

When Christians Make Mistakes

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon addresses the common mistakes Christians make, emphasizing the need for mercy, faith in prayer, and the importance of returning to God after failure.

Duration: 39:50

Scripture: Psalm 22:1-2, Isaiah 6:5-8, Mark 11:24, Luke 22:62, Acts 1:14, Acts 12:12-17, Romans 8:28, James 2:13

Topics: "Gods Mercy", "Christian Repentance"

Description

This sermon focuses on the theme of Christians making mistakes and feeling distant from God, emphasizing the need to come back to Him with honesty and openness. It highlights the importance of understanding God's mercy, the tendency to substitute human reasoning for divine counsel, the danger of writing off people God hasn't written off, and the significance of praying with genuine faith in God's ability to answer. The message encourages individuals to trust in God's plan, embrace His mercy, and come back to Him, acknowledging their flaws and relying on His grace.

Transcript

Luke chapter 22, please. Luke chapter 22 and verse 62, one verse of scripture. I want to talk to you this morning about when Christians make mistakes.

Now this is a pertinent topic this morning because I believe the Lord is calling His people home. Many, many of God's people have strayed in one fashion or another. Many do not believe that God still wants to use them the way maybe they feel He once did.

Because of past mistakes or present misunderstandings of the kingdom of God. Father, I thank you with all of my heart today for the touch of heaven in this service. I thank you Lord that yours is a kingdom of mercy.

We stand, we move, we live, we breathe because of your mercy. If you marked iniquity, none of us could stand. We all are recipients of an incredible and amazing grace.

I pray with all my heart God that you would cause people today who are going to be hearing this word and in the days ahead to get up from where they are and come home. Come back to you with an honest and an open heart to let you speak and to let you do what you desire to do in every soul. I pray for health and healing in your body, your church Lord, so that we might be honest ambassadors of your kingdom in our

time.

Bring us home Lord from where we strayed. Bring us from the mountaintops where we found ourselves, the valleys where we settled in to despair and defeat. Bring us home God Almighty as only you can.

There are so many in this generation that are just like the prodigal son wanting to get up but not knowing how to get back. I pray Lord Jesus Christ that you would anoint these few words, that you would open prison doors and give sight to the blind and heal the bruised in heart. I thank you for it.

Thank you for this church Lord. Thank you God Almighty for what you alone have done and will continue to do in the days ahead. Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory today and forever.

We give you the honor in Jesus name. Luke chapter 22 verse 62, one verse of scripture. So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

I feel in my spirit that there's a lot of bitter weeping going on in the body of Jesus Christ today. A lot of disappointed people, a lot of disillusioned people, a lot of people who feel that they have failed somehow God and they have a deep sting in their spirit because of their own sense of failure. In the case of Peter that we're reading about today in Luke chapter 22, he didn't believe that he was capable of doing what he had just done.

He was the one that seemingly had the most passion of all those that were following Christ. He was the one that said others may run from you but I will not. He was the one that said I'm willing not just to live for you or to travel with you but I'm willing to die for you and with you in Jerusalem.

And in just a very, very short season of time he had denied that he even knew Christ and he had cursed and swore with an oath to this effect. I don't know what that oath sounded like but in my heart and it's only an opinion that I have it was something like may God strike me dead if I know this man. He was so bitter, so disillusioned, so stung by his own sense of failure.

Now have you ever been disappointed in God? Have you ever felt that he made you promises that he hasn't kept or at least he hasn't kept them the way that you thought he should have kept them? Are you among those sitting today in the house of God feeling a little outside of it all? Wondering if your relationship with God can ever be the way that it once was. And I know I'm speaking to a lot of people today. I once loved to pray.

I once couldn't wait to tell people about Jesus Christ. But something happened along the way. I made a mistake of some sort and now I don't know if I can get back.

I don't know if it could ever be the way that it once was. The Lord put on my heart to speak to you about four common mistakes that Christians, every Christian, every believer in Christ is prone to make. We all do it from time to time.

