

Journey of Faith!

Overview

For those of you who might be joining us by way of the internet, we welcome you to our service this morning. We're located in Vineland and it's a holiday weekend and maybe it won't be a holiday weekend when you're watching this because these messages are stored on our website and anyone can go back months back and watch and listen to a service from the past. So I want to read this morning from God's Word out of the gospel according to John. And I'll read it without making references in any way, although I'm dying to get into it, but I'll just read through to begin with. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. Now there was a man sent from God whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the light that all through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, but the world did not know him. He came to his own, and even his own did not receive him. But as many as did receive him, to them he gave the right, the power, to become the children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but of God. Here I end the reading. Now it's interesting when you're looking at the Gospels, we call them the narratives, the narrative, the story. Matthew, take note, Matthew begins his narrative tracing the genealogies from Jesus through Mary's ancestors, through Joseph's ancestries, all the way back to Abraham. So don't get bored with all those genealogies. They are absolutely essential. You can trace the family line of Jesus all the way back through King David, all the way back to Abraham. So that's where Matthew began his narrative, his story about Jesus. But Mark, he was his own man, and he begins his narrative not with the genealogy, but he begins with the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. Now John, he's his own guy.

He goes back before the prophets, back before Moses, back before Abraham. He goes back at the very dawning of the universe, the very beginning of the beginnings. He starts off, in the beginning, God created. So John goes back to the infinite eternal past and declares about in the beginning, and he tells us the word that is identified as the person of Jesus. In the book of Genesis, chapter 1, in the very first few verses, you have the Father, you have the Son, and you have the Holy Spirit. All three are there, and John reminds us of that even in his presentation. He's talking about Jesus. He says, when God created the heavens and the earth, he, the Word, Jesus, was there. The Word was with God. Then he goes on to say, but he was God.

That means that Jesus, from what we what we call the beginning, what the Word says at the beginning, Jesus was co-eternal with God. The Jehovah's Witnesses will tell you that Jesus was made by God, and that is a lie with a capital L.

That is an impossibility, because I just read the scripture that says, he, through him, Jesus, everything was made. Through him, everything was made. And he says, there's nothing existing. Nothing that was made was made without him. So how did he get made if he was created? Jesus is not a creation. He's the eternal Word. He was with God. Co-equal, co-powerful, co-eternal. The Word tells us the same. The Word was God. The Word was with God.

But he goes on to tell us about the light. I want to go back and read now. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was, in the beginning, with God. All things were made through him. Through him. Why that word? Why don't you say made by him? Because it was through him. It was through his proclamation. God, in Jesus, God spoken, and it was done. It was through his voice.

All things were made through him, and without him, there's nothing made. All things were made by him. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. The darkness did not. . . Does that mean it? Does that mean the darkness did not understand it? If I say to you, I'm not comprehending what you're trying to say, I'm telling you that I'm in confusion. The original, here we go, the original Greek word for comprehend or apprehend. Another word that is sometimes used in the translations is apprehend.

What it's really saying is this. The darkness was not able to withstand. The darkness could not conquer the light. The darkness could not grab it. He's speaking of eternal dark powers. Jesus came into the world, and the devil couldn't touch him until the Lord God and Jesus allowed the same to happen. The darkness had no power over the light. We're told all things were made by him. Nothing was made that was made without him. He was in the world. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. He was in the world.

The world that he made, and the world did not know him. The world. When you and I think about the world, I think we immediately jump to, yeah, that big globe in the sky that the astronauts have said when they looked out a window from their rocket ship. They said, oh, there's the earth. That's not the world that's speaking. The world is the people that Jesus came to bring light to. He made this world, and the world did not know him. The world did not understand him. And no matter what he did, they were clouded in their understanding. No matter what miracles he performed, they would stand there, and they'd say, wow, I've never seen anything like this. And somebody said, I wonder if it could be the Messiah. Well, probably not.

