



Message Transcript

These Belong to You

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Thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today, would you do me a favor? Welcome our Broomfield campus, who is worshipping along with us, so great to worship with you. As we go before the Lord, let's make sure our hearts are prepared to receive his living and active word this morning. Will you pray with me? Lord Jesus, we do. We give you all the glory, honor and praise and Lord, regardless of our are circumstances, we say, hallelujah, praise you the Lord. Lord, we love you and we bless you for who you are, we praise you that you're alive and we praise you that we hold in our hand a copy of your living and active word, which we're about ready to hear and so Lord we say, speak to us because we're ready. Lord, our desire this morning is to clearly hear you to become who you say we are and to put into practice the very things that you show us from your word.

So Lord, we believe that you have a special word for everyone here and now got all of God's people who are ready to receive his word and to own it and to live out what he shows you agreed by very loudly saying with me, amen.

Amen.

Amen. This story goes that there was a guy that saved up all of his money to take a cruise and he bought his ticket for the cruise, but when he purchased a ticket, that was the end of his resources. So when he got on the cruise, he was hungry and for a couple of days, he couldn't really find any food and so he started sneaking food from the cafeteria lines on the ship, but began to feel his conscience seared because he knew he was taking something that wasn't rightfully his. After about three days, he

was so hungry. He asked someone on the ship, if they would be willing to get him some of their food so that he could eat. The person looked at him dumbfounded and said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "Well, I haven't eaten in three days." He said, "Sir, when you purchased the ticket, all the meals on the ship were paid for. It all belongs to you. These belong to you, they're yours."

Whether that story's true or not, when it comes to our spiritual life, it's very true that at the moment of salvation in the life of a believer, God makes it a positive, the holy spirit and there are some specific promises that belong to you. We won't be able to go over every single one, but John is going to highlight three specific promises or gifts that belong to you that the enemy has tried to rob. Now the enemy Jesus refers to in John chapter eight verse 44 says this about him, that he was a murderer from the beginning and that every time he speaks, he is a liar because the lie is his native tongue. In other words, the enemy is a murderer and a liar and all he does all day long is speak. Here's what you need to understand believer, at the moment you were converted to Christ, Satan knows that he lost you for all eternity. For the Bible says that no one can snatch you out of his hand.

You belong to God and you're his, and because Satan knows that you belong to God and he can't take you, the only thing he can do is lie to you so that you don't take what is rightfully yours. There are some things that belong to you. Ever felt like you lost something close to you, you ever been in a shopping center and you can't find your kids? Maybe somebody comes up and says, "I think these belong to you." Or maybe you've walked back in the house, after you get out to your car, you can't find your keys

and your spouse is there saying, "I think these belong to you." I mean, there are gifts that the holy spirit says are ours in Christ Jesus, that we can have, but we relinquish them because we don't realize that when Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin and rose from the dead, we got all of him. If you don't realize that you have all of him, you will miss out on these three promises that God says these belong to you.

So believer listen up this morning because these promises are so special and so good. It will radically change the way you live, radically change the way we live as a church and God wants you to own the very things that he talks about. If you have a copy of the scripture, I invite you to open to first John chapter five. We're going to begin in verse 13 this morning and go through verse 17. If you don't have a copy of the scriptures here in Inglewood, it's under your chair. In Broomfield, I believe it's under your chair. Raise your hand, somebody will bring you a Bible, but get your eyes on your own copy. I'll read these verses. Right now what we're doing is we're looking at the post script of this letter that John is writing. It's so powerful. I've broken it down into two weeks, because I don't want us to miss any part of what he's saying rightly belongs to us and notice what John says.

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. This is the confidence which we have before him. That if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us and if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from him. If anyone sees his brother committing a sin, not leading to death, he shall ask God and God will for him give life to those who commit sin, not leading to

death. There is a sin leading to death. I do not say that he should make requests for this. On righteousness is sin and there is a sin not leading to death. In that short section, John highlights three promises belong to you as a believer. Three promises that belong to you. Three gifts if you trusted in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and savior. Are you ready for the first one? This belongs to you and it's this.

The certainty of salvation. The absolute certainty of salvation. Notice what John says, these things I have written to you. Now, these he's not talking about the entire book. He's talking about what he just talked about and what we just looked at last week was the fact that in Christ, what we have is Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins so we have his blood. He was baptized in the Jordan and so from the time he was baptized, until the time he died, he has always been and will always be the Christ and the spirit testifies to these. We talked about the water, the blood and the spirit, the same three we yield to today. We yield to the blood of Christ when we trust in Jesus Christ alone, for the forgiveness of our sin. We yield to the water when we go into the waters of baptism as our first step of obedience.

