

# The Life of Faith Is a Life of Dying

by Mike Morrow

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*The life of faith involves dying to our old nature and trusting God to do the impossible.*

**Duration:** 41:18

**Scripture:** Romans 6:4, Hebrews 11:17

**Topics:** "Dying To Self", "Faith And Obedience"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of faith, which involves a continual process of dying to self, desires, and worldly attachments. It draws parallels to the faith journey of Abraham, highlighting his obedience and willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac, showcasing a deep trust in God's promises and sovereignty. The message challenges believers to prioritize God above all else, to value Him as the ultimate reward, and to be prepared for seasons of dying to self in order to experience God's miraculous work and fulfill His will.

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## Transcript

Let's pray again just for a moment. Lord, You know our hearts tonight. Lord, I pray that You'd, oh God, You'd subdue our hearts before You.

And all those things around us, Lord, the bugs and the dogs and everything else that would try to distract us. Lord, I pray You'd subdue all these things. And Lord, help us tonight that we might hear from Heaven.

Oh God, we need to hear from You. Lord, there's situations, there's home lives, and Lord, there's souls in the balance here. And I pray, oh God, You'd help us tonight to hear from You.

Some dad, some young man, Lord, who needs to hear a word from God. Lord, speak to us. Speak to us from Your Word, I pray.

Help us to know what You're saying to us by Your Word, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Let me ask you to turn tonight to the book of Romans.

We're going to look at that passage in Hebrews 11 again. But I want to read a passage to you in Romans chapter 6. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us, as we're baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Now let me stop there.

I don't know what your version says, but the word baptized is baptizo, which means immersed. So read it like that. Know ye not that so many of us, as we're immersed into Jesus Christ, were immersed into His death? Therefore we're buried with Him by immersion into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we've been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe we also, we shall also live with Christ. Look at verse 11.

Likewise reckon ye yourselves also to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Hebrews chapter 11, verse number 17. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac.

And he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Hebrews 11, verse number 19 now. Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also He received him in a figure.

I want to talk to you tonight just a little while about one of the elements of this life of faith that is most important that I think so many people miss, so many people forget about. And it's simply that when a person is saved, they not only are brought to life in Christ Jesus, but there is an actual death to the old man. There is an experience of repentance and an experience of dying out to the old man that is a real thing.

What Paul describes in Romans chapter number 5 is something that our generation knows very little about. You know, we're the generation that talks about say this prayer after me. Pray this little prayer and you'll be saved and so forth.

Now Paul says, the question came up, Paul are you teaching and preaching that if a person is in Christ that they can live any way they want to, that they can live in sin and God accepts them and Paul says, God forbid, let it never be. That is not true, that can't be. Don't you understand that when you were immersed into Christ, you were immersed into His death.

And the life of faith has something to do with dying. I thought one time, this is egotistical, I admit it, I confess it, I pray that the Lord will forgive me if it's actual sin. I thought one time about writing my autobiography.

I mean, you've got to admit, God's done some good things for me. And I thought about writing my autobiography and when I started thinking about that, I thought, well, where would you start? Most people would start when they were born. And then I got to thinking about that and I said, my goodness, I don't want to start when I was born, I want to start when I was born again.

Because the old man is dead. Mike Morrow was pronounced dead that Thursday evening that God saved me. And if you've been saved by the grace of God, you've experienced a death, a real death.

And here's the thing, people want to put that off into some sort of positional truth, some kind of mystical thing that happens in heaven and God writes you down as dead. I'm telling you something, my friend. If you've come to the Lord Jesus, that old man has died.

He's been placed on a cross. Now, you may not believe it, but that's what Romans chapter 6 says. He says, don't you know that the old man is crucified with Christ? Listen, the new man has been raised to life in Christ.

And that's what happens in regeneration. You're lifted out of that death into genuine life. And you begin to experience life in Christ.

That's why things that happen to you spiritually are so real to you that things that were not real at all before God saved you. Church wasn't real. Prayer wasn't real.

Bible wasn't real. Preacher wasn't real. I mean, none of that stuff really had much of an effect on you and you didn't care a whole lot about it before God saved you.

And then all of a sudden, life was breathed into you. But you hear me, when life came, there was a death also. There was a dying out to your own thoughts, a dying out to your own desires, a dying out to your own will, and a coming down and collapsing at the cross of Christ.

Somebody said, are you preaching lordship salvation? Jesus has been Lord. He is Lord. He always will be Lord.

