

Program Transcripts

For January 2014



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

SEARCH PROGRAMS

January 2014

JANUARY 5 – STAND STRONG

We are all facing a fierce opponent who is after our souls. We must strengthen ourselves in the power that the Lord supplies so that on the evil day we may be able to stand strong. This lesson will teach us how.

JANUARY 12 – NEVER ALONE

More than 44 percent of all adults in the United States are unmarried; that's more than 102 million people. Living alone presents many challenges to adults today, but the Lord's way provides some valuable help to single people.

JANUARY 19 – KEEPING MY ZEAL

Some people live their Christian life to the fullest, while others drift aimlessly. Some are passionate about their faith, while others are apathetic. How can we keep our passion and zeal for God alive?

JANUARY 26 – GLORIFYING GOD

Everyone who is called by the name of the Lord has been created to bring glory to God (Isaiah 43:7). We should let our lights shine, that men may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Stand Strong

Did you know that you're facing an opponent who is after your soul? Today we're going to see how we can stand strong as Christians. We're here to search God's Word for His way. We've spent the last five years studying together, and today marks the beginning of our sixth year. Over these years, I've had the pleasure to be able to visit with many of you who watch this program faithfully, and I thank God for you. This program is the way that we spend time together studying the most wonderful book in the world, the Bible. So thanks for studying with us today; and we want to be a part of your life each week.

The Lord Jesus calls us to take a stand for Him and for what He teaches. Many today want a convenient Christianity that asks little of them. They're content to practice their faith as long as it doesn't require much or call for any real sacrifice. They want God to commit fully to them, to hear every prayer and to give every blessing; but they want to believe whatever they like and live however they want. They want a Christianity that never embarrasses them in front of their non-Christian friends. They don't want a strict morality or to talk about sin. They don't want to be asked to believe anything that's different from the popular opinions of the day. They want the crown of life but they don't want to deny themselves or to take up a cross. Frankly, this kind of Christianity is a fantasy. Authentic Christianity means taking our faith seriously.

Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians 6:10-13. "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." That's advice from God's Word.

A spiritual war is taking place, and you're in the midst of the battle. It's not a war of guns and bombs, but a personal fight like hand-to-hand combat. At the end only one person will be standing. Our battle isn't physical; we aren't wrestling with flesh and blood for our lives. Our battle is spiritual; and we're fighting for our souls and the souls of people that we love. The battleground isn't at Armageddon; it's in your heart and life. If you aren't standing at the end, you will be spiritually dead and your soul lost. Your opponent is the devil, and he's been fighting for thousands of years. He knows how to fight; he cheats; and he is very strong. The devil has a strategy, and he intends to win. We cannot take this battle lightly.

When it comes to spiritual warfare, we cannot be strong enough by ourselves. If we're going to have sufficient strength in this spiritual battle with Satan, we must have the Lord's strength. Only the Lord Jesus has enough might to win spiritual battles against the demonic forces in our enemy. We cannot win on our own power.

If you do not know you are in this spiritual fight, you will surely lose. Many Christians are unaware or they ignore this battle. They imagine they can live as they please and can still be right with God. Some believe that once they are saved they can never be lost, but this false doctrine ignores many clear Scriptures that teach otherwise. Hebrews 3:12-13 warns, "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it's called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." People who take their salvation for granted will be surprised to find out the Lord expects them to stand strong in their faith. Every recruit in ancient

times in the Roman army would take an oath of loyalty to the legionary standards and to the emperor as commander-in-chief, swearing to obey his orders and to protect the state. Everyone in the Lord's army also confesses to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and to follow His will. Christianity is serious business.

If you aren't prepared to fight spiritually, you will surely lose to the devil. The Lord provides the armor that we must possess in order to face Satan. The Roman soldiers of the first century were the strongest fighting force of their day. To be a legionnaire, one had to endure strict training. His training would include marching in step, traveling twenty miles in five hours, swimming, basic tactics and battle maneuvers, and how to win at hand-to-hand combat. The Romans wouldn't send out an untrained man as a legionnaire, and nor can we expect to face the devil unprepared.

You, too, must put your armor on for this fight, or you'll surely lose. Romans 13:12 says, "The night is far gone; and the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." We must have God's help and equipment to stand against the tricks and the schemes of the devil. The Lord provides for His people the armor that's necessary to win the battle. Paul wrote, "Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness" (Ephesians 6:14). A Christian's armor includes "the belt of truth." The Roman "belt" or "girdle" referred to a leather apron beneath the armor that protected the lower abdomen. The truth is like that, it's a great protector, because it keeps us right on track. It keeps us going in the right direction. Truth gives us the best weapon against false doctrines, against moral deceptions, or against counterfeit religion. Exposing the devil for an immoral deceiver, which he is, opens the door to defeat the devil.