Then we continually yield to the spirit for the rest of our lives and those testify that we are of the Lord. These things he's written to us so that we can know. Well, what things? These things I have written to you who, what? Who believe in the name of the son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. There is certainty of salvation for those who believe in the son of God, right? There is certainty. Now the Bible says to examine yourself and make sure you're in the faith. If you have questions today and say, I'm not so sure, I'm not just giving you a rubber stamp and marking you

and saying, well, you're saved because I'm a pastor. No. If there's questions in your life, here's what they need to be resolved. What needs to be resolved in your life is that you come to the place where Jesus Christ and him alone is the Lord and there are no other gods.

If you believe that Jesus is the Christ who died on the cross in your place for all your sins and rose from the dead, and he's the only way to the father and you've repented of your sin and turned to Christ, you are his and you are his forever. On the authority of God's word, you can know that you have eternal life. You can know it. You can experience that here. Now, why is that important? Because if you don't realize that salvation is rightly yours, you'll walk differently. If you live your life knowing for sure no matter what happens, I'm God's daughter or I'm God's son and no one can strip me of that and I know he lives in me and I know I'll be with him forever and I'm living my life as if I know salvation's not a deal for me anymore. It is finished.

So what's the gospel? What does it mean to believe in the name of the son of God? See the Bible spells out this for people in this world. God doesn't say people are bad people. God says people are dead people. See the gospel is not this. A lot of times I hear the gospel spelled out like this, that you were born and from the time you were born, you started doing some bad things. Who hears done some bad things? Every raises their hand, we've all done some bad things and Jesus didn't like those bad things. So he came and died on a cross because of your bad things and now that you're a Christian, Jesus is in and you start doing some good things. There's no good

news in that. Any talk show host can tell you how to go from doing bad things, to doing good things.

Any radio personality can tell you how to change your behavior from bad things to good things. Here's what the Bible points out, it's not that you've done bad things, it's that you are a bad thing, right? You're dead in your trespasses and sins and you have no hope and you have no future and you will be judged according to your sins that you've committed. There is nothing you can do from this moment on to get right with God, but God loved the world so much that he sent his son Jesus so that in your deadness Christ would take on his life and die for your sins and take all your sins and place it on him. Then he rose from the dead to demonstrate that he was indeed God's one and only son. He's the only one who has ever conquered death permanently.

He is the one and only true God and to believe on him and him alone, you can know, that you can know, that you can know that you have eternal life. The passage right before in John chapter five, 11 and 12 says he who has the son has the life. He who does not have the son does not have the life. It doesn't get any simpler than that. I'm not talking about what religion you favor. I'm not talking about the color of your skin or your gender. I'm telling everybody, everywhere, all over the world, you need to repent and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God and if you do, you may know, that you may know, that you may know that you have life in his name. If you do, God wants you to walk with that certainty.

It's not arrogant to walk around saying, I know Jesus died for me. I know that he rose for me. I know that he loves me and there ain't nothing that can change that.

That's not arrogant. That's humble. That's admitting what Christ did on my behalf and saying that I believe in him and that I trust him, right? That's the gospel of Jesus Christ. Are you sure that you have that? If you've trusted Jesus as your Lord and savior, put it to bed today that he is yours. I mean, this is what John's saying. John said the same thing in his gospel in John chapter 20 and verse 31, when he was summing up his whole gospel. Here's what he said. He said in verse 30, he said, therefore are many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which were not written in this book.

But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name. What's the summation of everything John's saying? That Jesus is the Christ, the son of God and by believing in him, you have life. If you have life, live with certainty. Now, why is this a big deal? Because I meet a lot of people who have genuinely entrusted in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sin and then they live as wondering, did I really do it right? I mean, I pray. I've been in church. I think I prayed it over 500 times now, but I don't know if it's stuck and I don't know if I did it right. Okay. Here's three lies that the enemy will tell you. The first one is doubt.

He'll use doubt. He will tell you as a believer that if you have any questions at all about God, that you're really not safe. That is a lie. Go all the way back to the book of Genesis. After God created the heavens and the earth, created the whole world, created man and woman on the sixth day and then what happens? Where's Satan first show up? He shows up in the garden at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

right as Eve's standing there and how does he come into play? By asking the question what? Did God really say that? What was Satan doing? Getting Eve to do what? To doubt. Did God really say that? Yes he did. God said, if you eat off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will certainly die. Did God really say that? Here's what Satan does to believers.

