

# Program Transcripts

November 2022



IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

# **SEARCH PROGRAMS**

**November 2022**

*Topics subject to change without notice*

## **NOV 6 – AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY**

When people hear the word “Christian,” many imagine things quite different from what the New Testament teaches about Christianity. What is authentic Christianity really like? What does God’s Word say about Christianity?

## **NOV 13 – GOD HAS SPOKEN**

When Jesus spoke in the first century, scribes took down His words, and these words are in the New Testament. God speaks to us today through His Son Jesus, and we would do well to listen to what He says.

## **NOV 20 – GIVING THANKS**

At this season of the year, it is only right that we give thanks to our Father in heaven who has blessed us materially and spiritually. Wise Christians give thanks every day, having counted their many blessings.

## **NOV 27 – FIVE WARNINGS**

What does it mean to be a Christian? Who are you, if you call yourself to be a Christian? How does the Bible describe a Christian? The New Testament uses several terms that describe the Christian and help us understand God’s will for our lives.

## Authentic Christianity

When people speak of Christianity, it's often quite different from what the New Testament teaches about Christianity.

If you ask the question "what is Christianity?" people will give you all kinds of opinions. They'll tell you what they think Christianity is or what they wish it were. People see Christianity historically and socially as it appears in America; but if that's all they see, they may never know what Christianity really is. Today we're exploring the question, "What is authentic Christianity?" Is the Christianity we see today what God intended when He sent Jesus into this world? In the early days Christians were known among themselves as "brethren," "the faithful," "the elect," "saints" (and all of them were called saints by the way), and they were also thought of as "believers." But people outside the church called them "Christians." This term came by the will of God, and it was universally accepted.

You might think the word "Christian" would occur frequently in the New Testament, but it occurs only three times. The word "Christian" refers to an individual who "belongs to Christ." Originally words that ended in the letters "i-a-n" applied to the slaves belonging to the great households, it had passed into regular use to refer to followers of an individual or a party. Some Bible dictionaries define the word Christian as "The name given by the Greeks or Romans, probably in reproach, to the followers of Jesus. It was first used at Antioch." But the name "Christian" is far more than that, as we will see.

Our reading today in the New Testament comes from the book of Acts, chapter 26, verses 24 to 29. "While *Paul* was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, 'Paul, you're out of your mind! *Your* great learning is driving you mad. But Paul said, 'I'm not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth. For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do.' Agrippa *replied* to Paul, 'In a short time you will persuade me to be a Christian.' And Paul *said*, 'I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains.'" That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Father we're grateful for Your love and we're thankful Father for the hope that we have in Christ, that He was raised from the dead and stands as our Lord. And Father we pray that we may do Your will always on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

The first time "Christian" is used in the New Testament is in Acts 11 verses 25 to 26, the text says, "So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians." Now the word for "called" here is *chrematisai*, not the common word for "called" from the word *kalleo*. *Chrematisai* refers to a divinely revealed name or instruction. The name "Christian" didn't actually come from men; it came from God in fulfillment of the prophecy found in Isaiah 62 and verse 2: "The nations will see your righteousness, And all kings your glory; And you will be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the LORD will designate."

Now to call myself a Christian means that I am a servant of Christ. I wear His name, I follow His teaching, I call upon him as my Lord, and share in his spiritual and moral way of life. A disciple is a person who imitates his master, becomes like him in manner, in speech, in mind, and in behavior. The disciples were called Christians. Both words, "disciples" and "Christians," show the close relationship between the Lord Jesus and those who follow him. I am happy and honored to wear the name of Jesus and those who follow Him. Now I'm happy and honored to wear the name of Jesus Christ. I love Him and I want to wear His name. And I don't mind the world knowing that I am his servant.

The second time the word Christian is used is also found in the book of Acts. In chapter 26, Paul is defending himself and his faith before the Roman governor Festus and the Jewish king Herod Agrippa. And Paul said in Acts 26:27 to 29, “‘King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? (he said that) I know that you believe.’ And Agrippa said to Paul, ‘In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?’ And Paul said, ‘Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.’” Paul wished everyone was a Christian, and so do I. My friend, I hope you’re a Christian.

