

If MY People

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Date: 25 February 2024

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[0 : 00] Director of missions, what is that? Well, that's a group of guys that we get together in a regional thing.

! We're kind of the boots on the ground for Southern Baptist here in the Washington, Osage, and we also have churches in No Water County. There are 37 churches that I try to work with. It's like herding cats. You know, I've always said, put two Baptists in a room, you get three opinions. It's worse. I mean, it's just crazy. And one of the things I do is coordinate the work. We have a free clinic, Hope Clinic, that you know about. That's our clinic. We have a 25-year-old partnership with the country of Malawi, which is in Africa.

We have planted hundreds of churches over there, seen thousands. I'm not doing the Billy Graham here. I've seen thousands of people actually come to know the Lord. The first week, the first time I went was back in 1998 when I was pastor at Eastern Heights.

And I went with our then-director of missions and another pastor. And that weekend, we saw over 600 people come to know Christ. It is one of those places where the Holy Spirit is just going crazy in the streets. I mean, you just walk into any hut, you walk into any village, and you share with them the gospel.

[1 : 26] And you say, would you like to know the Lord as your Savior? And they say, well, of course. I mean, people are like, we've never heard this before. And of course, this is good news, and we want to be a part of it. Now, it's not like that here, but it is like that there.

And that's why we still have that partnership with those churches there. We also have a wonderful thing down at Falls Creek. Our kids are going to Falls Creek. They stay in our cabin. That's the last year for the cabin that we have at Falls Creek now.

It's 50 years old. It has fallen off of the foundation. It's wonderful. And the kids know that because every time it rains, the water runs right through the cabin.

It's had its due. But the good part about that, over the last 50 years, we've seen what we have estimated between 3,500 and 5,000 teenagers come to know the Lord in that cabin.

Many, many people, many, many young men and ladies have surrendered to preach and to be missionaries during that time. So we're building a new one. And I hate to say this, but we need your money, okay? No, we don't.

[2 : 35] We have raised about \$200,000 over the last couple of years for that cabin. It's going to be about a \$700,000 cabin. We have some money that we're going to be contributing to it, but our goal is \$250,000.

If you've got about \$48,000, \$49,000 sitting around, if you just want to make out a check today, I'll take it on the way out. But I'll be at the door. No, I'm kidding. You give what God would have you to give.

That's a great investment in the lives of teenagers who are going to give their life to Christ. It's almost a guarantee that kids are going to be, teenagers, students are going to give their life to Christ when they go to Falls Creek.

It was at Falls Creek where I was saved. It was at Falls Creek where I was called to preach. It was at Falls Creek where I asked Cindy to marry me. And she, believe it or not, she said yes. It was amazing, but I finally talked her into it.

But it's just a great place, and you know that place if you've ever been there. And so that's why we've invested and are going to invest in a new place for our teenagers and others to go down at Falls Creek, just to let you know that.

[3 : 36] So part of the work I do is helping churches like yours. Now, six or seven years ago when we first came, we were looking for a church. And you say, well, you surely went over to Eastern

Heights.

And I did. I didn't know a soul there. We were gone for 20 years, and we didn't know anybody. They either moved off or died or gone or something. And we started visiting around different churches. And we came here, and on the Sunday we came, there was 80 people here. Now, look around you. There's more than 80 people here today.

But there was something going on, and Mike got up to preach, and we sang the music. Mike got up to preach, and I told Cindy when we left, that's where we're going. Why did I say that? Because I could tell God's hand was on this place. And I could tell that God was getting ready to do something great among you. And he's not stopped yet, by the way. Maybe just because you get to a certain point doesn't mean he stopped.

[4 : 36] He's going to continue to do that. Nobody ever sat in those pews where you guys are sitting. Nobody ever. And especially that nobody went over there. They didn't go over there because we didn't need to. We were all right here.

But God began to grow us, and God began to do great things here in this church. And it is our privilege to be a part of this great body of Christ.

Now, when we're here, and not here a lot, I have to go preach at other churches and be in different places. But it is a privilege. And I love your pastor, our pastor. Our pastor is our moderator at our association.

And he and I work together to keep things going over there. And he's just a great man of God. Can you say amen? Amen. And here's the thing. I have people call me and say, well, hey, I'd like to recommend Mike to this church and that church.

