

Yosemite Bible Conference 1996-02 More Like Christ

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of reflecting the virtues of Christ, such as gentleness, self-control, humility, and compassion, in the lives of believers.

Duration: 47:52

Scripture: Psalm 30:11, Isaiah 42:3, Matthew 5:4, Matthew 19:14, Romans 9:25, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 Peter 2:9

Topics: "Christ Likeness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher, Robert Chapman, emphasizes the importance of having a servant's attitude. He acknowledges that serving others is not our natural inclination, but as believers, we are called to serve. The preacher shares a personal anecdote about being interrupted while writing a book to take care of his sick son, highlighting the unexpected opportunities for service that arise in our lives. He also mentions examples of other individuals, like a wealthy man doing dishes at a skid row mission and a Bible school professor cleaning up a mess in the men's room, who demonstrate a humble and servant-hearted approach to life. The sermon encourages listeners to follow the example of Jesus, who served others selflessly, and challenges them to consider if they are willing to change and embrace a servant's heart.

Transcript

Could we turn, please, this morning to 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 9. 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 9. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, who once were not a people, but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Another translation of verse 9 says that you may show forth the excellency of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. I like that, that you may show forth the excellency.

In other words, that the life of the Lord Jesus might be reproduced in us. And, of course, that's what we're talking about this week, isn't it? How we might show forth to the world the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. We used to sing that chorus, Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me, all his wondrous compassion and purity.

All thou spirit divine, all my being refined, till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. We've been thinking about some of the virtues of the Lord Jesus, and we've been finding them reproduced in the lives of his people. And we've seen it here at the camp.

You can't be without Christians without seeing the virtues of the Savior in his people. It's really wonderful. But while we see individual excellencies in the people of God, what must it be like to see them all in one person, the Lord Jesus? I think that's wonderful.

You wonder what it's going to be like when we first see him. What are you going to do when you first see the Lord Jesus? I hope we'll be able to throw away all reserve and just lavish our love and affection on him in a way that we have never done before. Well, I think today, first of all, of the gentleness of the Savior.

Isaiah's words were fulfilled in the Messiah. He said, a bruised reed he will not break, nor a smoking flax he will not quench. It's beautiful, isn't it? A bruised reed he will not break.

A contrite heart, he loves it. And smoking flax he will not quench. Wherever the Lord Jesus sees a spark of faith, he fans it into a flame, his gentleness.

When he found those who were suffering under the blows of life, he treated them with gentleness. It's wonderful. The Lord Jesus gives beauty for ashes, doesn't he? The oil of joy for mourning.

And the spirit of praise for the garment of heaviness. He was gentle, wasn't he, when the mothers of Jerusalem brought their children to him and the disciples were, they were troubled. Get these kids out of here.

They were an annoyance and a distraction, but not to the Lord Jesus. He said, now suffer the little children to come unto me. Forbid them not, for if such is the kingdom of God.

I often think of how gentle H.A. Ironside was. Oftentimes at the end of the meeting, people would, nitpickers would come and try to pick a quarrel with him. It wouldn't be any great fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith.

Some minor thing. And he would look at the brother and he would say, Well, brother, when we get to heaven, one of us is going to be wrong. And perhaps it will be me.

And you know, that was the end of all arguments. You can't argue with a person who has that spirit. Another time, a sister came to him and said, Dr. Ironside, will I have my dog in heaven? Now, what would you say if somebody asked you that? Will I have my dog in heaven? Well, he could have said, you speak like one of the foolish women.

You know, he could have said that from direct, it was scripture, direct from the book of Job. But he didn't say that. She said, will I have my dog in heaven? He said, yes, madam, if you want him.

And I think that was the perfect answer. The perfect answer. Self-control, another of the wonderful attributes of the Lord Jesus.

He practiced self-control. When you think of a perfect person coming into this world and putting up with a bunch of bumbling disciples, every time they'd open their mouth, they'd put their foot in it. They were always saying and doing the wrong thing.

You know, it's wonderful when God saves us by his grace and we really do become new creatures in Christ Jesus and we start to notice this difference. That we begin to practice self-control. I had a letter from a missionary in Quito, Ecuador recently.

