

# The Thrill of Obedience

by Francis Chan

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*Francis Chan's sermon highlights the thrill of obedience to God's call and the necessity of taking action in faith.*

**Duration:** 52:11

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19, Luke 15:7, James 1:22

**Topics:** "Repentance", "Surrender"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and surrendering to God, highlighting the need to take action and make a change in our lives. It shares powerful stories of transformation and the impact of sin, urging listeners to not walk away sad but to have a 'Zacchaeus moment' where they choose to turn to God and experience His presence and peace.

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## Transcript

I Think one of the things that I love and appreciate about Francis is just a man that's passionate about not only knowing Jesus But really desiring to live out Jesus in his life. And so this morning, I'm excited to have him speak But what I'd like to do is I just love to pray together with us Let's beg God to do a work through him. But in our hearts, we don't want to be the same people as when we came in So could we pray together before we ever speak father? It's not just about gathering together.

It's not just about singing songs We believe that the Bible that we're about to open inside of it has a message that is powerful that your spirit wants to communicate to us that he's been communicating for 2,000 years and so I just would even ask this morning that as Francis preaches that Father he would speak on your behalf and call us to to what it is that that you desire us to be and to live And so just empower him this morning allow him to be able to to really speak on your behalf and then father on our end All of us are coming in from different things and our hearts just need to be adjusted We need to be changed. And so would you do a work in us? Would your spirit be powerful in that way? We beg you and so Father this is your moment Do your work in your precious name we pray. Amen.

Amen This is good, I I was like bawling during the first service like a little girl I just it was it was it's it's weird. I mean things are so good in my life right now But walking in here this morning and seeing familiar faces It wasn't ready for it It was such a shock and I and I realized what it was right as we started to worship as it It feels so good to walk into a place and be loved And And you realize it no because we have awesome things are going up in San Francisco And and for those who don't know me I was a pastor of this church for for 16 years and then the last year and a half been up in San Francisco just believing the

Lord wanted me to go to a difficult place and San Francisco is difficult and and go to a place that where most people reject Jesus pretty adamantly vehemently and And try to be a light there and it's good and seeing great things happen but it was so nice to walk into a room and actually have support and People that care about you and and you almost forget You almost forget what that feels like I mean, it's so good to be on a mission and to go after something but one of my kids said the other day, you know, it's weird to be in a place where no one really cares about you and where we're used to Being loved and it's a weird thing and it made me think you know between services I I remember how when missionaries would come back They would tell me how Insecure they would feel coming back to cornerstone. They say it's weird because we've been away for like a year You know we're going after this thing and trying to meet these people and Pursuing this whole new life and the whole time you're wondering when I go home.

Will anyone even remember me? And and so it was weird because this morning it was just that awkward thing, you know Todd and I were praying earlier this morning and and I could what's weird because I'm kind of not the pastor there anymore I don't know who I am or what I do and you know Who's gonna remember me who's new and all these new faces and that sense in which you've lost home and and I During between services. I'm like, this is what all those missionaries were talking about to such a greater degree And man and I know, you know, I've got so many people that care about me this or that but it made me think about the people that have left here to go out and be missionaries and and How I just got a little glimpse of what they go through and just beg you Please if you think of people that have left cornerstone to go and do God's work Somewhere else in this world man do everything you can to support them right to them when they come back Make them feel like gold Because it's it's pretty crazy. You get excited about the mission But it's so nice to come back somewhere where people actually know you and you've got a history with them and there's Relationship and I see so many of you that I I baptized you.

I saw your kids being born I didn't watch but you know, I always you know, but you know, it's like I married you, you know we've been through some tough times together and that history you just can't repeat that and You know as I'm getting settled in in San Francisco I was just out there thinking but I don't think this could ever happen again in my lifetime You know what what we had the the relationship in those years and you start over and you go on these callings from God But it's just it's it's just it was special being back in this room and and seeing your faces again But life for me, like I said, I don't know that I've ever had this much peace about my life. The family's great It's really weird last week, you know, I'm teaching Rachel how to drive and I'm teaching my youngest how to walk You know Not many fathers can say that, you know, I've got a 16 year old and a one-year-old My boy Zeke is six now and he's got four sisters So we go out and hit each other and you know, just do guys stuff. It's been good A lot of you guys remember mercy my 12 year old daughter She still hasn't sinned So that's good news we almost got her to swear but She's been great.

