

When God Comes There Must Be Repentance

by Mose Stoltzfus

The sermon calls for genuine repentance and humility as prerequisites for experiencing God's presence and forgiveness.

Duration: 1:06:10

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 15:7, John 14:26, Acts 2:37-38, Romans 10:14, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the amazing power of God to turn our lives around and lead us in unexpected directions. He expresses gratitude for God's mercy and guidance, urging the audience to humble themselves and serve God. The preacher prays for God to call more people to Him and asks for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The sermon then focuses on the account of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, highlighting the significance of the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples and the fulfillment of Jesus' promise.

Transcript

Amazing God, who can turn us around and send us in all kinds of direction that we have never expected or dreamt of. And I thank God for how he continues to, in graciousness, have mercy upon us and guide us and have patience until we come down from our foolish pride and our own ideas and turn our hearts to serve God. Well, may God do that again tonight.

Shall we bow our heads for prayer? Father in heaven, we come before you tonight. Thank you for another soul that has found you and ask you, Lord, to again tonight call men and women to come to you. Make us a vessel through which we can, as the scripture said, how shall they hear except there be a preacher, and except they hear the word of God.

And I pray that they would open their hearts, all that are here tonight and all that may hear this tape may open their hearts and consider. We ask for the anointing of the spirit of God upon our words, upon ourselves, upon the tape, upon the services here. Conviction would come upon those, Father, that are still bound up in sin and that they could become exceedingly guilty of their sinfulness before God and let God come and redeem them and save them from their sin.

Thank you for thy word, O God. Break it tonight again, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, I'm still on the old subject. When God comes, when God comes. Tonight I want to look on the answer that is given or when God came in the greatest time ever on earth in Acts chapter 2 verse 37.

We have the account of Pentecost here when they come down from the upper room after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them and they had received the promise of the comforter coming that was given by the Lord Jesus Christ that I must come, I must go, and then when I go I will send him. And here it is, ten days later after his ascension, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon humanity and we have the clear, distinct word that is given to us here, how that the gospel Peter had stood up and told them that this was that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, the prophecies are being fulfilled. And when they heard this preaching from Peter they were pricked in their hearts in verse 37 and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? When God comes, men need to ask, what shall we do? What shall we do? It is a question that comes up over and over again in counseling and in preaching the Word of God that men and women come to me and say, what shall I do? We have situations where hearts are as hard as stone and men ask, what shall I do that I might soften my heart? What shall I do to feel God? What shall I do that I might respond to God? And that is exactly what was happening by these people.

I mean, Peter laid it on the line and told them that they are guilty of the death of the Lord. He told them the same Jesus whom you have crucified is both Lord and Christ. He rose from the dead.

He ascended on high and He came down in the presence of His Spirit and He told them straight to their face, you are guilty of the whole thing. And they responded the best way that any man can ever respond. Men and brethren, where do we go from here? What shall we do? What shall we do? I don't understand why that isn't the cry of so many today.

I don't understand that a man goes to see a psychiatrist and allows the prescription of medicine upon his life in order to cause him to walk around like a zombie for the next year. And he never comes to Jesus Christ and says, what shall I do? I am at the end of my rope. I don't know what to do.

After all, God made us. Doesn't He have the answer to man's needs? Absolutely He does. But what happens is society goes headstrong on their way and never stops and says, what shall we do? Oh, it's the most precious word tonight and I pray that every one of you, if you don't know what to do, I can understand that.

I can understand that. All the confusion of religion, the confusion of your upbringing, the confusion of sin in your life, modern philosophies, books that you have read. But why don't you get on your knees in your closet and say, what shall I do, God? I think if men and women would just humble themselves that much and get on their knees before God and say, what shall I do? The doors would open, the lights would go on and things would happen through the sovereignty of God that would tell you what to do.

I know there are people here tonight that God told in a dream. I know there are people here tonight that opened their Bible and God told them. I know there are people here tonight who walked up to another man of God and said, what shall I do? And the man told him what he must do.

All of those things are in the Bible. Some of you may have picked up a tract. Some of you may have got it in many other obscure ways that I didn't even think about telling you tonight.

But I know if men and women would ask, what shall I do? Oh, it's a precious word. What must I do? What must I do? Well, when God comes, when God comes, there needs to be a response from man. And we want to talk about that response.

We want to talk about that response tonight from the Word of God. If I could turn to Jeremiah chapter 7, verse 5, I would want to read a few Scriptures. And this one here says, For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, he goes on down there and says in verse 9, will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense on the veil, and walk after other gods whom ye know not, and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered from all these abominations.

He's simply saying here that if you're going to turn from your sin, if you're going to amend your ways, if you're going to amend your doings, if you're going to quit your stealing and your murdering and your committing adultery, and swearing falsely and burning incense on the veil, and walking after other gods that you never knew and never did anything for you, and you're going to come unto me and come into my house. God dwelt in a temple in the Old Testament. You remember that.

