

# What Is A Christian

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Date: 05 July 2026

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[ 0 : 00 ] I have a lot of announcements, but we're not planning on doing anything this week. so many people need something. So, yeah, that's what I'm going to pray. Yes, dear Lord, thank you, Father, for this day and for your word.

Pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit to be here, to open our hearts and our ears, Father, to hear your word. Just pray, Lord, that you would lead and guide us, Lord, into your light.

Help us to be your hands and feet, Father, and to affect this world. That's so full of darkness around the world, Father. Help us to be that light that carries the testimony of your word and what Jesus did on the cross, Lord.

Just pray that you'd anoint John today, Lord, that you'd speak through him and use him. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Amen.

Well, it's good to be here this morning and greet you all in Jesus' name. Appreciate what's been shared so far.

[ 1 : 13 ] Thank you, Dan, for sharing about your family and sharing our lives together, ministers to each other.

Thank you, Aaron, for what you shared as well. times what is really going on in our hearts. So this may seem challenging or whatever, but I certainly don't want it to be condemning. But yes, being challenged is good.

Being stretched is good. Being renewed is good. And you never know. I know we record, so you never know who listens to messages. But somebody probably needs this. And the other evening, a couple nights ago, with a celebration of 250 years of America, President Trump gave a speech at Mount Rushmore, and it was about what it means to be an American.

And I thought right away, well, what does it mean to be a Christian? You know, and I don't expect that coming from a president. But that's where my mind went, had been anyway. And so that's just when that statement was made, I right away thought, okay, that's this kingdom. That's America. But what about God's kingdom? What does it mean to be a Christian? And depending who you would ask, you would get different answers.

But it shouldn't be different answers if you look at the Word of God. It should, in Christianity, it should be the same. So let's turn to Ephesians chapter 2.

[ 3 : 37 ] And just look at a few scriptures here of what the Bible says, what it means to be a Christian. I want to talk about that first, about what it means to be a Christian, assuming that we are Christians, at least most of us. I know there's always new people, young people, and so on that maybe are trying to find their way in this.

So I want to end up with how to become a Christian. But a reminder to us that have had the new birth, what does it mean?

Ephesians chapter 2, verse 1 to 5. Paul says to them, And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we had our conversation in times past, in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

But God, who is rich in mercy for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.

By grace are you saved. Notice here that Paul is not saying that we were spiritually sick.

[ 5 : 25 ] He says we were dead. Let's be reminded that we were once dead, spiritually. We weren't just half dead.

We were dead. And he's reminding us of that. Dead men cannot improve themselves. They cannot make themselves alive.

They need resurrection. They need life. Christianity begins when God does what no man can do. He gives life to the spiritually dead. We think of Lazarus. The story of Lazarus. And how Jesus is that resurrection.

He is that resurrection power. He is life. He is the way. He is the truth. Somebody said once that if Jesus wouldn't have used Lazarus name when he said come out.

[ 6 : 34 ] He called. I think the Bible says with a loud voice. He said Lazarus. Come forth. If he would have just said come forth. Maybe everybody that was dead would have arose.

But he specified it's just Lazarus this time. Because Jesus is the resurrection. And if he speaks it, it'll happen. But anyway, that's a good illustration of what happens in us.

Or what has happened in us when we got born again. Something was made alive that was dead. And that's the only way to be a Christian.

A Christian is born of God. Now let's turn to John chapter 3. One of my favorite chapters in the Bible. Is the story of Nicodemus.

And I think we'll just read the first part of that chapter at least. Maybe down to verse 21. John 3 verse 1. There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus.

[ 7 : 41 ] A ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night. And said unto him. Rabbi, we know that thou art a good teacher. Come from God. For no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.

Think about this Nicodemus. I believe because he was a teacher of the Jews. He was probably. He could have been twice as old as Jesus. Maybe even more.

We don't know. I don't think we know the age of Nicodemus. But I believe personally he was an older man. And a teacher of the Jews. Who's a Pharisee. But he saw what Jesus was doing.

And became troubled. Or curious. Curiously troubled maybe. Jesus answered him. And said unto him. Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Except a man be born again.

He cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him. How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered.

[ 8 : 44 ] Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Except a man be born of water and of spirit. He cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

And that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee. Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth.

