

The Continued Centrality of the Gospel - Accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior - Personal Salvation

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[0 : 00] message this morning is the continued centrality of the gospel. I'd like you to please turn to the book of 1 Peter.

And we'll be looking at 1 Peter 1 verse 23 through the second chapter verse 3.

1 Peter 1 verse 23.

The grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

And this is the word which was preached to you. Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

[1 : 50] We have labored in some detail to explain and elaborate on the dynamics of personal salvation.

It's all about this thing called the gospel. And we've tried to approach it from different angles in an effort to leave no one in the dark as regards understanding of this most important issue.

We've tried to treat it in as basic a manner as possible so that everyone has a sufficient grasp. And why are we laboring to do so?

Because this is so very vital. It's a matter of life and death. I remember one time when I was in the hospital for the heart bypass operations.

And it must have been 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. I was sound asleep. And a nurse came in and flipped on the lights and started making commotion and noise and everything.

[3 : 06] And I thought, well, is it time to get up? And I looked at the clock on the wall and it was something like 2 or 2.30. And I said, what's going on? And she said, oh, I'm just here to check your vitals.

And I said, my what? Your vitals. I said, what are they? She says, those are the things that tell us whether you're alive or dead.

I thought, well, she took my pulse and took my temperature and put my finger in one of those things that has something to do with the breathing.

And I thought, well, now that's interesting. They call that taking your vitals. Well, that's what we're talking about. Only these are spiritual vitals.

And it has to do with being spiritually alive or spiritually dead. And you can see how the word really relates to living and dying.

[4 : 12] Because the Bible makes it very clear there is a spiritual death as well as there is a physical death. And there is a spiritual life as well as there is a physical life.

And we are talking about the dissemination and the appropriation of this thing called the gospel, which is designed by God to contain a life-giving element whereby when this gospel or this good news is embraced by faith and one's confidence and trust is placed in the person of Jesus Christ, it is through that act and because of that act that the Spirit of God enters the life of the individual and quickens them.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians and said, And you hath he quickened, or you hath he made alive, because before you were spiritually dead.

And when God quickens you and makes you alive, he creates in you a whole new being that certainly was not there before.

And John Peterson, hymn writer, said, My father is omnipotent, and that you can't deny. He put the stars in space.

[5 : 31] It was a miracle he put the stars in space. It was a miracle that he hung the world in space. But when he saved my soul and cleansed and made me whole, it took a miracle of love and grace.

And many of us here, maybe even all of us, I don't know, are recipients of that miracle. And there isn't a one of us that understands how it happened or how God did that.

We only know that because of the results that he did. So the first thing I want you to look at is while we are here in Peter, if you're still there where Gary was reading, is come over to 2 Peter, chapter 3, and let's look at verse 9 as to what God has done to prove his love.

And this is one of those verses that lends itself to a considerable amount of controversy, particularly between Calvinists and those who are less than Calvinists because this is the kind of verse that they've been fussing and arguing over for a long time.

And it is in verse 9 of 2 Peter, chapter 3, which indicates what God has done because he is not content about our lostness.

[6 : 51] In most cases, I prefer the New American Standard Bible and the way they render things, but I don't here because the King James actually has it more accurate when it says that God is not willing that any should perish.

And that is the word that in the Greek is bulimai and it is translated correctly here in the King James in a reference that I certainly prefer over the New American Standard, which waters it down by saying wishing.

Now we'll look at wishing in just a moment because Paul wrote to Timothy about that. But I just want to point out to you that in verse 9 we have an indication as to what God has done to demonstrate that he doesn't want any to perish.

And that's simply this. He sent his own son to pay the price for our sin that we might be saved through him. That's how we know that God loves us and that God loves us with an incredible love.

John 3.16 He's so loved. It means that he loved the world in this way. It doesn't have anything to do with quantity but it has everything to do with quality.

[8 : 20] It means that God's love was this kind of love that he gave his only begotten son. That's proof positive to the world that God loves the world and does not want us to perish.