Next, we have the breastplate of righteousness. The "breastplate" for the Roman army normally consisted of leather that was overlaid with metal, and it protected the chest in a battle. Today, Christians wear the "breastplate of righteousness." They live morally pure lives and "make their calling and election sure." They have peace of heart and of mind, because they know that they are right with the living God. This assurance encourages their heart to stay right with God at all costs. They value righteousness. The Lord said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6). We need righteousness. In fact, the Lord urges us, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). Being right with God must be our priority.

More than that, Christians wear "as shoes ... the readiness given by the gospel of peace," according to Ephesians 6:15. Soldiers needed shoes like boots so they could move quickly without worry as they faced the enemy. The gospel of peace prepares the Christian to be strong in the Lord as he faces the enemy's deceptions. The more we tell others the good news of the gospel, of the love of Christ, the more we confirm our own faith. When Christians are busy telling others the gospel of peace, they have little time to become self-centered and fall prey to the devil's schemes.

Just as the Roman legionnaire had an iron or bronze helmet, so the Christian must "take on the helmet of salvation." The Roman helmet protected the cheeks and it flared wide at the back of the neck to protect the soldier. So we, too, must protect ourselves with the knowledge of our salvation. Knowing Jesus paid the ultimate price for me and for you to save us from our sins leads us to love Him and to stand strong with Him. Hebrews 12:3 urges us to "Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or

fainthearted.” When I see what lengths that Jesus went to save me, I grow bolder in my faith and my resolve to serve Him.

The Roman soldier had a short two-edged sword. This sword was twenty to twenty-four inches long and was used as a weapon when soldiers were in very close battle. Christians have “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). The truth of the Word is certainly able to pierce hearts, and that love and that truth helps them to be able to reach in to someone’s soul and it also helps them to refute those who believe in error.

Paul commanded, “In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.” Each Roman soldier carried a large rectangular shield. Roman soldiers were equipped with these large wooden shields that were four feet high; and the fronts of them were made of leather. Before battles in which flaming arrows might be fired, the leather would be wet down to quench any fiery darts that would be launched at them. After Roman legionaries closed their ranks, the front row would hold the shields forward and those that were behind would hold them above their heads, and so they were virtually invulnerable to any attack from flaming arrows. Faith in Christ Jesus as Lord keeps us safe from the fiery challenges of the devil. It helps us to deflect all the lies and the false doctrines that the devil hurls at us.

We have this armor to prepare us to fight. But our preparation to fight the devil is not complete without prayer. Ephesians 6:18-19 urges us to be “praying at all times.” God protects us when we pray. Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Paul here adds two very important ways to stand strong spiritually. First, he wanted us to pray at all times; and second, he wanted us to be alert.

The Lord Jesus said, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). Prayer keeps our focus on God rather than on selfish desires. When we prepare for that temptation, we aren’t taken by surprise. When we know that it’s coming, we can handle it much easier. Peter encourages us to be on the alert. We must keep our eyes open. First Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Lions prowl and sneak up on their prey in order to seize them. Lions tear their prey apart with their teeth.

I tell you, if you’re not prepared, you’ll lose. But I also want to say if you’re not willing to fight, you will surely lose. Whether you want to fight or not, the devil will come at you. Many Christians don’t want to get involved in this battle; they’d rather ignore the devil’s challenges. They don’t realize the devil is planting seeds of evil, immorality, and error in their hearts that can capture their souls. They fall victim to the devil’s schemes because they don’t like conflict. They don’t want to rock the boat, but the devil will rock it. Paul said, “So then, brothers, you stand firm and you hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter” (2 Thessalonians 2:15). We must hold to those divine traditions that come directly from the Lord through His apostles and prophets. The truth that they teach protect us from those false teachings and the counterfeit religion that’s proposed by the devil and by men. God’s Word alerts us to the dangers and it calls us to resist in the evil day.

If you do not give your all in this battle, you will surely lose. Ephesians 6:13 says, “take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done

everything, everything, to stand firm.” Are you doing everything to prepare for that evil day of testing and temptation? If you aren't reading your Bible and studying your Bible every day, you aren't doing everything. If your knowledge of the Bible is so limited that you don't know what is good or bad, right or wrong, or true or false, then you're vulnerable to Satan's schemes. If you aren't worshiping regularly with brothers and sisters, you aren't doing everything. If your prayer life is weak, you aren't giving it your all.