He doesn't now, but he did then. And he says, You come into my house and you listen unto me. I'll heal you.

I'll change you. I'll save you. I'll redeem you.

And you'll be able to go out a different person. But I'm reminded of the Lord Jesus when He said, You will not come that you might have eternal life. You won't come.

Sad words. Psalms 34, 18. The Bible says, There the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saith it them that are of a contrite spirit.

It is time to get off of our spiritual high horse, our pride, our foolish pride, thinking we have the answer. We know what to do. We can control our lives.

We can do what we want to do. And simply come before God and say, I don't have it. My cup is empty.

I don't have the answer. I can't solve my problem. I need help.

Oh, if men would only do that. If men would only do that. But if you want God to come, then I want to tell you tonight this is one of the prerequisites of Him coming into your heart and life, is that you must have a proper response to Him if you ever want Him to come.

You cannot laugh it off as a joke and go on your merry way and go vacationing and bowling and swimming and watching a movie and everything else and going through the pleasures of this life and expect that God is going to come and meet the need of your heart. No. Listen to the Word of God tonight as we go through numerous Scriptures to show you what the Bible says.

Here He says very clearly, the Lord is nigh, or He'll come near, to them that are of a broken heart and saveth such that are of a contrite spirit. God will come to the soul tonight that humbles himself before the feet of God at the foot of the cross and bows his hard heart and his stiff knees and says, God, I don't have peace. I don't have assurance of my salvation.

I don't know whether I'm lost or saved. I don't think I'm saved. I need help.

My past sins bother me. I have made a mess of my life. I have so much guilt on me.

I don't know what to do. I don't know where to go. Men and brethren, what shall we do? That needs to be the framework of our heart tonight.

I'm going to center the message a lot on the focus of humility, contrition and repentance of heart before God in order for God to come and for you to have a right response. You must repent of your sins. You must be willing to turn from them and willing to abhor them and give your heart and life to God.

I don't believe that the millions that are claiming salvation today, somebody says there are 62 million Christians in the United States and I don't believe it for one minute. And it's because people are coming to God without repentance. They have never faced their rebellion against God.

They have never turned away from their own sin and from their own way and their own pride and said, I can't do it. I need help. I'm sorry, God.

I have so boldly, so arrogantly lived my life against you, against your faith. And I recognize that I can't do it. You know, I look at the example of Pharaoh tonight.

And whenever Moses and Aaron went up there and did a plague and he suffered for it and the lice were everywhere or the frogs all through his bedroom or there was such darkness so thick that he could feel it and he couldn't see a soul and he dwelled over all the land of Israel, then he would repent. Then he would be sorry. And as soon as Moses would lift his rod and the lice would all leave and the darkness would lift, then he would harden his heart and tell the children of Israel again they can't go.

And that man seesawed back and forth. And I want to tell you tonight, that is not the kind of repentance I'm talking about. If you only repent tonight and you only turn from your sin in the moment of your misery and the moment of your disadvantage, in the moment of your loss of money, and then you say, oh, I'm sorry, I probably shouldn't have done that.

That is not going to change your life. But what you need is a repentance that is so deep that you recognize that all your framework is built upon a faulty foundation and that you don't have the answer and you don't know what to do. And you are coming to God.

It took this young man quite a while until he finally was able to do that because of all the things he had trumped up in his life, as he said in his testimony. But one of the things that was missing in the first three quarters of his testimony was simply to have that absolute humility and brokenness. He had college in his mind.

He had to be somebody in his mind. The pomp and pride of life had so latched on to his mind and heart that he couldn't get converted. He had his own act together.

But what God was waiting on him to do was saying, I'm at the bottom, I'm at the end, and I need help. And I'm willing to turn from my own way. You know, that's the big thing about repentance.

In some youth life, they don't have such a big catalog of sin to turn from like he didn't. But you have to turn away from your plans, you see. You have to turn away from your own ideas and from the pride that trumped up, the pride of your own heart to think, I have the answer.

I'm going my own way. I do what I want to do. I go where I want to go.

And for you to come and bow your heart, and that's why there are so many people, God doesn't hear them. They cry to God. They even pray to Him years on end.

And say a few words, the nice words that make it sound like they're in love with God a bit. But God never takes them serious because they have never responded right to God in their life because we cannot come to Him arrogantly. We cannot come with the baggage of our religion and say, okay God, I'll come to You, but I must come this way.

The only way I'll ever live is this way because I won't upset anything in the apple cart, you know. I just want everything to go on as before. And we make all kind of conditions of how we're going to come to God, like Pharaoh did.

Yeah, get rid of these frogs. Come, help me. And as soon as the frogs are gone, I'm ruling this nation.

