

Loving Sin More Than Jesus

by Mark Greening

This sermon emphasizes the need for repentance, humility, and a deep love for the Lord Jesus Christ to experience personal and corporate revival. It highlights the importance of understanding and confessing sins, believing in God's promises for freedom, and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts. The speaker shares personal experiences and biblical truths to encourage listeners to seek God's mercy, forgiveness, and transformation.

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Transcript

Father, we thank you for your evident presence in the meetings this morning with our brother Richard, as he has spoken to us and challenged us. Now, Father, quieten our hearts again, I pray that as Mark speaks to us, we might hear you speak. Grant to him, Lord, your unction, your clarity of mind, clarity of tongue, and may his heart overflow as he ministers to us.

May you minister to him. We thank you, Father, we commit him to you now, and we open our hearts and our ears to hear what you have to say to us. In Jesus' name.

Do you believe God's word? I'm glad Dick Siffley broke you in. Let me ask another question. Do you believe the promises in God's word? Now, before you say yes, remember that there are 7,487 promises in God's word.

You may not be sure, some of them you may wonder if they're for Israel or someone else, but there are some promises that are so evident that to disbelieve them is to do nothing short than call God a liar. But let God be true in every man a liar, scripture says. We're here because this is a revival conference.

We're here because we're here because either we've been praying for revival, we desire revival in our own lives or in the church, or we're just wondering what it's all about. But I want to tell you today that revival is

not just the sovereign work of God. It is.

Everything in this world is a sovereign work of God, is it not? Everything's under God's umbrella of sovereignty. We can blame God for a lot of things that don't happen because we use our theology against what ought to be. But it is God's desire to revive us as we will see today in the word of God.

As a matter of fact, he gives one promise in 2 Chronicles 7, 14. He says, if my people will, then I will. Now that sounds like a promise, that sounds like a condition, does it not? If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. What are the prayers that you are praying that you need God to answer on your behalf, on behalf of your family, on behalf of your church, on behalf of this nation? God says, if you will, then I will. My text this morning is Psalm 85, verse 6, which says, will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you? It's not enough for countries around the world and different locations to have been revived in times past.

It's not enough for us to be personally revived in times past, whether it's a month ago, a year ago, 10 years ago, 50 years ago. God says in his word, he expects that we're going to cry out, will you not revive us again? And we can only be revived in our hearts, whatever that means, if we listen to what God says to us in his word. You know, it'd be a wonderful thing tomorrow morning to read in the headlines of the newspapers that revival came to Victoria.

That would be a wonderful thing. But even if it doesn't come to Victoria at large, in 2nd Corinthians 3, it says that Christ himself will write not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God on tablets of human hearts. And he can write on your hearts, in my heart, revival came to dot, dot, dot.

Put your name in where those dots are. Zechariah 4.10 says, who despises the day of small things? We often think of revival as something that sweeps a nation. But this verse is talking about you personally being revived, me personally being revived again and again and again and again.

We think that revival only counts if it's some big, huge event. Let me tell you, let me ask you a question. Someone with the gift of healing was to go down to a large hospital here and was to heal a thousand people in that building all at once with a prayer from the front lawn.

And a thousand people were healed and there was wonderful healing. And one of us came forward today and by the power of God you were healed. Let me ask you, one individual, would you feel any more excitement than any one of those thousand people in that big building about your healing? No.

You would be just as excited. And over the years I have witnessed many, many times, over and over and over again, because God says, if you will, I will. I've seen individuals revived.

I've seen families revived. I've seen churches revived. I've seen home fellowships revived.

One of the key words in this verse is the word again. As a matter of fact, in verses 2 to 4 of Psalm 85, 6, we read this, you forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins. You set aside your wrath and turned from your fierce anger.

Restore us again, O God, our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us. It's talking about people who are saved. Their sins are forgiven.

That's the doctrine of justification. God's wrath is satisfied. That's the doctrine of propitiation.

And yet there is still a need for us to be restored again in verse 4 and be revived again in verse 6. This brings up a critical point in our walk as Christians today, because as Christians and in our churches, we need to be constantly in a state of being revived. You know, when I was younger, I used to think that my spiritual gift, one of them, was backsliding. I could backslide real fast.

