

# Pray & Proclaim (Part 2)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Turn in your Bible to 1 Timothy chapter 2 verses 1 through 7.

! We'll be our text again this morning. We'll cover the verses we didn't cover last week. If you don't own a Bible, there are Bibles in the pews that you can use. If you don't own a Bible, please take that Bible home with you today as a gift from our church to you and our hopes that you'll continue to be reading God's Word.

1 Timothy chapter 2 verses 1 through 7, if you would please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together. First of all, then I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.

For kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

[ 1 : 27 ] For this, I was appointed a preacher and an apostle. I am telling the truth. I am not lying. A teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

May God add a word, a blessing to his word. Would you please be seated? I'm going to do something a little bit differently this morning with my sermon. Again, as we're looking at praying for the lost, I thought, well, I could share someone else's testimony about that, or I could invite them to come and share their own testimony.

And so, Reed Ridgway is going to come up, and I've asked him to share his testimony with us this morning. Thank you, Reed. Hello.

This on? I'm Reed. If you haven't met me yet, we started coming here last June. My testimony is I wasn't raised in church, didn't come from a so-called Christian family.

And when I was 13, I went to a church camp called Camp Lila, and I just remember the pastor preaching, and I don't remember much about what he was preaching.

[ 2 : 40 ] I was 13 and probably had a lot of other things on my mind, but I know at the end of the sermon, there was an altar call, and I remember, well, I don't want to necessarily go to hell.

And it looks like several of my friends don't either, and they're going up there, so why don't I just go with them? So, I went up front, got paired up with a sponsor, and they led me through a prayer and sent me back, and I thought, well, this is great.

That was easy. Check the box. I'm done. The rest of my time through school would reveal that I had not been saved. There was no change.

There was no need for Christ after that. I didn't feel that I needed to go to church. So, anyways, going on through middle school and high school, I wasn't a very good kid.

I kind of started doing drugs in high school, and throughout school, like when sports seasons would come around, baseball and basketball, I would kind of put that stuff away, but off-season, I would go right back into that.

[ 3 : 49 ] And then shortly after school, after high school, I got addicted to drugs, and I spent the next four, four and a half years highly addicted to some pretty bad drugs.

But anyways, throughout that time, I would come up to my mom's house and tell her, give her the whole story about how I wanted to get better, to get clean.

And she would give me a place to stay, food to eat, things like that. And I'd usually last three or four days, sometimes a week. And then I would, once I was rested up and stuff, I would just run off again.

I'm sure many of you know somebody that's done things like that. But I would just run off, and I'd be gone again, be missing for a long time. And I did that probably 10 to 15 different times throughout these four, four and a half years.

This last time that I did that, I came up to my mom's, and I slept for the first three or four days. I was in very, very bad shape. I couldn't really function being awake.

[ 4 : 57 ] So I slept for three or four days, and Sunday morning come along, and she woke me up and she said, okay, it's time to go to church. I thought, oh boy, no, I'm not going to a church, not at all, not with those people.

And she said, well, then you can leave. You need to leave. I said, mom, I have nowhere to go. I can't leave. She said, well, then you can go to church. So it was kind of a tough love type moment. There was some words spoken between us, but she got me to church. I walk into this little church in No Water, and walking through the door, and this big, big old Indian man comes up to me and hugs me and kisses me on the cheek.

And the lifestyle I'm living at this point, or was living, that was very, I was, whoa, man, what's your problem? So anyways, he tells me he's been praying for me for three or four years.

He just asked if I want to go fishing with him the next day. Just seemed like such a joy, like he loved being around me. I couldn't understand it. So I walked through the door.

[ 6 : 05 ] Another guy comes up to me and just, hey, are you Reed? We've been praying for you for three or four years. I said, yeah, that's me. A couple of women did the same thing. And just mind you, before I walked in that church, I was hopeless.

I had no, I just felt like I was about to have the worst time of my life in this place, but I've got to get through it so I can get back to my mom's house. But these few people telling me that they've been praying for me for three or four years, something started to change in me.

Something started to, like some hope started to arise. So anyways, I sit down and we worship and we listen to the sermon. The pastor preaches on the hope and love that we have in Christ Jesus.

And my mind's just blown right now. Looking back, the Holy Spirit was drawing me in. I know that's what was going on. But in the moment, I was just like, what is this message?

What is this? There's a way. There's another way. I don't have to be this hopeless, addicted person the rest of my life. So I leave the service that day.