Did God really say that you're going to be saved? Well, the Bible says that for God so loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten son. That whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life. Yeah, he did say that. The Bible says that if I confess with my mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in my heart, that God raised him from the dead, I will be saved. Yeah. God said that. We can put our doubts to rest when we study the word and one of the things that Satan tries to do is get you to doubt God's word. You can always go back to God's word and say, no, this is what God's word said. I'm going to stand on the word. The more acquainted you are with the word of God, the more clear the lie will become.

See, I know according to Ephesians 1:13, that God has given me his holy spirit, which is a deposit guaranteeing my inheritance in the saints. So when Satan says, are you sure pastor Jeff? Are you sure? What if you've died, you find out Christianity really isn't the only way? What if you find out Jesus wasn't true? Well, the word says that it is. The more and more I walk with Jesus and the more and more I live by faith and the more and more I experience his grace, the more and more I know that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life and I am more certain of my salvation today than that I'll

I wake up tomorrow. I'm 100% convinced. So don't worry if you have doubts, it's okay to have doubts and for those of you that have doubts and say, "Well, I don't even know if Jesus is the one."

Hey, bring your doubts to the word of God and bring your doubts to the Lord, because here's what you'll find. If you really want to know the truth, Jesus is not ashamed to reveal the truth to you. Second lie of the enemy, he'll have you look in the mirror. He'll have you look in the mirror, he'll look at your sin. It's an identity issue. He'll say, "Look at your life. You call yourself a Christian and you act like that? I know what Christians look like. They look like that and that is not you. So how could you call yourself a believer?" Because the word of God says that when I trust in Christ, I am a new creation, that old things have passed away. Behold, all things have been made new. That's second Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 2:20 that I quote often from this pulpit says, for I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me and the life I live in the body.

I live by faith and the son of God who love me and gave himself for me. That's who I am. It's not what I do. It's who I am. I'm a new creation with a new identity. Sometimes yes, there may be sin in my life, but I can confess to my sin and God who's faithful and just will forgive my sins and cleanse me from all in righteousness. So when Satan says, hey, look in the mirror. I said, that's not what I do. I don't look at me. I look at the cross. I look at what Jesus Christ did. He shed his blood for me. He died and he rose from the dead. That's why I'm saved. I'm not saved by what I do or didn't do. I'm saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. It is a certainty. It

is a deal. It is done. Or how about this? Listen to Christians say stuff like this. "I'm not sure I'm saved because I'm still tempted. I still have temptation in my life. I still have temptation."

Temptation is not sin. Temptation is not sin. Can I tell you when temptation will stop in your life? When you die. Then it will go away. Until then, you will always be tempted in some way. Tempted to the flesh, tempted to serve yourself, tempted to go away from... You'll always be tempted. That's why I love God's word, because God's word says in Hebrews chapter four and verse 13. In Hebrews 4:13, it talks about the great high priest that we have. For we have a great high priest, this is 4:15, who... For we do not have a great high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are yet without sin. Therefore he encourages us to draw near the throne of grace.

Jesus has been tempted in every way. There's no way you're being tempted, that he wasn't tempted. There's no new strategy Satan's designed for you. The difference between Jesus and you is he's God and you're not, which means Jesus never sinned and you have, but just because you've been tempted and you say, well, I'm I've been a Christian for a while and why am I getting that thought in my head and why do I feel like I want to do that and why do I feel drawn back here? Because the enemy hates you and he wants you to doubt your certainty. Because if Christians don't know 100% sure that there's no way they can lose their salvation, you cannot live out the faith. You cannot live out the faith. Just think about this, my own kids, they're my kids. Nothing will ever change that.

They can do whatever they want. It won't be the fact that they're my children.

They're my children. My children do not walk around saying, if I do this, am I going to get kicked out of the family? If I do this, maybe dad won't love me. My kids don't worry about that. Jesus said, if you who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your heavenly father who gives the holy spirit? God doesn't kick his kids out of his family, right? There's a certainty of salvation. John writes in first John 5:1, these things I have written to you so that you who believe in the son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. You can know it for certain right now at this moment. You might say, well, that sounds arrogant. It's not arrogant. It's the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's a gift that he's given through his holy spirit.

You can know, that you can know, that you can know that you are saved. Now all of these build, because if you don't get this first one right, you're not going to get number two right. If you don't get the first two right, you're not going to get number three right. The first gift and what belongs to you is a certainty of your salvation, which leads to the second gift, which is this. This belongs to you. Confidence and prayer. Confidence and prayer. Notice this in verse 14 and 15. This is the confidence which we have before him. Christians listen to these words, see if you believe them. I believe them because it's the word of God. That if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us and if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests, which we have asked from him. That's confidence. Confidence also means boldness. It means a willingness to come before Jesus. It means a willingness to spend time with God.