You know, as I get older, the backsliding just becomes more subtle, right? It becomes sins of the heart. Out of the heart come these things. And I find that I have to come to a place of brokenness again and again and again.

And Lord willing, I will preach on brokenness tomorrow night. Lord willing. All we have to do is to look at the powerlessness of our churches and even our own lives to recognize that we are in desperate need of revival.

Now, the obvious question would be, well, how does a person get revived? But I don't want to ask the obvious question this morning. I want to ask that obvious question in a different way. I want to ask the question this way.

How does a person get unrevived? Because the answer to how we get unrevived is the answer to how we're going to get back to being revived. The answer to how a person becomes unrevived is found at the end of verse 6. Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you? Brothers and sisters, we fall into a backslidden state when we no longer find our joy in the Lord Jesus Christ. When we no longer love him.

When we find more joy in the things of this world. When we find more joy in a relationship with a husband or wife or your children, a boyfriend, a girlfriend, a best friend, someone else. We have more joy in a relationship with a human being, a sinful human being, than with the Holy Son of God.

When we find more joy in money and security and our investments and in our plans for the future and for leisure than in the Lord Jesus Christ. When we find more joy in our possessions, in success or power or position or lustful pleasures than in Christ. I like what our brother said the other night.

He says just let your mind go and wherever it lands, that's where your heart is. Jeremiah 2.12 we read, be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror, declares the Lord. Why would the heavens shudder? That's a big place up there to shudder.

Verse 13 tells us, my people have committed two sins. They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. Can you imagine that? You have a wonderful fresh well and instead of going to that wonderful fresh well, you go and dig a hole down by the swamp where there's amoeba and parameciums and tadpoles and everything else in that water and you drink from that.

And heaven goes, this forsaking of God not only happened in the Old Testament, it also happened in New Testament times as well. Revelation chapter two, the Christians there had left their first love. They didn't lose their first love.

We often talk about losing your first love. No, they had, as an act of the will, they had left their first love. They turned their back on the Lord Jesus to embrace people, places, things, possessions, whatever it was, and they loved those things more than Jesus.

That's the way, brothers and sisters, we become unrevived. We stop loving the Lord Jesus Christ with all our hearts, souls, mind, and strength. We become unrevived when we break the first commandment, which is to have no other gods before Him.

If we have other gods, would we love anything or anyone or any goal more than Him? The apostle Paul said in Philippians 1, for me to live is Christ. Whatever was to my prophet in chapter three, I consider it dung, rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him. So the way to revival is finding our joy in the Lord again, or if you've never found your joy in the Lord, it's to begin to find your joy in the Lord today, possibly by true salvation.

You know, I've been asked to leave a church before because Christians were getting born again. Have you ever seen Christians get born again? It's a wonderful thing. I know it's possible for Christians to get born again because I was one of them.

I got saved three times, the third time counted though. Do you know how people get saved but not saved? Because they come, they're told, they hear a hell-fired brimstone sermon, and they come and they pray, God save me from hell, right? I don't want to go to hell. That's what I prayed.

I prayed the sinner's prayer. I didn't who wants to go to hell? Lord, save me from hell. That's not what the angel said.

Emmanuel, God with us, we said, you shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from hell. From what? Their sins. You see, when we want to be saved from hell, but we don't want to be saved from our sins, then we only deceive ourselves, and that's where we're still going.

When God saves us, he saves us from our sins. We'll talk about this at the end. He saves us from our sins and the desire to sin and live in sin, but this is called a revival conference.

And whether revival sweeps Victoria like it did the eastern seaboard in 1857 through Jeremiah Lamphere with a total of almost two million people being swept into the kingdom over the next few years, whether that happens or whether a handful of us today find our joy in the Lord Jesus Christ and repent of our our sin of rejoicing in other things rather than in the Lord Jesus and loving other things more than Jesus Christ, revival can come. I believe that. Over the years, I've witnessed many individual revivals in people and families.