They chose to not investigate further because, you see, Jesus was not the right height. Jesus did not have the right eyes. Jesus did not have the right sound of voice. Jesus came from the wrong family. Jesus did not have a high education. Jesus was too mellow. Jesus who's too gentle. Jesus was not ready to raise up a Jewish army and take on those Italians. Oh, sorry, those Romans.

Jesus did not measure up to what they pre-considered him to be. He just didn't add up. And yet, according to this book, he added up absolutely perfect. Nothing was missing. He arrived on time. Everything about his coming was prophesied right down to the day. And he was born on the day. And his demise, his death, was recorded long before. He was the Messiah indeed. But they did not know him. Did this ever occur to you? The men that he came to touch, the Jewish people, the rabbis, the priests, all of them, he was answering everything that was in this book. Those who were the scribes, they would be translating the Old Testament. They would be the writers. They would be the printing press, you might say, of the day.

And they were the legal keepers of the word. And they would say to the Pharisees and the others, you may not like him. It's kind of like Donald Trump. You may not like him, but he's done some things right. These guys looked at Jesus and said, I've never heard anyone open the book. I've never heard anyone speak divine truth like this man. He speaks of a heaven as though he'd been there. He can tell us about Moses crossing the sea as though he was there. He can tell you stories and you feel like he plants you right there. It's an amazing thing. And yet they all stalled and couldn't handle it. He came amongst us as light in the midst of darkness and we did not know him.

But the devils did. The demons knew who he was. When Jesus started crowding demon-possessed people, those people's voices were taken over by the demons. And they said to Jesus, we know who you are. We know who you are. And the priests, the scribes, the wise guys who claimed I know this book backwards and forwards and upside down, they did not know him. This doesn't work for us, but you just have to accept what it says. Nature recognized him. Jesus is in a boat with his disciples. The winds are boisterous and it looks like they're going to sink. And if the boat goes down in the middle of the Galilean Lake, all life is lost. Jesus stands up.

Why did he stand up? He wanted the disciples to acknowledge. He wanted them to see something. He was about to perform a miracle. He was about to perform a sign that would indelibly tell them, this is God the Son. So he stood up to get their attention, but he stood up to get the attention of the ailments. Can you believe this? Jesus spoke to the winds and he spoke to the waves and he said, you settle down now. Peace, be still. And the winds and the water listened. They acknowledged him. That means hallelujah, that's a short form of hallelujah.

You silly little donkey. You silly little donkey. That's what somebody might have said to that donkey that morning. They thought they had the little rascal house trained. You think that's silly? We had a young couple in our church when we were out pastoring in Alberta in Red Deer. We had this couple that came to us and their means of income was a traveling petting zoo. And the zoo lived in their house. I would go there to visit them and I'm going to tell you what, I don't know how to describe this. It's best to put it this way. When I first went, I'm mixing up my stories. It'll come together. It's one of my first trips to Nairobi, Kenya, and I'm in a mission's office and I see a picture up on the wall. And there's a missionary standing there and April and I are invited to that missionary's house this Thursday for a meeting. His name is Harold Binder and Mariela spoke from this pulpit two mother's days ago.

So I'm in the office with Harold and he and Mariela are there, missionaries, from originally from Zambia and now they're functioning in Nairobi. And in this office is a cartoon on the wall and pictured in that cartoon, he walked over and says, David, have a read. He didn't have to say another word. I sit there and I just looked at the pictures. There was a picture of a very, very robust, overfed fellow with a three-piece suit on, his hair slicked perfectly. And in the background, you can see probably what is a helicopter. He's standing out in the middle of a field and out in front of him are clearly a bunch of, the picture meant to say savages. Some of those savages became my best friends, like I got to know the Africans. They're not anything like us.

They're wonderful people. But there are these men and they've got spears in their hand. They got feathers sticking out of their hair and whatever, and they're listening to him. And so there's writing underneath this picture. And he's saying, of course, you know, as an ambassador from the United States, we're going to take care of you. And they yell, Kalinga. This is all around Kalinga, Kalinga. He said, when I get back to America, I'm going to tell the president about you. We're going to send hundreds of thousands of dollars. Kalinga, Kalinga. And then somebody taps him on the shoulder and says, Senator, your plane is ready to go. Oh, OK.