So he has taken the steps. He has initiated the steps on his part that makes it possible that we not perish. But coupled with that is the reference to which I referred in 1 Timothy chapter 2 and if you will turn back to that please we'll see the contrast and it is quite stunning but I think that it points out the fact that both of these are actually at work.

God took the initiative and he sent his son to do for us what we could not do for ourself. And here in verse well let's just begin reading with verse 1 of chapter 2 1 Timothy First of all then I urge that entreaties and prayers petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men for kings and all who are in authority in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who desires completely different word in the English and in the Greek than the word will.

A desire is different from a will. A desire simply indicates a preference. A will represents determination and the text says who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Now that which of course separates the Calvinists from those who are less so has to do with God taking the initiative in a way that completely eliminates your initiative and our Calvinist friends and I say this with some degree of understanding because for a number of years I was one of them they are those who believe that God is absolutely sovereign in everything including your salvation which means you may think that you had a part in your salvation but you didn't have to do because God elected those whom he chose he chose those whom he elected and you and your will had absolutely nothing to do with it you were just completely passive and in that regard God is absolutely sovereign that means he is in charge of everything and you may think that you were saved because you made a decision for Christ but that is not true

[11 : 06] God elected you and you didn't have any choice but to make a decision for Christ because you were one of the elect which means you were pre-programmed and you had to believe because you couldn't not believe now that's the position that unconditional election takes and they completely dismiss the human will from the whole process actually what we have here is God taking the initiative in that he provided redemption for the entire human race and as we tried to point out in times past this is not universal salvation this is universal redemption and that means that in the death of Christ every human being who ever lived was redeemed by the finished work of Christ and thus made a candidate or a potential for salvation but that depends upon their will and what we have here is a marvelous thing that I see all throughout the Bible and I do not think that salvation is an exception to that and that marvelous thing that I see all throughout the Bible is a divine slash human cooperative there is a mix between the divine and the human so that both are operative

God for lack of a better term God has chosen in his grace and in his wisdom to partner with humanity and it is quite a humbling thing to realize that he's been willing to do that but it's very obvious that he has done that and he's not only done it with men he has done it with angels so that because God has created angels and human beings with a thing called a will or volition which becomes the basis for our being accountable to God it is that human or angelic volition that works in concert with the will of God to accomplish what God wants God did not have to partner with us God does not need us in any respect but he has chosen in his grace to implement us in the process and we ought to be quite humbled by the fact he has done the same thing for angels now this is all the way through the

Bible you could go back as far as even Noah God did not need Noah he could have rescued those whom he wanted to rescue any other way but he chose to pull Noah and his family into the mix and make them part of the process and he didn't have to have Noah to build the ark but he again he chose to use human beings to accomplish his will not that he had to but that he condescended and was willing to and we ought to be grateful to be recipients and participants in the plan did the same thing with Abraham he partners with him and he partners with Joshua and he partners with Moses and he partners with all of these people and he partners with you too because he's given you a thing called a volition a will and here in this text who desires all men to be saved and that is a good word and it's the way it's rendered in the Greek because here it is the word fellow which means a desire or a preference so all I'm saying is this there is a distinct difference between the passage we've already looked at in 2 Peter which simply indicates that

God was determined to make a way for man to be able to repent and that is proof positive that he was not willing that any should perish so he sent Christ to do for us what we couldn't do for ourselves but here in 1 Timothy chapter 2 it is the desire on the part of God not the will in other words God's preference is for man's salvation and to demonstrate how serious he was about it he made it so that it was available to all of humanity that he did through the death of Christ so in both cases we have the desire and the will and there really isn't any contradiction between them we ought to appreciate both of them in Acts chapter 17 and let's go there please I've got a number of references and I must discipline myself or we'll never get through them I don't want to belabor the point of elaboration too much but I want to make sure that it is adequately understood

