimes in the ministry. It's not about that. It's about Jesus.

Everything is about Jesus. Then He's saying, Peter, do you love Me? First of all, do you love Me more? You see, you can't really get to the second question until you've dealt with the first. Do you love Me more than your possessions? Do you love Me more than worldly things? Do you love Me more than position, power, ambition? Do you love Me more than all of the things that this perishing planet have to offer you? Do you love Me more than these things? Peter says, oh, you know I do.

Then he says, now, is your joy found in Me? Do you find your joy in Me? At the mention of Jesus' name, is something leaping in your heart? If you hear somebody curse His name in the workplace, are you grieved inside? It's not just because you're religious, but you feel like somebody is cursing your best friend that you've ever known. There's something so deep in your heart. Your joy is so found in Him that you're grieved when you hear His name misused, even for apparently righteous purposes.

And Peter said to Jesus, Lord, you know I love You. Then he says to Him, feed my sheep. He says, it implies, the word feed in the Greek implies the whole office of the shepherd.

It means leading the flock to its true source of nourishment. It means more than merely feed. He says, Peter, you can't lead the people to Me if you don't love Me.

Because salvation is a love relationship. God so loved the world. The Scripture doesn't say God so was distressed at the mess that had been created, He decided to do something to satisfy His own legal requirements.

Now, the Scripture could say that and be justified, but it doesn't say that. It says God so loved the world. There was a passion in the heart of God for His people that He determined that He was going to redeem and bring back to Himself as His bride for all of eternity.

Just try to even imagine that. That God so loved me, God so loved you, that He's willing to become a man and die on a cross and suffer a horrible, cruel death, that you and I might be restored to God for all of eternity. He says, oh Peter, if you're going to shepherd My people, you've got to love Me this way.

You've got to lead the flock to finding their joy in Me. Not in possessions, not in things, not in church attendance, not in any amount of human effort. They've got to find their joy in Me, in Jesus Christ.

That's the mark of genuine shepherdship, genuine pastorship over the church of Jesus Christ. That's the mark of every true office in the church of Jesus Christ. At the very core is a passion for Christ.

If that passion is not there, you're not sitting under somebody's ministry who can lead you to the knowledge of Almighty God. The psalmist says in 119, verse 97, he says, Oh how I love Thy law, it is my meditation all the day. Oh God, how I love Your Word.

Oh God, how I love Your Word, it is my meditation all the day. I have always loved the Word of God. Always.

You can never get to the bottom of the Word of God. Never. Never.

You can read a single verse of Scripture all your life and never touch the bottom of it. I could preach on John 3, 16 from today till the day I die, assuming that's a little while from now, and never touch the bottom of that verse. Never touch it.

Tell me, how can I ever touch the depth of God's love? Oh, I could preach on it the rest of my life, and there would always be a new corner on the diamond every time I would stand. Phenomenal, when you get into the Word of God. Phenomenal.

My whole growth in the Christian life has been in the Word of God. I remember when I was a police officer, I've shared this with you before, when it used to work radar, actually, when I first got saved. And I used to pray for rain, because the old radar sets didn't work in the rain.

And we weren't allowed to take calls at that time, so I would just have to find a barn or a shed somewhere and park behind it, and I'd open my Bible, and oh, eight hours, eight hours in the Word of God. Oh, I loved His Word. His Word is life.

His Word is change. Oh, how I love thy law. Because the Word is Jesus.

He's not divorced from His Word. In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God.

The Word was God. The Word became flesh, and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. The Word is Jesus Christ.

Everything in this Bible is Christ, from Genesis to Revelation. It's the heart of God through His Son to our generation. It's amazing.

Oh, how I love thy law. Oh, I love God's Word. I was sitting a while ago in a seminar that's supposed to be for leaders, and I thought it was rather interesting because the speaker got up, and he started the seminar with a false premise.

