

# Almost Persuaded

by Jim Cymbala

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*The sermon 'Almost Persuaded' teaches us about the dangers of following the wrong examples and the importance of seeking God's guidance and wisdom in our lives.*

**Duration:** 37:23

**Scripture:** Genesis 6:5, Exodus 20:3, 1 Kings 15:26, Proverbs 14:12, Isaiah 59:2, Matthew 22:39, Acts 16:31

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of setting good examples in life. He shares a personal experience of witnessing three young men being arrested and reflects on how their lives took a wrong turn due to following the wrong examples. The speaker also highlights the mercy of God and how he becomes angry when people waste their lives. He mentions the story of God's people in the Bible and how they faced consequences for their actions. The sermon concludes with a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice and the opportunity for redemption and eternal life through faith in Him.

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## Transcript

You know, sometimes in life, you're just about to do something, you're almost persuaded, and then you back away at the last second. Sometimes you back away from something, wow, I'm so glad I backed away, because if I would've gone that way, it would've blown up in my face. Other times, we're almost persuaded, but we don't cross over the line, we don't make the decision, and then we really, really, really are sorry later on.

We're sorry later on that we didn't go ahead and make that decision, because life is made up of decisions. And this is a kind of back to basics review, because every Tuesday I've been here, as I talk to people and ask them questions, I get some very, to me, strange answers. So how long you been going to church, you know, what church, Roman, Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, Charismatic, whatever, and different races of people.

But when we begin to dialogue, just in a few seconds before I pray for them, they say things, or sometimes after service, I hear things and I go, wow, where did they get that from? I don't say that to them, it's not my place all the time. Sometimes I do. Like, where'd they get that from? But they got wrong religious thinking, they have wrong, you know, like there are things that are right, things that are wrong.

Two and two is four. If you say, no, that's not my opinion, two and two is seven, it doesn't change anything. Two and two is four.

Everyone has a right to their own opinion, but nobody has a right to their own truth. There's truth, and then there's opinions. So I wanna go back to this, almost persuaded back to basics story.

And it happens in the Old Testament, and then we're gonna update it to us, because it happened thousands of years ago. It happened to a king named Jehoahaz. Jehoahaz, that's not an easy word, Jehoahaz.

And he was the king of the northern kingdom of Israel. You know, let's see if we know anything about our Bible history. The first king of Israel was Saul, then came David, and then David's son was Solomon.

After Solomon, there was a civil war, and the 12 tribes of Israel, which by the way, that's basically the land that's being lived in now, in Israel, they divided. 10 tribes were in the north. Their capital was Samaria.

They had the most people, 10 tribes. The two other tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were in the south, and their capital was Jerusalem. The only bad thing about that civil war, there was much bad about it, but what happened was the temple and the whole worship system was focused in Jerusalem.

And the first king of the northern kingdom said, wait a minute, if I let my people go to Jerusalem and obey God and worship the way God said, they're gonna go into the enemy's territory, and they're gonna be won over to the king that's down in the king of Judah. They were the king of Israel, all Jewish people, but divided. They're gonna go down there, and I'm gonna lose their allegiance, so you know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna make my own religion.

I'll call it the God of Israel. I'll mention that it's the God who brought us out of Egypt. I'll say everything like that, but I'm gonna set up my own idols.

And he took two cities, and he made two cabs, and he said, these are the representations of the invisible God. We are orthodox, and he set up his own religion. He started ordaining people to be priests who weren't qualified.

He got, his name was Jeroboam. He had a whole thing going on, just to keep people. It was a religion of convenience.

At least the people wouldn't go down to Jerusalem and maybe be won over. So this really aggravated God, because God, one of the commandments is never make an image, right? Never, we're never to bow down to images or anything like that. It got worse.

Because they had turned their back on God, next thing you know, idols came, Baal, and all the Canaanite gods that were around when they went in the land, they started to resurface, including this horrible God. And gotta remember, these idols, some of the things that were going on was when they worshiped, they sacrificed their own children in the fire. They burned their children alive.

They had prostitutes as part of the worship services. They had sexual rights involved in the worship of these horrible gods. And God said, these things, never get involved with them.

The Northern Kingdom said, bring it on, including Asherah. And the worship of Asherah, one of those gods, was horrible, and the Asherah was not a shrine. It was a huge pole and was likened to the male sex

organ, and horrible things went on.

