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CHOOSE JOY (PART 1)

2 Corinthians Series | 2 Corinthians 7:2-7

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we now come before you, asking you to teach us from your word. We ask that this passage that comes out of your scriptures would touch our hearts so we would leave different people, that it touches who we are. Lord, I pray that you'd give the wisdom in my words to say the things you've been teaching me this week to amplify and develop this passage in a way that people can receive well. So Lord, do a deeper work in our lives. We commit ourselves to you. We humbly come before you and open our hearts now. In Jesus' name, amen.

I don't know about you, but I have a hard time with some of the conversions that we have to make at times. Like when we're going from the metric system. When I was a kid they said we were going to be moving to the metric system so we better learn it. I don't know if anybody's going to move to the metric system except those of you who are scientists. I know a lot of you are scientists and in the medical field here and you're already into the metric system. But I have a hard time converting some of those things – kilometers to miles, or centimeters to inches. One of the challenging ones is the one converting Celsius to Fahrenheit. Right? So when I try to convert it, it looks like this. This is the conversion. You multiply 1.8 times Celsius and add 32 degrees. That looks really easy. But when you're on the fly, it's hard to do. So I find that the conversion that we do might be in my head, but actually knowing how to do it is hard.

So I just google it and get the answer that I want or there's an app for translating metrics now. There's an app for everything. Except I don't think there's an app for what we're going to talk about today. So that's why it's important that we go to God's word because He has that set up for us.

So would you please look with me at this passage in 2 Corinthians 7:2-7. Would you stand with me? I'm going to read this passage to you. These are the verses we're going to look at today. If you have your own Bible, take it and open it up to 2 Corinthians 7:2-7.

It reads this way: *Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great (he repeats great several times) pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.*

For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn— conflicts on the outside, fears within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told

us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

Notice the word *joy* mentioned twice in this passage. We're going to talk today about converting troubles into joy. That's what we're going to see today. A lot of stuff about troubles here. We're going to try to convert troubles into joy. That's where we're headed in this particular passage.

You may be seated please.

As you can see in the passage, there's a lot of information about troubles here. He's got a lot of problems and he's going to start by defending himself because, as you know, since we've been teaching through this book, part of the purpose of this book is to straighten out the people who had somehow either attacked him or he wants to straighten out the people who might be listening to those who are saying he's insincere. So Paul wants to straighten them out.

So he says we haven't wronged anybody, we haven't corrupted anybody, we haven't exploited anybody. So he's just trying to defend himself. Obviously being attacked, and so that comes out of his own pain trying to share that experience with others.

But notice he says down in that next verse down in verse 4 – *in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds*. So he's talking about these troubles and joy and how we experiences joy in the midst of those. That's what I want to focus in on a little bit today. I think it will help us understand.

But then before we go further, I want to take you down on to the next verse because he describes four different kinds of problems. I don't want to spend a lot of time dwelling on our problems here because I want to talk about the solution. But just notice in four different categories he talks about this.

Number one, he says – *For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest* (that's kind of the physical area), *but we were harassed* (that's attacks coming at him). And then it says we had *conflicts on the outside* and we had *fears within*. So I'm meditating on that this week and saying, "Lord, what are you talking about here in our lives?" Because every one of us is different. We all experience hardship and problems.

So in my life I'm looking at just the healthy side where he says being restful. We didn't have any rest. I'm thinking well in the health side these are the nine things I came up with last year that my doctors are telling me to do. You know you go to visit a doctor and he tells you to do one thing. Then you go and visit the trainer and he tells you to work on something else. And then you go to another doctor and they're telling you... So all these doctors have all these ideas of how to be healthy. I list them all up and I'm going, "There's no way I can do all these things!" If I add up all the things I was supposed to do in a day, it would take 30 hours without sleep, let alone with sleep. So let's just put the healthy thing up in the corner.

Another category that he's talking about is these pressures from the attacks that he's receiving. The attacks. Paul is saying he's being misunderstood. Accusations. Mistreatment.