Ellie's same old goofy Ellie Rachel like I said turned 16 she released an album earlier this year and she and I've been touring around a little bit where she sings and I teach and It's it's it's pretty pretty crazy Man things are just really good and then Lisa who many of you love and miss and rightly So has just been an absolute gem She she just she's been filming a Bible study series for women that's getting released this fall She's just been Just an amazing support discipling all sorts of women out there with crazy needs and Puts up with a husband that just you never know what's gonna happen next. It's like hey, yeah, I found this homeless lady and Sorry, if I bring her back, you know, it's just All right, you trust her. I don't not really, you know, but I think we're supposed to Okay It's just it's just life, you know and and and I couldn't be more excited about where she is with the Lord and how she's Ministering to people and caring for people and

and just living out what she says she believes But like I said, there's just been so much peace and I I think of that passage in in first John When I think of you guys in first John chapter 1 Where where John's kind of almost beside himself.

He's trying to explain Jesus and he's saying this is this is why I'm writing to you He goes because I saw him I touched him and and then in verse 3 He says that which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you So that you too may have fellowship with us and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ and we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete John's like man. I'm Experienced Jesus like I have fellow it's crazy. I talked to him.

He's right there with me I touched him and he goes and I'm writing this because this is gonna this is what's gonna make my joy complete Because I'm telling you because this is gonna make my joy complete And there's so many times when I'm up in San Francisco Like I've got this group of guys every morning We worship together incredible times of worship some of my favorite times of worship get in the word together share together you know get in our Faces and pray to God and then we go and we hit the streets and just start ministering to people However, we can and and there are times when I'm there that morning time where I I picture some of your faces I go. I wish he could experience this. I wish he could be in the room right now I wish you could all just get a glimpse of what goes on in that room Because it's just such a powerful time and and I think of that passage like oh this would make my joy complete if I could get the people I love to experience something like this This is what I've been after It's I Keep using that word peace like I go.

This is right. This is right. This is right This this feels like the Bible now It's the piece that I've lacked for so many years where I'd read this book and go gosh, I don't feel like I'm on the mission like they were and now it's starting to get there.

It's like, okay, this feels right This feels good because I'm a very selfish Self-centered person I wake up. I think about myself. I think about me and And I don't like that about me and yet there are those times when I finally walk away from Something I go Good.

I finally did it because you I'll feel convicted about things You know you do it you you you hear a message or you read the Bible in the morning and you get Convicted or you hear a message on the radio or in the internet you get convicted But then you know, sometimes you just ignore it You know you feel bad, but you don't do anything and then Sometimes we even make excuses and we'll justify why well, you know, even though I feel that conviction It probably doesn't really apply, you know, but then there's those times when you get so Convicted you just have to do something Like where you go, you know what? I I need to actually act And when I look in Scripture, I see that Satan doesn't mind you hearing the Word of God and being convicted by it as Long as you don't act He doesn't mind you getting in Bible studies. I mean, in fact, it's great He would love for you to get into Bible studies study it over and over again Cry together hug together and then do nothing about it Because then like James one says it's perfect. Oh good They're here's of the word deceiving themselves and not doing what it says It's when it comes to Action when there comes an actual I'm gonna do something about it.

That's when he hates it He hates action. He hates change to actually do something I mean, that's why what did John the Baptist preach? What was that one word? Repent, right. What does repent mean? Does it it's about change turn go You're heading one direction.

You actually turn around and head the other direction. That's what the message has always been What was the first thing that Jesus preached? Repent the kingdom of heaven to change your ways change. What's the first thing Peter preached on the day of Pentecost? Repent and be baptized.

It's always been this message of change like do something There's a repentance. It's change change change do something change. That was the message of John the Baptist That was Jesus.

That was Peter Obama, it's just change It's kidding it's that idea, but I was thinking about this and I Meant nothing by that. It's just purely a joke. Okay In Luke I was thinking about this.

It's it's the message you guys know of The rich young ruler Remember in Luke chapter 18 and he's like, oh, I want to follow you. I want eternal life He says well then sell everything you have and give it to the poor. And what does it say? It says he went away sad Because he was rich, right? So he got convicted and he walked away sad and Jesus is like, ah, it's so hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven And then his disciples say well, then who can be saved? He goes.

