

# (Clip) When a Preacher Needs to Repent

by Jim Cymbala

---

*Jim Cymbala shares a powerful story of repentance and the transformative power of God's love through an encounter with a homeless man.*

**Duration:** 8:19

**Scripture:** Matthew 25:40, Luke 6:35, Ephesians 4:32, 1 Peter 4:8, 1 John 4:7-8

**Topics:** "Gods Love", "Christian Compassion"

---

## Description

This sermon shares a powerful personal experience of encountering a man in need, highlighting the transformative impact of God's love and the call to embrace and love others unconditionally, regardless of their circumstances or appearance. It emphasizes the importance of seeing others through God's eyes and being willing to extend grace and compassion to those society may overlook.

---

## Transcript

I had a crisis event happened to me in our previous facility on an Easter Sunday when I preached for the third time that day was bone-tired, bone-tired. Poured out myself, the singers, choir had done a cantata and people had come to Christ and I prayed and I got through with the meeting. The other building had a platform with no steps so it was my habit to just sit like this and let my feet dangle down on the edge of the platform.

And I was like, right, it's just about the same angle with the middle aisle and I'm just saying so tired. I remember taking my knot on my tie and loosening it and saying, you know what, I'm going to, I'm going to, I'm just going to chill. And Carol was playing just like Jamal's playing now exactly, people praying, workers, deacons helping.

And I was tired. I want to go home. Hadn't eaten all day.

And then I look and around the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5th row, there's a guy in the aisle around level with the 5th row. He's had a cap, filthy cap, but he had it in his hand and he was staring at me and looking at me and I could tell by his eyes like he wanted to know, could he come up here and talk to me? And I just looked at him a little closer. Man, the guy was disheveled, filthy looking, matted hair, a mess.

He looked in his 50s. He actually was 31. And I just looked at him and I thought, because Everton, Tulia, they remember back in that building with a lot of people panhandling in the church.

They would come in and ask for money and we had procedures of what to do when people ask for money. So we don't want to build their habit and hand them money. They'll just go out and drink it.

And I thought to myself, what a bummer because I'm going to have to give money. I'm not even going to go through the procedures. I'm going to just give this guy some money.

I had no wallet then. I had a money clip. So I waved him up and he came.

So I'm here. He got to about five, six feet away from me. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

Smell? No, a smell? You think you smell something? I'll match that smell with anything you've ever smelled in your life. A mixture of feces, urine, sweat, street and alcohol. Stir gently.

And let it cook for a while. That's what I smell. Nasty.

I looked away to inhale and I started to question, what's your name, David? Okay, I'm a minister. Let me go through at least the procedures here. So, man, you look bad.

I didn't know he was laying in his own urine right outside the side door on Park Place in that building. And he heard the music and it drew him in. He was just sprawled laying out there.

So, he's there. Oh, Lord. Where'd you sleep last night, deserted truck? How come you're not in a shelter? Too dangerous.

Almost got killed last one I was in. Okay. Man, this guy smells bad.

Missing one or two teeth. At least one right in the front. Let me give him five dollars, something.

Not the way I want it to end the day, but, you know, what can you do? Took out the money. I remember handing it. Pushed it down.

Said, I don't want your money. I want this Jesus you were talking about. And at that moment, I forgot all about David.

Because I knew who was really in need of prayer. It was Jim Simbler. It wasn't David.

So, I forgot him. I lifted my hands. Like I'm going to ask you to do in a moment.

And I just said, God, please forgive me. What have I become? What kind of cheap, two-bit preacher have I become? You send somebody who's searching for you. And I want to give them a few dollars and get rid of them.

Please help me. And God, that moment, baptized me. With a love.

With something, with grace. He saw how pitiful I was. And David knew it.

And he drew close to me. And I started to cry. And he started to cry.

And then he fell against me. And he put his head over here. And I put my arms around him.

And he put his arms around me. And for a while, we just rocked back and forth. A preacher in need of God.

A guy from the street in need of God. I'm not sure who was needier. Might have been me.

You know what, God spoke to me that moment. And this is not trendy at all. Those of you who want to go to like church growth institutes, this is not what this church is about.

God spoke to me and said, you see that smell? If you don't love that smell, I can never use you. Because the whole world smells that way to me. All the stinking, filthy sin of mankind.

I sent my son to die for that smell. So you're either going to embrace it, and love people in my name, or I can't use you. I'll put you on the shelf.

And if God is my witness, you can believe it or not. Suddenly, that smell became like the most beautiful ladies' perfume you ever smelled in your life. It just overwhelmed me.

He was weeping. I was weeping. I led him to Christ.

We prayed. We detoxed him for four or five days. Hired him on church, staff, housekeeping.

He spent Thanksgiving and Christmas at my house that year. My buddy got his teeth fixed. Handsome guy.

For that Christmas, all he had, he gave me a handkerchief. He wrapped it up in wrapping paper, gave me a white handkerchief. I kept it for years.

It meant more to me than anything anyone could give me. He gave me a car. I would have said, keep your car.

Give me that handkerchief. And what broke him and what broke me is God's love. Brothers and sisters, let's walk in love this year.

Let's think about other people. Let's love other people. If they're different than us, think different than us.

Look different than us. Smell different than us. I didn't grow up around that smell.

I was blessed, fortunate, middle-class Polish, Ukrainian, middle-class home. That wasn't my world. But it's God's world.

And He wants to use all of us.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/iHPaYYM1DBE.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/clip-when-a-preacher-needs-to-repent/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**