



Message **Transcript**

Believe Your Blessings

Jeff Schwarzentraub

A year and a half ago, we had a consulting group come into our church. And as a staff, we took personality tests and we were trying to learn a little more about each other. And I've taken a lot of personality tests, I'm sure you have too. But each and every time, they all have a little bit of nuance to them and you can learn a little more. And really all it shows you is what your temperament's like, kind of what your strengths are, what your weaknesses are, some of your preferences.

And we had fun dissecting this as a staff and getting to know each other better. And we already knew each other pretty well. And one thing that they shared about me when they were taking my test is when we were discussing who I was, they asked me this question. They said, "Do you ever leave the house in the morning and forget to bring some things with you?"

And I said, "Yeah, about every day." Said, "Normally it's either my keys. If it's not my keys, it's my wallet. If it's not my wallet, it's my sunglasses. If it's not my sunglasses, it's my phone." I mean, inevitably I'm sitting in my truck and I'm getting ready to back out I'm like, "Oh yeah, I forgot my book bag." Something like that. I mean, it's so routine for me that when they started telling me and said, well, that's kind of how you're wired to which my wife was like, "Amen. I know that about him."

And then they asked this question like, "When you go on vacation, do you ever recognize that maybe you forgot some things and you need to go pick up stuff?" I'm like, "Are you kidding me?" I said, "The first stop we make, after our rental car is Walgreens or CVS. We don't even hesitate, that's what we do."

And as I was learning about myself, it made me feel good to know that's just a weakness I have. I have strengths, I have weaknesses just like you have strengths and you have weaknesses. But my forgetfulness and the small details of things is something that just comes with how God made me. And we can talk about personalities. We can talk about different things, but what's tragic is when we forget spiritual truths.

And so often for those of us in the body of Christ, we have what I call spiritual amnesia. We read the word, we know the word to be true. We even would say we believe the word, but then when it comes to putting it into practice, we oftentimes forget like, what was it I believe and how do I really hold onto that? Today, I want to talk to you about believe your blessings, believe your blessings.

Now we talk often in the church. We say stuff like this, like count your blessings. You ever heard that before? Count your blessings. What we mean by that is we have a lot more to be thankful for than to be discouraged by because our God is the giver of every good and perfect gift. And sometimes if we count our blessings, we can sit down and start writing them and realize, well, I'm thankful for that and I'm thankful for this group of people.

I'm thankful for my mom, my dad, my, my coach, my teacher, the income I have. I'm thankful for all of those things. But sometimes we don't take enough time to count our blessings. The second thing we don't do a good job in the church is enjoying our blessings. Sometimes God gives us blessings, but we're afraid to talk about them as

blessings.

For instance, sometimes we've been trying as a couple as a married couple to get pregnant, we get pregnant, but we don't want to share our blessing because we know somebody else in the church or in our small group, and they're trying to get pregnant and they couldn't get pregnant so we don't want to share that. Or we get engaged to get married.

We've been waiting for a long time, and we're excited about that, we know it's the Lord's blessing in our life, but we don't really want to enjoy it or share it because there's somebody else in the church and they're trying to get married and they haven't found the right person yet and it might make them feel bad. Or we get a promotion or a job that we weren't expecting, but we're afraid to enjoy that blessing because we're afraid because there's somebody else in the church and they're unemployed and they've been praying in their small group about getting a job so he is going to quiet it down and we don't enjoy the very things God has given to us.

But what's even more tragic than not counting your blessings or enjoying your blessings is this, not believing the blessings that you already have. And by believing, I'm not talking about cognizant awareness of what some of the blessings are, it is believing in the sense of, I am holding onto this with everything I have because this is what God has given to me and this is who he says I am.

And in Hebrews chapter 10, we're going to take a look at five blessings that you have. And the question is, do you believe it? Not do you say, "Yeah, that's true." Do

you own it in your gut? Do you believe? Because I'm going to hear to tell you today, a majority of Christians that hear this message do not believe any of the five blessings. They might give mental ascent to it, they might say, "Well, there's some truth in that, but they don't own them." And if you don't own them, you miss out on all the good things that God has for you.

I want to encourage you to open your Bible today to Hebrews chapter 10, Hebrews chapter 10. And as we unpack this first part of the chapter, we're going to go through 25 verses today and I'm going to highlight five truths that you can believe, five blessings that God has given to you that you can understand. And the first is the longest section of the scripture. We're going to go through the first 25 verses. The first one is the first 18 verses.

And the reason we're going to cover that collectively is for those of you that have been coming these verses, we've been talking about every single one of them. It's a highlight of all that we've been talking about. And here's the blessings. The first is this. Believe your blessings in the new covenant because of Christ's life. Believe your blessings in the new covenant because of Christ's life. Notice Hebrews chapter 10 starts by saying this.

For the law since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things can never by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year make perfect those who draw near otherwise, they would not have ceased to be offered because the worshipers having once been cleansed would no longer have had consciousness of sin. Friends, we've been talking about the new covenant.

You ever heard the statement if it ain't broke, don't fix it? Okay? It's not that the old covenant was broken. It was just that the old covenant was insufficient to do what the new covenant can do. If it could do what the new covenant could do, we wouldn't need the new covenant. If the old covenant could do what the new covenant could do, Jesus Christ would've never needed to come.

We are under what's called the new covenant, which we started talking about a few weeks ago, which is when Jesus Christ inaugurated it through his death, burial and resurrection from the grave. And here's what the author is trying to make the point of. The author's trying to make the point if the old covenant was so good and could do everything the new covenant could do, you wouldn't need the new covenant.

But because the old covenant couldn't do what the new covenant could do, Jesus Christ came to establish and inaugurate a new covenant for which we live. We have a blessing we need to believe and the blessing is the new covenant. He starts by saying this in verse two, otherwise they wouldn't have needed to keep giving the offerings.

They kept giving offering after offering after offering day after day, month after month, year after year. But guess what the problem was with the offerings? The blood offerings that were given the gifts that were given did not cleanse you from your sin. The only thing the old covenant did was establish that God's standard is perfect and he's holy, righteous and good.

It also established that you weren't and every time you gathered, especially on the day of atonement, it was a yearly daily, monthly reminder that God's holy and

you're not. And oh, by the way, the priest has prayed prayers for you and your sin is covered, but it's not cleansed. Which means the shame you feel and the guilt you have, guess what? Keep having those feelings because your sin hasn't gone anywhere. God's just overlooking it for a season until the Messiah comes. That's what he's talking about. But we live in the new covenant.

He goes on to tell us this. But in those sacrifices, as the old covenant, it's a reminder of sins year by year. Why? For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. The sacrifices in the old testament never took away any sins. Sin was never atoned for, it was never gone. It was simply covered until the Messiah would get here. And then he begins to quote Psalm 40, starting in verse 5.

