

Risen and Returning

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon 'Risen and Returning' explores the full gospel message, emphasizing Jesus's birth, sacrificial death, resurrection, and the promise of His return.

Duration: 42:00

Scripture: Matthew 24:36, Matthew 24:42, 1 Corinthians 15:52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 11:7, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "Second Coming"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ rather than just going to church. He urges the audience to examine their faith and ensure that it is real and centered on Jesus. The preacher then discusses the concept of the second coming of Christ, comparing it to the days of Noah. He highlights the need for faith and obedience, using Noah's example of building the ark despite being mocked. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God will punish unrighteousness and sin.

Transcript

I thought we could today go to a fuller picture of who the Lord Jesus Christ is and go past the most celebrated facts of his existence and get to something that we don't often think about and I want to put it before you as a different version of the good news. Different version means just coming from a different angle and presenting to you the gospel. We've made up our minds that starting last Tuesday all the way through today, we just want to reiterate to everybody the good news of Jesus Christ.

Gospel means good news and the Lord said to everyone who followed him, go into all the world and preach the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. So let's look at it from a different aspect. I'll be reading some verses in a second, but I want to give you this introduction, shall we say.

In the Old Testament, there were many promises made that one day God would send the Messiah, the anointed one, the promised one. He would be the deliverer for humanity, not so much physically to throw off the yoke of some political oppressor, but that he would be the deliverer and the savior that would take away our sins and the guilt of sin and the fear of judgment and death. So the Old Testament not only talked about his being born of a virgin hundreds of years before it happened, it actually says the name of the town, Bethlehem, and the prophets would get insight through the Holy Spirit and start talking about someone who was coming much further down the corridors of time.

Well, Jesus came and was born, as predicted, about 2,000 years ago in a little sleepy town of Bethlehem at night, and Mary and Joseph were nondescript parents. The father, of course, was thought to be the father, but Jesus was born miraculously according to Scripture through the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary so that the child was the Holy One. And he grew up, and around 30 years old, he publicly presented himself by going to the Jordan River and asking John the Baptist, who was related to him, like a second cousin, to baptize Jesus.

Although Jesus had no sins to repent of, he was taking his place as the Son of Man, a favorite name that he used for himself, humbling himself, and he was baptized. Coming out of the water, he was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness where he was tempted for 40 days and 40 nights by Satan. When he returned, he returned, the Bible says, in the power of the Spirit, and he began at about 30 years old this public ministry of preaching, doing good, casting evil spirits out of people, and bringing a message of good news, telling people, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

God's time has come. The Old Testament that foretold his coming and his birth also said that he would be a suffering Messiah, a suffering Savior. He was wounded for our transgression.

He was bruised for our, yeah. And that happened at about 33 years old because although he had popularity, the crowds were with him. He got the religious establishment, the Jewish religious establishment, very, Jesus was Jewish.

He got them very upset with him because they were jealous because the crowds were with him, and they, in collusion with the Roman authorities, plotted and carried out his death. The Jewish people had no authority to crucify anyone. Capital punishment was not allowed in the Roman Empire except by the Roman Empire.

So no local ethnic group could execute somebody. The Romans had to do it. And Jesus, 2,000 years ago, hung on a cross.

But of course, what was being fulfilled was the fact that he would be our substitute, that he would die on the cross as the Lamb of God. All those tens of millions of lambs had been killed over the centuries because God had said from the beginning, sin is very serious. And without the shedding of blood, there is no remission or putting away of sin.

Sin is not something you just laugh at or scoff at or make that, that's the way I do things. No, God is holy. And God said, I can't live among a people where sin is out in the open and not covered and forgiven and pardoned.

A whole system of sacrifices was put into the Jewish religious system, their form of worship, morning and evening sacrifices, all kinds of sin offerings. And to cover up sin and to get some kind of partial atonement was, was always a blood, blood being shed because the life was in the blood. God had said that life is in the blood.

In fact, the Jewish people were not allowed to eat the blood of any animal because the life is in the blood. So when Jesus died on the cross, he shed his blood, i.e. he shed his life. He poured out his life for you and I as our substitute and for anyone else who would put their trust in him.