Hey, it's it's difficult but what's impossible with man is possible with God and Then what happens next chapter chapter 19? Jesus runs into Zacchaeus and it says Specifically in verse 2 there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich Now the rich guy Jesus tells him hey come down. I'm gonna stay at your house when Zacchaeus hears everything he says in verse 8 Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord Behold Lord the half of my goods I give to the poor and if I have defrauded anyone of anything I Restore it fourfold and Jesus said to him today Salvation has come to this house You see the difference? You got two rich guys One guy he's looking at his stuff and he walks away Convicted sad like oh, I got a lot of stuff I don't know man, and Jesus just goes.

Oh, it's so hard for them to enter the kingdom of heaven And then you got another rich guy who jumps out of his tree go Hey, here's half of everything, you know, I own give it to the poor and I know I ripped a bunch of people off I'll give you four times whatever I stole from you. Come yeah, and Jesus look. Okay salvation came to this house Remember what I said was impossible with man.

It was just made possible with God right there right there rich man Just as I could care less I get it you see what was the difference they both heard a message one went away sad and One just repented and did something and that's what God wanted. You see that joy. You see this like here it is Here's I'm gonna do it.

I'm gonna do it. And that's what life is all about I mean, I I think so many times we come to church and we get convicted and we walk away sad Because we're not repenting It's not like we're trying to make you feel terrible. It's like no, but if you change it would be great It'd be great because there's those times and I do it too where you know It's gonna cost something and so you go.

I don't know and you do I really actually I'm just saying the times I've actually done something Man have been the greatest times in my life This church started because of that a Point you ever get to that point where it's like I can't take it anymore Something's got you. I love how Bill Hybels puts it. He calls it a Popeye moment How many you guys some of you get young people even know who Popeye is? How many know who Popeye is he watched? Okay good a lot of you.

Okay, Popeye Remember remember how he would get to that point like Pluto would be like throwing stuff at him. He was just like You know, but then there would come that point where he would get him so mad maybe he did something to olive oil Oh Remember that and then finally, what would he say? He goes

that's all I can stand because I can't stand no more Remember that? And I will talk about that moment that Popeye moment where he just pulls out the springe forget this and he beats up Bluto I'm just done. Okay, I can't take it anymore See, there's those moments in life where you have such a lack of peace because you know, you read this book You've been convicted convicted convicted it eats at you.

You push it away push it away. You say forget it I can't take it anymore. I'm just gonna change.

That's all I can take. I can't take anymore I've got a change and that's the key. It's like, okay forget here.

Here's all my money here You take half of a year four times. Let's just get this thing over with I'm repenting I'm turning Man, I this church was a result of me at one point just finally going, you know I'm tired of all the fighting in church. Now.

What are we arguing about? Why do I walk in and I don't know who hates who or or what's going on? And and you know, where's the money going with and I'm being told not to preach certain passages. What are you talking about? What do you mean? Don't talk about hell. What do you mean? Don't mention that time? I just want to be in a place.

I just want to be in a room with people It's just just to teach the Bible to him and teach anything out of this book I just want to know that it's real and that we're really singing to him. And so is it okay if we start a church? My living room wherever I don't care. I just can't take this anymore And that's how cornerstone started.

I First time with children's hunger fund and I came back Kidding after what I saw and then you know, it's like we can't build this big giant monster mall church, you know Let's just Worship on the grass, you know, remember that missus. It's like I can't take it anymore all my life I've known there's people that are starving. I know there's people who have no clean water to drink I know there's people dying right now and yet I keep pushing off.

Well, but that's you know, I don't know There's a reason why it's okay for me to live this way and for them that way and ain't get to this point Where you go, you know what? I can't take it anymore. I haven't felt right about this the whole time You know, let's just start getting rid of stuff. Let's just purge.

This is simplify and let's just help Man you remember when I came back from Getting so convicted about the human trafficking in these kids being enslaved and it's just like I couldn't take it I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking what if that was my kid that was kidnapped and I just thought there's no way I'll just walk on this stage and go. Hey, guess what? You know, one of my kids was kidnapped being raped right now, but that's cool.

Let's turn to John chapters I couldn't do that. I would be going nuts. And so how can we just kind of go on with life? We got to do something and it's so cool to see different ones of you going.

