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## JOHN 20

### Easter Service

Open your Bibles to John 20. We're going to look at that passage today and go through it together.

Before we do, I love talking to kids about Easter and why do we have Easter. When grandpa was asking his daughter Julie why we have Easter, she said, "Because Jesus died on the cross and then they put Him in the grave and then three days later there was an earthquake and the grave opened up and Jesus came out." He was pretty surprised that his four-year-old daughter could tell the story. But then she continued and said, "And when the earthquake happened all the people from the town came out to the grave. If Jesus came out and saw His shadow, there would be six more weeks of winter." Getting the stories a little bit confused, but at least the little girl got part of the story right.

We're going to look at the Easter story and I want you to get it right so that you understand it. But also we're going to take some principles from it, take Jesus home into our lives. We want you to be able to go away and put the principles that we've learned from God's word into action in your life. So let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come before you right now and we ask that you would be working in each one of our hearts. Lord, we come with cares and challenges. Sometimes we feel weak and we know embedded in this resurrection story is a story about resurrection power that you provide for us to overcome the challenges that we face. Some of us have challenges from the past or the way we grew up that we carry with us, but we know you can free us from the past and lead us to the future. Some of us have been hurt deeply by things that have happened in the past or are even happening now. You, Lord, can free us from any challenges, bitterness that might grow or sadness that might overcome us and free us to go forward. So Lord, as we look at this story today, we ask that you would make it alive for us again today. Not just a story from the past, but a story that's alive for us today that empowers us to be the people you want us to be. We trust you now, Lord, to work deeply in our hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.

Before I take you to John 20, I want to talk to you about the significance of what happened before John 20 when Jesus Christ died on the cross.

In Hebrews 9 we have the story about Jesus being a high priest. The analogy is one that takes us back into the Old Testament when we had the high priest who would take off his beautiful multicolored garment that he would wear that showed that he was the high priest. He would take that off once a year and he would put on a linen garment, just a white linen garment, and he

would act like any other priest. But he had a special job to do on this one day we call Yom Kippur.

This special day he would go into the Most Holy Place. The high priest would only go in once a year and he would offer blood sacrifice there and he would offer atonement for the whole community for the year. There was a rope tied around his foot because if he were to go into this Holy of Holies and he would go in with a sinful heart, or if for some reason God wouldn't forgive the people, he would be killed. The rope was on his foot so they could drag him out.

The people would all be waiting for the high priest to come out of the Holy of Holies. Because when he would come out he would say one word: Forgiven. The crowds would roar and everybody would be excited because, yes, again, God has forgiven our sins for another year. That's a special day of atonement that God did for the people in the Old Testament.

Well in the New Testament in the book of Hebrews the Bible says that Jesus is this high priest. That not only offered a sacrifice every year, but He did something much more than that. I want you to see the passage so you grasp the importance of the crucifixion and what He did.

*In Hebrews 9:7-14 it says, But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.*

Some of you know that because you have a history of being religious, a history of doing sacrifices or doing good works or doing activities to try and somehow earn righteousness before God. And so what happened here in this illustration is that those gifts never, never in their own selves were able to satisfy the conscience of the worshiper. *They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.*

*But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place **once for all** by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.* It's something that God does inside of us. We don't have to keep going back year after year.

*The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

It's powerful. Jesus Christ as this high priest went into this tabernacle, sacrificed Himself, and was buried into the grave. We all wait for Him to come out because when He comes out the

statement is made: Forgiven. We now have the power to overcome sin. We now have the power to have a personal relationship with God. That is powerful. And that is the appreciation of the resurrection because the resurrection is that stamp that says we are forgiven, that God has released us, and He's moved us forward in our lives.

Now we're going to look at that story in John 20. There are four gospels. Each one tells the story of the resurrection. We're just going to look at John 20, John's accounting of this story. So we want to go ahead and read it. I'm going to stop after every couple of verses and make some comments so that we can draw some applications out of it for ourselves.

Verse 1: *Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"*

Now Mary Magdalene is the first person on the scene. She was the last person to see Jesus on the cross and then she is the first person on the scene. She comes to this scene where there is an empty tomb or the stone has been rolled away. At least she knows that. She's troubled about that. I don't know what she was thinking. I don't know why she was going there. The grave was closed. She wouldn't be able to open it on her own. But she's on her way to pay her respects or something along that line. She's troubled in her heart, but the stone has been rolled away.

