

Times of Refreshing!

Overview

One of our fairly regular attenders, his name is Roger, her name is Cher, and he had to undergo some emergency surgery, something to do with the bowel, and I don't think his problems are over, but he is home and is in recuperation, but I think they have some more things they need to address. So put Roger on your prayer list, won't you? And the Lord bless you as you do. A couple of weeks ago I mentioned the potential that some folks might want to become part of the membership of our little church, and this is not a push, it's an opening of the door.

If you'd like to do that, there's green sheets at the back of the auditorium. You would take one, fill it out, and put it in one of the mailboxes. There's a mailbox on the door in that hallway.

Just fold it and put it there, and we'll see to it. April's not feeling the best today, and no crisis, no emergency, but I said to her, you ought to lay here and recover and get over whatever is troubling you. And so she's just taking a rest, and she'll be tuning in shortly when we start broadcasting on YouTube.

So that's the story from here. It's so good to see you all this morning, and I have a message that I've prepared, and I'm looking forward to sharing it with you this morning. I'm looking at Acts chapter 3, and if the fellows who assist me with mechanical means, etc., I didn't get a chance to speak to you earlier, but if you want to follow me in Acts chapter 3, you're welcome to do so.

I think it'll be easy enough for you to follow me. So I'm going to read what I call the setup. So the main message that I want to share with you this morning is Peter's sermon in Acts chapter 3. He'd already preached a sermon in Acts chapter 2 on the moment of the outpouring of the Spirit upon the church, and Peter knew that there was a question in people's minds, what does this mean? And he preached an eloquent message that was very powerful, and it concluded with, repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins.

And about 50 days, give or take 40 to 50 days passed before a very special event happened when Peter and John went to the gate called Beautiful in Jerusalem, and there they came a fellow who had been crippled from birth. Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour, and a certain man, lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they had laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple, who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked them for alms. Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look here.

He responded to them expecting to receive something in his hand, but Peter said, Silver and gold I have none, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

And he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping. Now some people don't like that, you know, like calm down please, this is a very special place, don't get carried away, but we don't like emotionalism. It's not emotionalism, it's overflowing joy, walking, leaping, and I suggest to you, loudly praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and they knew that it was he who waited for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened unto him. And the lame man which was healed, held on to Peter and John, and all the people ran together unto them in the porch, that is called Solomon's Greatly Wondering. And Peter launches into sermon number two.

Sermon number one was Acts 1, sermon number two. I've never heard anybody preach on this, I'm sure many have, I just wasn't present at the time. And so, I want to speak this morning about Peter's primary objective in preaching this message, and that primary objective, I'll break it down into several parts.

I'm still enamored with the Jewish people, the Jewish nation, that's where I am in my head, that's what's going on in the world today, and that's what this chapter is all about. People have been asking me, do you think this is it? I had a call from some people far away from here, and they said, do you think this is the big one? Is this it? Is this it? You know, the peace accord, to which I reply, it's nice, but it's going to be short-lived. The people that we're trying to make peace with have their own book, they have their own scriptures, and those scriptures do not give them space to relax and give up on such a thing.

And it's that whole disturbance on that side of the world is not about a piece of land called Gaza, and it's not about the poor downtrodden people known as the Palestinians. It's about them, according to their book, attempting world dominance, and one of the biggest problems that they have is these horrible Jews who won't buckle down and pay attention. And there's very trouble with them because in so many ways they're actually related.

The Jews and all of those people of that part of the world, they're actually cousins. They're very, very much related, and I haven't got time to go into all of that, but just, that's not what the message is about this morning, but just to let you know, it's nice that there's peace, but it's not going to last. So Peter's objective, his objective is to call this crowd, who have now gathered and are amazed at this miracle, they're looking for an explanation.

How did this happen? Their eyes are fixed upon Peter and John. They did hear stories, and some of them may have even been present by times when Jesus had worked a miracle, but this Jesus is no longer around us. Here's two more Jesuses.