I've mentioned that and I'll share some of those testimonies in a few minutes, but I want to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that a deep love for God and not just conviction of sin or convicting messages or prayer alone is necessary if God is to send personal or corporate revival. Many of you have read the account of the Welsh revival in the early 1900s where 100,000 people were saved in the space of about 10 weeks, but are you aware that the flashpoint of that revival, the one event that God wanted people to remember as the start of that great awakening, took place on the second Sunday of February 1904 where after the morning service the youth got together in the vestry and their pastor Joseph Jenkins asked them this question, tell me what is God doing in your life? One or two got up to read scriptures and to preach at the others and Jenkins interrupted and said, no, no, tell me what is God doing? Is he real to you? And then a

19-year-old girl by the name of Flory Evans stood up. She was a fairly new Christian and she said this, I am unable to say very much today but I love the Lord Jesus with all my heart he died for me.

Those words ignited the flame that was to eventually lead to national and even worldwide revival in selected places. God confounded the wisdom of the wise by not using theologians or pastors or revival preachers although he did use them powerfully as he did with Evan Roberts but he used the teenage girl to spark one of the most powerful revivals this world has ever seen. Not with fancy words or theatrics or rhetoric but in simplicity and sincerity expressing her deep love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is this not what the psalmist meant when he said in Psalm 51 12, restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will turn back to you. Have you ever considered that the one of the most effective ways of seeing people saved and backsliders turning back to God is through the example, through the words, through the teaching and the preaching of people who are filled with joy and love for the Lord Jesus? That's what it says here and when we love the Lord Jesus it's infectious and others get convicted as a matter of fact others that aren't even knowing they're being convicted they aren't even hearing the messages they get convicted by God and they come in and they get saved. I remember this is what happened back in 1992.

I'd become pastor of a church I never intended to be I never wanted to be a pastor of a church I said oh Lord spare me from that I'll be itinerant preacher because you're not allowed you're not around long enough for them to kick you out you know you just kind of go from place to place they know you're going after a week or so and you can move on I said oh Lord I used to say the world's worst job was being a pastor and the second worst was being a missionary that's when I was a teenager I used to watch these you know missionary conferences that would come I said oh Lord call me to be a missionary but not a pastor and somehow I got into this church I didn't look for they said we want you I preached I pulled the pin on a revival sermon launched that grenade said they'll never invite me back here they said we want you so I didn't have anything to do so I said okay you know the Lord was burdening me that I was to preach on revival and so we got there and the board introduced me to this great big thick manual it's a huge it was a strategic plan of what we were going to tell God to do and how he was going to do it over the next five years I've mentioned it it was a marvel to angels and pets alike it was it was phenomenal this thing I looked at it one of the other elders was kind of on my side I said what are we going to do they said let's hide it so we hid it we hid it we we didn't want the board to see that thing it was amazing and we used to go into our board meetings with Robert's rules of order and it was just I said Lord spare us from this and finally I preached I taught them a message all the elders I said it would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word and prayer you know to wait on tables so to speak I combined two verses in acts and and they got the idea I said listen as elders we got to pray if we're not praying we really disqualify ourselves from being elders well everyone resigned on the board except for one man who really believed that he should pray and I had been praying for once oh Lord descend upon us according to Zechariah 12 10 by your spirit of grace and supplication we need you to fall on us if your spirit does if your Holy Spirit does not enable us to pray we can't even pray isn't that what Romans 8 says you don't know what you ought to pray for he helps us in our weaknesses because we don't know what to pray for so we began to pray we prayed Lord search me oh God I remember hearing from Blue Terror Revival as God's point to point back at us never forget hearing him say that years ago and I said Lord forgive me forgive me and I began to get broken over my sin then one day I get a call from this elder my only elder and I didn't know it was him on the phone he was weeping and I said to him brother where are you what's what's wrong he says I'm at work he was the controller of an engineering company he says I'm at work I said where are you