Yeah. Yeah, let's do something Let's do something to see the video this week of Shannon and everything that she started over there different ones Um, you know when I went to Thailand seeing Al one of our guys who who was so convicted just that you know I'm just gonna move over there and take my family and my three foster kids because you guys were preaching foster system So I got three of them, you know, and when it's just I can't take it anymore. I've got to do something I mean, that was the other thing I was so beautiful here the Testimony of what happened in this room when we would look at James one and we'd go wait true religion It's a care for the widows and the orphans It doesn't make sense that there are half a

million kids in the foster system and no one will take them and yet Supposedly a hundred million Christians in this country and no one wants the kids to care for those orphans And we started somebody started taking some foster kids in and it became this movement here And we start emptying out the foster system and people other places Hear about and go with that actually makes sense Remember Domingo and Irene that was in you know that we're in this in this congregation You just sat right about there and they go actually moved up north We get a bigger place and taking more foster kids, you know I mean, they're they're over 60 years old now and they took in 11 foster kids adopted them You know and you go that makes sense in light of what this book teaches me It's fine.

Like I can't take it anymore. I'm just gonna go do it. I'm just and once you do it, it's like oh This is so good.

This is so right but there's been a one area in my life That honestly I haven't had peace about in years and I just kept pushing it suppressing it and it's just Become that time where you just go I got to just change. I got quit going away sad I quit feeling bad about it. I Got to just change.

I just have to repent And that's this It's never made sense to me that I believe in hell And I am NOT warning people like crazy Doesn't make sense I can justify it. It's always bothered me It's always bothering me I remember when I first started Cornerstone and it was bothering me then Like I still don't actually go out and talk to people about Jesus and so I went to a very successful pastor in this area and I just Close the door I go. Hey, honestly you ever feel guilty like Like right now shouldn't we be like out telling people about Jesus you ever feel guilty about that and he goes no Like really because he was Francis.

That's not really our job. Our job is to motivate the people and then they do it Okay, I like that You know, it's just okay. Okay.

Yeah, that that feels a little better. Yeah, it's your job stupid, you know and It's like, okay, you know, but it never felt right still doesn't make sense You know, it doesn't make sense if I believe this and I don't tell my next-door neighbor. I Don't care how you justify it.

It just doesn't make sense and you can't be at peace with that And you try to push it off and everyone has their excuses. Oh, that's right. I'm the pastor pastor doesn't Evangelize and then share, you know, and then and then you guys come in and like well, that's not really our job That's your job pastor Why don't you come to my workplace and share with my friends and and it just becomes this whole thing where it's like no No, no, you do you do you do it and bottom line is we're all supposed to be doing this It's the only thing that makes sense And we don't have peace about it when we're not It's always bothered us But we we blow it off or we make excuses or we come up with other ways To where we don't have to tell the people that we love the most important thing in our lives to where we don't talk to strangers about it and For me, it's been a time where I just got rid of excuses quit suppressing it and just started sharing with people Spent a lot of my days just knocking on doors Trying to enter in a conversation with people Walking up to people in the street and understand.

Okay. I'm in like the inner city, San Francisco the Tenderloin District bunch of druggies, you know street people and That's not to be admired because I go there because it's easier to start there It's easier to start with them because they have time It's just it's like prison ministry they got time, you know, you go and it's effective there they're out there and You know here everyone's too busy and you just go man Let me just I just got to get in the habit of telling strangers about the most important thing I got to just get in the habit of looking people in the eyes and start talking to them about what I believe And then hopefully as that happens It'll just become a regular pattern in life and then I can be in the suburbs and do the same thing

But sometimes I'm just saying it's easier to start there. I'm telling you there's a sense of peace The sense of peace where you're going Finally, I remember one day just telling Lisa I go.

I think I shared the gospel with more people today than I did last year and It's so good. I Just can go to bed tonight and rest and go that's what he told me to do Because it's a big deal, you know Sometimes we get so used to hearing messages and doing it nothing and disobeying that it just becomes pattern And it's a novelty when someone actually obeys But you understand that's not the way it's supposed to be. I mean Jesus Jesus rose from the dead And remember what he says he goes Oh Authority every bit of authority So you don't listen to anyone else because every ounce of authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me You don't have to look at anyone you have to listen to anyone because every ounce of authority was just given to me I just rose from the dead to give you this command go and make disciples that's a big deal and It's a big deal when we don't I mean think about it you guys all were a lot of you work or have worked Isn't it a big deal when your boss gives you an assignment and you choose not to do it? Some of you have never done that at work Because that's a big deal your boss just told you to do that and you're not gonna do it that's massive Some of you are employers That's a big deal when someone disrespects you like that, right? You said wait, so you understood the assignment and you just didn't feel like doing it Really you have the freedom to do that.

