

Ancestors

by Jim Cymbala

Jesus wants us to trust him like Abraham, and his connection to Abraham highlights his role as the Savior who helps us when our faith breaks down.

Duration: 37:30

Scripture: 2 Samuel 11, Matthew 1:1-23, Acts 20:28, Hebrews 10:19-22

Topics: "Ancestors"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for guidance and nourishment in our spiritual lives. He compares humans to sheep, highlighting their dependence on a shepherd to lead them to good pastures. Jesus is presented as the ultimate shepherd who can provide both physical and spiritual sustenance. The speaker invites the audience to accept Jesus as their shepherd and put their trust in him. He concludes by encouraging those who have lost faith to take the first step towards a renewed relationship with Jesus.

Transcript

We stopped our series on the book of Acts so that we could focus on pre-Christmas and Christmas themes, and I want to preach, I've never tried to do this before, on the first verse of the New Testament. The first verse of the New Testament. What's the first book of the New Testament? Which is followed by? Then, then.

Those are called the four Gospels. Recounting a small period of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Because we have the three synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who repeat stories and teachings, John comes from a slightly different angle, but even with all that put together, we know so very little of what Jesus said and did, given the fact that for three and a half years, morning, noon, and night, he was surrounded by people, it seems, rested at night, got up early and prayed, then ministered to crowds that were so great, even his own mother and brothers and sisters couldn't get to talk to him at times.

So every verse and every part of the New Testament and the Gospels are important. But this one is challenging because a lot of people skip the whole first chapter of Matthew because it has what is commonly called the genealogy. There's genealogies in the Old Testament and there's genealogies in the New Testament.

Matthew, each of the Gospels has a certain perspective and emphasis. Matthew is the Gospel written to the Jewish mindset. It's the most Hebrew of all the Gospels.

Not that Matthew, Mark, and John were not Jewish, Luke was a Gentile, but did careful research for his Gospel, but Matthew was the one that most of all tries to prove that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the prophetic verses in the Old Testament, speaking of the Messiah that would one day come. Let's also get this clear in our minds, that the word Messiah and the word Christ are the same word, one in Hebrew, one in the Greek language. Messiah is the Jewish one that they were expecting.

Christ is the anointed one, the one who's the fulfillment, the same person, so they are juxtaposed together for us to understand that Christ is the Greek way of saying the fulfillment of the Messiah who was to come. Let's also discuss this about the book of Matthew. He starts with a genealogy because genealogies were very important to Jewish people.

When you met someone in the Jewish culture back then, 2,000 years ago, you wanted to know who were their ancestors, where'd they come from. That was very important. When you married a woman, the woman had to be able to prove through the records kept by the Levites and Herod, by the way, kept records too, King Herod, of proving that they were truly Jewish and didn't have any Gentile blood mixed in.

You had to show it for five generations before you could marry that Mr. Wonderful. You had to show that you were a Jewish woman, five generations. So that's why the Old and New Testament have genealogies, listings of this one begat this one, who begat that one, who begat that one.

And Matthew begins with a genealogy which runs down to Joseph, who he says was the husband of Mary who was the mother of the Christ child. These were so carefully kept that when the Jews were dispersed, as the prophets foretold, and went into Babylonian captivity, when they came back out of captivity after 70 years, some people volunteered to be priests because they said they were from the tribe of Levi. Not so fast.

They had to prove by checking the records were they truly, truly descendants of Aaron. You couldn't be a descendant of Judah and be a priest. You couldn't be a descendant of Simeon.

You had to be a descendant of Levi. King Herod, who tried to kill Jesus when he was born, he was half Idumean. He was mixed with other Semitic blood.

And the Jews resented him because they called him a half-breed. He wasn't a pure Jewish king like David and Solomon and the rest. He got so angry at that that he had all the records that he could find out about destroyed so it wouldn't be accentuated that he wasn't a pure Jewish king.

Enough of that. We have an interesting genealogy that Matthew gives us because instead of just giving the typical genealogy of one begat one, begat one, begat one, he starts with Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, runs it down through David, the king of God's choice, to the captivity and then from the captivity to the birth of the Christ. He divides it three ways.

He says that from Abraham to David was 14 generations. From David kingship to the dispersion, the going into captivity in Babylon was 14 generations. And then from the coming back to the time that Christ was born was another 14 generations.

What's interesting also about the genealogy is that he brings in women and mentions women on the side. Women were never mentioned in the genealogy. This was a man-dominated society and women weren't mentioned.