That was his heart. And that's why that repentance was never unto the saving of the soul. Oh, so many Scriptures.

So many Scriptures, the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. Break your hearts. Break your hard hearts.

Bring contrition upon your lives. Humble yourselves in the sight of God. We're going to look at some more of those Scriptures over in Psalms 51.

The Bible says, thereafter it gives the repentance of David. And I don't know if we can come to that, back to that or not, but it says in verse 17 that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a broken and a contrite heart. Oh, God, thou wilt not despise.

I was involved in my youth a bit in breaking horses. And I know the difference of a horse that's broken and one that isn't. But I'll tell you, once a horse is broke, he stands there as long as you want him to stand there, until you tell him to go, until you tell him to stop.

And then he goes until you tell him to stop. But if he's not broken, he'll do anything else when he's supposed to do it. And it is just a nuisance.

And many have gone to the butcher shop because of it. Because there's nothing you can do with the fellows, you know. Because they were not broken right.

Somebody ruined them. And that's the way people are. And there are so many people tonight that are not able to live a Christian life, and God doesn't hear their prayer, and God doesn't answer them, and God doesn't deliver them, because they're coming on their own terms.

They have never had a broken and a contrite heart in their life. They still have the controls. They still have the reins in their hands.

You Amish men know what that means. Psalms 51.17, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a broken and a contrite heart. Oh God, Thou wilt not despise.

Let us look at Luke 24.47. I want to show you that one. Here the Bible says, in verse 46, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at

Jerusalem. That's what I'd like to do tonight.

I'd like to preach on repentance and remission of sins. And I want you to see that those two go together. You cannot separate and have the remission of sins without a time of repentance and remorse for your sinful ways.

Many people who try that, they end up with just a stony heart. You know, when the seed was sown in Matthew there, and Jesus talked about the four heart conditions, He gave the indication of a stony heart. And a stony heart, there was a little bit of life.

And a little plant did come up until the sun came out with a burning heat. And the persecutions came and tested the individual. And then the thing withered up and died.

Because it was founded upon, it had no root, it says. And I don't want you to have an experience tonight with no root. I want you to have your seed of the Word of God fall upon a good heart, an open soil, where the seed can go down into the dark, moist dirt and can die.

And then there can be real life come up. But if the seed only falls on a stony and hard heart that has been hardened by unrepentance and lack of humility and brokenness, I tell you, you will never, never get what you need out of Christianity. I look at the remission of sins.

Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name. I want to come to you tonight in the name of Jesus. There are many people who are sorry that they got caught tonight.

There are thousands, tens of thousands of prisoners that are in prison, and they are very sorry for the sin that they have committed in which they've gotten caught, incarcerated in prison. But they have never repented. They have never turned from their sin.

I heard of a man just a few weeks ago, maybe it's a month or two now, time flies, where a man was let go out of prison. I think he was there for 12 or 14 years for a moral crime, and he got out, and with one week he did it again. You cannot imagine the powerlessness of men, but that's what it is.

They cannot turn from their sin. They have been sorry they're caught, but they're not sorry for what they have done and for the wickedness of their own hearts. And only repentance does that.

Repentance tonight involves the entire personality. The intellect must function. A person has to know what he's doing.

You're not going to repent if some wave comes over you in a dream and asleep at night. If God shows Himself to you, fine that way, but then get on your knees beside your bed when you wake up and repent from your sins. It involves the intellect.

The intellect must function. You must stop and look at your life, and look at your doings, and look at the way you've lived, and say, I was wrong, and I'm so sorry God. I have sinned against thee and thee only.

David said when he was caught with the sin of Bathsheba, and Nathan the prophet came and gave him the story and said, Thou art the man. This is what you have done. Oh, David was smitten by the Spirit of God then, and he said, against thee only, against thee and thee only have I sinned.

I have sinned against God. And we must see in the act of repentance that we have sinned against the God who made us. We have sinned against His holy Word.

We have sinned against His holy commandments. We have offended God. You know, I work with a number of people, religious people, who their general practice is to make their confession to the preacher.

In fact, I have a hard time getting them out of that. It seems like it's difficult for them today. Some of them, especially, they used to confess their sins to God and believe that God forgives them because they're so trained for generations and generations that the way to get rid of sin is you have to go see the preacher and tell the preacher your sin.

So they seem to even be comfortable to come to me and confess their sin. And I'll let them do that, but I'll do it on their knees before the God of heaven and I tell them, you're confessing before God. I don't care if some man's present or some woman is present.

That's all right. I think that's good sometimes. But the repentance has to be to God.

We have offended God. God is angry with us because of the sins of our lives. The next one I want to tell you is that the emotions must be aroused.

