

Normal Life?

by Mike Mollman

The speaker encourages listeners to be willing to go through the narrow way of life, which requires facing difficulties and challenges, in order to be close to God and to be one with His people.

Scripture: Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 18:21-22, Romans 12:18, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:12-13

Topics: "Gods Guidance", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about herding cows and relates it to the journey of God's people. He emphasizes the importance of the word of God, comparing it to a surgical tool that brings transformation. The speaker also highlights the reality that believers may make mistakes along their journey but encourages them to seek God's guidance. He concludes by sharing a touching anecdote about his father calming fighting bulls with his voice, illustrating the power of God's voice to bring peace.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Well, good morning to you all.

It's good to be here this morning, this weekend. Amen. I bring you greetings from Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Praise the Lord, I can bring you greetings from Cheyenne, Wyoming. And give a report that God is doing a beautiful work there. It's been a long time coming.

And there's been, yes, there's been a lot of heartache, a lot of tears, a lot of disappointments. A lot of people come and go, but God is faithful. And the Lord Jesus said, I will build my church.

He will build it with somebody, somewhere. And I thank the Lord by His grace and mercy that we've got a group of families here that have come together over this past year. That I can tell you there's not a

frustration amongst the brethren there.

There's peace. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren that dwell together in unity. It is good and it's pleasant.

It's pleasant unto the Lord and it's pleasant for His people. And so I give you greetings of encouragement from out west. And my heart and my vision, my dream is that that work in His Spirit will continue to go to the west.

There's a great dearth, Mike Mose mentioned yesterday, all over the whole country and all over the world. But, I mean, as far as what I would consider sister churches to our church right here, what I'll call a mother church here, there's two of us that I can think of out west. There may be a few more in other remnant families out there.

But, so there's work to be done. May God give us the help and the grace, He will, to carry on and to march on as an army of God. I want to take an opportunity while I have it with me here.

And I wish that all the brethren from Charity and Living Hope could be here as well. But you're looking at a parent who has sent a number of his children out to a number of Bible schools. You're looking at a man who's been to a number of leadership conferences, has been to a mission conference.

And I know that there's a lot of work. There's a lot of physical work and labor and a lot of prayer that goes in to put those types of events on. And I want to, as a father and as a brother, say thank you.

You bless, we men, we parents, you bless us that aren't here, that send them all in. And I for one just want to say I appreciate it immensely from the bottom of my heart. It has blessed my family tremendously.

And helped us all stay true and stay directed and stay focused in a time when there's such mass confusion and, like I say, much disappointment out there. So I greatly appreciate and I want to personally give a thank you to all of you who give of yourselves for the work that you've done there for many years now. So, anyway, before I start my message, let's bow for a word of prayer.

Father, I thank you, my Lord, for the love of Christ that you've poured out upon all of mankind, Father. Lord, my prayer is that you would help me to be able to expound on the thoughts and the verses and the analogy that you've given me to share with this group of dear brothers and sisters, Lord. I pray that, Father, that the words that would come out of my mouth would be pleasing and pleasant in your sight, in your ears, that your people would be edified and challenged at the same time, Father.

Oh, Lord God, may we come away from this gathering this morning, change more into the image of our Savior, our Lord Jesus, God. We may give Him more glory and honor through our lives. We love you.

We praise you in Jesus' name. Amen. I want to share a message that I've shared before a couple of times in my home church.

It came out of a conversation that I had with Brother Gerald Nolt about three years ago. And we were talking about church life in general, and he was sharing a testimony with me one time about how he used to share with his family these words. Well, when things get back to normal, when things calm down a little bit, and things settle down a little bit, we'll do this and we'll do that as a family.

When things get back to normal, when life becomes more normal, and he said, I did that for quite a while. He said, I finally realized life's not going to get back to normal. Now, I want to clarify something a little bit here.

I'm not saying that, especially us as fathers, that we let church life just run our lives to the neglect of our families. I'm not saying that at all. We have to pour our lives into our families.

If we don't do that, we've got a very, very weak, anemic church. And I think we all know that. I'm not saying that.

But I am saying that if you're going to pour your heart and your soul and your life into serving our Lord Jesus and within the local church body, which He loves to move through, brethren, life's not going to be normal. Now, it's worthy, it's worth taking a moment to say, well, what do you mean by normal? Define normal for me a little bit here. What I'm talking about, I think you probably have an idea, but a life that is where, at least to some degree, your plans come about as you plan them.

Things move along relatively smoothly, without any bumps along the way. Wouldn't that be nice sometimes? I've said that before. Normal life.

The title of my message, with a question mark, Normal life. Normal life. There's a verse of Scripture that I think about when I ponder this particular topic.

Out of 1 Peter 4, verses 12 and 13, I'll just read them to you. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. Does life ever feel like some strange thing is happening to you? What's going on? But rejoice inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Think it not strange. Think it not strange. When life gets abnormal, think it not strange.

That's not strange. For one thing, if you're a child of God, your citizenship is in heaven. It's not even here anyway.

Think it not strange when life becomes abnormal. You know, Jesus warned His disciples in John 16 there. He said there's going to be a time when people will think they're doing God's service when they kill you.

And that happened right after Pentecost. The Apostle Paul, he thought he was doing God's service. Killing Christians.