Women were property back in that day. They were more or less property. They didn't have equal rights with a man.

And Matthew throws out some women's names, some of the mothers that were involved in this and he picks just the ones that you wouldn't want mentioned. This is a very interesting genealogy. He brings up the woman in Jericho who was a harlot and he throws her in there, which is a name you wouldn't want if you wanted to prove that the one you're writing about is a great man in the Jewish mind.

Other tawdry stories which are not easy even to go into in a mixed audience, especially if there's children here. That's how bad some of the stories are that are alluded to. But nevertheless, he gives us a genealogy because he wants to prove two things.

Jesus was Jewish and Jesus was a king. Jesus was Jewish, he came from Abraham. Jesus could be king because he came through the line of David.

So the first verse doesn't get into a lot of those hard pronouncing names. I would not try to do that in front of you because I would slip up, but we have this verse. This is the list of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, a descendant of David who was a descendant of Abraham.

Now notice a lot is skipped in there. Let's analyze this. This is from the Good News translation.

This is the list or the genealogy of the ancestors of Jesus Christ. Notice Jesus was the name given him, and since the New Testament is written in Greek, we have Christ here instead of the Jewish word for Messiah. Jesus Christ, a descendant of David who was the king who replaced Saul, the one chosen by God, who was a descendant, not direct descendant, but a faraway descendant of Abraham, the father of the Jewish people.

So Jesus, Matthew tells us, was truly Jewish. He was the one that was promised. He was the Jewish Messiah.

He was the one that had been promised in the Old Testament. He also wants us to know that Jesus is the king of kings and the Lord of lords because he comes from the one who is called David, the great king. And Jesus, by the way, is not called in the New Testament son of Abraham or son of Moses or son of Elijah.

What does he call most often? Son of David. Many times, especially in the Gospel of Matthew, you will hear the crowd cry out, Jesus, thou son of David, linking him to the great king. And the promise was that David was a type or a shadow or a symbol of the great king that would one day come, Messiah, Christ, who would be David and a lot more.

So there are prophecies about Messiah being son of David, even though he wasn't a direct son of David. So that sets the stage in our minds for why Matthew would write. And then it goes on, verse after verse.

In fact, he goes back to Abraham and he says, Abraham begot Isaac and Isaac begot Jacob and Jacob begot Judah. And then he throws on the side what baby was chosen through Judah, which was not a nice story at all, but that's another sermon for another time. And that angel said to Mary, his name shall be called Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Jesus, a descendant of David, who was a descendant of Abraham. Well, let's go back and say, why are those two names picked? Well, we know one reason. Jewish, Abraham, king, David.

He's royalty, even though he was born in a manger. Well, let's go back and analyze that a little bit more. What is it about Abraham? What do we know about Abraham that Jesus would wanna be linked to Abraham beyond just his Jewishness? Well, Abraham, of course, was the father of the Jewish people.

He was living in Ur of the Chaldees in the Middle East, far east of Israel. And he was a pagan, like everyone around him was a pagan, worshiping some false god. And the Lord spoke to Abraham and began to dialogue.

Why did he choose Abraham? Because God is sovereign and God didn't have to explain anything to anyone. But he chose Abraham and he said, Abraham, get up and leave everything that you're used to. Leave your family, leave your culture, leave your food that you're accustomed to, and go to a land that I will show you.

And I will bless you and I will make you a blessing. And now, already foretelling about Christ and out of your seed, the whole world will be blessed by you and the children that come from you. That, of course, is an allusion to Jesus thousands of years later.

And Abraham, the Bible says, got up and went where God told him to go, stepping out totally in faith. Abraham's name in the Old Testament and in the New is highlighted because of one main trait in his character. Abraham, the Bible says, is the father of everyone who believes.

The law came hundreds of years later and said, thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt not, and if you don't obey it, the soul that sinneth shall surely die. But when Paul is making an argument for salvation through Jesus Christ, through faith in Christ, he says, now, wait a minute. You'll never be justified by the law.

No one will ever be accepted by God for living a good life because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But he says, hey, guys, remember this. Hundreds of years before Moses got the law, God spoke to Abraham, and what did he ask Abraham to do? To believe, to trust God, to rely on him, to trust in his word.

In fact, the Bible says in both the Old Testament, then repeated in the New, and Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. His righteousness was not won by obeying the laws, which is the way we think of righteousness. Do you have a good record on your driver's license? Yeah, perfect record.