I also work with a group of people that are dead emotionally. They have been taught all their life that there's no emotion to be expressed. You just stomp it and swallow it and don't express your emotions.

And recently I led a couple to the Lord in British Columbia and another man's wife and the other man had been converted just a little bit before. And he said, do you understand now why we can't get converted in our religious setting? Because we have no emotion. We're not allowed to cry.

We're not allowed to, you know, we just kind of have our stoic people and sober and we just make our decision and nothing happens because the emotions are not aroused to make a decision. I don't believe a person has to do it, but it's of tremendous value if a man can weep over his sins and weep in remorse over his deception and over how he's offended God and say, God, is it possible that you can ever forgive me for the sins that I've done? And consider oneself unworthy and you get dead, dead earnest about the thing you see in repentance. I see so many nonchalant conversions and they mean nothing.

Five-year-old child is given a horror story about hell. Raise your hand if you want to accept the Lord Jesus. And they raise their hand and it means nothing.

They go home unchanged. By far the majority of them never change because they have not understood repentance. Don't lead them through at that age.

They don't understand their sinfulness. They have to come up in accountability where they understand the guilt of sin and being a sinner before they can ever repent. Very clear in the Scripture.

Little children can come and play on the lap of Jesus anytime. Suffer the little children to come unto Me, but He didn't tell them to repent and to get right with God. They don't understand those things.

The emotions must be aroused. Oh, I think it's good when the emotions... that there's a vehemence and an earnestness in there and that we cry and we are burdened and the emotions are in gear. Don't you stumble your emotions so bad that you can't respond in emotion anymore to any need or any situation.

That's sad when a society gets like that. And yet I see them and they're all over the country like that. They're so stumped on emotions that they can't respond anymore emotionally to anything.

And the third one is the will must act. You must choose concerning this matter. You must choose after you say, what shall we do? There are some things that you need to do and one of them is to repent and to turn from your sin for the remission of sin.

And He even says in the book of Acts, here it is again, I don't want to overemphasize it, but it says repent and be baptized. Well, God isn't going to baptize you. You have to go and get baptized.

You've got to ask for it. You've got to get in the water. And God is also asking you to obey Him in that way.

You see, I think in repentance many times we must burn our bridges behind us. I see a lot of people, you know, they try to come to God and they keep their hand on their former life and their former religion so they can run in case it don't work out. But I tell you when I got born again, I recognized that I had to burn my bridges behind me.

It wasn't even in my mind to go back. I had found something that was so genuine and so thorough, I never wanted to go back to my sin and to my misery and to my dead religion or any of those things. And that is an important thing.

You know, that's faith. You're not having faith if you have your hand and your anchors and your rope still back there and still hanging on to the old life and the old friends and the old comfort zones. You simply have to go think or die, I'm with Jesus.

And then you'll get God's attention. You need to see oneself as falling short of the requirements of a holy God. You know, sin is an awful thing which dishonors God and ruins men.

You have to see that if I go forward like this, I am going to hell. I'm on my way to hell. I'm a lost sinner.

No wonder people can't repent. They're too good to be saved. They do not see their own sinfulness.

I like to picture it this way when I consider the ruination of man. If I don't get rid of my ugly pride, this thing's going to kill me. I like to see in repentance when you come to God, I like to see... Now let's look at this again.

We need to have... The intellect must function. We have to see ourselves for what we are. The emotions must be aroused and the will must act.

But I like for us to see ourselves at Niagara Falls about ten foot before going over the precipice. And I'd like to see you in that situation for five minutes and what kind of response you'd have if somebody threw you an inner tube. And that's how you need to come to God.

We've come so weak and so nonchalantly and say, Lord, yeah, it wouldn't be an idea. I guess I wouldn't like it and hell, why don't you come and consider helping me out a bit. God have mercy.

God have mercy. We're in the rapids. We're in the point of no return.

You know, there's a place up there in Niagara where the motor of the boat spinning the propeller at high speed will not get you out of the current going down. It's too fast. They call it the point of no return.

And none of the motors are fast enough to get you out of that. Maybe on a speed boat or race boat it would be, but ordinary propeller boat, no. If you're fishing and you get into the rapids, you're doomed and you're going to go down over.

But I want you to see tonight, I want you to respond to God. Tonight, I'm telling you, I want you to respond to God. If you're serious with Him, like somebody would be throwing you a life preserver on a rope before you... when you're in the rapids on your way toward the precipice.

And I want you to hang on to God like you would hang on to that thing. And I promise you, I promise you that will make all the difference in your response to God. If you respond to God like that, then I'll tell you God will hear your prayer and God will save you from your sin and God will deliver you from your dilemma.

But if you come to God so nonchalantly, like so many people do, and what has been so watered down in the Gospel, and there's hardly any conviction of sin, and men think they're too good to be lost, they just want a little fire insurance not to go to hell, you're not going to get what you need. You're not going to get what you need. There needs to be a hatred and an abandonment of sin.

