

# Standing in Awe of Him

by Daniel Kenaston

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*This sermon emphasizes standing in awe of God's power and transformative work in our lives. It highlights the stories of Joseph's preservation, the demoniac's transformation, the prodigal son's return, the healing of the girl by Jesus, and Saul's conversion to Paul. The message encourages faith, belief, and speaking in alignment with God's promises for our lives.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 45:1, Luke 8:26, Luke 15:11, Mark 5:35, Acts 9:10

**Topics:** "God's Transformative Power", "Faith and Belief in God's Promises"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Amen, Lord. Father, we just thank you God this morning for your word. And I just thank you for my brother Daniel.

And I just pray, God, that you would anoint him today, Lord. That you just pour out your spirit over him, O God, and through him, Lord, and may he be very sensitive to what you're telling him. And, Lord, may our hearts be open with good soil, O Lord, to receive your word with faith, mixed with faith today.

I ask you in Jesus' name, amen. Greetings to all of you this morning. In Jesus' name.

What a lovely Sunday morning. Glad to be here with you this morning and to share this Sunday morning, including getting the chance to share the word of God with you. I have in my library a 500-page book written in the 1950s, and it is a book of American etiquette.

And suffice it to say, American etiquette has changed incredibly since the 1950s. If that book of etiquette is even 50% true, you would hardly recognize the culture of the country. Just for public interest, for example, it was considered incredibly rude and uncouth for a woman to serve herself at a buffet or to indicate in any way her food choices.

1950s, not 1750s, 1950s. I'm saying that to say this. I know we just stood and then we sat down and we stood and we sat down, but in the 1950s when a woman walked into a room, men were supposed to

stand.

And I don't think that ended in the 50s. I'm not sure when it ended, but it's not practiced very widely anymore. But I'd like you to stand one more time because it's difficult to sing a song that speaks about standing while your body language is the opposite.

I'd like you to sing with me, You Are Beautiful Beyond Description. Who can grasp your infinite wisdom? Who can fathom the depths of your love? You are beautiful beyond description, majesty and promise. And I stand, I stand in awe of you.

I stand, I stand in awe of you. Only God to whom all praise is due, I stand in awe of you. And I stand, I stand in awe of you.

I stand, I stand in awe of you. Only God to whom all praise is due, I stand in awe of you. Father, we thank you for these words.

And Lord, in our hearts, we do. If the military can stand at attention, if Americans can stand when a woman enters the room, surely we should stand out of respect for your awesome power. Lord, I pray that you would open our hearts to receive your word this morning and that you would reveal and open up some part of your awesome power and love for us as we study your word together this morning.

We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Now you may be seated.

Thank you. I know that the word is changing in its meaning in America, but the snow this morning is truly awesome. If you were a missionary family and you haven't seen snow for years, and you hear that there might be a dusting.

When they say there might be a dusting in Pennsylvania, that usually means you're not going to get any snow. So I went to bed very late last night and woke up at 2.30 this morning to use the restroom, and I looked out the window, and it was just like, go wake the children up. It's snowing.

And it was a particularly beautiful snow. I've seen a lot more snow than my children have, but the way it sat on the branches, there must not have been any wind through the night. It is amazing.

So hopefully you can enjoy it at least to some degree. I'd like to share with you this morning a message on the subject of standing in awe of Him, and that's why we sang that chorus. I would like for you this morning to look for yourself in these five biblical snapshots of the work of God, or the power of God.

Obviously there would be hundreds of places that we could go in the Scriptures to look and marvel at the handiwork of our God, the power of our God, His life-transforming power, the way He changes situations. But these are the five that the Lord laid on my heart, and I can't argue why they're included and others are not included. I can only say this is what He laid on my heart this morning.

For the first one, I'd like us to go to Genesis 45. And if you remember, the last time I was here and shared, I shared from this story. I'm not going to re-preach it, but I have continued meditating on this portion of Scripture and would like to highlight just a very brief part of the story of Joseph, and particularly the part of Joseph's life where we see the hand of God on his life, preserving him.

We're in Genesis 45. I don't wish to repeat the story of Joseph's life. I believe we're all very familiar with it.