What does that mean? You never got a ticket, you never broke a law. But the New Testament says, no, no one will ever be accepted by God because they never got a ticket, because we've all gotten tickets, haven't we? The person will be accepted by God on the basis of trust. This is the genius of Christianity.

This is what legalists chafe about. This is what makes us different than Buddhists or Muslims or Jehovah Witnesses or Mormons or all the cults that don't preach the true gospel of Jesus Christ. With the heart, man believes and is saved.

God accepts his faith in place of perfect obedience, and the obedience of Christ is given us, his perfect record on earth, and all we have to do is trust him. So Abraham was the one who was the forerunner in this concept which the human mind has a trouble grasping. I once talked to a congressman of the United

States, and he said to me, so wait a minute, what are you trying to tell me, Reverend? You're trying to tell me that you can make mistakes all your life and mess up and be in rebellion against God and then see the light and come to God and say, God, have mercy on me, forgive me, and then God's gonna save you and you're safe for all eternity? I said, yes.

He said, I'm a lawyer. I say, no. I said, I'm a Christian.

I say, yes. How many are happy that we say yes to that? For God, as Romans four, verse five says, to him who worketh not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly. Who does God justify? The ungodly.

That means you and me. Because there are no godly. All have sinned.

All we like sheep have gone astray. And Abraham is the one that brings this concept of trusting God to the fore. He believed God.

And thus, the Bible says, everyone who follows Christ is not a child of Moses. We're a child of Abraham because we believe. Now, faith is all important with the coming of the Messiah because what Jesus tried to get people was to believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions. I'm gonna come, I can get you, but you must believe first. Behavior is not changed by changing behavior.

It's changing who you trust in that changes your life. If you trust in yourself, we're doomed. If we trust in our ability to obey God, we're doomed.

Everyone under the law is under a curse. If you're trying hard to live a good life, you're doomed. You don't have a chance because you've broken the law enough already to get the penalty.

And you can't promise that you'll do better. That doesn't mean anything. Once you kill two or three people, you can't tell the judge, I won't do anymore for the next 20 or 30 years.

You gotta pay the price for the ones you already killed. My friend David Berkowitz, formerly known as Son of Sam, is lying in a prison right now, probably ministering to inmates. He's been a Christian for decades now, but he's the notorious guy in the 70s who killed nine that they know of, or seven or nine.

He terrorized all of New York City. After he got into prison, he found Christ as his savior. His sentence is 600 some years.

He once wrote me after we started to develop a friendship, and he said, Pastor, my name's gonna be in the newspapers. I'm coming up again for parole. And people are trying to make me that I have a jailhouse conversion and that I just found Jesus so that I could look better.

Well, no, no, Jesus saved him. And he said, if any reporter calls you because they know we're friends, just tell them that he doesn't wanna get out of prison because he has to pay for what already he's done. You can't promise and say, oh, I won't do it anymore.

Oh, well, that's good. We'll forget about everything you did. We'll let you go.

Penal system doesn't work that way. You do the crime, you do the time. But praise God for his grace so that we who have done the crime can be forgiven through Jesus Christ, through faith in his name and who

he is.

So the coming of Christ is linked to Abraham, not just because Abraham is the father of everyone who believes and is Jewish, but is more especially linked because of this concept of faith. What Jesus wants from all of us today is to trust him. Are you in a jam? Have you broken down? Is there something going on in your life that only God can change? It won't change by trying.

It only changes by trusting. This is the mistake that so many of us have made. Martin Luther, the great reformer, wrote in 1518 or 19 when he had already realized that the just shall live by faith, not by effort.

He wrote to a friend and he said, this legalistic concept is so on me that I have to battle with it myself to this day because I keep looking inward for acceptance rather than looking to Jesus for acceptance. You'll never be accepted by God by looking inward. How do I do today? How do I feel today? Did I pray enough? Did I read the Bible? You could read the Bible for 24 hours, then that won't get you into God's presence.

The blood of Jesus gets us into God's presence. Can we say amen by clapping our hands? You gotta remember that. It's not in running, but in resting.

It's not in trying, but it's in trusting that we find the salvation that the Lord wants us to experience. But there's one last reason why Jesus is linked to Abraham. Because he's the Savior who helps us when our faith breaks down.

The Bible gives us the story of Abraham and it tells us that Abraham believed God. I mean, the Lord was telling him, you and your wife, who's barren and who's old, no spring chicken, you're gonna have a baby. And Abraham believed that.

Do you get it? He believed it. That's what made him special. In Hebrews 11, he is honored as the other ones are.

How did they gain a good report? Because of their faith. They trusted God. They didn't try, they trusted.