I'm not even going to go into it, but he made a statement, and if you bought the statement that he made, then that means you buy the package that comes for the whole three days. But the statement he made was false. Isn't that amazing? And I remember thinking when he made this statement, I said, That's not in the Word of God.

As a matter of fact, that's not what the Word of God says. The Word of God says something else. Folks, if you don't love Christ, you can be deceived.

If you love Christ, you love this book, you love this Word. This Word becomes a lamp for your feet and a light for your path. This Word is light.

The Bible says that men loved darkness and wouldn't come to the light because their deeds were evil. But if your heart is towards Jesus Christ, you will come to this book, and you'll say, God, let this book be an x-ray machine every time I read it, and let it examine my heart, let it prove my thoughts, let it prove my ways, what I'm doing, and examine what is really being formed in me, whether it's Christ or whether it's something of my own heart. And Peter said, Oh, you know I love you.

And then he said, Feed my sheep. Oh, Peter, Peter, lead them to joy in me. Lead them, oh, Peter.

Lead them to finding their joy in me and me alone. Oh, folks, everything that we stand on today could be taken away in a moment, in a moment of time. And we don't know what the future is going to hold.

But everything could be taken away in a moment of time. But the love that you have for Jesus can never be taken away from you. It cannot be taken out of your heart.

Now he asked him a third time, John 21, 17. He said unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me? Now Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time. Imagine if you're sitting here today, and Christ himself were to come to you in front of the whole church three times, ask you, Do you love me? Oh, you know I love you.

Do you love me? I know, you know I love you. You know I love you. You know I love you.

Do you love me? And he was grieved. But it's a different word this time. It's a different question.

The word is phileo in the Greek. And it means to love somebody with the intent or the meaning of having common interest with that person. Now that's an interesting concept.

Now do you love me more than material possessions or friendships or these other things? Do you love me enough to find your joy in me alone? And then he says to Peter, Do you love me enough to share common interest with me? In other words, do you love me enough to walk with me? Do you love me enough to embrace my heart as your heart? That my work is your work? That you will follow the steps that I have outlined for your life? Do you love me enough to do this? You see, a lot of people get to stage two. They say, Well, I've given up material possessions and they don't seem to hold me anymore. I really have joy.

I come into the house of God and I have joy, genuine joy. I do love Jesus with all my heart. But then there's a third question that really proves the extent of our love for Christ.

He says, Do you love me enough that my way becomes your way? That my path becomes your path? That my will becomes your will? That the purpose that I set apart your life for from before the foundation of the world becomes your purpose? Do you love me enough? Do you love me enough to break out of the box of just religion and church attendance? Do you love me enough that we cease to simply study the Word of God? I mean, just studying for the sake of knowledge and begin to enter into that knowledge and what that knowledge represents for us personally. Do you love me enough to share the common interest that I have? Now, John chapter 12, keep a marker in 21. John chapter 12, verse 25.

Jesus makes an interesting statement here. He says, He that loves his life shall lose it. And he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

If any man serve me, let him follow me. And where I am, there shall also my servant be. Now, when he says he that loves his life, the same word is phileo, the one that we're talking about now.

He that has a common interest, and the word for life is for the lower region. It means soul, but it means the lower region of a man's being. It's that part of a man that he shares in common with animals.

Now, that's the easiest way I can say it, and that's actually what the lexicon says about it. And what Jesus is saying in this particular verse is that he that shares common interest with his lower nature will perish. In other words, he whose interest comes from his own fallen nature, who seeks to preserve himself.

He seeks to justify the interest of his own heart by somehow bringing it into the house of God and cramming it into Christianity as he sees it. But he's really following the interest of his own heart. Jesus says that man will perish.

But he who forsakes his lower nature will become... Actually, let me paraphrase this, my own translation from really digging this apart in pieces. It says that he that shares common interest with his lower nature or

his own desires will perish. But he who forsakes his lower nature will become the highest and best which Christ is in him forever.

