

# Repent and Believe the Gospel

by William Carrol

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and returning to God after failure, highlighting Jesus' unwavering love and commitment to restore us.*

**Duration:** 51:05

**Scripture:** Luke 22:31

**Topics:** "Repent"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the significance of Jesus' time in Gethsemane and the importance of watching and praying. He emphasizes that the disciples were not just watching for the events that would unfold, but also observing how Jesus dealt with the situation and seeking to understand the heart and mind of God. The speaker then introduces the topic of repentance and believing the gospel, highlighting the prophecy Jesus gave to Peter about his denial. He suggests that it is through our failures and recognition of our need for Jesus' sacrifice that we truly grasp the depth of the gospel message.

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## Transcript

I have a message entitled, Repent and Believe the Gospel. Repent and Believe the Gospel. I was going to give it the title, No Fishing, and I'll tell you what that means as time progresses, but we'll leave it at that.

Repent and Believe the Gospel. In your Bibles, in the book of Luke, the 22nd chapter and the 31st verse, we hear Jesus giving Peter a word of prophecy, and that word of prophecy was one that Peter did not necessarily want to hear, and I think it's primarily because he didn't necessarily understand it. Tonight, what I'd like to do is to consider that word, and to try to understand it.

Ultimately, Peter would understand it, but I think at the time that it was given to him, he didn't. Luke 22, verse 31, and also verse 32. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.

But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail. And when you have returned to me, strengthen your brothers. When you have returned to me, when we think of the word repent, basically that's what it means.

It means simply to return. Now, the one thing that I recognize when I read this text is that when Jesus speaks of praying for Peter, he doesn't say, I am praying that you are not sifted as wheat. In fact, he

suggests that the devil came, asked permission to sift Peter, and the permission was given.

And he doesn't seem to be saying, and I'm praying that when the time of trial comes, you stand without faltering or without fail. Because Jesus said to Peter very clearly that you will deny me three times during this sifting. And you will deny that you know me.

He suggests then that the temptation will come and that in this particular case, Peter will not do as well in that time of testing as he, Peter would have liked. But he says, I have prayed for you. And the prayer is very specific.

I have prayed that when you are tested and when you struggle during that test, I have prayed that you return to me. Now it's very important for us to remind ourselves that when Peter was tested and when Peter failed, there was at that time a temptation that would have kept him running in the wrong direction if the Lord had not caught him. Remember when he denied the Lord a certain amount of times, and then he looked at the Lord's face, and then Peter broke down in tears.

And even after the resurrection visitation, where Peter saw that the Lord was raised from the dead, the Bible says that he still said, I am going fishing. In other words, he began to believe that his call to the ministry was null and void because he did not pass the test that he himself convinced himself that he would pass. When Jesus said, you will deny me after a certain amount of time, and you will deny me a certain amount of times.

And Peter said, no, that will never happen. He said, I will not fail this test. Jesus made it very clear that there will be a time of sifting and a time of humbling, but I have prayed for you that you might return.

And when you return or when you repent, when you come back to me, you will be in a position now to do things that you can't even do on this side of that test. But Peter said, after the failure, after the tears, even after the resurrection where he acknowledged, yes, Jesus died for me, yes, Jesus resurrected for me, but I still feel like I've disqualified myself on some level or another from at least the kind of calling that was upon my life before the failure. And so I'm gonna go fishing.

Now, at a certain stage before all of this happens, Jesus is at Gethsemane. This is right after the Lord's Supper, right after washing the disciples' feet, the Lord's Supper, now they're in Gethsemane right before the cross. Jesus is weeping, the Bible says.

He's crying with vehement tears, we read in the book of Hebrews. And he is saying, Father, this is too much for me. Nevertheless, not what I want, but what you want.

And he's praying in weakness and he's praying and crying out to God because he recognizes that he doesn't have the strength in himself to go ahead and do this thing. He actually says that my soul is distressed even to the point of death. The Bible says that he was sweating so profusely, it was as though blood was streaming down from his face.

But when this was happening, the disciples, the ones that Jesus brought to see this, were groggy, they were sleepy. I believe that they were in a half-sleep, half-wake state because we know that they were able at least to write down and to bear witness to what happened in that garden. The Bible says that Jesus brings them to that place of his agony, of his brokenness, of his weakness, of his despair, but also of his resolution and of his commitment and of his determination.

