

James 4

by Richard Owen Roberts

The sermon emphasizes the need for revival and the importance of submitting to God, resisting the devil, and drawing near to God in order to experience spiritual growth and revival.

Duration: 1:11:43

Scripture: James 4:7

Topics: "Repentance", "Revival"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of submitting to God, resisting the devil, drawing near to God, cleansing hands and purifying hearts, mourning and weeping over sin, and humbling oneself in the presence of the Lord. It calls for a deep repentance, seeking God's face, and a genuine desire for righteousness and holiness in a time of spiritual need and revival.

Transcript

...wrong with any kind of licentiousness. Well, it's easy to say if you don't know God. So what I've suggested is if I had the wrong view of God, I've got the wrong view of self, then I don't know the difference between right and wrong.

I will say a thing is right that God has said is an abomination. And then the natural thing that follows is if I'm wrong about God, and if I'm wrong about myself, and if I'm wrong about sin, then I'll end up wrong about salvation. And we announce all kinds of people as converts to Jesus Christ who haven't come any closer to Christ than Satan himself.

In fact, if a person gives mental assent to religious truth, we say that they're a believer. Now, Satan gives mental assent to religious truth. Just think about what Satan believes.

Satan believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He knows absolutely that that's true. He believes that Christ was crucified.

After all, he was a participant in the crucifixion of Christ. He knows that Christ rose from the dead. After all, he got the Pharisees to instruct the guards to say the disciples came by night and stole the body away.

Every fact relating to Jesus Christ, Satan believes. But the Scriptures tell us he not only believes, but he trembles. And I know a lot of people who say they believe who don't even have the grace of trembling.

They live in sin. They enjoy it. They have no desire to depart from it.

And yet they say they believe. So, if my view of God is wrong, then I'll be all mixed up about who I am. And I won't understand what is right and what is wrong.

And then I'll have an idea of salvation that is completely in error. And that's what we're living with today. All of which helps us to see how desperately we truly do need revival.

As I said, revival is God. Revival is God in the midst of his people when God draws near. Now, I don't know you.

Very few of you have I ever laid eyes on before. You don't know me. But I know that the best season of your life personally was when God was near.

I know that for a fact concerning myself. My very best days have been the days when God was near. This is so very true that we can join the psalmist in saying the nearness of God is my good.

But not only is the presence of God the great issue in revival. The Word of God itself takes on dimensions of power. And it spreads with a rapidity that it has not had for a long time.

Those are the two great attractions of revival. Can you see anything wrong with those two? Do you find anything objectionable about God drawing near and manifesting himself? Wouldn't you love to live at a time when when the Word of God is preached it comes like an incredible tidal wave of blessing. It sweeps across the region.

And people who have had no sober interest in Christ in all their life are suddenly arrested in their downward course and turned to the Lord. Now let me just give you a bit of the pain that an old man like myself experiences. Someone of you is bound to ask before the weekend is over, How old are you Mr. Roberts? Well, I'll just relieve your minds by telling you 82.

Not that it matters. But because of my age, often people come to listen because it's a curiosity for them. They haven't heard an 82-year-old preacher before who could even still walk around.

Granted, he can fall off the pulpit. Granted, he can have trouble with the sound system. But nonetheless, there's still life and vitality.

And people come and I've heard people whispering, Say, you gotta come and listen to this curiosity. It's like an invitation to attend a carnival. And I would love to see the day come again as I've seen it before.

When the Word of God spread with incredible power. And men, women, boys, and girls were brought low through the presence of God in our midst and through the power of the Word of God preached. So I'm just simply giving you a summary statement.

There are those who say revival is an Old Testament subject. And I'm glad to agree with them and to say revival is an Old Testament subject. But it's also a New Testament subject.

A wonderful, wonderful New Testament subject. Now the reason why there's less mention of revival in the New Testament than in the Old is the Old Testament covers a long span of thousands of years. And the New Testament covers hardly a single lifetime.