Consider the Anabaptists and the Catholics and the Protestants were wiping them out. They thought they were doing God's service. Do you think life was normal for those people then? It sure wasn't.

That's okay. God gave us a verse of Scripture in Hebrews chapter 12 speaking of discipline and God chasing His children. It says, For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

That's Hebrews 12 verse 6. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? Then over at verse 11 it says, Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Is life normal when the Lord is chastening us? Is life normal? Do our children consider life to be normal when they're in the middle of being disciplined? I remember one time a brother shared with me a story.

I had his little four year old daughter. This was a number of years ago here now. He was seeing a strong will rising up that he could see needed to be broken for her good.

And he shared with me one time, he said, I sat down with my little girl on my lap, physically held her there for two hours while she screamed and shouted and threw a temper tantrum two hours before he finally broke her will. And she wept on his breast, submitting herself unto the will of her father. Two hours of very abnormal life for that little girl.

I assure you. But yet, that's what she needed. That's what she needed.

But I want to talk about and take this thought into the area of church life. It's a very dear subject to my heart. Normal life within the church body.

Jesus said here at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 7. A couple of verses. Verse 13 and 14. You know them.

Into ye in at the straight gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction. And many there be which go in thereat.

Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life. And few there be that find it. I looked up some definitions there of the word straight and of the word narrow.

The straight gate and the narrow way. That word narrow. One particular word I want to focus on.

One definition that it has is to crowd. It also means to afflict, narrow, to throng, to suffer tribulation. It's going through the straight gate and the narrow way.

Thinking of those definitions, does that sound like normal life? It doesn't to me. But to crowd. I thought about that and I pondered that.

Narrow is the way that leads to life. A crowded way that leads to life. You say, brother, where are you going? What are you talking about here? Jesus' prayer in John chapter 17 was that His people, His disciples at that point.

But brethren, it was for us too that we would be one even as He and His Father are one. And the reason that that was His desire, that we would be one, is so that the world out there might believe that indeed the Father sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world. That was His motive.

You can find that there in John chapter 17. I believe it's verse 21. I'll take a look real quick here.

It says that they may all be one even as Thou, Father, art in me and I in them, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. That was the motive of His prayer. That was the motive why He wanted His disciples, His children, us here today, to be one even as He and His Father are one.

Brethren, I pondered that. Only God can do that. Only God can take people and make them one.

Because it's not our nature to be that one with other people. By nature, we're independent. Only God can do that.

But that was His prayer, that God would make them one even as He and the Father were one. That means we're going to get close. For God's people to be one, that one, that united, in spirit and in truth, you're going to be close.

There's a scripture that talks about how wisdom shouts from the streets. I grew up on a little farm in Oregon on the west coast. And my dad raised a small herd of black Angus cows.

And I've got some stories I want to share with you. Because I believe wisdom also shouts from the farm, if I can use that term. As we walk through life, as you walk through life, the child of God, some things you don't see them for 20 years maybe.

Maybe 25 years. But you look back at the growing up years, and you ponder some of the experiences that you had growing up as a child, and you look and you say, Wow, Lord, here I was just out chasing cows around, and you had something eternal for me to grasp 25 years later. It's beautiful.

I was the youngest of five boys. My dad, like I said, he had a small herd of black Angus cows. Twice a year, we had an event that we went through, that we started up and went through.

It was vaccinating day. There were some diseases that went through the area there that I grew up in that would kill cows. Twice a year, we would round them all up, herd them all up, and put them in the corral and run them through the chutes, and we'd vaccinate them.

It usually took about a day. Maybe three-fourths of a day. He'd call up my brothers, we'd all come out and help, and we'd go out and we'd chase cows.

We didn't have any horses. We'd just run around there on foot out there, chase them around. This is a little bit of a side note, but one beautiful little picture here for you to ponder here is my dad.

He loved his cows, and I can say I think his cows loved him. He would go out when it was time to round them up. We lived on a small farm back there.

It was 80 acres. When it was time to round them up, he'd go out in the corral up there, and they'd be out in the pasture out there, and he'd just go out and he'd start hollering out, Come on, cows! Come on, cows! And they'd stop, and they'd lift their head up from eating up the grass and the ground, and they'd look around and start mooing, and here they'd start coming in. Dad's talking to us.

He's calling us in. Something's going on. We've got to go see what's going on.

Dad's calling us. They knew his voice. It was fun to watch.

And like you say, I never realized until 25 years after that, Whoa, Lord, this is beautiful. There's something eternal here to ponder. And they'd come a-running in, and sometimes there'd be a few stragglers out there, some ornery ones that we'd have to go out and chase in, and we'd bring them into the corral there, and we'd run them into a smaller little corral.

And then from there, we would run them through this small, little, narrow path. A chute. Probably about as long as from the podium here to maybe the edge of the steps right there, 15 feet long, maybe 20.

And then at the end of that, there was what they called a squeeze chute. You'd run them through there in this machine, this contraption, where you could squeeze them and get them. But what we would do is,

we'd run a bunch of them through into this narrow path, and they'd have posts on either side, and there'd be one of us on the outside there, and we'd jam a bunch of cows in there and cram them in there as much as we could, and we'd run these 4x4s behind them.