Come right this way, sir. And the last little picture, as he's walking towards the helicopter, the fellow guiding him says, Senator, watch where you walk. There's a lot of Kalinga on the ground. That'll come to you after lunch. A little donkey, maybe it was a pet donkey. Jesus told his disciples, go into town and go to this address. And tell the man there, the master want your donkey. He didn't ask for the mother donkey. He asked for the baby donkey. Baby donkeys are, they're frightful. I used to raise horses out on Highway 5 for a man named Freddy Smith. I know about young colts.

You don't jump on a young colt's back. It will turn into a bucking bronco. And years ago, I tried something. I read and heard the Bible stories about how Jesus rode on the back of a young colt. So I helped my brother climb aboard a young colt on my uncle's very famous wealthy farm. I had, to me, it was a horse. It was a small horse. It was, and I put my brother on. I said, I had a hold of its mane. I said, okay, Don, way you go. And as soon as I left the horse, that colt, it was a colt, let go. That thing, its back heels were up in the air, like bang, bang.

And I'm yelling, get off, get off. And my brother wanted to say, you stupid jerk. How do I get off this thing? And he eventually got thrown off. You'll notice that my brother has some broken teeth in the front of his mouth. It's not good to crowd a donkey. But this donkey was led to Jesus. And that donkey was as calm and collected as all get out. That donkey knew who Jesus was. Pastor, you're stretching it. Yeah, and I was stretching it when he said, peace be still to the wind and the waves. Do you know what we think about you, Jesus?

Your disciples are not living according to the law. You need to discipline them and straighten them up. They're praising you. Look at all these people shouting to you, calling you Jesus of Nazareth. You must be the Messiah. You tell them to shut up. And Jesus said, now folks, this wasn't a lullaby. This wasn't a little suggestion. He said this, and every word that came out of his mouth was powerful. He said, if these people cease to praise me, the rocks on the ground will cry out. That's a little hard to believe, pastor. Try this one on the universe.

All the planets, all the stars, all the Milky Ways, the billions of galaxies. The word says all of creation praises him and displays his glory. The word of God uses this word. Their voice is heard like in a straight line. It goes to the hearers, to the listener. The heavens declare. It means the heavens are actually speaking in a tone, a sense that is not beyond your understanding. A child like I was with my friend who lived across the street, Barry. In the evening, we would beg our moms who lived across the street. We would beg our moms to allow us to lay on the front lawn after it came in the dark. And he and I would look up in the stars, and we had no sense of the universe, galaxies, and we had no idea how far away it was. But as a child, I would lay on my front lawn, and I was struck.

I was immobilized by what I saw, his majesty. And I told Barry, whose friends never took him to church, I remember saying something like, and my preacher says, God put every star in its place. The heavens were declaring to a six-year-old the glory of God. And yet he came to the people who were the architects of the day, the psychological, the social top dogs of the day. Those who knew this book backwards and forwards and upside down, they did not know. He came to his own, and they did not know him. Therefore, they treaded over his word. And they actually accused him because of the miracles that he did, and they didn't know how to explain it to the people. The people asked the top dogs, could this be the messiah? They chose not to understand for themselves. They didn't want to deal with it. They said, you tell us what we believe.

Folks, eternal value of your soul is being weighed, and you want to ask somebody else, please tell me what I believe so I can regurgitate it for you. What do I believe, sir? Do I believe that this man is the messiah? And Jesus judged that generation. For following the blind leaders. Remember, he was called, they were called by Jesus. You're the blind leaders of the blind. You're all blind. And they had the audacity to say, okay, do one more sign for us. We just, he fed thousands. He walked on the water. He gave life to the dead.