I'm sick of it! I can't wait to get out of it! Oh Lord, who will deliver me from the body of this death? Who will get rid of that bondage for me? And there needs to be a desperation that I want out! I'm in a prison cage and I want out! And you have to say, or you need to say, this thing is killing me, even if it's religion. An abandonment. Sin is repugnant, despicable! You get rid of it like you want to get rid of waste or manure, or something else that smells and is full of bugs and whatever have you.

That's how we need to get rid of it. Repentance should be a remorse, a sorry. In their prayers, it's so sad how people pray in supposed repentance today.

And I ask people this question. Have you ever done anything about it? You ever went back and made it right? Have you ever told anybody you're sorry for what you did? The person you hurt? The person you stole from? And they say, no, I didn't do that. You didn't do that? It never bothered you? Of the things you have done? You never considered that wrongs have to be made right? You never considered that the things you stole have to be returned? Or paid for? Or made right? What do you mean? Oh, no wonder we're not getting through to God.

We don't understand repentance. We don't understand. The Bible says in James 4, verse 9, Let your luster be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

Did you know that's a prerequisite? That's what repentance is. You're not going to a party. You're not going to a ball game if you want to seek to get right with God.

You don't go on vacation. You don't go watch a movie. For God's sake, no! You put on heaviness and you let your luster be turned to mourning.

Now this is not for the Christian life. All the joy and laughter and we have exceeding joy over there in the Christian life. But when you come to God to repent of your sins, you need to go through a season of darkness and heaviness and repentance and remorse for your sins.

And you say, God, how could I ever do the things I've done? How could my conscience even allow me? I must have had it seared with a hot iron. How could I have done the things I've done and not be in sleep at night? I must have been hard. Those are the things that need to come to us like that.

Let us turn our Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 7. And I want to read some of the marvelous words from the Apostle Paul on repentance and how repentance works. Now this is written about the man who had his father's wife, his stepmother. And he was excommunicated for it.

And he was out of the church for about a year. And Paul was telling the Corinthians to take him back in. And it's evident that this man has repented and lest he be overcome with overmuch sorrow, they should receive him back again.

Because it is evident that he has cleared himself in this whole matter. Which, incidentally, that's what has to happen. If you want to see what repentance is, we must clear ourselves on the things that we have done.

Now let us look at that in verse 8 of chapter 7 of 2 Corinthians. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent. Though I did repent, for I perceive that the same epistle has made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

And this was the hard letter that he wrote in 1 Corinthians, reproving them for not dealing with sin as they ought to. And he laid it in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, and chapter 10, and chapter 5, and reproved them for having this man there to purge out the old leaven, that there may be a new lump there not to eat with such a one. And he really laid some hard things on them in the book of 1 Corinthians.

Now we're at 2 Corinthians, and a time has passed where they have put this man out, and he has repented, and look what he says. He now says, I was so hard on you with that letter that for a while I thought I was too hard, and I kind of repented. Verse 9, Now I rejoice not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance.

For you were made sorry after a godly manner, that you might receive damage by us in nothing. You were made sorry after a godly manner. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.

But the sorrow of the world worketh death. And I want to show you the difference tonight. The sorrow of the world tonight goes on medicine, or commits suicide.

That's what it does. They are overwhelmed. They can't handle it.

They walk up against a wall. The door doesn't open, and many a person in the sorrow of the world commits suicide. I saw a picture in the paper this morning.

I think it was of those Hasidic Jews in Jerusalem after that bus was blown up yesterday, or whatever. And there was a picture of a man, you know, in a beard and a black hat, in the middle of the picture just crying out in anguish, you know, for the death of these bodies. And another bombing, which, how many have there been? Fifteen or so this year.

And it just keeps on going as the animosity and the tension and the terrorism continues to reign in that country. But they have the sorrow of the world. That's all they have.

All they can do is grit their teeth and clench their fists and wail and cry. And if they can't handle it, go end their lives. That's what many people do with the sorrow of the world.

But repentance is not that way. Repentance is also a cry of anguish, where we also say, how could I have done that? But it ends up saying, Lord, forgive me. I'm sorry, God.

I'm a mess. And I have sinned against Thee. And I'm so sorry, God.

Will You cleanse me with Your blood? Will You forgive me? And we preach repentance in Jesus' name tonight. And it's so different. Because the repentance, the sorrowing under repentance will change you.

You won't have to be the same you were before. God will give you the power to live a different life. You can get up from your knee and walk out of there one ear or two many times.

Or with the burden of sin is gone, repentance will clean the slate, I tell you. If you come to God sorry for your sin, take responsibility for what you've done. And come to the only Savior in the entire universe in time and eternity, which is the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

There is no other name given among men and no other way for salvation or repentance to ever be received than in that name. You must come to Jesus Christ. He shall save His people from their sins.