And this was now all over Israel. And God sent prophets, but everybody went, get out of here, we're gonna do what we're gonna do. Don't be telling us what to do.

And God loved those people, trying to get them back to the right way of living. Well, Jehoahaz is one of the kings that succeeded Jeroboam. And in nine little verses, you have the story of, I'm afraid, a lot of people in the world.

It's the story of being almost persuaded. So let's look at it. I'm taking this one from the New Living Translation.

Let's just look at it, okay? Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, began to rule over Israel in the 23rd year of King Joash's reign in Judah. So you that read your Bibles a lot, you see there's two kings going on right there. In the south, Joash, and in the north, Jehoahaz.

He reigned in Samaria 17 years. But he did what was evil in the Lord's sight. He followed the example of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, the one I told you about, continuing the sins that Jeroboam had led Israel to commit.

So the Lord was very angry with Israel, and he allowed King Hazael of Aram and his son Ben-Hadad to defeat them repeatedly. God made that happen. Then Jehoahaz prayed for the Lord's help.

That king who was doing so many things wrong, finally it got through. Then Jehoahaz prayed for the Lord's help, and the Lord heard his prayer, for he could see how severely the king of Aram was oppressing Israel. So the Lord provided someone to rescue the Israelites from the tyranny of the Arameans.

And then Israel lived in safety again as they had in former days. But, in Spanish, pero, but they continued to sin. Following the evil example of Jeroboam, they also allowed the Asherah Pole in Samaria to remain standing.

Finally, in the end, Jehoahaz's army was reduced. To listen, 50 charioteers, 10 chariots, 10,000 foot soldiers, that's what he went down to, once a mighty king. The king of Aram had killed all the others, trampling them like dust under his feet.

The rest of the events in Jehoahaz's reign, everything he did and the extent of his power are recorded in the book of the history of the kings of Israel. And when Jehoahaz died, he was buried in Samaria, and then his son, Jehoash, became the next king. I wish these people named themselves easier names, right? Jehoahaz, Jehoash.

How about Bob and Mary and Sal and all of that? So why would God put that in the Bible and we're living thousands of years later? What's the deal? What's the story? The Bible says, all scripture's inspired by God and you gotta rightly divide it. But it's profitable for us. So when you read the scriptures, you step back and you say, so what does that tell me? What are the lessons? I'm not a king, you're not a king, we don't live in Samaria, we don't have armies, we got no Arameans attacking us.

So choir, what's the deal? Well, let's just get a few simple lessons so that we get our theology straight, okay? The first thing that we learn from this that we can apply universally to all of us is that certain things are evil in the Lord's sight. Jehoahaz did, the Bible says, what was evil in the Lord's sight. His guys

working with him in the palace probably were high-fiving him.

You go, king, you go. But it doesn't matter who backs you up or who backs me up. It doesn't matter who you get to agree with.

The question at the end of all of our lives is what does God think about the thing? He did evil in the Lord's sight. We live in the day of moral relativity. Everybody decides what's right for them.

But that's crazy. That's like saying everybody can have their own math. Everybody can have their own concept about what's healthy, what you eat and how you exercise.

People can say I'm on a ice cream and Oreo diet and I'm really getting buff. No, no, no, no, no. You're making that up.

That goes against the laws of the body, the laws of calories, the law of all of that. So we learn, ladies and gentlemen, and please remember this when you talk to people and people you love, your own family, Jehoahaz did what was evil in the Lord's sight. In the end, everybody in this building, starting with the speaker, is gonna face the Lord.

The Lord God, who's holy, is the one who determines what's right and wrong. You and I don't. It's pretty conclusive if you study history that in around 1934, 35, Hitler had come into power in Germany, was rebuilding the country which had been decimated by their loss in World War I and the heavy burden that was put on the country by the Treaty of Versailles, which ended the war.

He had come back and he played on the anger of the German population and he started getting things going and he was very bold and he started bluffing all the other powers. But even though they had the night of the Kristallnacht when glass was smashed and all the Jewish stores were smashed and Jewish people started disappearing left and right, it's pretty sure the historians tell us work camps had already been started just in Germany. The war hadn't begun.

It's pretty certain that if you would've taken a vote for the German people, are you for Hitler or against? Some estimate his popularity at 97%. The pastors, ministers, the priests, nobody lifted their voices. It was like a madness, like a current.