He brings them to that place and he says, watch with me and pray. Watch with me. Now that word watch basically means be aware, be alert.

Now the question is, what were they watching for? They couldn't have been watching for the people that will come and bring Jesus to trial and to the cross because Jesus was clear about the fact that that was the will of God. So what were they watching for? I'm taking it for granted that at least a part of it involved simply being with Jesus and watching how he was dealing with the situation, watching for the heart and the mind of God, watching to see what God was doing. In a very real sense, watching to see what the gospel looks like.

Believing what the gospel is. If ever we got to the point where we asked ourselves, in a nutshell, what does the good news look like? What does the victory of Christ look like? What does the infusion of the kingdom look like? We can look at Gethsemane and see Jesus crying out for humankind, crying out because of this burden that was on his heart. And they were invited to watch that.

And Jesus gave them an admonition as they began to fall asleep. He said, watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. Now, the trial that Peter was going to go through and all of the other disciples were going to go through was already set.

Jesus said, smite the shepherd and the sheep will scatter. Jesus said to Peter, you will deny me three times. That was already set.

So when he said, lest you enter temptation, he could not have been speaking about that. But there was a greater temptation on the horizon. And that temptation is, if you find yourself fleeing from the cross, from all of the great responsibilities that are involved with sharing in the sufferings of Christ and all of the confusion that sometimes comes when God makes a turn that we didn't expect, nobody expected the Messiah to die.

When we find ourselves on the business end of a test, sometimes we feel that if we've fled to a certain degree, because we fled to a certain degree, we become embarrassed or we become ashamed as you would have seen in the face of Peter in those days. We feel like we have to keep on running now. We failed in a time of test and now we don't feel like we can come back.

We feel like we gotta keep running now. We feel like we've made our bed and now we have to lie in it. Or we feel like somehow or another, our ministry or our calling has been devalued because there was a specific test where we felt like that was the test.

And if we pass that, then we have the right to continue to minister. And if we don't pass that particular test, the particular test, then we have somehow made our calling and all the promises of God null and void. And therefore we may as well just keep running off into the abyss.

That's the great temptation that came upon Peter in those days. That's why he said, after all of that, even after having seen the resurrected Jesus, I go fishing. What I go fishing means is, no longer am I able to fulfill the ministry that Jesus Christ has placed upon my life.

This is not saying that he decided that he was no longer gonna be in vocational ministry. Now he'll do a secular job. That has nothing to do with it.

Whatever God calls us to, God calls us to. The question is, can I, after having failed this test or that test, can I still fulfill the mission of God upon my life, wherever that mission happens to be? Or am I automatically a second-class citizen in the house of God? See, the gospel message suggests that what God said he would do, he will do. The gospel message shows that God is absolutely committed to fulfilling his promise in our life, no matter what it takes, no matter what it costs.

You see, what Peter had to do, was return, was repent and believe the gospel. That was Jesus' message when he first started to preach. Repent and believe the gospel.

Now here's what I mean by that. Peter finds himself out in a spiritual wilderness. He finds himself going back to what he believed to be his old life.

He finds himself not turning away from the Lord in the sense that he didn't believe or love the Lord or anything, but believing that his ministry now was somehow truncated, somehow null and void, somehow never going to be what it was supposed to be. Believing that his life now was somehow never going to be what it was supposed to be because somewhere along the line, he denied the Lord. And Jesus meets him, you remember, at the lake one day and he's on the shore and he breaks bread before them.

Now, this was a picture of what had happened a certain amount of time ago where he said, take and eat. This is my body. This is my blood.

This is given for you. And this is the new covenant that we have. Now, Peter is out there on the edge, wondering whether or not God can use him, actually convinced that God can't use him.

And the Lord, by breaking that bread, kind of brings Peter back in his mind and brings Peter back to that particular series of events, the foot washing and the breaking of the bread at the Lord's supper and Gethsemane. And what was supposed to happen in Peter's mind was he was supposed to be able to see in his mind's eye what he barely saw when he was actually there because he was sleeping on it. But he was supposed to see what the gospel looks like.

And he was supposed to see that one that he was coming back to. You know, oftentimes when we first hear the gospel message and we believe the gospel message, there's an element of us that kind of sleeps upon the gospel message. We believe it.

We know it. We love it. But it doesn't really have that kind of depth until we fail along the way.