Don't forget that verse. He shall save His people from their sins. And you come to Jesus Christ, He will save you from your sin.

And if you bring them to Him and cough them up and confess them and give them to Him, God will take them away. Jesus Christ came, sacrificed Himself on the Calvary's cross to take away your sin. Not to be repented of.

I have, even though men backslide, this is interesting. Even though men backslide and go back into sin, I've never heard them get up and say, I'm sorry that I repented. They'll say, I had it for a year.

I had it for six months. I had it for two years and somehow I lost it. They'll say words like that.

But I've never heard them say, oh, I wish I'd have never found God. I wish I'd have never repented of my sin. It gives you a sorrow never to be repented of.

But the sorrow of the world worketh that. For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye sorry after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you. Look at that word.

You see, when you repent of your sins, it shores you up and brings a carefulness. You begin to think, I never want to do that again. And you begin to be careful.

And the man who drinks doesn't go into the bar for a hamburger anymore. Because he wants carefulness, see. And he stays away from the swimming holes and the places where he fed his lusts before, you see.

He doesn't go to those places anymore because it wrought a carefulness in him, see. Oh, a person is careful because they don't want to go back into that same sin and back in that same wallowing in the mire that he was before. True repentance is a turning from sin and brings a carefulness not to go back to the former sins that you were in.

And then he says, yea, what clearing of yourself. And here we have apologies are made. Restitution is made.

Letters are written. Phone calls are made. Brother, sister, friend, neighbor, can you forgive me for the way I've been, the way I acted? Parents go to their... children go to their parents.

Married children go to their parents. I had a couple just not long ago. And they were nice.

Looked like nice Christian couple. Dressed like Christian. The wife kind of flopped on the couch and said, could you just explain the plan of salvation to me? And I was a bit shocked because I thought she would have heard it.

In the church she went to. But I explained it to her again. And she got on her knees and accepted the Lord and repented of her sin and accepted the Lord as her Savior.

Her husband was sitting by and he had mocked her and said, ah, you're going to be one of them holy rollers, are you? And all that. But by that time he was in tears and he got on his knees and he repented. And then they said, you know what? We lied to the parents.

We lied to the church. We committed fornication. We didn't want anybody to know it.

So we lied our way through our wedding. And here they were a year later or so, a baby was born. And they had covered the whole thing and no one knew.

What shall we do? I said, well, first of all, if you have lied like that to the church and lied to your parents, I want you to go back and sit down with your parents and tell them what you did. And that's exactly what they did. They made an appointment, went back to see their parents, sat down with them, and just opened up and spilled it out.

Yea, what clearing of yourselves? When God comes, we clear ourselves. When God comes, the hidden things of darkness are manifest. And they come to the surface.

And that is what true turning away from sin is. We want to clear ourselves in the same way with the church. And you know the sad thing in some of these cases, I can't get the churches to receive them back to hear their testimony.

They think they've been so bewitched by some new doctrine that they don't even want to let them come back and make wrong things right. And I tell you, that's sad. Churches are way off the track.

And they don't want to hear a penitent person come back to make his wrongs right. But that's part of repentance, is a clearing of yourself. Then it says, yea, what indignation.

And that word is a word of anger. And it's talking about a righteous anger. It's talking about a bit of a riling in your spirit that says, Whoa! I'll never want to go that way again.

I don't want nothing to do with that anymore. And it causes people, like the one man said sitting back here the other night, to take a barrel of whiskey or a barrel of wine and pull the plug and let it drain down through the ground. Dump the whiskey into the sink.

Flush the cigarettes down the toilet. That's when God comes. That's what we can do.

That's what we can do. Why? Simply because we have that indignation that we're going to clean house. If you take a man, put the whiskey back in the cupboard, he might get thirsty sometimes, keeps the cigarettes in the pocket or back in the drawer and says, I don't know if I can handle this or not.

I'm going to try and quit. But keeps the cigarettes in the drawer. They don't get anywhere.

Because they hit a weak moment. And like Abner Coffin used to say, he threw the pipe, but he watched it where it landed. So he could go find it in the field again if he got that enough.

And that's exactly what he did. But one day he got that indignation in him and he closed his eyes and threw the pipe. That makes the difference.

And I tell you that if you want to get out of sin tonight, if you want to turn from your sin and repent of it, you need some indignation in your repentance. We are too flat. We are too weak.

And we don't have enough oomph to do it. What needs to be done. That's what Paul was talking about.

It seems like that's what this man in Corinth did. I mean, he said, I'm done with this thing. I am finished with it.

It would be interesting to know what all that man did to clear that matter. But he got clear and they brought him back into the church. Well, that's what the recommendation that Paul gave.