So what was God saying? God was saying, I love you so much that even though the world has turned away from me, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There's none that seeks

righteousness, none who looks for God. There's not one who does right.

God in his great love for us, instead of just punishing sin and remaining just, he went beyond justice and he shared his love with us by sending his son to die in our behalf, in our stead. When Jesus died on the cross, he wasn't dying for himself. He was dying for you and for me because of our numerous sins that are serious.

It's a record against us. Whatever your friends say or culture says or the media says about sin, that doesn't matter. It's what God says about sin because at the end of life, it's appointed unto man once to die and then the judgment.

And when you stand before God, God's going to look at sin the way he looks at sin, not the way you look at sin or I look at sin. So we're dealing here with God, not with popular opinion or public sentiment. That's why this was all important.

And when Jesus hung on that cross, God, can I say it? He became a curse. For cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree. So he was cursed for us.

I deserve to be cursed. Look at me. I've sinned a lot in my life.

I deserve to be punished, but he died in my... Oh, isn't he wonderful? What a wonderful savior we have. Can we put our hands together and say amen to that? He died for me. That's what Paul says in the New Testament.

Christ died for me. Not Christ just died on the cross. Not Christ died, the Romans crucified him.

No, Christ died for me. It was a sacrifice. And just like a lamb, he never opened his mouth during the trial.

And they yelled at him and spit and beat him and did every kind of foul thing, and he never lifted his voice. So he died as a substitute for us. That's part of the good news.

That's the crux of the good news, to understand the meaning of the cross of Jesus Christ. Cross is not something you wear around the neck. A cross is something you believe in with your heart.

So Jesus died. Oh, how many are happy? He paid the price for our sins. Aren't we happy for that? So that we could be free.

And then he said two significant things of all the things he said on the cross. He said, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And the experts in scripture, the commentators say that he was so punished and he became sin. He bore your sin, my sin, that God, the Father, had to look away from him.

And God, the Father never had looked away from him ever. He had perfect fellowship with his Father. But when he bore our sins, he cried out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Last of all, he said, it is finished.

And then what he suffered and what he went through was more than just the crucifixion. He was suffering, and he could, as the Son of God, suffer punishment for all of our sins. And God, who's just, counted Christ's sufferings as an atonement for sin for everyone who would believe in him.

But they buried him in a tomb. I noticed last night as I was reading, it wasn't just Joseph of Arimathea, but it was Nicodemus. They were two kind of underground believers, part of the Sanhedrin, which was the Jewish religious governing body.

And they went and asked for his body from Pilate, and they put his body in the tomb. They anointed him with 75 pounds of precious preservatives. Jewish custom was you were buried within 24 hours of the time you stopped breathing.

So he was put in a tomb. A big stone was put in front of the tomb. Why? Because the Jewish authorities came to Pilate and said, look, this trickster, this faker, this Jesus of Nazareth, he was talking about he would rise again and then that something else would happen after he died.

And you know what? His followers will come and steal his body. And then they'll say, he's alive, he's alive. So we got to cover this up.

We're going to seal the deal. So we're going to put a big tomb in front of there. And it was done.

But no tomb, no stone, no rock can stop Jesus Christ. On the third day, on the third day, he rose. And we have no account of how that happened, who rolled the stone away, how that all happened.

But a dead man came to life. But not only came to life, a dead man came to life with a resurrection body and an eternal life that could no longer ever be extinguished. Well, the disciples couldn't believe it, even when Mary Magdalene, who had been possessed by evil spirits, came and told the disciples she was the first evangelist.

Jesus picked a woman to do it. The disciples were all unbelieving and frightened. They were down to 11 because Jews who betrayed him had taken his life.

And she went and said, he's alive. The tomb is empty. And the Bible tells us that Peter went sprinting to go and see it.

But John, being younger, outran him. And but John, being shyer, would not go into the empty tomb. Peter came and went in.

And they saw very neatly the bandages that were wrapped around him were put neatly at the head and at the bottom. Jesus then revealed himself to Mary Magdalene. She didn't recognize him at first until he called her name and said, Mary.