And when we fail along the way, we become very cognizant of how much we really, truly need the blood of Jesus Christ. When we find out that we're not as strong as we thought we were when we first got saved. And when Jesus said to us kindly and lovingly, you know that going to be sometimes you're going to fail, right? And we say, not me, Lord.

Not me. You know what I mean? And he said, you know, you're going to deny me somewhere along the way. We're like, no, I deny that.

I'll never deny you. You know, that kind of a thing when we're saying to the Lord, you don't know me. You don't know how serious I am about this.

And we become very, very clear on who we are. And the blood is kind of there in the background somewhere. The cross is kind of there in the background until we fall flat on our face.

And all of a sudden, then there is nothing but the cross. Then there is nothing but the blood. But first, hallelujah, hallelujah.

But first we got to get past the lie of the enemy. See, the lie of the enemy says you've already run this far. You might as well just keep going because there's nothing for you now.

God can't use you now. But the Lord tells us to turn. He tells us to return.

He tells us to repent. That is to say, don't believe that lie. Don't think you have to keep running from me.

Turn and come back to me. Now who, hallelujah, hallelujah. Now the question is, who are we turning back to? I think what Jesus wanted Peter to do and what he wants us to do periodically is to see that man that was weeping, that was praying, that was crying out in Gethsemane.

Because oftentimes when we think about returning to the Lord, we think about coming back and just beginning to believe again that the thing that God spoke over our lives is real and that it is non-negotiable. When he said, you will do this thing that I asked you to do. Believe me, brother, sister, you will do it.

As the Lord said to Paul, it's hard for you to kick against the goads. If God is goading you in a certain direction, I'm telling you, you're going to find yourself there one way or the other. It might take 11 days.

It might take 40 years, but you're going to find yourself there. You remember Moses' life. Moses had a word.

We see it in the book of Acts. Moses had a word that he was going to be useful in the hands of God to save some lives. And he thought he was going to do it in his own strength and, you know, use his own hand to do it.

And so he, in defense of one man, he killed another man. And his life, for a certain amount of time, seemed to be, at least from his perspective, put on hold. He failed.

And so he just went out and he said, well, I guess I'll just be a shepherd out here and so on and so forth. And 40 years later, God meets him on the back side of the desert. 40 years later, he got a little bit curious and said, what's this plant doing burning here? I noticed it's burning and it's not being consumed.

40 years later, God just begins where he ended. Mid-sentence, God begins to say to him, and as I was saying 40 years ago, I told you I would use you to deliver men and women. And when I said it, I meant it.

Now, for us, we have been lied to by the enemy every now and again. And the enemy says, you know the one that you need to turn back to if this thing is going to get back on target. He said that one is angry at you.

That one is disappointed in you. That one expected you to be perfect. That one expected you to be able to do all kinds of good things in your own strength and with your own hand.

And now he really doesn't want to have anything to do with you. But that's not the God of the good news. That's not the God of the gospel.

If we want to know that one who's asking us to simply turn back and look at him, all we have to do is go back to Gethsemane and see what he looks like. In the book of Matthew, the 26th chapter, I'm just going

to read a portion of scripture here. And then I'm just going to discuss this one that's asking us to believe that he can continue to do what he said he would do in our lives no matter what our struggles happen to be.

He is still able to draw us to himself, still able to cause his will to be made manifest in us, still able to glorify his name in us, still able to help us, still able to change us, still able to mold us and shape us and free us and strengthen us. In Matthew 26, 36, it says, Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane and said to his disciples, Sit here while I go and pray over there. Matthew 26, verse 37.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then he said to them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with me.

He went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed saying, Oh, my father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. Then he came to the disciples and found them asleep.

And he said to Peter, What? Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again, a second time, he went away and prayed saying, Oh, my father, if this cup cannot pass away from me unless I drink it, your will be done.

And he came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were very heavy. So he left them, went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to his disciples and said to them, Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand that the son of man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

If they had stayed awake long enough, if their eyes were open, and the Bible says that their eyes were heavy because of sorrow. I think it's because they knew that there was something in them that was not going to be able to stand that test. I don't think it would have been a guess for them.

Jesus had already proclaimed it, that there was something that was going to fail in them. I think they were sorrowful because they knew that they could not stand with him in that particular time. But of course, that was already Jesus' design.

They were not going to go with him to the cross. They were going to follow him as far as he said, and then he was going to go farther. You see it right there, even in this particular story.