People choose to be Christians; nobody is born one. We might be born into a family of Christians, but that doesn’t make us a Christian. We have to decide for ourselves. We must be born again to become a Christian. And we do that when we by faith decide to follow Christ and to be baptized. The Bible says in Romans 6 verses 16 to 18, “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, that you’re slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness.” You see, you can become a Christian by your heartfelt obedience to the gospel. And each of you, each of all of us, must choose to believe and to obey.

Now the Bible teaches in Ephesians about the transformation that takes place when a person becomes a Christian. Ephesians 4:17 to 24 says: “Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They’re darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that’s in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves over to sensuality, to greedy and every practice of every impurity. But that’s not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you’ve heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

You must make a true change when you decide to become a Christian. You must leave an old sinful way of life, a way that’s darkened and futile; and you must put on the new way of life that is patterned after Jesus Christ. A Christian who loves the Lord no longer wants to live the way the world lives. He sees an abundant life that is higher and nobler than his old way. Christianity is the way that people become new. They’re no longer darkened in their understanding, living callous and impure lives. Now in Christ, they have learned a better way, full of love and full of good deeds. People learn Christ, and as they grow in their knowledge, their lives become better and better.

The third Scripture which mentions the name “Christian” is in 1 Peter 4 verses 15 to 16. These verses say: “But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.” Now here in this passage the Bible says that one should not be ashamed of being a Christian but to glorify God in THAT name, that God-given name that associates us with Jesus Christ our Lord. Christians were undergoing serious persecution at the time that Peter wrote this to them. I could see how some might feel hesitant to admit that they were Christians, if it meant persecution. Others might hesitate if they acted sinfully and brought reproach upon their faith. But wearing the name of Christ honorably glorifies God. This is truly the name that God designates for his people.

The apostle Paul, like Peter, was willing to endure whatever shame and punishment necessary in order to preach the gospel and to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul felt obligated to serve the Lord in a pagan society. He said in Romans 1 verses 14 to 16, “I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I’m eager to preach the gospel to you also who are

in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Now, no one has to be ashamed of the gospel of the Lord Jesus, because of all the good that Christ does in their lives.

A Christian doesn't have to be ashamed when he wakes up without a hangover. A Christian doesn't have to be ashamed that he tells the truth, that he keeps his word, that he practices what is right, and that he loves his neighbor. The way of Christians is God's way, God's plan to bless all of mankind. And that's why Christians are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. They are God's people making a difference for good and right in an evil world. In their lives they prove what the will of God is, that which is "good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12 and verse 2).

Well, what does it mean then to be a Christian? It means: I don't belong to me; I totally belong to my Lord Jesus Christ. I have given Him first place in my life. I believe what He teaches. I practice a life that imitates Him. He loves, so I love. He gives of himself, so I give of myself. He avoids evil, so I avoid evil. He kept his heart right, so I keep my heart right. To belong totally to Christ is a radical notion. And the reason many people wonder what a Christian is arises from the fact that many so-called Christians play with the notion of following Christ but never fully embrace the idea that we fully belong to him and not to ourselves.

Many think being a Christian is a great thing until it interferes with what they want to do. They're willing to let God be a part of their lives to some extent, but they're unwilling to follow Jesus when they don't agree with Him or they don't like what He asks of them. They like Jesus until he interferes with their freedom to live as they please. Such people may call themselves Christians, but they're only fair-weather Christians.

They've forgotten the price that Jesus paid to redeem them. The Bible says in 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 18 to 19, "knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold (you know, God could have made all the silver and gold He wanted, you could have been redeemed by that, but that wouldn't have cost anything, no it wasn't by silver or gold that you were redeemed), but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." The Lord Jesus paid His precious blood to save and redeem you from sin and, yes, from hell. What He has done for you and will give to you far, far outweighs any earthly pleasure. We all ought to count it an honor to belong to Jesus.

The Bible says in Colossians 1:13 to 14, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and then transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Jesus took us from sin and darkness and brought us into the kingdom of hope and peace and promise. He rescued us from an evil world and brought us to the love of God. How could we imagine living ungodly lives, when we consider all that he has done for us? 1 Corinthians 6 verses 19 to 20 says, "Or do you not know that your body, your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

In the book of Philippians Paul described himself in chapter one and verse one as a bond-servant of Christ Jesus. Now to be a bond-servant means that I am a slave, a slave in chains to my Lord. The Lord owns me, and you know what, He has a right to make important decisions that affect my life, decisions that I cannot change, that I cannot overrule. Christianity is not a democracy where I can vote things in and vote things out, no; it's a kingdom. And Jesus Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is in charge, He makes the rules, and we must submit our hearts to Him.