If you haven't thought about your hope in Christ, your strength will falter. If you aren't hungering and thirsting for righteousness, if you haven't drawn your strength from your salvation, or if you haven't given thought to the gospel of peace, how will you be able to stand strong when the devil comes at you?

Being a Christian is more than being part of a social club and getting entertained once or twice a week. Being a Christian is more than simply doing a few good things and being nice to others. Being a Christian demands our full commitment to the Lord. Romans 12:1 commands us to present our bodies “a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God.” First Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? And you're not your own, for you were bought with a price. And so glorify God in your body.” When we become a Christian, we don't belong to ourselves anymore. We belong to the Lord: body, soul, and spirit. Jesus paid a dear price so that we might be saved. And we have to commit ourselves fully and give Him our all!

Without a doubt, we're facing serious, spiritual battles today, just as they faced them earlier. Satan is challenging us from every side. Whether it's the eye, the flesh, or the pride of life, this world challenges us to be self-centered rather than to love God. Satan is working overtime to produce counterfeit gospels and false religions that he may draw people away from God. Make no mistake! If you give the devil a foothold in your heart, your mind, or your life, he'll conquer your soul. Don't lose your soul; be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. First Peter 2:11 says, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.” Please, don't take this warning lightly. Don't spend your days without a thought about your soul. Don't imagine the devil will challenge your neighbor, but will never challenge you. Get strong in your faith, in your hope, and in your love by getting strong in the Lord. Ephesians 6:10 says, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.” Christ is the source of our spiritual strength. To be strong in Him and His teaching is our duty; to remain weak or apathetic is sinful. Strong trust, strong courage, strong endurance, strong hope, strong love, and strong knowledge of His Word will come from getting right with and staying close to Him. We must maintain our fellowship with him at all costs. We must never let up, give up, or grow weary of serving the Lord.

When a person who believes repents and is baptized into Christ, the Lord at that time washes away his sins (Acts 22:16), adds him to the church, counts him as His child (Galatians 3:26-27), and saves him (1 Peter 3:21). God wants you to live with Him forever. The way to live in His house forever is to become a member of His family. The church is God's family (1 Timothy 3:15). As His child, you worship with other members of His family by attending church regularly. God has designed the church to meet your spiritual needs and to provide you a loving family. God's arms are open wide longing for you to come home to Him. Won't you come to Him, serve Him, and live with Him? Won't you get involved with a local church of Christ? Take time today to worship with them.

Never Alone

Living alone presents many emotional and spiritual challenges. Today we're exploring what God desires for those who live alone. The Scriptures are God's instruction book for everyone, in every stage of life, and in every circumstance. Whatever struggle or heartache you face, God has some comfort and help for you. He hasn't forgotten or abandoned you. He knows and cares about you. Many years ago, I did a funeral for an elderly man who had no family at all. Three funeral directors and I carried his casket to the graveside service; two ladies from the nursing home and I sang some hymns. No one else attended. Six people, no family, no friends! This man was utterly alone and buried by strangers.

Loneliness is a growing problem in our society. More than 44 percent of all adults in the United States are unmarried; that's 102 million people. A study by the American Council of Life Insurance reported that the most lonely group in America are college students. That's surprising! The survey next listed divorced people, welfare recipients, single mothers, rural students, housewives, and the elderly. Loneliness is a widespread problem; and in fact, one in four people complain about feeling lonely frequently. Persistent loneliness can harm our mental and our physical health.

The LORD God said, "It's not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). Living without a spouse is difficult, whether you've never married, become a widow, or have been divorced. Loneliness is painful and can confuse you into thinking that you are a loser or an outcast, but that's not necessarily so.

Our reading today comes from one of the Psalms of David, Psalm 139:1-5. "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me." Aren't you glad that God is so close? Let's pray together. Father, we're thankful that no matter where we are that You're with us, that Your hand encloses us, that You know us so well. Father, we're grateful for that loving care. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!

Loneliness makes people feel sad and empty, cut off from others and needing companionship. Loneliness typically includes anxiety because people need to connect with family. We all need a companion who shares our lives and dreams, who walks through life with us, who experiences our joys and sorrows, and who shares our responsibilities and decisions. Connecting with another is more than living in the same house. One can feel lonely even when surrounded by other people.

The Bible tells of several people who lived lonely lives. Joseph, the son of Jacob, grew up in a large family; but his half-brothers hated him so much that they sold him into slavery. At a young age, he lived as a stranger in a foreign land, Egypt. His master's wife tried repeatedly to seduce him. When he refused her advances, she falsely accused him and he spent years in prison, separated from home and family. I can only imagine how Joseph must have felt. However, Genesis 39:21 says, "But the Lord was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer." Whatever Joseph endured, the Lord was with him. The Lord protected and provided for him what he needed, even if his family was far away. Joseph was able to endure his hardships and keep his faith, because he knew the Lord was with him.