He says, therefore, when he comes into the world, he says, sacrifice in offering, you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me. In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, you've taken no pleasure. Then I said, "Behold, I have come. In the scroll of the book, it is written of me to do your will oh God. And saying above sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices are for sins you have not desired nor have you taken pleasure in them, which are offered according to the law."

Then he said, "Behold, I have come to do your will, he who takes away the first order to establish the second." Here's the problem. They had the same problem in the first century that we have today. They preferred rituals and rules and regulations to a genuine relationship with God. The Jews of the first century were saying, "Well, how do we get our sin covered anymore? And we're not going through the same rituals and

a priest won't let us come in because we're following Jesus now. So who's going to atone for our sins and who's going to do all that?"

And the author is writing telling them it's not about that anymore. That never cured your sin in the first place. That was always a foreshadowing or a shadow or a type of what was to come. And now that Christ has come, he has come to cleanse you from the inside out of all your sins. If the old covenant could do that, Jesus would never have needed to come.

Now you say, "Well, that doesn't mean a whole lot to me. Here's what I mean." You and I prefer religious rituals and rhetoric to a true relationship with Jesus. Deep down in our hearts, we think that there's something we can contribute to God so that he'll be pleased with us. We like that. We don't like the fact that there's nothing you can do to get closer to God.

Your sin separates you from God. God is angry with your sin every day. And even your best efforts cannot make you right with God. Your spirituality, you're going to books that you read, you go to fortune tellers, you go to church, you do all these things thinking that if I just do this, then God will be pleased. And here's what the Bible points out, he's not pleased with you at all. There's nothing you can do to get right with God.

Sometimes we prefer religious rituals. Some people like to go to churches where the pastor wears a robe because they think that's more spiritual. Those who either come here because the pastor doesn't wear a robe and you think that's better. Some

people go to churches where there's organ music or a higher liturgy. Some people like music, some people don't like music. And we tend to think that if I go to certain places or do certain things, then that's going to make me more spiritual. If I get around certain people that are deemed more spiritual, then I'm going to be more spiritual.

Here's all the old covenant pointed out. You're not spiritual, you're dead. God's holy. And that's all you can do. And your sins being covered, but until the Messiah comes, your sin can't be taken away. So you better believe in the promise that God's going to send a Messiah. But the new covenant's different. Can I just tell you it's night and day different?

It's different than anything that had ever been established because Jesus said, "Behold, I've come to do your will." What the old testament sacrificial system couldn't do, Jesus Christ came to fulfill. The shadows point forward to the future, the Messiah. See, God was not satisfied with rivers of animal blood and carcasses. That didn't please God. God also is not satisfied with ritual and routine because what satisfies the heart of God is contrition and a change of heart.

When we're sorry for our sin and we desire to change, that's what moves the heart of God. Notice what he says about this new covenant. I mean, you're going to need to get this down in your soul and believe it. It says, by this, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. How have we been made holy? How have we been set apart? How are we able to be right with God? Through Jesus Christ?

There is no other way to God except through Jesus Christ. Let me say it again. Some of you have friends who are "spiritual", or they go to other forms of religious practices or they tell you that their angels talk to them or they journal in a special way or they feel something on the inside. Here's what you can know for sure. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. And no one, but no one comes to the father except through him.

That's the new covenant. That's the new promise. That's the new testament. That's why Jesus Christ as the Godman, God of always being God, man flesh of all flesh, the Godman Jesus laid down his life on the cross. If you have repented of your sin and believed in Jesus, you can have life with God in relationship. If you don't, you don't have relationship with God, period, end of story according to the Bible. That's what he's talking about.

And he's saying if there's any dispensation you could live in, you want to live in this one. Because when Jesus died, how many times did he die? One time. How many sins did he die for? All. How many people did he die for? All. How sufficient was it? Complete. The priest had to stand daily and make sacrifices monthly and make sacrifices. Once a year, they had to get into the Holy of Holies. Jesus Christ came and did what they were trying to do every single day.

He did it in one specific act, by dying on the cross and rising from the dead. Notice what it says in verse 11. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices which can never take away sins. But he, Jesus having

offered one sacrifice for all time sat down at the right hand of God. That means when Jesus got to heaven, he sat down saying, "My work's done here." But he waiting from that time until his enemies be made a foot stool for his feet.

Friends, make no mistake about Jesus Christ is coming back. Even the people that say, "Oh, I'm not going to believe in Jesus," you'll be the foot stool for his feet. His enemies will be underneath him. Jesus Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth right now. And at the right time, when the father sends the son to go collect his church and bring us to heaven with him and that happens, I promise you, Jesus will show himself authoritative.

But notice verse 14, one of my favorite verses in the entire new testament. For by one offering, he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. Jesus Christ, one offering, what has he done for those who have repented and believe? What has he done for those people? He's perfected them for all time those that are sanctified, those that are being sanctified, which means this.

If you've turned from your sins and you've trusted in Jesus Christ, that means he's come to indwell you through his Holy Spirit. And the way God sees you through the blood of his son is what? Perfect. Your behavior is how you see yourself. That's imperfect. The blood is how God sees you, through his son. That's perfect. Have you ever thought about yourself as perfect?

Now I'm not talking about behavior. I mean, you can just ask my family in the front row. They will tell you that I'm not perfect. I'm not talking about behavior. I'm

talking about positionally the way God sees you right now if you trusted Jesus. He sees you as perfect and he's in the process of making you holy so that presently while you're positionally perfect in the future, in reality, you will be too, that when Jesus presents you before the father with exceedingly great joy, he will present you faultless at the time he presents you to his dad. Is that incredible or what?

Now, think about it. If you believe that, not just like, that sounds like a nice truth, but if you believe that. You're not walking around like, "Look at me. I'm perfect." That's not what you're saying. You're walking around saying because of the blood of Jesus in me, God sees me as already perfect and he's in the process of making me that way, and when I enter heaven, I will be declared perfect and I will be perfect not because of anything I've done, but because of who Jesus Christ is. Is that incredible?

Most Christians, when it comes to understanding the new covenant, they think about the cross and they should. We should talk about the cross. It's through the cross that Jesus Christ shed his blood. It's through the cross that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin. It's never wrong to talk about the cross, but so often Christians stop at the cross, but I'm here to tell you, don't just go to the cross, go through the cross because the Jesus I'm telling you about rose from the dead.

The Jesus I'm telling you about is just as alive today as he's ever been. The Jesus I'm telling you about is the one whose life wants to dwell in and through you. And in the new covenant, the new promise, it's not about you trying to make yourself right or dance through the right rituals or do the right routine, it's receiving the grace of Jesus Christ in your life so that his life living in and through you is Christ's glory coming

out to give you hope for your future.