And when they'd back up, they'd ram those 4x4s up against the post right there, and they'd be squeezed in there. And it was crowded. If those cows could talk to us, I think they'd probably say, what's going on? This isn't normal.

Dad, what are you doing? I don't understand. What's going on here? Father. He knew exactly what he was doing.

He knew that if I don't take my herd and run them through this narrow chute and take this big needle and poke them all, they'd die. It was a narrow path that for those cows, it led to life. It led to life.

And they had to go through there because those diseases that came through, they killed cows. That's why we vaccinated them. Now, sometimes there'd be cows that would be at the very back of that thing.

And bear with me a little bit, brethren, but if you happen to be the cow at the very back end, about the only thing you can see is the back side of that cow right in front of you. And no, it's not pretty. And yes, sometimes it got messy.

And yes, sometimes you might sit back and say, sometimes, at times anyway, it sounds like church life. Because we all know we've all got warts. We all know we all make messes.

We all know we all make mistakes. That's how it is. No, we don't want to.

I don't want to. But that's how it is sometimes. Let's face it.

That's reality. But at the same time, if they didn't go through that narrow chute, they'd die. Jesus had a reason why He said, narrow is the way that leads to life.

If we don't go through the narrow way, what are we going to do? We're going to die. The only other option is death. That's the way that leads to life.

And like the definition said, it's crowded. His desire is to make us one, even as He and the Father are one. And if we're willing to go through that, His promise is this is the way to life.

Broad is the way that leads to death. And I think that right there, some people will shy away from that because I don't want to get that close. That's too dangerous for me.

I've got too much in here. Like Brother Myron was saying, too much in here, maybe, that I'm unwilling to share. That's too close for me, brother.

I don't know if I'm willing to go there. Well, that's the way that leads to life. If you want to find life in Christ, it's a narrow way.

They didn't understand. You know those poor cows, what's going on? And yet, my dad, he knew exactly what he was doing. He was caring for them.

He was caring for his business. Ultimately, it was for his own sake. Isn't that just like the Father? His desire is for us to have life in Him so that He gets glory.

It's for His namesake. He leads us in the paths of righteousness for His namesake. Yet, we get blessed with Himself as the reward and life out of that.

But He gets the glory, just like my dad. He was just taking care of his business. The Father's business.

Yes, it seemed like about every three years or so, there'd be a stubborn one, a flighty cow. And yes, you get one. And brethren, this crosses over to church life as well.

You brothers know this. You get one that starts stirring up strife. And it starts getting every other cow wound up and excited.

You've got to deal with it. You've got to touch it. You've got to do something.

And sometimes eventually, he just would get fed up and said, I'm done with you. Off to the sale barn. And she's gone.

Because he's going to have peace with his herd. Because you get those flighty ones in there, there's a place for church discipline, brethren. It just takes one individual that goes around stirring things up because they've got their own agenda.

Or maybe they don't have a submitted voice to the will of God and they've got to spout their mouth off here and there and start stirring up things and it sows seeds of discord. God calls that an abomination. And He made a way for us in His Word how to deal with that.

It's not fun. And I've told my brothers here at home, I said, you know, I hope we never have to do that. But the reality is, in a certain sense, we did already one time this year.

It was someone who was wanting to come in. He didn't know he was submitting himself to a spirit of confusion. But we could see it.

And there's no way, there's no room in the church of Jesus Christ for a spirit of confusion to come in and start sowing confusion. We had to hold our arms up. That was hard.

I didn't like that. But we had to do it. Some of the more harder parts of church life.

But sometimes you had to do that. You had to make hard decisions. But I ponder that.

I think about that. I said, Lord, it's humbling to be compared to a cow. But maybe it's not quite as bad as being compared to a sheep.

I don't know. Because we're compared to sheep all through Scripture. And Jesus said, narrow is the way.

Crowded is the way. Are you willing to go there? Are you willing to go there with everybody else? With all their faults and all their messes and all their shortcomings? Are you willing to go there? I want to read a passage of Scripture. Turn with me, if you would, to 1 Kings 18.

I love this story. It's one of the most well-known stories in all the Bible. The story of Elijah on Mount Carmel.

I think there's a lot of insight here for us to ponder. I'm going to read a portion of this story and share some thoughts on it with you. 1 Kings 18, starting at verse 30.

And Elijah said unto all the people, well, first of all, this is right after all the prophets of Baal have come down and they've chanted and cut themselves and got all wound up and cried out, Oh, Baal, come down and consume this sacrifice. And nothing happened. And Elijah's mocking them and saying, well, maybe he went on a trip and maybe he's gone to sleep.

You better wake him up. And nothing happens. He had a lot of faith that day.

Praise the Lord. Verse 30, And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him.

And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name. And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord.

And he made a trench about the altar as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order and cut the bullock in pieces and laid him on the wood and said, Fill four barrels with water and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time.

And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

And the water ran round about the altar and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering and the evening sacrifice that Elijah the prophet came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel and that I am Thy servant and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God and that Thou hast turned their heart back again.

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and they said, The Lord, He is God. The Lord, He is God.

Consider with me. I believe we've got a beautiful picture of the God of heaven. The triune God of heaven.

And yourself and me right here in this picture. You and I. We're the bullock. We're the bull.