Jesus walked alone much of his life. He never had a wife and children, but gave Himself completely to His mission of saving people from sin. Jesus had people all around Him all of His life. He grew up in a household with several brothers and sisters. He chose and trained twelve disciples who accompanied Him in His ministry. Jesus often stayed in the home of friends like Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Multitudes followed Him wherever He went. But in spite of all this, Jesus faced much of life alone and did what no other person could do. He went to the cross alone. While praying at Gethsemane His disciples fell asleep. His familiar friend, Judas, betrayed Him; Peter denied Him three times; and the rest were scattered from Him.

Like Joseph Jesus found strength in His relationship with His Father in heaven. Jesus said, "Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I'm not alone, because the Father is with Me." (John 16:32). Jesus found the strength that He needed in the Father, and so can you. Peter revealed how Jesus dealt with lonely suffering. In 1 Peter 2:21-23 the Bible says, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; and while being reviled, He didn't revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." When Jesus suffered most, He put His life and His soul into the hands of the heavenly Father. There He found comfort and support.

Jesus began and ended His ordeal on the cross with prayer. He prayed for three hours while in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Lord Jesus prayed, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). While Jesus wanted to escape the cross on one hand, He wanted to do the will of the Father on the other. His desire to fulfill the Father's will was greater and His true prayer, because of His love for His Father was "Thy will be done." Hebrews 5:7 says, "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence." In His pain and sorrow, the Father heard His reverent and obedient prayer.

As they were crucifying the Lord Jesus He was praying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they're doing" (Luke 23:34). Instead of focusing on their cruelty and the overwhelming pain of large nails going through His hands and feet, Jesus was thinking about their souls. Jesus prayed for them to be forgiven. We often focus on the evil and the ugly in life, but Jesus focused on saving people from their sins.

In Matthew 27:46, the Lord Jesus "cried out with a loud voice, saying ... 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" Did you know that these are words from Psalm 22:1. Psalm 22 is the most Messianic of all the psalms of David. It begins with a feeling of forsakenness; it speaks of the wagging of the head in verse 7; predicts the piercing of His hands and feet in verse 16; and speaks of the dividing of His garments in verse 18. Verse 27 speaks of all the nations turning to and worshiping the Lord. Could it be the Lord Jesus was reciting this Scripture to Himself and reassuring Himself that His death was not in vain?

Jesus kept entrusting Himself to the Father. In fact, Luke 23:46 says, "Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!' And having said this he breathed his last." From the beginning to the end of this excruciating ordeal, Jesus found His strength in prayer. His example will help us in our times of pain and loneliness. First Peter 4:19 says, "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right." When you're lonely, entrust your soul to a Creator who will not let you down.

The apostle Paul provides another example for those who live as singles. While some think he may have been married at some point in his life, he speaks of himself as being unmarried. He said, "To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am" (1 Corinthians 7:8). He realized that not everyone had the gift to live the single life yet he felt there were many advantages to living as a single. Paul knew that having family would get in the way of his ministry, and he wanted to be free of any responsibility except to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul often faced great difficulties. They put Paul in prison five times, and he spent about five years of his life in jail. If you read through the book of Philippians, you wouldn't think of Paul as depressed or defeated even though he was in prison when he wrote it. Instead, he spoke of his joy in that letter more than twenty times.

Paul learned the secret of being content in whatever circumstances he found himself. In context, Philippians 4 is speaking of Paul's financial wellbeing; but this is likely true of other circumstances of his life. He explains, "I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I've learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:12-13). Paul found God's grace was sufficient for him, even when he was suffering. Having God in his life made up for all the things that he didn't have.

Paul also understood what it's like to face death alone. God spared Paul's life the first time he appeared before Caesar. Paul said, "At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen" (2 Timothy 4:16-18).

When you're lonely, think on the promises of God. They will reassure you. The Lord God said, "A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, Is God in His holy habitation. God makes a home for the lonely; He leads out the prisoners into prosperity, Only the rebellious dwell in a parched land" (Psalm 68:5-6). If you have God with you, you have far more than many of the largest families. The Lord Jesus promised, "and lo, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). The Lord Jesus dwells with His people. I love the Lord's promise in John 14:23, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." The Father and the Lord Jesus make their home with those who love Him enough to obey Him.

The Lord God promised Joshua, "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you" (Joshua 1:5). This promise is repeated to Christians in Hebrews 13:5. David said, "I've been young, and now I'm old, yet I've not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread" (Psalm 37:25). What's true in practical matters is also true in our relationship with the Lord. David said, "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But the LORD will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). When no one else was there for David, God was.