And if you get saved, you'll take Him as Lord. He is... He is... If you don't know what Lord means, it means He's the boss. He is in charge.

And when a person is saved, they bow before Him as the one who is in utter charge. He is in absolute charge. Now, I read that passage about Abraham because we're talking in Hebrews chapter number 11 about faith and the faith life.

So, he brings up Abraham several times. He talks about Abraham leaving his country. He talks about Sarah receiving strength to conceive seed.

He talks about... Now he's talking about Abraham offering up Isaac as a sacrifice to God. Do you really understand what was going on there? I want you to look back with me. We're going to stay here for a while, so I'll not have you flipping around.

But look back at chapter number 12 of the book of Genesis just for a minute. Bible says in verse number 11 of Genesis, And Terah, this was Abram's father, took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife. This is chapter number 11 in verse 31.

And they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go to the land of Canaan. And they came into Haran and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred. Hear that. And from thy father's house unto a land that I'll show you.

So what is the first step when Abraham begins to walk by faith? What's the first thing he's going to have to die to? Same thing a lot of times we have to die to when we come to the Lord, and that's our family. Word of God says that he had to get away from his family. And so Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him.

But here's a problem. And Lot went with him. So nephew Lot is tagging along now with Abram.

And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's sons, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth to go to the land of Canaan, into the land of Canaan they came. And then the Bible tells us about Abraham passing through the land of Shechem and so forth, and the Lord appeared to him in verse number 7. And the Lord said to him, Under your seed I'll give this land. And so there he built, he built an altar to the Lord and worshiped God there.

You go down through there and then come into chapter 13, and the Bible says Abram went up out of Egypt. There's been a drought, he's gone down into Egypt. I don't want to get into that story, but it was a lack of faith.

You know, when we talk about these heroes of the faith, if we're not careful, we'll talk about them as if they never had any lapses. Abraham had a lapse. Came a drought in the land, he was dry, so he goes down to Egypt.

When he comes out of Egypt, he brings somebody with him that he shouldn't have ever brought out of Egypt, but he brings a slave girl with him out of Egypt. When he comes out of Egypt, then we're told in chapter 13, when Abram went out of Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot was with him into the south, Abram was very rich in cattle. Look now at verse 5, And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents, and the land was not able to bear them that they might dwell together, for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

In other words, in God's providence, God was separating Abram from his family. That was the first step. The first thing God did for Abram was take him away from his family.

Terah dies in Haran. Now he's gone down to Egypt, he's come back, he's got Lot with him. They've spread out all over the country.

The Bible says that Lot's herdman and Abraham's herdman couldn't get along, and so now they've got to separate. And Abraham has nobody left in his family except his wife and his immediate servants and so forth. You know who he's got left? He's got God.

He's got God. Now hear me. Listen to me.

When the Lord saves you and calls you, He's enough. I love my mother and my daddy. I love my family.

When the Lord moved on our heart to go to Mississippi, my mother especially did not like that idea at all. And then over the years, you know, she's occasionally mentioned the fact that we raised her grandchildren 500 miles away from her. And I understand that.

That's a natural desire. She had a natural desire to be with her grandchildren and to be with her family. And so forth.

But I'm going to tell you something. When God calls you, He's separating you so that you can be to yourself and Him. And you have to die to that.

Now we're going to take a step further because I want you to see what happened. Look at chapter 16. Chapter number 16.

Abraham had to die to his family in his walk of faith. Now all through here, God's making him promises. You look at chapter 15, verse 7. And he said unto him, I'm the Lord.

God speaks to him and says, I'm the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? How am I going to inherit this land? How shall I know? And he said, take a heifer, divide it up. God puts Abraham to sleep.

And God says, all right, this is the formal way they made a covenant in that day. And God makes a covenant with himself before Abraham that he is going to do what he promises Abraham he's going to do. You understand, by the way, that your salvation is a covenant between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

It's not all about you. It's all about what God's determined to do. You do understand that, don't you? God has promised to do something.

He's promised to do something with his people. He's promised to give his son a bride. And thank God, if you're saved tonight, you're part of that.

Well, I digress. But anyway, he said, how will I know? And so the Lord makes this covenant with him. And he says, I'm going to give this land to your seed.

Abraham doesn't have any seed. He doesn't have a child. How are you going to give this? I can almost hear him as he goes back to his tent later and in the days that are coming.