Number one, when we substitute human reasoning for divine counsel. Look at the book of Acts chapter 1 with me for just a moment. The scripture tells us in the beginning of this chapter in verse 14, all of the early disciples continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.

And as they prayed, you know when you and I pray, ideas will come into our heart. They're not always from God. Even though we are praying, we will get ideas, we will get thoughts.

Remember, our fallen nature is to be as God is. The fallen nature will still every once in a while just whisper something. And our fallen nature wants to declare that something to be good that might not, even though it is good, it might not be God for the moment.

And in those days, Peter stood up and in verse 16, he says, men and brethren, this scripture had to be fulfilled. And he talks now about Judas. He talks about how Judas betrayed the son of God and how he fell into his own death.

He talks about how a field was bought with the reward of his betrayal. And then he quotes a scripture in verse 20, let his dwelling place be desolate and let no one live in it and let another take his office. And so all of this is true.

So Peter has an idea in his heart that he was an idea guy. Get me wrong. Even though he had wept bitterly, even though he had made tremendous mistakes, he still had a strong will and he still had a long list of ideas in his own heart.

Therefore, verse 21. So Peter has come to a conclusion of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out from among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when he was taken up from us. One of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.

And they proposed to Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justice and Matthias. And they prayed and said, you, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two you have chosen. It's only my opinion, folks.

But when God is speaking, he is not presenting two choices before us. When we end up with two choices, a lot of times it has come from good ideas. We have our scripture text.

It has come from the heart of man. This is only my conjecture. You're free to disagree with me, but I've been in enough board meetings.

I've seen this over and over and over again. And so how did they figure out who's going to be the 12th apostle? They cast lots. They drew straws, basically, threw dice.

Any other way I can... And the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the 11 apostles. So here's your very first committee meeting in the New Testament Church of Jesus Christ. Now, subsequent to this, there have been hundreds of thousands of meetings just like this, with human reasoning, with a sense that they're being led by God, with a scripture to back it up, an inconclusive conclusion, may I call it that, and voting or casting lots or drawing straws or however they chose to do it for something as important as an apostle.

And so this guy, Matthias, is elected, and you never hear of him again. He disappears from the... even doubting Thomas has some history. Matthias disappears, as far as I know.

If you know something, don't let me know, but he just disappears. You see, somebody did have to take that 12th place, but if they would have learned to wait on God and not substitute human reasoning for divine counsel, the man God had chosen to be the 12th was not saved yet. His name was Saul of Tarsus.

And when you read Paul's letters, Paul, chosen by God, called to be an apostle. Paul knew that he was called, and he became the one chosen by God, became the greatest apostle of all times. Now you think

about Matthias.

It seems to me when humanness gets into the church of Jesus Christ, we are always pursuing something that we can't touch, we can't see, we can't feel. We're always trying to promote a kingdom that's a supernatural kingdom in a natural way. And the two simply just don't go together.

Like oil and water, they just don't mix together. I feel bad for Matthias. It's almost like a guy in a race who's way behind, always trying to catch up.

Which way did they go? I must find them. I'm one of their leaders. Discouragement and bitterness against God comes into the Christian heart when the plan doesn't move forward like we thought it should move forward.

Think about Peter for just a moment. He's at the last table, and he's zealous, and he wants to serve God with all his heart. And you remember those days in your own life.

You were willing to do whatever God asked you to do. So suddenly, here's the words. Whoever doesn't have a sword, get one now.

For it is written, he was numbered among the transgressors. And so Peter goes, and he gets his sword, and he sticks it in his belt. And he's made the promise that he's going to fight to the end for this kingdom and for this man he believed to be the Son of God.

He's told to take up the sword. And in Gethsemane, when Judas and the band of zealots come to take Christ captive, Peter draws his sword, takes a swipe at the high priest. I believe it's for the jugular, not for his ear.