He says, Come with me this far, you stay here, I'm going farther. For them, that was something that they could not at that stage handle. It just overwhelmed them that they couldn't go at that stage as far as they would later go.

They would all suffer for his name. They would all be martyred on some level or another. John would die of old age, but he would be boiled and all according to what we hear.

He was sent to the Isle of Patmos, exiled and so on and so forth. So they all were martyred on some level or another for his name, but it wasn't the time for them. They were still children, still growing, still had some things that they had to do some ups and downs.

And there was still going to be some times, you know, when you walk your little child, when they're taking their first steps, they're going to fall. They don't know it. You're going to fall a couple of times as you try to walk or you try to ride your first bike or whatever the case might be.

They don't know it or they don't want to believe it. So likewise, but there's still something that says, I want to stand with him. I want to walk perfectly.

I never want to fail. I never want to take a misstep, but I realize that there are going to be some struggles sometimes. And for them, it was too much for them to bear.

And so the cross and the prayer around that cross was at times too much. You see that same situation with Peter. Every time he had a struggle with the Lord, if you read it in your scripture, Peter was not this impetuous man, as we like to say sometimes.

The truth of the matter is every time he had a struggle with the Lord, it was always about the cross, always about the cross. It was just too much for him. So now what we see happening here is Jesus in Gethsemane and he's bearing witness first and foremost to the fact that they are not the only ones who struggle with the cross.

You are not the only one. I am not the only one who struggles with the cross. Jesus himself struggled with the cross.

And so when he tells us to turn and look at him, when he tells us to lift up our head and look him in his eyes, he is not talking to us as someone who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, someone who did not expect us to struggle or someone who doesn't know what it feels like to be overwhelmed by the cross. The Bible says that he said, I am overwhelmed to the point of dying. The Bible says that it was as though blood was profusely streaming from his face.

The Bible says in the book of Hebrews that he let out vehement cries. The Bible says, yes, though he were a son, yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered and being made perfect. That is being brought to this place where he was finally able to go to the cross.

He was perfect morally, but he still had to be perfected so that he could go to the cross. In other words, he had to go through everything that he had to go through. He had to endure all kinds of suffering and struggles so that when he went to the cross, he was able to bear the sin of all of us.

He knows what it is to be overwhelmed by struggle and by difficulty. He knows what it is to see that cross looming on the horizon and to be terrified of it. He's not ashamed of you and he's not ashamed of me when the realities of the cross begin to settle in and we shrink back.

There is nothing pretty about the cross. We like to put it on top of our churches and around our necks and make it look nice and pretty. There is nothing desirable about the cross.

The Bible talks about Jesus and it talks about his cross experience, his atonement for humankind. And it says when we looked upon him, there was nothing about him that we would desire. In other words, this is how he looked as he's walking with that cross beam on his shoulders and he is beaten beyond recognition.

He is marred and we will look at him and we would say, God must be angry at him. We esteemed him smitten, stricken of God, but it was for our sins, it was for our iniquities that he was bruised. And when we saw that, oh, glory to God, when we saw that, there was nothing about it that would make us say, boy, I'd like to do that.

There was nothing about it that said, man, oh man, I'd like to join him there. And I want to suggest to you that there's still nothing about the cross that makes me at least say, boy, I love this. I love this suffering and this struggling and this constantly being lied to by the devil and constantly feeling like, oh, my life is this far from being over.

And I love the fact that the hardships and the difficulties of what God has called me to oftentimes causes me to weep and to cry and to say, God, I can't do this one more day. No, there is something about the cross that's repulsive, repugnant, that makes you think, no, not that anything but that. And if you don't feel that way, God bless you.

God love you. You know what I mean? My cat is stuck in a tree. Maybe you can fly up there and get him for me.

You know what I'm talking about? But the truth of the matter is this. For that person who's tried to live this life for real and has tried to make a difference in other people's lives for real, who's tried to give themselves over to the way of the Lord for real and to worship him for real and love him for real and bless him for real and cause his name to be glorified in the earth for real. Sometimes it gets a little bit hard.

Sometimes it gets a little bit difficult. And sometimes we find ourselves with Jesus at Gethsemane saying this is too much for me. But if you will it, Lord.

Remember the Bible says that it's God who works in us both to will and to do. So when we hear that prayer, if you will it, Lord. We're not just hearing somebody saying I want this, but you want that and your desire is more important than mine.