And thou hearest the sound thereof. But canst tell whence it cometh. And whither it goeth. So is everyone that is born of the spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him.

How can these things be? Now Jesus challenges him. He says, art thou a master of Israel? And knowest not these things? It's almost like Jesus pointed to him and said.

You know. You're the teacher. You're supposed to be the teacher of the Jews. Right? Anyway. He goes on. I don't think Jesus did that in any condemning way.

[ 9 : 45 ] But he goes on. Verily, verily, I say unto thee. We speak that we do know. And testify that we have seen. And ye receive not our witness.

If I have told you earthly things. And you believe not. How shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? And no man ascended. No man hath ascended up to heaven.

And he that came down from heaven. Even the son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Even so must the son of man be lifted up.

And whosoever believeth in him should not perish. But have eternal life. Why? For God so loved the world. That he gave his only begotten son.

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish. But have everlasting life. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world. But that the world through him might be saved.

[ 10 : 42 ] And he that believeth on him is not condemned. But he that believeth not is condemned already. Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.

And this is the condemnation. That light is come into the world. And men love darkness rather than light. Because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light.

Neither cometh to the light. Lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light.

That his deeds may be made manifest. That they are wrought in God. I believe here Jesus. What he's saying here in these last few verses. That he that doeth truth.

For example in verse 21. He that is honest with himself. He that's honest. Will come to the light. That his deeds.

[11:46] The works. May be manifest. That God can change us. It's the people. It's the one that want to live in the darkness. Aaron mentioned about coming in turning the lights on.

And I have that in my notes as well. About coming into a building that's dark. And you don't go in and try to shoo out the darkness. Right? You turn the light on.

And the darkness just flees. Within a flash. Just like that. Jesus comes into our life. Darkness leaves. Amen.

So let's keep going here. About. The new birth. You know the.

The way that Jesus. Explained to Nicodemus. About this birth. Nicodemus pointed to a baby. A.

[12:48] Can a. Can a. Man be born again. Of the flesh. And then Jesus explained. No it's the flesh. It's. Flesh is flesh. Spirit is spirit. Spirit. And.

When we think about a baby. In Christ's teachings. I want to just talk about that. You know. A baby that is born physically.

How much does a little tiny baby. Contribute. To its own. Birth. Or to its own life. Nothing.

Right? Right? He didn't. Educate himself. Into life. We didn't. Learn. To become. A human being. He didn't.

Discipline himself. Into life. Do you have that. That picture. Yeah. There you go. Beautiful.

[13:49] Beautiful little baby. He didn't. Improve himself. Into life. Into life. But he was. He or she.

Was given. Life. And that's what. Makes little babies. Little babies. They don't. Become.

Just educated. They educate later. After they've been. Giving life. The same is true. Spiritually. No one. Educates. Himself. Or herself.

Into. Christianity. Christianity. You know. It's. Something that. Our world. Christianity. Tries to.

Okay. So I believe. The Christmas story. I believe. The Easter story. I believe. Believe the Bible. So therefore. I must be. A Christian. But no one.

[14:43] Reforms himself. Into. Christianity. It's God. That gives. Life. Just like. In the natural.

And I think. This. This. Beautifully. Fits. The words. Of Jesus. Here. In this chapter. To Nicodemus. You must. Be. Born. Again. A Christian.

Becomes. A new. Creature. Second. Corinthians. Five. Verse. Seventeen. Very familiar. Verse.

Therefore. If. Any man. Be. In Christ.

He is. A. New creature. Old things. Are. Passed. Away. Behold. All things. Become. New. I believe. That. That.

All things. I mean. We could. Add. Many things. In there. But. It might. Be. That. My life. My outlook. Of life. Has become. New. That's. One of them. Somebody.

[15:42] Got. Saved. And. Friend. Of mine. Years. Ago. And. He came. Out. And. The next. Morning. And. The grass. Was. Just. So. Green. The skies. Were.

So. Blue. He never. Realized. How blue. It was. And. How clear. And. All things. Became. New. To him. His friends. Became. New. Friends.

The old. Ones. Were. Passed. Away. They. They. Were. Bad. For him. And. Now. I. I. I. I. I. Just. Remember. That. Testimony. A.

New. Creature. Think. About. A. Caterpillar. We. Have. A. Picture. Of. That. Too. A. Caterpillar.! The. Process.