He said, I was involved in a motor car accident last month. A woman turning left from the right-hand lane hit the side of my car. When we got out of our cars, she began to scream at me.

She insulted me. She insulted my race. She insulted my nation.

Then she slapped me on the face. I returned to my car and drove away, thanking God for the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is self-control.

There was no damage to my car, but I have to confess that for the next few days I found myself wondering how I might have responded if it weren't for the Lord. A couple of years ago I was driving in Europe, driving with Andreas Linder. We were coming down from Salzburg to Munich.

And as we came near Munich, we came to a traffic light. There were cars stopped at the traffic light in front of us. And Andreas pulled up, but he didn't pull up right behind the car in front of him.

He left a space between. Well, the man behind him became very, very irritated and very, very incensed. And he got out of his car and he came over to the window where Andreas was.

And a torrent of German abuse came out of his mouth. And Andreas sat there and listened to it all. And he didn't say a word.

The light turned green and we drove off. Self-control, huh? I said to him, Andreas, I really have to commend you for your Christlike response to that man. He said to me, if that had happened before I was saved, I would have flattened him.

And it was true, too. It would have been true. He was in the special unit of the German army doing service down in Libya.

In fact, he doesn't talk too much about some of the service that he did. So, that's wonderful, isn't it? To see self-control in the lives of people where very little of it is displayed in the world about us. How is your self-control quotient these days? I have no doubt that in getting ready for a conference like this and even in driving down, there were plenty of opportunities for what's in the glass to spill out.

And I know that the Lord wants us really to exercise this wonderful spirit of self-control. The Lord Jesus did not retaliate. His meekness in enduring insult and shame and pain at the hands of people he created should really leave a lasting impression on us, shouldn't it? It's marvelous when you think of that.

He created it. The very breath we're breathing right now, he's giving it to us right now. And yet he came down to this earth bearing shame and scoffing rude.

In my place condemned he stood, sealed my pardon with his blood. Hallelujah! What a Savior! The Lord Jesus did not bite back. He did not fight back.

And we're to follow his example. People say, well, that was all right for Jesus. He's perfect.

He has all power, but we're different. But that can't be used as an excuse. Paul says, Philippians 4, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

In other words, anything he wants me to do, he'll give me the power to do it. And so that wipes away the excuse from under my feet. It was said of Archbishop Cranmer, Do him a displeasure and he will be your

friend for life.

Boy, that's Christianity, isn't it? Do him a displeasure and he will be your friend for life. And in the very last message he ever preached, he said, I had never had any greater pleasure in all my life than to forgive and forget injuries and to show kindness to those who sought evil for me. It was said of Abraham Lincoln, he had a short memory for injuries, but he never forgot a kindness.

A short memory for injuries, but he never forgot a kindness. That's the way it should be with us. What we do for others, we should keep under our feet.

What others do for us, we should keep close to our hearts. The proper Christian balance. Dr. Ira Scudder was a medical missionary in India for many years.

And one day a Muslim lady came to her and said, Why is it that you don't ever seem to lose your temper when others are abusive to you? And a Hindu woman was listening and she interrupted and she said, Don't you know why? It's because Dr. Ida's God is patient and loving and she's like her God. Wonderful, isn't it? That's showing forth the excellency of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. For many years there was a missionary in Amman, Jordan.

His name was Roy Whitman. And Roy went out there, a marvelous minister. He saw, I don't know how many assemblies planted there in the country of Jordan, and especially in Amman.

And then, you know, U.S. denominations came out there and they wanted a work in Jordan. And how do you start a work in Jordan? Well, they would go to the assemblies and they would get some of these national elders and they would say, Look, come with us and we'll pay you \$10,000 a year. You know, it really wasn't fair.

It really wasn't fair. \$10,000 a year to those men. There was no hope that they would ever get that in this life.

And many of them did. Many of them left the assemblies and went to become a pastor in one of these denominational churches. And what did Roy Whitman do? He just sealed his lips.

He never said a word. And, you know, the interesting thing is that some of those denominational missionaries that came over from this country were won over to the assembly principles, as seen in the New Testament, just because he refused to fight back. He refused to retaliate.