Acts chapter 17 God respects the volition he has given us and we are responsible for our use of it and on Mars Hill chapter 17 of Acts he is talking to a group of pagans a group of heathen very intellectual intelligent heathen idolaters idolaters all of them and we're going to skip much of the sermon but I just want to start with verse 30 and he's talking about the God of heaven and he says therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance and that could only refer to past times God is now that is as of the time Paul was delivering this message to the Athenians on Mars Hill probably somewhere close to 65 AD as opposed to previously now God is declaring to men that all everywhere should repent and the reason they should is because he has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom he has appointed having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead and the command to repent is an appeal to the volition to the will what do you repent with you repent with your will it is your volition that causes you to repent it is also your volition that makes you refuse to repent so your will plays a very very important part in this either way in chapter 20 of the book of

[17 : 33] Acts come over just a page or so chapter 20 and this by the way ties in with a criticism that some have leveled and some of these dear folks are what we would call grace preachers and I just do not understand where they're coming from and and I related to you earlier that they say that when you when you preach the gospel and you tell people that they need to repent that is unscriptural because the idea of repenting and requiring people to repent means that you are adding to the gospel of grace which simply says you do nothing but believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and that requiring people to repent inserts works human effort and labor into the process thus adding to the gospel of the grace of

God which means in effect you are not saved by grace alone you are saved by repentance and grace which of course denigrates the idea of grace altogether now I do not understand how they can think that way when the scriptures make it so clear as we see here in Acts chapter 17 and in Acts chapter 20 and verse 21 where the apostle Paul is talking to the believers at Ephesus and he says regarding verse 21 he says solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ we have attempted to point out in the past that to repent has nothing to do with penance it has nothing to do with somehow paying for your sin and adding to the finished work of Christ all it means metanoia we've looked at the word on the overhead

I'm not going to put it on there again but all it means is change your mind that's all it means don't try to make it mean anything else it means change your mind and my position is this and I think it's crystal clear you cannot you cannot believe on the salvation without repenting it's impossible because before you came to faith in Christ before you made that decision you were counting on something whatever it was to give you a right standing before God or to assure you of heaven and I don't know how many times I've asked people are you sure of heaven the most you get from most of them is I hope so I hope so well that's not good enough the scriptures have made it an absolute definite certainty but the repentance has to do with a necessary change of mind before you can come to the position of receiving

Christ or believing on him this is a very simple thing and it's so simple I almost lack for words to explain it simply means that before you heard the gospel you were counting on something whatever it was church membership good attendance good morals come from good stock whatever it was something that you were that's what you need to change your mind about and when you do that that's repentance I don't know how many people I've encountered over the years in giving them the gospel they say something like well you know I was raised in church and we went to Sunday school every Sunday and that's kind of like what I was counting on you know that was that was that was my hope and when they hear the gospel and the grace of God and that salvation is by grace through faith not of yourself they have to change their mind about that Sunday school thing and about church and all the rest all I'm saying is you cannot believe on Christ without changing your mind because you weren't born that way you had to make a change somewhere and when the gospel is preached death burial and resurrection of Christ for our sins when the gospel is preached you are giving people a reason to repent change their mind that's all the gospel is it is information and people receive the information they process the information they reach a conclusion and the conclusion is you know what

I've been wrong all along about what it was that I believed and I need to change my thinking and make this definite deliberate decision for Christ that's repentance so all I'm saying is repentance isn't adding to the gospel you cannot believe the gospel without repenting because you were not born believing you were born and grew up counting on believing in something else usually your own morality and that's not adequate that's not good you need to change your mind about that and people who refuse to do so are called unrepentant and they are not changing their mind they are going with what they have always believed that's all we're saying so how can anyone think that repentance is adding to the gospel there is no possibility of believing it without repenting and again in Acts chapter 26 just for another reference