The guy ducked. That's why he cut his ear off. Then Jesus reaches to the ground.

Peter is serving God the way he feels he's been instructed to do. And he takes up the ear, puts it back on his head, turns to Peter and says, Put your sword away. And Peter's standing there.

You can just imagine how he must have felt. I trusted you, and I sincerely followed you. And you've left me standing here looking like a fool.

Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever felt led of God to do something? Have you ever felt like you had a direct word from the Lord and you said it out to do something and it just seemed to all blow up in your face? And you end up in a place like Peter was at that moment. I don't know you. I don't know you.

I don't even know if you know what you're doing. You give all these contrary instructions. I follow you the best way I can.

And you just leave us standing there looking like idiots in the garden when we know you have the power. And if you didn't want me to use the sword, why did you tell me to use the sword in the first place? How many people set out failing to understand that God's ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts? There might be something a little deeper in the instruction of God, but we assume that we know what he means when he sends us out to do something. And when it doesn't work out, we become discouraged and even bitter against God.

It's very hard for Christian people to admit sometimes that they have become bitter against God. A very famous evangelist that I once knew who was visiting this church told me of a situation in his life. He was in his late 80s at this time, and he talked about a grandchild that got cancer, and he prayed and fasted and believed this little three-year-old girl was going to be healed, but she died.

And he became so bitter against God. And there's something in the heart that says, Lord, I've served you all these years. Can't you just do this little thing for me? I've wanted your son.

I've wanted your family. I've fed your sheep. And all I'm asking you is for this one little life to be spared.

Will you not spare it? And I remember he and I, after she died, were sitting in a restaurant together, and he said, Pastor, he said, The only reason that I didn't turn from God when my granddaughter died is that I had come too far to turn back now. But he was angry with God and had the courage at least to admit it. Listen to the words of David, the psalmist.

How long, Lord, will you forget me? Forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long will I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long will my enemy be exalted over me? And David the king again writes in Psalm 22, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me? And from the words of my groaning, Oh my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not hear. And in the night season, and I'm not silent. Now here's in effect what David was saying.

I'm doing my part. Why are you not doing yours? I'm praying. I'm crying out.

I'm seeking justice and righteousness. And God, I know you have the power to make a difference. But why are you silent in the midst of my prayer? The third common mistake that Christians make is when we write off people that God hasn't written off.

That's part of the reason why so many feel so distant from God is because in this case, for example, of Paul, the greatest apostle of all time, takes a young man called Mark with him, who's simply not ready for martyrdom. Paul was. He was a zealot before he got saved and he brought a great measure of that zeal into the kingdom of God.

This young man traveling with Paul is probably 17, 18 years old. And he says, look, Paul, I got life to live. Everywhere you go, you're crawling up from under a pile of rocks.

I'm just not ready for it. And he leaves. And Paul is so angered by it.

He just writes him off as useless and no good for the kingdom of God. And he's so adamant about this that he even splits up a good friendship with his friend Barnabas over it. He says to Barnabas, if you want him to travel with us, you take him.

I'm not taking him. I'm going in another direction. He so had written this young man off.

Now we know that God hadn't written him off. He ended up writing the Gospel of Mark. God was not finished with this young man.

I want you to remember today, we reap what we sow. If we sow judgment towards others who have failed in our sight or fallen short of what we think the glory of God ought to be in our time, we reap judgment without mercy who have shown no mercy. It's quite often just a bounce back effect when people feel far away from God of how they have treated others.

I think it might be a good idea if we learn to be kind now towards other people. If we learn, yes, praise God for that. If we learn to believe that if God is not finished, it's not over until it's over, folks.

It's not over. We're going to be awful surprised when we get to heaven's throne one day and they're going to point at me and say, you made it here. And be surprised when they point back at you and say, I never expected you to be here.

And I'll find out how merciful God has been. None of us have a handle on the full truth of everything. None of us are walking in absolute perfection.