So much of what people think of as “Christianity” is changed from what Jesus meant for it to be. People have filled it full of human creeds and human traditions so that it hardly resembles His divinely revealed will in the New Testament. For many people Christianity is like a smorgasbord laid out for them, and they can pick and choose whatever they like. You pick the kind of Christianity in their minds the kind of Jesus that you want. You pick the kind of church that you like. You pick what you want to believe and you can leave the rest alone if you like. Many fail to hear God fully but hear only what they want to hear. Let me tell you something, that kind of religion is not the Christianity of the Bible; it's the kind of Christianity that people manufacture for themselves. It's not divine; it's human!

New Testament Christianity is built upon the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ! It's built on divine truth found in the scriptures, because God never lies. Jesus loves us so much that He willingly died for us. And His grace and forgiveness are available to all. He's the Lord of all mankind, you and me and everybody. And His words are the final authority for our faith, our practices, and our morals. You may think that you have a say so, but God has the last say, and what He says is powerful and authoritative. His promises are open to all who will believe and obey, and He's coming again to judge the world in righteousness.

Biblical Christianity is the most exciting, fulfilling, powerful, and loving life imaginable. To have Jesus as Lord and Savior and God as our Father is the best life with the best mission and the best result. God wants us to spread the good word to everyone. In Mark 16 verses 15 to 16 Jesus said “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.” Oh I tell you, Jesus is in the saving business, and His church is the way that He spreads the gospel to all. Let's pray together. Oh Father we're thankful that through Your love and grace that we have the opportunity to be members of Your church, and to follow Your will. We're thankful Father so much for Jesus. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. It's in His name, the Lord our Savior Jesus Christ, that we pray, Amen!

People often define Christianity unfairly. Many don't understand the Christianity of the New Testament. Now talk to some about Christianity and the first they bring up the crusades or witch trials. But neither the crusades or the Salem witch trials or the inquisition reflect New Testament Christianity. Titles, robes, cathedrals and icons don't show simple, New Testament Christianity. Monasteries, and incense, sitting on flagpoles, vows of silence, and forced celibacy don't reflect the Christianity of the Bible. Worship concerts, enterprises, fake healings have nothing to do with Christianity of the New Testament. If you want to know what real Christianity is, look in the Scriptures. The New Testament gives God's truth about Christianity.

Now New Testament Christianity is God's way to bless this world with love, with purity, with grace, with hope, and with heaven. Titus 2:11 to 14 says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”

Are you one of the redeemed? Have you become a Christian? To become one, believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, repent of your sins, confess the name of Christ, and be baptized. Now baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And when you're baptized, the Lord will wash away your sins and add you to His church. He'll rescue you out of the domain of darkness and transfer you into His kingdom. Don't let even one day go by outside of Christ or true Christianity.



## God Has Spoken

When Jesus spoke in the first century, scribes took down His words, and these words are in the New Testament.

Hugo McCord explained the concept of inspiration. He said: “The Bible was given by inspiration of God as the Holy Spirit worked within select men, revealing to them the thoughts of God and enabling them to use the appropriate words to communicate divine truth without error. God put the Holy Spirit into the writers of the Bible and, through Him, guided them in the writing of the Bible. Thus ‘inspiration’ may be defined as the process by which God breathed His Spirit into men, enabling them to receive and communicate divine truth without error. The Bible is God speaking!”

“The writers of the Bible wrote about both facts that they knew and facts they didn’t know without inspiration. The known facts that they wrote about came either from personal observation, existing documents, or oral tradition. Much of what was written by these men came to their knowledge for the first time through revelation from God. Whether they were writing known facts or revelation, inspiration guided them in making known only truth, without error in communication.”

Our reading today comes from 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 16 to 21. And Peter is describing how prophetic utterances and how the scriptures came about through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Let’s read together.

“For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased’— and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.”

“So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

That’s how scripture came about. Let’s pray together. Father we’re grateful that through Your love and Your mercy You sent the Holy Spirit to select men. And inspired them and moved them to write so that we may know Your love and know the truth. Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

Have you considered the power of God’s words? God speaks and things happen. “Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light” (Genesis 1 and verse 3). And each time God speaks in this chapter, we see the unfolding of God’s creation. God spoke creation into existence. Psalm 33 and verse 6 says, “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.” Verse 9 says, “For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” If God could speak creation into existence, then He has far greater power than we can imagine or understand.