That's true. But it's also saying something like my will is not strong enough, but if your will embraces mine, if your will engulfs mine, if your will surrounds mine, if your will overpowers mine and causes mine to be bent in your direction, God, my will is not enough. I never want to see the cross.

I'm just going to be honest with you. That's just me. And it's probably because I understand to some limited degree what it is.

I never want to see the cross. I never want to bear my cross. I don't like dying.

I just don't like it. It's just not one of my favorite things. You know what I mean? I like chocolate.

Chocolate is good. You know what I'm talking about? Dying is not quite up on the top of my list, but it's what I'm called to. So it's not about my will.

I need a will that's stronger than mine to overwhelm mine, to draw mine in, in love and in affection and to pull me in another direction. So basically what the disciples were asked to do when they felt like they need to go fishing again, because it wasn't just Peter that says I'm going fishing. All of them said it.

They were being asked to go back to the garden and remember the one who's asking you to stop hiding your eyes from him. The one who's asking you to repent. That is to turn back and look at me.

The first time Peter did that, the Bible says he broke down in tears. The next time it was a situation where he was just confronting the Lord and the Lord was basically asking him, do you love me though? Do you love me? Because ultimately that was the bottom line. So he had to go back to that garden and he had to realize that Jesus was sensitive to his struggles.

And also if he had looked, he would have seen Jesus calling God his father, even in the midst of his struggle. Even in the midst of saying, I don't want to do this. There was always my father.

Even when he said, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The emphasis is not on the why have you forsaken me, the emphasis is on the my God, my God aspect of it. See, even in his struggle, he would not let go of the reality of his relationship with the father. He would not let go.

And if Peter and James and John allowed themselves to look back as they were going fishing, as they were settling for less, as they were considering themselves second-class citizens in the body, if they had just gone back to Gethsemane, they would see a Jesus struggling with the reality of this cross, yet never struggling with the reality of his relationship with his God, with his father. See, you and I are going to have some times of struggle. Jesus' struggle was different than ours.

Obviously, his cross is different than ours. We can't die to save the world. Jesus had no moral struggle.

He had just an ordinary struggle to live. Nobody likes to die. But you and I are going to have some struggles with the cross.

We're going to have some struggles with dying daily. We're going to have some struggles with laying down our lives so that somebody else can live. We're going to have some struggles with speaking when we know it could cost us embarrassment or shame or ridicule in our generation.

Or we're going to various places when we know that it might cost us financially, it might cost us on our job, it might cost us our vacation. We might go in and it might cost us our lives. We don't know.

We just know that it's hard. It's difficult. But what the devil wants to do is to say that because you're having a difficulty with this, God is mad at you.

Or God is inaccessible to you. Until you get it right, you can't talk to God. Until you make up your mind, you can't talk to God.

But what the Bible seems to be saying to us is until you talk to God, you're not going to get it right. And until you talk to God, you're not going to make up your mind the way you need to. See, it's God's will engulfing our own and bringing our will to a higher place.

It's not simply me saying, God, I'd rather have what you want. It's saying, God, your will has got to draw me in. Your will has got to become my will.

That's why the Bible says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is working in you both to will and to do. Work out your own salvation. Basically, it doesn't mean work for your own salvation, obviously.

It means allow the salvation that you already have to begin to work out. To begin to have its outward application. To begin to impact other people.

And he said, the only way you can do that is if God's will overwhelms, overpower. But I like to think of it more as, as embracing and drawing you in. My wife's will always overpowers my own.

You know what I mean? You know, because I love her. If I know what she wants, and I see somehow her will is able to embrace mine. Do you know what I mean? And it drove me to all kinds of places.

You know what I'm talking about. But anyway, the point is, when we decide that our will is not enough, then we submit our will to God. We say, Lord, I can't do it, but you can.

The cross is scary. The cross should repulse you. Why? Because when we look at it, not the Christ of the cross.

When we look at the cross, we see all of our sin, all of our weakness, all of our frailty, all of our faults. But we also see this concept of sacrifice, of giving, of sharing. And when we try to reconcile those two things, I'm weak and yet I'm asked to make others strong.

I'm greedy and yet I'm asked to give. You know what I mean? I'm fearful and yet I'm asked to encourage others and that kind of thing. And it becomes overwhelming.