There's Peter and John. We've seen this guy at the gate called Beautiful for years. He's always been there, and all of a sudden this guy is leaping, shouting, praising God, and we know who was involved in this whole situation because the man, it says, was holding on to Peter and John, shouting, laughing, dancing, but hanging on to them.

So I think that John and Peter became bobbleheads as this fellow could not contain his joy and his excitement at what had happened to him. Why was he holding on to them? Well, he was not an overly educated fellow. Clearly he was a peasant.

Clearly he was a poor man begging for money. He probably had a very, very lean education. He was not a thoroughly biblically knowledgeable fellow.

He didn't really know what was going on. He didn't know who these two chaps were when he begged for money, and he has no idea what's going on except he's giving glory to God, and he's shouting, but he's hanging on to them less. What's really happening is that these fellows have some electricity going through them, and if he were to let go, maybe the electricity would stop, and he'd crumple down on the ground again.

Or maybe he's just hanging on to them to say, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. It doesn't matter. What does matter is that if anybody just happened to show up and wonder what all the hullabaloo is about, they wouldn't have to ask a whole lot of questions except, who is that man that's making such a disturbance? Why is he disturbing? Healed from lame? Who did this? The guys he's hanging on to.

So maybe that's why he's hanging on to them. So here this Peter gets up, and he's going to preach to them, and he's going to call them to repentance. That is his main drive.

The role of Jesus in what just took place is also a primary for him, because in order for them to repent of their sin, they've got to acknowledge Jesus. So his message is going to be about Jesus, but he's going to conclude it with, you need to repent. He's going to explain the miracle as a sign of better things to come.

The better things to come are mentioned right in this sermon when he says, get ready, get ready for the times of refreshing. That word refreshing is, you know, we get refreshed in the summer with a drink of lemonade. That's not what it's talking about, of course.

The time, the season of refreshing he's mentioning and referring to is the coming revival that you and I, no one has seen yet. A revival in Israel of the people looking to God and accepting Jesus. Something that you and I need to acknowledge and reckon with.

The second coming of Christ, not the rapture for the church, but the second coming of Christ does not take place until the Jewish people, the nation of Israel experiences a revival. He came, he came the first time and they rejected him. He's not going to come until they're ready to accept him, and that acceptance of him is called the times of refreshing.

And so here Peter is saying to these people, you actually have a second chance. This miracle that has taken place right here before so many of you in your own eyesight is clearly a sign. Jesus physically has departed, but in his spirit he's still here, and his spirit is resident in us. And so he's going to answer a question. Did we heal him? No, we did not. This is the work of Jesus.

Who's Jesus? They knew very well who he was because he's going to outline for them. So he's aimed to correct their sense of awe. They're thinking this Peter and John have exclusive rights somewhere to a power, but he's got to correct that and educate them and straighten them out.

So in verse 12, Peter sees the excitement of the people and he's hearing what they're saying. He acknowledges in some way, shape, or form that everybody's pointing at Peter and John, and they're explaining to one another how many people could have actually seen it. We don't know, but this man is making such a fuss, it becomes the topic of the day.

And everyone who's trying to explain what might be going on, and some of them were talking about it in second and third and fourth person. In other words, I didn't see it, but that guy told me. And how does he know? Because somebody else told him.

So the story is broadening and it's going on and on, and Peter's going to straighten it out. He's going to straighten it out. He's going to let them know this is Jesus that is doing this, and by the way, he's the one that you guys crucified.

So in verse 12, Peter sees the excitement, and he's energized by the Holy Spirit to become involved, and he answers the people. That's the wording in the King James. When Peter saw it, he answered because he was acknowledging their question.

You men of Israel, why are you wondering about this? Why are you marveling? In essence, he's saying, Jesus did miracles all the time. You tried to get rid of him, but he's back, and he's back here in a wonderful form. We are his representatives.