[ 7 : 09 ] My mind's just rolling with all kinds of thoughts and things. And the very next day, Monday morning, my family, my mom and my stepdad go to work.

My sisters go to school. I'm there by myself. I turn on the TV. I start listening to some preaching. He asks us to open our Bibles to I don't even remember where, but I did it.

And he preaches the gospel. We read through the gospel. And I just remember falling to the floor in my mom's living room that day by myself, just realizing that I was a sinner.

I needed Christ. And that there was another way. So I was saved right there the very next day. That next week on Sunday, I met with the elders and I said, guys, I don't fully understand baptism or what it really means, but I need to be baptized.

And they baptized me the next week. And another kind of side story to this testimony is I told you I wasn't raised in a Christian family.

[ 8 : 15 ] My mom wasn't saved. And whenever I started going through my addiction, she started seeking answers, like what's going on?

So she started joining a Celebrate Recovery class. And in that, she'd seen that, man, these people need Christ. And she ended up realizing that she needed Christ herself.

So my mom got saved seeking answers through my addiction. And then she started going to the prayer meeting at this church where she started asking the elders to pray for me, where they would spend the next three and a half, four years praying for me.

And then here I come walking in those three and a half, four years later. So I just, I love that part that even though I was going through a horrible time and at the lowest of lows, God still used it for his will.

Amen. In our text today, we continue to look at Paul's instruction for the church in Ephesus. The church needed this instruction because strange teachers were teaching strange things which produced strange gospels within the church.

[ 9 : 45 ] The church was disorganized. It needed reform. It needed to get its priorities straight, to keep them focused on Christ.

To keep them focused on Christ's mission for the church. In chapter 3, verses 14 through 15, Paul clearly states his purpose for writing this letter to Timothy, his protege, a young pastor, a man whom he called his child in the faith, whom he'd left at Ephesus to pastor this church.

And he says to them, to Timothy there in chapter 3, verses 14 through 15, I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that if I delay, you may know how you ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and a buttress of the truth.

And so in chapter 1, Paul gives instruction to Timothy to confront false teachers in the church whose misbehavior was causing problems in God's house.

Timothy was to wage the good warfare. He was to do that by preaching the truth of God's word and reforming the church according to the principles of God's word.

[11:01] In chapter 2, Paul continues with his instruction, calling for the church to proactively engage in the mission that Jesus gave it.

It's a mission that Jesus commands all churches and that he commands all Christians who are part of his church to engage in. It's the main idea for this morning's sermon.

Our primary mission is to seek the lost and pray for their salvation. Our primary mission as a church, your primary mission as a believer, is to seek the lost and pray for their salvation, even if it takes three to four years.

In the case of our brother Reed, thank you so much for your testimony. We praise God for what he's done in your life and is doing in your life. After Jesus died on the cross and rose again to life three days later, the Bible says he appeared to many of his disciples.

He had things to say to them still. He had things to reveal to them. Many of those things are recorded in the Gospels. Matthew's Gospel records the command Jesus gave to his followers who had all assembled to see him ascend back into heaven.

[12:18] And in Matthew 28, 18 through 20, we read, And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Before I left to go to India a couple months ago, I had instructions for my children, for Jack and Hazel.

I expressed my expectations to them of how they were to obey and how they were to help their mother and obey her while I was away from home.

I knew I was going to talk to them again once I got to India. And when I did talk to them from India, I reiterated those expectations. And I asked if they were obeying what I had said.

The words that Matthew records in chapter 28, 18 through 20, aren't the last recorded words of Jesus in the Bible. For example, he appears to Paul on the road to Damascus, on his way to persecute Christians.

[13:33] And there Jesus calls out to him and eventually saves him and makes him his disciple to go to the nations, to go to the Gentiles, to be his messenger to them with his message that he is the Savior.

If Jesus has saved you, he's commanded you to participate in his mission. He's called us.

He's called his church to be a light to the world, a bright city on a hill that people living in darkness would behold the glory and the goodness and the grace of Jesus Christ in us.

This means, as we saw last week, that we pray for all people. We go to all people. We share the gospel with all peoples in the hope that God will save them.

This means that as our church, we make our Lord's mission our primary objective. And I hope that the Holy Spirit will use the words he's inspired to convict and convince us all that our primary mission is to seek the lost, which I believe begins with our praying for them, praying for their salvation, and then proclaiming the gospel to them.

[15:01] Maybe you're here this morning, and like Reed, when he first walked into his mom's church for the first time, he wasn't a believer. Well, we're glad that you're here.