Yea, what fear! And this is why we cannot have the stuff in the drawers or in the closet or down in the basement. Because we have a fear. We fear God and we fear our own weakness.

Oh, that we would go back to it if we protected it and keep it in a corner somewhere, you see. And so there again I say, burn your bridges behind you! If you mean business with God, if you want to come to God halfway tonight, I can't promise you're going to get very far. You might have a little plant too that might spring up according to Jesus' words there in Matthew.

But when the sun comes out with a burning heat, you'll wither and you won't have the power to live it. Yea, what vehement desire! Look at those words! My, they're strong words! Look at them! Vehement desire! I don't know a better word than the German word ernst. Than for that.

But that's what it is. It's a vehement desire. I mean, you will do whatever to get run away from that thing.

It's like Paul said to Timothy, flee your lust! Run from them! If men would do that today, they could save themselves from them. But they stop and look at them. And then they fall.

Yea, what zeal! There's another word. Or yes, after vehement desire comes the word zeal. And then we have another real strong one that says revenge.

I want to tell you something. We've been pretty hard on anger. And that's good.

Don't you get angry at your wife, at your children. You deal with it if you're angry. But you need to get angry with sin.

And angry with your evil habits. And angry with your spots of temptation. And the way they pull you down.

You get some anger there. Righteous anger! Revenge! And that simply means something has to rise up within you that you will save. Strong words.

You know, against this thing that has so captivated you and so changed your life. Or so pulled you down. You know, repentance is not waiting on God to remove them.

I remember years ago I was in Kentucky having meetings back in the early 1990s. And there were a bunch of fellows sitting in the back of the room. And they had this philosophy that they can't do anything so that God would bail them out of their sins.

And they were in horrible sins, we found out later. Of the worst kind. They should have been in jail.

But they sat back there rocking on their rocking chair waiting until God would come and take it away. And telling each other that we can't help ourselves. We have to wait until God just comes down and takes it away.

I'm telling you, you can do something about it. You can stir up yourselves to get a hold of God. You can fast and pray.

In the Old Testament, that is clearly marked out. That individuals are called upon to fast. And you know, when we fast for a couple of days, we break down the hardness of human pride.

And it weakens the constitution of man, you know, to be so proud and so arrogant. And somehow we get real weak in that constitution. We come to God and say, we need help.

And it weakens the strength of man in himself when he fasts. He can go alone into a room somewhere and he can plead with God to give him repentance. You know, the Bible talks about the gift of repentance.

The gift of repentance. And sometimes we simply need it like we need the gift of faith. Like this man said, I couldn't believe.

I just couldn't hardly believe. And God had to give him some faith and help him along with his faith. But he had to put a little seed in there and choose to believe first and then God gave it to him.

And that's the same way that he will with this. The gift of repentance. You simply say, God, I'm going to turn from everything I know and you'll find out God will give you the ambition and the ability to turn away from a lot more.

Don't you wait on God to come and just remove him saying you can't do anything. You can do something. I think that is found in Jonah chapter 3 when Jonah went to Nineveh and preached to the Ninevites for days that God is going to destroy this city in 40 days.

And I just want to read this to you in Jonah chapter 3 verse 7. And he caused it to be proclaimed this is the king of Nineveh. The word came unto the king of Nineveh and he arose from his throne. He laid his robe from him.

Get rid of your pomp and your royalty like he did. And covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his noble saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything.

Let them not feed nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily unto God. Yea, let them turn every one from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.

Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not? Can you imagine how that sounded? Everybody went to fast, but they would take all the feed away from all the cows and all the heifers and all the animals. And can you imagine horses neighing and cows mooing and

dogs barking because they were hungry and men were wailing before God because they were expecting destruction to come in 40 days? Can you imagine the scene that that was and the earnestness that that city of Nineveh put forth? And then he said, who can tell? He didn't even demand it of God. He said, maybe God will have mercy on this whole situation.

And God saved that city and it's no wonder He did. Look at the earnestness that they brought forth in order to repent and turn to God. And then you and I, you know, we want to push buttons.

Christianity. Why don't it happen? That's how we say it. What's wrong? I thought He would come and flood me with joy and just take all my sins away.

How come I'm still tempted to smoke? People say. Well, you don't have any promise that you'll never be tempted again. You just have a promise that the temptation won't be so great that you can't bear it.

But some temptation is good for you. It's a testing to see whether you're going to be strong and resistant, because you'll need that to go through the rest of your life. And then let me turn you to Mark in closing.

Chapter 9. Mark chapter 9. I don't know what you think this means. It's also in Matthew 5. The same passage is given to us two, three times in the Gospels. But in Mark chapter 49 it says, If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out.