But I think that it's right for us to recognize that when Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, they did not expect to see him ever again. The life expectancy of slaves was not very long, and the conditions under which Joseph served would not have been conducive to long life. So imagine the shock of Joseph's brothers when they found out that he was alive.

We are in Genesis 45, verse 1, and I read, Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, Make everyone go out from me. So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, Before we get to that, if the whole house and the Egyptians heard him crying, imagine how unnerving it was to his brothers, not understanding who this was and not understanding why this powerful prince or powerful prime minister of Egypt is wailing in front of them. Finally, Joseph stops his crying and speaks to his brothers, and he says, I am Joseph. Does my father still live? But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.

Joseph said to his brothers, Please, come near to me. So they came near. Then he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

This morning, I would like us to stand in awe at his preserving power. Here was someone that his brothers had written off, both because they disrespected him and because they had grouped together, and as a group, they had contributed to getting rid of Joseph. Joseph was, at best, a very distant memory by this point in their lives.

They had written him off for dead. They had told the story so many times, probably to their wives and to their father and to their children about Joseph's demise. That lie had almost become a reality to them, and the years had passed, and Joseph was out of sight and out of mind and forgotten.

But God had intervened in Joseph's life and preserved him, and so well preserved him that his brothers were in his presence repeatedly without being able to know who he was. Imagine being such a surprise, your life being such a surprise, who you have become and how God has kept your life, that your siblings, the people you grew up with, the people who share your genetics, cannot even identify who you are. What an amazing thing that Joseph had to say to his own brothers, Hey, I'm Joseph.

Does this face look at all familiar? I know I look a lot different than when you pulled me up out of that well and shackled me behind that camel on that journey down into Egypt, but I am Joseph. You know, your brother, the one you sold into slavery, I am Joseph. And Joseph stood as a testimony to the amazing preserving power of our God.

And the fact that God had put his preserving hand upon Joseph's life and had kept him and kept him so well that his own brothers could not identify him. I keep meditating on this profound self-introduction. I am Joseph.

It's very simple, but very profound. And the fact that Joseph needed to introduce himself was a testament to how God had preserved him to such a point that his brothers never recognized him. He was so far out of their minds and he looked so different, having been preserved by God for all those years, that they didn't recognize him.

I would like you to look for yourself in this point, point number one, standing in awe at his preserving power. Most of us don't have a life story like Joseph's, haven't been sold into slavery, haven't been written off for dead. But you know, I think that I have elements in my life and you have elements in your life where there are parts of our life that need his touch and that as we trust him for his touch in our lives, he will preserve us and keep us to such a level that we will be a surprise even to those who were nearest to us and who should have known us and who should have recognized us.

To the point that Joseph had to say, Hey, I'm Joseph. His brothers should have known who he was, but they could not recognize their brother after all of those years of God preserving him. If they expected to find him, if by chance one of the brothers on that ironic journey down into Egypt to buy food, if one of his brothers had thought, you know, wouldn't it be so strange if we would find Joseph? I mean, we did sell him into slavery in Egypt.

Wouldn't that be crazy if we would find our brother Joseph down in Egypt? It's quite possible they thought of it. I mean, they had to walk with a donkey all the way down into Egypt. It's very possible one of them thought, that would just be crazy.

We might find Joseph in Egypt. They probably expected him to be sweeping streets or running along behind some wealthy man carrying his bags. I don't know what they imagined him to do.

Maybe they imagined him taking care of horses. Maybe they imagined him doing some sort of a menial task. Maybe grinding grain, walking around all day long, as some of the slaves did in those days, grinding grain.

They certainly did not expect to meet him in the prime minister's palace. Amen? Maybe there's a part of your life that you don't expect to see preserved and restored. Maybe there's part of your life where God's preserving power on your life may shock even you someday.

I am Joseph, standing in awe of his preserving power. The second one that the Lord laid on my heart is in the New Testament. We're moving to Luke chapter 8. The book of Luke and chapter 8. I realize these are all familiar portions, but I do want to read a number of verses here because I think as we read the Word of God, our lives are transformed by its power.

So I don't want to just grab a verse. I want to read to you this story of Jesus transforming the life of the demoniac. Let's read from chapter 8 of the book of Luke and verse 26.