Amazing when you really begin to understand it. He said he who hates his life. It doesn't mean we walk around saying, I hate my life, I hate my house, I hate my job.

You know, that's not what he's talking about. He's talking about the part of the man that will try to lead him. Is that making it simple? He who just puts it off, despises it.

God, I will not be led by my lower nature. I'll not be led by the soulish realm of my mind. I'll be led by the spirit of God.

I want common interest with God. I want to know what God's plan is for my life. And that's the plan I want to follow.

I want to walk that way with all of my heart. And verse 26, he says, if a man serve me, let him follow me. And where I am, there shall also my servant be.

I think that settles the issue. Where I am, there's where my servant's going to be. So the question that we have to ask ourselves is, where is Christ? What is he doing? Go to Psalm 107, please, with me.

I want to show you where God is today. And he says, where I am, there will also my servant be. I want to be doing what Christ is doing.

I want to be walking where he's leading me. I want to be speaking what he's speaking. I want to be reaching out where he's reaching out, as his servant.

Psalm 107 begins to tell us in verse 4, they wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way. They found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by a right way that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men.

Now, he's saying, here's where God is today. Here's where Christ is. There are people wandering.

They're alone. They have no dwelling place. They're hungry.

They're thirsty. Their soul is fainting. And they cried to the Lord in their trouble.

Now, there's a cry that only God can hear all over society today. There's a cry at every level of society. And my Savior and yours heard you and heard me when we cried out to him.

Even if it was just a faint little bleat, if that's all we could get out of our mouths, he heard us. And he came to us. And I thank God for that with all of my heart.

And quite often he came to us through a person in his church. I don't know if that's been your experience, but that was mine. I thank God to this day with everything that's in my heart that when I was crying out to God and saying, God, if you're real, I want you to show me who you are.

I thank God that he put it on a policeman's heart to come to my door and knock on the door and say, I'm here to tell you what it means to be a Christian. He came to me, but he came through his church. That's where Christ is.

And where Christ was, his servant was as well. Now, that man, I gave him a hard time. I rode him hard for over two months.

I argued with him. I mocked him. I made fun of him to the point where when I gave my life to Christ, he didn't believe it.

He didn't believe that I actually had surrendered my life to Christ. He was skeptical because I had been so argumentative with him. But he persisted because Christ was there, because the cry in my heart was real.

I wanted to know. I said, but I don't want any more religion. I'm sick of religion.

I want a living relationship with God. And this thing is real. I want it.

And if it's not, I want nothing to do with it. I was very, very clear. But Christ came to my house every Wednesday, 7 o'clock.

Christ came to my house. And he came through a man. He came through a vessel that he sent to my door.

Jesus said, where I am, there will my servant be also. Where I am. Hallelujah.

He heard my cry, and he delivered me out of my distress, in verse 6, and led me forth by a right way to go to a city of habitation. I could stop and dance right here. Thanks be to God.

He took me out of the confusion, the despair, the depression, and brought me to a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. I thank God with all of my heart. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

Verse 8, he says, Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Now, you see, the Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is the pen of Christ that is writing through a man, in Psalm 107.

And this is a cry not from the psalmist's heart, it's from God's heart. If you understand the Scripture is inspired, you understand this principle. And it's like as if Christ himself is saying, Oh, that there would be a chorus, that there might be a chorus of voices raised to the goodness of God, who might be there to see the hungry and the distressed delivered and brought to a city of habitation.

God says, Oh, that my people might surround those that are coming and share in my joy, that there might be a chorus of voices raised to the goodness of God. Again in verse 10, he says, Such as sit in the shadows, in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron, because they rebelled against the words of God. So the Lord says he hears the cry of the rebellious, even though they've rebelled against God.

When they cry, he says in verse 11, And condemned the counsel of the Most High, therefore he brought down their heart with labor. They fell down and there was none to help. This is always where the rebellious will go.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, verse 13, And he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and broke their bands in sunder. Then he says again, Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works.