[23 : 28] I don't know what these brethren do with these verses because I just to me they are just so crystal clear Acts chapter 26 in verse 20 Paul is giving his testimony to King Agrippa verse 19 consequently King Agrippa I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first and also at Jerusalem and then throughout the region of Judea and even to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God performing deeds appropriate to repentance and there it is with crystal clarity as best as I can see in connection with this repentance I think that contrition is involved and we need to look at some Old Testament references because this is cross dispensational truth and it doesn't matter when you're living it is repentance it is contrition that is always in vogue Psalm 34 and verse 18 we are belaboring this point in an effort to make these things as simple as we possibly can and in Psalm 34 and verse 18 here in my

New American Standard it says the Lord is near to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit I think the King James probably renders that contrite and it's it's the idea of a crushed spirit a broken spirit and that's a position that one has to come to in order to believe on Christ there is this sense of being undone the sense of being unable to measure up the sense of being lost and doomed that's all tied in with this package and do you realize and here I'm realizing that I'm on thin water but I want to I want to point this out because I think it's very important when we talk about contrition we're getting into feelings emotions we are not only physical beings we are emotional beings as well and the point that I think

I tried to make in our last session together is how how is it that feelings plays a part in our salvation some are of the opinion that well really you don't have to feel anything you just have to believe because it is an intellectual thing and it is not an emotional thing and I well remember you know when I look back on that incredible day December 8 1956 when the pastor who married Barbara and me led me to Christ I can't say that I had any upheaval of emotions any great feelings I didn't feel like a huge burden was lifted off of my shoulders I can't say that I felt euphoric I did feel a sense of I guess you'd say calm satisfaction appreciation and those are feelings those are emotions and I am confident that it came on the heels of the decision that I had just made and I realized at the time that it was the most important decision that I could ever make and I had a sense of release or satisfaction about it so I guess there was some feeling there but I didn't shed tears

I didn't cry some people do it depends on the way people are wired and put together because some are more emotionally demonstrative than others and some just aren't made that way some are more stoical but this contrition thing does it matter how you feel about your sin when you come to embracing the gospel and for those who say doesn't matter all that matters is that you believe alright let me pose this then is it okay if you're proud of your sin is it okay if you're boastful of your sin we're talking about a mental attitude and how it is impacted and affected by feelings and emotions contrition is a sense of brokenness a sense of failure a sense of coming up short a sense of not measuring up a sense of being doomed all of these things are involved in this broken spirit and this is cross dispensational this is

Old Testament as well as New Testament I don't think that we can escape it in Psalm 51 in verse 17 David's penitential Psalm the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit now look at the context here what he's talking about is animal sacrifice and in verse 16 he says thou dost not delight in sacrifice otherwise I would give it in other words thou art not pleased with burnt offerings God is not satisfied with simply offering an animal in sacrifice what is the sacrifice that God accepts it is when one is broken and contrite over their sin you cannot dismiss your sin lightly you cannot excuse it you cannot justify it you cannot deny it you own it and you say this is me it's me oh lord standing in the need of prayer not my mother not my father but it's me oh lord you take responsibility and there is a sense of remorse and guilt in connection with that because if there is no guilt what do you have to be saved from guilt is the product of sin all of these things are tied together and

[30 : 16] I don't think it's possible for us to dissect them and put each one in a place but all I'm saying is when salvation takes place and someone comes to faith in Christ these things all come together like a chorus all coming together and God in the midst of it all reads the human heart he sees and he knows and he understands the intent of the heart and he's able to interpret that in a flawless way he knows what is really there so there is no concern about having a mantra to say having some special words to say I've heard of people saying God be merciful to me a sinner well many would consider that inadequate information but again it all depends on what is already in that person's heart by way of understanding and appreciation it depends on their attitude it depends on how God views them and sees them and he is able to look into and read and if the heart is right don't worry about the words being right about a certain expression that has to be given or a certain act that has to be followed