And they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when he stepped out on the land, there met him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.

When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me. For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man, for it had often seized him. And he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles.

And he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, What is your name? And he said, Legion, because many demons had entered him. And they begged him that he would not command them to go out into the abyss.

Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain, so they begged him that he would permit them to enter them, and he permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.

Then they went out to see what had happened and came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid, and they were afraid, standing in awe at his transforming power. And they saw the man sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.

Now this was not the first time that they had been afraid of this man. A man as demon-crazed as this would be someone that people would run in terror from, with that unusual power to be able to break chains and shackles. You can imagine that when he walked through a village, children screamed and ran.

But now Jesus has touched his life, and they came out of the city, and when they came out of the city, they met the demoniac sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. Part of that word awe includes the concept of fear. They were afraid, not a fear that made them want to run, but a fear which made them say, Who is this? What kind of power is this? How is it possible that this man, who is well-known as a terror in the community, who lives among the tombs, who's been chained innumerable times, who rips off the clothes that are put on him, how is it possible that Jesus has just encountered him, and through that encounter, this man is now sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind, standing in awe at his transforming power.

I'm not suggesting that any of you, or that I myself, am a demoniac. But when I read this story this week, and as the Lord brought it to my mind, my heart thrilled at the concept that that same touch of Jesus is available to you and to me for all the little areas of our life which still need to be transformed. And I have them.

I'm not running around naked, being chained up, living among the tombs. But I have areas of my life where I need the transforming power of Jesus to be applied in my life. And this morning, I would like you and I to stand in awe of his transforming power and reach out by faith and acknowledge that that transforming power is available in my life, in whatever area of my life is confused, in whatever area of my life is not bringing glory to God, in whatever area of my life does not reflect the glory for which he created me.

That's available to you and I. Standing in awe at his transforming power. He met Jesus. And through meeting Jesus, he's changed from that graphic picture of a crazed, demon-possessed man into a man who's sitting there at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind.

I don't think that you or I are mentally insane today. But there are certainly some areas of your mind and my mind that are not yet right. I acknowledge that.

There are areas of my thinking that are not yet right. And so, I'd like to claim that his transforming power in my life this morning, I would like to stand in awe of that power and acknowledge that his touch on your life and my life can result in you and I sitting at his feet, clothed, and finally, in our right minds. Transformed by the renewing of our mind from the Word of God.

Standing in awe at his transforming power. Let's move to the next one. Also in the book of Luke, over to Luke chapter 15.

Again, a very familiar story. But these are the ones that the Lord laid on my heart, so I share them with you, believing that it's God's purpose that they be shared here this morning. Luke chapter 15.

This is the story of the prodigal son. Let's read from verse 11. Then he said, A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.

So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate. And no one gave him anything.

But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.

And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, the father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his right hand and sandals on his feet, and bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found, and they began to be merry.

The third point I'd like to make this morning is that you and I should stand in awe at his waiting and welcome. If you will, it's almost, if you could picture it with me, like a split screen. The one screen shows this young man finally coming to his senses and finally getting fed up with the hunger and the quality of his life and the fact that even the pig's food wasn't being given to him.

And this young man comes to his senses and says, I am living a ridiculous life. At least my father's servants are faring better than I am. I'm going to leave this life and go back to my father.

I'm going to repent, and I'm going to beg my father, just take me as a servant. Let me be one of the workers. That's playing on one screen.

Verse 20 says, And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, split to the other screen, if you will. I do not believe for one moment that it was just by chance that that night or that evening, that's how I picture it, his father happened to look out and saw his son coming.

You think it's probable that his father had been waiting night after night after night, evening after evening, looking in the direction that his son had left, believing that that would be the same road upon which his son would return. Stand in awe at his waiting and welcome. So now we're on the other screen.

While the son was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and said, I'm standing right here. You come and get on your knees in front of me. No.

His father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. I stand in all this morning at the welcome and the waiting of our father. He welcomed me.

He waited for me, but not just when we came to him in salvation. If you haven't come to Christ for salvation, or if you're carrying a load of hidden sin, know that the father is ready to run in your direction. He's been looking down that road every evening, hoping to see your return.