And if you live knowing that you're already perfected, how different will you live? You say, "Well, why don't I feel that way?" Well, because you have an enemy that's going to show you all the time your behavior and why you're not perfect. He's going to tell you why you're not perfect. That's why we have to believe the word, we have to believe our blessings.

One of the blessings we have is people who have repented and believed in Christ. One of the blessings is positionally, we're already perfect and God's in the process of making us that in reality so one day when we get to heaven, we will be declared perfect and we will be. When we see each other in heaven, we're not going to know what it means to sin. We're not going to know how to mistreat one another. We're going to be as perfect as Jesus is. Is that amazing or what?

Most Christians fear going to heaven for the fear that there's like four big screens behind them like there is for me and that God's going to show your life and we'll all be sitting there eating popcorn like, "Seriously, you let them in? No way, no way." When God brings you into heaven, he's going to show you perfect. And we're going to say, "Whoa, look at what God did in her life and look at what God did in his life." And it's through the blood of Jesus, we've been made that way.

And the Holy Spirit also testifies for us saying this. He's going to quote Jeremiah 31 to 34. He said this is the covenant I will make with them. After those days says the Lord, I will put my laws in their heart and on their minds, I will write them. He says and

their sins and their lawless deeds, I will remember no more. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Did you hear what I just read? God forgives all your sins and he doesn't bring them up anymore. You say, "Well, then why do I think about it all the time?" Well, you have an enemy that's going to bring them up over and over and over and over again until you believe the blessing you have, which is that in Christ through his shed blood and resurrection from the dead and you turning from your sin and turning to Christ, it's done, it's finished.

Sin is not remembered anymore. And where sin is not remembered anymore, there doesn't need to be another offering for sin. Jesus Christ already paid for that. You say, "Well, pastor Jeff, this week, I sinned again." He already paid for that. But what if I sin later today? He already paid for that. But what about tomorrow? It's paid for too. Once and for all paid for for those who have turned and trusted in Jesus. It's your blessing, it's your privilege.

If it's your privilege and why do so many Christians struggle to try to get right with God when God has already made you right with himself? Why do you live in guilt and shame and doubt and fear when God already said, "I declared you righteous and I've already said you're perfect,"? If you know that you've already been perfected, you will live differently. If you see yourself the way God sees you, you will live differently. And you'll do it in great humility because you'll know this has nothing to do with me, this was all about Jesus. Friends, that's a new covenant.

Now we've talked about different aspects of this. I'll highlight the sticks that I gave you before, but we're going to go through them really quickly. I mean, this new covenant is gracious. He says it's not like the covenant I made with their fathers. It's not a works covenant, it's a grace based covenant. It means it's not by works. You didn't do anything to earn it, God just gives it to you.

He gave you the gift of his son. By trusting in his son, he gave you every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. You didn't do anything to earn it, it's all grace. It's also internal, not external. God says the law will be on their minds and in their hearts. That's why as believers, we have the Holy Spirit in us. We know conviction. We know when we're doing right and we know when we're doing wrong.

When we're walking in fellowship with the Lord, he prompts us and he turns, says, "Don't do that. Hey, you need to go visit them. Hey, stop doing this, start doing that differently." It's internal. It's also personal. He says, "I will be their God and they will be my people." Christianity is not about a bunch of rules and regulations and religion and coming to church every Sunday and doing all the right things, it's about having a relationship with Christ.

You can talk to Christ and Christ will talk back to you. I do it every day. Sometimes I hear him more distinctly than other times. And he doesn't do that to me because I'm a pastor, he'll do that for anybody that is willing to seek his face. It's also experiential. It says they will know me. John 17:3 says this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God in Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

It's not just about talking to God, it's about experiencing God presently in this age. That's part of the new covenant. Oh, by the way, there's forgiveness. He says I'll be merciful to their inequities and I will remember their sins no more. Isn't it good to know today that the sins that you've thought about from your past, God's not thinking about them anymore.

If you've trusted in Christ, they were buried with Christ in the grave, they're done with. Why do you keep thinking about them? Why do you keep living in shame and guilt? And why do you keep saying to yourself, "I need to get right with God, I need to get..." The only way to get right with God is by believing Jesus Christ died for you and rose from the dead.

And if you believe that, you've already been made right with God. And if you've been made right with God, you can't be made more right than made right perfectly. He's made you perfect. Through the blood, he sees you as perfect. Talk about divine songlasses, S-O-N glasses that God the father sees you through. He sees you like he sees his son because he sees the Jesus in you. And while you may not feel it, it's a blessing that you need to believe.

And then finally, how about this one? It's present, it's now. We can experience God's presence. Think about the old covenant for a minute. The presence was in the Holy of Holies. It was past the holy place, it was in the most holy place. And the only one that could enter the most holy place, the only one that could experience the presence of God was the high priest, and the only time the high priest could experience

the presence of God was once a year just for a few minutes.

And the only way he could experience the presence of God was if he brought the right sacrifices of blood for himself and for his people and he could walk in there and he had to do it with great reverence and had to go through all the right routine or he would die in the presence of the Lord. And that's the only one in the entire nation that could experience some of the presence of God, but not in the new covenant.

Because when that veil was rent or torn from top to bottom, through Jesus Christ's shed blood on the cross, he invited all people everywhere at any time that wanted to experience his presence presently that they could experience God's presence now. You say, "Why do I need that?" Because I don't know what you're going through, but I promise you this, a touch of God's presence in your life would make all the difference in the world.

Some of you are going through difficult times right now, some of you have wayward kids right now, some of you struggle with your finances right now, some of you have a hard time in your job right now, some of you having a hard time in your marriage, some of you having a hard time in your singleness right now. You know what you need more than anything else? You need a touch from the Lord Jesus Christ knowing that he's presently with you at all times.

And some of you that are celebrating all these wonderful things, you're celebrating your marriage, you're celebrating your kids, you're celebrating your new job, you want to know that the God of the universe is celebrating that with you. See the

question we ask all the time, where's God? Where's God? Where's God? Well, we know that Jesus is in heaven ministering on our behalf.

And oh, by the way, even if you forgot to pray this week, guess what he was doing for you all week long? Even while you were sleeping last night, he was interceding for you. He prays for you. He's ministering on your behalf. He loves you with an unconditional love. But even more than that, through the Holy Spirit, he indwells us, which means this. As a believer, everywhere you go, there God is. How good news is that? How much good news is that?

You're walking into that job interview and you feel all alone, where's God? Oh, he's right with you. You're going to have that hard conversation with somebody you don't want to have, where's God right now? Oh, he's with you. You're troubled about things going on in our world right now and you don't know how they're going to work out and God's like, "I'm not sweating this and I'm right with you." That's the presence of God, that's the new covenant.