The words of Jesus are likewise powerful and authoritative. Colossians 1 verses 16 to 17 reminds us, “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” When Jesus spoke, miracles happened.

In Mark, chapter one, Jesus was teaching with authority in the synagogue in Capernaum. And verses 23 to 27 say, “And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you

are—the Holy One of God.’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

Well, Jesus not only had authority over unclean spirits, He also had authority over nature. And this power is shown frequently in the New Testament. Matthew 8 verses 23 to 27 says that, “When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing!” (and) He said to them, “Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?” Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. The men were amazed, and said, “What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

God speaks with great power and authority, and all of nature and the universe respond. Man is the only creature that can hear what God says and ignore or disobey Him. When people disobey the word of the Lord, they face great consequences. Some people don't take God seriously, but God has shown through time that He means what He says. Some think God will not condemn anyone no matter what that person does.

When you hear the words of the Lord Jesus, remember that He created you and sustains your existence. Without His power over creation, you couldn't exist. He deserves to be heard! One day the words that He has spoken will be the standard for your judgment. The Lord Jesus said in John 12:48 that, “He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.” Now since the words of Jesus will judge you, you should know what He said and take it seriously. The words of Jesus will not disappear, and Jesus will not forget what He said. What Jesus said is just as binding today as it was in the first century. Changes in time and culture do not change what the Lord said. No one can ignore the words of Jesus on the Day of Judgment. The Lord said in Matthew 24:35, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.”

The Lord Jesus said in Luke 9 and verse 26 that, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.” Many people regard Jesus as a great moral teacher, but then they feel free to disagree with Him or ignore Him. What Jesus says about moral issues embarrasses some Christians. They imagine that Jesus doesn't care whether they live righteously or not. They listen to what He says about salvation but ignore what He says about repentance. They want Jesus as their Savior but not as their Lord and Master. They want all of His promises but they dismiss His commandments.

Now how we respond to the Lord matters, and what we teach and practice will affect how the Lord judges us. 2 Peter 2 and verse 3 speaks about some disobedient false teachers. The apostle Peter said, “and in their greed they will exploit you with false words;(then he says) their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.” I tell you the Lord is not asleep or idle; He sees and knows what the righteous and the wicked are doing. He will judge us all.

Peter explains in 2 Peter 2 verses 4 to 9, “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from



temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.” Since the Lord has a record of how He deals with sin, we should take Him seriously.

When we become Christians, we recognize Jesus as Lord. Jesus built the church and purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20 and verse 28). And when we were forgiven, He redeemed us with His precious blood and added us to the church. The word Lord describes Jesus as divine, as the One who created us. Philippians 2 verses 9 to 11 says that, “God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Because He is Lord, everyone will be subject to His authority. He is our Lord and Master, and there is no other. As Lord, He has complete authority over our lives on earth and in the hereafter. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

Because Jesus is Lord, His words will judge our souls and determine our destiny in the hereafter. Hebrews 4 verses 12 to 13 says, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do (that is we have to deal Him one day).” God knows all about you and me; He knows the good and the bad. He knows our thought and our intentions. We cannot hide anything from the Lord; He already knows all our secrets. And we ought to listen to the Lord!

I'm thankful the Lord Jesus spoke, because He not only teaches right and wrong but also gives us the words of eternal life. He gives us great and precious promises. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 6, “For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shown in our hearts to give (us) the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

Without the Scriptures, without the bible, we would not know many things. We wouldn't know about where we came from, why we're here, or what will happen to us after this life is over. The Scriptures give us hope of eternal life with our Creator, who loves us and wants to bless us eternally.

The Scriptures teach us about God's grace and forgiveness. When we realize the extent to which God has gone to forgive our sins, we love Him more and more. We are all sinners saved by the grace of God through the gospel message by the blood of Jesus Christ when we obey Him. The message of that salvation is found in Scripture and it's crucial. Paul wrote in Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” God powerfully uses His word to reach into our hearts with the gospel. 1 Corinthians 1:21 says “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached (that is the message preached) to save those who believe.” God saves people today through that message preached.