He opened blind eyes. He healed crooked limbs. All right, all right. That's good enough. But could you just give us a sign? And after Matthew's gospel, chapter 12, Jesus did perform the signs. But there was a reason that he did so. Before Matthew's 12, Jesus was preaching the coming of the kingdom. And he was saying, the Lord God, the father loves you. He wants to gather you together. He wants to, he wants to restore the kingdom. He wants to work a work in your lives.

And to prove his deity, to prove his message, he performed miracles. But when they said, he does miracles by the power of the devil. The miracle slowed down. You read it. The miracle slowed down to a trickle. And he was no longer performing miracles to convince these wasted blind people. He wasn't doing miracles to impress them. Now he was doing miracles because he loved people. He loved people. The evil spirits knew him. The waves knew him. Shut these disciples and these happy worshipers. Shut them up and the rocks will speak. Their darkened minds, they could not see him. They did not comprehend. They could not seize the truth. They could not grapple. The demons could not overcome the light with their darkness. But he spoiled every demons working at the cross. He finished them off. I want you to know in verse 13, verse 13. But as many as received him. Let's go back. Verse 10.

He was in the world, not the planet. He was amongst the worldlings. And the world had been made up by him. They were all sons of Abraham. They were all descendants of Adam. They lived on the planet he created. And they, their very nature was his handiwork. It says he came to his own people. He didn't go to Europe. He didn't go to Japan. He didn't come to the North American India. He went to his own people.

His own people, those who he chose. Abraham, I'm going to raise up your descendants and you're going to become a nation. And Jesus came to that nation to fulfill the promise that he'd made. He came to his own and his own rejected him. But as many as received him. I looked up that word received. You see, I'm getting, I don't know what you call this, but I see a word like received. And I think, I got to know more. Okay. As many as received. I guess we know what that means. I thought, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Maybe we don't know what that means. As many as accepted him, people accepted lunch, 5,000. They were not his friends. There were people who got healed. And I don't know if everybody who got healed. Actually believed in him going forward. What do we know? Receiving him. As many as received him. I checked that word out, received. It means those who exuded genuine faith. I wrestled with this one last night and this morning.

Will I tell this story? I dare. A church that I won't name in a city. I won't disclose a very large church. And there was this wonderful couple there. I won't describe them in any way, shape or form. Because maybe somebody on the internet will say, oh, I know who he's talking about. So I'll just tell you, they were a wonderful couple. He was a very, he was happy to live in the shadows. He could be there and you wouldn't even notice him. But she, if she was in the room, everyone knew it. She was a social butterfly.

She was nothing short of incredible. She had a generous heart. She'd hear about somebody sick. She'd make a bowl of soup and take it to their house. She showed up at my house as the pastor. Showed up at my house one day with a basin and a towel. Insisting that she's gonna wash my feet. I just opened up Pandora's box. No, I did not let her wash my feet. I was sure if she saw my right foot, you will never see it. If she saw my right foot, she would have passed out. No, no, it's that bad.

But that's the kind of woman that she was. How busy was she in the church? I called her in my office and I said, I wanna talk to you. You are the busiest lady in this church. You do this and you do this and you do this and you do this. I said, I don't know where you get the energy. I said, I think you're in this building every day of the week. This is incredible. She sat there and glowed, she glowed. I said, I just love serving Jesus. I said, that's great. I said, I counted up.

You have taken upon yourself 12 particular responsibilities in this church. The most obvious one is you lead the women's group. Oh yeah, we have a wonderful time, wonderful time. I said, I wanna talk to you about your boys. Two teenage boys. Oh, they're fine pastor, they're fine. They were both baptized when they were such and such. That's fine. I said, I wanna talk to you about your boys. How do they feel about you never being home? Well, you know, we're a happy family. They know why I'm at the church.

I said, I'm not asking you if they know why you're here. How do they feel about that? She wasn't really sure. I said, your boys never come to the youth group on Friday night. We had a big youth group. And for my first two years in that church, I took over the youth because it needed help. And we'd built the thing up to over a hundred teenagers. And I said, your two boys are never in that group. Well, you know, they like computers and they like this. And I said, fine, fine, fine, fine, fine. I said, I'm worried about the souls of your sons. I can tell you because I've tracked this down.