And some of you understand that history itself does not go uniformly. History goes in ups and downs. You trace history from the beginning of recorded history.

And you see one season after another. Seasons when people move toward God. Seasons when they move away from God.

We call these the cycles of history. Some of these cycles are very short. If you read carefully 2 Chronicles you see how close together some of those revivals come.

But on the other hand there are often long periods of time from the last great awakening to the next great awakening. And we've no grounds to suppose that God is through reviving his people simply because it's been a long time since he did so. The wiser conclusion is we've been content to live without the manifest presence of Christ in our midst.

We've been content and willing to live with play religion instead of the real. But revival is very much a New Testament subject. So what I would like to do... Now by the way, if you're one of those mean-spirited people who brings a stopwatch and times the sermon, I haven't started preaching yet.

I've just introduced the subject. So don't be unkind and put these last few minutes in your stopwatch. But I've got to go up and get my Bible.

I shouldn't have left it there. But I will need it tonight and you'll need yours. So let me get it and I'll write it down.

Are all of you able to hear all right and see all right if I stand down here? I'm not in any danger of tripping if I stand down here. Or I should maybe adjust that and say it's not quite as dangerous. Anyway, let's turn.

Now there are two colossal passages in the New Testament on the subject of revival. I'm going to turn to the second one tonight. And I'd like to ask you to turn with me to the book of James.

The book of James at chapter 4. I want to read the chapter. And then we're going to focus upon verses 7, 8, 9, and 10. But pay close attention now as we read the fourth chapter of the epistle of James.

I'll give you a moment. And if you have your Bible with you, turn to it. And if you didn't bring your Bible, the next time you come, bring a Bible with you.

Unless you can't read. In that case, of course, we're willing to pardon. So James 4, verse 1. And you do not have.

So you commit murder. You're envious and you cannot obtain. So you fight and quarrel.

You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives so that you may spend it on your pleasure. Now that's a pretty solid foundation to lay out the great truths about revival.

And after all, those verses do explain the nature of the church in the English-speaking world. It is simply astonishing how many churches are in constant conflict with one another and with other churches. There are churches that haven't known a season of three weeks of peace for decades.

They're constantly in conflict with one another. And so he deals in those opening words with the cause of quarrel and conflict. But pick it up now again at verse 5. Or do you think that the scriptures speak to no purpose? He jealously desires the spirit which he has made to dwell in us.

Now think of those words. We take it as an automatic thing that the spirit dwells in us. But what grounds do we have if we quarrel? If we lust? If our lives are dominated by a purpose contrary to God's, is it reasonable to suppose that the spirit of God dwells in us? Well, if he somehow could dwell in us, he must be dwelling in some tiny portion somewhere in a back room.

He's not dwelling as a dominating spirit. And yet we're plainly told, every believer, listen to this, make sure it's true in your case, God desires his spirit to dwell in you. As the reigning spirit.

As the controlling spirit. And verse 6. He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, God is opposed to the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.

Now I skipped over verse 4, but let's come back and look at it. You adulterous. Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Have you gotten a hold of those words? Remember in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ was speaking about seeking to serve two masters. He said if you love the one, you will despise the other, or vice versa. But he said plainly, you cannot serve both God and mammon.

I meet constantly people who have one foot in the world and one foot in the church, and they hope that they're pleasing God. They groan because they never seem to make any progress. And the truth is plainly told here, if you seek to please the world, you do displease God.

You cannot be a friend both of Christ and the world. But then we come to the portion that we're going to focus on tonight, verse 7. Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Be miserable, and mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Now if you're paying attention as we were reading, you see that there are seven specific things given in those four verses. Let me repeat them now and number them just in the hope that they will fix in your mind. Number one, submit therefore to God.

Number two, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Number three, draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Number four, cleanse your hands, you sinners.

Number five, purify your hearts, you double-minded. Number six, be miserable, and mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom.