The Lord Jesus said in John 6:44 and 5 that, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.” Now God works in and through the preaching and teaching of the word to convict men of sin and to bring about faith. Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” When we study God's word, we come to believe in Jesus Christ and in His teaching. This is why James says in James 1:21, “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.”

The word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, causes us to be born again. 1 Peter 1:23 to 25 says, "for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word which was preached to you." When a person hears the preaching of the gospel and obeys it, God causes him to be born again. The gospel story is filled with God's love for mankind and His willingness to send Jesus to atone for our sins and grant us forgiveness. Now this true story comes from God and has all of His qualities. His goodness and kindness they lead us to repent. His love causes us to love Him!

Because the gospel is good news, it brings about a joy unspeakable! Sin is bad news, but forgiveness from sin that condemns us, is good news! Hope for eternal life is good news! The Lord Jesus preparing a home for us in heaven is good news! God has spoken through His Son Jesus and in the gospel message. And all I can say is what a blessing! What a blessing. Let's pray together. Oh Heavenly Father we are so grateful for all of the love and the grace You have given to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. That He was willing to die for us upon the cross. Father we pray that we may come to believe more strongly in the words that have been spoken. And may be obedient to Your will in every way. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Peter, James, and John were on the holy mountain with Jesus, when He was transfigured. Moses and Elijah were there as well. Matthew 17 verses 4 to 5 says that Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three (tabernacles) tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." God the Father was well pleased with Jesus His Son, so He distinguished Him from Moses, the great lawgiver, and Elijah, the prophet. God said, "listen to Him."

Hebrews 1:1 and 2 says that, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." God is now speaking to us through Jesus Christ. If we want to know God's will, we must go to the words of Jesus and His apostles and prophets commissioned to speak for Him. And that's found in the New Testament. Jesus is Lord, and there is no other!

And if you wish to obey the Lord, then listen to Him. Hear what He says and believe Him. Hebrews 11 and verse 6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." Repent of your sins and turn to righteousness. Confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Be baptized into Christ, immersed in water, for the forgiveness of your sins. God has spoken; let's hear what He says and obey Him. Nothing is so important!

## Giving Thanks

The mark of a real Christian is love; the love that grows out of thanksgiving.

William Law, in his book, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, said, "Would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms, or is more eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice; but it is he who is always thankful to God who wills everything that God wills, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it."

One temptation of the maturing Christian is the danger of getting accustomed to his blessings. Like the traveler who has been everywhere and seen everything, the maturing Christian is in danger of taking his blessings for granted and getting so accustomed to them that they fail to excite him as they once did. Emerson said that if the stars came out only once a year, everybody would stay up all night to behold them." I fear we've seen the stars so often we don't bother to look at them. We've grown accustomed to our blessings.

Psalm 92 verses 1 to 2 says, "It is good to give thanks to the LORD And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning And Your faithfulness by night." Are you thankful?

Our scripture reading today comes from Psalm 103 verses 1 through 5. This is a psalm of David talking about all the good that God has done.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
 And all that is within me, bless His holy name.  
 Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
 And forget none of His benefits;  
 Who pardons all your iniquities,  
 Who heals all your diseases;  
 Who redeems your life from the pit,  
 Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;  
 Who satisfies your years with good things,  
 So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.

That's God's blessing for us. Let's pray together. Oh, Father we are so grateful for all the good that You have done for us. Help us to be faithful in our commitment and our love for You. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Psalm 100 verse 4 says, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name." This is really what those who love God enjoy doing. Giving thanks takes place when people think about all the good that God has done. In the old Anglo-Saxon tongue, thankfulness means "thankfulness." Thinking of all that God's goodness gives to us and how it draws forth from our heart's gratitude. When we count our blessings, we begin to realize all the good God has made possible for us. James 1:17 says, "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." Yes, every good thing is from our God!

The Christian life should be full of thanksgiving. Paul wrote in Colossians 3:15 to 17, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in

word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.” Gratitude for the Lord leads us to forgive others, to sing from our hearts and to serve the Lord Jesus.

When people fail to respect and thank God, they give their lives to things that can do them no good. Nothing substitutes for God. Romans 1:18 to 23 says, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth (and they suppress it) in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and His divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.” Those who forget God settle for useless idols and futile speculations. Without God, there is no hope.