God says, Oh, that I would have a people who would be there when it happens. That I would have a people who are walking with me, who go into places where the rebellious live and are crying out, who stop writing off this generation of young people and go where they are and hear their cry and bring them Christ and see their chains broken and see them set free by the power of God. He says, Oh, that I would have a people who would share a chorus of voices and be raised to the goodness of God.

In the midst of the rebellious who cry to God in our generation. Verse 17, God even reaches out to the foolish. The foolish, who are not sort of fools in our generation.

Verse 17 says, Fools, because of their transgression and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. The soul abhors all manner of meat and they draw near to the gates of death. These are the God resistors, the fools who are trying to push Christ out of every segment of our world today.

Then, it says in verse 19, and you can better believe this is coming to every fool. Then they cry to the Lord in their trouble and he saves them out of their distresses. You remember Jonah.

Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh because he said, I know what you're like. He said, I know I'm going to preach the word and these fools, these enemies of God are going to get saved. And Jonah says, I don't want to go because I know what you're like.

I want you to destroy them. But God reaches out when he hears the cry of a fool. I was a fool before I came to Christ.

I don't know about you. He sent his word and healed them and delivered them from their destructions. Delivered them from that which they were embracing that was going to destroy them.

Not only temporarily, but for all of eternity. Then again he says, oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men. Oh, that I could find a people intermingling, not of them, but with the fools of this world who have rejected God.

That I might have a people who are working there with me. Where I am, there my people may be also my servants. And when they see even one fool come to Christ, would join their voices with mine, would join with the angels around about the throne of God, who break into uproarious joy every time one sinner repents in the sight of God.

Verse 23 tells us that he delivers businessmen who are crying out to him. It says, they go down to the sea in ships and do business in great waters. They see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep.

For he commands and raises the stormy wind and lifts up the waves. They mount up to heaven, they go down to the depths. Sounds almost like the stock market today, doesn't it? Mounted up to heaven and now everybody's in court.

They go down to the depths, their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, they stagger like a drunken man and are at their wits end. These are the businessmen of the world, the business people.

Then they cry, verse 28, unto the Lord in their trouble and he brings them out of their distresses. He makes the storm a calm so that the waves are ever still. Then are they glad because they are quiet and he brings them to their desired haven.

Isn't that amazing? He brings them to the place where they long to be right from the beginning. They thought they could find it through money. They thought they could find it in business.

They thought they could find it in trade. But God had a people that loved him and were set apart for him and were walking according to his purposes. They brought into the midst of the business community the message of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

And those who were crying and at their wits end came out and God brought them to their desired place. That place of security they longed for and thought they would find in the world, they found it in Christ. And then he goes on, he says, oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men.

Oh, God says that I could have Christian businessmen, businesswomen in the middle of this whole confused community looking for success and security in the wrong places. Who every time a man or woman who has sought security in the world finds Christ could lift their voices with me and worship with me. Oh, that I could have a people that love me in the business community.

And verse 41 tells us that he delivers the poor. That's where he is right now. He sets the poor on high from affliction and makes him families like a flock.

And I love that word families. In the Hebrew text it means he brings them into a circle of relatives with strong blood ties. Don't you love it? Isn't it amazing? He takes the poor that are cast out and brings them into a circle of new relatives that have strong blood ties.

That's you and I today. That's who we are in Christ. And then he goes on and says, the righteous shall see it and rejoice.

Now, how do the righteous see this? Is it that somebody comes to Times Square Church and gives a testimony? One time I was in Africa and I had a chance to lead some people to Christ. I went to Jamaica. Brother Dave, for example, is in South Africa right now and just came from Zambia.

Is that how the righteous see it? I don't think so. There's a lot of places that are just simply willing to hear nice stories about what God is doing around the world. And they will clap and they will say, this is wonderful, this is great.

And they'll take an offering and give \$100 and walk out and say, well, I've done my part in world evangelism. No, but the Bible says the righteous will see it. There's a big difference between seeing it and hearing it.