And number seven, humble yourself in the presence of the Lord, and he will exalt you. Now that is a word to every single believer. Age is not the factor here.

Education doesn't enter the picture. This is a direct word to every single believer. Before you leave tonight, you ought to be able to say, I have complied with all these seven things.

Now for some of you that might be quite easy. But some of you may be a very long ways from compliance. But here is the pattern that God lays out.

Whether you feel the need of revival or not, it is desperately needed. We cannot make it happen. Revival is that which God does.

But we can get ready. We can prepare the way as far as we're concerned. We can even prepare the way as far as this church is concerned.

Now I know to some extent you have been doing that. But by God's grace, I'm going to believe that this passage will burn its way into your hearts tonight. But now let's finish the reading.

Verse 11, Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you're not a doer of the law, but a judge of it.

There's only one lawgiver and judge, the one who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow we shall go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow.

You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that. But as it is, you boast in your arrogance.

All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it to him, it is sin. So when this Word speaks to you tonight, it is not simply to inform you, but to conform you to the will and purpose of Christ.

If you do not act upon the Word spoken to you tonight, it will be sin. He who knows the right thing to do and does not do it to him, it is sin. Now let's take these seven matters in verses 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Number one, submit therefore to God. And let us begin with a simple question. Are you 100% submissive to God? Now we live at a time when there's a great deal of talk in society about human rights.

And we hear people saying, I've got my rights. And I'm not here tonight to deny human rights, but our Maker has His rights. Now this might not be of interest to some of you, but I live in a country that has what is called the Bill of Rights.

Some of you may have heard these words. In our Bill of Rights it says, we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights. The right to life, to liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Now think of this. God has His rights. Now suppose in looking around here, I step up to this gentleman seated here, and I say to him, I have decided to endow you with ten million dollars.

Now what is the question he ought to ask first? Well he ought to ask, does he have ten million dollars? And the truth is, no. So if I told you that, I'm a liar. Can't do it.

But God has rights. Whatever rights we have have been endowed by God. And what are God's rights? Well they're expressed very clearly in the Ten Commandments.

God has the exclusive right of being God. Any other God is a violation of God's rights. He and He alone is our Maker and Sustainer.

He gives life. He takes life. There is no life apart from God.

God has a right to be called God, to be worshipped as God, to have no compromise whatsoever in that. God has sole control of His name. He has a right to say how His name can be used and how it must not be used.

God has a right to control one day out of seven. He has made it crystal clear. He's given us six days for work and He's given us one day for worship and any violation of the Lord's day is a violation of God Himself.

Now all that's easy to relate to but stop to think. Sometimes when I talk with young people they kind of make it sound as if they are the discoverers of sex. You might get the notion from listening to them that no former generation ever knew anything about it.

Some of them are so thick they don't even know how they happened to get here. I don't want to be crude but God is the creator of sex and as the creator He has made a very plain statement how sex is to be used and He has forbidden fornication. He has forbidden homosexuality.

He has forbidden adultery. He has forbidden bestiality and yet we live in a society that says it's up to each person to determine how they were created and what is right and what is wrong. No! God has His rights.

He spells them out in the commandments. And I'm asking you now this first statement of verse 7 Submit therefore to God. Are you entirely submitted to God? Now I hope you're not stupid because stupid people think they can rob God of His rights and maintain their own rights.

But intelligence says our rights were granted to us by God. And if we deny His rights we rob ourselves in time of our own rights. Are you submissive to God? In absolutely every realm.

Well if you don't know God or if you've only heard of Him a wee bit with the hearing of the ear you may not even be able to answer that question satisfactorily. But it is your responsibility not only to answer it but to obey. To do precisely what is required.

Submit therefore to God. And if you're not doing so then you're not right with God. If you've got any area of your life where God is excluded then you're out of harmony with God.