But even we who trust, we can have a breakdown, can't we? The Bible tells us twice that this happened to Abraham. The first time is the one I wanna focus on. He got to the promised land that God led him to and there was a famine in the land and God had told him, just stay in the land and obey instructions, just trust me.

But a famine came and he heard that there was food in Egypt and without consulting God, he went down to Egypt and Egypt is always a picture in the Bible, a type in the Old Testament of going the wrong way, going back to the old life before you trust God. And while he was down there, he got in a jam because when we're not led by God and trusting him, we can get into some major jams. When he was in the land and Pharaoh's helpers saw his wife who was stunning and they said, come here, we're gonna put her with, hook her up with Pharaoh and the Bible tells us that Abraham got under pressure and he thought he might lose his life.

So he said, no, that's my sister. Yeah, she can go with you. He lied, risked his wife.

God intervened to save him and help him because God is merciful and God puts that in the Bible because Jesus came not only as Jewish and not only asking us to trust him, but Jesus came so that when we break down in our faith, he can pick us up and get us back on the right track. For you that are here today, if your

faith has broken down, don't think it's the end of the world. It's happened to better people than you and me.

The thing is to turn to Jesus and say, Jesus, pick me up because the best people I know, the best biographies I've read, everyone has something that's not convenient to them. Every man or woman who ever served God has had periods of time where they didn't know what to believe and they went through a crisis in their faith, but if we turn to Jesus, he will pick you up out of the mess that you created because he can make your mess into a blessing. Can we all say amen to that? He can take your mess and make it a blessing, but it comes by trusting him.

That's why he came. Notice the human link. Even though he's Messiah, he's the Christ.

He's linked to people like you and me who break down, even like great Abraham, the father of all of those who believe. This is the line of Jesus Christ, the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David who was a son of Abraham. Abraham, faith.

Yes, not just Jewish, faith. And even when you break down, get up and believe again. I just feel to pause.

If you're here today, and even though you're in church, you're crushed inside because your faith has broken down. Get up and believe again. Believe in Jesus.

Call on Jesus. The devil will whisper in your ear, quit, you're no good for anything. You're a hypocrite.

You're a joker. You're this. You're no good.

Whatever the accusations are, the only way you'll overcome him is through the blood of Jesus Christ. You have to plead the blood and believe that God loves you, that Christ has a plan for your life. And until you and I believe that, we're gonna be just stuck in the muck and the mire.

So get up today and believe again. And what you don't know and you're not sure of, tell God you're not sure of that. Don't make up any stories to God.

When John the Baptist was languishing in prison, he must have sent his disciples to Jesus and they asked him this question. Are you the one or is there another one that's gonna come, another Messiah? There had been a teaching that two Messiahs might come, one a valiant general and all victorious and the other one more compassionate and reaching out to the downtrodden. And even John the Baptist, his faith was shook, languishing in prison.

And he sent his disciples to ask and Jesus did not get upset. He didn't yell at anybody. He answered politely because the best of us go through times where it's hard to believe.

And if you're here today and it's hard to believe, believe, believe. Even though you have doubts, believe. Tell God your doubts.

Tell God what you can't figure out but believe. Run to him and pour your heart out to him. Abraham, who later on had a great descendant by the name of David.

What does David mean to us? Well, David means to us that he's the one who sat on the throne and the messianic throne is called the throne of David and he shall reign forever sitting on the throne of David. What a great man David was in the Bible. In fact, God actually calls him, you know, he's a man after my

own heart.

There's no one else quite called like that in the New Testament. Now, the thing about David was he was the king, the model king, warts and all, but he was the model king. But here's what's interesting about him.

The Bible says about David something never said about Saul and never said about the other kings that I can find. It says this, and now David has been chosen, Samuel was told to go anoint this young man and the Bible says, and he will not just sit on the throne but he will shepherd the people of God. Here's a new concept for us.

The king as a shepherd, well, of course, what did David do as a young man? What was he? He was a shepherd boy. He wrote Psalms probably out there while he was tending the sheep. So this brings a new concept to us that the king is not just regal on a throne with an army behind him, but the king is a shepherd.

No wonder he wrote, the Lord is my shepherd. Jesus is king, and there's many aspects to this kingship of Jesus, and one day he will come visibly, not hidden, unhidden, out in the open, but he's called the king who will shepherd us, and what does a shepherd do? Shepherd really does three things, and that's what Jesus wants to do for you today, and I'm up here just to talk about Jesus and tell you that he is the descendant of, not just Abraham, but he's the descendant of David. He wants to shepherd us.