I Mean, you know how you feel when you're disrespected that way I'm just going here is the Son of God going every ounce of authority and heaven and earth has been given to me Go make disciples And some of us in this room have never baptized anyone never made a disciple aren't even planning on it And I'm going that's a big deal And I know you don't feel peace about it And my goal is not that you walk away sad But my goal is that you change it. Okay, great great. I'm gonna go for I'm gonna be obedient.

I'm gonna turn That's all I can stand. That's all I can take. I'm done.

I hear you. I hear you I've never felt peace about that either. It's never made sense to me and I got to take a step now I got to do something do something I Love what Paul Paul says in Acts 20 verse 26 He goes I testify to you this day that I'm innocent of the blood of all for I did not Shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God Paul Paul had that piece where he goes.

Oh, I did it. I just did it. I just told you everything Your bloods off my hands.

I can testify. I didn't get scared. I didn't shrink back Here I said it man in those moments when I look a friend in the face or a neighbor in the face and go man, I Can't believe I've never told you this but I got to just share it because it's driving me nuts It's the most important thing in my life And I care about you.

So I gotta say it here it is and to be able to go home at night and go I Did it I can't control whether they believe or not, but I put it out there And that's that's a hard thing. You want to try to control it. You want to make it work? You don't want to be rejected.

You don't want them to reject God worse. I was like, don't reject him Don't reject him and it kills you But the beautiful thing and going back to that why I want you with me on some of the things that I'm doing is You know Jesus says at the end of that, you know Go make disciples baptize them teach them to obey everything. I commanded you and that last phrase and I'll be with you always I'll be with you.

I Was reading through Mark the other morning and the very last verse of Mark after Jesus again gives his great commission And you know says go make disciples then in verse 20 of Mark 16. It says and they

went out and preached everywhere while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs It's like they went out and Jesus was right there with them This is after he ascended in heaven just like he says in Matthew 20 You just go start making this up because some of you go man. I don't I don't feel his presence with me I don't I don't sense God right there.

I don't experience that intimacy and I gotta go. Well, are you making disciples? If you were out making disciples trying to teach people obey everything you'll experience That's when you're gonna experience his presence just like in Mark man Once they got out. It says that Jesus actually worked with them.

You're not alone when you're out making disciples Those who say I don't experience the Holy Spirit. Well, the Holy Spirit was given you to be a witness, you know Wait for the gift. He's gonna empower you to be a witness.

You'll want to experience his presence go Get rid of all this guilt and just actually go and share and start living a life where you're actually obeying God on the mission Doing it enough excuses and you'll experience him I mean, that's the thing that I've gotten to do is is See God do I miss the relationships and the love I miss it dearly but the peace of actually being on the mission and finally going I'm doing it and the presence of Christ that I get to Experience so that you're not alone Yeah, I was at this one guy's house knocked on his door you know he's smoking pot drinking everything else a guy that I've gotten to know and we start talking and I don't know something hit me when I when I just Casual conversation like how old are you? Anyways, and he goes, you know, I'm 59 He didn't look that old like 59 I go man. You're not gonna live very much longer. I'm serious.

I mean I go. Wow How much longer you think you're gonna live? Look at the way you're living and I just started freaking out going man I like you man. Do you are you ready to see God? 59 are you ready to see God and he just goes Yeah No, you're not you're not I promise you you're not I mean I just was like I Promise you you're not ready, you know, and I just went to Isaiah 6 Do you know even the prophets like you think? There's no way, you know, and you know suddenly he sees bumps on his arm.

He goes. Whoa. I just lost my high I go.

Sorry. Sorry about that, you know, but it's just You know, it just started laying it out and you know, and I go man. Do you believe this? Do you believe this you kind of believe this and laying hands on him praying over him, you know Gives his life to the Lord, you know gets baptized and you know bring him over to our house because it actually was gonna be his 59th birthday and He brought his crack pipes and a hammer and just buried in our backyard the kids and I saying happy birthday you know bottom presents and you know Zeke's playing with the you know, so and just whatever and Crazy thing though.