It means you don't need to go through a pastor or a priest to get to God. You can go directly through the Lord, Jesus Christ and have access to his presence anytime you want. That's the new covenant. You're completely forgiven. You're seen as perfect. Do you believe that? Most Christians, even if they're here today, say, "Yeah, I believe that." In their heart, they're like, "I don't know that I'd believe it totally. It doesn't feel right. It feels a little bit arrogant for me to say that I've been declared perfect before God."

It's not arrogant, it's humble. Because what you're really saying is I believe that I'm not, but I believe in Christ that I am. He says it about me, therefore I believe it. And I'm telling you, if you see yourself as perfected in Christ, you will live every relationship in your life differently. You will make every decision in your life differently because you know you've been set apart, you know you've been crowned with glory and honor, you know you have a new identity.

Friends, believe your blessings in the new covenant because of Christ's life. Study all the religions of the world. I talk to people sometimes like, "Well, how do I know that Jesus is the only way?" And I would say, "Well, the Bible says that John 14:6, I'm the way the truth and life." And they say, "Well, that's your Bible. What about the rest of the..."

Study any religion you want in the world, there is no religion that makes a promise that God will come and indwell you. There's no religion in the world that says you can't be made right with God, but God will make himself right with you. There's none of them. Christianity is so distinct that God, the father sent his son to be the savior of the world, that the new covenant is not a promise of routines and religion rituals, the new covenant is a promise of God himself in the form of Jesus Christ dying on the cross for all of our sins and rising from the dead.

There's no way in the world there's any other religion that even comes close. And if you understand the gospel and you understand that you've been perfected in Christ and you understand that God's going to present you perfect in Christ, you'll live your

life different. And not only will you be excited about who you are, but you'll be excited to tell other people about who you are because you want them to experience that same thing you are.

Friends, believe your blessings in the new covenant through Christ's life, through Christ's life. Second is this. Believe your blessings in the new confidence you have because of Christ's provision. Believe your blessings in the new confidence you have because of Christ's provision. I mean, we have the new covenant, but we also have this new confidence. Notice what he says in verse 19.

He says, therefore, brethren. That means listen up brothers and sisters, we're going to sum some things up here. Since we have what? Confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil that is his flesh. He says we have confidence. There was nobody that even messed around with entering the Holy of Holies in the old covenant.

I mean Aaron had two sons that tried to mess around playing with strange fire and they died. People knew you don't just go into the presence of God in a cavalier way. Here's what happened. Now there's a new and living way. You know what that word new means? It doesn't mean like brand new like this is the new style. It means like fresh sacrifice, the newest sacrifice, the newest slaughter, the new and living way.

Well you say, "Well, how is it slaughtered and alive?" Because Jesus died and he rose. The new and living way. He's the veil, he's the curtain. That's how we were separated from God. But God sending his son opened up the veil, opened up the

presence so that through Christ's shed blood and death in the cross and his resurrection from the dead, guess what we have? We have 24/7 all access to God. We can experience God's presence anywhere at any time. And if we're walking in fellowship with him, that's what he wants us to have.

Now in the weeks prior, we've been talking about the confidence we have to enter his presence. Hebrews 4:16 says that let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace in our time of need. Ephesians 3:12 says in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in him. It means no matter what you're experiencing, you can storm the gates of heaven and Jesus is inviting you to come and he's not going to turn you away.

See, for most of us because we believe in religion rather than a relationship, when we sin and when we do things wrong or when we don't feel like we're good enough, then we feel like there's some things we must do before we bombard the throne of heaven, such as well, I need to go to church a few more times, I better go to my small group first, I need to repent for about seven to 14 days, I need to get all right and then once I'm right, then I'll know we're a little closer and then I can go into the presence of God and tell him, "Lord, I'm really sorry for that."

No, the times we need to bombard the throne are sometimes the times that we're in our darkest desperate times, the times that we've screwed up the most where the Lord's like, "Hey, come, I got grace for that." And that's where we hear the enemy the loudest say, "Nah, he doesn't love you anymore. He's disappointed in you. Man, you should have known better. If you could hit rewind, got to be okay, but you kind of

blew that one. And man, how are you going to tell people in your small group about that? I keep that one to yourself."

And then we try to figure out how to work it out. No, no, no, no. We have a new confidence. Because Christ died and also rose, he invites come to me all of you who are weary and heavy laden and I'll give you rest. No matter what predicament you're in, I've already perfected you, I've already made you wise, just come to me, experience me, enjoy me.

We have an all access pass to him. And our all access pass, it's not a badge, it's a person. It's Jesus himself. It's kind of like this. I have a friend a few years ago and the Broncos went to the Super Bowls, he got tickets to go. Spent thousands of dollars on tickets, airlines, hotel, all this, was so excited to go, was going with a group of his business partners. And it was all well and good until he got to the gate and gave them his tickets and learned at that moment they were counterfeit.

What do you do? Who are you going to talk to? I mean, unless you know the owner of the stadium, unless you know the owner of the Broncos, unless you know the owners of the other team, unless you know the starting quarterback who can vouch for you like, "I got some extras, come on," you're out. You can show them your ticket all day long, you can tell them how much money you paid, you can tell them what hotel you stayed in, you can tell them how much you paid for your Uber and here's what they're going to say, "Sorry, you don't have a ticket."

Now that's tragic. But you know what's worse? Is when the God of the universe

has provided a way for anybody anywhere to have access to the presence of God and there's some people that still want to bring their own badge to the kingdom. Friend, let me tell you something. If you enter the kingdom apart from the person of Jesus Christ and you try to show your credentials for how you're going to get in, it is going to be the worst experience you've ever had.

Because you can bring your credentials like I was a good husband or I was a good wife or I was a good dad or I was a good mom or I gave to my church, I showed up in church, I did more than other people at church. Bring your badge of honor and here's what you'll hear Jesus say, "Depart from me you worker of iniquity for I never knew you. The only way in is through my blood that you repented and trusted in me. That's the only way in. And you didn't do anything with what I gave you."

Why am I so passionate about this? Because there's people that go to BRAVE that come here frequently that think because you're religious and you're a good person and you read your Bible and you pray, that you're going to heaven. That doesn't get you into heaven. Only Jesus Christ gets you into heaven. Only through repentance and faith are you going to have access to God.

When I get to heaven and I see Jesus, the only reason I'm getting in is because I'm saying this, I bank my entire eternity on the fact that turning from my sin and trusting you gave me life. It's your life. I want your access. That's it. That's the new covenant. And isn't it good to know that's the confidence we have in Christ? See, some of us don't realize the confidence we have because we don't realize the identity we have in Christ.