he says in my office I said is your door shut I thought he's gonna embarrass us he says yes it's shut I said he says I'm down behind my desk on the floor I said what are you doing down there he says God is breaking me from my foot for my sin God is convicting me of my sin I am so grieving over my sin I said praise God come on over after work we'll pray some more so we came and we prayed we began praying that God would raise up others and then another elder joined us there was three of us quarter three strands is not easily broken we began praying that God if you if you don't if you don't do something here Lord we won't pray so we prayed for three months God dealt with us as elders and then we prayed for another three months and one day we were at a retreat I wasn't speaking at the retreat and I don't even remember what the topic was necessarily was some general topic on prayer and we were standing out back after one of the sessions and all of a sudden there were 17 of men there and one of the men said at a clear blue we need to start praying as men and immediately immediately all 17 agreed and they started getting together to pray for revival in their own hearts in their own families in the church and then beyond three more months after that God came God came we didn't know he was going to come we didn't know how he was going to do it but he came no programs no evangelism no handing out tracts nothing against these things I'm just saying that God came and we we we didn't check to see if he you know if he was on time right we didn't check that manual God came we would go to I get a phone call I go to see someone who didn't know the Lord I would open the scriptures I'd let them start to read within three or four verses it was the same thing they would begin to weep for 10 minutes they'd weep I'd say nothing they would come out saved over and over and over every week one two three four matter of fact every time we came to church we no longer asked the question did anyone get saved this week but who got saved this week the ladies came to us and they said we want to start a ladies prayer group now I said why do you want to do that because the men have left the left us in the dust spiritually our husbands more men were coming than women to prayer 75 percent of the church was involved in prayer every week cottage it didn't matter where but we we had no agendas there was no more out we stopped how we never had elders meetings after that there were elders prayer meetings that's all we had and we would pray about things and we could pray one hour two hours three hours whatever the Lord showed us I remember that not only was God saving the people who wanted to get saved he would bring people in I remember at the back of the church I'd meet someone afterwards and I'd say oh you're new here where are you where where do you live they say oh they tell me where they lived and I said well who invited you here they said no one I said why did you come this morning they said we don't know God woke us up and told us to come God we would talk to them they'd get saved God was even saving people that didn't want to get saved do you know that God can save people that don't want to get saved we think we gotta somehow convince them God began saving I I remember this one lady this man he had just been saved outside of our church and he was from Vietnam he had a Buddhist background and God wonderfully saved him and he said pastor if you talk to my wife she'll get saved she was very antagonistic through the gospel she was very very devout Buddhist and I said well I can't save anyone but if you want to bring her over for dinner this Friday night my wife will cook something and we'll we'll talk to her so she came there she was so reluctant she just sat there looking at me I shall not be moved she just sat like that and so I thought well how am I gonna put it so I said to her I said um let me your husband is so excited about what's happened to him let me share what God did for him so I I used that story to share the gospel and at the end I said would you like to become a Christian too and she said no and by the way she could barely understand English barely understanding uh I said oh you don't want to be converted do you believe these things at least you believe something she said no so what do you do you can't do anything we just made small talk we keep you 10 minutes later she begins weeping and weeping and weeping and finally her husband was able to get some words in edgewise there and he turned to me he said pastor good news I said what good news she's

under conviction of the Holy Spirit and she wept for 10 minutes and he got saved got up rejoicing and praising God in her language gave us all hugs and has since led almost all of her Buddhist relatives to Christ how did God save her when she couldn't even understand me people would come the most I I could tell I'm not gonna I have to be careful about stories here maybe I'll share some more on Thursday night but I want to let you know that when God decides to move if you will then I will we cannot put that into a formula every time I've seen God move it's always been a little bit different but one thing is is is constant people get right and deal with their sin they love the Lord Jesus and God saves and he delivers if we love the Lord Jesus Christ with all our hearts and that was that was the thing that so characterized our leaders they were in love with Jesus they loved him with all their hearts they didn't care about anything anymore two of my elders ended up one of them's now he's passing he's on his third church in a very large church in Toronto and then another is running a small Bible college elsewhere but they were never the same after they saw God move they were never the same they quit their jobs and they went to serving the Lord one more just two more stories recent ones there's one man that came to our fellowship and 26 years old he's been looking for truth for years went to all the cults all the isms all different denominations all different churches good churches why not and he came in one day and there was so much love the Lord was doing such a work every week people were being saved we're where we were ministering and uh exactly what scripture says if you will I will so we just assume that God will we I just assume I believe that I do I really believe God will revive I believe he's going to revive some of you today I do and if not today then tomorrow or next week because you can't get away from the Holy Spirit convicting you his words will be like a barb in your heart and he'll get you where you want you and he'll bring you to brokenness and tears some of you and he'll save you or deliver you or free you but this man came in and I shared something I don't know what I shared that morning and afterwards he was observing all the people around him and they loved each other I mean they they love each other and they hugged each other giving one another holy hugs that they weren't giving holy kisses that's what we used to do back I'm french background we used to do holy kisses that that's a stretch or something but but we we we have holy hugs where we are now that's the british thing to do we have holy hugs that he couldn't believe this this love and how kind people were to one another and he came to me in the dining room and he said listen he says I've been looking for truth for years he says but today I don't know need to know whether you are speaking the truth about salvation I can feel the love here and he got saved that night and he just led the sunday service and taught this past sunday well I'm here you see when the lord saves and the spirit of god comes on a person he changes them and transforms them you see the lord cares about our hearts above all else that's why in proverbs it says my son give me your heart he doesn't need our money our talents or our hard work you see the pharisees had given all these things to him and jesus says these people honor me with their lips but their hearts they're far from me jesus cares about our hearts was this not the reason that jesus did what he did when he restored peter how would a court of law have dealt with peter today they would have had videotapes and reenactment and and eyewitnesses and they would have raked him through the coals and made his whole inquisition a very painful one what does jesus do he doesn't even bring up the event he just looks at him because he doesn't care about how good a fisherman peter is how good a businessman he is how good a leader of the other 12 11 or how good a preacher he is all jesus cares about is his heart and he says peter i just want to know some three times i want to ask you the same question because this is really important to me do you love me more than these and jesus asks us that question this morning do you do you love me more than people places or things or goals you know the holy spirit tells us what it is we love more than him today i know i can't help but sit back there and even as our brother preached and others have preached the holy spirit speaks to me and convicts me deeply of my sin and my failure and the fact that i need to get back to him to revive me again that i might rejoice in him can we be honest with