The righteous will see it. The righteous will see the poor taken and delivered from the oppressor and brought into the family of God. The righteous will see it.

I love it with all my heart. I've seen it. Have you seen it? And I've rejoiced.

Have you rejoiced? I've seen the poor delivered. I've seen the one that has no helper brought into the kingdom of God. I've seen young people at this altar this Friday night who may be raised without father or

mother in some cases.

Raised without God. Raised in a hopeless society that taught them that temporal values and violence were okay as long as the objectives were met. And I've seen these brought into the kingdom of God.

I've been there. And I hope to continue to see it until the day I die. And the Scripture says the righteous shall see it.

Now, go to Psalm 109. I'll show you how the righteous see it. Psalm 109, verse 30 says, I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth.

I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor to save him from those that condemn his soul. Christ will stand at the right hand of the poor to save him from those that condemn his soul.

How does the righteous see it? It's simple. Jesus said, Where I am, there will my servants be also. It's not complicated.

I'll be standing at the right hand of the poor to deliver him. And my servants will be there. Those that are mine will be there.

They will be fighting. The fight of faith. They'll be walking with the love of God.

They have another worldly view in their heart. They see things in this perspective of eternity. These are our people who are not gripped by temporal things.

These are our people who find their joy in Christ. These are our people who have gripped and are gripped by the will of God. And they're being led as God leads them.

Their daily cry is, Jesus, wherever you go today, I want to go with you. Whatever you do, I want to be doing. Wherever you send me, I will gladly go.

God, let me walk with you. Let me speak for you. Touch through me.

Speak through me. See through me. Encourage through me.

God, flow through me. Because you said where you are. He's not changed His work because He's at the right hand of God.

He's still reaching out to fallen humanity. That is the work of God. We are now the church.

We are now His body. And where He is, His servants will be also. That's why on Judgment Day, I believe it's going to be quite simple.

He's going to say to some, I never knew you. You did all kinds of wonderful things in my name, but I never knew you. Because where I was, you weren't.

It's simple. I'm looking. I don't recognize you.

I don't recognize myself in you. You see, that's why the separation will be evident on that day. There will be no arguments necessary.

Those who are damned will know it. Those who are saved will be leaping and dancing for joy all around the throne of God. Say, Lord, you're no stranger to me.

I knew you on the earth. I walked with you. I knew your voice.

I loved you with all my heart. If you asked for something, God, I gave it to you. You had everything.

You owned everything. You reached in one day, and by grace, you ripped it out of my heart. I gave it all to you, and you gave me as much as you thought I should have.

But more than that, you gave me your will. Then Jesus says to Peter, feed my sheep. Then he says, when you were young, you went where you wanted to go.

You did what you wanted to do. And of course, Peter was a pretty tough guy. He says, but as you're growing older, you're going to stretch forth your hands, and another's going to lead you where you don't want to go.

And the Scripture says, he said this to signify by what death he would glorify God. Then he said to Peter, follow me. Peter, do you love me enough to share my interest, to adopt my plan for your life and for this world? He said, now that you're going to mature, and as you get older, stretch out your hands and let me lead you.

Let me take you where you can't go. Let me make you what you could never be. Let me give you what you could never possess.

Let me flow through you, Peter. Let me be God to you. Let me be God through you.

And then he said, follow me. And Peter, by the way, feed my sheep with this. Feed my sheep with the understanding There's no greater calling on a man or woman's life than to yield their life to Jesus Christ.

This is not about a religion. This is about a relationship with God. Today, if you need freedom, you need deliverance, if you're tired, you're struggling in your sins, you can be free.

You can be absolutely set free by the power of God in a moment of time. Let's stand for a moment and just worship. I'm going to ask the worship team to come.

Please, it's early. Let's take a moment just to worship. I'd like to sing this song, I Love You, Jesus.