I think about young people. I'm glad that young people are here with us today because I think young people would experience this idea of being attacked. You know there's this anti-bullying emphasis in schools today, but that doesn't stop the young people from being mean. There's a still a lot of meanness that takes place in school today. So Paul is saying about himself, he feels misunderstood (he's defending himself), he says he's being attacked, there's accusations coming, mistreatment, unrealistic expectations from other people. I think this is a very valid concern that often young people experience in their own lives. They just feel like there's all these attacks that are coming onto them. So we'll put that one up in the corner.

Which brings us to the next one, which is all these pressures from without, as the scriptures said. I'm just listing a few. There's work, family, finances, the needs of other people. Circumstances like the weather, news, a house, car, phone. Whatever it is, all of these things that surround us that are pressures from without. So we'll throw those over there.

And then there are these inner fears that we have. That's the last one. Inner fears. *Fears from within*. These are the top six fears that people experience in their lives. Fear of poverty, fear of criticism, fear of sickness, fear of a loss of love, fear of old age, and a fear of death. Troubles on the inside. So we'll throw those up in the corner.

When I start looking at all these things, one statement stands out for me. I know you'll realize this and recognize this, even if you're a young person, that life is complicated. Isn't it? It's so complicated and each one of us experience complications a different way. Some person might experience this way as a student, someone else as a parent, someone else in business, someone else in whatever work they do. Life is really complicated as we're trying to understand this. Paul is saying, "Look, I got a solution for you. You need to understand that solution of joy in the midst of hardships."

It's troubling for me to see how many young people today have or are thinking about committing suicide. Isn't that troubling? To think that a young person would come to that place and they'd say to themselves, "I want to end my life." I want you to know that life is complicated for young people today. There's a lot of pressures on them.

But there's an answer. If you're a young person today, there's an answer you need to know. Not only for yourself. You certainly need to know it for yourself. But it's an answer that you want to share with people all around you continually. Life is complicated, but we don't live in despair. This idea of joy is something that God has given us that's really strategic and we want to take advantage of in our lives. So I spent some time this week looking at this idea of joy in the midst of troubles.

Look at this verse that we're in today because there's this word *in* that's right there. I underlined it in verse 4. *In*. Not after. *In. In the midst of our troubles we can experience joy*. That seems odd to me sometimes. I don't know about you, but it just seems odd to me that we would be able to experience joy in the midst of the troubles in our lives.

So *in*. *In*. It's *in* the troubles that we have. Not just in the future, but right now in the midst of the troubles that we're experiencing. That's what he's talking about here. We can experience that *in*

and it's really important to us. Now get that. *In* our troubles. We want to be able to catch that. Not just after our troubles are over.

Now Paul is not the only one who's communicating this idea. If we look at the Bible, we'll see this is a theme actually throughout the Bible. You'll remember in James he says – *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds*. James is saying the same thing. Whenever you face trials, problems, joy is right there.

Peter says something similar in 1 Peter 1. He says – *In all this you greatly rejoice* (you have joy), *though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief and all kinds of trials*. Get this next verse. *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with* (look at that) *inexpressible and glorious joy*.

I want that. Whatever it is, that inexpressible and glorious joy, I want that. I want it in the midst of the problems, not just as the result of accomplishing a goal or passing the test or winning the game. I want to have it in the midst of the challenges, and that's what we want to talk about today. How do you get it? What does it look like in our lives?

Nehemiah in the Old Testament says something similar. He says to them – *Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength*. There's this joy that comes from the Lord that's pretty significant and helps us understand that. So that's why Paul is saying here in this verse *in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds*.

Well let's talk about what this joy is. Because I think when we face our problems and our struggles and our challenges, it's like there's three doors in front of us is how I was imagining it this week. You can get frustrated with all your problems, you can get overwhelmed with all your problems, or you can experience joy. What are you going to choose? Can you choose joy?

I set out this week to define joy and tell you how to get it. That was my goal. I was going to try to define it and give you all the steps to achieve joy. It didn't quite work out that way for me. I don't know...I just got stuck on the defining part. I looked up some definitions of joy, but you know I really think that this is something that God does inside of us that's hard to explain. It's something that's inside of us that God does that's hard to articulate. I know what it feels like. I know what it's like because I experience it in my own life.