And I say, no. You stay away from me, man. I'm not your agent. But although I could get 10%.

[5 : 34] Let's think about that. No, I'm kidding. We love him and his family. And it is a pleasure to be a part of this body.

Well, let me turn you to 2 Chronicles. It's in the Old Testament. 2 Chronicles 7, chapter 7, verse 10 through 14 is our text for today.

If you have that copy of your Bible, if you don't have one, as Pastor always said, there's one in the pew. You can take that home with you today as a gift from our church. Let's start reading there at verse 11, okay?

Could we stand as we read the Word of God together? Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house.

And all that Solomon had planned to do in the house of the Lord and in his own house he successfully accomplished. Then the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him, I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice.

[6 : 39] When I shut up the heavens that there is no rain or command the locusts to devour the land or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

May the Lord bless the reading of his word. You can be seated. Familiar passage to most of you. It's even been set to music and has been sung many, many times in different places.

But I don't believe that we've really grasped hold of that. What I want to do today is to lift some things out of the scripture because here's the main idea of the scripture today.

God is calling his people. God is calling his people to return to him. Folks, we are in a situation here in our culture and around the world where it seems that everything that is true or has been true over the last 500 years is no longer true.

We see a group of people who have decided that for one reason or the other that they're going to identify as a certain group or a certain person or a certain gender.

[8 : 03] And they say it's my truth. One of the things that really gets to me is when people start talking about the universe. The universe has told me this or the universe has told me that.

Well, I got news for you today. If you know Christ and he's in your life, you don't pray to the universe. You pray to the God that created the universe. It is God and God alone that we pray to. But so we're in a mess. When this passage was written, Solomon had just finished building the wonderful temple that he built.

It's around 957 BC, about a thousand years before Christ comes upon this earth, a millennium before that happens.

The construction had gone on. They had done so many different offerings and sacrifices. Solomon had put 112 tons of gold inside of the building itself and in the walls.

[9 : 09] There were encrusted with all kinds of jewels. Onyx was a big thing. And they put that in there. He put 260 tons of silver into this place and into the different things that were around, the furnishings and everything.

And so what we have on this date is \$670 million worth of gold and \$171 million worth of silver in one building.

And I think a \$700,000 false creek cabin is too high. Wow. This place was incredible. Not only that, Solomon himself started to sacrifice it.

And he literally sacrificed 22,000 oxen or cattle. 22,000. That's more than the Drummonds have, by the way.

Okay. 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats. For two weeks, they did that. Someone estimated, in order to do just Solomon's sacrifice, they would have had to kill or to sacrifice an animal every three seconds.

[10 : 19] It was amazing what was going on there. How they honored the Lord with all the gold and all the silver and all the different things that were in the building itself.

Not only that, you can go back and all the construction. This construction was crazy. They had a celebration that kept on going on and going on and going on. Isn't it amazing how we get attached to buildings?

Things. Recently, the First Baptist Church of Copan, you may know or may not know, it was struck by lightning back in September and burned.

And so the pastor did something very, very smart. Last week, he gathered all the people who had been members of that church for all those years together. And on a Saturday afternoon, they stood out in front of that burned out building and prayed.

I know Willard and you guys were there. And prayed and said, oh, this was a great place. I remember my mother's, you know, funeral was there. I got married there.

[11 : 21] We get attached to buildings. But listen to me. My message today is not about a building. Let me just put your mind at ease. We're not going to talk about how much gold and silver we need to put in the wallpaper, you know, when we redo that.

I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about today is not a building. But what I want to talk to you about today is a place where you know that God dwells. Where you understand God dwells in this place.

Because the Bible says that at night, that night, after they had done all the dedication, and after God said, yes, I'm going to consume all of the sacrifice, and yes, I'm going to dwell here in this place, the Lord appears to Solomon probably in a dream, maybe, but at night.

And he says these words that we're very familiar with. He says here, if my people.

You see, God is calling us to come back to him. He's calling us to an identity when we do that. God is calling us to an identity.

[12 : 32] That's the first point I want to just pull out of this today. For he says, my people who are called after my name. These people who are mine.