god for a moment the lord jesus was to appear and just look right at you with those piercing eyes and say do you love me more than what would you say do you love me more than your life have you ever witnessed someone losing their life and been happy about it i have i've oh i love seeing people lose their lives i mean spiritually speaking i remember going to one house and his dear sister with her husband was counseling them and i had quoted john 12 24 i tell you the truth unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains only a single seed but if it dies it produces many seeds the man who loves his life will lose it well the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life and as i was sharing this with this dear sister she was struggling and under conviction of the holy spirit because like many of us we like to control our lives we believe the lie that to be happy we have to control things so that we're happy son and daughter i'm not going to be happy unless i can control you and make you say and do the things i want you to do husband i'm not going to be happy unless you do exactly what i want you to do and wife and i'm not we do this we try to control people oh it's a wonderful thing when we learn that we're not the holy spirit another person's life that he does a great job doesn't he and as she listened that the lord spoke to her heart and she began to weep and she says lord jesus you died for me but i've never died for you in other words dying in my life just dying to self and as she wept i wept i never heard a more sincere prayer and she wept and she died that day for you died and your life is now hidden with christ in god colossians 3 says and she died to that desire to control and what freedom there was in her heart see one of the main barriers to revival is a joyless loveless walk with god now someone will say i thought that sin was the barrier to revival and it is i mean isn't that what 2nd chronicle 7 14 says were to turn from our wicked ways sin is a main barrier to revival but the question i want to answer today is why do we sin you see if we know why we sin we'll be more convicted i believe by that sin the reason we sin the reason there is so little revival in our lives is because according to psalm 85 verse 6 we do not rejoice in the lord we do not love him as we ought it is not just enough for us to know about sin and know that we have to repent of it and just do that intellectually the pharisees were like that they had their 613 laws and yet despite all of their actions they dotted their eyes and crossed their t's their hearts were far from him they had no joy and love for god himself revival will come to us personally and corporately when our greatest desire is to love the lord jesus with all our heart and to hate sin we need to understand the reason we sin is because we love that sin or those things more than the lord jesus and when we love something more than the lord jesus we sin do you understand the way that works do you remember what here it is a perfect situation in the garden of eden they had it made adam and eve did perfect temperature didn't have to worry about the latest fashions they didn't have to worry about air conditioning and heating and gas bills they didn't have to pay taxes there was no no traffic jams going to work i mean what could be better than it was in the garden of eden so satan came and he somehow tempted them to believe that there was something better than the lord walking in the cool of the day with them every day if you just have it look at doesn't this look lovely and they thought oh does is that ever lovely we love that and the idea in that case in this case of knowledge we love that idea more than the fact that we love the lord jesus who told us not to do that you see the israelites thought too that they'd be happy what would make you happy well i remember back and we could go to swish we could get that meat and all we have is this mana lord they grumbled and complained and god says okay and he sends in these low-flying quail and they grab them out of the air and scripture says while the meat was still between their teeth he sent leanness to their souls god it's not enough that you are this rock that rock which is with us was christ it's not enough that christ with us we want something else we want some food that'll really make us happy we love this more than we love you that's what caused david to fall he thought lord it's not enough what you've given me i want something more and he fell into sin with bashiva and all of these things are ploys and distractions of the devil to take our eyes off of the lord jesus and to keep us from loving god with all our hearts could we get honest

