

Alive

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon 'Alive' emphasizes the hope found in the resurrection of Christ and the assurance of God's love for those who feel lost or like failures.

Duration: 37:55

Scripture: Proverbs 27:1, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:13-35, John 20:19-29, Acts 9:1-19, 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal story about a family in Ethiopia to illustrate how familiarity can sometimes blind us to the true power and majesty of God. He emphasizes that being raised in church or being familiar with Jesus can sometimes make us slow to believe in the vastness of God's power and grace. The preacher then discusses how Jesus appeared to his half-brother James to encourage him to have faith and not be slow to believe. He concludes by reminding the audience of the importance of the gospel and how salvation comes through believing in the good news of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

Transcript

Usually at funerals, when we talk about what the Bible teaches about what happens after you die, 1 Corinthians 15 is a chapter that a lot of ministers go to. It talks about the hope that we have as Christians and the fact that at death, nothing ends in terms of your eternal soul, things just begin. What the Bible teaches is that existence here on Earth is very transient, very fragile.

We can't say where we'll be tomorrow because no one knows what a day may bring. But when death comes or when Christ returns, it opens up something called eternity, time without end. So all of us here will be somewhere one billion years from now.

There's no end, there's no time where you go, it's over, that's not taught by Jesus or any teaching in the New Testament. But the chapter begins with Paul talking about basics, the ABCs of Christianity, Christianity 101. I wanna direct your attention to it because while we emphasize the cross of Christ, at the cross, da da da, and the cross is center to Christianity, what Christ accomplished on the cross, the New Testament has a much greater emphasis than we usually put on the resurrection of Christ and the fact that while he died on the cross and was buried, he rose again.

And if you'll notice the sermons in the New Testament in the book of Acts, you'll find that they're pinpointing, hey, he died but he came back. No teacher, no religious leader ever died and came back. And

this validated him as the son of God and he was seen, as we're gonna see, by certain people who ended up giving their lives in some cases because they kept saying, he's alive, we saw him.

And as I've mentioned before, that's very powerful proof to me. Who would give up their life for a lie? Who would make up a story just to lose your job, be persecuted and end up sometimes being killed? For what? Why make up the story? No, it's because it happened. So let's see what happened.

Let's look at this, 1 Corinthians 15. And now I wanna remind you, my friends, of the good news, that's the gospel, which I preached to you, which you received and on which your faith stands firm. That is the gospel, the message that I preached to you.

You are saved by that gospel if you hold firmly to it unless it was for nothing that you believe. Notice, I wanna remind you of the gospel. It's not a genre of music.

It's not a word to be flippantly used because the gospel, the good news of how God showed his love toward us involves the giving up of his own son. So this is no light matter. Christ died to make the good news possible.

So Paul's reminding them and he says, your faith is on the gospel. You gotta keep it firm on the gospel. That is the gospel, verse two, the message that I preached to you.

He's being repetitious here for emphasis. You are saved by the good news. You're not saved by living a good life or joining the church or how you were raised or what your parents believe.

None of that has any effect on us. Ultimately, you have to believe in the good news. You have to believe and understand what Jesus did on the cross.

A man earns acceptance with God, nothing to do with their track record or their behavior patterns. You're not saved by living a good life. You're saved by faith through God's grace that just shall live by faith.

It's faith in the good news that makes a person a Christian. This is totally different than most people's concept of religion. 82% of America says they believe that the way to get to heaven, if they believe in heaven, is to live a good life.

But how good? How good? I mean, how good? Perfect? Pretty good? Very good? What's good mean? Good compared to who? No, no, it has nothing to do with living a good life. It has to do with receiving Jesus Christ so that you are then born again, and then you'll begin to live a different life because Christ will be in you. You don't live a good life in order to get saved.

You live a good life because you are saved. Can we put our hands together and say amen to that? We live differently not in order to, but because. All right, let's go.