Now, please understand he's not addressing the pagan. He's not addressing anybody in our present world. We'd say, well, if the government would just do, if we just get the right president, if we would just get all those goobers up there, you know, in Washington, D.C.

to just get together again and do what they're supposed to do and just drain that swamp. Boy, we'll just be, everything will be just great. No, no, no, no, no. Folks, listen, the message today is not about our government.

It's not about what you're hearing on Fox News or any other news. It's about what God wants to do among his people. God is calling his people to come back to him.

If you think it's bad now, just wait around a little bit. Y'all better hold on between now and November because it's going to be crazy around here. And we better understand that it's not about somebody else coming to help us or some other group of people or some other, somebody we elect to be president that's going to do this.

[13 : 44] No, it is about us. It's about my people. We're talking about a sovereign God who denotes in this one verse.

He says, if my people who are called by my name, he denotes ownership. Did you know that the sovereign God of the universe, not the universe, but the God of the universe owns you. When you signed up for this thing called Christianity, you gave up your life and you said, I'm going to follow after Christ. How do I know that? Jesus said, if any man wants to come after me, what? Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow after me. If you deny yourself. See, the world says, oh, just follow your heart. Now, your heart is, if your heart is transformed, it's wonderful. Go ahead and follow your heart. But if your heart is not transformed, don't follow your heart. Your heart's wicked. Go follow your dreams. Go do those things. You just have your own special truth. [14 : 47] No. When you give your life to Christ, when you become a follower of Jesus, you deny yourself, deny yourself, deny yourself. Because the Bible says, if those of you who will deny yourself and take up your cross, when?

Daily and come follow after me. Now, some of you know that Cindy and I are help on Wednesday nights at Awanas.

And we have the little dudes, and they're called the Puggles. These are two, three, and one four-year-old who, by the time we're finished in that hour and a half, we go home and sit in the chair and go to sleep.

Because they have worn it. I know why God gives you youngins your youngins, okay? Because if you gave them to me, I'd just kill them and tell God they died.

You know, I don't know. Anyway, I've got a deacon's kid. We've got one of our pastor's kids. We've got another kid.

[15 : 58] And then we've got Jody and Jody's granddaughter. Granddaughter. Anyway. But guess what? Guess what?

The number, what's the most spoken word at Puggles on Wednesday night? What is the number? Somebody just guess. What? Huh? No.

No. That's a close second. Somebody said it. Mine. Mine. And it's not said mine. It's mine. Mine. You get somebody out there.

They got the plastic pizza. You know. And they got a hold of it. And it's like, no. Mine. One of the little girls. I won't mention her name, but her initials are Carson.

She will. Anyway. She will take that. She'll get. Now, I've been to some deacon's meetings where that happened.

[16 : 57] But, you know. It just kept on going. You know. She gets over it real quick. And then she goes on to something else. Everybody does that. Everybody says mine except for Luke. He just growls.

Something doesn't go. He's like. I don't know where he got that from. But anyway. It is an adventure. We have had some God moments in there. I'm telling you.

We have. I mean, the Lord has done some great things. They pick up on these songs. There's so much learning that goes on. There's so much wonderful things. There's so many God moments. And, you know.

And then we've had some come to Jesus moments, too. But anyway. It's been a wonderful, wonderful thing. Cindy and I love it. But mine is the number one word.

And it's got worse lately. I don't know what that's about. But anyway. It's got worse. Do you know what the number one word among American Christians are today?

[17 : 56] Mine. Mine. My family. Whoa. My kids.

Uh-oh. My baby. My grandkids. My church. My pastor. My choir. My home.

My house. My way of doing things. My house. So when you're a puggle. When you were a puggle back in those days.

You said mine. And you keep on saying it. But hear me. God defines and identifies who you are today. If you're struggling with your identity.

Maybe you identify as a. You're a man. You're identifying as a woman. Or maybe you're a woman. You're identifying as a man. Or maybe you identify as a cat. Or a billy goat.

[18 : 51] I don't. You can identify about a lot of things. But here's your identity. Listen. When you make the step to God.

You become his. God. It's his. You're his. God. If my people.

Who are called by. My name. They are my. John MacArthur once said. We are not. Created. Equal.