He just goes. Okay, pray for me. Pray for me The first of the month is coming been good for a while But the first of the month is crazy because that's when we get our paychecks Everyone goes nuts on the first of the month two days before you're already dreaming and plotting of all the things you're gonna do It's been a cycle for years This guy's been addicted for 40 years And so I'm thinking we will pray for you, but I'll do better than that first of the month I'm gonna go to his house.

I'm gonna pick him up in the morning I'm not gonna let this guy I'll handcuff him to myself. I'm gonna go to his house You know seriously cuz I'm gone I'm not gonna let my brother fall, you know and But then first a month March 1st comes in and I get the flu and I'm just sick as a dog and I'm just gonna I can't get up. I can't get up.

Oh, no. No James. It's gonna he's gonna smoke crack again You know and and then one of the volunteers is you know kid Aaron's like hey, I'm gonna go visit James Oh good good good, you know hang up in the back of my mind.

I'm like, what's Aaron gonna do? You know even this guy's been addicted 40 years he needs Francis Chan, you know Seriously I I gotta admit some of these thoughts go through my head like Aaron some 20 year old kid and written any books and so you just start going he needs me, you know and Just stupid stuff going through your head end of the day. I get this call from Aaron He's just like lit up like you'll never believe what happened. I'm like Because man, I took him we went to the bank We put all his money on this so he couldn't, you know, give the drug dealers, you know And then he told me about you know, how he hadn't been clean on the first of a month He goes in at least 20 years.

There's no way not at least 20 years. He goes so I say let's go celebrate So so, you know, I go let's let's go to dinner and because I get on my phone I look for this one place, you know and end up at this I forget Let's just go to this Popeyes right here at this corner. We sit down have some fried chicken, you know He goes I'm walking through the Bible with him I got to teach him Romans 6 through 8 and walk through the whole thing with him then I looked at him I go man, when did this all start for you and and you know James just goes man, I Was 19 years old when it started because I was 19 he goes my boss Actually brought cocaine to work He goes and I dad I'd smoke pot a little bit drink a little bit, but I just wanted to try it And he goes and once I tried it he goes I fell in love with it I couldn't get enough of it.

And now for 40 years. I've been addicted to this and He goes but I'll never forget the first time I tried it because because I was He was I was working at this restaurant and he was the owner or manager and he was I was just a dishwasher cook guy And I remember because he put me brought me to the back room and there were lines down and and he goes It was in here It's just \$5.99 to visit Darryl. Yeah He just freaks out This used to be named the restaurant It was right there And he goes for 40 years It started here and God had me in this desert for 40 years Then he brings me back to the very place where it all started to deliver me after 40 years If I ever doubted God, I will never doubt him again Yeah And he and you know Aaron's just on the phone You know just telling me this story Things like that and you know Tom another guy just drunk out of his mind forever, you know, please I thought it was dead You know, he's just drunk out of the took him the hospital on and on been trying to share the gospel with him Finally, you know gives his life to the Lord and my friend Christian just says I don't know why I feel like I'm supposed to Read this passage to you.

I don't know. I don't know why this let me read to you You know his Daniel he goes Daniel 5 was about Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar He how God you remember him? He got cocky and and turns him into this beast and for seven years He just you know nails grow out just freak, you know And then at the end of the seven years, he says he regained his reasoning and Tom just goes How did you know to read that? It's like I don't know. I just read Tom's like, do you know that Memorial Day will be seven years for me? seven years ago Memorial Day I moved out here on that day and Have just lived as an absolute beast Drunk out of my mind just trying to forget everything and the thing I've been wrestling with is He goes I feel like God abandoned me And I kept wondering will he ever Bring me back.

Will he ever accept me? and then you read this story about a guy who for seven years was abandoned by God and Then at the end of the seven years his reasoning returned How did you know to read that? Tell you about Carla. Carla was another gal who just No church background whatsoever and back was hurting I prayed for her and she just looks at me and goes You are freaking me out right now She's like look at

me. I don't feel anything You are freaking me out It's just and I go it's cool, huh? You know, it's just Stuff like that that would start happening I mean Tom was a result Tom was a result of James because after James gave his life to Lord We said man, you've been a Christian two weeks You got to start praying for other people and start ministering to them and he goes you always just pick one guy in your apartment he goes, okay, I'll pray for Tom and Two hours later Tom you get a call from James because you'll never believe it Tom just knocked on my door He's never knocked on my door.