Why are you marveling at this? Or why do you look so steadfastly and so earnestly upon us, as though we had done something, as though by our power or holiness we made this man to walk? I hasten to say something that's not in my premeditated thoughts. Would to God that people that the Lord raises up in miraculous form are always pointing at Jesus and never expecting any acclaim. They need to put away their big limousines and their aircraft and acknowledge Jesus.

Just acknowledge him. The gospel really gets messed up when people start to act a little over human. So he's pointing, he's pointing to Jesus in his sermon.

Why are you marveling so earnestly on us, as though we by our power or our holiness had made this man to walk? Now in verse 13, he's going to start making the point of who Jesus was and who Jesus is. He begins with a familiar term, the name Abraham. So he's appealing to their historical knowledge.

They all idolized Abraham. They just did, because he was the very first Jew, and he was the reason for their even experiencing God. So he begins with the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his son, Jesus.

I'm quite intrigued by this fact that if you look in some translations, it will say his servant Jesus. This is not strange to me. I spent enough time in other cultures that I know this part, that the eldest son in a family is acknowledged as the primary servant to the father.

He does not take the place of servants if they're wealthy enough to have lots of servants. But if there are lots of servants, or even as many as one or two in a wealthy home, the servants will first of all acknowledge the orders of the son. The son is the primary servant.

I've mentioned this heretofore, that I was in a certain country in the Middle East, and as I was sitting with a fellow who was in his forties, visiting in the living room, the daddy walked in the room. He would have been in his sixties, and the moment that the daddy walked in the room, the forty-year-old son leaped to his feet. So I got to my feet as well.

I thought, I guess we're going to salute. I didn't realize what was going on. And the old gentleman, as he sat down, waved his hand like this to say to his son, sit down.

I later talked to that son and said, what was that all about? He said, my position in this house as a son is that I'm servant to my father. Jesus came to serve the wishes of the heavenly father. He said at all times, I don't do anything unless the father prompts me.

I and the father are one. His will is my will. So sometimes you will find in the translation the reference to Jesus, the servant of the father, and at other times, Jesus, the son.

And so what Peter is suggesting to them, the God of the father, God, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, they're with him so far, his son, Jesus. Now, they don't want to acknowledge that. They don't want to hear that because they crucified him.

But he's making the point, how did this miracle take place? It wasn't me, Peter says. It wasn't John. It was Jesus, God, the father, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, his son has performed this.

They were really being called to attention. Now, at this point, when he saw it, he answered them, why are you marveling? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his son. You crucified him.

You, in fact, in Matthew chapter 12, accused this Jesus of working miracles by the power of the devil. This is so interesting. In Matthew 12, when the people said, how did this Jesus work this miracle, the Pharisees, the top dogs of the religious day said, he did it by the power of Beelzebub, which means Satan.

And that was in itself, that statement, that was blasphemy. So they discounted Jesus in Matthew chapter 12, and now it's happened again. Somebody is healed.

The people are marveling, and Peter is warning them, be careful, be careful. You're wondering again, who performed a miracle, and this time it wasn't us. It was the same one that you accused in Matthew 12 of being the devil, this Jesus.

And he's calling them to repent of what they said then. He's calling them to repent of their whole position on the Messiah. So when he saw it, he said, don't marvel.

He said, the God of Abraham, the God of our fathers has glorified his son, Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied him in the presence of Pilate when he was ready to let him go. How did this man get healed? Jesus has done it. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sent his son, and his son has done even this miracle today, but you delivered him up, and you denied him before Pilate.

You're the very villains, you're the very villains that wanted him dead. So it's interesting to kind of step back and look at this whole story. We look at Easter, we think about Jesus on the cross, and that glorious picture, that glorious story of Jesus the sacrificial lamb being slain on our part.

But my mind has been sort of mesmerized during this week, and more so just in the last few hours, why did the Jews hate, why did the Pharisees hate Jesus so very much? What was it that drove them? And the answer is found in the Gospel of John. When Jesus talks about Abraham like he knew him, and they said, what are you talking about? Are you claiming that you knew Abraham way back when? We idolize Abraham, and now you say, oh yeah, he's my friend, he's my buddy. Who do you think you are? And Jesus said, before Abraham was, I am.