And you need immediately to correct that. Now the second statement that the Holy Spirit prompts James to bring to our attention resist the devil and he will flee from you. Do you get the impression that across Canada Satan is on the run? That he's losing power? That he's frightened greatly and he's seeking to get as far removed as he can? I get the impression that in your country and mine Satan seems to be in control right now.

It's only temporary but it's enough to mess up our families. Is there a single family here tonight that doesn't have cause for some bitter tears in your extended family? Children on drugs? Maybe a grandson in prison? Maybe somebody in the family in the midst of a rotten divorce? Young children in turmoil because

their parents hate one another? The consequences of not resisting Satan are mounting up on every side and our hope of God drawing near is that we submit to Him and resist Satan. I wonder if you care enough about the well-being of your own soul and about the well-being of your country to go home, find a quiet place and ask God to show you if there's any area in your life where you are not submissive to Him and if there's any area in your life where you are not resisting Satan.

But isn't it wonderful that these words are couched in the form of a promise? Resist the devil and he will flee from you. What an incredible word God has spoken. So I plead with you, take this serious.

Nothing, absolutely nothing that could happen in your life could be anywhere near as wonderful as God drawing near to you, to your church, to your area, to your country, to our world. But if we have not submitted to Him and if we are not resisting Satan, it's not a very strong hope that we have. But look now at what happens.

Number three, verse eight. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Now how does one go about drawing near to God? Well, obviously you've got to follow the first two instructions.

If you are not submitting to God, there's no danger of His drawing near. If you're not resisting Satan, there's no possibility of God drawing near. But suppose you have submitted to God fully and you are resisting Satan and he is fleeing from you, then this word, this wonderful word, draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Now I ask, how does one draw near to God? Well, let me give you a very simple plan. This book. You have a copy.

I have a copy. Our translations might be slightly different, but the truth is exactly the same. Now was this book written about me? Was it written about you? Was it written about us? No, the real purpose of this book is to show us God.

This is God's book, you might almost say. It's God's autobiography. It's everything God wanted us to know about Himself in this present life.

So, you set your heart to draw near to God. Now then, what must you do? Well, call a moratorium on all misuse. Now maybe that's a bad word.

Do you know the word moratorium? I can't tell from your faces. Maybe by tomorrow I'll be able to read you a little better. But let's not worry about the word.

Let's think about the significance of what I've said. Call a moratorium on all misuse of the Bible. Some of you perhaps have listened to the recorded sermons of Martin Lloyd-Jones, that wonderful preacher at Westminster Chapel in London.

Or maybe you've read some of his marvelous books. I heard him say one day that most Christians use the Bible like it was a medicine cabinet. You go to the Bible to get a pink pill that will pep you up.

You know, I'm feeling kind of wilted today and discouraged, so I search around in the Bible, or maybe I use the magical system of closing the Bible, twisting it around, letting it fall open, and just say, ha, now there's the word from the Lord. Whatever method you use, the Bible is God's book. It reveals His heart.

It enables us to know Him, to draw near. So instead of misusing the Bible for a little pick-me-up or encouragement, or to find some direction for the weak, what if you were to use this book every day for the next year to discover for yourself the God of this book? It would be similar to what Job ended up with. Now I didn't get it from the book, but God stood in front of him and said, you talk too much.

Now shut your mouth and listen. Gird up your loins and get ready, because I'm going to give it to you straight. And then he begins that list of 38 questions that just about knocked the old patriarch off his feet.

And when he's trying to gasp his breath, God says, now we're ready for the second round. And he begins another series. But use this book to draw near to God.

And a very simple way that even a young child can pursue is to get the Bible that's not marked up and maybe to take a red pen or pencil or something and put a circle around every passage where God is talking about himself. And then just sit quietly and meditate and make it clear to the Lord, I'm wanting to draw near to you. And so I'm going to use your book to find out everything you want me to know about yourself.

You see, sometimes when we say we're drawing near to God, what we're really doing is seeking His hand. We pray, give me this, give me that. But this is not a commendation to seek God's hand.