I passed on to you what I received. This is the basic now, which is of the greatest importance, not the mark of the beast, not the mysteries of the book of Revelation, not the gifts of the Spirit and Pentecostalism, five-point Calvinism, and all these other things that muddy the waters often. Here's the basics.

The greatest importance, that Christ died for our sins, as written in the scriptures. Notice, what scriptures? The New Testament hadn't been written yet. So he's referring to Psalm 22 and other places in the Old Testament that spoke that when Messiah came, he would not only die, but the grave would not hold him.

That's written in the Old Testament Jewish scriptures, guaranteed, many references to that, as written in the scriptures, that he was buried, he not only died, he was put in a tomb, and that he was raised to life three days later, as written in the scriptures, that he appeared to Peter and then to all 12 apostles. Then he appeared to more than 500 of his followers at once on a road, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. Then he appeared to James, that's his half-brother, we'll learn about that, and afterward to all the apostles.

Last of all, he appeared also to me, the risen Christ, Paul says, even though I am like someone whose birth was abnormal, for I am the least of all the apostles. I do not even deserve to be called an apostle because I persecuted God's church when he was Saul of Tarsus, that we learned about when we went through the book of Acts. I want you to notice here that Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, begins to give a little list of who Christ appeared to after he rose from the dead.

And then he includes himself years later on the road to Damascus, he had an appearance supernatural of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he adds himself in. But he begins by talking about the people and persons and individuals who Christ, the risen Christ, appeared to. And that makes me wonder, why, por que? Why those people? And why would it be mentioned? Notice that when Christ rose from the dead, he didn't walk into Jerusalem and say to all the people who had plotted his death, ha-ha, here I am, you thought you were done with me.

No, he didn't do that. He had given them his word and they had rejected his word, so now we find out that he was appearing to those who had believed in him in some way, shape, or form, and later to one who had actually been persecuting his people. The question before us is this, what's the lesson of this? What did Jesus say to these people? In most of these cases, we don't have a reference of what he said.

A couple of these cases, as we're gonna learn, they were private appearances. But why? What was the message he gave? And is that message still ringing out to us today? Could it be that in this choir, right here in this alto section, and in this auditorium, or could it be that we have people who are represented by folks that we just read about, and that Jesus wants you to know that he is alive and he wants to convey a similar message to you and I today just like he did to these that he chose, out of all the people in the world, he chose to appear to them. He didn't go to Caesar, he didn't go to the high priest, he didn't go to Rome, he didn't go to the richest guy in Jerusalem, some guy working a hedge fund in Jerusalem.

He didn't do any of that. He went to these people who were specially chosen that they needed a personal appearance of Jesus. So my mind this week has been pondering this for hours and hours.

Why? What's it mean to me and you? How can this be an encouragement to us? So let's just go briefly over it and review it. Paul says, this is the basic thing that you must know. Christ died for our sins.

When he died on the cross, he did not die because he was a criminal. They had to trump up charges. They had a railroad kind of trial to get him convicted and they put him on the cross, but he wasn't guilty of any of that.

Why did he die? He died for our sins. How many are happy for it? Say amen. He was the sacrifice.

Remember Passover? Celebration for the Jewish people. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. Jesus was the Passover lamb shed once and for all that his blood, the blood of God's own son, is worthy and powerful to cleanse everyone who puts their trust in him.

He died. He was a man. He was God, but man.

That's the incarnation. His name was Emmanuel, God with us. He was perfectly man, perfectly God, a mystery that we don't fully understand.

He died and was buried in a tomb. He was there three days. But on the third day, he rose again from the dead.

And that proves that he's the son of God and that his death has significant meaning to us. He didn't stay in the tomb. All Buddha, all other religious leaders, they died and they ended up in that tomb because they were just men or women, religious leaders of some kind, but not Christ.

After he rose from the dead, Paul says he appeared to Peter. We know nothing about that. We know from the Gospels, if you study them carefully, that reference is made.