And he talks to Sarah about it. And he says, you know, God's promised to give me this whole land and to give it to our seed. Sarah says, there's one little thing there, Abraham.

We don't have any children. Yeah, but God's promised us. Yeah, but we don't have any children.

Yeah, but God's promised us. Well, maybe the Lord's going to work it out this way. And then she gives Hagar, her servant, this Egyptian girl that's come out of Egypt with Abraham and Sarah, she gives her to Abraham to raise up a seed.

And of course, we know Ishmael comes from that union. Now, here's the thing that had to happen. The Bible tells us that Sarah gets upset because Hagar actually makes fun of her because she's childless.

Listen, let me just read it to you, chapter 16. Now, Sarah, Abraham's wife, bare him no children. She had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

And Sarah said unto Abraham, Behold, now the Lord hath restrained me from bearing. I pray thee, go in unto my maid. It may be that I may obtain children by her.

And Abraham, hearkening to the voice of Sarah, he cooperated. And Sarah, Abraham's wife, took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, after Abraham had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband, Abraham, to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived.

And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. In other words, Sarah was despised in the eyes of Hagar. Hagar said, I can have kids.

You can't. She mocked her. And so Sarah was upset.

Verse 5, Sarah said unto Abraham, My wrong be upon thee. I have given my maid unto thy bosom. And when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes.

The Lord judged between me and thee. And Abraham said unto Sarah, Behold, thy maid is in your hand. Do to her as it pleaseth thee.

And when Sarah dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. Now listen. You need to do a study on this, preachers, sometime.

Hagar is one of the most mistreated women in the Bible. She really is. But when you read that, you find Abraham saying, You know, Sarah, your little scheme didn't work.

You might as well. So he's having to die now to his idea that God's going to raise up a seed for him through Hagar. That little episode's over, at least for now.

Chapter 17, God renews his covenant with Abraham. When Abram was 90 years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am the Almighty God. Walk before me and be thou perfect.

And I'll make my covenant between me and thee and will multiply thee exceedingly. Abram fell on his face. And God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant was with thee.

Thou shalt be a father of many nations. And Abram still, he's in unbelief. Look at chapter 17, verse 18.

And Abraham said unto God, Oh, that Ishmael may live before thee. Lord, we're working this out. You know, I believe Sarah had probably quoted him the verse that says God helps those that help themselves.

He says, Oh, God, that Ishmael may live before thee. And God says, Yes, I'm going to make a great nation out of Ishmael. But Sarah, Sariah will bear the seed.

And Abraham, getting older now, is having to die to his own ability to fulfill the will of God. Listen to me, guys. The life of faith means that I begin to die to my own ability to do the will of God in my life.

In other words, when I'm first saved, you know, give me the world. When I first got saved, get out of my way. I'm going to charge hell with a water pistol.

You know, I'm going to get this done. I'm going to get that done. It didn't take me very long to find out I couldn't do that.

Abraham is finding out that it's not by might, nor by power. It's not by his intellect. And it's not by his conniving.

And it's not by his working out the situation. Anytime you're in an impossible situation and God is calling you to trust Him and walk through something by faith and you are tempted to grab hold of it and start twisting knobs and fixing things on your own, you be very, very careful because you may have to just start all over again. Here God says to Abram, Abram, it's not going to be Ishmael.

And it's not going to be Hagar who's the mother of this great nation I'm going to raise up. And that's not where your seed's coming from. But it's going to be Sarai.

And so the Bible tells us that God continued to make His covenant with Abraham and continued to talk to Abraham. Chapter 21, the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. I told you this morning it meant laughter. And Abraham circumcised his son, Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him.

And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born. Wonderful. Isaac's born.

The will of God is being done. I didn't have to help God. The Lord did a miracle.

Well, you should have seen Sarah. She was up cleaning the house a week after she had the baby and she's 90 years old. Isn't that amazing? I mean, God did this.

Listen, who got the glory? God got the glory. How was this accomplished? By faith, Abraham. By faith, Sarah.

This was accomplished because they believed what God said to them. God made promises. Now, again, there were lapses.

There were times when they decided to fix it themselves. And God, in His patience, just pushed that off and said, No, I'm not having that. No, I'm not going to allow you to do that.

No, you're not going to do it that way. I'm telling you, there's a dying there. He had to die to his wife.

He had to die to what she said ought to be done. He had to die to Hagar. He had to die to Ishmael.