I still know people from that church. And I've said, how are those boys? I get a very sad report. Did they accept Jesus? Yeah. What does that mean? Did they get water baptized? Mom and dad said they're having a water baptismal service. I told the pastor, you want to get baptized. I'm sure you'll want to. Yes, mom. When it says as many as received him, it means they had genuine faith.

Without faith, the word says it's impossible to please your creator. But I was baptized when I was a baby. I don't care what will happen without faith. It's impossible to please him. And if you don't please him, you won't make it to heaven. Pastor, that's heavy stuff. Do you want me to play Namby Pamby and say, well, maybe you'll make it. Maybe God will make an exception for you. You are cute. I know this is harsh, but as I prepared this, my heart ached. Have you received him? I receive communion every time they serve it.

I love the songs of the church. Congratulations. I heard a story 48 hours ago about a lady I know. I know her because I was her pastor. And while I pastored that church, she went to Bible college to study for the ministry. She graduated after three years. She became chums with another lady, probably in the same class. And somehow or other, they decided together, yes, we're going to answer that call. The two of them went to some kind of a mission somewhere in Canada. I don't know exactly where. Maybe it was Wayne. It doesn't matter where it was.

And she had a very bad experience with the other lady. Hear what I'm saying? I know her mom and dad. I know her sisters. Her sister or younger sister was still in the church. So I pastored her sister to much greater depth than I ever pastored this girl. And in the church, she was she was a soul searcher. She was honorable. She was faithful. She was a godly woman. And she went to Bible college and she studied this book. And I'm sure she passed it with honors.

And then she went with a friend out to some reserve or wherever they were. And this woman, this woman somehow treated her poorly. So much so that she gave up that mission, came back to her motherhood town. And she walked away from God for years. Did you catch the gravity of that story? She said, if this is Christianity, I'm done. All the you're struggling with the word. This isn't normal Christianity. That's got nothing to do with your relationship with Jesus. So much of church is like a club because we love to come and we love to fellowship. I'm not putting any of that down. But a person can be among us and never be saved.

The guy upstairs who's working with the camera right now asked me, he says, do you remember Bruce Tyner? I said, oh, I remember Bruce. He said, he's a fantastic guy. He's doing this. He's doing that. I said, I remember when he got saved. Bruce was raised in a Christian home in the same church I was in, in Bethel Tabernacle, Hamilton.

Years later, I came back in the 70s and I became, well, kind of, they never gave me a name. I did everything that Stuart Mulligan didn't want to do. I mean, I did, I visited the insane asylum. I visited the hospitals. I was running out of breath.

I did everything. I sang in the choir. Sometimes I sang bass and sometimes I sang tenor. Like, I did everything that he wanted me to. And including the young people believed I was the youth pastor. They still refer to me as Dave was our youth pastor. I preached every Sunday, but I was the youth pastor. I took the group up somewhere up north in the Muskokas to what we were calling a snow fest weekend. And there was no snow. And so I had to figure out what are we going to do? So on the Saturday night, I had them gather in this beautiful, we were at a wonderful retreat center, put wood on the fire and sat around saying kumbaya. You know, if you've ever been to a retreat, it's a great thing.

And as we sat there and we sang some songs, I pointed out a couple of young people that I knew God had done something in their life. And I said, why don't you tell us about your little journey? And so they started sharing their hearts. And I felt a tenderness coming in that room. I really did. I sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit. And right in the middle of somebody sitting on a chair over here, telling the little bit about their journey, about how Jesus convicted them, and how they remember going on a sunny night to the altar and kneeling there with a broken heart and wailing and say, Jesus, forgive me. Bruce Tyner, who had hair like you've seen the picture of Jesus. If he had his head down like this, his hair was like a great big curtain. He had to lift up his hair and part his hair like this. So you could see his face. He couldn't see unless, I don't think he could drive a car.