Don't forget all the good things that He has done for you. Moses warned the Israelites not to forget God after they entered the promised land. He said in Deuteronomy 8 verses 10 to 14, “When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. “Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

The book of Judges tells the sad story of a generation that lost sight of God and had to be disciplined. Judges 2 and verse 7 tells of the faithfulness of the people during the lifetime of Joshua: “The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work (which the Lord, a, which) the LORD which He had done for Israel.” However, verse ten tells what happened later: “All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; (that is the generation of Joshua) and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.”

The later generation “did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals, they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers” according to verses eleven and twelve. Judges 2:14 says that, “The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.” When we forget the Lord, we put our lives and our souls into jeopardy. God raised up judges to deliver them from the hand of their enemies, but they wouldn't listen to the judges and they turned quickly away from the Lord back to the idols.

On the other hand, Job held fast to God even when he suffered great anguish. According to Job chapter one, Job suffered the loss of seven sons and three daughters, 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants. He was the greatest of all the men of the east. Job 1:20 to 22 says, “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, ‘Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.’ And through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.”

In chapter two, Job suffered a terrible disease that caused sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Job didn't understand why this happened, but he did not give up his faith in God. When his wife told him to curse God and die, Job said, "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. We all face adversity, but we should never forget the good that God gives to us.

What does God do for us? Well, let's count our blessings. First, we should be thankful we are not where we were spiritually. Salvation is no small gift. Paul realized what it means to be saved from sin. He said in Romans 6:17 to 18, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." On a very personal level, Paul knew how important it was to be saved from sin. He said in Romans 7:24 to 5, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" I tell ya without Jesus, we could never be free from sin's control and destiny.

Second, we should be thankful we have a Savior who loves us and is interceding for us. 1 Timothy 2:5 to 6 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." Jesus not only died for us; He serves as our mediator with God the Father and makes intercession for us (Hebrews 7 verse 25).

Third, we should be thankful we have a Father in heaven to bless and help us. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:31 to 33, "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." God will take care of us!

Fourth, we should be thankful the Lord gives us strength. Isaiah 40 verses 28 to 31 says, "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary."

Fifth, we should be thankful that our names are written in heaven. Luke 10 verses 17 to 20 says, "The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.'" And He said to them, "'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.'" I tell you even a miracle is not as great a blessing as knowing that our names are recorded in heaven. This is our hope.

Sixth, we should be thankful we have victory over death. Because Jesus arose from the dead, we have hope in our bodily resurrection. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:50 to 56, "Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of (Heaven. Or the kingdom of) God (rather); nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?'"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Seventh, we should be thankful that we have an inheritance in heaven. Jesus went to the Father in heaven to prepare a place for us. 1 Peter 1:3 to 5 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, (you) who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Yes, we have an imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance. We serve a great and loving God.

Let's praise God and thank Him for all His blessings. Thanksgiving is the foundation of our love for God. Psalm 30 verses 4 to 5 says, “Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, And give thanks to His holy name. For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning.”

Don't let a single day, not even a single day, pass without giving thanks to God for His love, His grace, and His blessing! Without God we have no hope; but with God in our lives, we have every hope and promise. We can rejoice in His love. We can face the future with confidence, because God walks with us. He walks with us every step we take. And so, make this day and every day a day of thanksgiving! And never forget. Never, never forget, what God has done for you.

Let's pray together. Oh, Father we are so grateful for every good thing and for every blessing that comes our way. Father help us to count our blessing, to remember Your kindness and goodness and to devote ourselves to You in service and in love. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Leslie Flynn tells the story about a farmer in Vermont. He was sitting on the porch with his wife. He was thinking about how much she meant to him. It was about time—for they had lived together for forty-two years; and she had been such a help, a willing a hard worker. One day as they sat together, he said, “Wife, you've been such a wonderful woman that I can hardly keep from telling you.” I'm sure it would mean much to her if he had regularly told her how much he loved and valued her as a wife. Should we be like this thankless farmer and forget how good God has been to us?

You know everyone likes to hear, “thank you.” Some people are kinder to the store clerk than they are to their families; they hardly say “thank you” to their families. Others are kinder to the store clerk than they are to God, because they rarely if ever pray, study the Bible, or attend worship. Some rarely think about God or respect His words. When people live more like the world than they do the Lord, their hearts are far from God. If you're grateful to God, say so! If you're grateful to God, show it!