We mentioned before that Christians are supposed to be an alternative society for the world so that they might know that there's something better. Somebody said this. Let's ask why it is that Christians are to be non-retaliatory.

The reason is that we lose our credibility as the alternative society if we behave exactly as other people do. That's good, isn't it? If we behave as the world does, we lose our credibility as the alternative society. Part of our witness for Christ and his saving grace is an attitude of meekness.

In other words, the entire mission of the church, the witness of the gospel, is affected if Christians give in to retaliation or revenge. Yesterday we mentioned that two of the attributes of the Lord Jesus that are commonly seen in his people are love and compassion. Christ and compassion, those two words go together.

You can't read the gospels without seeing his compassion shining through on every page. He had compassion on the multitude, and he sent the disciples forth to them to teach them the word of truth. He had compassion on the multitude, and he fed five thousand.

He had compassion on another multitude, and he fed four thousand. He had compassion on blind men. He had compassion on lepers.

Compassion on demon-possessed people. Compassion on a mother who had just lost her son all through his life. Compassion, compassion.

We see his compassion as the good shepherd, don't we, who went out to find that sheep that was lost. We see his compassion as the good Samaritan, who really endangered his own life in order to help that man down on the road. And we see his compassion as that father of the wayward son, the prodigal son.

We see his tears of compassion at the grave of Lazarus, and we see his tears of compassion as he wept over the city of Jerusalem. What a scene, huh? God the Son down on this earth, weeping over the souls of men. He wept alone, and men passed by the men whose sins he bore.

They saw the man of sorrows weep. They'd seen him weep before. They asked not who those tears were for.

They asked not whence they flowed. Those tears were for rebellious men, their source, the heart of God. The eye of God is downward bent, still ranging to and fro.

Where'er in this wide wilderness there roams a child of woe. And if the rebel chooses wrath, God mourns his hapless lot. Deep breathings from the heart of God, I would, but you would not.

And I'd just like to pause there and say, you know, it's inevitable that in a group this size there are some who have never taken their stand for the Lord Jesus Christ. Just think of the Son of God weeping over you today. He's saying, I would.

Will you? Will you come bow at the feet of the Savior, repenting of your sins and acknowledging him as your Lord, turning yourself over to him to save, keep, and satisfy you? The Christ of Compassion. Many of you know Paul Sandberg, and I often use him as an illustration. He's a great singer and well-known in the Christian musical world.

One day he went into a coffee shop, and he sat on a stool there at the counter, sat beside a fellow named Freddy. And Paul, witness to Freddy, struck up a friendship with him. And in time, that fellow trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

It wasn't long after that that he was stricken with a fatal disease. Paul Sandberg cupped up his friendship with him. Freddy had to be taken to a convalescent hospital where the care was something less than desirable.

For the nurses' aides weren't really doing the work that they should be doing. Paul Sandberg would go there. He would change the sheets.

He would bathe Freddy. He would do all the things that others should have been doing for him. And the night that Freddy died, Paul Sandberg was holding him in his arms, whispering words of Scripture into his ears.

Dear friends, that's Christ, isn't it? Reproduced in the life of one of his own. What a tribute to the Savior such action is. How we need that kind of compassion.

How we need to pray, Let me look on the crowd as my Savior did, Till my eyes with tears grow dim. Let me view with pity the wandering sheep, And love them for love of Him. There was a young couple in Northern California, known to the Wilsons, Gary and Beth, very well.

They had five children of their own. Their oldest boy had to have a heart monitor for the first three years of his life because he tended to have apnea. He tended to stop breathing.

That little fellow's been in the hospital 34 times. Another of their boys, named Steve, was born with a hole in his heart. Five children of their own.

They adopted three children. And those three babies that they adopted all had one thing in common. They all had Down Syndrome.

Isn't that something like the Lord Jesus would have done? I think it is. There must be a special reward for people like that. We can show compassion, the compassion of Christ, by standing by people who are in a tragic situation and offering encouragement and hope.

Jesus is the one who does this. He's the friend that sticks closer than a brother. There was a young fellow in Western Michigan, and he was stricken with cancer.