That's our father. Stand in awe of a father with that kind of patience, with that kind of love. I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus.

And I wonder, how could he love me? So while you're feeding pigs and getting fed up and tired and realizing what an awful life you have, know that every evening, your father comes out and stands on that little hill and looks down that road waiting. Not waiting with a, see, I told you. Not waiting with a, I hope you learned your lesson real good.

Not, you had it coming. You see what I told you? I told you it would be like that. Not at all.

Every evening, the father stood out there. It says a long way off. You know, most old men, when they want to see a long ways, they have to look like this.

It wasn't the first time. There's no way that was the first time. Not a father who runs to his son and grabs his son and holds him.

That was not the first night that father had looked. And any of you that have experienced this in the life of your family know, it's not one time that you go and look down the road, figuratively, spiritually, or practically, or in reality, to see whether maybe, maybe this is the night that the son will come home. But it's not only in terms of you today, if you've never come to Christ, or if you're carrying a load of hidden sin, it's not only that way, because I feel it in my life, and I'm not really a prodigal son right now.

I feel it in my own life, because there are times where I choose, and for an hour or for a day, sometimes for a couple of days, to not respond in the grace that is available to me in Christ. I do that. And I find over and over and over that when I finally say, I'm not going to do this, Lord forgive me, it's like, oh my, were you there all this time? And he was there all this time.

And I want us today to stand in awe at a father who waits and who welcomes prodigals, whether they're coming back from three years or three hours. And I know that we all have that experience of being a prodigal for three hours, maybe choosing to walk out of faith for a while, maybe choosing to allow discouragement into our lives, maybe choosing to walk in doubt, maybe giving over to the lust of the flesh in some area of our life. It's not only the once-in-a-lifetime prodigal son that has the father standing on the hill, looking over the long distance and wondering.

It's also you and I, when we choose to walk out of grace for three hours, when we turn and say, Father, I have sinned. I am not worthy for your forgiveness. We don't find him standing there waiting for us.

That alone would be amazing. We find him looking out over a great distance and running and falling on our neck and welcoming us. So don't stay away.

Don't stay away from a father like that. Why? Why would you wait? Why would you decide to have one more day on those pig husks? Why would you decide to have one more hour away from the embrace of a

father who every day walks out on the hill and looks? Is that my son? Stand in awe at his waiting and his welcome. And may God grant each of us the grace to be there on the hill for our children, whether they're gone for three years or three hours.

May God give us the grace to show the welcoming, waiting, embracing heart of our Father. Because Jesus didn't tell this story because this was a really good dad. Jesus told this story because it reflected the heart of God.

That's why he told it. Let's stand in awe at his welcome and his waiting. Let's move on to the next one.

This one is in the book of Mark, chapter 5. Again, there are so many stories that we could have looked at today. These are the ones that the Lord laid on my heart and I'm trusting him that they are uniquely fitted to meet my needs and your needs. So many stories that we could have read about Jesus' healing power, but this is the one that Jesus, the young girl that Jesus raised to life.

Let's start reading in verse 35 of Mark, chapter 5. While he was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not be afraid, only believe. And he permitted no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.

Then he came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When he came in, he said to them, Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping. And they ridiculed him.

But when he had put them all outside, he took the father and the mother of the child and those who were with him and entered where the child was lying. Then he took the child by the hand and saith to her, Talitha kumi, which is translated, Little girl, I say to you, arise. Immediately the girl arose and walked for she was 12 years of age.

And they were overcome with great amazement. We'll stop reading there. I want us to stand in awe at his healing power today, but not just his healing power in the moment of the miracle, but recognize that Jesus had a different perspective on this situation.

They came to the ruler and said, Don't disturb him. The situation is already beyond his help. The girl is already dead.

And Jesus immediately was there to encourage or shore up the faith of this ruler of the synagogue and said, Only believe. Only believe. Keep believing.

And then when Jesus walks into the room where everyone is wailing. I'm not sure if in American culture we really have that anymore. We still have that in Africa and it is incredibly unnerving.

But Jesus walked into the room where all of these people were wailing. And he said, Why are you making such a commotion? She's sleeping. Our God is a God who speaks to things that are not as though they were.