Now in our English, we can't grapple with that statement, before Jesus was, before Abraham was, before he existed, I am. But you see, I am is the name of God. Moses said, who shall I say has sent me? And he says, you tell them, I am that I am, that's my name.

So as Jesus is answering, how come you think you know so much about Abraham? Jesus says, I know him, he was my servant. I am that I am. And they, you read it for yourself, they immediately picked up rocks, and they were going to stone him to death.

Now this was an angry crowd. They were going to stone him to death. There wasn't going to be a trial.

There wasn't going to be an investigation. It was clear to everybody standing there, he's guilty. He just claimed that he's God.

That's blasphemy. And they were ready to kill him. And all the way through the Gospels, you hear these top guys saying, we've got to figure out a way to kill him. And we know what he's guilty of, because we caught him. He's guilty of blasphemy. So then there comes a story in my head.

Well, why didn't they stone Jesus? Why didn't these Sanhedrin guys? Now the Sanhedrin were like the House of Commons, but even higher. Like, they were the Senate. They were the Supreme Court. They were the Supreme Court of Israel, and whatever they said went. They could be asked, what should we do? And the Sanhedrin was like the Supreme Court of Israel. So the Supreme Court of Israel had the right, based on blasphemy, to stone Jesus to death.

Why didn't they do it? And why did they take him to Pilate? And who was Pilate? Why would they take him? Because what they were doing was jettisoning Jesus into a civic court. Well, this was a problem that they had. This was a religious problem. Pilate didn't care about blasphemy against God. He didn't even believe in their God. He had nothing to do with it. He wanted nothing to do with it. But they were going to force this Jesus problem onto Pilate. Why? And it comes out when you go back and you read the story that Pilate said, he's your problem.

And they said, he deserves to die, and you know we don't have the authority to execute him. We have lost our privilege of capital punishment. Bottom line, that was a double-sided response, actually, because biblically they did have the right to do so. But the Roman government, in order to control all of the affairs, including the civic affairs—I didn't know this after I had to dig, find out—they had taken away from the supreme court the right and the privilege of killing, of exercising death, capital punishment. They said, no, no, no, you can't do that. It has to go to the prefect.

The prefect was Pilate. Now, Pilate was an employee. He was a Roman guard, but he'd been elevated up into a certain point, and he was over all of Jerusalem and part of Judea, in fact. And the fellow in charge of all that part of the land at the time, his name was Herod. But Herod was the religious, the Jewish side. So the Romans allowed Herod to be their religious representative. They said, we're not going to take everything away. You can have your little king, but he'll do as we tell you. So when Jesus was brought to Pilate for a civic court affair, Pilate says to them, why did you bring him to me? I don't care about your religion, and I don't understand your ideas about this man having committed blasphemy.

It makes no sense. He sends him to Herod. He says, this is a religious problem.

So when Herod meets Jesus, you'll remember, he gets all excited, and he says to Jesus, this is great. I've heard all about you. I was hoping to meet you, but I'm a busy fellow. I didn't have time to get on a horse and go riding and searching the country for you. But my friend Pilate, Pilate was not a friend. They were bitter enemies up until now. Pilate was, he was totally committed to the whole Roman exercise overseeing the country. Herod was just a puppet king, so he couldn't do whatever he wanted to do. He was just a puppet.

He was doing as he was told to do. So Herod looks at him and says, what's this all about? And he starts to mock Jesus and said, king of the Jews, that's what I am. And he says, take him back to Pilate. So he takes him back to Pilate, and Pilate says to the Sanhedrin who represented there, "What have you got against this guy?" He's guilty of blasphemy. You know very well that we can't carry out any kind of punishment for blasphemy. And so then what they did is they framed him.

That's our word. You know, this guy got framed, like Trump got framed for the Russian collusion, blah, blah, blah. Jesus got framed, and this is how they did it. They knew that Pilate would not respond to he's guilty of blasphemy. So what they did do is they said, this man claims he's king of the Jews. That is insurrection. And the people by the thousands are coming to him. They don't go into a description about, well, he heals the sick and he makes bread and fish and all this kind of stuff. No, they just said he's guilty and you've got to kill him.