And then she said, rabboni, rabbi, teacher. She was instructed to tell the disciples to go and meet him in Galilee. But Jesus, even before that, started appearing to them.

One of them so doubted him. How many know the name of the doubting apostle? What was his name? Thomas said, no, I'm not believing that he wasn't there when Jesus first appeared. Just think, they lived with him for three years and heard his teaching.

And even when 11, 10 of them had seen him, Thomas said, no, I wasn't there. I'm not believing it until I put my finger in his hands and I put my finger in his side. So ladies and gentlemen, I just want to tell you that Christianity is based not only on a virgin birth and a miraculous sacrificial death of Christ, it's based on the miracle of a dead body coming alive.

Jesus rose from the dead and these men saw him, touched him, heard him, ate with him. And they lost everything because of that message. So if you say, no, that's some cockeyed story, some made up thing.

They were hallucinating. They were tripping on something and they thought they saw him. Listen, they saw him because they risked their lives and lost everything because they wouldn't change this message.

He's alive. And the authority said, you better not say he's alive. We'll kill you.

You could do whatever you want. He's alive. We'll chase you all over the known world.

He's alive. We don't care where you chase us. We can't lie.

He's alive. Jesus said to Thomas, you believe in me now that you've seen me, but blessed are those who have not seen me and yet still believe. Can we put our hands together? We believe that Jesus is raised from the dead.

Well, for 40 days off and on the Lord would appear to them. He didn't stay continually with them, but he stayed off and on with them and he would talk to them about things pertaining to the kingdom. And he started to remind them of something he had taught earlier, which they did not get into their cabeza, into their heads, which was, I'm going back to heaven, but I'm going to prepare a place for you and I will return.

See, this is part of the gospel that is swept under the rug in many places now. And we don't get the full picture. The full picture is he was born, he died, he rose again, and after 40 days, right in front of them, he ascended up into heaven.

And they were gazing up at him and missing him. I'm sure the moment they saw him ascend, because what a spectacular moment that must have been to be with the risen Jesus. And as they were looking up there, the angels appeared to them and said, hey, what are you doing gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus is coming back the same way you saw him leave.

How did he leave? Vertically in the clouds. And this over and over again in scripture, just as supernatural as his birth, just as supernatural as his death for our sins, just as supernatural as his resurrection from the dead. The thing that is talked about most in the Bible is not Jesus's first coming, born of a virgin, but his second coming.

Jesus said, take it to the bank. I'm coming back again. When he comes back, no one knows.

But the Bible tells us that we're to live continually with the state of expectancy. But either we die or he comes while we're living, we're all going to end up with Jesus. Every true believer is going to end up seeing the fulfillment of, I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, you may be also.

Heaven is not Brooklyn. Heaven is heaven. Heaven is not New York City.

It's not the American dream. It's not Trinidad. It's not Jamaica.

It's none of those places. Heaven is the place we're all going to go to. When the earth is renovated by fire and God makes a new heaven and a new earth, you and I are going to be with Jesus in heaven.

But to set that in motion is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. So the name of this little message is risen and returning. Not just risen, risen and returning.

Jesus said he's going to return. He's going to return. He's going to put a stop at some moment that only God knows.

He's going to put a stop to all the nonsense here on earth. All the cursing, all the stealing, all the raping, all the prejudice, all the immorality. He's putting an end to the whole thing.

He's coming Jesus back again, not to die on a cross. He's coming back as a lamb, but as also a lion. And he's going to judge the living and the dead.

You've got to understand that the good news involves Jesus coming back again. Jesus is not just for this life. In fact, the apostle Paul says, if only in this life we have hope in trusting Jesus and we have some peace and some joy.

If that's all there is, then of all the people in the world, we're the most miserable and most to be pitied. Because we deny ungodly lusts. We try to live by God's grace on a straight and narrow.

We say no to a lot of things which we know are not pleasing to the Lord. For what? To die and go in a grave? Does that make any sense? Because if there's no life after death, then Paul says, let's eat, drink, and be merry. For tomorrow we die.

Let it all hang out. Do whatever you want. Deny yourself nothing.