I don't think that they had somehow mistaken the signs of sleeping and the signs of death and somehow they thought she was dead and she was only asleep. Jesus raised this little girl from the dead. But through Jesus' eyes, knowing who he was, knowing the power that he had, knowing God's will in the moment,

Jesus said, She's sleeping.

Why are you making such a commotion? And when Jesus raised her up, they were overcome with great amazement. That's standing in awe. Looking at what Jesus has done.

Remember I said at the beginning we want to make these applicable to our lives because I think that every one of us can find some area of our life where this applies. And no, you may not have a child laying dead at home. But we certainly have situations in our life where people have decided or more often we have decided that it's beyond help.

It's not able to be changed. Christ really can't intervene here. This situation has gone beyond.

We asked for your help when she was sick, but don't make him come to your house now. She's dead. And I wonder what part of your life or my life we may be thinking it's past hope.

It's beyond his reach. It's gone too far. I've gone too far.

The situation is too far gone. I've fallen too far. She's fallen too far.

He's too far gone. And Jesus says, only believe. Why are you making such a commotion over a girl that's sleeping? Stand in awe at his power to reach into a situation which was beyond hope, but not beyond his touch.

Which was beyond human ability to make a difference, but not beyond his healing power. Stand in awe today, but apply it to your life. What area of your life, what area of my life are you starting to write off? Like, well, it's just the way it is.

It can't be changed. It can't be helped. It's too far.

I'm too far. He's too far. Our God speaks into those areas of our lives today and says, only believe.

I still want to go to your house. I wonder what the ruler of the synagogue thought. Why does he still want to go to my house? It's over.

Jesus said, she's just sleeping. I wonder what the eye of faith would say about my situation and your situation. They mocked Jesus because it seemed so ridiculous that he would walk into a room full of weeping people and say, she's sleeping.

She's sleeping. But because Jesus knew that he was about to reach out his hand and raise her from the dead, she was effectively sleeping. So which area of my life and your life needs that touch of Jesus? And which area of our lives needs us to maintain that faith that is able to look at a situation and speak about it and speak to it as if it's not what it looks to be.

That's our God. You don't need to turn here, but just let me turn here because it's pertinent. Romans chapter 4 verse 17 says, God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.

I'm not saying this glibly this morning. I'm not talking about speaking riches into your bank account or speaking a new house into existence in your life. I'm not talking about that.

I know that that has been abused. I know that. But the fact that it's been abused doesn't take away from the fact that God's word records the Son of God walking into a situation which was beyond human help and saying, she's sleeping.

So what would Jesus say if he walked into your situation and my situation? Those parts of our lives that we feel like can't be changed. Those situations which feel like they're beyond human help. What would Jesus say? If Jesus walked into a funeral, into the grieving, weeping crowd and said, she's sleeping.

What would he say into your life and my life today? And if that's what he would say, shouldn't you and I as men and women of faith say what he would say? I'm not saying this glibly. I find this immensely challenging in my own life. But it's in the word of God and I'm sharing it with you because it's what God gave to me this week.

Your God speaks about things that do not exist as if they already existed. Not because he just likes to do that but because he's just about to make them exist. Amen.

Amen. Thank you. I forget sometimes that in America we don't say amen when the preacher says amen.

You know in Africa it's responsive. When the preacher says that, everybody responds. It's like just culture.

That's okay. Let your heart say the amen. And recognize that Jesus spoke those things because effectively she was just napping.

Because Jesus was about to reach out his hand and speak over her a command which would make her sit up and Jesus took her by the hand and she stood up because she was 12 years old and a 12 year old is able to stand. Well, what would Jesus say? Or what does Jesus say about your life and my life and our situations and our challenges and our things that have gone too far? At the very least today please don't be like the servants who came running and said don't trouble the master. God is speaking into my heart this week and saying trouble the master.

How do we trouble the master? Pray. Don't walk away from a situation in your life or in your family or in those you minister to. Don't walk away and say don't disturb him.

Don't make him detour down here. It's already gone. Don't listen to those voices in your life this week.