And he had to undergo, of course, the chemotherapy, and it made him very, very nauseated. But also he began to lose his hair. And the time came when the chemotherapy was stopped, and he was going to go back to high school.

And he dreaded the thought of going back to high school with just little patches of hair on his head. But when he got there, something very wonderful had happened. His Christian friends had all shaved their heads bald so that he wouldn't feel different from the rest of us.

It says, And with a wise and ingenious grace, these teenagers had thought of a way to ease their friend's pain and to help him fit in. I like that word, the wise and ingenious grace. We need that, don't we? We need an ingenious grace to think of things like that, to show the compassion of the Savior to those with whom we come in contact.

Meekness or humility. Another grace of the Lord Jesus. Meekness or humility.

That word meekness is closely related to the words of the Lord Jesus, I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your soul. It has the idea of being broken. It has the idea of that young horse that has at last agreed to take the harness, and you see him plodding along, his head up and down, just looking straight ahead.

He's broken. He has agreed to take the harness. The Lord Jesus calls upon us to be like that broken young animal.

Jesus was humble from the very outset. Imagine the Son of God. Imagine God incarnate being born in a cattle shed with a feed trough for his bed.

It's really enough to blow you away, isn't it? His birth did not borrow any glory from this world. You mothers think of when your baby first came along, how you repapered the room or repainted the room, and you had that new crib or bassinet, you know. Think of the glory that child came into.

Dear friends, your Savior came into a cattle shed. Really marvelous. He was humble in his life.

Not a trace of pride or arrogance about the Lord Jesus. Not a fraction of a superiority complex. I think that's wonderful.

He didn't have a fraction of a superiority complex. The person who was really superior, really perfect in all his ways. And, of course, the best example of his humility was when he humbled himself and became obedient even to the death of the cross.

What thou, Savior, meek and lowly, and will such a worm as I, weak and sinful and unholy, dare to lift my head on high? It's good for us to know our correct size, really. There was a very prominent man, and he was once caught doing a very menial job, and somebody said to him, You're too big a man to do that. And he said, No, I'm not.

I'm just the right size. That's why I say it's good for us to know our correct size. The poet has said, Oh, I am so unlike to Christ, whose likeness I would gain, I in his presence am so dim, comparison is vain.

His humble, meek, and gentle ways I long to make my own, that rightly I may show his praise and live for him alone. Isaac Newton was one of the most brilliant minds of his day. He was, of course, in the genius category, one of the most obvious geniuses that this species has ever produced.

In fact, he was such a genius that Alexander Pope wrote these words of him, Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night. God said, Let Newton be, and all was light. Well, that's quite a tribute to pay to a mere man, isn't it? I'll say that again.

Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night. God said, Let Newton be, and all was light. But listen to what he thought about himself.

I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself now and then in finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary. For the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me. That's true humility, isn't it? You know, I'm just a little boy playing at the shore, and here's a smoother pebble than some of the others, or a shell that's different from all of the others.

That's what he thought of himself. Compare that to a man of the world, to Oscar Wilde. He came to New York, and when he stood before the customs man, he said, I have nothing to declare but my genius.

Servanthood, another grace of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus was the ideal servant who put his ear to the door, and he said, I love my master. I will not go out free.

It all went through his ear and his hands and his feet as well. He was a perfect servant. His whole life was lived in service to God and in service to man.

Absolutely amazing. Amazing to think of the creator and sustainer of the universe leaving the palace of glory and coming down here and putting on him the towel, the apron of a slave, and getting down and washing the disciples' feet. You know, even for one man to do it with another man in this world usually

causes some, no, no, you can't do that to me.

But think of God himself doing it with the creatures whom his hands had made. He was served by myriads of angels in heaven above, and yet he came down here to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. Paul vividly describes his self-abasement when he says, though he was personally equal with God, he didn't feel that that positional equality was something he had to hold on at all costs.

He's the one who could say, I am among you as he who serves. There was not one act for self in all of Christ's life. There was not one act of self in all of Christ's life.

He was always at the service of others. I tell you, we rightfully sing, we wonder at thy lowly mind, and fain would like thee be that all our rest and pleasure find in union, Lord, with thee. Though in the very form of God with heavenly glory crowned, thou didst a servant's form assume, beset with sorrows round.