Say no to nothing. But Jesus is coming again. And that's a solemn thing.

Because, first of all, it tests our consecration and whether we really are in Jesus and really believe in Jesus. The Bible says he's coming for those who long for his appearing. I wonder how many of us, it could be said about today, we're in church, but how many are longing for his appearing and saying, Lord Jesus, even so, come quickly.

Get us out of here, Lord. We want to be with you. Do we have family attachments, children, and all of that? Yes.

But the early Christians, they said, used to open up the window every morning that they arose. And looking out toward the east, they would raise the window and cry out the last thought in the book of Revelation. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.

We're supposed to be living every day as if the Lord could return. Because he's not only died and crucified, he's not only risen, he's not only ascended to the right hand of the Father. There's going to come a moment where he will return.

And we don't want to live, I don't want to live with the dread of that trumpet sounds and this supernatural thing happens. I don't believe, Pastor, how that could happen. I'm telling you, it's a miracle.

Can you believe a virgin gave birth? Can you believe a man died for the sins of the world? Can you believe that he was in a tomb and he raised from the dead? It's all supernatural. And his return is going to be supernatural. But I don't want to be those saying, the Bible says, some people will say, hide me from the wrath of the Lamb.

Let the rocks fall on us. Because we've been using his name and cursing him and mocking Christians. And now we found out we're wrong.

We're in the soup. He's coming. It was real.

How do you think? You want to talk about moaning and groaning? Think of that moment when Jesus returns. But for the Christians, it's going to be, hallelujah, we're out of here. Come on, can we put our hands together and say that? Hallelujah, we're out of here.

Now, if this talk, which is obviously biblical, is making you feel a little uncomfortable, you got to check yourself. The Bible says, check yourself. I'm using a contemporary term for what the Bible is saying.

Check yourself to see whether you be in the faith. See if it's real, or is it just going to church? Do you have a real relationship with Jesus, or are you just a member of Transitions, or a member of the youth, or a member of BT? And are you sitting in a pew? You think that'll do you good when Christ comes? Oh, I sat in a pew. A lot of good that will do any of us.

Oh, I was the pastor. A lot of good that will do me. I need a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's going to be my Savior, my Lord. He's got to be the center of my life. Praise God, I love Jesus today.

How about you? Come on, do you love Jesus? Just put your hands together. So now's our short little verse. We got the picture now.

What will it be like when he comes? This is part of the good news. It's not like, oh no, he'll come. It'll be like, hallelujah, he's coming.

What will it be like? Well, Jesus talked about when he comes back in many different ways. I'm not deep enough, to be honest with you, to understand all that he taught about his return, and my prophetic calendar is a little bit disarray right now, but I just know he's coming. How it'll all work out, I'm not sure, to be honest with you.

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, Jesus said, nor the Son, only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark.

And they knew nothing, they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. This is Jesus talking, who loves us so much.

Two men will be in the field, one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill, one will be taken and the other left. Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

Jesus said, it's going to be like it was in the days of Noah. That was Matthew 24, Hebrews 11, 7 says, by faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear, built an ark to save his family. And by his faith, he condemned the world and became the heir, h-e-i-r, the heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

This is what I want you to think about for a few moments. Jesus said, here's the way it's going to be when I come back again. First of all, no one knows it and there'll be no warning, because he's coming as a thief.

Thieves usually do not text you and say, tomorrow at 12 noon while you're at work, I'm gonna bust your house up and steal everything you have. No, they come suddenly with no warning, so we know that. We know nobody, and this, that character on the radio who predicted, he's in hiding now I think, he's done that twice now, he predicted when the Lord will come, that guy, he should be thrown off the air, he really should, because he just sells books from making wild predictions.

Nobody knows when Christ is coming, but it will be like it was in the days of Noah. Who was Noah? Do you all know about Noah? Noah is this, one of the men mentioned in Hebrews 11, where I just read, who was a man of faith? And all the people in the Old Testament who gained God's approval were people of faith. Did they live perfect lives? No.

In fact, Noah, you would wonder why God even put that in the Bible. After Noah came out of the ark, he got dead drunk. He did.