You'd have to have windshield wipers. I'll never forget, Bruce leaped out of his chair and he hit a wooden floor on his knees. And the noise of his knees hitting that massive, beautiful wooden floor was unbelievable. And he started to wail, I'm a liar, I'm a liar. I was never saved, Jesus, please. Here he was among us. He was understood as one who had received. He understood as one coming from a fine, fine Christian family. He was always at church. He was always at youth. He always sat there quietly watching everything. But nobody apparently was looking out for a soul, including me.

And there he was, he had received. But he knew nothing about a relationship with Jesus. This word received doesn't mean taking communion and signing up the membership and giving 10% of your income. This man, John, crafts this word in a beautiful spiritual architecture as many as expressed genuinely faith to them. I was sprinkled as a child. Did you have genuine faith then? Well, no, my parents had faith. And so they did. Do you know what the word says? You can't be saved by somebody else's idea. No pastor can spit on you, baptize you, or pour wine in your mouth and say it's communion. Nobody can put you in the Lamb's Book of Life.

But your genuine faith in the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. And there are thousands, if not millions, in church in Canada this morning. Have you received? Oh yeah, oh yeah, yeah. I do good things. I belong to the Red Cross. I do all this. They're not going to show up in heaven because there's nothing genuine. They joined a wonderful club. Ah, pastor, slow down. You're going to have a heart attack. I think you're right about that.

The word became flesh and he dwelled among us. And we saw his glory. The darkness comprehended it not. But those who were recording for us this story said we saw it. We saw his glory. Oh, did he glow in the dark? We saw the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full and overflowing with grace and truth. And we were overwhelmed. We were suffocated by his love. We were hopelessly drawn to him like a powerhouse. A powerful magnet. It was like we had no choice left.

We had to go forward. I take the last few minutes. I just take the last few minutes to tell you something. I can't tell you how discouraged I am. I'm going to talk about every other church. I'll just talk about the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada we gave up on Sunday school. That was a terrible day. I learned about Jesus from my Sunday school teachers. Incredible people that they were. Some of them read to me the story. That didn't matter. Nicholas, I observed the glory in them.

It's not what they taught me on Sunday by, oh, this is Jesus turned the water into wine. It's how I perceived my teacher. They sanctified my person by what they said. That was an influence. That's what brought me to genuine faith. I'll tell you something else that brought me to genuine faith. That was a powerful sermon to a young fellow sitting in church. A crimson stream of blood. As we sang hymns in those days, I saw word pictures. When we sang hymns like that, I saw word in picture form. I see a crimson stream of blood. It flows from Calvary.

It's waves which reach the throne of God are sweeping over me. I was getting converted. Hello? Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid? Your heart does his spirit control. You can only be blessed and have a sweet rest when you're all on the altar is laid. Our church would sing that on a Sunday night at the invitation. Is your all on the altar, David? Is your all on the altar as a sacrifice laid? Your heart does his spirit and his word control. You can only have rest and experience sweet rest when you have done more than receive. Breathe on me breath of God.

Fill me with life anew that I may love what thou dost love and do what thou dost do. You didn't come for a concert. This is my sermon. This is my sermon. I am thine, O Lord. I have heard thy voice and it told thy love to me. But I long to rise in the arms of faith and be closer drawn to thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, to the cross where thou hast died. Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord. To thy precious bleeding side. I was compelled by the theology that I heard every Sunday morning and every Sunday night. I was compelled by theology.

Take me to the river so I can dance, dance, dance, and jump. Theology, please. Please, theology, tell me where that is the truth. That's a song sang in churches all over North America. Dear God. Empty dustbins. But the people love it. Oh, yes, they love it. Gyrating. And lastly, I'll tell you this with one minute left. Self-imposed. Sunday nights, I was always there.

Not because I had to go now. I'm a young, I'm a teenager. I'm maybe 14, 15 years of age. And at the end of the sermon, always, the pastor would lead into him. And about the third stanza, he'd say, let's all move to the prayer room. I have to tell you, I learned this sometime later. There would be people who would kind of wait for a bit. To see who's going down and who isn't going down. Uh-huh, uh-huh. Yeah, I'm worried about that kid. He always slips out the door. He ain't going downstairs.