And he's still saying, as he said on that fateful night, I have given you an example that you should do as I have done unto you. Borden of Yale came from a wealthy family, multi-millionaires, and though a son of wealth, he was sometimes seen doing dishes down at a Skid Row Mission. A Bible school professor was not above getting down on his knees in the men's room and cleaning up the flood of water that they had left in order to go off to class.

Robert Chapman, he found great delight in polishing the shoes of his guests after they had retired for the night. It's not natural for us to do this. I recently read a book by Steve Farrar, it's called Finishing Strong, and he points out that this attitude of service is not really our knee-jerk reaction.

I'd like to share this with you. He's writing a book, and he says in the book, let me ask you a question. Do you want to change? Are you willing to change? Are you willing to become a servant? Unless I miss my guess, this serving stuff does not come natural to you.

It's not your knee-jerk reaction. It's certainly not in mind. But you know what? I really don't have an option.

I'm called to do it. And then he says, do you believe God has a sense of humor? He says, I can guarantee you that he does. In fact, let me prove it to you.

Do you see the last sentence of the previous paragraph? I'm called to do it. He said, just as I wrote that down, I heard a voice say, Dad! Dad! He said, I walked out of my office to see my son vomiting in the hallway between his bedroom and the bathroom. And since I'm here along with him, the job of serving fell to me.

In the last 90 minutes, when I should have been completing that chapter, I've cleaned up my son, put him to bed, cleaned up the vomit off the carpet, gone to the grocery store, rented a carpet shampooer, shampooed the carpet. Well, you get the idea. It's now 9.48 p.m. The completed chapter has to be at FedEx by 10.30 p.m. So, FedEx closes in 42 minutes.

When my son threw up, my first reaction was, where is Mary? Actually, that's not quite right. He said by first reaction, where is Mary? She promised on our wedding day to be faithful in sickness and in health. But this is sickness.

He said I didn't say that out loud, but that's what I was thinking. After I cleaned Josh up and got him into bed, I looked at my watch and noticed that the time was quickly coming when no man can work. FedEx

would close.

I began to think, where is that woman and what is she doing? I don't have time to clean this crud up. I have to get this chapter done and get it to FedEx. I have to finish this section on servanthood so that these guys can be the men of God that God wants them to be.

Where is she? I'm about ready to throw up myself after getting this stuff off the carpet. I'm supposed to be doing something important for the kingdom of God instead of getting recycled hot dogs and chili off a carpet. He said when I finally sat down to figure out where I left off, I noticed the last paragraph that I had written.

Let me ask you a question. Do you want to change? Are you willing to change? Are you willing to become a servant? Unless I missed my guess, the serving stuff may not come naturally for you. It may not be your knee-jerk reaction.

The situations in your life, it's certainly not in mine. Do you know what? I really don't have an option. I'm called to do it.

His words came back to him after that experience. It's an authentic mark of the Christian faith when we stoop to serve. Forbearance.

We talked yesterday about long-suffering. This is how I react when people are abusive to me. Forbearance.

How I put up with other people. You know, the wisdom of God is really seen, the manifold wisdom of God is seen in the average assembly or local church. The way God puts people together to develop the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

Oftentimes we wish that everybody was like ourselves. The same personality as ourselves. Everything would be perfect, you know.

God doesn't do it that way. Sometimes there are compulsive talkers in the assembly, you know. They never come up for air.

Monopolize all your time. There are misfits in the assembly. People who want to monopolize your time.

And some, no doubt, have various forms of physical and mental problems. Forbearance is how I deal with people like that. And you know, I make this my prayer all the time.

Lord, if I could only look on people and see them as you see them. Because he loved them very, very much. They're dear to God.

And they're there for a real purpose for my life. To develop the fruit of the Spirit in my life. Forgiveness.

Forgiveness. Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. That didn't automatically forgive them, did it? That didn't forgive Judas.

I think it's good for us to remember that. Although he said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. There still has to be repentance before the prayer becomes effective.