Pilate eventually washes his hands and says, I'm done. You do what you want. He said to the soldiers, they want him dead, so carry it out. So Pilate was guilty, but he was guilty by the pressure of these guys. So now here is Peter in his sermon saying, this is what you did. You actually framed him.

He was not guilty of anything that you said. You have hurt the son of God, the glorious son of God, the son of Abraham, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. So this is why they hated him so much was that, no, they said they hated him and they wanted to kill him because of blasphemy, but really they were losing their power over the people.

The people were ignoring them now, and they were going to Jesus and saying, you teach us. And they marveled at what he said. They said, we've never heard a man teach the word of God like this man. So they were excited. So you see, the reason why they hated him and the reason why they came up with the sin of blasphemy was because they were losing their power and they could not argue with him. They could not organize it.

They could not deal with what he was saying. So they accused him of treason and they crucified him. So look at this in verse 14. You denied the holy one and the just, the holy one and the just. He's speaking here of the deity of Jesus. You denied the holy one and the just one. You denied the righteous one. I looked it up again this morning and it's recorded in the gospel of John when Pilate says, are you sure you want me to kill your king? And they cried out, he's not our king. We only have one king.

So they overspoke of Herod who was supposed to be their religious king. They said, we only have one king and his name is Caesar, Caesar, Caesar. You crucify this Jesus. And then they said one more thing. We want you to crucify him. His blood be on our hands and his blood be upon our hands of our children. Rejection. You rejected the Savior. Peter didn't go into a lot of detail because these people looking upon him knew far more than's even revealed in his sermon.

They were aware that the morning that Jesus resurrected from the dead, all kinds of Old Testament saints rose from the dead. Do you remember that? There was a resurrection of Old Testament saints. They were all aware also that at the hour that he died, the sky blackened.

Even some of the soldiers said, I can't believe this. This has got to be the son of God. They were also aware that the moment he died, that the curtain, the massive curtain within the temple, was torn from the top to the bottom. And there was no reasonable explanation for such a thing.

People who are historically inclined have done studies about how the curtain was made. And they said, you could put a team of oxen on either side of that curtain and go now and pull, pull, pull. And two teams of oxen could not have torn that veil. But the moment that Jesus died, the veil was torn. What did that mean? You see the veil separated the people from the presence of God. You remember, Moses, I want you to build a tabernacle where you and I and the people, we can be one. I want to be among them. But when the temple was constructed, there were three courts.

There was the outer court, where a sinner could come and identify with an animal that would be slain for his sin. And then there was an inner court, where the priesthood would go and offer things to the Lord. But then there was the Holy of Holies, and even the priesthood could not go into the Holy of Holies but once a year.

And what separated the priest from the Holy of Holies and the inner court was a veil, and it represented the holiness of God. And that veil was torn the very moment that Jesus arose from the dead. And then these people who are now looking at Peter and John and are saying, how did this miracle take place? They were very much aware of the stories.

He's alive. He's alive. The church was enamored and taken up with the glory of the presence of Jesus. He's alive. And miracles were happening. And then they were aware that 50 days ago, this city of Jerusalem was alive with people who were shouting and were getting carried away because they marveled.

What are these 120 people saying in languages from all over the world? And here these people, 120 of them, on the day of Pentecost, it says when they listened to what was being said and they compared the Italian and the Greek, the Mesopotamian, the guy from Iraq, these Jewish people from all over the world, compared what they were hearing in their language. And this was the common answer. We do hear them speak of the wonderful works of God.

What were the wonderful works of God? Well, Moses crossed over the Red Sea. We've heard that story. We're not going to get excited about that. What about Elijah? What about Daniel? These were wonderful works of God, but these were historical. We all know this. I submit to you, we do hear them speak the wonderful works of God.