The enemy wants to lie to you and tell you God's mad at you. He's disappointed with you. He might kick you out of his family so that you'll do what? So that you won't spend time with Jesus in prayer, right? It's tough to come boldly before the Lord if you don't feel you're worthy to come boldly before the Lord. If you know that you are his son or his daughter, and no matter what you do that you can bust down heaven's door and get to the throne as quick as you can and that you be welcomed with grace, it changes everything. God wants you to know that you belong to him. God wants you to know that you're his son or daughter, and God wants you to pray. When you sin or if you sin boldly, here's what the enemy will whisper. You better fix yourself up. You better confess a lot. You better do a lot. You better get right. I mean, Jesus is disappointed with you now. What's he saying? Stay away from Jesus.

Now, if there's anyone who modeled prayer on the earth, who was it? It was Jesus. I mean, we see him from the time he's 12 of in the temple. We see him breaking away to pray early in the morning. Where do we see him? After he feeds the 5,000, he goes up on a mountain side to pray all night long. What's he doing in the garden of Gethsemane? He's praying. What's he doing on the cross? He's praying. What's he modeling? No matter where I go, no matter what I do, it is so important for me to spend time with my dad, right? That was his whole life, was a life prayer. So much so that when the disciples saw Jesus, they saw him do miracles, heal, all sorts of things. The one thing we have in scripture that the disciples wanted to be taught specifically by Jesus was Lord, Luke 11:1. Lord teach us to pray. Lord, teach us to

pray.

I mean, we see your life. We see who you are. Lord teach us to pray. It marked his life. So what does Jesus say? He goes, what we call the Lord's prayer, which is really the disciples' prayer. He said, when you pray say this. "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day, our daily bread and forgive our sins for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us and lead us not into temptation. What's he telling the disciples? You have confidence to come before me. In Ephesians 3:12, it says that we may enter the throne with boldness or confidence before the Lord. What does Satan want to tell you all the time? God doesn't want to hear you. He doesn't want to listen to you. You screwed it up again. Because Satan knows, because he's a defeated foe that he still has power over you as an individual. Who he doesn't have power over is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because Christ is in you, he knows that if you spend time in prayer, there ain't nothing he can do to mess with you. Prayer is that powerful. That's why as a church, prayer will not be something we continually downgrade. It'll be something we continually upgrade. Yes, I know I hear it from people all the time that come to our church. When we pray in groups and sometimes they say I'm uncomfortable with that. I want to go somewhere else and I get that and I'm okay with that and it doesn't make you a bad person, but we as a people are going to learn how to seek the face of God. Because we as a people are going to trust that God can do something through prayer that he otherwise can't do. That's what John wants us to know this morning that there is a certainty that you can have confidence when you come before the Lord in prayer.

If you don't truly know that you're saved, loved completely forgiven and have your identity, it's very hard to come before the Lord and pray prayers according to his will, right?

You might say, well, how do I know that I'm praying a prayer according to his will? Here's how you know. Does it align with word of God? Does it align with God's word? If it aligns with God's word, pray it and pray it in all boldness and trust that God can do that and the more you see God answer prayer, the more that you will pray. Now listen to this. We may not have a problem that if we bring requests before him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. Yeah, I get that pastor. He's God, he's got to listen to us, but we have a problem with verse 15. If we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests, which we have asked from him. Whoa, whoa, wait, because I know what some of you're saying, because the enemy's lying to you right now and say, wait a second.

I see in the Bible where Jesus was willing to heal people and I prayed for someone to get healed, they not only didn't get healed, they got sick and they died. Look at that. I asked for that request and God didn't answer that request. That's what Satan does and he lies. The reality is when we pray according to God's will, God shows us his will over time. Do you know what God's will is sometimes? Can I tell you what God's will is, just so you know? It'll help you out a lot. Here's the God's will sometimes. No, I'm not doing that. That's sometimes God's will. Now that's not my will. See, it doesn't say bring my request to God the way I want God to do it and God will always grant the request I want. It says when I pray according to his will, God will

always respond according to his will.

So what's the purpose of prayer. The purpose of prayer is getting to know the heart of God so that when I'm praying, I'm praying in alignment with what Jesus wants and every single time I pray in alignment with what Jesus wants. God always grants that request. That's what he does. You say, well, how do I know what God's heart is? You pray more and you pray more and you pray more and you pray more. Now think about this, if I were just to ask you, this is a rhetorical question. How's your prayer life? How much time do you spend in prayer on a daily basis? What do you spend time doing when you pray? I mean, it's not the only litmus test of a spiritual life. I mean there's worship and there's Bible reading and prayer, but prayer is the opportunity to spend time talking to, listening to and seeing the God of the universe work on your behalf. I mean, it's unbelievable. Name another faith that even believes that.