I don't know about you, but it overwhelms me. The thought that I'm supposed to make a difference in other people's lives. And then I remind myself of something.

God knows my struggle. God knows my pain. And God is able to help me by drawing me into his will.

And as he draws me into his will, this my father begins to overwhelm this, the cup is too much for me. And this my God begins to overwhelm this, why have you forsaken me? This my father, my God, this sense that my relationship with God is intact. No matter how hard it is for me every day to wake up and to recognize that I have to bear my cross again.

Another thing I noticed and I think the disciples would have noticed if they had just gone back in their minds to Gethsemane is that this was a process. Three times Jesus went. Three times Jesus asked Peter whether or not he loves him.

But three times Jesus went. And each time at first it was, I just can't do this. I can't do this.

And then it was like, well, if I have to do this. And finally it was, I'm doing this. You watch, if you compare the teachings, you compare the Gospels and their various reminders of what happened there, there is this process.

Each time it's more and more in the direction that it's supposed to be. Oftentimes we think that if God is moving in our lives, then it's got to be instantaneous. It's got to happen right here, right now.

I don't know where we find that in the Bible. Oh yes, the Bible is replete with miracles. And I am a big miracle person.

I believe in miracles. But I don't think that a thing has to be miraculous in order to be supernatural. I think there's two expressions of the supernatural.

I think there's the one that's miraculous, where things just happen without a process. They just happen. And then I also think that there is a supernatural process by which things happen.

Where the Lord prunes a tree and the Lord cuts a tree and he does this and he does that so that it can produce more fruit and then more fruit and then more fruit. Little by little, line upon line, but it's still God. He's still the husbandman.

He's still the gardener. He's still doing it, but he's doing it progressively. See, if they had gone back to Gethsemane, they would have realized that there's no shame in that.

And sometimes you gotta go to God more than once before you are finally locked into what it is that he's asked you to do. See, what the enemy wants to say is if you've had a struggle going ahead and doing what God has called you to do, if you find the cross a fearful thing sometime, then God is ashamed of you. And you might as well forget whatever it was that he told you when you were a young Christian.

You might as well forget all the promise that was on your life. You might as well forget the fact that God promised you that he was gonna use you to impact the world. Forget that.

Just go to church every now and again. Do what you can. Make sure you take care.

You give your tithes or whatever. You shake somebody's hand. You say, God bless you.

And then leave the rest to the super Christians. Do you know what I mean? But that is not what the Bible says. See, all we have to do is repent.

That is to say, turn and look him in his face. Get back to Gethsemane. Lift up your head and look him in his eyes.

Repent and believe the good news. Don't concern yourself with the lie that the enemy has told you. Believe the good news.

And if you and I choose to believe the good news, if we choose to believe that Jesus can identify with our struggle, if we choose to believe that he's not ashamed of our process, if we choose to believe that our relationship with him is intact, even though we are still in a process, if we choose to believe that his will is enough for us, that his will can bring us to places where we never thought that we could go and could do things in us that we never thought that we can do, if we still believe that, then we'll do well. If we go back to Gethsemane and we see his cries for our forgiveness, the work that he put in for our reconciliation, everything that he did so that we never have to run from him, we never have to hide from him. If we could see everything that he was doing so that he could freely empower us.

As he said, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. If we went back to Gethsemane, saw all of the great evidence of how much he is for us, of everything that he is willing to do to keep us, and everything that he is willing to do to free us, to deliver us, because that's what we would have seen at Gethsemane. A man who was saying everything that is necessary to provide for my children, I'm going to do.

If we just turn back long enough to see that, then we would see what the good news looks like. And we would be reminded that the God that we serve is not ashamed of us, not ashamed of our process, not ashamed of our struggles, but in fact is able to help us through them, is able to bend our will to his own because he loves us and he draws us, is able to make us to be what we are called to be, able to give us strength over every kind of lie of the devil, and to keep us from straying away from him. When God tells us to repent and believe the gospel, here's what he's saying.

Look at me and see how much I love you. Lift up your eyes, don't hide your face from me. Somebody in this room, somewhere along the line, you failed a test that you convinced yourself you had to pass if you were going to be of any use to God.