Did it make it right? Well, of course not. Just because a lot of folks or your culture or your white race or your black race or your Latino race or your ethnic group says that's the way we do things, that doesn't make it right. In the end, Hitler, us, Mother Teresa, Billy Graham, all of us are gonna stand before God.

He's the only one who judges what's right or wrong. If you're with me, say amen. So the Bible clearly points out here the fact that moral relativism doesn't exist because Jehovah has might have had the support of his whole country.

It didn't matter. It was wrong in God's sight and what you sow, you reap. It's also, the Bible says he did evil in God's sight, which also reminds us of this.

God sees everything and there are no secrets. If you have a secret life that you think nobody knows about, think of the congressmen and these other people that have been outed for whatever they were involved in and famous people, governors or whatever, all across the land and now they found the tapes. Remember when President Nixon was impeached and they found the tapes of all his conversations, see? And they

found out how he really talked and the profanity used and the racism he had.

But you see, God has a tape recorder always going on. He's the big tape recorder in the sky. He's picking up everything.

So when you whisper something to somebody, it's gonna be shouted one day from a rooftop. So there are, for all of us here, I wanna help you. There are no secrets.

There's no secret sin, there's no secret, it's secret to you, you think it's secret, but in the Lord's sight, he's watching everything Jehoz is doing. Secondly, the Bible tells us why he did those things. Why did he do all those things? Because he said he followed the example of Jeroboam.

A previous king. Example is a powerful thing in life. In fact, it can be proved, psychologists say, sociologists say, spiritual writers point out that all of us basically are following somebody's example, even unconsciously.

I just was sitting over there and listening to Caleb and the choir sing He'll Be Faithful to the End, and my mind wandered to what I had to say when I came out here, and mentioned that book and whatever. And I just opened my eyes for a second and I noticed Sharon, who was sitting next to me, who really loves the Lord and who blesses this church, she just had a hand up, her eyes were closed, and she was worshiping God in her heart. And immediately, that example made me stop thinking about all that foolishness, and I lifted my heart to God.

You know why I lifted my heart to God? Because she set an example to me. What are you thinking about the bookstore for? We're singing right now. Don't make me feel worse by laughing.

We all, people dress, they follow examples. Nobody, who has their own style? Everyone follows somebody, follows something. Well listen, on a lot of things it doesn't much matter, hopefully you get good examples, but morally, how you shape your life.

My dad was an alcoholic for 22 years, beat my mom in my presence countless times. I grew up in a disaster. Should I follow that example? No, he would cry to me and say, Jimmy, when you grow up, don't be like your dad.

That's what he would say. Because he knew the power of example. A lot of people are destroying their lives because they follow example all due respect of parents or grandparents or a family life.

That is no good example to follow. No, but that's my parents, I know, but sometimes, you know, like, if Jehovah has was your father, it's bad. So we have to stop and not be like blind sheep that just follow, well that's the way we do it, that's the kind of house I grew up in.

We pastors, Pastor Burgos, Pastor Olmo, Pastor Hammond, you know how many countless hours we counsel people and try to unravel their problems, and when you get to the root, you find out that they are following a lifestyle, a value system that they inherited. It comes from one generation to another, and some of them don't make any sense at all. Some of them have godly examples, godly parents.

They learn things about industry and studying and discipline and saving money and this and that, and it's a good example. Others are following examples morally and practically that are just horrible, but a lot of us are brainwashed to that's what your family did, now you follow, and there's very few who break the pattern

and say, no, I'm not gonna do this anymore. My grandmother was a drug addict.

My mother was running around. No, I'm not gonna go that way. We're trying to help somebody right now in another place, not here, and they're trying to break that generational curse, although it's not a curse because if you're a Christian, God, you can't have a curse on you, but that generational pattern that Jehovah has, he's gonna end up losing everything.

You know why? He followed the wrong example. He who walks with wise men, the Bible says, will be wise. The New Testament says this, bad company corrupts morals.

Why? Because they set examples. You run around with the wrong people. My wife and I were walking around just yesterday and we saw a police car stop and three young men all being pulled out of this police car with handcuffs on.

I don't know what the charge is, but it was a bad feeling. Do you know that those three young men, they all started like babies? Do you know we all start as innocent babies? Do you know everyone's an innocent baby? Well then how do some end up helping people and living lives that are productive and other people end up, you know, a lot of it is example. No example, wrong example.