Here we are encouraged to seek His face, to draw near to Him. Suppose that going back to what I said earlier, that relationship between what I think of God, what I think of myself, what I think of sin, what I think of salvation. Suppose you know deep down that you've got that all messed up and you've got a very lousy view of salvation and a very lousy view of sin because you've got too high an opinion of yourself and too low an opinion of God.

So what to do? Well, here it is. Draw near to God. Oh, you say, I'm so busy.

Don't be foolish. Now, I already admitted I'm old and there's no denying it. And I'm not retired.

The pastor mentioned I am responsible for two publishing houses. I have a very large antiquarian bookstore and I travel incessantly preaching. But I have time to draw near to God.

I don't believe any of you are busier than I am. Busyness is no excuse. God wants you to draw near to Him.

And you have time for the things you're doing. And if you wanted to obey God, you would have time to draw near to Him. Now, instead of just thinking about it and knowing it's the right thing to do, do it.

And do it steadily and faithfully from now on. But then the next of these statements, cleanse your hands, you sinners. Put your hands out in front of you.

How clean are your hands? Oh, you said, I washed them just before coming to service. Well, that's obviously not what is spoken of here. Cleanse your hands, you sinners.

An amazing statement is made in the book of Job. It says, he who has clean hands grows stronger and stronger. Think of those words as I repeat them again.

He who has clean hands grows stronger and stronger. The opposite is not mentioned in Scripture, but it's obviously true. He who has dirty hands grows weaker and weaker.

Some of you may have been wondering why you have so little strength as a Christian. And some of you are aware that you are not as strong tonight as you were at some former time in your life. He who has clean hands grows stronger and stronger.

Obviously, our hands can be soiled by money. Now, there's nothing wrong with money. Money is an essential.

We can't get by without it. But there are those who have money in their hearts. And there are those who hold money loosely in their hands.

The greedy person, the grasping person, the person who's always trying to make an extra dollar may be in violation of this teaching. Sex can soil the hands. When we refuse to give God His rights and we turn His rights into our rights, we soil our hands.

But the favorite way for many Christians is they do something in the church. Maybe they teach a Sunday school lesson. Maybe they sing a solo.

Maybe they preach a sermon. Maybe they play an instrument. And the glory that belongs to God they touch and take to themselves.

There are innumerable ways by which we soil our hands. But this command is clear. Cleanse your hands, you sinners.

Why not go aside later this evening and hold your hands out before the Lord and ask Him, Lord, from Your perspective, are these dirty hands? And do not let go of the matter until the Lord Himself assures you that your hands are clean. And remember Job's words. He who has clean hands grows stronger and stronger.

Look at the next issue that's laid out here. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Now what is meant by that? Let me put this question to you personally.

Do you have a purified heart? Well now, let's not go at this from the surface. This passage is not describing a heart from which all wicked thoughts are removed. This passage is talking in the same vein as that passage in the Psalms where a prayer is lifted to God.

Unite my heart to fear Thy name. The purified heart is the heart made one. The singular heart over against the divided heart.

I'm regularly talking with professed Christians who acknowledge a divided heart. Oh, they do want to be holy. They do want to love Christ and serve Him.

But they also want to make lots of money. Or they also want to be accepted in this world. Or they want to have all kinds of friends and recognition.

In 1 John, that powerful epistle, it makes it clear. If the world recognizes you as one of its own, you do not belong to Christ. The nature of the true Christian heart is that they are isolated from the world.

The world views the real Christian as an oddball, a misfit. And Jesus taught us very plainly, as they hated me, so they will hate you. And so this very, very significant word, unite my heart to fear Thy name.

That's the psalmist expression of this. And here, purify your hearts. You double-minded.

Now let me take a moment to remind you of the Sermon on the Mount. The words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Many of you will be able to recite with me the Beatitudes.