And as we do, would you lift your hearts, your hands with me? Let's sing this song. And I'm just waiting for the Holy Spirit to give me exactly what he wants for this altar call today. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Now, listen carefully.

In the annex balcony of Main St. Tree, If you're here today and you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I want you to know that He died on the cross for you and He paid the price for your sins. And He said, if you'll believe that I took your place and confess that you're a sinner, I will save you. That means I'll take away the record of the wrongs that you've done that have barred your entrance into the kingdom of heaven for eternity.

And then I will call you into a life that is supernatural. I will come, He says, through the Holy Spirit, I will indwell you once you have received Christ. Now, you don't have to understand all of these things as I'm speaking them, but the Bible will bear witness to this when you begin to read it.

He says, I'll come, I'll live in you, and I'll give you the power to be another person. I'll change you. And it will begin at home.

It'll be changes day to day. There'll be changes come into your life. I will teach you how to walk with me.

I'll teach you how to love me. I will show you how much I love you. And this will become a love relationship.

You see, God's not inviting you into another religion. You may be coming from a religious background here today, and you're saying, well, what's the difference? This is not a religion. This is a relationship with God through His Son.

It's a love relationship above and beyond everything else. You may not understand it today, but something inside is saying, this is the truth. God Almighty has touched me, and I know it's the truth.

And I'm going to invite you this morning in just a moment to slip out of your seat and make your way here. And we're going to pray a simple prayer of salvation with you today that you may come to Christ. If you're here today and you're a Christian, but you're backslidden and you know nothing or very little of the joy of God, I want to encourage you to come back to the Lord.

If you're struggling with a sin, He'll set you free. Folks, He came from heaven to a cross to set you free. Don't let the devil convince you that somehow your situation is different than anyone that's ever come before you.

No, he hates your sin enough that he would be crucified to pay the price for it, and he will set you free. This is the work of God. This is the work of God.

This is what this church is about. This is what the message today you heard is about. It's the work of God to set you free.

You might be one of those in Psalm 107. You say, God, I'm at my wit's end. Lord, I've been a fool.

I've been rebellious. I've been covetous. I've gone the wrong direction.

And Lord, I even thought I knew you, but I don't know you. And I hear you calling me today, and I encourage you to slip out as well. And then lastly, but keep in mind, this is only if the Holy Spirit's convincing you.

I don't want altercals to get to be a force of habit in this church. If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, and you say, Pastor, I've been examined today by the Word of God. And the Lord's examined me.

I thought I loved the Lord when I came into this, but I see that the Word's been opened. My heart's been examined, and I've really got some areas that I don't really love God. And today, I just want to come and confess that and ask God for the strength to be a servant that would be where God wants me to be.

Where the Holy Spirit is working, that's where I'd be. The Lord would have access to my life and through my life for His purposes and for His glory. Now, we're going to sing that song again, Pastor Patrick, if you would.

And as we do, if the Holy Spirit has spoken to you today, would you slip out in the balcony? Either exit, make your way down here, the main sanctuary. Education NX, please step forward between the screens, and we'll pray for you momentarily. The Holy Spirit's leading you this morning.

Step out. Come, please, meet me at this altar. We're going to pray together today.

Let's do that. You're the first and last to say, I love you. I love you, love you, Lord Jesus.

And I praise your holy name. You are the alpha and the omega. You let them hang their honor free.

You guide the change of my feet. I raise my voice up with a cry. You lift my hands and dry my eyes.

You let them hang their honor free. You guide the change of my feet. I raise my voice up with a cry.

You lift my hands and dry my eyes. I want to ask you a very serious question this morning. If you're here today and you have never received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, this is the most important decision you'll ever make in life.

There'll never be a greater one than this today. Because this is the difference between heaven and hell, an eternity with God and an eternity without God. And how tragic it's going to be for those who are fools who choose to remain fools, and rebellious who choose to remain rebellious, and lost who choose to remain lost, who are confronted with the goodness of God through Christ but resist that incredible grace, somehow thinking that when they finally get there before the throne of God, maybe some good thing in them will outweigh the bad that they've done.