That. It. Goes. Through. I. Think. God. Created. That. For. Us. That. Happening. So. That. We. Could. Understand. New. Life. But. A. Caterpillar.

[16:39] Becomes. This. Other. Thing. Almost. Becomes. More. Ugly. Not. Saying. Caterpillars. Are. Ugly. I mean. If. You. Think. So. But.

It. Ends. Up. With. The. Butterfly. But. The. Process. It. Goes. Through. Is. I. Believe. A. Picture. Of. A. Person. Becoming. A.

New. Person. We. Used. To. Just. Crawl. Around. And. Have. No. Real. Meaning. In. Life. Other. Than. Just. Being. Very. Limited. But.

Now. We. Have. These. Butterfly. Exhibits. That. We. Can. Go. And. We. Were. At. In. Michigan. Recently. My. Wife. And. I. At. On. That.

Island. And. They. Had. A. Butterfly. Exhibit. And. There. Many. Places. You. Can. Go. Into. The. Midst. Of. All. These. Beautiful. Butterflies. And. We.

[17:32] Don't. Even. Remember. That. They. Used. To. Just. Be. That. Crawling. Around. And. Sometimes. We. Forget. What. Our. Old. Life. Was. And.

How. Empty. And. How. Meaningless. It. Was. Let's. Never. Forget. Where. We. Came. From. And. Be. Thankful. And. Be. Grateful. And. If. You. Haven't.

Yet. Become. A. Butterfly. God. Will. Change. That. God. Will. Make. That. Happen. If. We. Trust. In. Him. And. We. Ask. Him. What.

A. Beautiful. Illustration. Christ. Lives. Within. Every. Believer. Galatians. Two. Verse. Twenty. Says. Paul. Says.

I. Am. Crucified. With. Christ. Nevertheless. I. Live. Yet. Not. I. But. Christ. Liveth. In. Me. And.

[18:25] The. Life. Which. I. Now. Live. In. The. Flesh. Meaning. He's. Still. A. Human. Being. I. Live. By. The. Faith. Of. The. Son. Of. God. Who. Loved.

Me. And. Gave. Himself. For. Me. So. What. Makes. Or. What. Was. The. Title. Again. What. Is. A. Christian. What. Makes. Us. A. Christian. What. Makes. Us. Different. You. know. It's. Not. Merely. Just. Going. To. Church. Or.

Having. Bible. Knowledge. Or. Just. Outward. Morality. According. To. This. Verse. In. Galatians. It's. Christ. Living. In. Us. That's. It. That's. What. Makes. Us. Different. That.

[19:19] The. Holy. Spirit. Dwells. In. Every. Christian. In. Romans. And. By. The. Way. I. Believe. That. Is. Bible. Doctrine. That.

The. Holy. Spirit. Dwells. In. Every. Christian. And. We'll. Get. To. A. Verse. We'll. Get. To. A. Verse. Actually. Here. It. is. Romans. Eight. Verse. Nine. But.

You. Are. Not. Flesh. But. In. The. Spirit. If. So. Be. That. The. Spirit. Of. God. Dwell. In. You. Now. If. Any. Man. That. Means. Person.

If. Any. Person. Have. Not. The. Spirit. Of. Christ. He. Is. Anyone. Want. To. Finish. The. Verse. None. Of. His.

So. Any. Person. That. Does. Not. Have. The. Spirit. Of. Christ. Is. None. Of. His. You're.

[20:15] Still. Just. A. Caterpillar. Or. Something. Else. And. This. Is. A. Defining. Verse. Paul. Is. Not. Saying. Here. That. If.

Any. Man. Doesn't. Have. The. Spirit. Of. Christ. He. A. We. Christian. Or. A. Half. Christian. No. Self. Improvement.

Program. Will. Ever. Be. The. Answer. Only. Jesus. I'm. Thankful. For. That.

That. I. Don't. Have. To. Learn. How. To. Become. A. Christian. But. That. Jesus. Is. The.

Answer. Christians. Love. Christ. This. Is. Another. Point. That. I. Want. To. Make. Jesus. Defines. This. Himself.

[21:09] In. John. 14. Verse. 15. He. Simply. Says. If. You. Love. Me. Keep. My. Commandments. Love.