Was alive. Offering up ourselves as a living sacrifice unto our Lord Jesus who stands beside the altar, the repaired altar of the new covenant, a living sacrifice, brethren. What happens to a sacrifice? It's killed.

It's cut up. And then as if that's not enough for a person to say, Lord, I trust You. Here I am.

I offer up myself unto You. I say, Good. And by faith, they step up there at the mercy of their Savior.

Brethren, I think you all know this. Anybody that is willing to take that step, the God of heaven, for His name's sake and for your benefit, will begin cutting away everything that is dear to you. Everything that is precious to you.

And sometimes that hurts. It's surgery. It takes a knife.

The sword of the Spirit. His Word does the work. And if that's not enough, you know, He says, okay.

He starts talking to these people. He says, fill up four barrels full of water. Throw it on and douse it.

I said it before, sometimes God's people, they don't want to hurt anybody. They don't want to make mistakes. They don't want to say the wrong thing.

Maybe even make a false accusation. They don't want to do the wrong thing, but they're people. And God has them on their journey.

And sometimes along the way, they make mistakes. And they say things they wish they hadn't have said. You know, 20 years ago, myself and two other men, for all intents and purposes, we took a pastor and we pinned him in the corner.

And we said, it's you or us. That was wrong. It took me 17 years to see that.

I wrote a letter to that man. I haven't heard from him. I guess I would welcome any of you to keep me accountable to try again to get in touch with that man and ask him to forgive me.

I thank God he understood my ignorance then. I didn't understand. And you know, did he meet the qualifications for an elder? Honestly, no he didn't.

But that didn't matter. He was still that man overseeing that flock, that particular fellowship. And here we were, thinking we were doing God's service, pinning him to the wall saying, if you don't leave, we're going to.

That man passed the test. He did not grasp a hold of the authority that he had and said, ok, I'll leave. He passed the test.

We failed. For that man, I was one of those guys taking that bucket of water and just dumping it on him. And I'm sure he must have been thinking, Lord, what's going on? I'm just trying to serve You out of an honest heart.

In here with my very own friends. I don't understand. Life's not normal.

That's how it is sometimes. Isn't it? It's not easy sometimes. That's ok.

We heard it this morning. In this picture. Where's Jesus? Where's He at? He's right by you.

He's right there. We heard that already this morning. I so appreciated that.

I was a little bit awed at what you shared because I thought, wow. This is a lot of what I want to share. He's right there.

He hasn't left you. And He sees the whole thing taking place. You can trust Him.

Jesus right there. The High Priest. There is hope.

The fire of God did fall. He prayed unto His Father. God the Father.

Jesus the Son. What happened? The fire of God fell. It did come.

And it consumed that sacrifice. That living sacrifice with your name on it. And when that happened, it was gone.

It was nowhere to be found. It didn't get any attention. It didn't get any recognition.

Who got the glory? Who did they confess was God? It wasn't the sacrifice. It wasn't the preacher. They said, the Lord, He is God.

That was the testimony. I remember when almost nine years ago now, we lived in western Colorado, my family and I. We began visiting the church that at that time was in Loveland, Colorado at that time. And it's no longer there.

And we visited for two years. And pondered moving. And finally made the decision to go ahead and do that.

In doing that, excuse me, in doing that, I gave up a career, a job that I dearly loved. And I think probably anybody in here may have loved it too. I worked for the electric company out of Glenwood Springs, Colorado.

And basically what my job was, I would oversee excavating contractors placing electrical systems in the ground. And the area that I had to cover was Aspen, Colorado. Now it's quite a unique place in that it's one of the most materialistic places probably in America.

But at the same time, I got to drive up and see the mountains of Colorado. And I'd get up in the mountains sometimes and sometimes we'd be working on the ski hills up there. And I'd look around and I'd just take the view in and say, they're paying me for this.

This almost doesn't seem right. And so I loved my job. And I loved the people that I worked with.

There was a few Christians there I could relate to. One in particular was a dear brother that we didn't see things eye to eye in a lot of our theology. But he was a dear brother and sincere in his faith.

And we could have some depth of fellowship together. I appreciated him. But I remember the day that I gave my notice because I'd taken a job.

We were going to move to Loveland to be a part of the church there. And the day I gave my notice there, I sat down in my boss's office there. And it was all I could do to just not lose it all.

And I managed to get through and got done. I went and jumped in my pickup and started going down the road. And I just wept.

Because I loved it there. I loved the people that I worked with there. I loved my job.

And I loved life. Life was kind of normal in western Colorado for us. See, we home church.

And brethren, let me just say this. There's a place for that. There's families out there that they have nothing else to do.

And I don't fault them at all. They've got to have somebody to get together with. I don't fault them at all.

But we really didn't have any accountability. We were just there all by ourselves. And so life was relatively normal.

And my flesh liked it. But we wanted to do the Lord's will, and so we moved to a church body. And when we moved there, I thought I had found heaven on earth.

I found the people of God. And I had my expectations way up here. Because I humbly say this.

I guess I kind of put them on a pedestal. I thought we found them. You know.

So we moved there. And I say this. God in His faithfulness to me, and also to His own Word, in less than six months time, He took all those expectations and He wiped them off the shelf.

And I sat there. Hurt. Disappointed.

I even called my boss back up with the electric company. I said, do you have a job for me? I want to go home. The Lord spoke to me.