again i remember once the lord spoke to me about this it's a wonderful thing to be honest you desire truth in the inner parts the psalmist says and then he goes on and gives his confession in psalm 51 but i remember sitting there one day and lord says where can you get honest with me and tell say these words that you love that sin more than you love me can you say that but you know what i got honest with god i said lord the reason i'm sitting is i love that sin more than you that was very convicting and then to come to him in brokenness and repentance and ask him to take that out of our lives and out of my life second timothy 3 1 says but mark this there will be terrible times in the last days people will be lovers of themselves lovers of money verse 4 lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of god and if we're not revived it's because we're loving something else some other sin more than the lord jesus matthew 6 24 no one can serve two masters either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other you cannot serve both god and money if you love money you can't love god you see money is a wonderful servant but a terrible master 1 john 2 15 do not love the world or anything in the world if anyone loves the world the love of the father is not in him james 4 4 you adulterous people don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward god anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of god or do you think scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely and as was said earlier in these this conference that god is a jealous god and he does not wanting does not want us loving something or someone else more than him especially sin there's nothing wrong with loving our spouses or our children or our brothers and sisters in christ it's just a matter of degree if we love them more than jesus then we sin against him and we cannot be revived you say well how do i know if i love something more than the lord jesus well how much time do you spend thinking about it what keeps you awake at night how much time do you spend worrying about those investments you know the coyote has run off the cliff and it has not looked down yet that's why we have not had an economic collapse but the coyote is about to look down what are we worrying about where your treasure is there your hearts will be also what pleasures do we like do we spend our time mostly with tv or books some leisure some sport bodily exercise profiteth little doesn't profit some but we can make even exercise in health of god to itself am i given over to impurity or pornography or masturbation or lustful thoughts or any of these things we don't talk about these things in church anymore we don't so because we don't talk about these things people think it's just normal i'll talk about freedom from this in a minute god wants honesty our brother preached this this morning proverbs 28 13 he who conceals his sins does not prosper but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy you see our hearts can attach themselves to so many things it was i thought it was one of the funniest quotes i ever heard as a teenaged lucy tara he used to say that when the rapture comes many christians are going to go up feet first holding on to the things they loved holding onto that steering wheel hopefully have a convertible if that happens you know a hundred years from now not one of us will remember the things that enthralled us and captivated our hearts unless it's the lord jesus christ we won't even think about it there'll be nothing it's done paul said i consider it a loss comparing compared to the surpassing greatness of an owing jesus christ my lord for whose sake i have lost all things 1st john 2 17 says the world and its desires pass away but the man who does the will of god lives forever there's no reason there's no reason any one of us needs to either leave today unrevived or to not be revived in this next week or this next month as we do business with god there is no reason will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you once we understand what it means to repent of loving these things more than the lord jesus christ then 2nd chronicles 7 14 and 15 makes sense that if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then will i hear from heaven will forgive their sin and heal their land now my eyes will be open in my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place now here's where the devil comes along brothers and sisters he comes along and tells us that we're too great a sinner to ever be