God said to the people of Jerusalem through the prophet Isaiah, "Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me" (Isaiah 49:15-16). God thinks continually of His children. He thinks of their physical welfare, their spiritual strength, and their emotional needs. The Lord Jesus reminds

us that “your Father knows what you need before you ask Him” (Matthew 6:8). Oh, the Lord is a blessing to all of us.

David kept himself aware of the presence of God. Our reading today came from Psalm 139:1-5. He said, “O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.” David describes how intimately God knew him. God knew everything about him, how he acted, how he talked, even what he thought about. David said in verse 6, “Such knowledge is too wonderful to me, for me; it’s high; and I cannot attain it.”

God had known David from his conception in his mother’s womb. In Psalm 139:13-14 David says, “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; and my soul knows it very well.” No one knows you and me as intimately as God. He’s watched over us every day of our lives, heard every prayer, known every thought, and provided every need. You cannot go anywhere outside the presence of God.

How does this help? Because you too can say, “I’m not alone; the Lord is with me.” You too can say His grace is sufficient for you. You too can say He will never leave you or forsake you. Give yourself to God! Let’s pray together. Father, we’re thankful that You love us so much, that You provide for every need, and that You’re with us through every trial of life. This we give thanks to You in the name of Jesus. Amen!

The outspoken atheist, Madalyn Murray O’Hair, who went to court to take prayer out of the schools, clearly sensed something was missing from her life. She wrote in her diary in 1977 that she had failed as a wife, as a parent, and as a politician. In a half dozen places in her diaries O’Hair wrote, “Somebody, somewhere, love me.” We all long to love and to be loved. There’s one place in your heart and soul that no one can fill but God. The loneliest person in the world isn’t the one who lacks family, but the one who has rejected God.

Some folks allow their love for God to fade as years pass. The Lord Jesus said to the lukewarm church at Laodicea, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; and if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20). The Lord Jesus wanted to restore the warm and intimate fellowship He once had with the church in Laodicea, and He wants to have that same intimacy with you. Do you have a close, loving, peaceful relationship with the Lord?

Draw close to God; make Him part of your life every day! Become a Christian by placing your faith and your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He will never lie to you and wants to save you from your sins. Out of love, repent of your sins by forsaking them and following the Lord. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ, united with Him. We’re crucified with Christ in baptism that our body of sin might be done away with according to Romans 6:3-7. God washes away our sins in baptism according to Acts 22:16. Oh, become a Christian today!

Please get involved with a church of Christ. They love and support our ministry. If you’re looking for a Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one. Churches of Christ want guests, and you’ll be glad you worshiped with them.

Keeping My Zeal

Some Christians live their lives to the fullest, while others drift aimlessly. Some passionately pursue their faith, while others are lukewarm. How can we keep our passion and zeal for God alive? We love to study the Bible because we know the real author of the Bible is God. Peter said, "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" (2 Peter 1:20-21). Men didn't dream up the words of the Bible; rather God's spokesmen, the prophets, were moved by the Spirit to speak. They said what God willed for us to know, to believe, and to do. Because the Bible is from God, we can begin to understand the heart of God and His love for us.

Today we're asking the question, "How can I keep my zeal for Christ and renew my passion for God?" I don't want a bored and dull faith. I don't want to forget what the Lord has done for me. The Lord created me, loved me, protected me, provided for me, taught me, disciplined me, and is preparing a home for me in heaven. How could I become apathetic toward one who has heard my prayers and opened doors for me? David expressed my heart, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psalm 42:1-2). God is our hope, our joy, and our Savior. Staying close to Him will keep our passion alive.

Our reading today comes from 2 Peter 1:5-11. "Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you." Let's pray together. Father, we're thankful that You have given us the way to be able to respond to You out of love. Help us to give all diligence. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Have you ever been thirsty, really thirsty? The kind of thirst that demands you find some water? Israel knew what it was to have little water available. Israel had seasons of rain and seasons that didn't have much rain. Their streams would flow in the rainy seasons and dry up at other times. They could collect water in their cisterns, hoping to have enough water to last until the rains returned.

In the seventh century B.C., Israel turned its back on God and followed after the vain idols of nations surrounding them. God said about Israel, "for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). By forsaking God, they also had forsaken the source of life. Don't imagine something else can take the place of God. Nothing and no one can.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." When was the last time that you were thirsty for

righteousness or for God? When did you last feel that being close to Him, worshiping Him, or listening to Him was an immediate demand? It's easy to forget what you have and take God for granted. God knows when people ignore Him, and forget Him, and forsake Him. Do you imagine that God will run to your side when you have neglected Him for many years?