Mary Magdalene was totally committed to Jesus Christ. I'm sure it's because of what had happened to her. Here's a woman who had seven demons. When she came to Jesus, Jesus cast out the demons and she was healed. She was so transformed by that that she determined to serve God for her whole life. She followed Jesus regularly. It changed her life. So now her heart is broken in the midst of this situation. She doesn't know what to do.

She gets up early in the morning *while it's still dark*, the Bible says. *While it's still dark*. I think there's a message there just about morning times. Here's a woman who gets up in the morning and as a result she sees Jesus. I would just suggest that if you spend time in the morning taking out your Bible early in the morning, maybe before it's still dark and looking at your scriptures that God will reveal Himself to you in the course of the day. You'll see the Lord in some powerful ways.

Now Mary Magdalene is going to see the Lord in a very special way and we're going to see that as we move forward here. But she's a changed person. She sees the stone rolled away so she runs back. It says she runs to tell *Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved*.

Those are two guys. Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. We're not given his name here. The reason we're not given his name is because he's the author of this gospel. So in humility he doesn't put his name in here. He just calls himself *the other disciple, the one Jesus loved*. But we know his name. He's John.

Actually there's an interesting competition between Peter and John in their relationship. Jesus had to sometimes confront them about the way they were bickering with each other at times. It

was Peter who would often be speaking out of turn, putting himself out there in the front. Like at the Last Supper Jesus said, “*One of you is going to betray me.*” And Peter says, “I will never betray you, Lord.” You can imagine John over there rolling his eyes like “here’s Peter again.”

But it’s not just Peter who’s doing that, wanting to be out there in the front. At one point James and John came up to Jesus in private and said, “Hey Jesus, when we come into your kingdom, can we have the best seats? Can one of us sit on your left and one of us sit on your right?”

Jesus answered them by saying, “Look, that’s not my freedom to give that to you. The Father gives that right. But I tell you, if you want to be great, in my kingdom learn to be the *servant of all.*” Jesus was continually helping those disciples learn, not how to compete with each other, but learn how to be servants.

They were friends. Just like any siblings. I like to tell these stories to siblings who are in conflict because they were friends, but they were also often in conflict and competing with one another.

The story continues in verse 3. *So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.* I just think that’s funny because the other disciple is the guy writing this story. “And I just want you to know I ran faster than Peter.” So here we still have the competition going. Peter and John are running to the tomb.

Now John was probably about twenty years old at this time in his life. Came to follow Jesus when he was seventeen years old. Do you remember the story about how Jesus was going by the Sea of Galilee and He says to James and John, who were there working in their father’s business, taking care of the nets and mending the nets, and Jesus said, “Leave your nets and follow me. *I will make you fishers of men.*” Seventeen years old, a young man started following Jesus and changed his life completely. A man who wrote five books of the Bible. Amazing what God has done in his life. Transformed him. He’s the guy who wrote the book of Revelation. He got to see revelation. God did something very powerful. It started in his life as a teenager.

I just want to encourage you young people, serve the Lord now. The faith that we represent and the faith that we hold is not just an adult faith. It’s a faith for every person, child, young person. If you commit yourself to the Lord now, he will guide you in your steps and help you make wise decisions as you’re moving forward. It’s powerful what God wants to do.

The other guy is Peter. He’s over the hill. He’s about thirty years old at this time of his life. And they’re running. They’re running fast to get to the tomb to see what’s there.

In verse 5 it says, *He bent over* (now we’re back to John because he’s who got there first) *and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb.* Sounds like Peter. Just barge right in. John is the guy who does more contemplating. He’s the guy by the door just looking in, but Peter just runs right in. Nothing’s going to hold him back. He has more initiative than restraint, I think, many times in the scriptures.

It says, *He saw the strips of linen lying there (this is Peter now), as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first (let me remind you), also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.*

Now I want to pause right here. Because in verses 5-8 we see the word *saw* three times. In the English it just says *saw*, but in the Greek there are three different Greek words that are used that describe a progression in their understanding. I want to draw your attention to that so you can see it. I think it illustrates even our own understanding in our lives because sometimes we move from just seeing outwardly to a deeper understanding in our lives. In fact I would suggest that happens to us regularly. It happens to me, maybe it happens to you. But you see something and pretty soon it starts to become more meaningful and you realize God is working here. That's what happens to these guys.

In verse 5 of John 20 it says *he bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in*. The word *looked* is the word *blepo*, which is the word basically to see or to look. Basically to see something.