Produces. Obedience. Obedience. Does. Not. Purchase. Love. So. In. other. words. We. Don't. Become.

Accepted. By. God. By. Simply. Obeying. Him. There's. Many. People. That. Will. Try. To. Teach. That. That. That. You. Take. The. Bible. And. You. Just. Obey. The. Bible.

You. Just. Obey. The. Bible. Find. The. Commandments. In. The. Bible. And. Obey. Them. And. Obey. Them. And. Make. Sure. You. Do. Everything. That. That. The. law. That's. the. spirit. of. the. law. And. you. can't. purchase. your. salvation. through. doing. that.

But. when. Christ. comes. in. it. produces. obedience. Isn't. that. beautiful? That. we. don't. have. to. make. it. happen. all. the. time. and. try. and. try. and. try. And. well. I. hope. God's. happy. with. me. now.

[22:13] I. just. did. a. lot. of. things. In. fact. Jesus. said. that. when. he. comes. back. many. people. will. say. that. They're. going. to. say. well. haven't. we. done. this. and. that. and. all. the. good. things. even. cast. out. demons. and. prophesied. and. done. wonderful. things. in. your. name? And. he's. going. to. say. I. never. knew. you. It's. because. that. life. was. never. made. real. And. these. people. were. just. doing. things. But. if. we. love. him. if. his. spirit. is. in. us. making. us. his. child. then. we. will. love. him.

And. that. love. will. produce. obedience. to. him. We. need. to. know. the. commandments. that. God. wants. us. to. obey. If. we're. going. to. obey. them. right? If. we. love. him.

Read. Psalm. 119. and. see. David's. heart. when. it. comes. to. the. word. of. God. Thy. word. have. I. hid. in. my. heart. that. I. would. not. sin. against. thee. And. on. and. on. David. gives. many. illustrations. many.

words about being in the word of God. And we're in a time when obedience to the Bible is scoffed at. And it's looked down on.

When a person loves Jesus so much that they actually want to be obedient to his word. We're in a day and age where that's scoffed at and mocked.

This generation wants freedom from obedience. But that's not freedom at all. And I believe it's the spirit of the Antichrist to deceive many.

[ 24 : 04 ] Whenever Bible teachings become optional, beware of that teaching. Because Jesus said, if you love me, my commandments are not grievous. It's no problem.

You will love it. It'll set you free. And Christians also, there's another point. Christians will also love one another.

Same chapter that we, oh no, this is in 1 John. Same author, just different time. John 3 verse 14 says, We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.

He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Here John is giving us a test. Not a test of maybe perfection or having everything just perfect in life.

But there's an evidence. And it is simply a love for God's people. We have passed from death to life.

[ 25 : 19 ] And the fruit of that is that we love his people. We love each other. We love the brethren. Not just in this body, but we love all the brethren in the world.

All of God's people. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Is there any brother that you don't love or a sister?

It's an important question. It's a love for God's people. Christians don't shun each other. I have to throw that in.

But they love God's people. Christians bear fruit. Jesus said in John 15, I am the vine, you are the branches.

He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without me you can do nothing. Without him we can't love each other.

[ 26 : 21 ] There's nothing really good that we can do. Sure, outwardly it might look good, but if we are in him and he in us, we will bring forth much fruit.

Fruit is produced because of the union that we have with Christ. It's not just human effort, but the union that we have with Christ, the fellowship with Christ.

So I believe I've spoken of what, at least to a degree, what a Christian is, I hope.

Somebody that loves Jesus. Somebody that obedience to him, his word, is not a problem.

And like we heard in the opening, Brother Aaron saying, how that, about loving the world, and yeah, what an illustration, wow.

[ 27 : 27 ] How do you get a world out of your life? It's not by trying to blow it out, or shoo the darkness out, like we were saying, but filling it with water.

Filling it with living water. The life of Jesus. The life of Jesus in a believer will take care of the world problem. Right? It's when we try to fight the world out of us, we're in trouble.

Because we can't do it on our own. Now how does somebody become a Christian? One of the things that often speaks to me is the fact that Jesus wants to save us more than we want to be saved.

So much so that he came and gave his life. He came and died on a cross. One of my favorite stories is the woman at the well.

When he came to her and he asked her for a drink, she was dealing with the empty life, and he asked her for a drink.