Good relationships demand time and effort. Just like a marriage or any relationship, it can grow stale; and so our love for God can grow dull over time. If we want to strengthen our relationship, then we must take the time to make it grow and develop. We must first start paying close attention to what God says. Hebrews 2:1-3 says, "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" If we neglect to listen to God's Word, we'll fail to please Him and we risk the salvation of our souls.

Some people ignore God until they need Him. They focus their minds on the things of this world while they slowly drift away from God to pursue their own interests. They stop going to worship at church; they stop studying the Scriptures; they stop praying; and they begin talking and acting like the world. When some disaster then comes along, they feel God is distant. God doesn't forget His people, but His people frequently forget Him.

If you really want to have God in your heart, take a long look at what the Lord endured on the cross. The Lord Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:32). The Lord Jesus loves you beyond measure. He opened His heart to reach out to everyone. He bore the cross to die for the sins, not just of the whole world, but also for you. Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He didn't rule you out because you were imperfect. The only people Jesus died for were sinners.

See the crown of thorns on His head, see the nails through His hands and feet, see His back bloodied by the scourge, see His side pierced by the soldier, and see His blood offered for you. He suffered the shame of people mocking Him. He sacrificed Himself, "and with his stripes we are healed." "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). If the reality of what happened on the cross doesn't touch you like it once did, perhaps it's because you've let other things cause your heart to harden. Worldliness and sin cause people's hearts to grow cold.

Jesus didn't die on the cross to proclaim a health and wealth gospel that puts you in the center of the universe. He didn't die on the cross to help you become a millionaire, lose weight or overcome your fears and anxieties. He sacrificed Himself to redeem your soul from sin and to give you eternal life. His blood washes away your sin and causes you to be born again, so you'll be created in His image and become like Him. The Lord is interested in your inner man; and one day He will judge your soul on whether you gave of yourself as a humble servant.

In times of great prosperity, people tend to take their minds off God and put them on their own personal pleasures. Just as Israel was about to cross the Jordan and enter the promised land Moses warned them, "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I'm commanding you today; otherwise, when you've eaten and are satisfied, and you've 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 of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Deuteronomy 8:11-14).

Don't let your blessings keep you from remembering the One who gave you those blessings. 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." Apart from God we would have nothing. God is the One who gives us the ability to think, to work, and to make money. Moses said, "Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:17-18). The world wants you to be proud of all of your accomplishments. The Lord wants you to remember that every blessing that you have comes from what God provides in you and for you.

Some people turn away from God because they've faced some trying experience or circumstance. Rather than pull away from God, we need to draw close to God when we face a struggle or a heartache. We should turn to God for strength, for help, for encouragement, and for assurance.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." In hard times let's remember that God can do things that men cannot.

We draw close to God by making Him a priority in our lives every single day. We study the Bible because it reveals God's thinking and His will for our lives. To know God we have to listen to His words. We pray because we want God to know our hearts. First Thessalonians 5:17 teaches us to "pray without ceasing." God doesn't want us to quit praying. James 5:13 says, "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise." If you want to be zealous for God, then make being with God a daily exercise. You build good relationships; they don't just happen.

To draw close to God, remember what He has done for you. David said, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, And all that's 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" (Psalm 103:1-5). God is ever good to you. Consider how God has answered your prayers, given you the Scriptures that give us hope and comfort, and strengthened you through the years.

If you want to draw close to God, keep your eyes on eternity. Colossians 3:1-4 says, "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

To draw close to God, focus on the good. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there's any excellence, if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." When we concentrate on the negative, we lose sight of God; but when we concentrate on the positive, we grow more thankful to God.

If you wish to be close to God, you've got to give Him room in your life. You must get the weeds out of your heart and soul. Just as weeds can take over a garden, so spiritual weeds can take over your heart. Weeds rob plants of the space and the nourishment that they need to grow and produce. Likewise, distractions of life can rob us of our time and our energy for God. The

Lord Jesus said, “The seed that fell among the thorns, this stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature” (Luke 8:14). Many Christians fail to grow in their faith and in their relationship with God because they devote themselves to things that push God out of their lives. We must learn not to let the things of this world come between God and us.

Sin destroys our desire to serve God because it replaces God and enslaves us. Ephesians 4:27 says, “do not give the devil an opportunity.” If you let sin into your life it will dominate your heart. The Lord Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin” (John 8:34). To overcome sin, you must put it to death. Romans 6:11 says, “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” You can't cut down a weed and expect to kill it; you must uproot it. If you simply cut it down, you'll see it grow back. Sin is like that. You can't just cut back on sin and expect that sin to go away. You must remove it altogether. Unless it's completely stopped, it'll keep growing and crowding out what is good and productive in your life.