He knocked on my door and asked me for prayer What in the world is going on I go what I tell you this real isn't it and they're experiencing this stuff To see my daughter experiencing some of this, you know, some friends came to visit her up in San Francisco She takes him to in and out over there by Fisherman's Wharf and as they go in to get their burger She sees a homeless lady and just asked her. Can I get you a burger? And she's like sure it's Rachel goes in gets her a cheeseburger comes back out Can I eat with you can I sit with you as you eat and he's like sure Rachel starts sharing about Jesus to this guy, you know this gal and Then the girl just goes it's really weird This is really weird that you're telling me about Jesus because two months ago Someone told me about Jesus and when you were walking up I was trying to think about because this guy was telling about Jesus and then he started telling me about some Pastor that moved up here from this LA area And how I should go visit his ministry in the Tenderloin, you know And she goes when you walked up. I was literally trying to remember what the name of that pastor was My daughter's just like is it Francis Chan? Yes, that's it, you know him, you know, it's just this moment Where Rachel could look at this lady and go, okay, do you think there's any chance this is coincidence that You're trying to figure out the name of a guy of my dad When I walk up or is God trying to get your attention You know just a couple weeks ago it's talking with this so homeless lady And I just knew the Lord wanted me to stay with her You know those moments where it's like I'm not supposed to leave I'm supposed to just keep talking keep probing and I don't know something was happening and I just kept asking more questions more questions at one point.

I finally go I Could be totally off but it seems like you used to know God when you're younger didn't you you used to believe in Jesus didn't you? She just starts crying and I said you've been miserable because you've been fighting fighting it fighting it She's crying and then she finally she says yeah, I Grew up in the church. I was that kid that Didn't I just could do no wrong and Here she is living in a shelter and everything she goes, but I I did I grew up in church. I loved God I was so into everything.

She goes when I graduated high school. I became a lifeguard at a Christian camp She goes for six years. I was a lifeguard at this place called Hume Lake I'm like what I Taught at Hume Lake for 20 years in a row She's like, who are you? I go Francis.

You're Francis. Yeah, you know, it was just I go. I knew it I knew I was supposed to sit here and listen to your story I mean don't you see how God's trying to pull you back and you know and just these things that happen where he's going man God was There God was there God was there and I I'd love to tell you all those people Repented and are walking with the Lord today, but it's not true Some of them experienced miracles right there and decide to go back to their sin and it breaks your heart There's no guarantee that they're going to turn what the guarantee is is that Jesus will be with you Just the signs will accompany you.

You'll see. Wow. This is cool.

You know, yeah They didn't repent and I would love that and it breaks my heart But I know Jesus with me and I'm seeing him every day and I'm experiencing him And that's what I think of when I think of that first

John passage. It's like I want you all to Experience the supernatural. This is not like oh, well, that's unique to you Francis.

No, no This is what God has for all of us If we would go out and try to make disciples try lift up the name of Jesus get rejected We get I wish I could tell you all these wonderful stories. There hasn't been a ton of repentance out there There hasn't been it's not glamorous I can't tell you man, I got a church this size now, you know, and they're all excited. No Most of the people that got baptized whatever went right back to their junk Breaks my heart My heart gets broken day after day.

That's rough But the presence of Christ is with you and there's a peace and it's like, okay, this is good. This is good This is good. I'm experiencing you and nothing compares to that You know, that's what some of you needed to hear but I just got to share one last thing with some of you One of the things I've learned being out there.

I've learned so many things but one of the things Has been just how awful sin is Like see living here You don't often see the end result of sin You just see a next step and and I remembered when I lived here sin still looked a little glamorous to me And you get tempted by things Out there when you see a guy drunk out of his mind Diarrhea all over himself laying on the street. You don't think oh man. That's what I want to be There's nothing attractive to it The end of those addictions.

It's like oh and and and when you talk to them it all started with a party It all started. Well, it's just a casual drink. It was just this.

I just wanted to try it I'm not gonna become one of those guys. No one ever plans on that And it's the same, you know Sexual sin suddenly is so ugly because you find these people they're just trying anything Turning themselves on in any way possible. Now, you're just going wow, that is so gross now So I see the end result and I love that my kids are growing up and seeing the end result People talking to themselves crawling around, you know, just begging for money just going that's that's that and that's not even the very end I I tell the people out there I go.