forgiven as a matter of fact those the more you know the scriptures you know the enemy can use scriptures against you too i've had many people come to me and said we're just like that that person like esau in in book of hebrews you know hebrews 12 17 people have quoted this to me afterward as you know when he wanted to inherit this blessing he could bring about no change of mind though he sought the blessing with tears and they say it doesn't matter if i repent because i've gone too far for too long that's a lie of the devil so first corinthians 11 31 says but if we judged ourselves we would not come under judgment isn't the lord merciful today whatever the holy spirit has nudged you and me about today do you know he says that if we judged ourselves if we get honest with him and tell him lord i have sinned and i have loved this sin lord this is what i have done against you lord forgive me but i want to repent of this sin i'm going to come to you in brokenness lord if i don't have godly sorrow godly sorrow works repentance that leads to salvation but worldly sorrow leads to regret do you know what the definition i once i said lord what's the difference how do i know if i have godly sorrow let me tell you what godly sorrow is very simply godly sorrow is understanding first what your sin is that the holy spirit is convicting you about and being so grieved and sorry about it that if you could go back and relive your life knowing what you know today you would not fall into that sin that's godly sorrow now often it will come with tears god says if you will judge yourself you will not come under judgment oh i love psalm 103 verse 8 the lord is compassionate and gracious slow to anger abounding in love he will not always accuse nor will he harbor his anger forever he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities for as high as the heavens are above the earth so great is his love for those who fear him as far as the east is from the west so far as he removed our transgressions from us as the father has compassion on his children so the lord has compassion on those who fear him for he knows how we are formed he remembers that we are dust i remember years ago i prayed a very foolish prayer i prayed many but this one was really foolish i remember reading a story about general booth praying he said lord if you could just dangle all of my elders over the pit of hell for a minute it would cure them of their backsliding he wrote something like that so i thought i don't know that's a little extreme lord i want i know what i want if you could give me a vision like i isaiah had of your holiness that would cure me no i wasn't really looking for a vision but i wanted something i just wanted something to keep me going and i prayed nothing happened a few days later i was alone in my apartment on my knees and we used to have a country place in vermont and i had the ominous task of digging up that cesspool and putting a new one and i remember thinking i saw myself in the middle of that cesspool with my nose just above the sludge line and i said lord what is this i was just minding my own business praying and the lord spoke to my heart and he says mark that's the way i see your sin and i said surely not i lord i said that's not my sin that's the sin of the prostitutes and the drug dealers in in parkside where at king and jameson where i used to take teams we grew up witnessing and talking to the people there i said that's their sin and the lord spoke to my heart very clearly again he says no mark that's your sin because when they sin they do it comes naturally but when you sin you sin against knowledge and light i was devastated you know when the psalmist said take not thy holy spirit from me i know theologically that when we having believed you remarked in the holy spirit i realized we cannot lose the holy spirit we can lose his anointing but we do not lose that ceiling do you know i know what the psalmist meant because it felt like god's holy spirit was taken from me at that moment and for two weeks it felt like i was hanging by the skin of my teeth over the pit of hell that any moment i could lose my life for eternity every day i drove i would drive on the 401 and i i'd be weeping because all i could see was my sin and i prayed god take my life cause this car to go into the it was an old car anyways i propped up the front end i used to be a mechanic it was still in a garage and so i knew what to do and there's an old honda the front end had fallen down so i took a driveshaft stuck it through the two tow bars and kept the front end to go it would just move like this the front end you know so you go around the corner you had to actually start