We are created. Unique. Now some of you are more unique than others. You have to say that. But you understand what I'm saying. We are not. I'm not against the Constitution.

Don't hear me what I'm not saying. I'm saying we are unique individuals that God has created for a purpose on this earth. And you belong to him.

[19 : 47] Look at 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 9 and 10. You are a chosen race. A royal priesthood.

A holy nation. A people from his own possession. That you may proclaim the excellencies of him.

Who called you out of darkness into marvelous lights.

Once you were not a people. But now you are whose? God's people. Once you had not received mercy. But now you have received mercy.

Let me remind you dear friends. Dear loved ones. Dear fellow church members. Dear fellow Christians. You belong to God.

And you wear him upon yourself. You are branded with who he is. In your heart. God's name is stamped upon your life. God's name is stamped upon your name.

[20 : 48] We must wear the brand. We must wear the name. We must wear who he is. In our lives. We must say. I am a child of God.

I'm not somebody out here wandering around. Trying to figure out what I'm doing next. I am God's child. If my people who are called. After my name.

Have you ever researched your own name? What it means? Now a lot of our Native Americans friends. Who have these wonderful names back in the day.

Like I wish my name was sometimes was Crazy Horse. Don't you? Crazy Horse Hale. Or how about Sitting Bull? Or Red Cloud.

Or Geronimo. Or even Wilma Mankiller. Ha ha ha. You know. I researched my name one time. And Monty is short for Montague.

[21 : 51] Now that's not in my case. But that's where the origin of it came. It means mountain. Oh that's pretty cool. Mountain. Mountain. You know what hail means?

In the hall. Well my name literally means mountain in the hall. No sense at all. But when people. When God looks at me. He doesn't see Monty Hale. He sees me. He sees him. It is branded on his. I have this little sweater that I wear sometimes. That says Oklahoma Baptist.

Some of y'all have it too. Because we went to the convention. And we got free sweaters. And so it says Oklahoma Baptist. I was over at Aldi the other day. And said something to somebody about something.

You know I'm always talking about. Talking to strangers about. Drive Cindy crazy. But anyway. I'm always talking to somebody about. I said something to somebody. And they said something back to me. And then they saw my brand.

[22 : 48] And they went oh. It's amazing to me. When I'm in an airplane. Or traveling together. And we'll start talking with somebody with me. And they'll say well. How's things going?

I don't know. Everything's fine. And blah blah blah. We start talking about. And me and especially. They say well what do you do for a living? And I think okay. The end of the conversation is getting ready to happen.

As soon as I tell them that I'm a director of missions. They say what is that? And I say I don't know. And then they. And then they say well what does that mean? And I tell them I work with Baptist churches. And when I say the word Baptist and churches.

It's over. I wear that name proudly when I wear that sweater. But at the same time. We have to know that every one of us wear a brand upon our lives.

And it is the brand of God the Father himself. Now some of us are not acting like that. But we do. And people look at you.

[23 : 42] I'm sorry but people are looking at you. Your neighbors are watching to see what you do. On Sunday morning. Whether you leave or not. Or whether it's going on. Or how you're doing things around your house. Or how you're hollering at your kids.

Or whatever you're doing. They're watching you. And we have to come to the place. And I'm talking to the people of God today. If you're not a person of God today. I'm not talking to you right now.

Well in just a minute. But listen. We have to come to the place where we say I wear God's brand. If my people called by my name. Will do what? It's secondly.

There's a call to identity. And then secondly. There's a call to action. A call to action. What is the action that we're to do? If my people who are called by my name.

Will do what? Humble yourselves. And pray. Back in the middle ages. The church was struggling. [24 : 39] And they were trying to look for the unique part of who they were. Well there were a lot of people. The Jews had a certain way to pray. And they would pray with standing many times with their hands up.

And sometimes they would walk back and forth. You've probably seen that at one time or another. And the men especially. Those who are followers of Islam of course. Would go before the Lord in their places.

And they would get on the ground. And take their shoes off. And they would get on the ground. And they would put their head to the floor. And they would do their own posture prayer.

Prayer. Really the Christian church at the time really didn't have one. And so back in the middle ages. There came a point where. They said we need to find a way to signify.