I mean, people in other religions don't even know if their God talks, and the reason they don't know is because there's no other God, but the Lord Jesus Christ. We serve the living. God, we get to pray to a God who's alive, who speaks back through his word and oftentimes subjectively about what he says so that we can actually know him. Do you spend time praying to him and trust me, I'm a pastor. I know how hard it is to pray. It's just hard to pray. It is hard to pray. You ever wake up in the morning and you're like, I'm going to pray. I'm going to pray and you sit down to start praying and your phone starts beeping and you're thinking about the day and you got this going on and that going on and you spent 15 minutes thinking about what you want to pray about and you haven't even prayed yet. Why? Because the enemy knows that

the most important thing you can ever do is pray.

Now in our culture, we really don't believe that. We hear pastors talk like that, but here's what people in north America often say, "How come it is when we take mission trips or when I hear about people in other parts of the world that they see God do all these miraculous things, but in America we don't see it?" Here's my answer. They believe that prayer changes things and we don't, it's that simple. Here's what we believe. Well, God's sovereign. I totally believe God's sovereign and that nothing happens according, unless God wants it to happen or he allows it to happen or causes it to happen. I believe that. So then why pray? If God's going to do what he's going to do anyway, why pray? Here's why, because even though God's sovereign, God here's your prayers and when you pray according to his will, he answers and does things in the world differently than if you didn't pray. I still believe God's sovereign and we don't pray because we look at things as impossible.

I can't pray for my marriage, is beyond repair now. I can't pray for the job, that's out of my reach now. I didn't get the right education for that. I mean, we think when we see with our eyes that things are impossible, that we can't pray about them, because that's too big for God. Can I just tell you something? God has a resume of the impossible.

Amen.

God loves the impossible. God loves when he sees his people praying the impossible and we start praying for God to do the impossible. Your child's not too far

off. They haven't wandered too far. Your marriage is not too broken yet. You're not so single that God can never bring you a spouse. You haven't screwed up your past. See, if you don't understand the certainty of your salvation, you will begin to look in the mirror and say, who am I to ask God for that, because look at how bad I screwed it up and because I did, I can't really ask for that anymore. So I'll just take what comes my way. Satan loves that because Satan knows that you could have everything that God promises, but he's lying to you because he knows he's lost you for all eternity. So what does he want to make you do? Be miserable on this earth. Can I just tell you as a pastor, God answers prayer and God changes things in the world when we pray. He does.

There's a confidence in that. If you don't have confidence coming before the Lord, the reason for that is because your heart condemns you. If you flip back to first John three in verse 21 and 22, it says this, we've already gone over this verse. Beloved if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God and whatever we ask, we receive from him because why? Because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. I mean, if you do the things God wants you to do, and if you're living according to the word, you can ask whatever you will and it will be done for you. That's what Jesus said. Those are promises from his word, but pastor Jeff, what about my heart? It condemns me. I haven't been living out the gospel right. I haven't been doing the right things. I have no confidence. Go back another chapter or two. First John chapter 1:9. But if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, not only to forgive our sins, but to cleanse us from all

unrighteousness.

So you can stand confident before the Lord right now, even if you're not standing before the Lord confident right now, because the blood of Jesus cleanses you from all your sin so that you can stand before the Lord and offer bold prayers to him. The enemy will lie and say, who are you to offer bold prayers when you just acted like that? Your answer is I'm a child of the king and he asked me to pray bold prayers and I can have whatever he says I can have. That's the gospel. These belong to you. Church, prayer belongs to you. It's yours. You have power from on high, through the holy spirit when you pray and by believing his name, we have life in his name. Satan knows God listens to the prayers of his children and he answers them. Satan knows that. That's why he doesn't want you to pray.

Let me tell you the hardest meeting that you'll ever have to make at our church. Let tell you the hardest meeting, prayer night. I don't care who you are, set on your calendar, okay? The next one is February 5th, 2019. Set it on your calendar. Can I just tell you right now, even as I say that, some of you're saying, I don't know if I can make it that night. I'm not really an extrovert. I don't know I want to come to that? What if people will ask me to do... I mean, just tell me. It's the hardest meeting to make it to. On the day of prayer, I promise you on our staff, every single time we have prayer night, somebody on staff's family gets sick. Every single prayer night, every single one. I mean, there is not a prayer night that comes where I realize that sometime during the day, I'm going to have thoughts about why I don't want to come. It's the hardest meeting to come to because Satan does everything to fight with us. I mean, we've had

car exits. We've had everything.