But is it an emotion? Well it's not like happiness. The word 'happiness' comes from the word 'happenings' or 'circumstances'. So if circumstances are going okay, then I can be happy. If they're not going okay, then I'd maybe be sad, or angry, or whatever else. But joy seems to be different from that. Is it emotion? Maybe it's connected. But it certainly is something spiritual that happens on the inside of our spirit that God provides for us.

In fact if you're not a Christian today, I don't think you can fully experience the joy that God wants you to have. There's something kind of...it's not natural, it's supernatural. I look at it this way. It's like this engine inside of us that when Jesus Christ comes into your life, you experience Him and He starts to live inside of you. Something amazing happens when you become a Christian.

So if you're not a Christian today, you want to listen to this because this is a great reason to become one. To ask Jesus Christ to come into your life and to run your life because then He produces this engine of joy inside, and this engine starts to run. And it's running continually. It's not like it's there sometimes and it's not there. But the idea is do we tap into it or not? Do we choose to accept the joy that's there? This engine is churning along inside of us that Jesus Christ produces for us to experience. It's something like this. The well being or things are okay or that there's this general sense of wholeness that we experience on the inside, even when there are problems.

Now I think what these guys are saying here, this symphony of people that are talking here, is that joy is found especially in the midst of trials. Not just in the addition in the midst of trials. It's found especially there.

Why? Because you know you have this confidence that God is at work. Maybe He's doing something in you to bring something about. We don't know what He's doing. But we know God is at work. He's good, He's in control, and He's working, and this engine is running inside and we can tap into that. Yes, I can feel joyful even when bad things are happening in my life. That's what he's saying.

Somehow Jesus does this. When Jesus Himself was here on earth, He gave us these words. He said – *I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and so that your joy may be complete*. So Jesus, as part of His whole message and mission, was to provide us a way to experience this internal joy inside of our hearts, this engine that runs so that we can take advantage of that and enjoy the benefits that come from it. Something supernatural.

It's supernatural because it says *in the fruit of the Spirit there is love, joy, and peace*. It's a spiritual thing. It's not just something that happens because things are going well. It's not something we look forward to because we know we're going to come out of this trial. That's not only what it is. We can't say, "Oh I'm experiencing joy because I know I'm going to come out of this trial." You might not come out of the trial. You might experience the pain that you're in for quite a long time. But in the midst of that, can you experience joy? And the answer is yes. There's joy going on inside of us and we want to tap into that. We want to choose to receive that and receive the benefits of that engine that's running inside of our hearts.

We all have troubles. Life is complicated, but there's a solution that God provides and that's Jesus Christ. One of the benefits of that is that we experience this joy, this ongoing joy.

Ed Miller and I are in process here learning about this joy. So you're going to hear Ed Miller teach next week. This is like a two-part sermon on joy. Ed's going to teach next week and share some very personal things about how the Lord's working this out in his life. Both of us are in our sixties and God is still teaching us things. I find that to be encouraging that we can still learn and grow in the midst of all of this. I think you'll benefit a lot from what he has to share.

Last fall, Ed in his travels came across a man, Keith Dorscht. He now has influenced both Ed and me significantly. Maybe we'll tell you more about him. Maybe he'll even come here someday

and teach. I don't know. We'll see what God allows. But He's a godly man and he's a counselor who's done a tremendous amount of research and he helps families too. That's how Ed and he got connected.

One of the things in his study of God's word he came to this understanding that was new for me and I really appreciated this. He said, "If you look at a study of joy in the Bible, one of the things you realize is that joy is oftentimes relational. It's tied into relationships." Wow. I found that really intriguing, eager to look at it.

There's a verse that I really like that he shared. First of all here's the passage of scripture that we're in right now. It says – *I'm greatly encouraged in all our troubles, my joy knows no bounds.* So even he is reflecting on kind of the relational component of his experience with the Corinthians and he's experiencing joy.