The 120 were prophesying. They were prophesying of what this Jesus who's risen from the dead is going to do through his church throughout the world. They were prophesying of the days of refreshing. They were prophesying that the Jewish nation is going to rise up. Peter on this very day says, you need to repent. You need to of your sin.

You need to repent of your culture. You need to repent of everything. And by the way, this whole nation needs to repent. The bottom line is that every person who would repent that day, their name would be written down in the Lamb's Book of Life. It's recorded. And they would not face the difficulties of AD 70, which was coming very shortly. 40 years later, AD 70, the temple was torn down. There's no record of any Christian dying during that period of that terrible war. No record of any Christian.

And there were writers at that time recording and dating everything. And so the people who would, as he was preaching to them and saying, you repent of your sin, make your life right with God, you will be saved. But then further on, besides that, if the nation will repent, they also shall enjoy the times of refreshing.

So his message to them was, turn back. The word repent means change your mind, turn around, head the other way. And if you do, revival will come. Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of any Jew the things that God has prepared for those who are willing to love him. The word says he's coming for those who look for him. The whole nation of Israel, as of this hour, is not looking for him.

He's coming for those who look for him. He will come when the times of refreshing happen. I want you to notice, can I find it here? The times of refreshing, he mentions, will come from the presence of the Lord. That's key. That's key. Israel will experience the times of refreshing that can only come from the presence of the Lord. Moses, build a tabernacle. My presence will be there. Go ahead, Solomon, build a temple.

My presence will be there. The presence is the secret. The presence of God is the secret of the blessing, the presence. And so here's Peter saying, you want Israel to be restored? It will be, but not till the Messiah comes. When will the Messiah come? When you repent and deal with your sin and your obstinacy. And when you will repent of ever saying, he, Jesus, Matthew 12, did this miracle by the power of the devil. You've got to recant. You've got to back off and leave that alone. And what will happen is that the glory of God is going to show up in a rebuilt temple, and the time of refreshing will be worldwide.

Every Jew is going to be confronted by their Savior who has marks in his hands. Every Jew is going to be confronted. Not every Jew will confess him. To confess him means you have to turn from your wicked ways. It's like telling Epstein, you got to give your heart to Jesus. Oh, I'd like to give my heart to Jesus. Good. Get rid of the islands and leave all those young girls alone. Well, no, like I want my pedophile experiences, and I want God to. We have a whole world that wants to be like that. I want God. I want, okay, okay, okay.

But I won't let go. The hand is in the cookie jar. And if you want to be saved, let go of the cookie and repent of your wicked ways. And the first message is to all of us. If my people, who are his people? We are. If my people, which are called by my name, will humble themselves and turn from their wicked ways. There's wickedness in the very heart of the church. The wickedness is unbelievable. I believe it's wickedness when the church succumbs to political correctness.

Do you know that churches, don't say, oh yeah, we've heard about those churches. No, our churches, our churches that are related to this church by means of documentation and legality denominational. We have churches that are now becoming more and more politically correct. They're crafting things in their church because they believe in this word inclusivity. And even their washrooms. I was in one such church, and someone was asking about the beautiful building.

And somebody said, I was in the men's washroom and there's no urinals. Well, no, you know, there may be some people who would be troubled by the presence of a urinal because it suggests something. And so we don't have urinals. We just have toilets and so on and so forth. Why are we submitting? Why are we submitting to the ways of the world? I believe that the message that Peter was preaching that day is a message that the whole church needs to hear. Repent, he said, and be baptized, every one of it.

I want to mention, I've got to stop here momentarily, but this is a delicate topic, but I dare, you know, I do. Acts chapter two, he said, repent and be baptized. The word baptize comes from, I'm sorry, I'm not throwing academics at you. I'm just telling you what I know. The word baptize comes from the word baptizo. And the word baptizo means totally immersed.