He had to give it up in faith to the Lord. Oh, God, here I am, an old man. It's impossible for me to father a child.

Here is my wife. She's an old lady. It's impossible for her to mother a child.

And brother, nine months later, they're saying, Hallelujah, His name is Isaac. Let's have a laughing good time here. God did that.

I'm coming. I know it's been tedious, but I want you to hear me. I'm coming to the point of my message tonight.

The Bible tells us in chapter 22, and it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham. And said unto him, Abraham. And Abraham said, Behold, here I am.

I mean, Abraham's been having some good experiences with God, hasn't he? I mean, the old man has been doing pretty good. And, not disrespectful, but the old lady's been doing pretty good, too. And everybody's been getting along good, and God's just been working miracles after miracles.

And here is Isaac, and boy, God's just done some good things. And God says, Abraham. And God says, Yes, sir.

Lord, here I am. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son, you know, the one you love, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I tell thee of. Now, wait a minute.

Abraham has died to his family. He's died to his home life. He's died to his kinfolds.

He's had to die out to the opinion of his wife. He's gotten into some awful situations with an Egyptian servant girl. There's another child running around now.

The whole thing's been a mess. And then God, He's come before the Lord, and His body is dying. He's old.

And God miraculously gives Him a child. Do you know what Isaac was? He was the fulfillment of all the promises God had made to him over and over and over again. We read through Genesis, and it's like God said this to Abraham, and tomorrow God said something else, and the next day God said something else.

There were years intervening here when God spoke to Abraham. And He's walking along. What's He doing? He's going around and around Canaan land.

God's already told him, everywhere you put your foot, I'll give it to you. So He's putting His feet in places. He's going around and around Canaan land.

But the real problem is nothing's happening on the seed side of things. Nothing's happening as far as an heir is concerned. The promise of God, how do I know? He asked God this, whereby will I know that my children will inherit? How am I going to know this? And God said, I'm going to give you a child.

When? When? When? I'll tell you when. When it's absolutely impossible for you to father a child, when your wife can't mother a child. And I get the glory for it.

And you don't get the glory for it, and Hagar doesn't get the glory for it, and Sarah don't get the glory for it, but I get the glory for it. And Abraham is ecstatic. But now God has stepped in again.

And you know what? That thing, hear me, that very thing that was born of faith that came directly from God and was a miracle was the last thing Abraham had to die to. He had to die to what God had promised him. You need to think about that just a little bit.

God said, take your son, your only son, Isaac. Again, He said, you know, the one you love. He didn't say take Ishmael.

He said, take your only son, the one that's really going to be your heir. Take the one that you idolize. Take the one that you love, that is the joy of your heart, that you love to hear running up and down outside the tent.

Take him. Go to a place that I'll show you and burn him up on an altar and let that smoke ascend to me. Offer him as a burnt sacrifice.

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, saddled his donkey and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son. The Bible says he claimed the wood for the burnt offering and rose up and went into the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.

Wait a minute, wait a minute. God didn't say, let's get this over with over here on this hill. On the third day, Abraham is going along with his donkey and his son and his servants in the wood.

And on the third day, he sees Mount Moriah, the place where God says, do it. I don't know about you, but even as I read that story and as I put myself in Abraham's shoes, I feel dread. I'm getting closer.

I'm getting closer to that mountain. I'm getting closer to sacrificing my son. Abraham said, on the third day, he lifted his eyes and he saw the place far off.

And Abraham said to his young men, abide here with the donkey and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac, his son, and he took the fire in his hand and a knife and they both went, both of them, together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham, his father, and he said, my father.

And he said, here am I, my son. And he said, behold, here's the fire and the wood. And he said, where's the lamb for the burnt offering? Isaac, you just took a knife and put it in your father's heart deeper.

Where's the lamb? Abraham said, my son, God will provide himself with a lamb. They came to the place which God told him of and Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, here am I. And he said, lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. Not only is it revealed there, but it's revealed to all of us.

Abraham feared God. And Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thickets by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

And somebody said, how on earth could he do that? How could Abraham have ever even consented to take his son to the side of the mountain and put a knife in his heart and light a fire under his body until he was burned to ashes? How could he even consider doing that? By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac. And he that had received the promises, all of them right there in Isaac, he had received them, offered up his only begotten son, his uniquely born son, of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. How could he do that? Accounting, believing with all of his heart that God was able to raise him up even from the dead from whence also he received him in a figure.