God reads the heart and we can be thankful that he does because we would make certain specific requirements of individuals you're going to do this and you're going to do that and all these hoops that that's nonsense whenever someone comes to faith in the gospel they already have certain ideas and certain concepts in their mind and heart stored away that they've accumulated over years some of them are right and some of them are wrong and God takes that whole mix and he puts it together and when there is a simple childlike faith and the reason we say childlike is because you realize as parents what is characteristic of children they God wants he wants us to believe what we are told that's a childlike faith and all of these things come together in different degrees and different ways and different times in an individual's life that brings them to this point of salvation in

Isaiah 57 a couple more Old Testament references Isaiah chapter 57 and verse 15 for thus says the high and exalted one who lives forever whose name is holy I dwell on a high and holy place and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite contrite heart delights the heart of God this is a heart that accepts and assumes responsibility for one's actions and is appropriately grieved over their sin God when

Paul wrote to the Ephesians he talked about grieve not the Holy Spirit think about that the Holy Spirit is a member of the triune God the Holy Spirit is as much God as is the Father and the Son and the fact that we mere mortals have the ability to bring grief to deity is a pretty heady thing to think of we can actually sorrow the mind and the heart of deity through our attitudes and actions and that's what we do when we grieve the Holy Spirit when we are unforgiving one to another we grieve the Holy Spirit these are these are emotions in Psalm I'm sorry Isaiah 66 our last

Old Testament reference Isaiah 66 in verse 2 well let's read verse 1 also thus says the Lord heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool where then is a house you could build for me and where is a place that I may rest for my hand made all these things thus all these things came into being declares the Lord but to this one I will look to him who is humble and what's the opposite of humble it's proud God resists the proud but he gives grace to the humble humility is akin to contrition it's facing the facts of who we are and how short we fall of God's standard and the sorrow that goes with it but to this one

[35 : 43] I will look to him who is humble and contrite of spirit and who trembles at my word what is this trembling that's induced emotionally the trembling is a fear the trembling is an awareness of awesomeness that you are in the presence of God when you are in his word and reading his word and you tremble at his word and you know what we ought to tremble at the thought of disobeying it that's a real legitimate cause for trembling Charles Finney an evangelist of the 19th century actually he was around in the 1820s Charles Finney was a lawyer who came to faith in Christ and then he began preaching the gospel and for all practical purposes I think Charles Finney might be considered the father of modern mass evangelism and he obviously had a way with words and delivered spellbinding messages and captivated people all over the country particularly in

New England and Charles Finney originated something that he called the anxious seat well what in the world was that all about well he would preach these messages about guilt about repentance about the necessity of believing the gospel and so on describing sin and the activities of people that were taking place at that time and he called them out on it like Paul wrote to the Ephesians that we are to have nothing to do with the unfruitful deeds of darkness but rather expose them and Charles Finney exposed them and people would become under conviction they would be upset over their sin by the way you ever get the impression that anybody gets upset over their sin today wow all you have to do is look around you and look at what's on the tube and everything and if anything they are exporting it they are bragging about it they are well what happens in

Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas do you know what that is that's barely a modern attitude about sin that's all that is and it's funny and people laugh about it and we say that when a guy is on a business convention away from home and he goes to Las Vegas for this convention and he's confronted by all kinds of temptations and availability of this and that and everything why shouldn't he enjoy himself and have a real fling after all what happens in Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas and the little woman back home in Ohio she doesn't need to know a thing about it and this is a common attitude today and not only that but you know more and more it is being considered normal and you're some kind of a weirdo if you don't adopt it then you're a prude undesirable uncool and all the rest that goes with it so when

Finney would preach his messages people would actually become under conviction and I just can't imagine this but I know that there was a different kind of mentality in the 1800s than what there is today that's for sure but people would become visibly upset and this was because they took the word of God very seriously and they took the character of God very seriously and when they compared the two to themselves they felt anxious and remorseful and contrite and they would begin to weep now I'm not in favor of trying to stir up people's emotions and get everybody bawling and crying and carrying on but there is a legitimate place tears might be the most appropriate thing and Finney would invite those who were anxious over their sin to come up front here and sit on the anxious seat while others would be praying for them today we would probably consider that exhibitionism and it's unacceptable and it's culturally blah blah blah and you know what