We really are. In fact, the Lord has brought you here. He has ordained this day for you to be here, to hear his word, to hear his gospel.

His desire is to save you, to transform you, and to give you new life in Jesus Christ. We have prayed for you, and your being here is an answer to our prayers.

And we hope, again, that today is a day of salvation for you. And so in our text, we see four principles about prayer. And I'm going to quickly recap the first two, which we covered last week, and then we'll examine the last two in greater detail.

But that first principle is that, as a church, as believers, we must prioritize prayer for the lost. Again, in the beginning of verse one, Paul says, first of all, of all the things the church is commanded to do, Paul urges the church to pray.

[16:11] I shared that last week about how the Lord has convicted me of this, in studying this. It isn't that we don't pray as a church, or that we don't pray in our church, but that in our worship service, it seemed to me that we sort of, we sort of tack prayer on to things, the beginning of things, or the end of things.

But they, but it's not one of the main things that we do when we worship together. And so we've reformed our worship service, as you've seen this morning, to prioritize prayer.

This is something that we should always be doing. We should always be reforming ourselves, our homes, our church, to what we read in God's word.

There may be other things that we need to reform as we go through this book. But for now, we see that we need to make prayer a priority and seek to be a church that prioritizes prayer for all people, which leads to the second principle, that we must pray for all people.

Again, in verse, the rest of verse one and verse two, Paul says, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every day.

[17:43] And out of the universal group of all people, Paul specifically singles out those in high positions of authority. And I think that he singles them out because this is a group of people that we often neglect to pray for.

And I think that we often neglect to pray for them because we see them as the problem, which is why we should pray for them.

We should pray for their salvation if they aren't saved. We should pray for them to govern us with wisdom and to uphold what is good.

Next week, one of the things that Pastor Tyler will have is just a sheet of all of our local state leaders who are in authority over us.

And again, this is a way that we are seeking to be obedient to God's word. And I hope that you'll take one of those home and that you will be consistently and continually praying for our leaders as our Lord commands us to do.

[18:50] So those are the first two principles. Now we go to the third. We must do what pleases God. We must do what pleases God.

When we pray for all people, when we pray for kings and those who are in high positions, when we pray for the lost, Paul says in verse three, this is good.

And it's pleasing in the sight of God our Savior. Prayer is a good thing because it is something that pleases God. And shouldn't that be motivation enough?

If it pleases God, we should do it. If we love God, then we should do and want to do and desire to do and be proactive about doing the things that please God.

and God is pleased when his people pray for all people. As he did in chapter one, verse one, Paul identifies God as God our Savior.

[19:57] God is by nature a saving God, the source of salvation. God is pleased when we pray for lost people and it gives him pleasure to save them.

And so I ask you, do you share in that pleasure? Last week, I talked about those people. Those people, we think, sometimes, that are too sinful, too unlike us, too far gone, for God to save them because of their sin.

And if we aren't careful, we can find ourselves pleased with their destruction, more pleased in thinking about their destruction than their salvation.

In Luke chapter 15, the Pharisees and scribes, the religious leaders of Israel, grumbled over their disdain for the kinds of people, those people that were drawing near to Jesus.

They objected to Jesus receiving those people whom they thought were too far gone and too sinful. And we read about that in Luke chapter 15, verses one through seven.

[21:20] Now the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to him, Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them.

So Jesus told them a parable. What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?

And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.

Just so I tell you, there will be, hear this, more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over the ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance or who don't think that they need to repent because they don't realize they're sinners.

When the lost are found, it pleases God, our Savior, and it should please us to see him using our church in ways that please him.

[ 22 : 39 ] In verses four through five, Paul adds that this is pleasing, again, to God, our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus.

Now, it's important that we read these verses together as I did to understand them in their original context and understand them in the context of the rest of the Bible because if you read verse four without reading verse five, you could wrongly assume that verse four teaches universalism, thinking that if God desires salvation of all people, then all people will be saved or God won't get what he wants.

Verse five makes it clear that salvation is only through Jesus Christ who is the mediator between God and men. A mediator is someone who intervenes between two parties in conflict to either make or restore peace.

The Bible tells us an experience confirms that people are sinful. We are born with a nature to sin. You don't have to tell a little kid how to do bad things.

It just comes instinctively to them and as I've always said, if you don't believe that, we need volunteers in the nursery and you will soon discover that they're beautiful and they're precious but they love to sin just like we do.