Jehovah has followed the wrong example. What else do we learn from this story? We learn about the mercy of God and the strange way that he manifests it. It turns out that God got angry that his people, who he loved, were throwing their lives down the drain.

God was angry. That means God, God is an emotional being. If you believe the Bible, unless Jesus Christ is like the biggest charlatan that ever lived and this book is just, how did it help so many people over thousands of years? But you have to throw away the Bible, cut it up and burn it, and you have to make Jesus the biggest charlatan if you don't realize that God is an emotional being.

Certain things make him happy. Aren't we all like that? Aren't we made in his image that way? Certain things make us happy. Certain things make us sad.

When you raise your children, some days they make you happy. Sometimes in the same day they make you not only very sad, they make you angry. And God got angry.

Why did God get angry? Pastor, I don't like that idea of an angry God. Well, then you don't understand anything about life. You see some drug addicts, drug dealers messing around with your 13-year-old son, you will get angry.

You will not say, well, my boy's gotta choose his way of living, you know, who's to judge? No, you're gonna be in someone's grill and say, get out of here, don't you ever come around my son again, or I'll have you arrested, am I correct? Well, that's how God is. He doesn't get angry just to get angry. He gets angry because he sees what's gonna happen to his people, he understands the way the universe works, how life works, and you fight for those you love.

This idea of God just accepts everything and he's just some nebulous figure, that's totally contradicted by 100 places in the Bible. God is made happy, God can be made sad, God can get provoked. The other thing that provoked him, and tell me if you would not be provoked, is these are the people he brought out of Egypt, these are the people that he blessed, that he had provided for them, he had helped them in so many ways, and now you turn your back on God and say, I don't want you, and now I'm gonna worship an

Asherah pole and I'm gonna serve idols and offer my children, he blessed you with children, now you're putting them in the fire, and he's gonna just sit by and say, well, who's to judge? No, almighty God is gonna be angry with that, that children who are innocent would be hurt by your blindness, that people would turn their back on him.

Don't you get upset when you see children grow up and then don't care about their parents? And they have lots of money and they don't even give a dime to their parents and watch out to provide for their parents? Doesn't that make you upset? Like, wow, who was changing you when you were little? Who was feeding you? Now you have no time for your parents because your life is so busy? Doesn't that bother you? It's wrong, it's wrong. So God was like, wow, you turned your back on me. Jehovah has finally got the message, why? Because here's another thing we learned about God with this passage.

When God loves us and we're going off the highway, he will sometimes send trouble to get our attention. They're going the wrong way, so he has the ability to do this, he uses political, international politics, he can use anything he wants. It's not seen because his hand is unseen.

He stirred up the Arameans under two different kings and he had them attacked and they started beating down Jehovah has. So it was as if God was saying, you don't want to serve me? Then let me show you what it's like to serve a false God who can't help you. Call on your Baal now that you're in trouble.

Call on Baal, B-A-A-L. Call on Asherah, see if she'll help you. Call on your gods and see who can help you.

And they probably did and they got no answer because all those gods are mute and dumb, they don't exist. There's only one true and living God, the Father of Leah. Let's put our hands together.

The Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Then when the trouble got bad enough, guess what Jehovah has did? Yeah, wicked Jehovah has. You know what he did? He prayed, he actually prayed.

Listen to this, you can't even make this up. He prayed and he humbled himself and he must've realized, the only one who can help me in this mess is God. I'm in a mess, I'm in a bind, I'm between a rock and a hard place.

Who in the world's gonna help me? And he remembered what some prophet had said or he remembered the scriptures of Moses and he remembered the promise, call upon me in the day of trouble and I will help you. If you'll just humble yourself and pray today, no matter what you're going through, whatever confusion, whatever mess. I don't care if you make 400,000 a year or 40,000 or 400 a year, what does it matter? We all get in messes.

And God uses a lot of different ways to get our attention. He doesn't use Arameans sometimes. Sometimes he won't let you sleep.

Sometimes he takes away any kind of peace. You lose your joy, you're on the borderline of depression and you're blaming everybody, but you don't step back and say, wait a minute, is God trying to get my attention? Is he trying to tell me something about my life and my eternity? A billion years from now, all of us are gonna be somewhere unless Jesus is a fraud. A billion years from now, you're making a big thing about 60, 70, 80 years now.