He said, now, son, love these people and serve these people. I wanted to ask Him, Lord, can I just go back home? I thought I knew what He'd tell me. I thought He'd say, no.

You stay right there, boy. Son, that wasn't what the Lord told me. When I finally got on my knees, I asked Him, Lord, okay.

What do you want me to do? He said, son, you can go. That's fine. But you just make sure that your heart is clear with every brother in this congregation I put you in.

And that was not what I really wanted to hear. But that was what I needed to hear. There's a verse of Scripture that says, it was good for me that I was afflicted.

It was good for me that my own brothers, God allowed them to take these after I'd been chopped up, my own brothers got to take these buckets of water and just douse me with them. It was good for me. You know, there's a reason why Paul wrote these few verses here in Colossians.

About forbearing with one another and forgiving one another. Colossians 3, verses 12 and 13. It says, Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, vows of mercies, kindness, humblest of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any.

Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Why do you think Paul wrote these verses? I think because he knew you're going to have opportunities to forgive one another. You're going to have opportunities to forbear with one another.

And if I remember right, I think that word means to put up with. You're going to have opportunities. We better expect it.

God in His faithfulness to me took all those expectations and said, now start forbearing with these people. Love them. Serve them.

Serve me by serving them. A question I asked in a message here a few months ago at my home congregation. I shared a message.

The title of it was, How deep is your non-resistance? How deep does it go? Is it limited to those outside the church where we expect to be stepped on and let down? Or does it live right here where we expect to be served as well? Is it here? Am I willing to be a doormat for my Lord Jesus? Am I willing to go that far? And I know that there are those out there that would say, brother, you've gone off your... Jesus doesn't call us

to be doormats. I have this to say. Jesus became a whole lot less than a doormat for you and me.

He became our sin. He became our sin that we might have life and even have an opportunity to walk down the narrow path that leads to life. And I can't be a doormat for Him? Something's wrong with my heart.

Can I have a heart that says, Lord, I understand. I'm right along with my brothers and sisters. I'm right there with them and I understand that at times, we're going to make mistakes.

We're going to say things we don't mean to say. We're going to do things we don't mean to do. We're going to say things we're going to regret.

People are going to get hurt sometimes and things are going to have to be made right. If somebody's got to be a doormat in the church, if somebody needs to be that one that all those other brothers and sisters need to step on on their path to heaven, let it be me. Can I have that kind of a heart for my brothers and sisters? Am I so dead to myself for His sake and His honor and His glory that I can let everybody walk all over me and bless them on their way and say, I love you? Can I have the kind of heart that Jesus had when He was walking to the cross and He said, Father, forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing. That pastor 20 years ago, he had every right to say that about me. Lord, forgive Mike.

He doesn't know what he's doing. I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't want to hurt anybody, but I didn't know what I was doing.

Can I be a doormat for my Lord? Reminder, all the while, all that water is being dumped on, that sacrifice. Where's Jesus? He's right beside you. He's right there.

I'll never leave you or forsake you. I know exactly what you're going through. It's okay.

Love my people. Serve my people. It's okay.

If you care to get honest enough with yourself, you'd have to say, you've been one of those too. You've been one of those that have been dumping the water on your own brother, on your own sister. You say, I'm sorry, I didn't know what I was doing.

Praise God, the blood of Christ is greater than all those things. But His grace is also greater than all those things for you and I to be able to go through those things and love and bless along the way. I'm not saying there's never a time for Matthew 18 when you need to sit down with a brother or a sister but I wonder sometimes if God's people don't really understand the right spirit behind Matthew 18.

If you're going in with an attitude that says, well, I'm going to straighten this brother out. Matthew 18 right here. Brother, we're going to sit down.

If you don't listen to me, I'm getting elder. If you don't listen to me, we're going to take you before the church. That's not the spirit behind Matthew 18.

Brethren, you better have a heart for that brother or that sister. That's your burden. That's your concern.

It's not about me getting vindication. Jesus is right there beside you. The Scripture says that He ever liveth to maketh intercession for you.

He ever liveth. He conquered sin and death, rose from the dead and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God and He prays for you. Do you believe that? He does.

He says He does. That means He does. His Word is true.

Do you ever think about, what does He pray? Have you ever asked that question? Have you ever wondered, Lord, is there a specific prayer? What are you praying? What are you saying? You're praying to the Father. You're at His right hand. And you're praying for me.

Have you ever stopped to think about what is He praying? I think God gives us a picture here. Ponder this with me if you will. Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and all Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God.

And that I am Thy servant. And that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God.

I don't think I'm stretching it too far to say I think that's what Jesus prays. He prays for His testimony in our lives. There's grace in that prayer for us to make it through without getting up off of that altar.

There's power in that prayer for each of His children to stay there by faith. Because, just like my dad, he was thinking about his business. He was about his business.

God the Father is about His business and His name being honored and glorified on this earth. And that's the heart behind Jesus' prayer. Lord, be glorified.

He looked to His Father. He just wanted to glorify His Father. He finished the work to glorify His Father.

That was His whole, harsh desire. That's His prayer for us. As you lay there, chopped up by God's Word, because you've offered up yourself a living sacrifice.

And then by His mercy and by His grace, He allows other people to let you down. To disappoint you. That's when it really gets tough.