[ 28 : 45 ] And then, of course, she questioned that, you know, he being a Jew and her being a Samaritan, that wasn't appropriate in their culture.

But what Jesus was really wanting to do was to give her life. Living water. And he said, woman, if you would know who's speaking with you, you would ask me for living water.

Water that you'll never thirst again. And there was that back and forth.

An amazing story. True story. True happening. She ended up getting excited and running and telling people that, come and see if this isn't the Christ out here.

He's told me all things about my life. Amen. It was the Christ. Amen.

[ 29 : 51 ] Have we asked him for that living water? The Father draws. In John 6, 44, Jesus said that, no man can come to me except the Father which has sent me.

Draw him. And I will raise him up at the last day. You know, we can't just come to Jesus. It's, it's, well, that's a fine line.

Because Jesus said, whosoever will may come and drink freely. But in that, somehow in that, it's the Father that draws us.

Because Jesus said, no man can come to me. So it's his mercy. It's his drawing. It's like we can't just produce it on our own. The Holy Spirit convicts.

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. And I believe that is the first work of the Holy Spirit in someone's life.

[ 31 : 02 ] Is that he will convict us. He'll convict us of sin. He'll convict us of worldliness and about righteousness and about the judgment to come.

But then there's the gift of repentance. The sinner must repent. In Acts 17, verse 30, in the times of this ignorance, God winked at.

There was a time in the Bible where God winked at certain things. He overlooked it. But now he commandeth all men everywhere to repent.

Did you know that repentance is a commandment of God? We kind of make that one optional, don't we, sometimes? Well, yeah, God convicted me of something and we even share it sometimes.

I've been convicted about it. Well, the real question is, have you repented? Even after we're Christians, we're convicted about something in our life, but repentance is simply turning around and going the other way and saying, no, I'm not going to do that anymore.

[ 32 : 17 ] The question isn't whether we've been convicted as much as, have I repented? I believe Christians repent frequently.

That would be my experience. I'm not talking the original repentance of becoming born again and again, but just to overcome things.

Believe upon Christ. Talking about how to become a Christian. In Acts chapter 16, verse 30 and 31, we know the story of Paul and Silas in the prison.

When the earthquake came and the jailer knew that he was going to be killed if these inmates escape.

And they were loosed. Even Paul and Silas, they were chained and the chains fell off. How bad does an earthquake have to be for chains to fall off? I've wondered about that.

[ 33 : 28 ] I mean, scientifically, I don't know how that works. But it says they were loosed. And they were, yeah, the inmates could have escaped.

And so the jailer was going to just end his life. But then they told him, look, we're still all here and we're not, don't hurt yourself.

Don't harm yourself. And they brought them out and said, this is the jailer, sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Have we ever asked that question? Anyone here or anyone listening that, have we ever asked the question, what must I do to be saved?

And they said, here's what they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust in him, to believe on him is to trust in him, to trust in the blood of Jesus, to forgive us our sins, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[ 34 : 44 ] That's what it means to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, you wonder if the jailer would have ever came and asked that question.

But he probably heard and he witnessed these men, Paul and Silas. And they were in there in chains and they were singing and praising God the night before.

How else would he have known to come to them and say, what must I do to be saved? He knew they had something that he needed. Does the world around us know that we have something they need?

Do our friends know that? Is our light shining?

Jesus said, you're the light of the world. And when Christ enters in, darkness leaves. I want to share just a few testimonies. Could talk about my testimony and my wife's.

[ 35 : 52 ] And we probably should share our testimonies more frequently. But the man that wrote the song, Amazing Grace, I think most of us know that story.

John Newton, the slave trader. He was a blasphemer. Immoral. He profited from human misery.

Think about that. He was making his living off of terrible suffering from other people. And God broke him.

He became a pastor and he wrote, Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

Wow. A wretch like me. Jesus said, He that is forgiven much loveth much.

[ 36 : 57 ] Have we been forgiven much? Do we see our past life as being a wretch? There's a lot of things in my life I am not proud of.

He later said, I am a great sinner, but Christ is a great Savior. Isn't it amazing? A man like John Newton and we still sing that hymn.

Saul of Tarsus that we know as Paul. Many of the writings we preach on and write about. One day, he hated Christians. He imprisoned them.