[ 24 : 13 ] We are sinful. God is holy. He is completely and totally sinless. That creates a conflict and the only way for sinful people to have peace with God who is holy is through the God-man Jesus Christ.

As verse six says, who gave himself, how did he purchase this peace for us? How did he solve and resolve this conflict? He gave himself as a ransom for us. This is the testimony of the proper time. Ransom refers to a price paid for the release of someone who is being held captive. Here Paul uses it as Jesus did to describe his sacrificial death on the cross by which believers are ransomed, set free from the consequences of their sin.

Matthew 20, 28, Jesus said, even as the son of man, referring to himself, came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Now, notice there that Jesus doesn't say a ransom for all but a ransom for many. This is where we use scripture to interpret scripture.

[ 25 : 30 ] In Matthew 25, verses 31 through 46, Jesus talks about a future day, sovereignly fixed in time by God when he will judge the nations.

He will make a separation at that time. Those whom he has ransomed, those whom he has saved, and those who have rejected him.

And in Matthew 25, 46, Jesus says, of those who have rejected him, these will go away into eternal punishment.

Eternal punishment. But the righteous to eternal life. Many will be saved by God but not all will be saved by God.

So why does Paul say all here in chapter 2? This is where we need to consider the immediate context which is the church in Ephesus.

[ 26 : 36 ] I went through this last week but it's important to cover it again because maybe some of you weren't here or maybe some of you forgot. Going back to chapter 2 verse 1, Paul begins his instruction for the church to pray and to pray for lost people again first of all indicating that prayer for the lost was something that the church in Ephesus was not prioritizing.

And the most likely cause I think of their deprioritizing prayer for the lost was due to the two strands of false teachings in the church. And so one of those strands was the Judaizers who thought that

salvation was a result of God's grace plus human effort or human works.

They basically believed that a person had to first become a Jew which meant keeping Jewish traditions and customs and observing all of the laws before they could become a Christian to be saved.

In this way they made salvation exclusive to a specific group of people. On the other hand you had the people who thought of themselves as intellectual religious elites who believed in something that later became known as Gnosticism.

They believed that salvation was only for the elite for those who were able to locate the inner spark that they said was within a person and then to ascend to the highest levels of this secret mystical knowledge that a person had to go on that journey by themselves.

[ 28 : 17 ] And so again since they thought that this was a person's journey that they had to figure it out on their own they also believed that salvation was for a small specific group of people.

Paul counters both of these false beliefs by stating that we must pray for all people meaning not just specific people but all kinds of people.

This is the way he would intend his original audience to understand all in verse six. Salvation is exclusive and that a person is only saved by God through faith in Jesus Christ but salvation is not exclusive and that is restricted to a specific group specific ethnic group or intellectual group of people who think that they've somehow discovered all of this secret knowledge for themselves and so we pray for all people we share the gospel with all people in the hopes that God will save them by grace through faith in Jesus Christ the one mediator between God and man again the man Christ Jesus who willingly gave himself as a ransom who substituted himself on the cross to atone for our sins according to the divine and eternal plan of God from the beginning

God's plan of salvation has always involved a massive global strategy the Lord told Abraham in Genesis chapter 22 verses 17 through 18 I will surely bless you I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of the heaven and the sand that is in the seashore and your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies and in your offspring there that's looking forward to Jesus shall all the nations of the earth be blessed all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed my voice in John 3 16 notice what Jesus said for God so loved thee the world all people in the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life revelation 7 the apostle John records his heavenly vision of an immense gathering of people standing in front of Jesus the lamb of God's throne joyously celebrating and worshiping him let's read how John describes them in chapter 7 verses 9 through 10 after this I looked and behold a great multitude that no one could number from every nation from all tribes and peoples and languages standing before the throne and before the land clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the land it pleases God when his people his church are proactive in his mission to pray for all people to pray for them in the way that he's told us to pray for them in the hopes that they will be saved through the one mediator Jesus Christ the way the truth and the life now the fourth principle we must proclaim the gospel to those we pray for we must proclaim the gospel to those we pray for verse 7

[ 32 : 06 ] Paul says for this reason I was appointed a preacher and an apostle I'm telling the truth I am not lying a teacher of the Gentiles and faith and truth now beginning of verse 7 the first two words therefore this refers to the great truth that God is our savior and Jesus Christ is our mediator who willingly gave himself as a ransom Paul was appointed he says he was called by God to serve as a preacher the Greek word translated as preacher derives from the Greek verb Caruso which means to herald to proclaim or to speak publicly during Paul's day there was no news media there was no social media we could hope for days like that but they won't come back to us like that I don't think ever again so announcements were made in the city square where people would gather on a regular daily basis to buy to sell to trade because they didn't have any