Christ is alive and he appeared to some women, which are not mentioned here, but and he also appeared to Peter. No Gospel tells where he met Peter, what he said to Peter, what Peter said back to him. Now why did he appear to Peter? Because the basic Gospel message that Jesus brings to all of us can be summed up in these words.

I am alive. When you follow me, you don't have a dead religion. I am living.

I died for your sins. I love you. I paid the price, but I am now alive.

I know where you're at. I know what you're going through. I love you.

I love you despite what you've done. Now put your trust in me. Believe in me.

This is the basic message that Jesus, in one way or another, is bringing to all of us at all times. But ah, did he need to go to Peter because Peter, him appearing to Peter, is under the classification of the biggest loser of all. And I don't mean losing weight.

Peter, of all the disciples, had crashed the hardest. He boasted the most. He was chosen for leadership when Jesus was here on earth.

And then when Jesus said, I'm gonna go to the cross and lay down my life, Peter rebuked Jesus and said, no, you're not gonna die like that. You're gonna be a king. You're gonna be what I have in my mind you're gonna be.

And you're gonna put those Roman authorities under your heel and we're gonna be free. And Jesus said, oh, listen, all of you men are gonna desert me. And Peter went, listen, these other guys might.

Not me. No way. I will never.

These other guys, they're shaky, I agree with you. But me, never. I will never.

I'll give my life for you. And Jesus said, will you give your life for me? Before the cock crows, you're gonna deny me three times that night. And Peter did.

And one gospel narrative tells us that as Jesus was being led out of where he was being beat and mangled and punched out and falsely accused, he walked out into the courtyard and the cock had just

crowded. And he looked at Peter. And Peter went off into the night, weeping convulsively.

He was the one who denied he even knew who Jesus was. You know, sin is one thing. Anybody can be tempted in sin.

We all need God's grace every day. Do I get an amen? But to be with him for three and a half years and then say you didn't even know who he is? And that's why Jesus appeared to Peter. He wants us to know that when you feel you're the biggest loser of all, he still loves you.

When you've crashed and you're burnt up in ashes and flames and you've gone down and done things and said things that you can't even believe that you did it and you know about the Lord, when you are at your lowest, Jesus wants to come and appear to you like he did Peter and say, Peter, listen, I died for your sins. I saw what you were gonna do before you even did it. I knew it.

I told you it. You didn't believe me. You crashed, but I have news for you, Peter.

Get up because I still love you. I'm alive. I'm gonna pick you up and carry you.

And listen, I have plans for your life. Now believe in me. Don't let your crash extinguish your faith.

Don't let your bottoming out. Don't let the dismal failure that you've made of your life extinguish like the devil wants your trust in me. So believe in me.

I love you. I know what you did. I knew it before you did it.

I saw the whole thing. So get over it. I forgive you.

Now forgive yourself and move on. Do you hear me up there in the balcony? Forgive yourself and move on. Forgive yourself and move on because God loves you.

Peter went out in that night and he wept bitterly and he repented. He knew he was wrong. But he found out, which we've all found out, we are weak.

And you can go to church for 40 years and you're still weak in your own strength. How many have found that? Just lift your hand. Unless the Lord holds us and keeps us, who's gonna hold us? Who's gonna keep us? Peter had this happen when he was walking on the water to Jesus.

He looked at the waves. He looked at the storms. How many of us have ever done that? We look away from Jesus.

We see our circumstances and we start to sink. Haven't you ever had that happen to you? And you get into some funky mood when almost all things are possible, negatively speaking. But Jesus appeared to Peter because he had plans for Peter.

And when you crash like Peter did, you need a special visitation. Get up, Peter. I love you.

I know what you did. Now get up. I love you.

Now believe in me. Believe in me. What a beautiful lesson for us, the appearance of Jesus after he rose from the dead.

One that's mentioned by Paul is he appeared to Peter, who was the biggest loser of all. If you ever feel like the biggest loser of all, just remember, he's alive. He loves you.

He wants to pick you up. And he wants you to trust him despite what you've done. Can we put our hands together and just say amen to that? Number two, he appeared to 500 people.