I mean, here's just a few of these. I read these to you often, but they're all throughout scripture. I mean, if it's true of Jesus and you're a believer and he's in you, then it's true of you. I mean, here's just a couple of them. I'm a co-heir with Christ inheriting his glory. I'm a child of God and will receive the inheritance he has promised.

I am now a citizen of heaven seated in heaven right now. I'm chosen of God, holy and dearly loved. I'm an enemy of the devil. I love that. I'm born again in Christ and the evil one the devil cannot touch me. I have received God's spirit into my life, I can recognize the blessings he's given me. I've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly place. Christ lives in me, that's my hope of glory.

Because I'm set apart and sanctified and one with Christ, he is not ashamed to call me his brother or sister, his son or his daughter. I have the right to come boldly before the throne of God and he will meet my needs lovingly and kindly. That's who I am not because of anything I've done, this is all Christ has done for me. Do you believe the blessings? Do you believe that's who you are? These truths change my life.

About five years into my walk with Christ, five years into my walk with Christ, I was still struggling trying to be good and trying to get it right and trying to do all the right things. And here's the problem in churches. Problem in churches, I'm not talking BRAVE, I'm not talking any other, I'm just talking church in general.

When we depart from the new covenant and the confidence we have in Christ in who we are, one of two things happens either A, we lower the bar of God's holiness and we tell people, eh, I don't know if God really said that and don't worry, but I love

you no matter who you are. You're such a nice person. Yeah, I know you're treating your husband like garbage, but that's okay. We're just glad you're here.

I know you're abusing your wife, but God loves you and we're glad you're here. And I know you're cheating your boss, but thank God Jesus loves you no matter what. I mean, we do all this stuff and we think it's spiritual and it's not. We lower the bar and make it unspiritual. Or we do the opposite. We keep the bar high, but then we falsely believe like we've achieved it. Like yeah, there's four things we do in our church and there's four things we don't do, and you're not doing them all the way we do.

Don't chew, don't smoke, don't date girls that chew and smoke, be in church. Because we do all those and you broke one of those so you're not in fellowship with us anymore. We kind of set a self-righteous standard or we think that we're achieving perfection apart from Christ. But it's at the cross and through the resurrection that we experience God's grace.

Standard is perfection, you can't get there, I can't get there. But in Christ through his shed blood, anybody can get there. And in Christ, we are there. That's the confidence we have. Do you have that confidence? Do you believe that today? Do you believe that blessing you have before Christ? I do. You've been given blessings in the new covenant, in your new confidence.

Let me give you a third one. Believe your blessings in the new conscience you have because of Christ's blood. It's a big one, we're going to park it here for a while. Your conscience. We talked about a clean conscience. Notice what the word of God

says in verse 21. And since we have a great priest over the house of God, who's our great priest? You got about a 50/50 chance of getting it right. Who's our great high priest?

Jesus.

Jesus, right? He's over the house of God. He says let us draw near with a sincere heart, that's a pure heart, in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Now, if you remember anything from my message last week, I used the word over and over probably a hundred times, what are we sprinkled clean with? The blood. We're sprinkled clean with the blood.

So come with great confidence, sincere heart knowing that you've been cleansed from your sin. This means you completely have a clean conscience. It means you're totally washed. Do you believe that? Even for many Christians that would say, "I know I'm totally forgiven and I know if I die I'm going to heaven," they don't believe they've been cleansed cleansed. Like if you ever had a garment that needs, there's a little stain on it and you take it to the cleaners and it's kind of gone, but you can still see where it was. It's clean, but it's not clean clean. It's not cleansed.

Many Christians live like that. I'll give you another example more real life. Somebody spilled coffee down here right by my seat a little bit ago, it wasn't me, and it didn't get cleansed. It got vacuumed, but you can still see the outline of where all the coffee is. Apparently one of our worship leaders told them don't clean it up, it'll help us

when we're trying to raise money for new carpet in this building, which I told them I think they know that already.

But that's how we feel sometimes. Like I know God forgave me, but boy, do I still feel the sting of that sin. That's not cleansed, that's covered. That's old covenant. New covenant is not covered, new covenant's cleansed. Listen to me, listen really close to me. Most Christians never get this because the enemy keeps his thumb on you. If you've been freed from sin, you're completely freed from sin. If you've been forgiven of sin, you're completely washed of that sin from the inside out. It's gone, you're new, you're pure.

Many Christians like, "I know God forgave me, but that was such a horrible thing that I did and I just don't know that he still likes me." It's cleansed. Single people listen to me right now. There's some of you in here that have lived immorally as a single person and you've heard this lie in your head. Oh, because I've been immoral, I'm going to have to settle for second class marriage.

And because I've been immoral, here's how I see myself. Because I've been immoral, God can't love me the same way he did. And I kind of forfeited my future because of my sin. That's being covered and not cleansed. Being cleansed means because of the cross and what Jesus did and because of his resurrection, when you confess your sins, you're washed.

It's as if you never sin that ever. It means you have every blessing and right as a person that never even engaged in that sin. You understand what I'm talking about? It's

really quiet in here right now for as many people as we have. And here's why. Because we don't like to talk about those things. We have this thing that follows us around called guilt and shame.

Shame is not that I did something wrong, shame is I am something wrong. Shame is I've got to work this off. Shame is I can never be of like one of those real Christians because I did this in my past. That's a lie from the pit of hell. So I kind of typed up a list here of sins. They're alphabetized. I had fun in the first service and here's why. Because there is some person listening to this message that has sinned this sin and because of the sin, I'm about ready to mention, they feel like they're not good enough for Jesus.

Jesus is good enough to make all these things good. You ready for this? Okay. Because I'm totally ready. Listen to this. This is what Christ forgave. Abuse, adultery, abortion, anxiety, apathy, bitterness, cheating, carnality, complaining, coveting, criticism, deceitfulness, disobedience, division, causing division, divorce, drunkenness, evil desires, exaggeration, fornication.

We could add the word failure to all sorts of things too like failure to help the poor and failure to repent and failure to mature in Christ and failure to take care of your elderly parents and failure to teach your children and we can go on with all the failures. Giving the devil an opportunity, gossiping, greed, grieving the Holy Spirit, grumbling, hatred, holding grudges.

H, we can talk about husbands in all the way that we fail. Hypocrisy, idolatry,

ignorance of the word, immorality, impure thoughts, lack of faith, lack of spiritual wisdom, lack of trust, laziness, love of money, lust, lying, murder not just physically, but how you think about other people. Like have you've ever been on I-25 driving...

Neglect of Bible reading, neglect of prayer, outbursts of anger, pornography, presumption, pride, procrastination, profanity, quenching the Holy Spirit, resentment, robbing God, selfishness, showing favoritism, sins of omission, sins of commission, slander, speaking on wholesome thoughts and words, being spiritually asleep, stealing, stubbornness, having a temper, uncompassionate, unconcerned for the laws, unforgiveness.