It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into hellfire. And some of the other Scriptures say, If thy foot offend thee, cast it out. If thy hand offend thee, cut it off.

What do you suppose that means? We have never known the Christian church to provide those services for men to hack off their hands or pluck out their eyes because they are having trouble with sin. But you know what it does mean? It says it is that serious. It is that serious.

That it would be better for you to pluck out your eye than let your eye take you to hell if you can't turn from it. It'd be better for you to hack off your hand than let your hand take you to hell if you can't stop stealing and stop doing wrong things with your hand. He's simply saying that's how important it is to turn from your sin.

And how important it is. Like I say, I don't know of any Christian group that does it, and I don't think that it's necessary to do it. I think God has given us the provision to get rid of sin by repentance.

But it's a vehement thing. It's not a light thing. And it's dead earnest.

If you're just wallowing around and around and around in the same sin and you can't change, you need help. And that's what I want to close with tonight. Repentance.

It was the message of John the Baptist when he came on the scene. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus started his earthly ministry a short time later, and his first message was, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Well, he lived his three and a half years, said that numerous times in his ministry, gave his life for our sins, rose from the dead three days later, ascended into glory 40 days later, and 10 days later after that, the Holy Ghost gets poured out at Pentecost and lights on Peter, and Peter rises up and says, men and brethren, repent! And be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins, that your sins may be

blooded out. They all three preached the same word. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And that's my message to you tonight. Have you ever thoroughly repented of your sinful nature? And your sins? By that, I mean that you have declared yourself a sinner before God. I not only have committed some sins, but I am a sinner.

The Bible says in Colossians 2.11 and Romans 6.6, knowing this, our old man is crucified, that the body of sin might be destroyed. That's talking about the sin nature. That thing that drives you to continue to sin night after night, day after day, and you can't stop.

You confess your sin nature and your sins. And your sins. If we confess our sins, He is faithful just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And God is able to change you and to take your sin away. But you must repent of your sins tonight and give them to God. And I promise you, God will come.

If he came to a bunch of heathen in Nineveh in an Old Testament setting before Jesus came, he'll come to you in a New Testament gospel where it needs to be preached over the whole world to all men. And if you're hearing the gospel tonight, come to Jesus Christ and repent of your sinful nature and your sin against God and how you have violated his commandments and grieved his Holy Spirit. And sin against the God of heaven.

And ask God to forgive you and God to cleanse you and God to change you. After a season of repentance, then you ask the Lord Jesus to come into your heart and give you the Holy Spirit and to make you a new person and to cause the old life and the old man to pass away and die and a new one to be resurrected with Christ. And you could be a new child of God.

You could be born again and you can let go of those sins of your flesh and the sins of your life. You do it with earnestness, with vehemence, with zeal, with a desire to clear yourself, with a desire to, with a righteous indignation that rises up and say, I will get out of this mess. By the grace of God, you can't do it yourself, but God will help you that you can do it.

Shall we bow our heads for prayer? Father in heaven, I come to you tonight in Jesus' name. I thank you, God, for the gift of repentance that you're willing to give on all them that are bound in sin tonight. I pray, dear God, that you would bring them forth tonight or help them to get ahold of someone to help to pray with them and to help them through this birth into a new life.

Oh, I thank you, dear God, for everyone that is here tonight. I know this message is needed and thousands of people need to hear it, but they are not here tonight. Oh, God, would you bless everyone that is here that they can hear the word of God and give their heart and life to you.

I pray your convicting power, the Holy Spirit to be upon them and to move men and women to serve you and to find you. I pray it in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

Shall we have an invitation hymn? Shall we stand together and have an invitation hymn? And if you feel like you want to take that step tonight and want to repent of sins and want somebody to pray with you, you come forward. Kneel down here on the carpet. Somebody will take you out to private rooms in the back in the trailer and pray with you and help you through this thing.

If you have never been born again, you want to be a Christian, you want to get this thing cleared tonight, you come forward. Somebody will pray with you and help you. You respond to God with the needs of your life and the sins of your soul and you give them to God in repentance, turning from them, returning back to God that made you, being able to live a godly life by the Spirit of God.

Shall we sing? Just come. Anyone wants to come. There's someone here who needs Jesus tonight.

We won't tarry long, but if you want the Lord, you come. Kneel here. Give your heart, your life to God.

Shall we sing another? Amen. Shall we bow our heads for prayer? Father in heaven, we want to thank you for your word. Thank you, dear God, for repentance.

And I pray, God, as souls are searching, counting the cost, looking at their life and the cost of the change that you're asking them to make, I pray for them, God, give them the courage to take that step tonight. We just look to you, Lord, and throughout the night, tomorrow, you may continue to work in this community. Oh, that the fire of God would spread in this community and many, many be touched by your presence.

We pray it in Jesus Christ's name. Amen. See you all later.

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