He approved of their murder. And a few days later, he's preaching Jesus. He wasn't educated into becoming a Christian, but he had a revelation of Jesus on the road to Damascus.

He had an encounter with Jesus. Jesus. And that's what it takes to be saved. That is not self-improvement.

[ 38 : 08 ] It's the new birth. It's being born of the Spirit. Born again. Nicky Cruz. That's another one. A leader of New York's most violent street gangs.

Yes, he was a leader. He carried knives. He was feared. He committed violent crimes. Hated everyone. And then he met David Wilkerson, a young preacher, a young evangelist in New York City.

He threatened him. He threatened David. David's response was, you could cut me into a thousand pieces and every piece would still love you.

And that broke his heart. Nicky surrendered to Christ. He later preached the gospel around the world. A hardened criminal.

That's the power of the gospel. God's Spirit can change Nicky Cruz.

[ 39 : 24 ] He can change anybody. I'm sure he would have said that. Charles Colson. He was known as President Richard Nixon's hatchet man. He came up with dirty tricks for the president.

powerful, ruthless. And then Watergate happened. That scandal of Watergate. The Watergate Bridge. I don't even know the details of that.

But it's American history. He went to prison and he met Christ. I didn't know that until I looked this up. He was Nixon's right hand man.

and he started prison fellowship. Spent the rest of his life ministering to inmates.

He wasn't in prison that long but he became he founded prison fellowship. I remember in Ohio going to prisons and they had this it's a big thing it's national prison fellowship for inmates.

[ 40 : 29 ] one of the largest prison ministries probably in the U.S. at least at some point. And the inmates are excited about that thing that prison fellowship.

I've heard it a lot. I had no idea who started it and here it was an evil man. Driven by his first hand experience behind bars Colson founded prison fellowship in 1976 when I was just four years old. It grew into the world's largest Christian outreach ministry to prisoners ex-prisoners and their families. And I just wrote down God took him from one kingdom and put him into the other just like the apostle Paul.

These are just testimonies of transformed lives. What about you? Have you been transformed by meeting Jesus? Has your life been changed from death to life?

Is the spirit of God dwelling in your heart and has witnessed to your heart that you are his? You and I have been purchased.

[ 41 : 52 ] We are not our own. We've been purchased with the blood of Jesus when we have that faith in him.

We put all our trust in that blood. The love of God. Then we are not lost anymore. It is not a question of whether you do religious things like going to church, saying right things, dressing right, but rather have you passed from being dead inside, not physically, but inside, being dead, to having the life of Jesus.

Have all things been made new? I once was lost, but now I'm found. God, that's why we worship him, right? Because he found us.

He found us. We opened our hearts to that. There's no greater joy than to know Jesus. The Bible says to taste and to see that the Lord is good.

Have we tasted? Now I want to ask, what about us that have been Christians for a while? And these are questions to myself.

[ 43 : 20 ] Have we, have I, backslidden? Have we lost our first love? Have we lost our way?

Have we been distracted by the noise of the age that we live in? Brother Aaron mentioned some of the platforms that we can waste hours and I call it noise.

It's silent but it's so noisy. It blocks out so much in our life. It's the little choices that we make that allow or disallow the devil from killing.

He came to steal. whatever God has put in us, he came to steal that. He came to kill it and destroy it. I think that's the battle of the age that we're in.

Satan has been, so to speak, turned loose with technology and the noise, just the noise. Not even bad stuff, but the noise.

[ 44 : 29 ] The constant distraction. But we can make good choices. I think we should pray over our devices and say, Lord, what do you want me to look at today?

Where do you want me to spend my time? Will it take away from you? Where's our first love? We can overcome.

In the Bible, they overcame by the word of their testimony and by the blood of the Lamb. another thing is that I fear that many Christians are becoming, and this is part of the age that I see that we're in.

We become so self-reliant, self-centered. Again, after the new birth, we have that potential, each one of us, that we have need of nothing.

We're just okay. Young people, hear me on this, don't need their parents. Old people, parents, don't need young people.

[ 45 : 48 ] And no one really needs each other. Sorry, young man, my young brother was sharing this morning, I thought, wow, I need these young men in my life.

They have way more energy and more excitement and more, more. Maybe they need me too. But I know that I need them.

Not to mention that most people today don't need a pastor, they don't need a teacher, they don't need a prophet or a father in their life, or a brother or a sister.