And if you're here today and your sins have never been washed away by the blood of Christ, you have to come in repentance. Acknowledging what God says about you is true. Then you receive that marvelous forgiveness of sin.

I wonder if there's somebody here today and you're just going on in the terrible burden and shame and weight of sin. It is so unnecessary. So unnecessary.

One of the marvels to me of Christian salvation is to know that the past can be blotted out in Christ. That when I come and bow the knee to Jesus Christ and say, I have sinned against you. I'm no more worthy to be called your son.

Make me as one of your hired servants. God says, as far as the east is from the west, so far have I removed your sins from you. It's wonderful, isn't it? They're buried in the sea of God's forgetfulness.

God looks upon a child of God and he can't find a single sin in him for which to punish him with eternal death. Because that person is in Christ. And God sees him in Christ and accepts him on that basis.

The forgiveness of God. And of course, there's another kind of forgiveness. After we're saved, we need another kind of forgiveness.

We receive judicial forgiveness when we're saved. That means that the penalty of all of our sins, past, present and future, is gone. But just walking through a world like this, we contract defilement and we need cleansing along the way.

And that's what John meant when he said, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That's parental forgiveness. God is now my Father and I come to him every day for cleansing from the defilement of sin.

In my life. And forgiving others, there are some minor wrongs that we can just forget, you know. A lot of things we can just forget in life.

But God wants us to have a forgiving heart. Jesus said, take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him.

If he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, I repent, you shall forgive him. Years ago, there was a couple serving in Angola.

Her name was Mandy Turner. Her husband had been out all day in evangelistic work. She waited at night for him to come home, but he never came home.

Church parties were sent out the next day. And they found his car overturned in a ditch by the side of the road, and they found his body in the middle of the road stripped naked. And it was a terrible sorrow to this dear woman.

She and her husband had poured out their lives for the African people. And it particularly grieved her. She was, of course, brokenhearted that her husband was killed.

But to think that the Africans would come to an accident and strip the car and strip the body of her husband after all their lives being poured out for them. I suppose a normal thing for Mandy to do would have been return to England and just carry on from there, but she didn't do it. She had a veranda on her

house there, and she had three big barrels on the veranda.

And every day she used to fill these big barrels with heat underneath them. She'd fill them with foods of all kinds. She put rice in them.

She put manioc in them. She put bananas in them. She even put the banana skins in them, because there were streams of refugees coming through all the time.

People who were starving to death. People who were really dying. And when they came along, she just had food for them from these three big barrels on her veranda.

One day she was in the house, and the houseboy came to her and said, there's a man outside that wants to talk to you. And she went out, and he was a tall, strapping Angolan. And he said, Mrs. Turner, I would like to talk to you.

She said, very well. He said, I would like to talk to you privately. She said, very well.

We'll go out on the veranda. They went out on the veranda, and they sat down there. But he didn't sit very long.

He got up, and he went over, and he knelt in front of her, and he put his hands on her feet. On her feet. And he said to her, some time ago, your husband died.

And he said, I know that the report went around that he died in an automobile accident. But he said, he didn't die in an automobile accident. He said, I was one of four men that murdered him.

He said, I don't know where the other men are today. But he said, I've been saved by God's wonderful grace. He said, I have asked the elders of the assembly in my district to baptize me.

But he said, I don't want to be baptized until I have received your forgiveness. He said, I murdered your husband. She knelt down, took the men's hands from off her feet, and held them in her hands.

And she said to him, how could I not forgive you when God has forgiven me for being a member of the world that crucified his son. So the man went away and was baptized and came into fellowship in that assembly. And Mandy Turner spent the rest of her life ministering there to the people of Angola.

Different, that's forgiveness, isn't it? How could I not forgive you when God has forgiven me for being a member of the world that crucified his only son. Shall we pray? Blessed God, how you speak to us through your word, how contemporary your word is to our hearts today. We just pray if there are any in our audience who are still strangers to you and to your grace, that they might come into this wonderful relationship with you.

Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they might know this wonderful life where all things do become new, where all sins are forgiven, and where a new creation has been made in Christ Jesus. Speak to all of our hearts, Lord. Help us to be more and more like the Savior we love.

We pray in his worthy name. Amen.

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