If you think you are, you need prayer more than anybody else in this place right now because you're not walking in perfection. And don't write anybody off. You watch what happens when you start extending mercy to other people, suddenly you become aware of the mercy of God.

You become aware of the long-sufferingness of God. You become aware of the kindness of our God, that He is good and His mercy endures forever when you choose to be kind to other people around you. The last that I have written down here today of common mistakes that Christians are prone to make is that when we pray but we don't really believe that God is going to answer us, we come to the prayer meeting because it's the thing to do.

And we pray because we are told we should. We pray for family members. We pray for communities.

We pray for leaders. We pray for different things. But in our heart, really deep, deep down, we don't believe that God is going to answer our prayer.

And so prayer just becomes a religious exercise without faith. That's why Christ Himself said, when the Son of Man returns, will He find the kind of faith that will not give up until it has its answer? In the book of Acts chapter 12, beginning at verse 12, now Peter, it's an anti-Christian time in society. King Herod has been putting people into prison.

He's killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. The people are pleased that persecution now, even violent persecution, is coming against the people of God. And so he stretches out his hand further.

He seizes Peter and puts Peter in prison. He surrounds him with four squads of soldiers and puts people before the door of the prison. And he intends to keep him out, bring him out for judgment, to just please this bloodlust towards the testimony of Christ in that society.

Now, it says in verse 12, many were gathered together praying at the end of verse 12. And Peter knocked at the door of the gate. A girl named Rhoda came to answer.

When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness, verse 14, she did not open the gate but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. This is what they're praying for. Actually go back a little bit in the chapter and the people were praying for him.

This was what this prayer meeting was about. But they said to her, you are beside yourself. In other words, you're mad.

She kept on insisting, it's so, Peter's at the door. Peter's at the door. So they said, it's his angel.

In other words, it's not Peter. It's just a messenger telling us that all is well. It's an apparition.

It's something spiritual. You ever notice how we try to spiritualize unbelief? We make it into something supernatural in another way than God intended it to be. Now, Peter continued knocking.

And when they opened the door, they were astonished when they saw him. They didn't believe that God was going to answer their prayer. And that's a common mistake of the Christian church.

And may we not make it in our generation as you and I are praying for a spiritual awakening in this nation. As things are getting darker, as captivity seems to be spreading itself, as the city seems to be indifferent to the things of God, as we gather Tuesday nights to pray in this congregation, as we continue to pray in the days ahead and fast, may we not fall into the trap or the mistake of believing that God will not answer. We actually believe something, but we believe that God will not answer.

We fail to believe that when we pray, mountains can still be moved. We fail to understand that Jesus made a promise that whatever you ask believing, you shall receive. So here they are in this prayer meeting, and they're saying, Oh God, have mercy on Peter.

Oh God, have mercy on the Christian church. Oh God, set Peter free. But they don't, it's the thing to do, but they don't really believe it.

You ever been in a prayer meeting like that? Have you ever prayed like that? Well, you just know it's the thing to pray, but you don't really believe what you're saying. You don't expect the answer to be at the door. Before the prayer meeting is over, the answer is at the door.

Now while they're praying, I'll talk to you about the mercy of God. This prayer meeting is not rife with faith from what I read in it at least. But while they are praying, God is taking that mustard seed that they have.

It's not much, but he's taking it. At least they're there and at least they're praying and at least they know God is able. They may not believe he's going to do it at that moment, but at least they know he's able.

But look what's happening as they begin to pray. You go back in chapter 12. When Herod that night, Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.

Now the prayer meeting is going on. I want you to catch the duality here. Oh God have mercy.

Oh God set Peter free. They don't really believe it's going to happen. Maybe sometime in the future, they've already crafted a scenario in their minds.

Maybe Herod's going to bring him out. He's going to stand before the judges. Maybe they'll find him innocent.

Maybe they'll let him go. Not really believing that supernaturally God really can answer prayer. And folks, we started out in the supernatural.