But look at this verse in 2 John 1:12. This is John writing his letter. He's got a lot more things to share, but this is what he says. He says – *Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink* or texting or Facebook or Snapchat. *But instead, I hope to come and talk to you face to face* (so we're looking at each other), *so that* (look at the word *joy* there) *our joy may be complete.*

One of the emphases of Keith's whole work is the power of face-to-face communication, which we don't do very much anymore. I mean you can be in the same house and texting your mate or kids "come and eat" or whatever. We don't just come face to face that often anymore.

I really like some of Keith's products get you face-to-face talking. He has a program called Meaningful Talk I really like. In fact it's where the computer is asking the questions and you're looking at someone and talking to them. It's great for couples to do to enhance their marriage relationship. It's great in parenting relationships. But Ed and I have done it. So we got the computer running, he and I are talking to each other and listening to each other and deepening our relationship together. It's just great. Something special happens in the midst of that that's relational, but it also produces something inside of our hearts. There's this joy that God does because of the connectedness that we experience.

I just think that's a very powerful verse and I would encourage you to spend some time face to face with those people that you love. It would really enhance your ability to experience joy more deeply.

There's what you call an electronic church. You can go home and you can read the Bible on your cell phone, you can listen to a sermon online, you can watch a TV show about someone preaching the gospel. That's fine, that's great stuff, really top-notch stuff that they're doing online. But there's nothing that's going to replace the physical presence of God's church. When we come here at 9:45 in the morning on Sunday, we're talking to each other, we are face to face and something happens in those moments that doesn't happen in the electronic church. It will never replace the physical church that God has designed. Joy. Relational.

Let's go back to our verse. He says right at the beginning in verse 2 – *Make room for us in your hearts*. I get the impression of our hearts being rather crowded with all kinds of things and we have to make room for this. We have to make room for the meaningful dialogue, the meaningful talk. We have to make room for it if it's going to work. We have to make room for the relationship and that's the joy he's going to be part of as he's talking here and bringing that out. It's just strategic and he's trying to help them understand that.

Let's just go back to that verse. I want to read the last part. I want you to see how joy comes into Paul as he's talking and describing it. Notice verse 6 – *But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus*. So Titus had been with them, Titus brings the message, comes over to Paul. Paul is now comforted *and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow*. So there's caring that's going on.

We have a small group that meets every week and when we care for each other, something happens in those relationships that's strategic and significant.

Your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever. You see the bottom there? *My joy was greater than ever*. How did it come? The joy came to Paul's heart through people. Through Titus, through the message from the other people it came to Paul. So it's relationally, but it also came through caring and comfort that came into his life. Very interesting idea that's described there.

I was trying to be very sensitive to this whole idea this week and I had an interesting experience because one of my clients that I worked with this week, one of the families that I'm working with, they really struggled in the work I was doing with them. So their daughter, I'll call her Danielle, ten years old. I work with her on the phone. She's somewhere else in the country. The daughter is not responding. So we're in an eight-week program and after three weeks the mom says, "This isn't working." And when anybody says, "This isn't working" (because I've seen this work so many times before), when they say it's not working I know there's something wrong.

I said then, "Would you please record the conversations you're having with your daughter so I can hear them?" And so she did. She recorded the conversations and as she recorded them I could tell just by listening to the dialogue, I knew why it wasn't working. Her daughter doesn't respond to correction well and when she comes back to debrief it, she's whining about it. So when she recorded all of that I realized mom was feeding into that and she was inadvertently (great mom, this mom is really good) encouraging her daughter in this. By dialoguing where dialoguing probably wasn't very helpful.

So I was very straight with her. I told her and over several days I'm communicating with her until finally we had a meeting. I said, "Okay. I know what you need to do. Tomorrow you need to have a difficult day. What you need to do is you're not going to put up with this. You're going to say to your daughter, 'This is what the break looks like. You're going to go take a break and come back. We're going to go through this and we're going to do it with an adult voice. Not whining, not complaining, or anything else. That's what we're going to do.'"

I said, “You need to prepare yourself for the battle. It may take an hour or two hours for this to take place. But I want you to have a meeting with her before you do to explain what’s going on so she’s not surprised. ‘This is how it’s going to be different. So we’re going to use a lot of firmness here. We’re moving forward.’”