I think we're much too sophisticated to consider anything like that aren't we of course we are and we congratulate ourselves for it and don't think that I'm trying to provoke that kind of thing I'm just saying that the culture is so radically different today and the way we regard offenses that God is just no big deal and we act like it this feeling thing has a legitimate place and we pretty much shoved it aside emotion and by the way it ought to say something to us that the word motion is in the word emotion and promotion which is up and demotion which is down and commotion involves multiple people we said there was a commotion at the mall the other day several people involved and this word motion is related to moving just like locomotion it's moving there is something moving about feeling something deep someone has said you may see a three year old toddler heading down the sidewalk toward a busy intersection and intellectually you know that that child is in danger but you are not moved by intellect you are moved by feelings by emotions and that's what causes you to run after that youngster because you are moved you know what is involved you know what you understand about that situation and movement

[42 : 32] I think that this is probably involved at least to some degree with Billy Graham's decisions that he gave when he was in Franklin Graham was doing the same thing today when he holds these evangelistic crusades as Billy held them all over the world and at the end of each message he would give an invitation he preached the gospel he's given people something to think about he's given them content to process and then he provides them with an opportunity to do something about it and what is that I'm going to invite you all over this arena to stand up and come forward as only Billy Graham could do it and very often people who were sufficiently moved by what they had processed in their seats saw that opportunity to make a kind of physical commitment whereby they got up out of their seat and they made a move they motion down to the front because they were smitten by their sin by their sorrow over sin contrition everything by a need by the clarity of the gospel and understanding of what was involved and they wanted to do something about it that became the basis for the invitation and it's something that every evangelist

I think since then even today with Franklin and the train of his father Billy is doing the same thing as well as other evangelists when someone comes to faith in Christ I want to close with this thought when someone comes to faith in Christ what is it that determines the kind of life that they will live two words diet and exercise they sound kind of familiar don't they because we think of them in terms of the physical how important diet and exercise is and the diet of course has to do with taking in the word of God as was read in our scripture portion this morning when Peter says that as newborn babes just as a newborn baby is hungry for milk so we are to take to the milk of the word that we may grow thereby and mature I heard some nurses one time talking about one of the saddest things that they experienced in the nursery that every now and then it happens that a little baby would be born and they call it failure to thrive and the baby just did not want and would not take nourishment maybe there was something neurologically wrong

I don't know but anyway they may have ways of addressing that today but years ago they didn't and when a baby failed to thrive it just died just wasted away so what Peter is telling us in that passage is that just like babies go after mother's milk we are to go after our father's word and be sustained thereby all true believers in Christ are provided with the same spiritual dynamics to work with at the point of salvation and here's my question for you so what is it that causes some to grow and mature into a healthy believer in Christ as opposed to those who stagnate and simply make no little or no progress in their spiritual life what's at work there or what isn't at work there what is it that makes some Christians be all they can be spiritually while others are merely content to be saved and let it go with that

I'm going to heaven my destiny is secure and I'm really not too interested in anything else and they're self-satisfied with that what is it what's taking place here I'm convinced that it is our greatest this is our greatest motivation living for Christ and it stems from a profound appreciation for what he has done for us Paul said when he wrote to the Corinthians in chapter 5 second letter that the love of Christ constrains us compels us motivates us drives us and I'm not sure whether that is our love for Christ or Christ's love for us both are a reality at least to one degree or another Christ's love for us is infinite sometimes our love for him may be questionable or certainly a lot less than infinite but it is only because of a profound sense of appreciation and gratitude to God that we will seek to serve him with our whole life and being and people who don't appreciate much won't move out much people who are not truly grateful for what they have in Christ will not seek out ways to serve him they are very content with what they have and they are impoverishing themselves considerably the greatest motivation for serving