Let's not end up in the natural, in the house of God, in our generation. An angel of the Lord stood by him and light shone in the prison. I want you to think now in the context of all the people we're praying for in New York City.

People shut in their apartments with seven locks on their door, living with constant fear, bound by drugs and addiction, living in a wrong state of thinking, as if they're in prison, as if soldiers of darkness are set

around them and soldiers of hell are at the door. And they're under the judgment of that moment in time. But the church began to pray.

And when the church began to pray, suddenly an angel comes into that place. A messenger of God and a light shines in that prison. And he struck Peter on the side and raised him up and saying, get up quickly.

And his chains fell off from his hands. I envision in my heart, as you and I pray, the presence of God will go into places all over this city that we never dreamed or believed. And God will begin to tell people, get up, get up quickly.

And as they get up, that which held them captive and bound falls away. And the angel said, gird yourself and tie on your sandals. Get your clothes on, put on your shoes.

We're going somewhere. And he said to him, put on your garment and follow me. So he went out and followed him.

Did not know what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. And when they were past the first and the second guard post, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord. And they went out and immediately down one street and immediately the angel departed from him.

I envisioned a day when we're going to live to see this in our time. I believe that prayer moves mountains. I believe that prayer releases the supernatural hand of God.

I believe with all my heart that God will take the least of us. God will take the failures. God will take those who struggle with bitterness.

God will take every person in this room. And as we begin to open our voices, he'll take what little kind of faith we can bring to him and begin to unlock prison doors and give sight to those that are blind and tell them, get up and go to the house of God. Get up and go to the prayer meeting, get up and go.

And it all happened while they were praying. And so here's the conclusion of what we've been talking about this morning. Matthias disappears, but Paul stands up and the plan of God goes forward.

Your plans will amount and may have amounted to nothing, but God's plan for your life is still ongoing. And God's plan is the best plan of all. His is the only plan.

His is the only power, the only glory, the only kingdom, the only direction, the only way. And so maybe you sit and say, Lord, we were so sincere and we so felt this is the way you needed to do things. But God would say to you today, I have something much better for you than what you thought.

You had your scripture text and everything, but I have something much better for you than what you thought your future should hold. So stop whining over that spouse that never showed up. Stop whining over the one that did show up.

I have a plan for your life. It is not stopped because you misunderstood me. It is not stopped because you got scripture out of context.

It is not stopped. I have a plan. And the Paul in your life is about to appear because the glory of the latter house is greater than the former.

David the king tried to bring the presence of God as he saw it back into Jerusalem and he tried to do it his way. But God put a stop to his parade. He was dancing and praising and God said his hand said, no, we're not doing it this way.

And it caused David to have an anger towards God. It says he was wroth and says, I'm not bringing the presence of God into my house. Obed-Edom, another man says, you can have it in your house.

I don't want it in my house. In the same way, my friend, the evangelist, even though he was so angry with what he saw as a failure on God's part, today he's dancing in heaven around the throne of God with his granddaughter. Do you understand me? Nothing was lost.

Nothing was lost. Everything was gained in Christ. And God knows why things have to happen the way they happen.

God knows he is sovereign. He understands the future. He knows what needs to be done.

I have a picture in my mind of this precious man of God dancing around the throne of God with his little girl, his little granddaughter in his hands saying, oh, thank you, Jesus. What I thought was lost was never lost. It was given to me eternally and you brought a healing deeper than I could have ever imagined.

And it's a healing that's for all of time. The sum total of what the Lord's given me to speak this morning is that God hasn't written you off. If you're disillusioned, if you've been angered, if you've misunderstood, if your plans seemingly went up in smoke, if you felt like you were left standing as a fool in the presence of God, if what you thought was God didn't materialize, even though you're sitting way back, even though as it was in the days of Christ, you're standing far off and beholding the greatest miracle of all time.

God has not forgotten you. He has not written you off. You are as precious to him, as valuable to him today as you were before you ever fully even understood who he was.