That we're praying to God. And so what they adopted was this. This praying hands. Have you seen the praying hands? Go down to Oral Roberts. And you'll see those praying hands there.

[25 : 41] And they took the praying hands. Because the feudal lords. When a servant would go to the Lord. They would go to him. And they would stand before him to request something.

Food or a new roof for their hut. Or whatever it may be. These servants would. And they'd go before the feudal lords. And they'd put their hands just like this. And then they would get on their knees.

And they would go before the feudal Lord. And with their hands lifted to him like this. And with their head bowed. They would ask for their request. And the feudal Lord would come to him.

Or that person. And they would take their hands. And put them around their praying hands. And they would say. I grant you this request. So it is true for us.

Now pray that I can get up. Okay. We have a situation. Where we must come with humility to God.

[26 : 42] If you will humble yourself. Heard somebody say the other day. I'm the most humble person I know. We are driven to humility by knowing that he has chosen us.

You see. Humility crawls out of pride. And comes before the Lord your God. And there you kneel before him in humility.

And you say. It is you and you alone. We are driven to humility by just knowing that he has chosen us.

Did you know that we cannot be humble if you're prideful? Pride is the number one thing that we struggle against. That's why we keep on saying me, mine, my.

And try to take ownership of things that are not ours to begin with. And so pride comes to the point even in these days where we have found that many, many people out of their pride has become autonomous.

[27 : 51] They are so self-centered and so self-directed. And they're so self about who they are. That instead of coming before a God and humbling themselves before a God who loves and cares for them.

And kneeling before them with the praying hands. They have decided that they are simply an autonomous individual. And therefore they can do whatever they want whenever they want to do it.

I heard the story not too long ago of a man who was pulled over by a highway patrolman. He was going 95 in a 65 mile an hour. Which is probably not very fast to tell you the truth.

I've been on turn or turnpike. It's crazy. But anyway. And he was pulled over. And the guy, the policeman said, highway patrolman said, I guess you know why I pulled you over.

He said, well, not really. He said, well, you're going 95 in a 65 mile an hour zone. And that's 30 miles over the speed limit. That's just too fast. He said, well, I don't really care. He said, excuse me?

[28 : 53] He said, yes, I don't really care because I'm an autonomous person. I'm a traveler of the earth. Well, do you have a driver's license? No, I don't need a driver's license.

I'm a traveler of the earth. I'm an autonomous individual. I don't need a driver's license. And I can go as fast as I simply want to. You may say, well, that's ridiculous. But listen, that's where we are.

We're living in a culture that it says, I'll do whatever I want to do. My truth is the truth. I'll go wherever I want to go. I'll go as fast as I want to get there.

I'll do whatever I want to do because I'm an autonomous individual. That, my friend, is pride. Over the last few years, through some other things that happened in my life, I've trained our pastors in different things.

And one of the things I tell them is that I always drive the speed limit. And I do. I go to whatever the speed limit is, I'll drive the speed limit.

[29 : 57] And, boy, I bragged about that and telling everybody about how I drive the speed limit and how wonderful I am to have a ticket. And it's just so wonderful. I never look up in my rearview mirror thinking I'm, you know, going too fast.

I never think about that until one day about a year ago. I looked in my rearview mirror, and there were some blue lights blinking at me. And I thought, what does this guy want?

I guess he wants me to get over. And so I got over, and I got over into the turning lane. I was making a left-hand turn. So I got over into the turning lane because he wants to get by me, you know. Uh-uh. He was after me.

And so I turned and went into where I was going to make the turn anyway, and he comes in behind me, and he said, Sir, what do you do when you see blue lights in your rearview mirror?

And I said, I thought, well, don't you know? I mean, you know, why are you asking me? I said, well, you pull over. He said, no, you pull to the right. And I was pulling to the left.

[31 : 03] And he proceeded to say, I need your driver's license and all that. I said, sure, and gave it all to him. And I kept my hands on the steering wheel, you know, and all that kind of thing that I've seen in TV and all that. And so he went back, and he came back.

He said, I'm going to give you a ticket. I said, what for? Because when you came around the corner there at No Watt and 75, you went into the wrong lane. You were supposed to go into the lane next to you, and you went into the lane.