How about a billion years from now? Oh, I don't believe that. Well, that won't change anything. You believing it or not believing it, you don't create reality by what you think.

It's either real or it's not real. If it's not real, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. So the Bible says that Jehoahaz finally humbled himself and he went to God.

Now if I were God and he had been pulling all this stuff for these years, I would've said, what's up with you? Oh, yo, Jehoahaz, now you're coming. This is very convenient for you. Now you're in trouble, your God's didn't answer.

Now you're coming. No, but God isn't like that. How many are happy? God is not like Pastor Simbala or you.

And when he came, you know what God did because he's so full of mercy? Said, I'll help you. And he raised up a deliverer to kick the Arameans out of town. And they had peace again.

But Jehoahaz went back, kept repeating the same sins. Well, wait a minute. How can you call on God when you're in trouble and know that God is real and go back to your sins and things that hurt God and offend God and will bring shame on you? Because it is what it is.

Have we not all done that? Come on, fess up, man up, woman up. How many here have in the day of trouble called upon God, but then after he got you out of that bind, I won't ask for hands, but there's too many that would be lifted, we'd be crowding the building. And after God helps us, it's back to the status quo.

In other words, we try to use God. I see this all the time. People don't wanna serve God, don't have integrity, don't wanna read their word, don't wanna follow God's pattern, but they're in trouble, the baby's sick.

Pastor, Symbola, Almighty God's the only one that can help my baby. But is that right? What if you had a friend like that? Didn't wanna talk to you, never wanna be with you, but when you were in, they needed a little cash, they called you. Brother Joe, you got a couple hundred to spare? I'm a little short this month.

Yeah, I know, but I haven't talked to you in a year and a half. No, I know, I've been busy, you know, things, it's a lot, I've been tribulated by a lot of things lately. And then Joe gives him the money, and then for another year and a half, he doesn't hear.

Isn't that the way people are with God? In trouble, call upon him. And then go right back. And you know what happened by going back? They got reduced to nothing.

They got wiped out, got decimated. And he passed this on to his poor son. Just think about that, those of us who have children.

Whatever you're doing with your life, that's what you're gonna pass on to your children. That's not cruel, and that's not melodramatic, that's the way it is. He got down to nothing.

50 charioteers, 500 charioteers, 50 chariots, 10,000 soldiers, when once he had hundreds of thousands. Isn't that a picture of life? People can squander and lose, but it's not about material things, because you can gain material things and be empty as a drum. My friend Mariano Rivera, who pitches for the Yankees, has told me, it's so sad to see great athletes, great baseball players, who have everything to live for in one

way, and are making 10, 15 million dollars a year, 20 million, blow up their lives, because they follow the wrong example and exclude God from their lives.

But they're superstitious, if they get in trouble, they're talking God talk. Even sometimes when they hit a home run, thank the man upstairs. You've seen that, haven't you? But otherwise, it's, hey, I do what I do.

Jesus came 2,000 years ago and died, so that any of us and all of us in this room who put our trust in him, we have all done what's evil in his sight, starting with the speaker. I have sinned, I violated God's law out in the open, I have violated God's law secretly since I've been a little boy, I've lied, I've done all kinds of things. I used to steal a lot, when I was little.

I stole money from my father when he drank, because I figured he owed it to me. You losing respect for me here? But when I was real little, my brother kept money in a little box, I don't know where I'm going with this, but he kept money in a little box. And I one day went in there, when he wasn't in the house, and I took 10 cents so I could get a double ice pop, that's what they cost back then.

How many have ever had a double ice pop? Oh, you haven't lived, a little, just double ice pop. I went around the corner, got it, because the money made me feel bad in my pocket, but then I spent it, I felt better. And I had the ice pop, that's the truth.

And I came off of Bedford Avenue, and Clarkson, and I was walking from Clarkson Avenue, down back to Parkside, to go back to my house, and guess who walks down the street? My brother, and he didn't even know that he was treating me to that ice pop. But I felt so bad, I couldn't look at him, and he said, what's wrong with you? And I said, no, nothing, nothing, nothing's wrong with me. Oh, you all look at me like you never stole anything, or cut school, or cheated on a test, or said things you shouldn't say.