Blessed be the name of Jesus Christ. And lastly, as you and I choose at this time, it's almost as if Christ needed a church that understood what we really are without him. It's almost like he had to cry out to this generation again, ho, all you who thirst and are hungry, come and buy from me without money and without price.

It's almost like we needed to know how deeply flawed we really are without him so that when he does what only he can do, we will not touch the glory that belongs to God alone. When our prayers are answered, when the lost come to the door, when family members start coming home that we didn't believe God could save at this time, when they start coming, when they start knocking, when they start getting up, when they start getting dressed, when their shoes are on their feet, when God sovereignly visits them, we will not touch the glory for what he alone was able to do. If God's going to use your life in any measure, he first is going to have to hold up a mirror and show you and I what we really are apart from him.

Because if he doesn't, we will touch the glory. We will write books. We will tell everybody how to do what God alone did through us.

By the grace of God. By the grace of God. Our testimony will be, look what Jesus has done.

Look what Jesus Christ has done. Only God, only God, only God could have done this. Only God could have brought you to his house.

Only God, and folks, I'll tell you, when we have been in that examining room of the Holy Spirit, we're not quick to judge the weak that come in among us, the confused, the darkened, those who are home but a long way down the path. We're not quick. We're quicker to embrace because we recognize we've been embraced in our failure, like the prodigal son.

We are quicker to empower. We are quicker to invite. Say, come walk with me.

Join me on this journey as we tell other people how merciful our God really is. And you can't know mercy until you've known you've needed it. You can't know how good God is until you know how good you and I are not.

That is the truth. Charles Finney, great evangelist, he said, the man who's growing distant from God feels very good about himself. He's very proud about his prayer life.

He's very proud about his service in the house of God. He's actually getting farther and farther away from God. That's evidenced by the pride of his testimony.

But the man or woman who's growing close to God becomes increasingly uncomfortable with themselves. They become more and more conscious of their own failure, their own frailty, the words of their mouth, the actions of their heart, the thoughts and intents are magnified until they're at the point, as Isaiah once was, of saying, woe is me, I'm undone. Everything I thought I was is unraveling.

Everything I thought I had, everything I spoke about God has been so utterly deficient because now I've seen him. I talked about him, but now I've seen him. Immediately, when he knows his condition, this seraphim moves and takes a coal from the altar and there's no record of God commanding that angelic being.

They just know the heart of God because they dwell in the presence of God. Immediately takes a coal and touches him, cleanses his lips. Then he begins to hear the voice of God.

Who will go for us and whom shall we send? Now here's a man who's just known he's undone. Here's a man who just feels like a total failure. Here's a man who just says, my words and all my actions are like filthy rags in the sight of a holy God.

I've just seen God and I know we're all doomed. If he judged us now, we're doomed. If it weren't for mercy, we would have no hope.

He's suddenly aware of his own condition and now he's hearing the voice of God. Who will go for us and whom shall we send? You see, because the message is about mercy. It's not about rules.

It's not about regulations. It's not about do as I do and you'll be okay in the sight of God. It's not about achievement.

It's not a numbers game. It's all about the mercy of God. And once you and I understand that, there's such power in our words.

Suddenly, the fear of speaking about Christ is gone. For we know we stand by mercy and we know that that mercy is available to anybody we speak to that we encounter throughout our day. We go to prayer and we start believing that in spite of the deficiency of our prayers, that God is going to bring home a multitude of souls because he is good and his mercy endures forever.

It's time for every one of us to come home. It's time for everybody to come back and reengage in the work of God. It's time for you and I to realize that there are no big people and no little people in the kingdom of God just sinners saved by grace.

That's all we are. He puts one in the pulpit. He puts another at the door.

He gives a third a broom. The beauty of it all is that when we get to heaven, the rewards are the same. I love that about the Lord because we've done what God asked us to do and we did it with all of our heart.