But then if we go to the next verse in verse 6 it says, *Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there*. This isn't the word *blepo*. He didn't just see with eyes. It's the word *theoria*, which is where we get the word 'theory' from. It has the idea to have an idea in mind. That's what it means. He comes in and there's something more than just seeing. He's trying to figure out the theory, trying to figure out what's going on in this particular situation.

And then in the third time in verse 8 it says, *Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed*. This is the *horaō*, which means to see and understand. I get it. It's when we say, "Oh I see," which has the implication that I understand more now than I did before. The first time he saw just with his eyes, but now he gets it.

I think there are times in our lives when we don't get it. All we do is see the things going around us and the things that are happening. I think God wants us to get it. He wants us to experience this seeing in the same way that John did in this passage. There's a progression that takes place. I would hope that our spiritual sensitivity is available so the Lord can draw us from just seeing things around us into recognizing that He is at work in the midst of this particular situation.

As we continue in the passage in verse 11 it says, *Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.*

You just have to experience the brokenhearted nature of this woman at this point. She had been following Jesus because she knew that Jesus had the answers to her problems. And now He's dead. She is so torn up inside. She's just crying about all of this. It's just so upsetting for her to experience this. She's overwhelmed with emotion. The fact that she's so overwhelmed with

emotion makes it hard for her to even see what's going to happen inside in this situation. It's hard to even recognize it. But she sees these two angels, *one at the head and the other at the foot.*

Verse 13: *They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"*

*"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.*

Wow. She's so overwhelmed with her emotion, so overwhelmed with her personal problem in life that she can't see that Jesus is right there in front of her. I want to suggest that sometimes that's very true in our own lives. There are times when we're so overwhelmed by the problems that we're experiencing right now that we can't see Jesus right in front of our face. He's right there in the midst of the situation. He wants to bless us, He wants to get close to us and we can't see Him because we're so overwhelmed with the experience we have in our own lives that's robbing us of that privilege of seeing what He's doing.

In verse 14 it says, *At this, she turned around and saw.* That's the word *blepo* again. She saw with her eyes *Jesus standing there, but she did not realize* (the word *realize* is that *horao* word. She didn't understand. She didn't get it. Wow. I really know that God wants to help us get it in life. He wants us to move from a place of just seeing life go by to getting it and seeing with different glasses how God is working right now in our world and how He wants to work in our own hearts.

So in verse 15 *He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"*

*Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."* She's trying to figure it out. Maybe you're here today and you're trying to figure out life. I just want you to know God wants to give you that missing piece, which is Him. When you understand Jesus Christ and how He fits life all together, it changes your whole perspective on things. Sometimes we can't see it because of the pain we have.

In this case her heart was so broken, she had so much pain she could see Jesus, but she didn't even know who He was. But He was right there in the midst of this experience. I would suggest that Jesus is often closer than we expect. He's right there. All we need is reach out. We need to talk to Him. He's there to help us. He's there to get to know us. He's there to introduce Himself to us. It's going to happen in the next verse.

Verse 16: *Jesus said to her, "Mary."* You have to believe that it's not one of those "Mary's" that has a lot of like "Mary, would you get up off the ground here!" No. This is that passionate, caring, comforting use of her name. When she heard it, *she turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").* She had such a relationship with Jesus that when He spoke clearly, she could hear Him.

I love watching spiritual light bulbs come on in the lives of people.

This week I asked a man, “Are you a Christian?”

He said, “I’d rather not answer that question. I’d rather other people who see me answer that question about me.” What he’s saying is, I hope I’m living a life that’s good and other people will see the goodness in me, and they’ll be able to tell whether I’m a Christian or not.

But unfortunately he’s not a Christian. Because if I ask a person, “Are you a Christian?” a person can say, “Yes, I’m a Christian.” They can say that because they’ve made the decision to accept Jesus Christ into their lives and say, “I want Jesus Christ to rule and reign in my life.” It’s not about outward actions. They come after we’re a Christian. But the ability to become a Christian is a decision we make to accept Jesus Christ into our lives.

When those spiritual light bulbs come on, and maybe they’ll come on in this gentleman’s life as I continue to work with him, but as light bulbs come on in people’s lives, it’s an amazing thing. They see the Lord and they see what God is doing. I just love to be a part of that and watch that happen in people’s lives and in young people’s lives as I talk to them.