turning before you hit the corner because there was a delayed reaction and so i used to say lord this would be this forensics would find it real easy it was the front end that broke just caused me to go in the car i take my life i prayed every day he would take my life it was so awful what i was going through nothing happened and after two weeks i went back to my apartment alone i got on my knees and i said lord you've always answered my prayer you did not answer my prayer for this and um i prayed for a vision of your holiness and you didn't answer me and then god broke the silence and he spoke to my heart and he said this he says mark i did answer your prayer but i couldn't show you my holiness until i first showed you your sinfulness now open to micah chapter 7 verse 18 i i did not know what that passage was and i opened to micah chapter 7 verse 18 and i read these words who is a god like you who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance you do not stay angry forever but the light to show mercy you will again have compassion on us and you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea and as i read tears of joy began streaming down my face and it was over and the lord released me from that and he laid on my heart now don't you ever dare look down on anyone else in their sin because but for the grace of god there go you joel 2 12 says even now declares the lord return to me with all your heart with fasting and weeping and mourning rend your heart and not your garments return to the lord your god for he is gracious and compassionate slow to anger and abounding in love and he relents from sending calamity who knows he may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing grain offerings and drink offerings for the lord your god isaiah 57 15 for this is what the high and lofty one says he who lives forever whose name is holy i live in a high and holy place but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite if that's you this morning god will revive you now i just want in closing to mention this some of you are thinking you know i've done this before i've tried repenting i've tried getting right with god and nothing works but the word of god says this it is for freedom that christ has set you free stand firm then and do not let yourself be burdened again by a yoke of slavery you will be bound unless you believe that the lord jesus christ not only died to forgive you of your sin but he also died to free you from your sin we preach a gospel of forgiveness but not freedom from our sin forgiveness of sin but not freedom this is why the holy spirit was given to free us from ours to raise us up as he raised christ from the death on the third day that same power is like the working of his mighty power which he exerted in christ and raised him and we have been raised with christ but if satan can keep you believing that you've only been forgiven and you have not been freed then you will not be freed scripture says it is for free it's free i remember an old missionary telling me mark the reason you are struggling is because you do not believe the promise in scripture it says and having disarmed powers and authorities he made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them by the cross satan has power in your life in these areas because you don't believe that he's been defeated do you know he's been disarmed whatever the sin is that's binding you today satan has been disarmed and the only power he has over you is the power of the lie let's assume that this is a stun gun and i'm a thief the thief comes to steal kill and destroy in our lives and i go out and i'm hiding next to your car and it's at night time and you come out and i hold this up to you and i say your money or your life i've tripled the voltage so it's going to kill you your money or your life little do i know your black belt in karate you do a flying kick knock it out you disarm me what can i do i've been disarmed you drive away but the next poor unsuspecting soul comes out to get in their car i've been disarmed you know what i do i put my finger in my pocket and i go like this your money or your life now if you believe i have a gun and i can what are you going to do i can rob you i can steal no that i've been disarmed that's why some of you like i was for many years were bound because we do not believe that we can be free you will know the truth and the will set you free if the sun sets you free you will be in god that has appeared that brings salvation to all men it teaches us to do what say no to ungodliness passions and to live self-controlled and godly lives in this

present day you see as our brother shared earlier satan is the father of lies and if he can believe you cannot change you will not change but god says repent if you if you i will if you will confess and humble yourself i will if you will believe the truth set you free you will be free and the question then is lord do i believe you you see the third time i got saved which was the real time i got born again the word came out of my mouth when i was on my knees i wasn't even praying to saved i was on my knees you know what i was praying i confess the greatest sin that i ever committed and it came out and i said lord jesus i confess the most grievous sin that i've ever committed and it's not all these things that i've confessed you before the greatest sin i've ever committed is an evil heart of unbelief according to hebrews and those words just came out and i asked god to forgive me for unbelief not believing that it is for freedom that he has set us free and not believing he can revive us again and again and again may god speak to us this morning and draw us to him and repentance and he will turn he will there's a promise he will turn he will have mercy if we judged ourselves we do not need to come under judgment if we wait too long and god takes us there may be just a fearful expectation of judgment and fire or if we're christians then we will repent we will weep you know when jesus dries every tear i believe that part of those tears is we're going to realize how much more he could have used us if only we had believed his word god has spoken to you this morning this afternoon now and let's allow the holy spirit just to speak to us we're not revived in a conference we're revived by the holy spirit it's between you and him you may feel you want to pray with someone you're welcome to come forward but god can meet you right where you are right where you are let's just have a few moments of silent prayer and then we'll close and if you'd like just continue an attitude of prayer as the lord speaks to us heavenly father we come to you we humble ourselves before you lord we come broken and father you can't fix anything unless it's broken first we don't come with our pride and our self-sufficiency we come broken you have convicted us of our sin we have sinned against you you only have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight so god we wanted to just to judge ourselves and to admit this and to repent and to come to you and ask for forgiveness but lord we've asked that so often we now believe that you could give us freedom not just through the shed blood of the lord jesus christ but the power of the holy spirit who rose him and will give life to our mortal bodies we died to sin how can we live in it any longer his name is jesus for he will free his people from their sins lord if there's anyone here this morning and perhaps like me would they just wanted to be freed from hell but not freed from their sins lord would you please have mercy and save that one save us today oh lord and lord for those of us who have left our first love please draw us back please draw us back there is nothing nothing more lovely and beautiful than the lord jesus christ there is nothing more enjoyable than walking with him and fellowshiping with him have i in heaven but you and being with you i desire nothing on earth there is great joy in your presence lord turn our hearts revive us again that we might rejoice in you thank you oh lord for what you will do it's in the name of the lord jesus christ we pray these things amen

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