Gratitude for the cross of Christ, revealed in the gospel, calls us to deny ourselves, to take up our cross daily, and to follow the Lord Jesus. Love calls us to believe and trust the Lord and His teaching, to turn away from sin and evil, to confess our faith in Jesus Christ, and to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Baptism into Christ washes away our sins, and adds us to the church, and makes us children of God.

## Five Warnings

Some say that we're living in a post-Christian society.

The book of Hebrews is a "word of exhortation," encouraging Christians to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus and not fall back into the world or revert to Judaism. Thirteen times the Hebrew writer uses the phrase "let us," encouraging them to grow in faith and devotion. In chapter 11, the Hebrew writer speaks of the great faith and commitment of the saints of old, encouraging them to keep their confidence in Christ and to endure.

The author describes the people to whom he is writing as drifting away, neglectful, in danger of unbelief, dull of hearing, immature, and needing to be taught first principles. You see, they lost sight of Jesus, and that He was better than what they had before. Some were hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, some were led astray by false teaching, some could miss their eternal rest, and some were beyond being renewed to repentance. They needed encouragement to do better, not to give up on Jesus Christ, and to fix their eyes on the Lord and to follow Him. I suspect people today need the same thing!

Our reading today comes from the letter to the Hebrews chapter 12, verses 1 to 3, in chapter 11. He talked about the great hall of fame of faith, and how he encourages them keep their faith in God. "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." What a great admonition to stay faithful.

Let's pray together. "Father in all of the challenges of life, we pray that You will bless us and help us to stay strong, to stay committed to Your way, and to love You and to love others always, as we do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

First, if we would take the warning of Hebrews we would beware of drifting. Hebrews 2:1 to 4 received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation. After it was at the first, spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard. God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders, and by various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will. I tell you, drifting is something that happens when we lose our focus on the goal. What starts out as a small departure from the goal in time becomes a great departure. Now no one drifts toward the will of God; people intentionally follow the Lord; but people do drift away from the will of God. When we drift away from God, we drift away from the joy of the Lord, away from righteousness, and away from His blessings. God wants us to enjoy a better life that's found in Him, not the world.

Second, beware of hardening your heart in unbelief. Hebrews 3:12-14 says, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end."

Now to "fall away" is to abandon a former relationship or association. It's not a temporary slip-up, but an intentional desertion of what one has formerly been. Sin and unbelief has led some in those days to quit the Lord or to quit the church altogether. They abandoned what they believed and were no longer committed to serving the Lord.



Now notice the text, "For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." There is an "if" to our salvation. Did you know that the word "if" occurs more than twenty times in the New Testament directly referring to our salvation? Our salvation is indeed conditional to our remaining faithful and obedient to God's holy word. God wants us to enjoy a better life, and that's found in Him and not the world.

Third, beware of becoming dull of hearing. Hebrews 5:11 to 12 says, "Concerning him we have much to say, and it's hard to explain, since you've become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you've come to need milk and not solid food." Well I'm not surprised at some Christians who grow upset when they hear someone speak the truth from Scripture.

Some had clearly stopped listening to the good word of God. Hebrews 6:4 to 8 says, "For in the case of those who've once been enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away (that is, they've deserted), it's impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it also was tilled, it receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it's worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned."

You see, there can be no doubt that these people were once faithful Christians. Notice the description: they were once enlightened, they tasted the heavenly gift, they were partakers of the Holy Spirit, and they tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come. Yes, they were once faithful to the Lord Jesus, but you see, they fell away from or they abandoned what they believed. They deserted their faith to the point that no one could talk to them about repenting of their sins. They crucified to themselves the Son of God and put Him to an open shame. Oh God had blessed them, but they gave God thorns and thistles. God wants us to enjoy a better life, that's found in Him and not the world.

Fourth, beware of shrinking back from the Lord. Hebrews 10:25 to 39 says, "And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." You see, assembling with the church is not some drudgery but an opportunity to grow in love and good works. When people forsake the church, they forsake their church family, they forsake the worship, and they forsake the encouragement to love and good works. My friends, don't rob yourselves.

We must remember: God's patience does have limits when people keep sinning willfully. Hebrews 10:26 to 31 says, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Now anyone who's set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. (He says) How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'vengeance is mine, I will repay.' And again, 'the LORD will judge his people.' It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Now don't imagine that you can shrink away from God and go unnoticed. Hebrews 10:35 to 39 urges us, "Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to

destruction, but of those who have faith and the preserving of the soul.” God wants us to enjoy a better life, that’s found in Him not the world.