I remember years ago, probably 20 or 25 years ago, a young pastor told me once how he feels the need to be accountable, how he needs me in his life so much.

Speak into my life, he said. And a day came when he had the attitude that he needs no one.

[ 47 : 02 ] He needs no one to tell him anything. He became very self-reliant. He had this connection with God, the way it sounded, and he wouldn't listen to older men.

And later, his life crashed. And it was found out that he had ten years of adultery in his life while trying to pastor a church.

Brothers and sisters, we need the body of Christ. We need each other. How is your attitude toward Christ's body here on earth?

Yes, we need the spirit. We need to know the word of God. We need the Lord Jesus. But he put us in a body. That's his heart for us. We also need to humble ourselves and say, I need you, brother, and mean it.

Not just say it so you look good. I don't know if that brother meant it or not. I thought he did. How is it with us today?

[ 48 : 15 ] Do we need revival? Do we need to repent of our own works, of acting like a Christian without really being one? And when we do that, we judge everybody else, by the way.

Isn't that amazing? We forget to judge ourselves. We just judge other people. And God gave us the gift of repentance if we choose that route.

God. It's a choice. He is always there for us when we turn to him. But his spirit will not always strive with man, the Bible says.

Someday it will be too late. The five virgins thought they were just as good as the other five. God. They had oil too.

Just not enough. And the door was shut for them. Are you sure that you are saved?

[ 49 : 20 ] Today you can make sure. God is giving you that chance. But we don't know about tomorrow. I remember so well that I thought I was saved when I was 17.

And I prayed and I knew about the cross. I knew about Jesus but I just never knew for sure. And I think I was it was in 95 that after we had left the church we were in that one day I just cried out to God and I said I need to know.

I need to know today. there was that desperation that maybe you can identify with that. That I need to know. I don't want to go through life not knowing.

Just being religious. Today if you hear his voice the Bible says don't harden your heart. We can harden our heart.

We can be a pharaoh. Will you surrender to the one that gave his life for you. Jesus said that if you're ashamed of me I will be ashamed of you before the father.

[ 50 : 39 ] that would be a terrible thing. I had to think of what brother Dan shared as we close here about his daughter.

Your daughter and son-in-law and three little girls right. As you were sharing that I thought what if that was us. What if that was you.

Amtrak one second away and boom. It's over. Are we saved? Are we right with God?

It's always somebody else that happens to isn't it? But we don't know. We don't have any promise of tomorrow. Maybe we should just I think I'll just ask something different today.

Why don't we just all kneel and pray and if our heart is right with God then let's pray for those that are struggling.

[ 51 : 58 ] Those that are maybe not right with God. Maybe family, friends, whatever. I know we don't usually kneel here but why not?

I know there's things in my life that I want to surrender to God and to trust him. And so why don't we just spend a little time just quietly and just praying to God individually and asking him to show us. I feel that need so let's do that for a little while and then I'll close in prayer. Let's just do that. Make it personal to Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus. we would just reach like that woman that reached for the hem of your garment just wanting to be healed.

Father may that be our heart's position this morning. Lord that we want to be healed. We want to be changed. We want to become more like you Lord Jesus.

[ 53 : 17 ] So we give ourselves to you and just ask you Lord to have mercy upon us whether we've been saved or whether we're still in the process that we could be free like the butterfly that flies and that our hearts would be free in Jesus Lord just bring whatever conviction upon us that we need.

You know every heart. You know exactly where we're at. There's nothing hidden from you Lord Jesus. So Lord just speak to us draw us forgive us cleanse us and make us more like you for your honor and for your glory glory.

That the Lamb of God would receive all the glory that is due to you. Thank you Lord for your mercy. Thank you thank you in Jesus name.

Amen. You may be seated. I'll turn the time over to Brother Merlin but I would like to say that you know there's times that we feel alone.

I know I do. I go through life and sometimes we feel like I can't share with anybody or whatever but I want to encourage us to be open and to have enough humility that I need you I need somebody to maybe pray with me or whatever if that's you then just make yourself known that you need prayer and the body of Christ will surround you and pray with you and that's what we're here for is for each other for the glory of God.

[ 55 : 22 ] So amen. Brother Merlin I'll let you close. Thank you.