You can't grow to be a productive and authentic Christian if you crowd God out by your whims and desires. You must give Him room in your life to grow. Many people let their jobs, and their hobbies, or their recreation come between God and themselves. None of these things is wrong in and of themselves; but if you let something, anything, take you away from your God, you can lose your soul. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

All this matters because it affects our relationship and our zeal for God. When our relationship is strong, then our hearts want to serve God; but when our relationship is weak, we let other things dominate our lives. If you wish to be zealous for God, then set your heart upon the Lord Jesus and upon all the blessings He has in store for you in eternity! Let's pray together. Father, we're thankful that You are so close to us. Help us to remain close to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!

Is there anything in your life that's keeping you from being close to God? Some people never pick up a Bible, never utter a prayer, and never go to church. Is it any wonder that they feel far from God? They've shut the Lord out of their lives; and people grieve God when they shut Him out. He hasn't quit loving or caring for us, but it tears at God's heart to be abandoned by His people. If you're letting sin have a place in your heart, then it's time to put an end to that sin. You can't love sin and love God at the same time. James 4:4 says, “do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

To be rid of sin, you must repent. Repentance is an act of the heart that says, “I will no longer do what offends God, but what will please Him.” In repentance, we put a stop to sin, but we must also be forgiven. The Lord forgives us when by faith and repentance we're willing to confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be baptized. In baptism, we're crucified with Christ, “in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin” (Romans 6:6). Baptism is that time that God saves us from sin.

Don't let your love for Christ grow cold. Don't grow weary of your faith and lose heart. Renew your faith. Restore your heart. Revive your spirit. Demonstrate your faith and love. Listen to God, love God, pray to God, grow a desire for God, and tell everyone about His goodness and kindness in Christ Jesus. Get involved!

Glorifying God

Isaiah 43:7 tells us that we were created for the glory of God. Today we're going to explore how God wishes for us to glorify His name. We search the Scriptures for the Lord's Way because the Scriptures reveal the glory and majesty of God. Our Father in heaven is so much wiser than we are. He sees things that we can't see, knows things that we'll never know. We must trust in His wisdom. The Lord God said, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). God will bless us and provide for us if we trust in Him and stay close to Him. He's prepared a home in heaven for us, and that's why we continue to search the Scriptures to find the Lord's way.

We serve a glorious God! Ephesians 1:17 calls "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory"; and 1 Corinthians 2:8 calls Jesus "the Lord of glory." The Lord Jesus prayed, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). I can only imagine how marvelous and how awesome was the Father and the Son before the foundation of the world. Today we know something of that glory because Jesus came into the world. Hebrews 1:3 says Jesus, "is the radiance of His (or God's) glory and the exact representation of His nature, and He upholds all things by the word of His power."

Our reading today comes from the revelation of Jesus Christ, that is the book of Revelation 4:8-11. "And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, 'HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is the LORD GOD, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.' And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.'" This is a majestic reading about God. Let's pray together. Father, we're thankful that You are such a wonderful and awesome God. Help us, Father, to live in such a way to glorify Your name always. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Solomon said, "A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow (or grief) to his mother" (Proverbs 10:1). We all would like to please our parents and make them proud of our accomplishments. Being wise is not the same as being smart. In God's eyes, the person who is wise pays attention and follows the teaching of the Lord. The fool has his mind on himself and his own pleasures. Because the wise and the foolish have different mindsets and desires, they go in different directions. A wise son follows his father's teaching and pleases him, while a foolish son that follows worldly ways gives sorrow to his mother.

It's the same with Christianity. Wise Christians pay attention and follow God, while foolish Christians pursue their own pleasures. The Lord Jesus contrasted two very different paths of life in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:13-14). Don't

you want to be wise and choose the path that leads to life? You might have only a few who go with you, but it will glorify your Father in heaven and bless you eternally.

The apostle Paul said, "For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12). Paul both encouraged and challenged the Thessalonians to live lives worthy of God. The Lord called us through the gospel into His kingdom and His glory. God has forgiven us, made us His children, made us citizens of His kingdom, and promised us a home in heaven. We must remember who we are and live as children of God and heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

First Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Everything we do ought to say thank you to God; it ought to reflect God's love and holiness. It ought to say to the world, "I belong to God and I live to serve Him." How do we do this? Of course, the most obvious way in the beginning is to glorify God through our worship. Hebrews 13:15 says, "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name." Our songs and prayers, the words of our lips, praise God. We worship to glorify God, and to proclaim to the world His greatness!