Trouble the master. And as your faith grows begin to say to yourself if Jesus said to a funeral morning group if Jesus was able to walk into a room with a whole bunch of people deeply grieving the loss of a little girl and Jesus was able to say she's sleeping. What does Jesus say about your life and my life and our situation? That's the second step.

And then the third step is to say I'm going to start saying what Jesus is saying. Because I stand in awe of his healing touch and I acknowledge that my God is a God who speaks about things that are not as if they already existed because they're just about to exist. Amen.

Stand in awe at his healing touch. And lastly for this morning turn to the book of Acts chapter 9. Book of Acts chapter 9. This is the story of Saul receiving his sight back after meeting Christ on the road to Damascus. We're going to start reading in chapter 9 and verse 10.

So prior to this Saul met the Lord Jesus in a blinding light on the road to Damascus and was blind for three days. Now Saul is in Damascus a blind man wondering about the vision and wondering about the Jesus

that he met. Now verse 10.

There was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias and to him the Lord said in a vision Ananias and he said here I am Lord. So the Lord said to him arise and go to the street called Straight and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus for behold he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming and putting his hand on him so that he might receive his sight.

Then Ananias answered Lord I have heard from many about this man how much harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name. But the Lord said to him go for he is a chosen vessel of mine to bear my name before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias went his way and entered the house and laying his hands on him he said Brother Saul the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road as you came has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales and he received his sight at once and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed and said is not this he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem and has come here for that purpose so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests? But Saul increased all the more in strength and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus proving that this Jesus is the Christ. Stand in awe at his choosing and changing power.

Saul to Paul. So God's been doing a work in the life of Saul and now there's this prophet named Ananias and he gets an instruction from God to go out and walk down this street and enter into a certain house and look for a man named Saul of Tarsus. And when Ananias heard the name Saul of Tarsus he started kind of running through the names that he had in his mind and he said Lord I think there's been some mistake.

Saul of Tarsus. This is a person who's already notorious for working against your people and against your interests. I think you're sending me to the wrong person.

Maybe we got the names crossed here because Saul of Tarsus is here in Damascus but he's not here to further your kingdom. He's here to work against the saints and to take people in chains back to Jerusalem. And God said no, no.

I know who I'm speaking about. See what you don't know Ananias is that I've met Saul on his journey between Jerusalem and Damascus. I met him and I've chosen him and he is a chosen vessel and I already know all the amazing things that he is going to do for my kingdom.

I have the right man. I don't sense in Ananias here any rebellion. I have to be honest I would probably be the first person to say the exact same thing.

Lord, I think there's a wire crossed here. I think you got the wrong last name. Must be somebody else.

It can't be Saul of Tarsus because we know who he is and we know why he's here. Jesus said no, he's a chosen vessel. Ananias, you have the opportunity to go and give sight to the man who is going to become the most influential man of the New Testament biblical period.

Paul. You have the opportunity to pray for him to receive the Holy Spirit. You have the opportunity to be the one Ananias, to tell Saul that he has a special calling of God upon his life.

Yeah, it is. It's Saul of Tarsus. And so, in my mind we're right back where we started.

The first one Joseph has to tell his brothers, I am Joseph. You don't recognize me because God has preserved me for his purposes. Now here we are at point number five standing in awe of God's choosing and his life-changing power.

And now God is advising Ananias, this is the right person. Yes, I know that you know this name. I know that this name has got a really bad list of behaviors and actions attached to it, but this is the person that I want you to go and pray for.

This man that you've heard about, this man that you can give this litany of all these terrible things that he's done. This man is a chosen vessel for me. Hallelujah.

This man is a chosen vessel. I am going to use him. So I want you to go and pray for him so that he gets his sight back.

Maybe one of you, one of us is a Saul of Tarsus and maybe an Ananias would be shocked if he was told by God, I want you to go lay hands on this young man because he is going to be mightily used of God. I want you to go and pray for this woman. She is a chosen vessel for me.

You can take it from two sides. Maybe you're Saul of Tarsus and you think you're pretty unlikely. Or maybe you're Ananias and today you and I need to stand in awe at the choosing and changing power of our God and we need to know that that's who he is so that when he gives us the GPS coordinates of a house where a very notorious criminal is staying and says I want you to go pray a blessing on this person, we're not caught like Ananias advising God that he gave us the wrong address.