I said, well, I was making a left-hand turn. He said, it doesn't matter. You've got to go in that other lane. I thought, what I wanted to say, that's ridiculous. I've seen 775 people do that in the last six months. You've got to be kidding me.

And so I got it. I said, okay. I took the ticket, and I thought, well, that guy's just trying to make his quota. You know, he's an idiot. I started calling him all kinds of names I shouldn't have called him. And I said, well, God bless him.

He blessed his heart, which you know what that means. And I was saying all kinds of things. And then I got the ticket. I went home, and I couldn't come to the court because I was sure going to argue it. How dare you stop me?

[32 : 02] I drive the speed limit. How dare you? Well, I couldn't go that day. So I thought, okay, well, I'll just pay it, you know. And I called up City Hall, and I said, how much is that ticket?

\$165. I about went, Cindy will tell you, I about went cuckoo. \$165 for something that I didn't do? How dare them? How dare he do that to me? I'm a traveler. I'm an autonomous. Wait, wait, hold it, hold it, hold it. Wait a minute. I'm under the law, too. And boy, was my pride of driving the speed limit taken down.

So humble themselves and pray. Secondly, seek my face. Seek my face. What does that mean? Seek the presence of God. Have you ever just come to the point in your life where you just want to keep on seeking God's presence?

You want to seek him over and over and over again. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, climb out of their pride, bow before me, and pray, and seek my face.

[33 : 20] In Exodus 33, Moses goes up to the mountain to speak to God. And he says to God, God, I want to see you.

Can I just see you? And God says, no, you can't see me because nobody's seen me and lived. You can't do it. I'll let you see my back. I'll let you see my back. And I'll tell you what. I'll pass by, and there's a little cave right there, a little clef in the rock.

And I'll put my hand over that. And when I pass by, maybe you can see this, the little bit of my backside here where you can kind of see where I passed by.

Isn't it amazing? And he did. And as a result, when Moses came down off the mountain, he had to wear a veil. The people said, whoa, whoa, Moses.

It's too much. You got to wear a veil. Did you know, dear beloved, listen to me. We can come to the place where we begin to seek God in such a way that we can see him fully because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

[34 : 23] We can come before a God into his throne room. I don't mean stomping in there and saying, oh, if we could just do this or we could just do that or I could just, this is my daddy. I can do whatever I want to do. Get out of my, no, that's self-pride again.

I'm talking about going into the throne room of God and seeking, seeking him, seeking who he is. What's the last time you just, you just wanted in your own soul and in your own being to seek after

the Lord?

I don't mean go to church and I don't mean to take all the trappings of church and all that. I'm not talking about that at all. I'm talking about seeking after God. Well, I spend my first 10 minutes a day in Bible study.

Wonderful. I'm not talking about that necessarily. I'm talking about seeking God and who he really is. It's a journey. It's a journey of sanctification when you're going closer and closer and closer to God.

You're seeking his face. And turn from your wicked ways. Now, a lot of us will say, I've got the praying down. I prayed that prayer back in those days and asked Jesus to come into my heart. [35 : 33] And yeah, I'm humbled. I'd humbled myself and I did that. And well, I haven't really been seeking his face a whole lot and my ways are still not all that great.

You know what the word here is? Repentance. A lot of us think that we can get away with doing things and we can do things and, you know, God's just working on me.

And I can just go and slither back into that old sin that I have. And I can just be there and be there and be there. But no, listen, God wants us to repent.

If my people who are called by my name, when all this tragedy happens, when everything's a mess, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and repent.

And turn away from your wicked ways. I'm not talking about those people out there. I'm talking about the people in the things of God. God's people.

[36 : 39] You see, there's still repentance is still available to you today. You say, oh, no, I've gone too far. I've wandered off into this far off land. I can't do that. I've been there too long. No, no, no. That's not true at all. Repentance is still, you know what repentance is?

Repentance is going one way in your life. And saying, I'm walking after this. And then turning around and going another way. It is not about being sorry. You have all these celebrities who's done something terrible.

And they get up in the front of the world and say, well, I'm sorry I did that. And all is forgiven. You know, well, you can't judge people. You got to. No, no, no. That's not what it is at all. Repentance is saying, I'm walking this way.