Isn't it? That's when a lot of people say, wait a second. This is too expensive. I'm not going here.

You can't treat me that way. You can't say that about me. You shouldn't do that.

You know what that's a picture of? I agree with Myron. He's there for us to pour our heart out to. When our heart aches and we're disappointed, He's there and He'll listen and He'll hear.

What I'm talking about is getting to a place where you're beginning to harbor and drink down those dregs like He was talking about and letting your mind stay there and thinking evil about your brethren within the church body. And that's where your mind dwells. And out of that becomes the root of bitterness that comes up.

And out of that comes a backing away. Backing away. And what you're telling the Lord Jesus who's seated right there, right beside you is this is too expensive.

I'm not going through that gate. I'm not going down that path. It's too expensive.

And He says, well, okay. That's your choice. But brethren, if we willingly offered up ourselves as living sacrifices and laid down upon that altar at the will of Him and let Him have His way with our life, is it right

for that sacrifice to sit up on that altar and point our finger at our Lord Jesus and say, nuh-uh.

I'm not doing this. That's what that's a picture of. That's pretty sobering.

And when that happens, the fire of God does not fall. And the lamb that was slain does not receive the reward of His suffering. And the people don't confess that the Lord, He is God, because somebody would not stay on that altar and let God have His way.

Let God do all the sifting through that man or that woman's life so that all that came through was a river of living water. It just burst out. And the testimony is, people could look at your life and say, there's something different.

God must be real. There's something different about this person. You know, I another little story here.

One particular summer when I was growing up, my dad he well, he raised bulls. He raised black Angus bulls to sell. And one particular summer we had a plot of 80 acres in a rectangular shape there.

And out in Oregon, the part we lived in, you had to have irrigation to water the land. So they had a system of irrigation canals and ditches and that kind of thing. And it would go around pieces of property and that kind of thing.

And he built a fence around the road that went alongside the canal there because there was lots of grass there. And he stuck these bulls out there in the summertime and had free pasture, basically. He had this one batch of bulls one time.

They fought all summer long. They'd just butt heads all the time. And they'd fall in the ditch and they'd splash around and get all dirty and they'd butt heads.

That's how they'd fight. They'd go head to head and they'd just beat each other up, basically. At the time, it was the funniest thing.

Our dog at that time, his name was Shorty. He was just kind of a mutt, pretty good size though, and pretty friendly dog. He couldn't stand it when those bulls fought.

He'd go out there and he'd try to bite him sometimes. He'd bark at him and he would just throw a fit when these bulls would be fighting out there. I mean, it was really quite entertaining to look at at the time.

And I've pondered that a little bit here a little bit ago and I thought, Lord, here's another picture. Don't you think that the lost centers of this world, especially in America where Christianity is such a kind of a, the definition is so nebulous. You try to put a grasp, what is it? Well, I don't know.

This people says this and this people says that and they live this and they live that way and this is okay. And it's like, well, what is it? There's no clear definition. There's so much confusion out there.

I wonder, I ponder as I think about this little picture here. Maybe I'm out of left field and if I am, you can correct me, but I here are the dogs of the world. Even the people out there watching the bulls of the church, if you will, butt heads and fight and bicker and they can't stand it.

They can't even stand it. They're out there saying, show us something real. I think they're out there.

I really do. I run across people now and then that they've been burned at various churches that they were at and I've talked to people that say, you know, I found out that I've talked to, well, no, I won't go there. But I've talked to people that they've been burned and they say, yeah, all they wanted was our money, you know, and I said, forget it.

Can you blame them? There are the dogs out there looking at the bulls of the church, the people of the church butting heads and not getting along and it's as if they're saying, show me something real. One time my dad walked out. I was outside playing.

I was about 11 years old just hitting the baseball around and the bulls, they happened to be right by our house along that ditch road there and they were fighting away like they always were just butting heads and you know, talk about my dad's cows and bulls knowing his voice. I was just outside playing outside and my dad comes walking out the back door there. My mom was right behind him.

They just start walking out there and he walks right over to those bulls and God is my witness, I guess I'll have to say to you. He starts talking to these bulls and this is what he says, something to the effect of now boys, and that's what he called them, now boys, we need to settle down and just get along tonight and quit this fighting. Come on now.

And those bulls, they stopped and they looked and turned at my dad and they looked at him and it was as if they understood every word that he said. They kind of hung their heads and they kind of walked away and the fighting broke up and you know, as if, my dad's really mad tonight, you know, we better get along you know. It's true.

I saw it with my own eyes. But brethren, does the King of Heaven should it be that way? And please understand me, I'm not making any assumptions that this is how it is here brethren. I appreciate my brothers and sisters here.

Please don't take it wrong, but if some of this applies to you, let it apply. Don't fight against the Lord. It shouldn't be that way.

God shouldn't have to come down and have to discipline whole church bodies to say, brethren, don't you understand? My glory is at stake. Stay on the altar. Don't get off.

Trust me. When life gets very abnormal and church life gets very abnormal, you say, I don't understand. What's going on? Stay there.

You know, I work, my occupation where I work in Cheyenne there. I work for the local utility company there. We deliver electricity and natural gas.