I see children who realize and understand the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Can a five year old be filled with the Holy Spirit? Yes, I’ve seen it. Can an eight year old rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome a problem like fear in his life? Yes, I’ve seen it happen. When the light bulbs come on, transformation takes place in a person’s life. That’s what’s happening right here.

Now you have to understand, Jesus introduces Himself first after the resurrection to a woman. That’s pretty countercultural. The men, the Jewish men, the religious leaders of the day believed that religious truth was really for me and wasn’t really applicable to women, or at least it wasn’t something that they were qualified to hold. But Jesus was on a mission continually throughout His life to raise the value of women in society during that time.

He’s the one who spent time with the woman at the well and they were surprised He was talking to her. He’s the one who let the woman who got caught in adultery be freed. He told her to *go and sin no more*. He’s the one who had the woman breaking the Alabaster jar of perfume on His feet and He did not rebuke her. Jesus valued women, so even here in this new situation He’s allowing this woman to be the first one who’s going to be the missionary who’s going to share the word.

Verse 17 goes on. *Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”*

Verse 18: *Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news (the good news; we call it the gospel): “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.* She’s the first real missionary and her story is “He’s alive! I’ve seen Him! He’s alive!” And so she takes that message to the disciples.

I just want to say, if you don't know what to share with people, if you're trying to share the gospel but you don't know what to say, just tell them what God has done for you. *"I have seen the Lord!"* That's all Mary did.

Let's go on to the story because now the story moves to the evening of that day, on that Sunday. It says, *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders (these guys are pretty timid now. Their leader got killed. They think they're next), Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"*

Now the doors are locked and Jesus shows up. Maybe He does the Spock thing. I don't know what it was, but He shows up right in the midst of them and He says to them, *"Peace be with you!"* After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Their minds are blown. God is expanding who they think Jesus is.

I think we tend to put Jesus in a box. We say Jesus can do this or Jesus can do that, and Jesus is a pretty handy guy for the disciples. He's the one when a big storm comes up He can stand up and calm the storm. He's the one when people are hungry He can bring out food and multiply it and feed the people. When people are sick He can heal them. He's a pretty handy guy when it comes to these things. But this is a very different thing that He's doing here. He's raised from the dead. This is outside of their box. So they are just shocked.

When they see that Jesus has risen from the dead and He shows them His hands, His side – "let me show you my side where the spear hole would be" – they look at that and they say, yes, this is Jesus.

Notice His first words that Jesus says to them. The first words aren't, "You guys are busted! What are you doing running away from the cross when I was hanging there?" He didn't do that. The first words He says are, "Peace. Peace."

"But God, you don't know how stressful my life is."  
Jesus' response is, "Peace."

"Lord, you don't know all the bad things I've done in my life."  
Jesus' response is, "Peace I give you."

"Lord, you don't know about the hurt I've experienced in my past."  
"Peace I want to give to you."

That's what peace that He's offering to these guys, and He's giving it to them in the midst of this moment.

Verse 21: *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them. What an interesting thing. He breathed on them it says. And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*

Now the word *wind* and the word *spirit* are the same in the Old Testament. So whenever you see the word *ruach*, you have to decide in the context of the passage, is the word *ruach* wind or is He talking about spirit? The same thing is true in the New Testament. The Greek word is *pneuma*. The word *pneuma*, pneumatic tires, means either wind or spirit. So you have to look at the context to see what it means.

It reminds me of this story about how when God created Adam He breathed into him the breath of life. The breath of life. The *nephesh haya*. I love those Hebrew words. The *nephesh haya*, the new soul. Because that's what God wants to do in each one of us. He wants to breathe into us that new life. When you say, "I need a breath of fresh air," I just want you to know that breath of fresh air you need is the Holy Spirit breathed into you to give you that *nephesh haya*, that new life that God offers to each one of us. It's powerful.

Verse 24: *Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. He missed the meeting. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"*

*But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."*

Now Thomas missed the meeting. I just want to suggest, don't miss the meeting. I'm sure he had good reasons. Maybe his kids had soccer, or maybe everybody was too tired to get up that morning, or maybe they had a late night the night before. I don't know what was going on, but Thomas missed the meeting. Don't miss the meeting, because good things happen in the meeting.

Now Thomas gets a bad rap, I think, in life. He's the poster child for skepticism. Whether you're a Christian or not, everybody knows what a doubting Thomas is. It comes from this story. But you know, tradition tells us that Thomas, after the resurrection, went to India as a missionary. The whole church in India now today, as they look back in their history, credit it to Thomas who brought the message to India to start the church in that place. Amazing.