I encouraged them to dialogue with me by email. So the next day she went through this whole day, and I get an email then the following morning about what’s going to happen. I open the email. It’s really long. I actually brought the email here. It’s really long and I’m looking at it going, “Oh no. We got to figure out what’s going on.” I’m bracing for the two-hour battle and what’s going to happen. So she described the whole day of what happened in this day.

It was fascinating because here’s what happened: The night before, after she was done with me and the girl was going to bed, they talked about it and how correction is a gift and how you should be grateful for the gift that you’re receiving. We’re not going to have anything but adult conversations, adult kind of language or mature voice when we talk about it afterwards. So the girl went to sleep.

The next morning there was an altercation of some kind with her brother and she said some mean things to her brother. The mom said, “Okay, you need to go take a break.” The girl goes over to the break place (the couch) and she puts her bottom down there. She gets up right away and starts giggling and comes back to mom. She’s never done this before. Mom starts asking her the questions I had suggested that she ask and the girl’s answering them like she’d never answered them before with a mature voice, even kind of laughing a little bit.

Mom’s saying, “What’s going on here? How come you changed so fast?”

She said, “I don’t know.”

She says, “Okay, fine. You’re doing great.” Mom was shocked by the whole experience. It wasn’t a battle at all.

Two more times in the day she had to discipline her daughter and correct her and send her back, and the daughter each time kind of came back giggling and happy. At the end of the day, after all of this, Mom is so puzzled by this and so confused, expecting to have a battle and not having it, she says to her daughter, “What’s going on?”

The daughter says, “I don’t know.”

“Well you must be thinking something or saying something different because this is different than yesterday.”

And the daughter answers her. She wrote: She had a good rest of the day. I called her over a bit after this and asked her what her secret to success was today. And she didn’t know. I said, “Oh okay. I was just wondering if you thought anything different today or did anything different to help yourself change your heart.”

She said, “Well last night I told myself if you get put in a break, be happy.”

Mom says, “Well it worked.”

Now that’s just a story about a family. Now you have to realize I’m reading that story in the morning. I’m reading that story and going through this thing and I started to cry. Because the joy

that they were experiencing in their family, I was experiencing too. Because God was working in this family in kind of a miraculous way that was totally unexpected. Mom was just shocked. She didn't know what to do with all of this. I experienced this deep kind of emotional response inside of my heart because of that. Not always does the joy that I experience become that emotional, but in this situation, I was just really tickled by what was going on. It just really touched me deeply.

Let me tell you one more story about this idea of joy. It's a story back about Paul and his understanding and his work with the Philippians. Because Paul had a very clear directive by God to go to Philippi. So he goes to Phillip, and not knowing anybody he goes down to the river and shares Jesus with whomever he can. One lady, her name is Lydia, she comes to Jesus. And her whole family, the Bible says, they come to the Lord. So now they got a church because they got a family and him, and Silas is there too.

Well every day as they're traveling back and forth, walking back and forth, there's a young girl who's calling out. She's obviously deranged and demon-possessed, got some problems. And she's calling out, "This person is from God!" The Bible in the passage said Paul was so annoyed. So you get the impression this was one of those annoying situations. If you have brothers or sisters like this, you know what it is. You're probably not going to cast the demon out of them, but at least you get the idea. So Paul is annoyed. It says that he was so annoyed that he turned around, he spent some time with her, cast the demon out, and she was healed.

Now you would think that would be fantastic news. Except this girl was a fortune-teller empowered by the demonic influence inside of her. And so her bosses didn't like that and they created a ruckus in town. So the magistrates from the town came. They took Paul and Silas and they beat them with rods. Took their shirts off their back and beat them with rods, and put them in a prison under the care of a jailor. They had stocks on their feet and they're in the dark inside of this jail. I mean they're in pain and they're in an uncomfortable position in the middle of the night. This is just not a great place to be. A trial, you could call it. I don't know what your trial looks like, but that's what it looked like for Paul.

And it says that in the middle of the night they started singing at midnight. They started singing. So everybody is hearing them singing. The other prisoners are hearing them. They kind of have this idea, "Well, if we're going to be here, we're just going to demonstrate the joy we have in our hearts and we'll start sharing that with everyone else." So they did, and they sang. And God decided to a miracle in the midst of that. There was an earthquake. The earthquake shook, and what do you think happens? Well the doors open up and the chains come out of the walls. So now everybody can get up and leave.