Unforgiveness is the number one sin in the church just so you know. If we're playing Family Feud right now and they ask the top 100 answers what's the top sin in the church, unforgiveness is number one. Unteachable spirit, unyielding spirit, using God's name in vain, witchcraft, workaholic, worry. I mean, this is not an exhaustive list. These are just some things that came to mind and yet how many people as believers have sinned in that way and then feel like I know I'm forgiven, I'm just not cleansed?

Friends, on the authority of God's word, if you've repented and trusted Christ, you are cleansed. Jesus said, if you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples and if the sun has set you free, you are free how much? Indeed. You're free. I mean, you think about all the ways and all the ways the enemy can lie to us. If you don't believe this and get this down in your gut, you'll always feel like you can never be the fullness of what God wants you to be.

You'll feel like because of my past, my future has been compromised. And then the devil will lie to you and say it's because God didn't love you enough. And then you'll be mad at God that your future's compromised. God never said your future's compromised. Read through the Bible. There's only one character in the Bible that lived perfect. Would you care to know you? You can take another guess, you're going to be right. It's Jesus.

I mean, you can study Moses, you can study Noah, you can study Abraham, you can study good men in the faith and you'll see flaws that they had. I mean, you see Noah, he's the only righteous person on the planet for 120 years preaching the gospel, it's only him, three sons and their wives that enter the arc. I mean, he is the only faithful guy. And what's he do when he comes off the arc after sacrificing the Lord? He gets drunk.

And in some ways, if I was on a boat for a year with a bunch of animal, I mean, there's nothing perfect about Noah. There's nothing perfect about Abraham. There's nothing perfect about Joshua. There's nothing perfect about David. There's nothing perfect about Peter or Paul. There's only one who has been made perfect who has always been perfect, who offered his perfection to us through his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead and it's Jesus, which means this.

Christian, listen to me, believe your blessing. If you've turned from your sin and you've trusted Christ, you are cleansed. You don't have to carry around the stain anymore. You don't have to go back and relive that. You say, "Well, why do I always

have those thoughts about my past?" Because the enemy hates you. And the enemy knows if you ever shut him up, that you would be a danger to the kingdom of darkness.

Do you know when God started calling me to ministry when I was 24, I didn't believe this because for some reason in my head, I had the view that I know pastors sinned and stuff, but they just send little sins. They didn't send big sins and they weren't around big sins. And so I didn't feel like I fit into the pastoral mode because my past was such that I didn't feel qualified to be a pastor. Bad past, no pastor until I started believing these truths.

And when I believe these truths, then I started living differently. Then it wasn't about God. You're not calling me because I'm good, you're calling me because I'm forgiven. You're calling me because this is your purpose in my life. And Lord, you've forgiven all my past so none of that hinders where you're taking me. And I'm not saying because you're cleansed, God doesn't call you to make restitution sometimes. Did you know God calls you to do that sometimes?

Sometimes with people that you've wronged even though you're forgiven, God's like, "Now, go make it right." Do it right in the sight of God and of man. It's not an excuse, you just, I got away scot free, now I know not to tell them I'm sorry. No, sometimes you need to go back and tell people I was wrong in the way I treated you to the extent that you can, right? But if you can believe your blessing of a clean conscience, that will change your life.

Now some of you're here today and I feel like I need to say this. Some of you

would say, "Pastor Jeff, the reason I feel unclean is not because of anything I did but because of what somebody did to me." That's legit. Like I feel dirty on the inside not because of me, but because of my dad, because of my uncle, because of my brother, because of my coach, because of my teacher. I just don't feel good not because of what I was looking for, but what somebody took away from me like what do you got from me?

Here's what I have for you. You need to forgive them with the same forgiveness that Jesus Christ forgave you. Do you know why? Because forgiveness isn't a feeling. If you wait till you feel like you're ready to forgive them, you'll never feel like it. Feelings an emotion. Forgiveness is an act of the will. Forgiveness is Christ because of all that you've forgiven me, I'm willing to offer the same level of forgiveness to them.

Because I didn't deserve to be forgiven and you forgave me, even though they don't deserve to be forgiven, I'm forgiving them. The way to your freedom is forgiveness. You say, "Well, why did God allow that in my life?" I can't answer that question, but I can't tell you this. God's ways are higher than your ways and God's thoughts are higher than your thoughts and God doesn't waste anything. And what the enemy intended for evil, God will use for good.

By your forgiveness, God will set you on a new course. And here's what I've found in my life, that sometimes the things that have been the most painful things in my life are the things that God uses in healing other people if I'm walking with them. Friends, it means this. You don't have to carry around a badge of shame anymore. Do you know why? Because you're cleansed. Not because your pastor told you, but

because the word of God declares it and Jesus Christ is telling you this morning you're cleansed, you're washed, you're free.

I mean, hear the word of the Lord in first Corinthians chapter 6 verses 9 through 11. He says this. He says, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" Make no mistake about it guys unrighteous people don't inherit the kingdom. Unrighteous people is everybody. We're all unrighteous. We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Make no mistake about it. Here's why.

Because sometimes people are like, "Whoa, I know he wasn't the best guy and I know he died, but you know what? He was in church a lot. I think he's probably going to heaven." No, he's not. If he hasn't repented and trusted Christ for the forgiveness of his sins, if she hasn't repented and trusted Jesus for the forgiveness, she's not because Jesus Christ is the only access. So he says, "Do you not know the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" Yeah, we know. Do not be deceived.

Now listen to what he says. This is not an exhaustive list either. Neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor a feminine, nor homosexuals, nor thieves nor the covenants nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor the swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God, nor will anybody else on the page of sin that I just read, can't. There's no way for you to get right with God. There's nothing you can do. You're already dead and you're going to die. And when you die, Jesus is going to say, "Get away from me."

But love verse 11, such were some of you. You know that list of sins I read? They're covered by everybody at BRAVE Church. Somebody here, every single sin I

read has committed it. Every single one. Why? Because there's no temptation that sees you except what's common to man. We just think that the sins we sin are unique because we're afraid to talk about them.

I mean, if I ask people, "Hey, stand up if you're struggling in your marriage," a third to half of the people in our church would stand up if they're being honest. Hey, stand up today if you're struggling with a wayward kid, about a third to half of our people would stand up if they're being honest. Hey, stand up today if you had problems with finance and you spend more than you earn, about third to half of the people would stand up.

Hey, if you've been immoral in any way sexually in your life, about a third to half of the people would stand up. I mean, we've all sinned fallen short to the glory of God. That's what some of us were. But what? You were washed, that's cleansed, you were sanctified, that's set apart, but you were justified, that's made right in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ in the spirit of our God.