Why? Because Satan knows when a church comes together and prays for the glory of God and truly believes that he's the power and not our strategy that God begins to do things we can never do and he tries to distract us from ever coming together and believing that prayer works. Let me tell you something, prayer is not a work. It is the work. It is not that we strategize and then to ask God to bless our ideas. It's we pray and ask God to do what he wants and then we see miraculous things happen. Prayer is yours. You have confidence to come before the Lord and pray. You have confidence to ask the Lord to change you. You have confidence to ask the Lord to do things in the lives of other people. Now really the only time I see in the scriptures where God doesn't listen to our prayers is when we're living disobediently, when we're in a marriage where we're not loving our spouse correctly, or when we've quenched the spirit of God in our life. I mean those three times.

If any of those three things have happened, great news. You can confess your sins. God's faithful and just and he'll forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness and you can start fresh right now. You have the certainty of your salvation if you believe in the name of the son of God, and you have confidence in prayer, which leads us to number three. Which the church in North America rarely talks about. This belongs to you too. It goes along with number two and it's this, it's a compulsion for intercession. It's a compulsion for intercession. Intercession is where I'm not just praying to get to know God better and I'm not just praying for God to change me. I am believing on the word of God that when I pray, God can change other

people and I'm interceding and praying for them because I know that through my prayers, God will move in their life and change them.

That's compulsion for intercession. That belongs to every believer. Now notice what it says, if anyone sees his brother committing a sin and not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give for him life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death. I do not say that he should make requests for this, all unrighteousness is sin and there is a sin not leading to death. Totally clear, right? I mean, just perfectly clear. I mean, what you have to understand is the word leading is added. Here's what it really reads. If anyone sees his brother committing a sin, not to death, he shall ask God and God will for him give life to those who commit sin, not to death. There is a sin to death and I do not say he should make requests for this.

Now there has been so much inks spilled on what's this sin and how do I know and did I commit it and all these different things. I think there's two really good understandings of what this sin could be. Obviously, the people in the first century knew what it was. We don't know what it was. So I don't want to be too dogmatic on this. If you hear somebody else say that was the sin, they may be right. Just listen to what I'm going to present to you. I think one of the sins, because he's talking about a brother, so he's talking about somebody that's been in the church can be the sin of apostasy. It can be the sin of apostasy. I mean, John has already talked about this in 1 John 2:19, where he says they went out from us, but they were not really of us for if they had been of us, they would've remained with us, but they went out so that it would be shown they're really not of us.

In other words, John was talking about that group of people that come to church and profess Jesus, look like Jesus, try to act like Jesus, but really don't know Jesus. When wander from the faith, it's really a blasphemy of the holy spirit because what they're doing is they're attributing the works of Jesus to the devil. Now I'm not talking about people that stray, I'm not talking about Christians that sin, I'm talking about people that were once in the church that now have left the church and they didn't just leave the church. They've left Jesus. They're cursing Jesus. I don't want anything to do with Jesus. I don't believe in Jesus. He didn't die for me. He didn't rise for me. I'm done with that whole thing. That's the sin of apostasy because they were never truly in the family of God and Hebrews chapter six, addresses this very sin and in Hebrew six, here's what it says. It says this... Hebrews chapter six versus four, five and six.

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the holy spirit and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come. In other words, people who have participated in the church, seen all the good of God, know that he's real and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance since they, again, crucified to themselves, the son of God and put him to open shame. It goes on to say the same thing in Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 26. It says for if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of truth, there is no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire, which will consume the adversaries. So there seems to be a sin in the Bible of apostasy.

Apostasy is not, I'm struggling at church right now. I'm looking for another church. The sin of apostasy is I'm done with Jesus. I'm done with the cross. I'm done with the Bible. I'm with all that. I never really believed it anyway, curse Jesus. That's a sin of apostasy. Much like in Jeremiah's day when God told Jeremiah don't pray for this people, because I'm about to judge them. That could be the sin, but the sin to death could also be sin where people die. I mean, Paul spelled out, first of all, we see in the book of Acts, Ananias and Sapphira lied about their offering in Acts chapter five and what happened? They died. I mean, the apostles buried both Ananias and Sapphira on the same day, they're dead. Paul's saying, well, if they die, I'm not asking you to make requests about that. They're dead. What we see in first Corinthians 11 where people took the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner and for that reason, some of them had fallen asleep or had died. Here's what I believe that John is saying.