How many know that part of the story, right? I didn't make that up. God put that in there, and it's not a joke. It's sad how dangerous drinking can be, that a godly man like Noah could get too much in him and shame himself.

But what gained approval with God was not that he never made a mistake. If going to heaven and being with Jesus is based on never making a mistake, how many know we are in a lot of trouble? Right? No, we are saved by God's grace through faith. God's favor and mercy and pardon is what is the ticket, our ticket, to be with Christ.

And it's secured by trusting, not in trying. If you're here today and you're trying, you got it wrong. You were mistrained in your early church like I was.

I was taught to try hard, not to trust. I never was taught to trust. I was taught to try harder.

And if you mess up, you try even harder. But you gain nothing by trying. You trust.

And Noah, by faith, warned by God. God came to him. There were no Bibles.

And God warned him and said, I've had enough. Listen closely. I've had enough.

Everybody's thoughts and actions are evil. There was some kind of cry that must have gone up to heaven like it was with the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. This cry of evil.

What was that cry? What was it from? Abuse of children? Murder? Rape? Hate? Some cry went up to God. And when God looked down, he saw that everyone was perverted. The whole thing was corrupt.

There was none righteous. Not no one. Somehow Noah found favor and grace in the eyes of the Lord.

And God came to him and said this. Listen. Now, a day is coming.

This is crazy stuff. A day is coming when I am going to wipe out everybody. Someone's going to start over new.

Just with you and your family and anyone else who might listen to you. But they didn't. So build an ark.

And that ark took years and years to build. And Noah, the Bible tells us, was a preacher of righteousness. So he must have been telling people, this old man, he must have been telling people, you better check

yourself out.

You better turn to God and repent. You better ask God to forgive you. Repent means to make a hundred eighty degree turn.

That's all repent means. You're living this way and now you turn and say, I'm sick of that. I want to go toward God.

God's going to help me. I need God. And Noah began to tell people that as he's building his ark.

And they're laughing at him. They're saying, what are you stupid? You're building an ark for what? No, there's a day of judgment coming. Come on.

Don't be stupid, old man. We're talking about this hasn't rained here in months. We're talking about judgment.

And he was a lonely, isolated voice. You got to get this brothers and sisters. He was not on the front page.

He had no television program. He was just a lonely voice. He was a remnant.

He was one of those few that believe God's warning. God gave him some kind of warning. There was no verse, no preacher.

He got some kind of revelation. God revealed to his heart, a moment is coming soon. You better prepare for it.

For the saving of not only you, but your family, Noah. So Noah preach righteousness, try to get the people to turn, but they mocked him, laughed at him. He was a joke.

Don't you get it? He was a joke. That's the way it is with everyone who serves God. If you really serve Jesus Christ, you become a joke to people.

It is what it is. And if that bothers you and you go, no one's laughing at me, then you can't be a Christian. To be a Christian means you're going to be mocked and laughed at.

It was that like that in the days of Noah. It was that all through time, John the Baptist, Jesus himself. Why do you think he ended up on a cross? So he was a joke.

He was the neighborhood joke. If you want to fit in and be relevant and get in with everybody and be accepted like, no, the Bible says anyone who wants to live a godly life is going to suffer persecution. If you really stand for Jesus, if you really stand for what's right, if you believe what this Bible says, those who don't believe, they're not going to let you alone.

They're going to mock you. They're going to mock you. I'm watching the response now to this football player who's a Christian who's now going to play for the Jets.

If he committed crimes and did drugs and all of that, it would be swept under the rug, right? But that he would dare and mention Jesus and be talking about verses. I want to thank my Lord and Savior. They say he's a polarizing figure.

I heard he's the most polarizing person now in America. What has he done that's so polarizing? He says, this is what I believe, but it's not going to be left alone. You can't believe that and be left alone.

They're coming after us if we believe that. But I don't care that they come after us. Come on.

We believe in Jesus Christ. Can we say amen to that? So guys that beat their wives and leave 10 women with children and then leave them high and dry, they're not polarizing. That's fine.