We were, we weren't judged. That was a, everybody in that church, it's a church about 300 or more at that time. Everybody was my uncle. Everybody was my aunt. So when they were looking around, it wasn't like, it was. You're all on the altar, Dave. Are you okay? Are you walking with Jesus? Are you okay? So I always went down to the prayer room. And let me give you a visual again. When we got, it was downstairs.

You had to take quite a journey. Downstairs and chairs just like these. Well, not comfy chairs. We sat, we sat on things that were made by chiropractors to work their way. We sat on cruel chairs. But they were turned back to back. Okay, so row upon row of churches turned back to back. So you go down there and you might see who's going to be on the other side of the other chair. You might, if they happen to pop their head up. But usually when I knelt down, I didn't know who was on the other side. Vivid, vivid, vivid memories. Because as I was kneeling there and I'd heard that preacher preach his heart out.

I would hear a man who was about 80 years of age. We all called him Uncle George, George Ridge. Lived out near Bimbrook. I would hear him coming. I'd hear him praying with people all along. Nobody got upset with this. Nobody got upset with somebody touching your shoulder. Oh, don't touch me. No, we were touchy. We were touchy. I loved it when Uncle George, I wasn't related to him. But I knew he loved David.

And I loved it when Uncle George put his withered hand on my shoulder. And I heard his prayer. Do you know what his prayer did to me? It riveted me to hear him pray out loud. Dear Jesus, keep your hand upon this boy. Dear Jesus, if you're calling him into the ministry. I'm thinking, no, no, no, no, no, no. But he would pray over me. And Siegfried, I can't tell you. That was more powerful than the sermon that was preached upstairs. This man was praying over David. My Sunday school teachers.

A brother of a man who's usually here. She's away today. We'll leave her name out. She knows who she is. And she knows because we've talked about it. Her brother was my Sunday school teacher. He was not a great fellow for teaching, you know, verse by verse. But I'll tell you what. I learned so much from that man by his walk of faith. He would actually bare his soul to us and say, you know. Boys, I know God's going to take care of us. I don't have enough money this week to buy groceries.

But God's going to supply. I sat there and I listened to that. Wow. That impacted me. It was Mel Schultz. Gone to heaven. There was Ernie Harbridge. Does that name ring a bell here? Ernie was Papa Harbridge. Ernie Harbridge knew how to pray. And when he prayed over me, he wept like a baby. Angelo Borsellino. And Tom Herndon. These names mean nothing to you. They mean everything to me. Our faith is impacted by who our friends are. Our faith can be warped by people who speak to us and they don't know what they're talking about. Somebody said to me recently, and it was at a restaurant with a group of people.

There were a couple of you, I think, were there. And a man spoke up and said, well, I know the Catholics aren't going to heaven. He said, I got that figured out. Be careful who you fellowship with. That's a foolish statement. We don't know who's going to show up in heaven.

We might be surprised who doesn't show up. We're impacted by the people around us. We're impacted by the songs that we sing. Nicholas, you've been coming here now for a year or more. You're being impacted every time you come. You're being impacted by the songs that are sung. You're impacted by the sermons. You're impacted by the love and the acceptance. You won't go to another place for a hundred mile radius where you'll be feel more love and more acceptance than you feel right in this place. You know you're loved and that is impacting your spiritual walk, isn't it? It's impacting you. To as many as received him, he gave the power to become sons of God.

That's a rich verse. I can't go in. It doesn't just mean, well, you get saved. No, no, no, no, no. Like there's got to be a whole 400-page novel written on that one too. To as many as received him, he gave the power to become successful, righteous men and women of God who left an impact, who developed a legacy by the people that they impacted. So I just want these, you come on down here quick, run as fast as you can, Lucas. We don't need you up in there anymore. You're a good guy, but I need you down here and we can shut off the internet. It's okay. Thank you for joining us. I think I love you.