Now hear me closely. Abraham was about to literally put the knife in the heart of his son. He would have done it.

Do you get that? He would have done this thing. He didn't even seem to be hesitating. He's just about to plunge the knife into the heart of his son.

Now listen closely. God stops him. How could Abraham come to the place where he was willing to do that? The Bible says that he believed God.

Here's his reasoning. God said he was going to give me a seed. God said he was going to make him a multitude that just filled the earth like the stars of the heaven and the sands of the sea.

God said he was going to give them this land. God said those things. And God promised me by covenant and he covenanted with himself to do this.

Not even with me. He covenanted with himself to do this and promised me that he would do this. And so if God requires me to give this up and give him up then to keep his word to me he's going to raise him from the dead and do through him what he promised me he would.

Now brother, that's why this man is called the father of the faithful. And that's the kind of faith that works genuinely to the glory of God. You see, the Lord's called some of you to leave your home.

Leave your folks. And some of you men, God's called you to deal with your wife and be the head of your house. Walk in the way God's Word says you're supposed to walk as the head of your house.

She doesn't understand exactly what's going on but you're dying to her, to that. You're walking on with God. God's called you to this great project.

Boy, you see this thing happening in Mexico or Nicaragua or Iraq and you say, boy, praise God, this is really happening. And in front of you it starts falling apart. Now I've got a question for you.

When does God get the most glory? When you start tinkering with it and fix it for yourself or when the Lord God Himself takes it from you and gives you something else or resurrects it Himself for His own glory? Here's the thing we do. This is what we do, guys. God gives us, we die when the Lord saves us.

We live this life of faith and it is a life of dying to stuff. Dying to people. Paul said, I've died daily.

He said, don't you understand when you came to Christ you started dying. That's what this Christian life is about. It's a life out of death.

That's what it's about. God gives you something and then He takes it away from you. Because you know what? He doesn't want that to be your reward or the thing that grabs your heart.

He says to Abraham, I am your reward. I am your reward. I am your rear guard and I am your front guard and I am your reward.

I am your exceeding great reward. So as you walk in faith and learn what it means to walk in faith, understand that God calls you to die. If you present the faith life as a life of zippity-doo-dah, I'm living by faith, praise God.

Isn't everything wonderful? I can just pray and God just supplies. He does supply our needs. But I want to tell you something.

There's a dying, constant dying. That's what the Christian life's about. You're dying to self.

You're dying to the flesh. You're dying to the world, the devil. You're dying to good things.

You're dying to things that you say, oh, God's called me to and He has. But you die to that too until Christ is all in all. Until Jesus is everything to you.

And it just doesn't matter whether you go to Vietnam or whether you sit on a church pew for the glory of God. It just doesn't matter anymore. It's whatever the Lord wants.

And if this ministry that He's called me to has crashed and yet He promised that He was going to give it to me, I believe with all of my heart He can raise it up out of the ashes if He so chooses and use it for His glory and honor. But it'll be His ministry. It'll not be mine.

It'll be His work. It'll not be my work. And ever after, Isaac was more with God's than he was Abraham's.

And God worked His perfect will through Isaac. Isaac is a personality. He's not one of the most striking men in the Old Testament.

But oh, how the promises of God rested in him. And how through him comes the Messiah, the Savior of all men. I want to encourage you tonight.

Don't be surprised when you're called to die. Don't be surprised when everything around you crashes. You see, that's our problem.

We have so bought into the idea that if we serve God, everything will be great. I mean, maybe we need, well, we got a little hump right here, but just get over this hump and everything's going to be great. Absolutely not.

And it's not the bad people that's making it rough on you. God's calling us to die. He's calling us to die.

That's what it's about. And that's what living by faith is. That's what living by faith is.

Father, I pray tonight that You'd help us to think about Abraham. Lord, to remember how he gave up the most precious thing so that You could be more precious. And Lord, how that You showed him how precious You were to him.

And how You really, really were his exceeding great reward. Help us tonight. Help me tonight, Lord.

To value You above my ministry, above my family, above every single thing in my life. Help me to value that way. You.

And help me to love You, Lord, more than I've ever loved You before. I pray that for all of us, Lord. God, would You have mercy on us, Lord? Would You revive our hearts? Lord, would You stir up these men to live by faith? To not live by sight, but to live by faith? And as we do that then, Lord, would You work the miracles that glorify Your name through our lives? Would You do that for Your honor, O Lord? I pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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