We also glorify God by bearing fruit. The Lord Jesus said, "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8). How do we bear fruit? We do it by being as much like the Lord Jesus as we can. We too seek to save souls, like He did, by pointing them to Him, to the Lord Jesus and to His gospel. We preach and we teach to everyone who will listen. We bear fruit by caring for the needy. The Lord Jesus on the day of judgment will say to those who served Him, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Matthew 25:34-36). When we serve others, we serve Christ and we glorify God as the lover of all people.

We are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world to those who surround us. We are people who make life brighter, purer, more loving and more peaceful. The Lord urges us, "You are the light of the world. And a city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). When we bless other people around us by serving the Lord, they see the good that we do and they thank God for us. Serving the Lord as Christians opens the door for people of the world to see God's love and goodness.

Even when people don't understand us or appreciate us, they know love and kindness when they see it. The early Christians faced great persecution from the pagan nations surrounding them. They had to earn the respect of their neighbors, because people believed that they were evil. Peter encouraged Christians, "Beloved, don't be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you're insulted for the name of Christ, you're blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 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” (1 Peter 4:12-16). He said we may suffer for our faith, but we never have to be ashamed to wear the name of Jesus Christ. By holding fast to our faith and our values, we glorify the name of Jesus Christ.

The best thing you can do as a Christian to win the respect of your neighbors is to show the love of Christ and to do what is right. Those who don't understand our faith may insult you, may curse you, or may slander you publicly. Do what is right anyway! Glorify God because you belong to Him and love Him. Paul said, “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12).

The devil will tempt you, he'll make every effort to tear you away from your faith, but you stand strong with the Lord. First Peter 5:8-10 says, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” Since you have been called to eternal glory, don't lose your blessing over a momentary, sinful pleasure. It's simply not worth it.

The Lord Jesus purchased the church with His own blood and He looks at the church as His bride. Ephesians 5:25-27 says, “that Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.” Jesus cleansed and made the church holy. He wants to present His people in splendor on the last day. The Lord Jesus didn't cleanse and make you holy so that you could return to a worldly life of sin.

Because the church is holy, each Christian, each person who is a member of the church, should himself be holy. Peter said, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:11-12). If we allow sin to dominate us, the world will slander us as evildoers and look down upon our God; but if we live morally excellent lives, people will praise and glorify God because of it.

First Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. And so glorify God in your body.” Corinth was a city known for its sexual immorality of all kinds. They degraded their bodies and spread disease through their lustful acts. A Christian's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Christians stay away from sexual sin, because they know their bodies belong to God. They pursue a virtuous life, because sexual purity glorifies God. They save themselves for marriage as a gift to God and a gift to their spouse.

Sadly, some Christians don't live up to what they believe. They speak out against sin but practice it secretly. Romans 2:21-24 says, “you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who

boast in the law dishonor God by breaking that law. For, as it is written, ‘The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.’” When people’s lives conflict with their message, they cause the Lord to be shamed rather than praised.

Whether we honor God with our lives will determine how God looks at us. Second Timothy 2:19-22 says, “But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are his,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.’ Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, and some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”

Why is this important? It’s important because we’ll spend eternity somewhere, either in glory or in regret. We’re just a vapor that appears for a little while in this life. And we’ve got to keep our focus on the Lord and living eternally with Him in glory. Second Corinthians 4:16-18 says, “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” Where will you spend eternity?

Let’s pray together. Father, we are so grateful that You have prepared a home in glory for us. Help us to be prepared so that we might live with You forever. Help us to be obedient to Your word, and to love You and to love others always. In Jesus name, Amen.

One day, the Lord Jesus will return. He’ll come in great glory. The Lord said in Matthew 16:27, “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.” The second coming of the Lord Jesus will be unmistakable; Revelation 1:7 says that every eye will see Him. But it’s the purpose of His coming that is so remarkable. Second Thessalonians 1:10 reminds us that Jesus is coming “on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.” The Lord Jesus will be “glorified in his saints.” Their lives demonstrated their faith, and that faith will praise Him. Do you believe? And does your life glorify God?

Peter described himself as “a partaker of the glory that is going to be revealed” (1 Peter 5:1). When Jesus is revealed in glory, we as Christians will get to share in that glory. The Lord Jesus said, “that if anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him” (John 12:26). If you live so as to glorify God in this life, God will honor you in the life to come.

To honor the Lord Jesus, place your faith in Him. Trusting Him means listening to and following His Word. Trusting the Lord involves loving Him, repenting of sin, turning to what is right, confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and being baptized into Jesus Christ. Just as we must believe and repent, so we must be baptized in order to be saved. The Lord Jesus said, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16). Won’t you obey Him today?