Jesus came so that when we trust him, all of that can be forgiven and washed away. You won't have one wrong thing on your record, not because of you, because of him, his love and his mercy. And then, when he disciplines you, when you come into his family, and he disciplines, you remember that verse in the New Testament, whom the Lord loves, he also chastens, for our good, to keep us away from stuff that will hurt us.

But I want it, I don't see anything wrong in it. You're not as smart as God, trust me. Your arms are too short to box with him.

And instead of losing everything in the end, you'll have stuff that you can't even believe or imagine. Not just here, but for all eternity. I was in Bangladesh, six, eight months ago.

I was ministering to pastors, and there was this one young pastor who I saw talking to one of my associates there. And someone tapped me on the shoulder and said, see that guy? I looked at him, and I saw his face like scarred up and messed up. They said, he just won a convert in a small village to Jesus Christ, he preached the good news, like I'm preaching you the good news.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and your life will change, you'll be born again. You'll have the gift of eternal life. You'll have peace and joy, and your sins will be washed away.

That's what the gospel is, not join the Catholic church, not join the Brooklyn Tabernacle. That's not where the action is. You need a relationship with Jesus.

He preached that, and a Muslim girl, a young woman got converted, who's married. She came home, I don't know what she said, but she must have given testimony that I'm a Christian now. I have found the way of peace and joy.

Husband got so mad, got a gun, went to where the minister was. The minister was praying for somebody while he walked in, and he shot him in the mouth. And a bullet went in, did not kill him.

When I knew more about this story, I said, I gotta get, we were at a long table eating pita bread and yogurt or something there in Bangladesh, wherever I was. I went down to meet him, because I thought, I'm not gonna stare at whatever happened to his face. And when I went, stare at his face.

He was so full of joy, he hugged me, and he told me, oh, what you've been speaking about is such an encouragement to me. And he's going right back to his village to keep on doing it. When you follow Jesus, you get a joy and a peace.

Not even a bullet in the mouth can take it away. Let's put our hands together, just one last time. Let's close our eyes.

Everybody, just close your eyes. And I just wanna know, if anyone is in any state in your life right now, you need help. From the Lord, maybe you never received him.

Maybe you've received him, but you're not walking with him the way you ought to. But something in this message reminds you that you don't have that peace that Jesus promised. You're going up and down with everything going on in the world, but see, once you really have a relationship with Jesus, he gives you a peace that passes all understanding.

It's beyond the beyond. If you need an adjustment, you know, you go to a chiropractor, he adjusts your spine, your back, whatever they do. Anybody here said, Pastor Cimbala, I'd love for you to just say a final prayer over me.

I need to make an adjustment in my relationship with Jesus. I'm not gonna call anyone forward today, but anyone here who'd like me to pray, just stand where you're sitting, up in the balcony or downstairs, just stand. Just, Pastor, that was for me today, in ways that you don't understand.

I need to call on him because right now, I'm decimated, I'm in trouble, and I wanna call on him, but I'm not gonna be a Jehovah has. I'm gonna call on him, I'm gonna stick with him. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I'm gonna stop justifying what's wrong. I'm living in a delusion, I'm making up my own rules as I go, who am I that I can tell God what's right or wrong? I wanna live for Jesus, you just stand. I'll just say a prayer over you.

The main thing is that you open your heart to God. Let's all repeat this prayer out loud. Everybody in the building, let's help the people who are standing.

Dear God, you are the true God. You sent your Son, Jesus Christ, who died for my sins, but he rose on the third day, and he's alive today, and I recognize him as the Son of the living God, the Messiah of Israel, the Savior of the world. Forgive me of my sins.

I've been wrong, I confess it. But I wanna walk in the light, so I ask for your help. Forgive me, cleanse me, change me.

I want in on your family. I'm gonna be a son or a daughter of God, but I'm gonna be a son or a daughter of God. For I believe in my heart, and I confess with my mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Let this lesson today find a deep place in my heart. I ask this in Christ's name. Amen.

Every eye closed, everyone who stood at the end of this service, I'd like you to come up and give me a hug. I'll have somebody here to take your name, because I'd love to give you something that will help you. May the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all your people today.

Give everyone a good day, Lord. Put a wall of fire around your people today, Lord, and protect us, we pray. I ask that our love for each other will grow and increase so that we can bring joy to your heart, so that the people can say who are not Christians, look how they love one another.

Let that begin right now, we pray. And everyone said, turn around and hug a bunch of people, okay?

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