I feel like you're in a giant toilet you know and and at first you jumped in because you saw that outer rim and it was like it was like one of those Lazy rivers you that looks fun You know and you like this is fun And you don't even realize you're getting sucked down further and further and the longer you're in there The harder it is to swim out and now you're at the very bottom and it's not fun anymore now. It's just panic time I'm about to get flushed down and it's about to get a lot worse And I feel like man some of us are on that outer rim Thinking man, that's kind of attractive some of you ladies that suddenly someone's paying attention to you on Facebook And you're going man. This is kind of fun.

Someone actually Thinks I'm attractive someone is paying more attention to me than my husband this this I'll never cheat on my husband I'll never leave him I would never leave my kid, but just just let me just jump in there and paddle around for a little bit Let me just take the next step. I'll never let it go further than this. I mean, I'm not one of those I'm just gonna look at the computer just as one time just one glance at this this pornography, you know But I'm not gonna be one of those addicts where I'm 40 years old still looking on You know naked girls on the computer and playing with myself.

I'm not gonna be that I'm just I'm just having a couple of drinks. It's just casual. It's it's like this does this you know, it's just to fit in It's it's not it's not a sin.

It's not it's just a little bit of weed and it just Relaxes me and it's just that next step and I'll never be one of those That's what all these guys thought and you see the end result of it And I think there's some of you right now that are playing with fire and you know it And my prayers that you don't walk away sad, but you do as a kiss and go, you know what you're right I'm deleting that off from you're no longer a Facebook friend. You're you know Whatever. Let me get a filter on the internet.

Let me break off this relationship I'm lying to myself. I'm more addicted than I thought I was. I'm greedier than I thought I was.

I Got it. Just do something See Satan would be thrilled if you walked away sad today. Come on, man.

I'm really convicted by his message We had that week after week after week That's the rich young ruler, man. I'm really convicted by that message man. That message makes me really sad I'm going man.

I just want people to have a Zacchaeus moment a Popeye moment where you just go Okay, I've never felt right about this. I just want to have peace again Or maybe for the first time in my life And for me it meant Going out and Ditching my normal lifestyle and going out and doing some of the things that I hate to do And taking a step and doing something uncomfortable Others of you it means walking away Because you're thinking you're gonna take one more lap But every lap gets you closer and closer to the bottom and I've just seen Satan's plan I feel like I look him in the eyes every day out there And he's just thinking I got these people it's too late for them I got him I got him and sometimes I think Sometimes there are days when I just think I think it is too late for them If i'm honest with you, sometimes I just feel like giving up like you were so far down there To pull you out of this thing But what's impossible with man is possible with God I'm, just looking at you guys and saying please don't You know how many divorces i've seen in this room And no one ever thought it would go to that How many bad relationships where we just were hanging out as friends and then It just Repent And repent And it's hard But don't go away sad today Make this as a kiosk moment where you go. You know what? You're right.

I haven't had peace about this. I'm done I'm walking away and rejoice with the rest of us So we're gonna have a worship set and we're gonna sing But some of you the worst thing you can do is sing a song and forget about the change that God wants to take place right now Some of you you need to just tell someone that's why we have the prayer room up here Is maybe today's a day where you go? You know what? I'm done. I can't stand anymore I go to bed every night and I know i'm not living the way God wants me to So it never occurred to me to actually change And I want to do it now help me help me change others of you Maybe you've resisted God because you've been like that rich young ruler because you know what it means What you'd have to turn away from to go into the waters of baptism to repent to die to yourself and say i'm going to Follow Jesus now, but maybe today you're going you know what i'm done.

I'm not going to take another lap in this thing Pull me out. Jesus Get me out of here I want to follow you and give your life to Jesus today get baptized today Would be amazing but let me let me pray for you before we worship God I get so sad lord when I see people that I know Know that you are real They've experienced miracles. They've seen the supernatural And then yet they still walk away sad because they're not ready to turn And god only your holy spirit can cause what happened with Zacchaeus And make it a real thing where there's action and so father right now I ask that you would open the eyes of the blind that you give ears to the deaf And that people will just get it right now and realize this cycle that satan's had in them Over and over and over again god and that today would be the day they would trust in the power of your holy spirit to really empower them to turn And actually change God, you know how much

I love the people in this room God, I just pray That they would they would truly repent And turn and experience you And enjoy you now and forevermore In Jesus name we pray.

Amen

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