But he's polarizing because he says, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten. What a sick society we live in. This is one sick puppy of a country, isn't it? It is.

It is. I'm an American. I thank God I was born here.

This is a sick country. Sick country. So Noah was told, it's over.

Build an ark. No matter how they laugh at you, keep building. And listen, as he was building, don't you think they mocked him and laughed at him? That old guy, he's totally bonkers.

He's totally out until the rain started to fall. Then everything changed. At first they laughed it off.

Jesus said, it'll be like it was in the Noah. First they laughed it off. What's a little rain? We need it.

My lawn is looking dry. I need a little rain. But then when it kept up, secretly people's hearts were starting to pound a little more.

But not going to admit it. But when the water is about up to here, then some folks started to stroke over to that ark. Do you know what God said to Noah? Once you close the door, nobody can come in.

In other words, what does this whole story tell us? There's such a thing as unrighteousness and sin, and God will punish it. There are also people that God saves by His grace, the ones who trust in Him and who obey Him by faith. He built an ark.

Notice this. When the judgment came, the harder the judgment came, what form did the judgment come in? Rain. The more the rain came, the more the ark was lifted up closer to God.

Isn't that not beautiful? Listen, the more it came down judgment, God's people were lifted up higher to be closer to Him. Come on, can we say amen to that? And that's the way it'll be. Noah, by faith, worn by God, in holy reverence, that means respect, he built an ark for the of his family.

And when he built it, he said to the world, yo, I don't care what you think. He condemned the world. When you serve Jesus and you believe in Jesus, our faith condemns the world.

This polarizing picture of a football player, he's condemning the world. Because when you mock simple faith in the things of God, you condemn yourself. When you laugh at those who are trying to do what's right, you condemn yourself.

He condemned the world. He brought sentence on the world, because now they deserve what they got, because God said, come on into the ark. That's what he's saying today.

He's saying to all of you today, in case somebody here is not a Christian, not a real born again Christian, come into the ark. Well, the door is open now. There will come a day when the door is closed.

What can I tell you, brothers and sisters? What can I tell you, ladies and gentlemen? The door is open to the ark. The name of the ark is Jesus. You don't have to build an ark.

Noah had to build one. You don't have to build one. God has an ark, a place of safety.

No matter what happens, what judgment comes, when you're in the ark, you are absolutely safe. In fact, the more the judgment, the better it gets for you. You go higher up.

And the name of that ark, listen, the name of that ark is Jesus Christ. And as God is my witness, I don't want to die. I don't want to sleep tonight without thinking.

I don't want to think that there was somebody here, that you're not in that ark. You're not in a relationship with Jesus. And I'm pleading with you.

I'm asking you in Christ's stead. He loves you. I'm nobody, but he loves you.

And I'm representing him. Won't you come in the ark today? Won't you come in the ark? Listen, whatever sin you're in, keeping it from the ark, it better be good. It's going to cost you your soul.

It better be good. She better be really fine. He better be really fine.

That drug better be really good because it's going to cost you eternity. Eternity. This is part of the message.

I'd be lying if I didn't tell you this. This is serious. This is solemn.

Christ gave his life. He's returning again. He rose from the dead.

He ascended. Now he's going to come back. And my job is to get you to be with me and Carol.

And we're getting out of here. You're going to be with all the pastors and our wives. We're getting out of here.

But imagine the whaling will come from people who played instruments or went to church or sang in a choir and didn't really have a relationship. They were living a double life. And then he's coming.

And then everything will be revealed. What you whisper in the dark will be shouted from a rooftop. No secrets.

Everything's coming out in the open. That's what the Bible says. His eyes are like fire.

There's no hiding anything from him. So it's more than about going to church. Am I right? It's about coming in the ark.

Let me say this last sentence. Noah was told by God, build an ark for the saving of your family. When you come in that ark, you have a right now to go to God and say, God, I want my family with me too.

And if they're not with you right now, I'm talking about your children, a husband or a wife. If they're not with you now, you have every right to claim that to God and say, God, now work on my behalf. Because I'm entering the ark, but I want to go alone.

I want to be like Noah. I want to bring my family with me. Show me how to talk.