Now that's good news, except in this story it's bad news for the jailor. Because in those days if the jailor let his prisoners escape, he himself would be killed. So what does he decide to do? He decides to commit suicide. It's very sad when someone comes to the place in their life where they believe that there is no other option but to commit suicide, and so they kill themselves. Whether they're a younger person or an older person, it's a terrible, terrible thing. He was experiencing his own trial. Paul was experiencing his own trial. But Paul had joy in his heart and the jailor didn't have that and didn't know what to do.

So he pulls out his sword, he's about to kill himself, and Paul calls out, "Wait! Stop! We're all here!" The jailor says, "Bring me the light." So you know it must have been dark in that prison, uncomfortable place for them. He brings the light and surely everybody is there. And here's what the jailor says: "What do I need to do to be saved?" He comes this place he realizes, "I don't have what you have. You have joy when you're in problems. When I got a problem, I don't have joy. I don't know what's going on inside of me. I need something outside of myself. I need what you have."

The Bible says Paul led him to Jesus Christ. He got saved that night. Wow. What a powerful night that was. And it says his whole family. Now you've got another family in the church. You've got Lydia's family and the jailor's family, at least, who know who else, are part of that Philippian church when Paul later writes a letter to them. The theme of the letter is all about joy. That's the theme of the book of Philippians. Paul had something that the jailor didn't have.

So I want to suggest today that the joy we're talking about is not something you're going to manufacture. This is not like "think happy thoughts" when you're feeling bad. That's not what we're talking about here. I don't even know if you have to feel good in order to experience joy. Okay? There's a sense of well-being that goes on inside of you, even if you're feeling bad.

Can you feel bad and still have joy? I think so. Because it's different than the regular emotions we experience. It's a deep spiritual connection with God who has this genuine thing going on inside of us, this engine running that we need in our lives.

So that is a great reason, if you're not saved today to be like the jailor and say, "You've got something I want. I can see it in you. I want to grab that. I need it in my own heart." And that means accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Having Him come inside because that's the beginning of this joy. Then you'll have something there that's always there. The engine is running. You don't have to go find it somewhere. It's there. It's running. Because you're part of Christ's family. You're part of what's going on, and God is doing that deeper work. It's there continually if you have a relationship with Christ, if you've asked him to come in. Even if you sin, even if you do the wrong thing, you still can come back. That joy exists inside of you if you want to connect with it. It comes with the relationship with Jesus Christ. Wow. That makes salvation so powerful for each one of us.

They came to Paul and said, "Hey, we want to be saved." *They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with (what's the word there? Filled with what?) joy. He got it! He got the joy! What he needed! Do you have the joy today? It's there if you've accepted Christ into your life. Joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household. That is so cool.*

There are three doors out there. I say choose joy. Choose the one that God has designed for you. It's right there in the middle. Wow. God makes this joy available to every one of us. Let's be like

that jailor and go after it and ask Jesus Christ into our hearts. I know many of you have already made that commitment in your lives. But then take advantage of that engine that's running in there. Tie your experiences into that, so even in the midst of the challenges, when you're in them, you can experience that amazing, glorious, inexpressible joy, as Peter describes it in 1 Peter 1.

Let's stand together and pray.

[PRAYER] Oh Lord, we need this so much in our lives. Our lives are complicated. We need this supernatural joy. We know it comes in part through relationships, but that most important relationship is through you. So we ask you to do that deeper work in each person here. Lord, I just pray for anybody who's not committed yet to you and hasn't accepted you as their Lord and Savior, that you would prompt them to do that today, to start that new relationship with you in a special way. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

We're going to sing a song now and as we do, if you would like to accept Jesus into your life, come on up. We'll pray for you and help you do that. If you would like prayer for any other area of your life, come on up and we'll pray for you. If you want prayer for someone else that you're praying about, you've got a need, then come on up. We'll pray with you for that other person that you're concerned about. God works through prayer and we want to be part of that work this morning. Alright? Let's sing together.