We know nothing of this appearance. He appeared to 500 people on a road. We don't know what road.

We don't know where. But before he ascended to heaven in that 40-day period there that he was making intermittent appearances, he appeared to 500 people on the road. And Paul, very logically, Paul goes, listen, yo, some of them are still alive.

You wanna check it out, check it out. Go to Jerusalem. They saw him.

You don't make up a lie and then use other people as references if they're gonna go, I never saw him. What are you talking about? He says, no, you could check it out. Now, who were they? They were believers who most likely, like everyone else, was confused and discouraged and perplexed because the bottom had fallen out of their plans.

And Jesus appeared to them symbolically for all of us. Why do I say that? Because the Bible tells us that one of the first things that the disciples had to deal with when Christ was actually captured and tried and beat so viciously and the one who had walked on the water and opened blind eyes and raised the dead, he had no power against these soldiers. What's going on? No, that's not the Jesus we know.

He's the one who speaks to the water and the sea becomes calm. And now they're beating him, they're mauling him, they're opening up his back, and this is the one we put our trust in. What is God doing? What is God doing? This is not the way it's supposed to work out.

Haven't you ever had times in your life like that? You're following the Lord, you believe in him, and then things begin to happen and you go, que pasa? Or, que pasara? What will happen? What has happened? Jesus wanted to appear to them, to let them know, when you and I can't figure it out and it looks like the bottom has fallen out and you don't see what God is doing. God is working for our good when you and I don't understand it. Come on, let's say amen to that.

You don't feel it. They didn't know he was dying for the sins of the world. They didn't get that.

They didn't know he was gonna rise from the dead even though he said that he would. Don't you get it? If you go by feelings, you won't go anywhere by feelings because they had no feelings. They were like the two men on the road to Emmaus who had their heads down and were walking and the risen Jesus came to them, another appearance of his, not mentioned here by Paul, and they're just downcast and they're discouraged.

And Jesus comes and they don't know it's him and he says, guys, what's happening? And he goes, nah, you don't know, you don't know. You don't know what's been going on in Jerusalem. Jesus, he was the mightiest, he was the greatest.

We love him so much and we believed in him and we thought this is the one now who's gonna deliver Israel and set his people free and it didn't work out. What are we gonna do? Yet we saw these miracles and then no miracles when they arrested him. Nothing, nothing, no supernatural power and they're down

and they're out and then he opened the scriptures to them as he walked with them and said, don't you see the scripture said that this had to happen to Messiah? How would your sins be forgiven unless he died on the cross? But the cross didn't have the last word.

Resurrection power had the last word. So when he appeared to these 500 men, what he was saying to them is when you can't figure me out, I'm still working. When you're perplexed and discouraged and you don't know what's going on, haven't you ever had moments like that in life? I've had so many of those.

You have to learn to say, wait a minute, I have no idea what's going on here. I thought it was gonna work out this way. It's not working out this way.

This person promised they would help and make a donation, let's say to the church and then they disappeared and now what are we gonna do? And I thought it would work out this way and it didn't work out this way. Come on, haven't you had moments like that in life? And the devil tempts us and says, yeah, where's your Jesus? See, see, where's your God? And he appeared to them to say, listen, guys, I'm alive. And if I conquered death, don't you know I'm gonna conquer your situation? I'm gonna give you the victory.

Come on, one more time we can say amen to that. You can't figure out God. Let it go.

Do you think your little puny brain is gonna figure out infinite God? What's your IQ, 170, 180, that would be high. 200, you're a genius or whatever. You think any of our little minds are gonna figure out what God is doing? He says my ways are not your ways.

Neither are my thoughts your thoughts. People try to figure out God and analyze everything, they tend to go nuts. You can't figure out what God is gonna do.

At the moment they thought the bottom had fallen out, they were getting their sins paid for. At the moment that they didn't know what was happening, Jesus was rising from the dead and he wanted to let them know, listen, when you don't know what's going on, just tie a knot and hang on and keep your trust in me. I will never leave you, come on, or forsake you.