Most of the gas lines that are put in the ground to extend a gas line on down the street a ways are plastic. They're that yellow plastic pipe. Maybe some of you have seen it before.

When they do that, they dig down into the ground, they open up the end of that piece of pipe right there and with one end, they can squeeze it off. They've got this clamp that squeezes it off to stop the flow of gas to that end. They'll cut off that end of that pipe.

Then they'll cut off the end of another piece of pipe. Same size, same material, and they clean it up, they cut it, kind of shave it around a little bit, and they put it inside this clamp. Keeps it close.

Keeps it in place. They can move these clamps close together and move them apart. They line them up to where they're just lined up just right.

When you get it lined up just right and it's all prepared, they take a hot plate. It's hot on both sides, just like God's Word is. It's hot on both sides.

They take that pipe and they put both ends, one end on this side and one end on this side. That plate gets up to 500 degrees. That's hot.

It begins to melt the end of that pipe. Not to the point that it starts to drip, but it does get to the point that it makes it liquid on both sides. They hold it there for 30 seconds.

When that 30 seconds is up, they quickly remove that plate and they stick these pipes together and the liquid from both ends begins to intertwine and it makes like a weld. They've done tests on them where they'll take two ends of a piece of pipe with a weld in the middle and they'll stretch them apart. The weld almost always stays intact.

It's stronger than even the rest of the pipe. Brethren, sometimes I think we forget that when life gets to be 500 degrees and you're up against that plate and you stay there and you say, Lord, I want to have faith. I don't want to become bitter.

I don't want to become angry. I don't want to react. Help me still to be a doormat.

Sometimes we forget there's somebody else on the other side there that God's working onto and all He's doing is just preparing maybe a couple of families, maybe a couple of brothers, maybe a couple of sisters. Maybe there has been some hurt and He's just working on preparing and bringing them back together. He's just getting them ready to bring them back together again and make the bond stronger so that power can flow through that pipe.

That's what flows through that pipe. Energy. And they become a better, longer channel of God's power.

think about it. Where does this power, this energy end up? It flows through the pipe, down the roads, through the alleys, down the streets. Where does it end up? Right inside people's homes.

Where God's people ought to be. When we go out this week, are we reaching out to our neighbors? I have to tell you, I thank God, I praise God, that I'm at a place where we're not perfect. And you know that.

We're people, so that means we're not perfect out there in Wyoming. But it does feel pretty good to be able to say, yeah, where do you guys go to church? Can I come? Yeah. Come on.

Rather than, I think you better wait. We're having some turmoil right now. I got tired of that.

God got more tired of it. He's more tired of it than we are. So God, help us remember, stay there.

I know it gets hot sometimes. I know you wonder what's going on. I know you think, I don't understand.

Where's all this water from my own brothers and sisters sometimes? All this water coming up. All this heat coming up. God, He's at work, brethren.

He's at work. He's at work. He's right there beside you, right beside that altar as He's chopping you up.

You can trust Him. Stay there. I love you all.

And I hope this was an encouragement for you. Something that's very dear to my heart. My life's experiences the past seven, eight years, nine years now, ten years, Jesus loves His church.

He loves His bride. We saw a beautiful picture of that yesterday. Wasn't that beautiful? I love weddings because I look at that and I say, God is the author of romance and when He comes to take us home and we get to be with Him forever, it is going to be a love story.

It will. But do we know that we can have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ right here, right now. He's giving them to us.

And we hold on by faith. When life gets very abnormal, we don't understand what's going on. And we say, Lord, help me.

Help me stay there. Yes, I know I told you I'd offer up myself as a living sacrifice to God. I didn't know You'd take me here, but Lord, help me to just trust You to stay there.

And Lord, if You want to make me a doorman, I don't care. Whatever will honor You. Whatever will glorify Your name.

Your ways are far above our ways. And You've chosen the base things of the world, the things that are not, to confound the things that are. And I don't understand all those things, but I trust You.

That's the kind of faith our Lord Jesus wants us to have. Day by day. You know, one more little story here.

One time, once again, my daddy, he had this old cow. She was about 15, 16 years old. That's old.

That's old for a cow. And she was getting ready to have a calf. And, you know, at times, if you didn't know anything about raising cattle and that kind of thing, sometimes a cow will have trouble trying to deliver a calf and they need help.

And so you go out and you pull it. You hook up these little chains to the feet of the calf and you pull it. And you help the cow along there.

And my dad said, he came to me and said, Mike, I want to go get this cow. She's old. She's tired.

And it's probably the last one she's going to have. And I just don't want to mess with it. Let's just go get her in and bring her in the barn and let's pull the calf.

Okay, fine. So we went out there, went out in the pasture and she was just out there pretty peaceful. Which is a beautiful picture right there.

Very much in labor. But pretty peaceful. We went out there.

He'd grab a whip to kind of guide him along. And we went out there and got behind this old cow and we just started walking. And she just started following right along.

Well, not following along. We were behind her. And it was as if she just knew exactly where to go.

Walked right through the corral. Went right in the barn. Put her head in the stanchion there.

We closed the thing there. My dad, he went about his business. She just was as peaceful as could be.

Didn't put up a fight at all. He pulled the calf, hooked the little chains up, pulled the calf. Put it on the floor there in the barn there and let her out.

She started licking the calf up. Cleaning it up. That's what they do.