I don't think you have the right person Lord. This man is a criminal. No, he's not.

Ananias, I met him yesterday. He's been changed and he is a chosen vessel for my purposes. Stand in awe at that brothers and sisters whether it's applied specifically to your life or maybe God wants you to be the Ananias in somebody else's life.

Stand in awe of your God because he chooses and touches and changes people's lives. So Ananias okay, he did the right thing. He said okay Lord and he went and did exactly what God told him to do and that blessing is activated in Saul's life and he immediately goes out and starts preaching and everywhere he goes people are amazed.

They are in awe. It says the Jews were confounded. That also fits into the concept of awe.

They were Isn't that Saul of Tarsus? We heard he was coming and now he stands and preaches in the name of the Jesus who he was coming to grab the Jesus followers and send them to prison and now he's standing here convincing us that this same Jesus is the Christ. I'd like for your life to shock people like that. Not for the shock factor.

I'd like your life and my life to surprise people like that so that God gets that amazing glory of taking someone that seems unlikely or seems forgotten or seems like they're known for the wrong reasons and God transforms that person and everywhere they go people say that can't be Saul of Tarsus. Saul of

Tarsus? Really? Yes. Really.

I think you know the story after some other journeys and some other training Saul goes down to Jerusalem and the disciples were what? So thrilled! They were afraid. Hello church. We need to get on board with our God.

We serve God who transforms people's lives. So here we have every group of believers that meets Saul after Jesus touched him. Everyone that he meets apart from Barnabas everyone that he meets is rather frightened and taken back and a bit confused.

How is it possible that Saul of Tarsus could be one of us? We forgot the power of our God. We forgot. And so this morning I'd like us to stand in awe at a God who has the power to preserve.

Stand in awe at his life transforming power. Stand in awe at his waiting and welcome to all of us prodigals. Stand in awe at his healing power and his ability to speak over something as if it already is even though it isn't.

And stand in awe at his choosing and changing power. To change Saul into Paul and to do it so rapidly that all the believers were kind of caught out. They were kind of catching up.

They were really having to do some quick work to figure out how it would be possible that Saul the persecutor could become Paul the apostle. They weren't the only ones who don't have a realistic concept of their God. That's your God.

That's our God. Let's stand in awe of him this morning. Can we be on our feet again? The Hymns of the Church number 290.

I believe it is. Number 290 in Hymns of the Church. I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me a sinner and not a queen.

How marvelous how wonderful and my song shall ever be. How marvelous how wonderful is my Savior's love for me. For me it was in my garden he prayed of my will I'll die.

He had no tears for his own. Grievs but sweat drops of blood for mine. How marvelous how wonderful and my song shall ever be.

How marvelous how wonderful is my Savior's love for me. He took my sins and my sorrows. He made them his burial.

He bore the burden to bow and suffer and die alone. How marvelous how wonderful and my song shall ever be. How marvelous how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

When with the ransomed in glory in space I at last shall see it will be my joy through the ages to sing of his love for me. How marvelous how wonderful and my song shall ever be. How marvelous how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

Father we thank you this morning for your word. Yes your love is marvelous and wonderful and I pray Lord that today you would help us to stand in all at who you are. Lord increase our faith help us to catch up with who you are and believe you for your work of preserving and choosing and healing and transforming in our lives and in the lives of those we love and those we minister to.

Let us not be behind in your great work in people's lives or in our own lives. Lord let your people this week not stop troubling the master. That's our first step Lord to keep believing that you can do something and keep asking you to come.

Come to our homes come to our houses come to our lives. Lord let us secondly start to ask what is it that you Jesus would say in our life in our situation. What would you like to do? What are you going to do? And then Lord let us begin to speak with the verbiage of our God.

If our God says she's napping she's napping. If our God says he's a chosen vessel he's a chosen vessel. You are a God who speaks about things that are not as though they are.

We stand in all of you today Lord and we pray that you would strengthen our faith through your word. Thank you in Jesus name. Amen.

You may be seated. Thank you.

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