Verse 26: *A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. He didn't miss the meeting on this day. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them. The point is made the doors were locked so He didn't come through the door. I don't know how He came through, how He got there.*

He's in the room *and said, "Peace be with you!"* Then immediately He turns to Thomas. I just love His gentleness, what God does. He doesn't rebuke Thomas. He doesn't. He just goes to Thomas and *he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*

What Jesus is saying is, "Thomas, I knew what was going on in your life. I knew you were having trouble with this, so I've come to give you exactly what you need so you can trust me."

God wants to do that in our lives today. He wants to give us exactly what we need so that we can take those steps to trust Him in our own lives.

So Thomas' response in verse 28 is this. *Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"* I just want to suggest, if you've never said that to the Lord, that is how you become a Christian. I just want you to know that when you say, "My Lord and my God," you call Him that, you say, "I want Him to be my Lord and my God," then He does that. He comes into your life, He transforms you, and He becomes your Savior. Thomas is saying, *"My Lord and my God."*

*Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed." And then He has some words here just for you and me. He says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." You and I won't see the nail prints in the hands or the side that has a spear hole in it. But it says blessed are we who believe even though we don't see.*

I would suggest that's the definition of faith. The definition of faith is to move forward even though you don't see everything. You won't have all the answers. But you want to say, "Okay, I'm going to trust the Lord in this situation. I'm going to obey Him. I'm going to follow Him in my life. I'm going to do what He says."

Verses 30 and 31 are the key verses for the whole book of John, but I want to read them because they leave us with a good application. They say this: *Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Wow. Why was the Bible written? Why was John written? It was written so that as we read it we can see how we can have life. I want to suggest that God offers us a life, a special life, a beautiful life. The whole process of the crucifixion and the resurrection is His way of providing that life for us so we can have an intimate and close and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He wants us to have that.

An African boy was listening very carefully as the teacher was describing why Christians give gifts at Christmas time. The teacher said the reason Christians give gifts at Christmas time is because they want to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, but they also want to value the friendships they have with each other to say these friendships are very important.

On Christmas the young boy brought a special gift to the teacher. When the teacher opened it up, it was a beautiful shell, none like she had ever seen before. It was amazing.

She says to the boy, "Where did you get this shell?" He said it's a shell that you can only find in this one bay. She recognized the name of the bay several miles away. She said, "This is a marvelous gift, but you shouldn't have gone that far to get it."

His response was, "Long walk part of gift."

I want to suggest the same thing is true in our relationship with Jesus Christ. He came from heaven to be a baby in a manger, and from the manger went to the cross, and from the cross to

the grave, and from the grave back to heaven where He's preparing a place for us. And He will come again. Why? Long walk part of gift.

If you've never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I want to invite you to do that today. Today is a day that can transform your life and be a new day as you walk out of here knowing Jesus Christ personally. In a few minutes we're going to have a ministry time as we sing the next song. During that song you can come up and someone will pray with you and help you get introduced to Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

But this ministry time is not just for people who want to get saved. The ministry time we have at Calvary Chapel Living Hope is a time when anybody can come up for any reason, any age. If you've got something wrong in your body and you need to be healed, I want to invite you to come up today. If you've got some kind of a challenge that you're going to face this week, I want you to come up today and receive prayer.

We believe in prayer. We know that prayer changes things. We know that God demonstrates His power through prayer. We're just obeying Him. God wants to do mighty things.

Students, you got a test coming up this week? Come on up here. Get prayed for. God wants to do some powerful things in our lives.

This ministry time is your time – a time when you can take this relationship that you have with the Lord and allow someone else to pray for you in your personal walk with Jesus Christ. We'll let prayer counselors come on up during this next song, and as they do, please, come on up and receive prayer.

Let's sing this next song rather quietly. You can sing the song or you can just pray in your own heart and allow God to speak to you. If you'd like prayer, come on up and we'll pray for you this morning. Would you stand with me?

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come before you right now and ask you to do a deeper work in our lives. We don't want to just take this message and have it come into our heads, but we want it deep into our hearts. And so we ask, Lord, that you would move it there. Give us the hope we need to face the challenges of this week. We ask, Lord, that you would heal the sick, that you would empower us with the problems that we're experiencing, that you would give us hope to overcome the challenges that we face. And to that end we bring our prayers to you during these next few minutes. In Jesus' name, amen.