What's the purpose of church? It's to declare the glory of God and the forgiveness he offers through Christ and the life that you can have so that you can experience the new covenant with new confidence, with a clean conscience. That's the best news on the whole planet. I got nothing else. That's it. You can have it. That's what he tells us. Do you have a clean conscience this morning? Do you believe that you do?

Well, I'm hoping I'll feel that way later this... No, you have to believe it now. You

have to say I believe that. That's what the word teaches. Let me give a fourth truth. Believe your blessings in the new confession because of Christ's faithfulness. The new confession, notice verse 23, let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful.

God's faithful. God's always faithful. Confession is not just saying I did something wrong, confession means I'm saying the same thing as. It's two Greek words, homologō. It means I'm saying the same thing as, I'm saying the same thing as God. If he's referring to my sin, I'm not just saying, "God, I struggle sometimes," I'm calling my sins sin. But this time he's talking about different thing. He's talking about our confession of hope.

What is hope? Hope is a present confidence in a future reality. That's hope. It's present confidence in a future reality. It's believing what I can't see. Who here could use a little more hope? I mean, we're all looking for more hope. It's easy for us to tell other people about the hope they're looking for. It's easy for us to call out what they need. It's harder to believe it for our own self sometimes, isn't it?

The Bible says in the Proverbs 13 verse 12 hope deferred makes the heart sick. When you're trusting God to do something, he says his word's going to do, but you're not seeing it, there can be like an illness in your gut or in your heart you just feel like, "Ugh, what's wrong? How come God's not moving now? Why isn't he doing what he says he's going to do?" Hope deferred makes the heart sick but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

Matthew 10:29 and 31 says are not two sparrows sold for a cent and yet not one of them falls to the ground apart from your father. So don't fear. Are you not more valuable than sparrows? I mean, if God cares about the lilies of the field and God cares about the birds of the air, how much more does he care about you? Psalm 27:13, one of my favorite. I would've despaired unless I had believed I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. You know what that means?

My life would be a mess right now if I didn't believe that I was going to see God's goodness realized here. When it comes to my family, when it comes to my kids, when it comes to our church, when it comes to our nation, I would be in great despair if I didn't believe that I would see the goodness of the Lord presently in my life. That's walking by faith and not by sight. That's a blessing we can believe of God.

We can have the hope of our confession and the present certainty of a future reality that one day he's going to present me faultless before the throne. That's a guarantee. It's as good as done. But yet I find that for many Christians, we have a hard time believing that for ourselves. I mean, think about it like this. If God can save your life from the pit of hell, remove the penalty of your sin, free you from the power of sin, place Christ inside of you through his Holy Spirit and promise you eternal life. What else is too hard for him? Like what can't he do?

If he can be conceived by the Holy Spirit and the second person in the Trinity, the God man Jesus can become flesh and make his dwelling among us, what else is too hard for him? If he can walk on water, what else is too hard for him? If he can feed

5,000 people out of five loaves and two fish, what else is too hard for him? If he can slay a giant with a little boy, what else is too hard for him? If he can flood the world and save part of it so he can repopulate, what else is too hard for him?

The answer is he can do all things, and yet it's easier for us sometimes to believe it in others than it is to believe in ourselves. Remember the story of Mark chapter 9, Jesus had just revealed himself on the amount of transfiguration with three of his apostles and he was showing him all the glory and they come down the hill and there's this argument taking place. And the teachers are arguing with the disciples and Jesus is like, "What's going on?"

And his father comes from out of the woodwork and he's like, "It's my boy. It's my son." Said, "I asked your disciples to do something, but they couldn't do it. I needed him healed." And Jesus said, "Oh, perverse generation, how long I got to put up with you? You don't believe that I can do this? I mean, what's going on here? Bring the boy to me. What's his problem?" He goes, "Well, he's got a demon and ever since he's young, he throws himself in the fire. I mean, he can't control himself."

But Jesus said if you can do anything, if you would have compassion, I mean, maybe you could do. He said, Jesus said, "If I can, I can do all things for him who believes." And then the father praises prayer aloud to Jesus. He says, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." I have theological faith enough to believe you heal. I have theological faith enough to believe you cast out demons. I have theological faith enough that you can save, but I need faith to believe you can do it right here presently in my son.

You ever notice, sometimes it's easier when you're praying over other people for their physical healing it's easier praying over other people for their deliverance, it's easier praying for other people when they're praying for somebody to come to know Christ, but when it's immediately you, you get those doubts in your head? Why is that? Because the devil doesn't want you to believe that the word of God's for you. He doesn't want you to believe the word of God's for you. The healing power of Jesus.

Yeah, he does that for other people, he won't do that for you. The deliverance ministry of Jesus, he'll do it for other people, he won't do it for you. Hey, its salvation in your family for your kids and for your grandparents and your parent, he does it for other people, he's probably not going to do it for you. Why do we have those doubts? Because the enemy doesn't want you to believe that the word of God is true.

You all need to get you some scripture and hold onto it and believe it until you see it happen. I can handle God's nos. There's times God's like, "Nope, not on this side of heaven." He can do that. But I think far more often he wants to do it here if we would just believe. Lord, I'm believing your word says this. I'm holding onto this until I see it. I want to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. It's the confession of hope.

Lord my hope is that you will do everything that your word says you will do. And guess what? Sometimes even well meaning Christians, when you start talking like that will be like, "Well, don't get overconfident because he may not do that in your life." Yeah, but he may, he may. Well, I don't want to pray for that new job because what if

he doesn't? Well, if you don't pray, he won't. I don't want to pray for healing because what if he doesn't? But if you pray, he might.

But I mean, I don't want to pray for deliverance ministry because that's weird and freaky and I don't know that devils exist anymore. They do. Why don't we pray that way? Why don't we have a confession of that hope? Because we don't want to look bad. And we think we're like protecting God because we don't want to make God look bad. If he doesn't heal, that would make God look bad, it never makes God look bad. It's humility that says God, I'm believing your word for what you said you're going to do until I see it with my own two eyes.

This is the authority we have in Christ. That is our confession of hope. Let me give you a fifth. I know I'm running over and I really don't care because this is so important, so important you believe these. I mean, you think about this. If you believe in the new covenant and the new confidence you have and the new conscience, it's cleanse and the new confession of hope, then you have this one.

How about believe your blessings in the new consideration of others because of Christ's transformation, your new consideration, your new consideration of others because of Christ's transformation. Notice what he says in verses 24 and 25. He says, and let us consider. That means let's give a careful assessment to how to stimulate one another to love in good deeds. That means we're going to consider others how we can stimulate them to love in good deeds.