Number 1, blessed are the poor in spirit. Number 2, blessed are they that mourn. Number 3, blessed are the meek.

Number 4, blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Do you know that Jesus is giving us the way to a united heart? I'm going to ask this brother a direct question. I feel a great warmth toward him.

And I want to ask you, in how many realms is it possible for a human being to relate? Did your wife ask you that question earlier today? All of you think of this now. In how many realms is it possible for a human being to relate? Any thought? Nothing wrong with being cautious. Let me tell you how many realms we can relate in.

Three, the upward realm toward God. The inward realm toward ourselves. The outward realm toward others.

You see, that's what Jesus is dealing with in these first four Beatitudes. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. When you reach that point in your life where you realize that all of your righteousness is somehow you could gather all of the righteousness of your life and put it together in a stack, it would look like zero.

And it would look like zero because it would be zero. The person who is poor in spirit is the person who realizes that in comparison with God they are absolutely zero. It's a bit like what John the Baptist was saying in Luke chapter 3. Some of you will remember these words.

When He comes, whose sandals I'm not fit to untie, He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. Now, at the beginning of that statement, John the Baptist said, I baptize in water for the remission of sins. Now, if you paid any attention to that passage, did you know that John the Baptist was simply saying, I am drawing two important contrasts.

I am drawing a contrast between myself and Christ. And I'm drawing a contrast between my baptism and the baptism of Christ. Now, Jesus said, of those men born of women, there is none greater than John.

But John says, when He comes, that is the Lord Jesus, I'm not fit to untie His sandals. Why? Because He was poor in spirit. He was emptied in the upward realm.

He knew that in comparison with Christ He was absolutely nothing. Now, when you're empty toward God, then you stand in front of the mirror. Say you get up early in the morning and you spend an hour in prayer and in your Bible.

Then you return to your bathroom and you comb your hair and get ready for the day. You stand looking in the mirror and say to yourself, Oh world, I hope you're ready for my blessedness when I emerge. If you had any idea how fortunate you are that I'm coming among you, you would be shouting in glad joy.

No, no, no. If you had an hour with God, then you look in the mirror and you feel absolutely wrong. How could anybody have been a professed Christian as long as I have and be so unlike Christ? There are three realms, I've said, in which you can relate upwardly, inwardly, outwardly.

The meek man is the man who admits to his world what he's already admitted to God and himself. Lord, you're everything. I am nothing.

And I admit to my world that I'm nothing. Now you see why Jesus made the fourth beatitude. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness.

For they shall be filled. When you're emptied upwardly, when you're emptied inwardly, when you're emptied outwardly, you cannot do anything other than hunger and thirst for righteousness with the guarantee from the lips of our precious Savior, you shall be filled. So Jesus gives us the way to end double-mindedness, to purify our hearts.

So go back to what I said about submitting to God. Spend serious time every day drawing near to God that will hasten this self-emptying process that will lead you forward to that point where in desperation you cry out perpetually, unceasingly, Lord, you are all I want. You're all I need.

And you live then with that glorious dependence upon the Lord and that joy in His person and in His presence. So cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Then number six, be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Now is that a picture of the way the Christian is supposed to live every day of their life? No, we know that God is an incredible fountain of joy.

And everyone who knows God knows joy and peace and love. But when we get into a bankrupt state like we are currently, when our nation of churches has gone so far from God, we wonder can it get any worse. When our own hearts have been affected by the iniquity all around us and our spirits grow lax, the time comes when every true Christian weeps and mourns.

We are at that time when an appropriate season of weeping and mourning is upon us. That lament that I mentioned from the lips of Job, I have heard of you with the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you and I abhor myself and I repent in dust and ashes. We're at that time when we're going to have to go deeper than we've ever gone.

When we're going to have to seek God with a larger measure of brokenness, fasting, prayer, weeping, calling upon the Lord with brokenheartedness, longing that He will come again among us. And finally, number seven, humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you. What a wonderful assurance.