I mean, from my perspective, because I don't get a chance to look out and say, is that person a Christian who's kind of waffling and we need to pray for them or is that person apostate? Because I don't know, here's what I think the sin to death is. If the person has died, you can stop praying for them. If they're dead, don't make requests for the dead. It's not going to help, but if they're still alive, you can intercede for them. That's what I believe John's saying. In other words, pray without ceasing. In otherwise, pray and don't give up. In other words, when you have sons or daughters that don't know the Lord, you never stop praying for them. In other words, when you have a marriage and you see somebody else's marriage and it's broken and the world's like, there's no way God could restore that. You continue to pray for them. When

somebody's struggling in their finances, you continue to pray for them. When somebody's got bitterness in their heart and unforgiveness, you continue to pray for them.

I mean, when you start praying for other people and you realize that it's through prayer that God does the work, you'll have a compulsion for it. You'll want to see it more and more and more. When I read the book of Acts, when I see the book of Acts, I see a pattern throughout the book of Acts. It's very different than what we see in North America. Here's a pattern we see in North America. The pattern we see in North America is get some people together who are pretty good leaders, who have some good strategy, get some money involved in it, map it all out, get everything in order, get your plan. Then once you get your plan, open the doors, but right before you open the doors, start praying about it in hopes that God will do something and then keep moving and then keep strategizing and then keep people happy and then keep doing this stuff and people ask the question, why don't we ever see God do miraculous things? How come we don't see God heal people in our church?

How come demons aren't cast out in our church? How come people aren't set free in our church? Because we don't use the same strategy they used in the first century. Everything good that happened in the first century started with a prayer meeting. I mean, Acts chapter two, the birth of the church. Acts chapter two, the birth of the church. Well, what were they doing in Acts chapter one? They were spending days doing what? Praying in the upper room, waiting on the holy spirit to come. So they prayed. The holy spirit came in power. They spoke the word of God boldly and

miracles happened. Whether it was thousands saved, people walking, people seeing, doing all sorts of things. What happened? Every time those things happened, what were the apostles having to say? Hey, we're just mere men. We didn't do any of this stuff. Don't look at it like it's just us. It was this Jesus that you crucified, who is now both Lord and Christ that did this work.

We didn't do anything. All we're doing is seeking him, asking him to do the same thing through us that he did while he was on the earth. It all starts in prayer. It all starts in prayer. That's why I get fired up to pray. We don't have a prayer meeting because it's the right thing to do in a church, we have a prayer meeting because I believe God is living and active and God speaks in our prayer meeting about what next steps we need to take and that when we pray for one another, God shows up and does incredible things. We've had people saved in our prayer meeting. We've had marriages healed in our prayer meeting. We've had sicknesses cured in our prayer meeting and we'll only see more and more of that, right? That's who God is. Jesus modeled this, his whole ministry, didn't he? I mean, it's really interesting. I mean, we see Jesus say, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. So who are we to intercede for?

One of the people are your enemies. People that absolutely hate you, pray that God's love would break into their life. That's a great place to start in case you're like well, who should I pray for first? Pray for the people that hate you until you can pray blessing all over them and pray that God can turn their heart. But he modeled this all the time. I mean, even Jesus knew that his prayers were powerful. Notice this in Luke chapter 22 in verse 31. Right as Jesus is getting ready to go to the cross. Luke 22 in

verse 31, Jesus is talking to Peter and he says this, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail and you, once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." What was Jesus doing? Jesus is telling Peter, hey, listen, I prayed for you because Satan's demanded permission to sift you like wheat.

In other words, it's not going to be a good day for you, but I've been praying for you and I'm praying that when you're restored, you'll strengthen your brothers. Was Jesus' prayer answered? Absolutely it was answered. I mean, you got to realize when you start praying for other people, God moves on behalf of your prayers. He moves on behalf of your prayers. If I didn't believe God moved on behalf of my prayers, it would be tough to pray. I believe that when we pray our prayer request, when we pray for people in the church, that's what happens. You pray, the holy spirit comes. We speak the word and it's like, whoa, look at what God did. It had nothing to do with any individual. When you study the apostles in the first century, I had somebody ask me the other day, how do you know you're called to ministry? Here's my first answer, that you have a burden to pray for others. That's number one, because in Acts chapter six, verse four, here's what the apostles devoted themselves to.

Prayer and the ministry of the work. Not just speaking, not just preparing sermons, prayer and the ministry of the word. We see it all over the place, right? I mean every time Paul's writing a letter like in Philippians 1:3, I thank my God upon my every remembrance of you and all my prayers for all of you. I always pray with joy

because of your partnership and the gospel from the first day until now. What's Paul doing for the Philippians while he's in jail? Praying. Or how about these guys that never get any mention in the church? Like Epaphras. Nobody names their kid Epaphras. We've never dedicated an Epaphras, but it'd be a good name for your kid. Okay. Epaphras. Colossians 4:12, Epaphras who is one of your number, a bond slave of Jesus Christ sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers so that you may stand perfect and fully assured in the will of God. What do you see the apostles doing all the time? They're praying for the churches.