Walmarts I don't know that we could do without Walmart but the news media probably so Paul so Paul would go wherever people gathered publicly and he would publicly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ he was Jesus' apostle he was his messenger called to proclaim his message specifically to the Gentiles a term which is used to describe anyone who is not a Jew but Paul also proclaimed Christ's message to the Jews when he entered a new city he would often go into the synagogue first and proclaim the gospel to them he was faithful and he was truthful in passing along the gospel message that Jesus had entrusted him with he knew that God is sovereign in salvation he also didn't know whom God would save but that God does save and so it was his life's

ambition to go as far as he could to as many as he could in the hopes that God would save them in 1 Corinthians 9:19 through 23 we hear Paul talk about the lengths that he would go to to obey his mission given to him by the Lord for though I am free from all I have made myself a servant of all that I might win more of them to the Jews I became as a Jew in order to win Jews and he's talking about sharing the gospel with them in the hopes that they'll be saved to those under the law I became!

under the law though not being myself under the law that I might win those under the law to those outside the law I became as one outside of the law not being outside of the law of God but under the law of Christ that I might win those outside of the law outside of the Jewish community to the weak he says I became weak that I might win the weak in fact he says I have become all things to all people that by all means I might save some why does he do it I do it for the sake of the gospel that I may share with them in its blessings we aren't apostles in the sense that Paul was having personally witnessed Jesus his resurrection but we are called to be his heralds to be his messengers to be his ambassadors to proclaim his gospel to all people if

God has saved you he probably used someone who proclaimed his gospel to you when you pray consistently for all people for lost people it changes I think your attitude towards them and your desire to be used by God to be the one to share the gospel with them now let's address a couple of things here some of you might think since God is sovereign he's ordained the end from the beginning Isaiah 46:10 says that very clearly since God is sovereign and he's ordained from the beginning why should I pray now let me let me flip that thought upside down or actually right side up since God is sovereign you should pray amen why pray to a God who isn't sovereign why pray to a [36:58] God who is limited in what they can do and the Bible says that God uses our prayers to change us God uses prayer to communicate with us and in some mysterious way God uses our prayers to accomplish his sovereign will also prayer isn't a one dimensional thing it shouldn't be there should be multiple dimensions to our prayers as Paul states in chapter 2 verse 1 in prayer we have the opportunity to express our worship our adoration our thanksgiving to God in fact you should start with that when you pray we express our gratitude to God that he would save us and that includes our wanting him to use us to be involved in his mission to make disciples and to disciple his disciples the more we understand God's sovereignty the more effective our prayers will be and the more worshipful our prayers will be the next thing I want to address deals with

God's sovereignty and salvation Paul makes it crystal clear in many places not just Paul but Jesus all of the Bible makes it clear in many places that God is sovereign in salvation one of those places is Ephesians 1:3 through 6 blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace which with he has blessed us in the beloved Paul knew Paul wrote about God's sovereignty in salvation but he also knew that those whom

God has been gracious to save are commanded by him to proclaim the gospel that people would be saved look at what he says in Romans 10:14 through 15 how then will they will they is lost people how will they call on him whom they have not believed and how are they to believe in believe in him on whom they have never heard and how are they to hear without someone preaching and how are they to preach unless they are sent as written how beautiful are the feet of those who preach!

these two truths in scripture if you want God's sovereignty and salvation our responsibility to go and to plead with people to be saved and if you try to do that you'll drive yourself crazy and we will pray for you in the mental institution and we will come to you and we will give you food and we will try to take care of you and we will talk with you through these things but here's what's given me solace I'm a one thing I'm a finite just like you I'm a finite being and if I could fully wrap my mind around everything about God 11:33 through 36 oh the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God how unsearchable are his judgments how inscrutable his ways for who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid for from him and through him and to him are all things and this is where we end to forever amen I'm not God again if I could wrap my mind around all that God is and all that God does he wouldn't be God but what I do know and what he's revealed to us in his word is that God commands us to pray for all people to go to all people and to proclaim the gospel to them and the results are up to him because no matter what happens he gets all the glory Charles Spurgeon is one of my heroes

he preached about God's sovereignty and salvation but that knowledge didn't lead him to the un-Christian thought that evangelism and missions are then unnecessary and I love what he said to his church I want to share with you what he said to them if sinners be damned at least let them leap to hell over our dead bodies and if they perish let them perish with our arms wrapped around their knees imploring them to stay he says if hell must be filled let it be filled with the teeth of our exertions and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for since