Fifth, beware of refusing Him who speaks. Hebrews 12:22 to 25 says, “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.”

As Christians we have the privilege of approaching God in heaven. As Christians, we’re children of God, who are blessed to be enrolled in heaven. We should never take the grace of God for granted. “See to it” means to take notice of what God wants us to do. If God meant what He said on earth, we need to take Him seriously when He speaks from heaven. I fear that many feel God ought to be happy that we give Him any attention at all. God, however, demands our close attention to what He says. His words have commandments, principles, examples, and promises. To select some passages to the neglect of others fails to take God’s word seriously.

Some people say, “I love Jesus, but I don’t like what the Bible says about this or about that.” Some imagine the grace of God allows them to live any way that we please, to believe anything we please, and do whatever is right in our own eyes. Well this way of thinking says to God that He doesn’t matter, and His words aren’t important. The Bible is God’s word for all time, my friend. And when you challenge the word, you’re challenging the authority of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. You remember Jesus said in John 12:48, that “He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.” Now if the Lord Himself one day judges you by His words found in this book, you better not refuse what He says.

God wants us to enjoy a better life, and that blessing is found in Him and not the world. And God wants you to enjoy His love and to be saved from His wrath, but God has given each of us free will. You see, the Lord distinguishes between those who will listen to Him from those who won’t listen to Him. The Lord distinguishes those who believe Him and believe in Him from those who don’t believe in Him. John 3:17 to 18 says, “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; but he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Now if you say you believe in God, but live like God doesn’t matter, you’re fooling yourself.

Christianity is a life of faith, hope, and love. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 12 and verse 30, that “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” People who love God to that extent won’t neglect their salvation, they won’t fall away in unbelief, they won’t remain immature and untaught, they won’t desert their faith and desert the church and desert their brethren, and they won’t abandon assembling with the saints. They won’t shrink away from the Lord, and they won’t refuse to listen to what the Lord has to say. Sadly, some who are loved, that had love for God at one point, and maybe were strong in their faith, they can become people who aren’t as devoted at another point in life. Jude 21 urges us to “keep yourselves in the love of God.” Now just as people who loved their spouses deeply early in their marriage can fall out of love, so people can fall out of love for God and turn to selfish, selfish ways. The Hebrew writer wrote this word of encouragement by inspiration because people were drifting away and falling away from God. You may be one of them. I hope and pray, if you are, that you’ll return to the Lord and to His church.

Now if you truly compare being saved with being lost, you'd never choose to be lost. Being saved means being forgiven of all our sins, being saved means freedom from the consequences of our sins, it means no longer being enslaved to sin, it means being a child of God, and it means living with God forever in heaven. On the other hand, being lost means you're not forgiven, you're enslaved to sin, you're a child of wrath, and you have no home in heaven. Being lost means choosing the punishment of God over the grace of God. Now Jesus died to save us from the wrath of God. And God gives us life now on earth to make our choices. When Jesus comes again, we won't have the opportunity to change our lives and be saved. That's why we need to make the choice to believe and to obey God now, in this life, and for the days to come.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful for Your grace and Your love and for the great love that You have shown us day after day. And for the plan that You've had for us to be able to live, and to be close to You and to be close to Your Son, Jesus. Father, help us to listen, to be obedient, and to do Your will always. Forgive our trespasses, and help us to forgive others. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

Hebrews 4:1 to 2 says, "Therefore, let us fear, if while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard." Have you heard the word of God but refused to obey it? Have you refused to listen to God? God's word and God's promises will not benefit you if you refuse to accept them.

God wants something better for you than you may realize. He teaches us what we need to know to have the best of lives! God wants us to know the truth, to be saved, to enjoy our faith and commitment to righteousness. God is in the saving business, and He takes no pleasure in punishing the wicked. Friend, life is short and uncertain. And we need to be prepared now for the life to come. And that preparation means humbling ourselves and turning to the God who loves us and wants what is best for us.

Become a Christian by placing your faith in the Lord Jesus and His word, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and being buried and raised with Christ in baptism. God will cause you to be born again when you're baptized. You'll have newness of life! Don't let anything come between you and God. Serve Him all the days of your life. Stay faithful and stay in church. Don't drift and fall away. Worshiping with other Christians, studying the Bible, drawing close to God, praying daily is your best hope of staying true to God.