And what a wrong theology that is. The Bible says, All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The only remedy for sin is Jesus Christ.

He took your place on the cross. He did it publicly. He did it high on a hill.

He did it bruised and beaten and naked as they saw nakedness in His generation. And He did it for you and He did it for me. I remember the day I finally first stepped up in a balcony in a church similar to this, and an altar call was given for salvation and nobody went.

And my heart was pounding in the middle of my chest. And God says, I died for you publicly. I don't want you living in a closet for me.

I want your testimony to be a public testimony. And I remember getting up and walking down that aisle all by myself. It seemed like it was a hundred miles long coming down there.

But thanks be to God. He gave me the courage to take a stand for Him. My life's never been the same and yours won't be the same either.

You may not feel anything, but when you believe in Christ, the Bible says your sins are going to be dealt with, washed away. Scripture says, In Christ you become the righteousness of God. It's as if you've never sinned.

It's amazing. You're brought in to fellowship with God through His Son. The power of God begins to operate through your life.

You become a new creation. A brand new person. It's amazing.

And that's how you know it's real. I remember saying, God, if this thing is real, I want it. That was my salvation prayer.

If this thing is real, I want it. If it's not, I don't. And the Lord took me right where I was at and began to change me.

Day by day by day began to change my life. And I see people whose lives are going to be changed at this altar today. I see it.

I see what God is doing. I can hear the angels. They're tuning up their instruments around about the throne right now because there's going to be a party at the throne of God.

Education NX, I can't see you, but the Holy Spirit sees you today. Here in the balcony main sanctuary at the altar. For those who want to receive Christ as their Savior for the first time, would you just raise up your hand now? Unashamedly, all over the place, up in the balcony.

You didn't come to the altar, but you said, I want Jesus. Raise it high. Raise it high.

Let everybody see it. Let all your friends see it. Everybody, raise your hand.

Hallelujah. We're going to pray a simple prayer with you today. You're here together.

You're both coming to Christ. That's awesome. That's wonderful.

Thank God. Let's pray. Let's pray together.

Everybody who raised their hand and anybody that wants to pray, just encourage them. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, I am a sinner.

Jesus, I thank you that you so loved me, that you gave your life on a cross and paid the price for all the wrong things that I have done. Thank you, Lord, for giving me a new heart. I don't want to live in sin anymore.

I want to live a new life, a life that brings honor and glory to God. Today, Jesus, Son of God, I open my heart to you and I receive your offer to me of forgiveness and eternal life. And I invite you to come into my heart and be my Lord and my Savior.

I believe that at this very moment, you are receiving me and my sins are being washed away. I believe that the angels are beginning to rejoice because I'm being set free from a life of sin And brought into the life of God. Oh, God, thank you.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you for loving me. Thank you for saving me.

Thank you for saving me. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Oh, that men would rejoice! Oh, that men would rejoice and lift their voices to God for His goodness! That they would rejoice with God! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Now, for the rest that are here, pray with me now. Lord Jesus, forgive me. God, I've not loved you the way that I should.

And you've shown me today. But you've also shown me your mercy. You've shown me your power and your ability to love me and to change me.

I ask you, Jesus, to take my life in its fullness. Break away from my heart. Everything that holds me from loving you.

Challenge me and change me. I want to be where you are. I want to be doing what you are doing in this generation.

I want to be among the righteous. Who stand with you at the right hand of the poor. And see them delivered from the power of the enemy.

I want to rejoice with you, Jesus. Every time one sinner comes to the knowledge of God. I want to love you with all of my heart.

And all of my soul. All of my mind. And all of my strength.

And I want to love my neighbor. As I love myself. Oh God, hear the cry of my heart.

Answer me today, oh God. And Lord, I will rejoice with you. I will rejoice with you.

I will rejoice with you. This is the conclusion of the message.

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