Christ is that profound inner confidence and assurance of God's love for you and the extent that Christ went to to make his salvation available for you and as a songwriter with the little ditty years ago after all he's done for me after all he's done for me how can I do less than give him my best after all he's done for me and if you aren't interested in pulling out the stops and throwing everything in the pot in order to serve Jesus Christ it can only be because you don't have a level of appreciation that allows you to do that so what is Grace Bible Church all about not only preaching the gospel but our interest is in doing what we can through the teaching of the word to elevate people's appreciation understanding gratitude for what they have in Jesus Christ and once you grasp that that's all you need that's all you need then you can move out to live for him and serve him in any one of a thousand different ways or avenues and nobody's telling you which one you want to

[49 : 27] I'm just saying that that profound sense of desire is going to be there if the level of appreciation and gratitude is sufficient if it isn't ho hum I'm saved I'm going to heaven that's really all I'm very interested in and the idea of communicating that gospel and sharing it with others just doesn't grab you at all you'd say well I'm not very good at that well I can't speak to people well I somebody else can do it better than me well that's what we pay the preacher for on and on and on Gypsy Smith whom I never heard preach but I've read some of his sermons he was called Gypsy Smith because he was really a gypsy traveled in a gypsy band as a young lad I think he was probably 10 or 11 years of age when somebody encountered this band of gypsies and preached the gospel and Gypsy

Smith as a young lad came to faith in Christ and he devoted the rest of his life to preaching the gospel and crusades and meetings wherever he could all throughout the country this is back in the early 1900s and one day as he was nearing the end of life an interviewer was asking him some questions and he was saying one of the things that people have been so much impressed about you Gypsy Smith is that despite your age you just continued on preaching the gospel with the same excitement and the same verveur and the same zeal that you always have how is it that you were able to do that and I'll never forget his answer he said I guess it was all because I never lost the wonder I never lost the wonder the wonder that God loved me and that

Christ did for me what he did I never got over it and let me ask you something have you lost the wonder is your salvation kind of ho-hum taken for granted you got yours others can get theirs however they can I don't particularly feel called to do that that's all cop-out talk that's all somebody else can do it better than me that's not my thing that's all cop-out talk and God isn't buying it if you want to say that's not my thing and be willing to admit I guess I've lost the wonder I'll pray for you

I'll pray for me too because you know something there is a natural tendency for the edge to be taken off the wonder of all of us and we need an ongoing burning recommitment to keep that commitment fresh and vital and in the forefront and never lose sight of it and we ought to be dedicated to do that until we take that last breath how that's going to be played out in individual lives I have no interest in trying to tell anybody how to do it but all I'm doing is giving each of us myself included an opportunity to reassess everything think about your priorities think about your agenda think about what is it that really matters to you have you lost the wonder we're grateful father for the time that we've been able to share together we've recognized that some of these things are very simple and some of them are very complex and some of the things we've talked about we'd be the first to admit we don't begin to understand as fully as we'd like we are so grateful for one thing in the midst of all of this and that is you know and you read the desires of our heart and that's we're counting on thank you for being a God who is able to do that and our prayer for each of these right now is that wherever there is a need for rekindling that fire for placing another log on the fire for recommitting if that's what it takes not to our salvation but recommitting to our love for you and our service and our devotion to you if that's what the need is then we pray that each of us will have the courage to do that and not only the courage but the eagerness to do it because we realize what is at stake thank you so much for the word that you've provided thank you for each one here to receive it we pray that as we go from this place you will take this truth and burrow it into our hearts and anything that has been uttered of the flesh may it pass away and come to naught we thank you for it and we ask it in christ's name amen next sunday is father's day and it will be a little different george craig and i are going to share in the message together and there will be some different things i think that you'll appreciate especially those of you who were fathers so we invite you not only to be here for that but to invite other dads that may be available as well so thank you for your presence you are dismissed