He places us in the body as he sees fit, not according to how we see fit. But by his mercy and by his grace. Father, God, in Jesus' name, I just want to say I love you this morning.

I want to say thank you. I want to thank you, Lord, God, for being as kind as you are to me, to these people in this house in spite of all that we speak and what we do and how we think. Lord, your mercy is the one constant thing in all of our lives.

Forgive us, Lord, for the times where we've misunderstood you and even been angry with you. We've walked away and judged you. Forgive us, O God, for these things.

I pray, O Jesus Christ, Son of God, that you would rekindle the spirit of prayer in this house, a renewed compassion for your kingdom, a love for the lost, a love for one another in the house of God. You'd take judgment out of our ranks and let mercy triumph over judgment. Father, I thank you, Lord, today for bringing home, Lord, men and women who sat on the sidelines, many for a long time, feeling like somehow you let them down.

You left them standing. You didn't fulfill your word. You didn't do it the way they thought it should be done.

Lord, what right do we have to accuse you? What right do we have to stand as your judge? One day, just like our brother did, we will stand at your throne, and suddenly we will understand and we will see. Until that day, we are called to believe that all things work together for good because we do love you and are the called according to your purpose. I ask you, Lord Jesus Christ, to make this a church of evangelists, to ordain, call, anoint, touch people in this house, Lord, that we would be compelled to speak your name out of a heart of compassion and gratitude everywhere we go.

Make us ambassadors of forgiveness. God, not of judgment, not of rules, but of forgiveness. Give us a tenderness, Lord, that can only come from the Holy Spirit, can't come from any human emotion.

Take us, Lord, where we need to go and make us into the kind of people we need to be now that we may glorify you in this darkened time. Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for not forsaking your house or your people.

We bless you in your precious name. Amen. Praise God.

Listen to me carefully now. Come home. I'm going to give an altar call.

Come home. You who are weary, you feel like the Holy Spirit has spoken right to your heart and to your situation. Just come home.

You don't need to understand it all. The only promise I can make you today is that God will not fail you or forsake you. Come home, let him touch your life again.

Come home and get your song back. Come home. Come home to God.

We'll pray together at this altar and we're going to believe for a touch of heaven that can only come from the Holy Spirit. Let's stand together. We're going to worship just for a moment.

And if that's you, just slip out of your seat, please. In the balcony, go to either exit. Main sanctuary, just come.

Just come. Come home. Make your way here, please.

Move in close. I know there's some terrible experiences in this sanctuary. Just come home.

That's all I can say. Come home. Let God touch you again.

Let him embrace you as the Father did to the prodigal son. Let him embrace you. Let him give you power.

Let him rekindle your heart. Let him put oil back in your lamp again. Just come.

Just come, wherever you are. You don't need to be ashamed. I know it's hard to trust when you feel like your trust has been broken.

But just come and just say, Lord, I choose to trust you. I choose to believe God. You have not failed me.

You have not forsaken me, Lord. Just come. Father, I pray for a renewed touch of heaven on every one of our lives, oh God.

A renewed baptism of your Holy Spirit. Renewed strength. Renewed compassion.

Renewed passion for your word, your house, your kingdom. I pray for a new spirit of prayer and faith to come into every heart. I pray for new eyes, Lord.

God, you have to give us those eyes first before we can pray for them for others. Give us hearts that believe, Lord, and eyes that can see. Open our eyes, Lord, and help us to understand the greatness of your power, the incredible, unsearchable depths of your mercy.

Help us, Lord, to know your heart to this lost generation. Deliver us from fear of our own failure, fear of the people. Father, we thank you, God, for anointing us, each of us, Lord, with a new compassion for the lost, a new boldness to speak your words, new hands that are tender that came from our Savior.

Father, I thank you, Lord, that you will keep us as a people. I pray for everyone, God, who needs to just come home in their heart and lay aside the things of the past and embrace the future. Father, I thank you, Lord.

Thank you, God. The best is yet to come. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

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