Now we're taught in our Bibles that God hates the proud in heart. Our Bibles tell us that God holds the proud in heart at arm's length. Now suppose I hold one of you at arm's length.

Is that significant? Not in comparison with God. I mean look at this tiny little arm. One of the shocking and the humorous things that happened to me recently.

I've got a group of grandsons that live in Tennessee and I was with them recently and the second boy said to me, Grandpa, how tall are you? I said, taller than you? No, he said, I'm taller than you. Well, I said, how tall are you? He said, I'm five foot seven. Ha! I said, I'm five foot eight.

No, Grandpa, you're not. So I got out my driver's license and said, look here, right here. It says five foot eight.

So this grandson said, Now, Grandpa, you stand back to back with me. So the older brother took his hand, shouted across my head and whacked the back of his brother's head. It was kind of convincing evidence that I wasn't as tall as I thought I was.

So a few days later, I had a routine kind of visit in the doctor's office and the nurse scooted out of the room for a moment and there's one of those scales, you know, with the bar that goes up and the rest down on top of your head. So while she was out of the room, I jumped on the scale, let the bar down on my head and then I read it. You know what it said? Can you imagine what it said, sir? No, 5.5. Shrinking away.

If you invite me again and I can make it, I might be about 4.6. Who can say? Our bodies do wither, but some people never humble themselves, never truly bow down. Humble yourself in the presence of the Lord. He will exalt you.

As I said, God holds the proud in heart at arm's length and God's arm is of incredible length. You never draw near to God when he's holding you at arm's length. So humble yourself.

Hasn't the time come when we ought with greater fervency and honesty admit our desperate need of God and he assures us if you will draw near to me, if you will draw near to me, I'll draw near to you. If you will humble yourself in my presence, I will exalt you. Now look, friends, you should have heard this message tonight not as if a mere man was speaking to you, though a mere man has spoken, but this mere man has not spoken his words but God's.

And you should hear them as God's word. And every one of us without exception should immediately begin to put into practice what is here. So submit to God.

Resist the devil. Draw near to God. Cleanse your hands, you sinners.

Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Mourn and weep and humble yourself. Father, we thank you tonight for your word.

Your word is living and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword. We thank you for your Holy Spirit. Thank you for showing us how we can draw near to you.

Thank you for opening the way and calling us to yourself. Thank you for your grace by which we can do these things. Oh Lord, help us to be doers of the word and not hearers only and so deceiving ourselves.

Thank you for your word tonight. Help us to meditate on your word and allow it to become a light for our path, a lamp for our feet. Lord, let it be that hammer that breaks the rock in pieces.

And let it be that fire in us that burns away all dross and causes us to appear before you even as you have chosen us before you laid the foundations of the world that we should be holy and blameless before you in love. Thank you for making that possible. Lord, none of us can perform that or produce that, but thank you that you finished all that is needed in order that we might become like you.

Lord, we recognize tonight that we are far from what we ought to be far from what you desire us to be. Oh, increase that burden in our hearts, that desire to be like Jesus. Teach us to pray and teach us to walk in your ways.

Lord, that can only happen when that heart of stone is removed and replaced with a heart of flesh and when your spirit reigns in us and we become still before you. Help us, oh God. We recognize that we need

your help and you are a very present help in time of need.

God, you see much better than we do how great a need we are in. And we just do desire, oh Lord, to humble ourselves and to seek your face and to have you do your good pleasure in us so that we once again, as David prayed, that the bones that thou hast broken would rejoice again, that we may show forth your praise and your salvation so that sinners might be converted to you. Lord, that you may have your way, that you may be glorified in us.

Thank you for your word, oh Lord. In Jesus' name, amen. Herman, would you lead us in a closing song? And then we need to just continue to be still and hear what the Lord is saying to us and go home and allow the Spirit of God to prepare our hearts for what he has for us tomorrow.

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