But that's a lie. There's only one test that had to be passed so that you and I could be of some use to God and Jesus passed it, Jesus passed it. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

And the only thing he's saying to us is, I'm praying for you that you turn back to me, that you look at me, that you lift up your eyes and that you see me. I was talking to the Lord today and just reminded, you know, whenever Jesus was resurrected and one time he appeared as a gardener, and I'm thinking the first commandment to humankind was to till the garden and to cultivate it, to protect it and to cultivate it. We were called to do something we couldn't do.

We failed, but he didn't. He knows how to take care of you. If you're feeling right now that you can never be what you were called to be because somewhere along the line, you made a bad decision and you failed.

Somewhere along the line, you denied the Lord and you ran because the cross scared you. The cost scared you. That type of commitment terrified you.

God has sent me tonight to invite you very simply to lift up your head and to look him in his eyes. Because when you look into his eyes, you will see a small reflection of yourself. So you'll know where you need to grow and where you need to change, but you will see that not in some cold blank mirror, but in eyes that love you so very much.

Repent. Believe the good news. Believe that God is still going to use you just like he said he would.

You're going to impact the world just like he said you would. Glory to his holy name. What a glorious God.

Let's stand together in the house of the Lord. We're living in a wonderful day. We have an opportunity to do things.

You know how it was when you were first beginning to be called and God would show you this. He would show you the Holy Bible and in it, you would see awesome things. And you believe that you were part of that.

That you were going to be used in some way or another and it was going to look like that. Then some struggles came and some hardship came and it was like, well, maybe not me, maybe somebody else. But it's not somebody else.

It's you. It's not somebody else. It's you.

There is no revival without you. It's just that simple. If you don't do your share, if you don't do your part, there is no revival.

And there is no hope for this generation. I invite you to turn back to Gethsemane. Look into that eyes, look into the eyes of that one who knows what it is to struggle with the cross and believe him.

Holy Spirit of Jesus, we ask you to help us. The devil has lied, but we refuse to believe. We choose to believe the good news.

Help us to turn our eyes upon Jesus. Help us to look full in your face, Lord, without any shame, without any fear, but with godly awe of your love and your affection. Bring us to that place, Lord, in Jesus' name.

If God is speaking to you, you want to come to the front of this auditorium and pray for a few minutes and just believe God to draw you back to Gethsemane, where you can see somebody who identifies a high priest that can be touched with the feelings of your infirmities. A Jesus who's not ashamed of you, not ashamed of your process, not ashamed of your fears, not ashamed of you, but who loves you, who loves you dearly, who loves you deeply. Come and pray in Jesus' name.

Say this and we'll pray. You know, the Lord tells us to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. There is an element of us, the spirit that's willing, and that spirit is willing to believe every word that God says to us.

But then there's an element as the flesh that still wants to hold on to the idea that God is angry at us. God is ashamed of us. God can't relate to us.

The God that we come to is cold and calculating and judgmental. And no matter how he tries to embrace us, the flesh will never embrace him. You understand? The flesh will never embrace the Lord.

We must simply trust him. The faith that we have is based upon the fact that we see him at Gethsemane. We see him in the scriptures.

When God tries to embrace us, there's going to be an element of us that says, yes, Lord, I hold to that. I believe. There's going to be another element that says, but I can't.

God must be angry. So on and so forth. That element of you, you simply have to dismiss.

Don't try to argue it down. Just dismiss it. It's a lie.

Hold on to Jesus. See that man at Gethsemane. See that man who knows what it is to weep.

See that man who knows what it is to struggle. See that man who knows what it is to wonder. And say, God, help me.

The only way to overcome is to watch with him and pray with him. We pray to him. We pray with him.

He leads us in prayer. He helps us along. There's going to be always an element of you that wants to believe that God is mad.

Don't believe it. Don't argue with it. Don't expect it to go away.

It is the flesh. It is weak. You simply say, but that element of me that knows it's true.

God is true. You embrace him with that. Embrace him with all that you are.

And you're going to have wonderful victory. Wonderful victory. Father, in Jesus name, we thank you.

That you invite us into Gethsemane, Lord. It's a hard place to be. Most of us sleep on it because it is a private place where we see a Jesus that doesn't look so nice in Italian Renaissance art.

The Jesus that is weeping and worried, committing no sin and yet identifying with human frailty. And it's not that easy to see. Most of us sleep on it.

But God, help us, especially during times of trial, to revisit this reality. To turn and believe. We love you so much, Jesus.

We thank you. In Jesus holy name we pray. Amen.

Amen. Praise God. Oh, praise his holy name.

God bless you.

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