The first thing a shepherd has to do is he has to feed the sheep. You know something about sheep? Sheep are dumb. Nothing personal, but I'm talking about all of us.

Sheep are dumb, and they have to be guided. They have no GPS. They have to be guided to where the grass is good so that they can eat, so they can be satisfied, so they can keep being sheep.

Jesus said, I've come to feed you. I'm the bread of life. I'll give you rivers of living water.

I'll sustain you. I'll feed you spiritually, not just physically. People who curse God are fed physically, and they can weigh 500 pounds, but they're starving inside, so if you're here today, and you're empty inside, and you're dry and emaciated in your spiritual being, Jesus is the king who's the shepherd who wants to feed you.

He wants to lead you into green pastures. He wants to lead you to a chair where you'll sit down, and he can feed you this rich word, and you'll be strong in the Lord. And when temptation comes, or difficulties come, or hassles arise in your life, you won't fail and faint because your shepherd has fed you.

But there's another thing a shepherd does. He has to protect us. Sheep have no defense mechanisms.

Sheep have no way to defend themselves. They are wide open to predators. Any kind of predator can take down a sheep because sheep don't even kick.

They don't do anything. And it's the job of the shepherd to fight off the enemies and protect the sheep. And our shepherd's name is Jesus.

He has come to fight off our enemies. I was just reading in my devotions yesterday when David wanted to go out and fight Goliath, and King Saul said, yo, what is that? You're just a kid. You can't do anything.

He goes, no, wait a minute. Don't say that. I might look young, but I'm a shepherd boy.

And when a lion would come and a bear would come to eat up the sheep and destroy the sheep, I would fight them, and God would strengthen me, and I would defeat the lion and the bear. And his sales talk was so good, King Saul said, go, fight that giant. But notice what David did.

He protected the sheep by fighting off the predators. Are you being attacked today? I've had times in my life where I was attacked left, right, front, back, upside, downside, everywhere. How many have ever gone through spiritual attacks? You know what I'm speaking of.

Or attacks of discouragement. Secret stuff. You don't tell your wife, you don't tell anybody usually.

Sometimes you have a friend you can confide in, a spouse or someone. You gotta run to your shepherd today and say you're not just my king, you're my shepherd. Protect me.

My enemies are too big for me. The enemies after us are too big for us. They're too big.

Too big for us. I'm fighting for a girl here. We prayed for her early.

I met her when she was 12. She's so full of anger. And I've been trying to help her for three years now.

I don't know why I fell in love with this little girl. I sometimes am preaching, and I think of her, and on the platform in some foreign country, I'll start crying for her and praying for her. Parents aren't together.

She lives in the hood, and her older brother's a drug dealer, and she thinks fighting and getting in trouble is like a big thing. I just found out she was in jail for the last 30 days. The only one who can protect her from herself is Jesus Christ.

There's no ability in me. I have to face that. Jesus has to come and do a miracle.

That's what we prayed for today. And if you're under attack, or one of your children are under attack, run to the shepherd. Run to the king.

Run to Jesus. And say, Jesus, would you protect us from these monsters, these predators, these spiritual enemies that are too strong? And finally, the shepherd has to guide us. And that's what, if you're in need today, he not only will feed you and protect you, but he will guide you.

That's what the rod and the staff are for, not only to protect, but to just say, come on now, we're going this way. Come on, sheep. No, no, don't sit down here.

It's dangerous. Come on, I'm taking you to the pen where you spend the night, because there's wolves and stuff around here. Come on, go.

If you're facing some decisions today, the good shepherd will direct you. If you just humble yourself and say, Lord, what do I do? Show me what to do. So Jesus Christ, son of David, who was a descendant of Abraham, man of faith, but even that mighty king, David, why would God put those stories in the Bible about David? I know people who wish they could just excise from the Bible the story of David and Bathsheba, how he lusted after a woman and got her pregnant and then planned the murder, although he didn't do it with his own hands, but he had Uriah the Hittite taken out, and then his sin was discovered.

Don't put that in there. We want Jesus to look good. Don't say that was one of his ancestors, but I love that about Jesus.

He identifies with us the way we are. Can I give you a good word today? We don't have a high priest that can't be touched by our infirmities, but we have a high priest who's been tempted in every way just like we have, and his heart, his ear is open to our cry. He lets us know that David messed up because he wants us to know.

I restore the ones that I love even when they've broken down and they've done it terribly. Come on, let's put our hands together. I restore them.