They're praying for people in the churches. They're not just giving counsel. See we in America think we're so smart that we have all the answers for everybody or we think if I know the Bible, then I'll have the answers for everybody. You'll never have the answers for everybody. Jesus is the one and only that has answers for everybody and even if you're new to the faith and people say, well, what do I do? You can say, I don't know, but I know one who does, let's pray that he has his will in your life. There's power in that. There's power in that and that's a compulsion that you will have. It's kind of like there used to be a potato chip commercial that says you can't just eat one. Once you start praying for people and you see God move in their life, you'll never ever stop praying.

I've watched God saved so many wayward people that were my friends in college and then even when I went into the ministry, I remember two of my buddies, their grandma was affirming me going into the ministry and she's like, I'm praying for my two boys. She's passed away now. She says, I know... This is how she would

speaking. I know the hound to heaven's going to get them because I've been praying for both my grandsons from the time they've been born. Keep doing what you're doing. I've had a chance to lead both her boys to Christ, right? Because of whose prayers? Because of gram's prayers. Pray and don't give up because the enemy will lie to you and say, who do you think you are to come before the throne? Hey, you've been praying that for 5, 10, 15, 20, you've been praying this prayer for 47 years nothing's happened. Hey, time's not over yet. They're not dead.

Keep praying, keep praying, keep praying and don't give up. The Bible gives all these illustrations about how even if there's an unrighteous judge or there's a person in a home that you're trying to get bread from that won't come, but because you keep persistent, they'll give you the bread. How much more your heavenly father who loves you, keep praying and don't give up. The enemy will lie to you all the time and tell you this, your prayers don't mean anything. Your prayers don't mean anything. They're not working. Your prayers don't mean anything. Church I'm telling you the most rewarded people in heaven, in my opinion, will be the people that prayed the hardest, people that you never knew on this earth that one day you're going to meet and you're going to realize that they sat off in some corner, in a room or with a group of people praying that we never even heard about and it was through their prayers and the ministry, the holy spirit that God did all these things. Prayer is yours. Prayer is yours and this is what John's telling us.

These all belong to you, church. These all belong to you. I like to say it like this. God said it. I believe it and that settles it. Amen. If you believe in the Lord, Jesus

Christ, you can have the certainty of your salvation. You can have the confidence in your prayers when you go boldly before him and you can begin to have the compulsion of interceding for other people and trusting that God believes in what you're praying. We're called to pray without ceasing. That means praying, don't ever give up. Church, sometimes we think this, well, I'm already saved. We'll just pray for those lost people out there because people in the church we already got to I'll figure it out. Could you just by... Just to help me out, just to help the people out that think that. Just by show of hands, in the last year, if you've had any problem that you would've appreciated prayer for, could you just raise your hand just real quick?

Okay. Okay. That's what we need. I need your prayers. I covet prayers. We pray before every service, we pray during every service, people pray for me every single day. I covet that, I need that. You need that. We need it for each other and what's our knee jerk. When you see something in somebody else's life or you see a problem, what's your knee jerk? Sometimes our knee jerk is I'm going to tell my friend about that or curse them or poor person, they got what they deserve. No. How about your knee jerk be this, Lord Jesus, they don't see you the way that you truly are. Would you move in their life?, Would you move in their heart? So today I want to close by praying, but I'm going to give you about 30 seconds to offer a prayer request, to intercede for somebody else.

I want you to think about that person or that situation in your life that you would say, that's impossible. There's no way that, whatever that is, it may have been something you prayed for hundreds or even thousands of times and as we pray here, I

want you just to pray for that situation and ask for God's blessing on that person, those people and that situation. Let's just trust because of who we are in Christ that God hears our prayers. So Lord, we just come before you now, Lord if there's any sin in our life here's what we do. We just confess it. Be as specific as you can tell the Lord what your sin is. Lord, we just now claim your faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Lord, right now, as a body of people on two different campuses, we're just going to intercede for what you put on our heart that's impossible. We're going to pray with boldness trusting you're going to move and change that situation right now.

Lord, I personally am praying that our church would reach 100,000 people for the Lord Jesus Christ, that would be walking in the truth that would send people all over the world to know your knowledge and grace and truth in 1,000 different churches that are multiplying churches. Lord, hear our prayer. We believe in you. We want what you want. You can say, no, you can say slow, not now. You can say, go Lord, whatever you say, but we're praying to you believing that in you, we have life in your name and we give you all the glory and all the honor and all the praise because you hear our us and when we pray according to your will, we have the request which we have asked in Jesus name. Amen and amen. Would you stand as we close.