You're not saying amen like I thought you would. Haven't you ever, no, I mean in this way. I'm not trying to get amens here.

What I meant is this. Haven't you ever been disappointed? Haven't you ever had the bottom fall out? Haven't you ever made plans and, come on, have you never had that? Where's God? And the devil whispers things, negative things in your ear. Emmanuel, Emmanuel, God with us revealed in love.

That's why he appeared to them and he wants to appear and speak to us today. Are you going through something now and you can't figure out what? And because you can't figure it out, so you don't think God's working. Or are you gonna believe the accusation of the devil? See, God doesn't love you, there's no God, there's this, there's that, and all of that.

Why, because you can't figure it out? Oh my goodness. I'm just reminded today as I was talking to the prayer band, I was talking about little Levi and what he means to my wife and I and how he's learning to share his pretzels for the Lord is dealing with him in an airplane. When he was born, his mother died in the dirt in a hut in Ethiopia, southern Ethiopia.

I was reminded today. It's an illustration of what I'm saying. His father had five other children, now this sixth one came, mother died.

He had to start giving away children, he couldn't take care of them. But his wife's mother, his mother-in-law, Levi's grandmother, she was like, no, don't give him away, I'll keep him. Now they're in a town, a village in Ethiopia, look at me everyone, you couldn't even find it.

My son-in-law Brian spent hours trying to find this place. And finally meets the father, because they had lost contact. He wanted him to know how Levi was doing.

So this father doesn't know him because there's no contact between the adopted parents and the family. So the father tells him how his wife died and Levi was born and shows him the hut with a cow in the hut where Levi was born. And then he says, you know who took it real hard though was my mother-in-law, my wife's mother because she begged me and said, please don't give him away, I'll take him, I'll raise him.

No, mama, you're too old, you can't take care of Levi. It was named Bushra then. You can't take care of the baby.

No, I will. So Brian hears that and says, my son-in-law, where is your mother-in-law, where's the grandmother? I'd like to meet her. Oh, she's where she always is, she's in church.

Oh, she's a Christian, yeah, she's always in church. So Brian goes, they call her out of this meeting that's going on, all providentially worked out by God. And he meets her, she doesn't know who Brian is.

All she's introduced and is told, I'm the one who adopted your grandson. She said, you know, it was very hard for me. I hope you're taking good care of him.

It was very hard for me because I begged my son-in-law, please let me have the baby, let me have the baby. And Levi looks, I think, from the pictures I've seen, he looks the most like this grandmother. And there are some pictures of his mom, but it doesn't look like his dad.

She said, yeah, I begged my son-in-law, please, please let me have him. No, mama, you can't, you can't. So she said, I mourn, she telling my son-in-law, I mourn 30 days, I mourn 30 days.

Why? Because there's a grandson, my daughter gives birth to a boy, he's born, he's beautiful, I wanna raise him, but it doesn't work out that way. So she said, I mourn for 30 days, and she said to this man who she's just meeting now in the first five minutes, she said, I only prayed one thing. As they took him away to Addis Ababa, the capital, to be whatever adoption is, how much she understood about that, I don't know.

He said, I only prayed one thing. God, let him end up in the house of a pastor. Now, how could you pray, wait, how could you pray, wait, wait, wait, wait, how could you pray in southern Ethiopia, in a town, and have your child ripped away from you, your grandson, and be brought to a city you're never gonna visit, you'll die, you'll never get to the capital.

And some adoption agency, which is now defunct, is working and just calling names. Come on, what are the odds on that? Come on, what are the odds on that? See, when you and I are most confused and heartbroken, God is working things out. Do you believe that? Now let's put our hands together.

God is working things out. Come on, let's give him extra praise. He's working things out.

Let me close by saying this. He appeared also to James, and the general consideration of the commentators and the experts is that this, there are several James in the New Testament. There were two disciples named James.