Do you remember the brile cream commercials? A little dab will do you. Have you ever been to an old fashioned corner store? I miss those corner stores, the little meat store. I could be with my mom. She'd be in a place on Upper James in Hamilton. And she'd say to the fellow, he knew her. He called her Mrs. Forrest. Mrs. Forrest, how can I get for you today? She said, I'd like a half a pound of Hamburg. He said, I got a special on today. If you'll take a whole pound, I can give you a markdown price. And my mom would say, you know, my family is not a big family. A half of a pound will do. Doesn't matter how special a full pound is. I only take a half a pound. A half a pound of Christianity. How we love the picture.

Watching Billy Graham, I was enamored with this. He stood at the back of the platform. He'd fold his arms like this, bow his head. He was praying. The choir would sing beautifully. I'm not putting this down. I was thrilled. I would weep as I watched this. As a teenager, I'd watch this. I was so moved. I was so moved by this. The crowds that came down to the altar. It was so easy to get saved in those days. So easy. Just come on down.

A counselor will come and they'll have you sign a little card, give you a little Bible. Two years from now. What religion are you? Well, I'm not really sure. But I went forward in a Billy Graham meeting and I have the card and I have it tucked away in a little treasure box. And I guess, I guess. And then foul language starts rolling out of their mouth. And you find out that they have other things going on in their life. The transformation of salvation is not instantaneously. It's not instantaneous. You know that. I'm going to be, I'm going to be rude. Okay.

I'm going to be rude here for a moment. But in a service that I preached in London, Ontario, a little church called Glad Tidings, which is now a monster. It's a huge church running something like 5,000. And a friend of yours and mine, Pastor Kuk and Sister Kuk, their daughter is very, very much a part of that. That little church I planted back in the 1970s. It was a glorious time. We were in a schoolhouse with the amount of seating was about the same exactly as this half of the auditorium. It was a dinky church. And in that dinky church on a Sunday night, I preached. I remember this tall, handsome guy. He looked like a movie star. He had blonde hair down to his shoulders. He was a weight lifter. It was all these things. And he came forward and he fell at that altar and he cried like a five-year-old.

He cried and he cried and he cried. And he was endeavoring to repent. And he had so many things that I can't describe, but I found out later what he was repenting of. The man had been a scoundrel and he was weeping and weeping and crying out for mercy. And eventually the congregation moved along and I was left alone with him at that altar. And finally he kind of gained his composure, and had a box of Kleenex. He pretty well emptied that. And he looked at me and he said, wow, that was one hell of an experience, wasn't it? What do we expect? What do we expect? Our lives don't change in a moment. There is something beautiful, the entrance of the Holy Spirit.

There's a word called justification. That fellow at that moment was justified and his name was written down in a heavenly book called the Lamb's Book of Life. But there's another word called sanctification. So sanctification is the process of my life getting changed according to the justification. I've been justified. Justified, never done it. Total clear slate. He wipes the slate clean and that's recorded in this sermon. He said, if you repent of your sin, your sins will be blotted out.

You said crucify him, crucify. You were part of the framing thing. You're responsible for putting this whole thing up and declaring he deserves to die. But if you'll repent of your sin right now, he'll blot that out and you'll never, when you see Jesus, you won't turn away and say, I did that to him. But you'll say, Jesus, I love you. Amazing grace will be more amazing when we get to heaven because your sins, your doubts, your disappointments, your total failures, your train wrecks will never be remembered except for the marks in his hands and in his feet.

That'll be the only evidence of heaven, of your failure, my friend, the marks in his hands and his feet. How did he get those marks? Nobody will ask the question. Those marks came because of my sin. I must close. But as I do, I want to, I just want to say something. I preached last Sunday about the fact that I was present literally a few, not 10 feet away from a wonderful woman of God. And I saw a person who was mangled in their body. How many years have they been in this condition? I don't know. Curled up like, like they lived in a cocoon.

And this beautiful woman of God, who in everything, she was so eccentric. It was almost frightening. If you saw her, you'd say, she thinks she's an angel because of the clothing that she wore. Beautiful, beautiful, flowing, white, silky looking. Like she was very delicate. She was very appropriate, everything. But she was eccentric in so many ways. But God uses eccentric people. Hello? Well, you know, Siegfried, you know he's eccentric.