Now what does that word stimulate mean? It means to stir up, it means to

irritate, it means to aggravate, it means to provoke. And some of you are saying finally, I know my spiritual gift. I'm great at doing that in other people. I irritate and aggravate and provoke people all the time, praise Jesus, I now know my spiritual gift. That's not what he's saying. He's saying we're irritating them and provoking them to what? Love for God and good deeds for others.

Why? Because the whole law is summed up in love for God and service to others, right? So the reason we gather and the reason we get together is to help each other on that journey. Do you know why? Because when we're isolated, we have a way of being not very objective with ourselves. We're objective with other people in their sin, but with ours, we're totally fine.

When we come into community, part of our job is to help other people to push them, to stimulate them, to irritate them. Not to aggravate them, but to push them in a greater love for God and a greater love for others. It's okay to tell another brother in Christ, "Hey man, the way you're treating your wife is not good and the reason your marriage stinks is because of you. And here's some things that you can do that would improve your marriage greatly."

It's not wrong to tell a woman, "Hey, you disrespect your husband so much in everything he does it's like a kick in the gut to him every time you open your mouth and you need to kind of tone it down a bit, he's trying his best." It's okay for you to tell Christian kids or even non-Christian kids of Christian parents, the way you're disrespecting your parents is unacceptable. That's not how you walk with Christ. The way you're treating your teacher, that's not honoring to the Lord.

Hey, you call yourself a Christian, but you're going out and getting drunk and you're saying that you're really spiritual. That's wrong. I love you enough to tell you that. I'm not saying we keep our spiritual eyes open to look at everybody else's sin, that's not what this means. But this does mean that in relationships that we have that there's going to be things brought across our paths where we're going to have the opportunity to share things with others because of our great love for them. And if you love people, you're not going to be afraid to point those things out. That's what God wants us to do, stimulate people towards love and good deeds, preference people.

Friends, we need comrades in the fight, we need warriors around us while we're in the battle. We need other people that can speak into us sometimes as an encouragement like, "Hey, don't give up now, you're so close, keep going." Other times like, "Stop going the way you're going and turn around or it's bad for you. I love you enough to tell you that." That's what it means to stimulate people towards loving good deeds.

And then comes this verse in verse 25 which I could spend another hour on, and I promise you I won't, but spoke to me very, very loudly during 2020 and all the chaos that went on in our nation. It says not forsaking our own assembling together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near. Now, you might ask me what does not forsaking our own assembling together mean? So I want to tell you. It means do not forsake our own assembling together.

It means as a church, we're called to gather by who? Jesus. We need each other. I'm going to promise you I'm not going to rant, but I am going to talk. It means... Lots have changed since 2020, did you know that? We got two new buildings. We have more doors than we used to have. They're all going to be kept open to the glory of God no matter what. Do you understand what I'm saying? Because we're called to meet together.

Pastors need to know churches are called to be open. It doesn't matter what some pagan official says of what essential and non-essential is. It's not that the church is essential, the church is primary. It is the most essential institution on planet earth. And we get our marching orders from Jesus not anybody else, which means if you can be here, come.

I realize some of you can't make it here. And we love our online community. And if you have a hip replacement you had done or your in poor health, we get it. That's why we do online services. And if you're in Florida or Hawaii, I know the commute's tough, stay there. But if you live in Denver, please come to church. There's a huge difference as you've heard said before, between watching a fire on TV and being around a fire and feeling its warmth.

If your view is I can do everything I can do in Christ at home, then you don't understand the church. It's a selfish view. It's a self-centered view. It's a sinful view. God saved you to contribute to the lives of others. And if you're not gathering, you're not fulfilling what God wants you to be. And you can never be the fullness of who Jesus

is apart from the church. That means this. I love Jesus, I just hate the church. Well then you don't love the Jesus of the Bible, period.

The church is the vehicle that God chooses to bless. Well, I have my backyard, I'm involved in a ministry over here. Hey, good for you and now get in a church too and honor the Lord. That's biblical. Do not forsake the meeting together as some are in the habit of doing it. Apparently in the first century, some people had games on Sundays, some people had all these other activities. Memorial Day weekend was nice where they want to climb fourteeners, they didn't come.

I mean, they had all those things then too. Don't forsake meeting together. Connect with other people no matter what. Why? Because we want to encourage each other. And how do we want to do that? All the more is what? We see the day approaching. What day? The day Jesus is coming back. The day Jesus is going to write every wrong, the day the chaos is all going to end. You say, "Well, when's that day happening?" It's coming soon. You see it approaching.

I mean, I talked through the book of Revelation two years ago or a year and a half ago and I remember thinking I'm watching this stuff happen before my eyes and now as I'm watching the news, I'm like, okay, we're here. We're right there. Everybody's wanting to make sure everybody's doing everything everybody else is doing and big brother's watching and we're going to have a one world economy and are you not seeing that it's coming?

Friends, you have nothing to fear if you're in Christ. You have everything to look

forward to, but the reason we gather is so we can encourage one another that even if the earth gives way, that Jesus Christ is still Lord to the glory of God, amen? Amen and amen. Isn't it true today? I believe, I believe, I believe, I believe, I believe. Do you believe? God wants you to hold onto that truth and walk out of here with those five new things in your heart and in your mind knowing who you are.

And friends, whether we have one song which we do today, or whether we have three songs at the end of a service, I'm here to tell you the reason we gather and pray is not for like the one person here that felt touched by God, all of you felt touched by God. We're here to cement in our hearts what God did. Sometimes it's good to come forward when God's prompting you and say, "Hey, I'm just praying for our marriage. It's in a good place, but I want to keep it there."

Sometimes they'll say, "Hey Lord, I'm just asking for this relationship to be what's honoring to you." And by the way, you don't need to come forward because everybody that's here would want to pray with you. You can turn to each other and say, "Hey, what do you need to pray for? Let's pray for each other. Let's sing to the Lord. Let's ask him to cement these truths in our heart. Let's believe the truth of God's word." Amen? Amen. Would you stand with me as we pray.

Father in heaven, we give you all the glory, honor and praise for who you are. And Lord, we ask you in this moment of worship, Lord, as we seek your face, as we worship you, as we pray that you would cement these truths in our heart. If you're here today and you've never trusted in the person and work of Jesus, here's how you can pray. Dear Jesus, I believe that you're God. I believe you died for me on a cross and

paid for all my sin. I believe you rose from the dead.

Lord, come into my life right now. I make you my Lord and savior. And for those of you who know Christ, what is it he's showing you today? I pray that you would believe you have a clean conscience and you have a new confidence and you're in the new covenant and you have a new consideration for other people and that God is working in your heart to cleanse you from all unrighteousness and he sees you as perfect. Lord, we worship you because we believe in all you've done in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. Can we give God praise today?