But this is James, the half-brother of our Lord. This is James, one of the children born by Mary after Jesus was born by virgin birth. And the Bible says that his own family didn't believe in him.

Mary knew, although she pondered all these things in her heart, but his own siblings did not come to a strong faith, and James was one of them. Now this James ends up becoming the pastor, the lead bishop or whatever in the church in Jerusalem. This James that I'm talking to you about is the one who wrote the book of James.

And Jesus made, again, a private appearance. We know nothing of it, what was said. But I wanna say what I think what was said to you.

Because we know that James and others were slow to believe. They were raised with Jesus. And sometimes when you're close to things and you're raised around things, it's harder to see the majesty of the thing.

Like some of you have been raised in church, or you've been around church. But you're so slow to believe what God can really do because you're used to church. You're used to hearing about Jesus.

And you put Jesus in a box. Some of you choir members, you have him in a box. This is what he can do, this is what he can't do.

And we're slow to believe. We're slow to believe how vast, how immeasurable is his power. How awesome is his grace.

So Jesus appears to James, his half-brother, and says, James, don't be slow to believe. Look, I was dead, but now I'm alive. I have a plan for your life, James, even though you were slow to believe, even though you should've picked up who I was earlier.

James, forget about it. Come on, James, get up and follow me now. And trust me, James, don't be slow to believe.

Don't think there's any situation too hard for me. If you're here today, all of us have what I call altitudinal limits. We believe God up to a point, but then if it's above that, well, forget about it.

Listen, nothing with God is impossible. Do I hear an amen? Nothing is impossible. What you and I, and I've even struggled to believe, like could God ever do? No, God couldn't.

No, maybe God could. God does exceedingly beyond what you could ask or think, but it's according to our faith. According to your faith, so be it unto you.

James, I'm alive. Don't be slow to believe. Believe in me, James.

Don't put me in a box. Don't limit me. Oh, let that word sink in our heart today.

Who knows what God would do if we would just not limit him. I've limited him in my life, but he's reminding me that with him, all things are possible. How many wanna have, as we leave this building, a big faith for a

big God to do big things? Little faith, little God, little things.

That's according to your faith, so be it unto you. Don't be slow to believe today. Let's believe God for big, awesome things.

Finally, to those men he could say I still love you because they knew about his love, the 500 men on the road to Peter, to James, but then he appeared to Saul of Tarsus, Pharisee. I see them, ultra-orthodox, hates the name of Jesus. Trying to persecute the church, and Jesus appears to him and said, Paul, Saul, Saul, it's hard for you to fight against the goads.

That was what was used for the animals to nudge them on and keep them focused on the work. So in case they stop or kick, they would run against the goad and the goad would make them go forward to plow. And Jesus said, it's hard for you to fight against the pricks, against the goads.

Saul, I love you. Love me? I hate you. I hate your name.

Yeah, I know, but I love you. Do we not have an awesome God? You know, we are so conditioned. You love me, I love you.

You don't like me? Oh yeah, okay, we'll talk. You don't like me? Then I won't like you. Who do you think you are? Not to like me, but then I don't like you.

Jesus has nothing to do with that kind of reasoning. You don't love him today? You're not serving him? You're questioning, you're fighting against those reminders in your conscience and in your heart? He's speaking to you and you're running from him today? I don't know why God would bring you to church, but maybe to hear this. He's running from, you're running from him and he's yet running after you and saying, yo, I love you.

I love you. I'm alive. I love you.

I have a plan for your life. It's better than anything you could think about. I love you.

No, get out of here. I love you. I love you.

I said get him, leave me alone. No, I love you. Come on, most of us are in church because he followed us just that way.

Do I get an amen? Did all of us just fall down the first time he spoke to us? No, some of us here used to use his name in vain. Curse his name. Curse God.

Damn God. And what did he do? Did he throw you away? No, he said I'm alive and I love you. And just my last sentence is, in case there's someone here who's not born again, you haven't received Christ, should you die fighting him? You can't fight him off because there's this mystery of free will.