[ 42 : 32 ] God is sovereign we pray and since God is sovereign we proclaim the good news to all people in the hopes that they will be saved and so how do we adjust our lives to this it's the same as last week we must plan to pray for lost people and share the gospel with them write their names down pray for them but brother sister don't let that be the end of what you do you pray for them and as you pray for their salvation you pray Lord give me that opportunity open my eyes to see that opportunity to make that opportunity to be the one that you proclaim the gospel through to them in the hopes that they'll be saved I'm going have TJ come up we began with testimony and brother TJ would you please come up here and end our time together with your testimony thank you

Mike my name is TJ and I am a child of God when Pastor Mike approached me and asked me to share how the prayers of others had led to my salvation my mind went back to five years ago a moment in time when my life was on a path of destruction and addiction that would tear my family apart a year prior to this from the outside looking in you would have said that I had it all beautiful family the bills were paid and a roof over our heads we even regularly attended church and volunteered but in the closet behind closed doors away from the sight of everyone was hiding an addiction that had been hidden for years this would go on until I was caught on more than one occasion apologizing and lying saying I would quit this would continue off and on for three years worsening every time I turned into a liar a master manipulator and a thief anger and selfishness would control my steps as this would continue to the point where my wife could simply not take it anymore our marriage had crumbled our family was fractured hearts were broken and hardened by my actions and life choices and now of course after losing everything

I cried out to God it was a reactionary defensive shallow prayer I said in the hopes of winning my family back but this was short lived and it was too late to do what I should have done years before the next eight months would see my life hit absolute rock bottom losing everything to the grips of sin a life out of control under the weight of cocaine and opioid addiction all while this was happening there was a mother and a family and a church countless others praying and interceding for me lifting up my children and my wife in prayer praying for healing praying for a miracle praying for the salvation of my soul I'm sure at times it was tough to continue to pray as they could see my life unraveling day by day but this did not stop them or discourage them they continued to pray faithfully and consistently day after day after day trusting in the

Lord our prayers began to be answered as the Lord opened a door a door to a ranch in southern Oklahoma called adult and teen challenge where I would find myself at the end of my road at the end of my road but at the beginning of a new one year long Christ centered recovery program where the Lord would transform my life prayers of family and friends were being answered one day at a time as the Lord began to break away my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh I was confronted with the gospel every day the hard truth of the simple gospel after months of sobriety and a clear mind the reality and the gravity of my sin and the life that I had been living were realized the Lord had opened my eyes the eyes of my heart and day by day revealing the truth of the scripture day by day answering the prayers of my family and the members of this church the prayers of my family and the members of this church had led me to a place where the Lord would make me new a place where the Lord would transform me into a father for my children a place where the Lord would save my soul from a life of sin and addiction a life transformed and a life made new by the power of the cross through the blood of Christ for the glory of God the old life was washed away and the new life began all glory be to Christ and we know that 2nd Corinthians 5 17 tells us that if anyone be in Christ the old is gone the new has come my name is TJ and I am a child of God amen pray proclaim let's pray

[ 48 : 27 ] God what a what a great day to be in your house to worship you sing about how awesome you are how glorious you are how great you are how gracious you are how loving you are Lord we're undeserving of all that you've given us in Christ Lord we're thankful thankful for the salvation that you've been blessed gracious enough to give to us for the new life that we have in Jesus Christ Lord grateful for the testimonies that we've heard this morning from Reed and TJ Lord

just to be reminded of how good you are to include us in your mission how great it is Lord to see you bring someone from sin to salvation from darkness to light from death to eternal life in

Jesus Christ and Lord we pray that that there would be even more of those stories that we get to hear those those the miracle of salvation that you do Lord as we I pray would pray more than we've prayed before that we would pray more for the lost and that Lord in praying for them Holy Spirit we pray that you would help us to see that we're the one we're the one whom you have put in their life to share your gospel to proclaim it Lord in the hopes that they'll be saved Lord we know the results are yours and you receive the glory no matter what Lord I pray that we would seek to do what pleases you and that in pleasing you Lord you would be honored and you would be glorified and exalted even more and more in our lives and in this place we ask these things in Jesus name amen