Show me how to pray. God, work on them. Visit them with a dream.

Do whatever you have to do. But I don't want to come in the ark alone. Lord understands that.

He had a family. He loved his mother and his brothers and sisters. Lord, I want my family in the ark with me.

Let's bow our heads. First of all, anybody here, if you have a scintilla, an iota of doubt, you're not sure that you're in that ark today. Not church going, not trying to live a good life.

I've been there. I've done that. That's not being a Christian.

I'm talking about a relationship with Christ where he is Lord and Savior. I'm going to ask you in a second to come forward so I can pray with you. But just as important, those of you who have family members, I'm talking about either a spouse or children.

You have entered the ark, but they're not in the ark. And you want to stand in their place today and say, Jesus, bring them into the ark. I am so thankful.

As much as my salvation I thank God for, I thank God that my son, my two daughters, my wife, I want to thank God that my three children and my grandchildren all right now are serving the Lord. Oh, I thank God for that. They're in the ark with me.

If you're here today and you need to come in the ark or you have a family member that you are really concerned about and you want to pledge to God today, God, by your grace, I'm going to pray them in, love them in. Something's going to happen. They're going to come in the ark with me.

And I don't care if that son's in prison. God can get them in prison. God can get them wherever they are.

Nothing's too hard for God. Let's close our eyes and I'm going to separate my prayer. Let's pray first for anyone who's here today that's not in the ark, but they're coming in the ark right now.

They're going to come right now into the ark. They're going to call on Jesus, believe in Jesus, give their life to Jesus and we'll pray for the family members. Lord Jesus, I thank you that as many as received you, you gave them the power to be the sons and daughters of God.

We don't have to break down the door. The door is open to the ark. You are the door and your hands are out wide to us saying, come unto me all you that labor in a heavy laden and I'll give you rest.

I pray not one of us will leave this building who is not now in the ark. We confess our sins. We repent of them.

What we're doing is wrong, Lord. Our lives are right now not right and we repent of that. We're sorry.

We humble ourselves. No excuses. We're sorry.

Now we turn to you. We ask for forgiveness. We ask for pardon.

We ask for mercy. We ask for you to change us from the inside out. Lord, we can't change ourselves.

You know that, but with you nothing is impossible. So we receive Jesus as our Savior. We believe in our heart and we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord.

We believe what the minister said today from the word of God. Now there's not going to be fear of death. No fear of Christ returning.

We'll be rejoicing. We welcome that because now we belong to Jesus Christ. For we believe with our heart and we confess with our mouth and that's how simple it is.

When you said you must be born again, you didn't ask us to climb over a mountain or take six months of classes. You just said except you become like a child and like little children. Let's just all lift up our hands.

Just lift up your hands everyone in the building and out loud just tell Jesus you love him. Everyone in the building just tell Jesus. We love you, Jesus.

Te amo, Señor. We love you. I'm not ashamed to praise you out loud, Lord.

Okay, now let's pray. Now Lord, we bring our family members to you. Sons and daughters, husbands and wives.

Did you not tell Noah that he should build an ark for the saving of his family? We ask that you would begin to work on those hard hearts of sons and daughters, even rebellious ones, distracted ones, blind ones. Break down their pride, their self-sufficiency, Lord, and draw them to you. This is serious, Lord.

We're praying for the salvation of our family, that they might enter the ark so that when the judgment comes they'll be lifted up to heaven. And we're not going to let you go, Lord. Every day of our lives now we're going to bring them.

We're going to name those children to you and the husbands and the wives, Lord. And we know that nothing is too hard for you. And you said in your word, ask and keep on asking and you will receive.

Seek and keep on seeking and you will find. Knock and keep on knocking and it shall be open to you. So we thank you for this Resurrection Sunday early morning service because we sent your presence and we thank you for your word.

And now let the smile of God be upon his people today. May your face shine upon us. May you grant us peace and joy all day long as we believe and trust in you.

Not trying anything today, Lord. We're trusting on you. You will do the work and you will keep us safe close to you.

We pray this in Jesus name. And everyone said, God be with you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24169.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/risen-and-returning/>

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