He won't coerce you to serve him. He will not coerce you to believe. But should you fight all the way to your grave or until Christ comes? You can enter into eternity without Christ.

You can't fight him off. We know that from the scripture. But I promise you, the last word you'll hear from him before you close your eyes is I love you.

I love you. I wanna bless you. I wanna forgive you.

You can fight it off. Fight it off then. But he won't stop.

He'll keep coming. Some of the Puritan writers called him the hound from heaven in a reverend way because he never stops. Come on, how many have found in your own life he just keeps coming after you? Come on, how many have found that? He just follows you.

Get away. I don't want that. I love you.

I love you. Like with a roaming child, a wayward child. I love you.

Get out of here, daddy. I don't wanna hear about you. I don't wanna hear what you think is right.

I know, but I love you. I wanna tell you something. I love you.

Let's close our eyes. He's alive. He is love.

He wants us to trust him and believe. Maybe somebody here is really struggling with their faith. You're like Peter.

You bombed out and now you're struggling that he could ever love you and use you. Or you're like the men on the road. It didn't work out the way you thought and now you're struggling with your faith.

Don't you hear him say to you today with a sweeter voice than this feeble speaker? I'm alive. I'm not dead. It's not a doctrine.

I'm a person. I'm alive. I love you.

Maybe you're like James. You're just slow to believe. You struggle to believe.

Or maybe you're running, running, fighting against all the calls of love that God is giving you. I wanna dismiss this service, but I just want one chance to pray. Even if there's just one person that God brought in and laid this, this is good for all of us, but maybe it has special application for somebody here.

Just stand where you are. If you say, pastor, just pray for me as you close. Just pray.

Pray for me. I needed to hear what you just said. I needed to hear what you just said in a special way.

If that is so, just stand where you are. Just stand. Come quickly to the front.

Come quickly. I just wanna say a prayer over you and then we'll all, it won't take long. Come quickly.

Now, Lord, thank you for every one of these people who you've spoken to through your word. We give you all the glory and we acknowledge, Jesus, that you are not dead. You are alive.

You were crucified under Pontius Pilate. You bore our sins on the cross. By your stripes, we're healed in every way.

We are saved not because of our track record or because we're good people. We are saved because we put our faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. After they crucified you, they buried you in a tomb.

You were pronounced dead. They put you in a tomb, but on the third day, because you are the Son of God, you rose again and you are alive forevermore. We do not have a dead Savior.

We have a living Savior. And I thank you that no matter how we have messed up, your love is greater than our mess up. You appeared to Peter to let him know, I saw it coming.

Now, get up. I forgive you, forgive yourself, and follow me and trust me. I'm happy that when our plans go awry and we have no idea what's going on, you speak to us and say, I'm alive.

I'm working out things in the darkest moments that you can imagine. I'm doing things that you don't understand. I thank you that you appeared to James, slow to believe like a lot of us.

And we pray that you will break down those little two by four boxes that we have you in. And that we will have a big faith and a big God for big things. Because you're not a man that you should lie.

Finally, we thank you that even when we fight you, stubborn, rebellious, obnoxious, cursing, sinning, running, you never give up. You never give up. You just never give up.

Your love has no end. And we surrender to that love today. Let no one in this building leave this edifice without knowing that they have confessed their sins and put their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

That makes us happy no matter what's going on. We pray for Iraq. We pray for what's happening in North Korea.

We pray for the Gaza. We pray all these things that are going on in the world today. We pray all of those that you will work and bring peace.

But we are so happy that you live inside of us, Prince of Peace. And that we have the best peace, the peace of God which passes all understanding. So we trust you today.

As we leave the building, help us to love each other and encourage each other. And help us to have a good, happy day. All day long, a happy day in Jesus.

We ask all these things in Christ's name. And everyone say. Let's all just put our hands together one more time.

Clap loud. Clap muy fuerte. Fuerte aplauso.

Turn around and hug three or four people. Come on, everyone. Give people a hug.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25924.mp3>
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