I'm going this direction. But I'm not going that direction any longer. I'm going this way. And the way that I'm going is to follow after God and to follow after Jesus Christ.

If my people who are called by my name, God is calling you. God is calling you to action. Lastly, God is a call of response to respond.

[37 : 42] This is God's part. You see, this is an if-then proposition. If you do this, then I will do this.

If God's people will do these things, listen to what God will do. Listen, it's so wonderful. I will hear. I will hear.

We're not talking about just your dad or your friend or your spouse or your neighbor. We're talking about God, the God of the universe, the God that spoke everything that is into existence, will hear you.

God's people, they will hear. He will hear God's people. He will hear what's going on. Have you ever prayed and thought, man, my prayers are not getting above that popcorn ceiling up there.

It's just not getting anywhere. God's not listening to me because he's surely not answering the prayer the way I want him to. He's not answering my prayer, my way, my things.

[38 : 47] Oh, we're back to the first point, aren't we? Oh, my goodness. Well, let me just start over. No, I won't do that. But we get to that point and we say, oh, God, if you just hear me.

Listen, if you will do the things I've just talked about, if you'll turn from your wicked ways, if you'll go to the place where God wants you to go, then God will hear from heaven.

And he will also forgive. He will forgive your sin. Now, along with that, and please hear me as I look at the Bible, when God forgives, he forgets.

If he's forgiven you of your sin, he's forgot it. You see, sometimes we dig up the old stuff and we get down in the basement and we start digging holes and we think, oh, if I could just get, I buried this thing down here somewhere.

Let me just dig this thing up and bring it back up to God. No, God says, no, what are you talking about? God, just please forgive me of the sin I committed back in 19 whatever or 20 years ago or last week or whatever.

[39 : 46] And you've already asked God to forgive you. He's forgot it. It's over. You know, you can move on. We don't move on. See, he forgives.

God forgives. That's what makes him God. Many of you have said, well, I may forgive, but I'm not forgetting. That's not the spirit of God.

Spirit of God forgets and moves on and does what you're supposed to do. And you're back into his presence once again.

And then last, he will heal their land. Beloved, do we need a healing today? Do we need a land that is healed of the things that are going on today?

And it starts with you. Your people. You're his people. It starts with us. And what I've noticed is that a lot of times healing, as I was sick last week, took me another few days to get healed.

[40 : 56] Sometimes it takes time. Sometimes it's not instantaneous. You think, well, God, how come you haven't healed me of this? And God says, well, I'm doing it.

I'm in the process. You're being healed. You're healed more today than you were last week. You're being healed. Well, what's all this about?

Why did I bring all this up? Friends, we need a healing from God that only he can provide. And if God's people who are called by his name will humble ourselves and pray, seek his face and turn from our wicked ways, the healing will happen.

It's a guarantee. It's a promise. Now I'm going to ask us just to bow our heads and close our eyes for just a moment.

Pastor and others will be here at the front in just a minute. There's some pew benches up here. I'm going to open those up as an altar to the Lord. I have an altar call today. I believe there's somebody here today who's never trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

[42 : 19] He's chosen you. He's revealed that he has chosen you. You have to respond to him. You see, there's a response. God's response is that I'm going to hear you.

I'm going to come to the place where I know that I can heal you. He can heal you of your sin-sick life today.

My question today is will you give him? Will you surrender your life to him? Others are here today and you're looking for everything else.

And you have claimed everything as your own. My way of doing things. My family. My this. My that. And it's all God's.

So I wonder today in this altar that you might come in a very public way. And it'll take some courage. And come before the Lord and say, Lord, here it is.

[43 : 24] And go away from this altar knowing that you have given him your all. Others here today who may want or need to join the church.

You want to talk to somebody about that. You certainly can do that. The altar is open today. Maybe you need to pray for a loved one who you know is wayward and needs to come back to God.

Maybe you just need to come and pray for our nation. And offer our nation up to the Lord. Whatever the case may be. It's an altar call time. It's time to respond.

Would you do that? Would you do it? Father God, thank you so much. For this word from your heart. Thank you that you own us today. Thank you, dear God, that we can come before you as your people.

And that we can respond to your word. We pray that our response will be one that you'll be pleased with. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

[44 : 23] Amen. Amen. I'll see you next time.