We stepped back and my dad and I just kind of watched for a minute or so and that cow stopped for I don't know, 10 seconds. It was long enough to tell you could see she wanted to say something. And she looked right up at my dad.

Just looked at him. And I know, I could tell if she could talk, she would just look up and say thank you father. I needed that.

Total trust. Total dependence. Totally at peace.

Trusting her father. And what was the result? New life. Born again believer? Is that fair enough to paint that picture? Total trust.

She'd been through that gate probably 30 times. She knew. I can trust my father.

He's been with me. He's never failed me. I've been through these things before.

I'll trust you again. I can trust you this time too. Isn't that the way God wants us to be with all of us? We can trust him.

And when life gets very abnormal, my encouragement is just if you have to take a deep breath, Lord I trust you. I believe in your word. I believe indeed all things work together for good to them that love you.

I believe indeed that there is nothing that can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. There's nothing that can take Jesus away from you brother. Nothing.

Not Jesus cutting you up while you lay on that altar. Not any brother, sister, lost person throwing water all over you. You can trust him.

If we'll stay there by faith, what's the story give us? The fire fell and the testimony was that all people could say the Lord he is God. You can't deny it. We look at these people.

We look at these families. We look at these men, these women. God is who he says he is.

These people prove it. I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to share. I pray this is a blessing and encouragement to you.

I'm just going to say press on. Press on. Move forward.

Trust in your Savior. With everything that comes across your path you can trust him. May our prayer be Lord, take my life and let it be consecrated unto thee.

Take my will and make it thine. It shall be no longer mine. Take my heart Father.

It is thine own. It shall be thine. God bless you all.

Thank you Brother Mike for giving us those very practical and vivid illustrations. It's a blessing isn't it? How we can picture the spiritual realm through the natural realm so many times. And this morning was one of those mornings that we deeply appreciate it.

We know and could tell couldn't we that you spoke out of your very heart. Out of your experience the things that God has shown you. And we appreciate that.

We know that's very real. Just encourage you to keep on serving the Lord and striving to have that peace in your congregation. That's really what it's about isn't it? To be able to blend our hearts together without the constant butting of heads and friction and strife and difficulty in our church life.

I think many of us in this room know the difference don't we? We've seen it both ways so many times. Alright, well someone else maybe has something to share. Raise your hand and we'll get you a microphone.

If you have something to share with us this morning. A message first or second or anything pertaining your life. You're going through.

What do you want to share with? Peter? I just want to thank God this morning for the message. I appreciate the words that were shared. It's given me courage to stand up for Christ and live and give Him the honor and glory for what He has done.

I just want to thank both you brothers for sharing the words that you shared. It's been a real encouragement to me this morning. God bless you brother.

Good to have you with us again. Yeah, I am also blessed this morning. I appreciate the message you brought there Mike.

I can relate to a lot of those things that God has taught me in my own life. I think that Brother Myron's message this morning was very pointed to my own life. In fact, it witnesses to the very thing that God has been speaking to me and bringing through my own attention that the things that go on in our minds defile us.

They have the potential to defile us. Not just all those gross sinful things that we often at times attribute to it, but just the other things too. The vain things.

Like David says, I hate vain thoughts. The malice or the hurtful things that we say in our minds. That area of my life God has really been putting His finger on.

I appreciate it. This morning I was praying that God would speak to my life again this morning. I feel that God really spoke to that message, Brother.

The caution and the carefulness of what I allow my mind to meditate on. I really appreciate it this morning. Amen.

We're in the back there. Well, I'm really glad to be here this morning. I was blessed by the message.

I was just put in awe again at the power of God. God's power is so much higher than we as humans can even comprehend. He can do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think.

It's almost exactly a year since God's power protected me. I was in a small two-wheel drive Toyota pickup sitting still and a tractor trailer slammed into me about 55 miles an hour. I crawled out without a scratch.

If God's power can do that, why is it so hard to trust Him at times? I just want to keep my life in His hands and trust His power at all times. Amen. He can do above what we can even think.

Good morning. I enjoyed Myron's message. It was perhaps two years ago it occurred to me that as a man thinketh, so is he in this regard.

When I met someone that had a complaint or was bitter or life was just a whole bushel of lemons as what they acted like, I found that it really told you very little about their real circumstance. It was the way they perceived it to be. It was the way they had their heart wound up in life.

And when you met someone that was joyful and thankful, it wasn't that they had a big, long it really didn't tell you much about their real state of affairs. They were just thankful. And I realized that my heart had some needs in that area.

And someone here in this church used to remind me how I'm very appreciated and I'm very liked and my response would be, but I don't really feel it. And I'm happy to say that in 2008 I have very much begun to feel that. And it makes me a much more thankful person as I realize as I took note to see what my heart, what my thoughts were.

And to correct my thinking and to think on good things and not bad things. So I can't put it all in words very well, but I appreciated the message Myron. And I'm thankful for my brothers and sisters here.

I'm happy to be here. And of course I think I could think better of you all. And that's my prayer that I would get my eyes off myself and more on my blessings.

Amen. Amen. Good exercise for anyone of us.

Yes. Watch over our thoughts. They can defile us like Brother David said.

Alright. Well, I think we'll have a song yet Brother Earl. Why don't you come and...

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