Like, and look how God uses him. Oh, he's scratching his brow now. No, the people that God uses, we're all eccentric. Every one of us in this house is a little bit eccentric in some way, and the eccentricities are more obvious in some than others. She was eccentric, but God used her. And I told you how I was there. And I was troubled. I was thinking, I wonder if there's somebody in here who would say, oh, I don't believe that. And standing out in this hallway, a giant of a fellow by the name of Bergman came by. I didn't tell you where that ministry took place. I didn't tell you where it was, okay? I just said I was in this meeting, and I saw this, and I was blown away by what happened. Bergman comes up, and with that huge, he's got, you should have been with the Toronto Blue Jays last night.

He's got a hand like a baseball mitt. They could have won if you'd been on the team. He put that big hand down on my hand, grabbed ahold of it, and he said, Pastor Dave, that meeting that you were in was in Buffalo. I said, yes, it was. He said, Pastor Dave, I was there. The man verified the story that I told you last Sunday.

Thank you, Bergman. I was there, and I saw it. Times of refreshing can come when we acknowledge the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Can you say amen? Now, I need this eccentric, wonderful piano player to come up and tickle the keys. He said, Pastor Dave, any time. I love this guy. I love him and his beautiful wife. Let's say, God bless you. We're always glad to see you when you come home.

He is home, isn't he? Now, what are we going to sing? You'll think of something between here and that bench. Something's going to hit you. Whatever song you pick, it's perfect, right? Let's all stand. That's what I would have asked.

He's coming soon.
 He's coming soon with joy.
 We welcome his returning.
 It may be morn. It may be night or noon.
 We know he's coming.

Now, you can sing that song with your eyes closed, with or without a piano. You know it off by heart, right? Pretend for the moment you've never heard that song and sing it like you were singing it for the very first time. Let it settle in your spirit. When's he coming? Dear Lord, I tell you, he's coming soon. I've been expecting him all my life in ministry, but I've never, I've never been on my tiptoes like I am now.

He's coming and he's coming very soon, and there'll be no warning. You won't get an email. You won't hear a fire alarm. You won't get one word of warning in a moment. Your wife will be gone. You'll still be here. Your father, your mother will be gone. You'll still be here. Your brother was taken because he's a man of God. You'll still be here, and fear will grip your heart, and you'll commit suicide, I venture to say. If you're listening in on the internet, you pay attention right now. It matters. It matters because he's coming soon.

He's coming soon.
 He's coming soon with joy.
 We welcome his returning.
 It may be morning. It may be night or noon, but we know.

For somebody who's listening in on the internet, or maybe standing in front of me here today, I want to say a prayer over you right now. Heavenly Father, how can I know who in this room needs to repent of who knows what? It's none of my affair, none of my business. I would never ask, but Lord, you know.

Lord, if anyone in this room felt a pinch a moment ago, if they felt a pinch, maybe I'm not ready. Dear God, I pray, Lord, that that person right now in their inner soul will say, Oh God, be merciful to me. Pass me not, O gentle Savior, hear my most humble cry, while on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.

My Savior, O my Savior, hear my humble cry, while on others thou art calling, do not pass me by. I got to let you go. I'll finish. I promise. I said it was so easy. It looked people streeting down the aisles at a Billy Graham crusade.

How many of those people walked with God after? As many as sought his face. The walk down the aisle is like a walk down the aisle at a wedding. How did the marriage take place? Well, a year and a half later, the couple just couldn't make it. They were just full of great ideas, and you know, pie in the sky, the marriage broke up. The walk down the aisle is a signature of, well, I'm emotionally moved. Let's get married.

Walking down the aisle at Billy Graham crusade didn't save anybody. It's the first move. It's the second move, the third move, the fourth. It's sanctification, a life changed, and a constant repentance.

Paul the Apostle said, I deal with repentance every day. He said, I die daily.

How are you doing? God bless you.