I pick them up. I don't throw them away. I fought going in the ministry probably for that one main reason.

When God started to deal with me in the business world about going in the ministry, oh, I hadn't been trained and all of that, but I knew that you could study, and I was insecure about speaking ability. I don't have a great voice. I'm not an orator.

All these battles went on, but the biggest battle I had in me, which God knows is true, was so many times God would come to bless me, and I would say, I'm not worthy. I'm not worthy. My older brother was a model child growing up.

He's six years older than me. He's my mother's favorite. My mother's here listening, but she's nodding yes while she's listening.

She's going, that's true, that's true. I have a younger sister, two years younger. My dad, after having two boys, wanted a girl, so that became his favorite.

I'm the middle child that nobody wanted. I've been in therapy now for 45 years, but I'm getting better. I see light at the end of the tunnel.

No, seriously, I wasn't a nice person growing up. I mean, I cut school, and I lied, and I did all kinds of things, and I just couldn't picture that God could use somebody as messed up as me. Has anyone ever had that battle in life? Lift your hand if you've ever had that battle in life.

In other words, you don't know me. I know me. See, you don't know me.

You only know me this way. That's not me. I know me, and I love that about Jesus.

My question to you is this as we close. If my words have struck you about who Jesus is and who he wants to be in your life, your shepherd king, the one who protects you, the one who feeds you, the one who guides you, if your faith has broken down, and you're like Abraham in a jam because your faith broke down, what do you think you're among people who are gonna judge you? You think I will judge you? I'd never judge you. Who am I to judge you? If you're here today and you say, Pastor, God brought me here today, whether it's across the street or in this auditorium, God brought me here today because he wants me to have the best Christmas that I maybe ever had or that I need to have because it's been a lot of years since I really was trusting and walking with Jesus.

It can happen today. The old Chinese proverb is true. The longest journey begins with the first step.

You gotta have a first step. You gotta acknowledge I need an adjustment here. I need help.

I need Jesus. I need to trust him. I need to bring my mess to him so he can make it a blessing.

I need him to feed me. I'm getting weak inside. That's why I have so little peace and joy.

That's why when someone talks about dying, I'm a nervous wreck because my eyes are not on Jesus. They're on the things of this world. Jesus will help you.

Jesus will protect you. If you're under attack right now, fear, depression, some demonic thing trying to just overwhelm you, Jesus is the only one who can fight off those enemies for you. You have to do it in his name, through his strength.

Or if you're in a puzzlement in life and don't know which way to turn, he's the good shepherd that will guide you. Oh, listen, he's so gentle. He will guide you in the way that you should go.

I need to draw closer to Jesus today. That's why I'm coming down here to the lowest step I can be on and still be able to pray with you. If you're here right now in the balcony or downstairs, would you just stand up if you say, pastor, pray for me as you dismiss.

That was for me. In some way that you don't know, that was for me. That's all I'm asking.

Just stand where you are, in the balcony or downstairs here. You just stand and say, pastor, I need to reconnect, draw nearer. I need to be saved.

I need to make Christ my savior. I'm religious. I grew up in church.

But what you're talking about, my shepherd, the center of my life, the one I trust beyond anyone else, no, that's not my experience. I want it to be though. If you're standing right now, quickly come out of your seat.

I'll wait for you from the balcony. Everybody here in the front, repeat after me. Dear God, thank you for Jesus.

Thank you for Jesus. I need him today. I need him today.

To save me. To save me. To deliver me.

To deliver me. To strengthen me. To strengthen me.

To protect me. To protect me. To guide me.

To guide me. My enemies are too strong. My enemies are too strong.

I am too weak. I am too weak. But you are strong.

But you are strong. I put my trust in you. Like Abraham trusted you.

I follow his example. And I lift my right hand. And I say, Jesus, I believe in you.

Have mercy on me. Son of David. Son of the living God.

Have compassion on me. And help me. Change my life from the inside out.

Make me the person you want me to be. I'm so tired of being tired. Make me strong now.

In Jesus Christ. I confess my sins. I'm wrong.

Forgive me. Give me the strength to stop it. To get away from that person.

To put those drugs down. Or anything else in my life. That's not of you.

I pray this in Jesus' name. Hear my prayer. Father God.

For Christ's sake. Make this change in my life. And I will give you all the praise.

And all the glory. And all the honor. In Jesus' name.

In Jesus' name. Let's put our hands together and just celebrate him. Come on.

Thank you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25428.mp3>
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