

This World Is Not My Home (The Pilgrim Lifestyle)

by Bayless Conley

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All right. I want to read you some of the words of King David from Psalm 119. It will be up on the screens.

He said this in verses 18 and 19, (TLB)

¹⁸ Open my eyes to see wonderful things in your Word. ¹⁹ I am but a pilgrim here on earth: how I need a map—and your commands are my chart and guide.

I'm a pilgrim here on earth. That means a sojourner, a temporary resident, someone that's just passing through. God, I'm here for just a little time, and I need a guide since I'm just a pilgrim. I need a map. I need instruction. And he said it very clearly, I'm going to go to Your Word. That's my map. That's my chart. That's my guide. So, we're going to be looking in the guide of God's Word when it comes to this pilgrim, this sojourner's lifestyle.

And there are a lot of things we could talk about, but due to the constraint of time, we're just going to center in on a few. The first one is this; since we are just sojourners and pilgrims, we need to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

That's actually a direct quote from Scripture. "Abstain from fleshly lust which war against the soul." First Peter 2:11 begins this way,

¹¹ Beloved, I beg you . . .

Everyone say, "I beg." All right. It lets us know this is no small thing he's about to address here. He's not saying, "Look, I suggest, and maybe you ought to think about this." He says, "Look, I'm pleading with you. I beg you." All right. What is he begging about?

¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, . . .

(or among the unsaved)

. . . that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

"Abstain from fleshly lust which war against the soul." The Greek word "war" literally means to carry out a strategic military campaign with the objective of capturing, crippling, or destroying your opponent.

So, "the lust of the flesh" literally carries out a strategic military campaign against our souls. And when he speaks of our soul here, it's the part of our spiritual life that comprises our mind, our will, and our emotions.

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Dear friend, if the enemy, through enticing our fleshly nature, can capture our thinking or our will, our conduct will be affected, which diminishes, if not altogether, destroys our witness for Christ.

You see, those two verses there in 1 Peter 2, they're connected. "I beg you, as sojourners and pilgrims, you are just here for a little while. Abstain from fleshly lust. They wage a campaign, a war to capture your soul." And then he said, "Let your conduct be honorable." What goes on in your soul affects your conduct. And if the enemy succeeds in capturing our soul, it'll affect our conduct. And then when those in the world speak of us as evildoers, well, they might be right because our conduct is not going to be honorable, and they're not going to glorify God in the day of visitation. In other words, it affects our witness for Christ.

If our conduct is wrong, if our thinking is wrong, if our soul has been captured, then our conduct is going to be wrong, and that ultimately affects our witness, and that affects the thing that God prizes most, precious souls coming into His family.

Fleshly lusts can encompass anything from forbidden passions to flaunted pride. And those are extremes, but the flesh loves them both. The flesh wants to indulge in them both.

I had a friend that I made when I first got saved. He'd been a Christian longer than me. And we were both learning to play guitar. And so, we would sit in the backyard, and we would play guitars for hours on end. And we would sing to Jesus. And we'd talk about Scriptures. We prayed together. We actually witnessed together. We shared the gospel with people together—a really, really good friend.

Then I left on a trip. I was gone for quite a while. I came back, and he was nowhere to be found—he had sort of fallen off the map. And you couldn't just call someone on a mobile phone because they wouldn't be invented for about 40 years. So I didn't know what had happened to him.

And then, I've been back now a couple months, and I'm in the market one day, and I run into him in the market. And he's there with a very attractive woman. And I chatted with him a little bit, and he sort of cut the conversation short and went his way. I thought, well, that was a bit strange. But it was good to see him.

Well, about a week later, I ran into his older brother, who was also a believer. And he said, "Bayless, you ran into my brother in the market recently?" I said, "Yes, I did." He said, "He went into a tailspin after he saw you in the market." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, he realized when he talked to you that you were still on fire for God and you're serving the Lord, and he realized how far he had fallen. He sort of gave in to some things and started drinking excessively, started using drugs again, and he started sleeping around. In fact, the woman you saw him with, she's the latest one that he shackled up with." He still believed in Jesus, but he's living like a prisoner of war.

His soul had been captured, and he was filled with self-loathing. As far as his witness went, it was diminished, if not destroyed. And he was so tangled up in sin that he didn't even know if he could get free.

Now, opposite end of the spectrum, the flesh, as well as indulging in forbidden passions, it loves to be pampered and applauded.

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I have another friend, and I can honestly say he might be the best preacher I've ever heard. He's been in heaven for quite a few years now. But I don't think I can name anyone that could hold a candle to him when it came to the gift of preaching. The guy was phenomenal.

And he became, years ago, very famous as a television preacher and became a host. In fact, just to give you an idea, he preached, like, a 20-minute message one time, and within 24 hours, 100,000 copies of that message, people had called in 100,000 calls just to purchase a cassette of that message. That was how good this guy was.

And he was hosting a show one night, and there was another preacher on, and then he had Corrie ten Boom with him. And he was going to interview Corrie. And so he's sitting next to Corrie, and the other guy is a bit pompous and kind of doing his shtick. And obviously, he really likes being in front of the camera. And he told me this personally; he said, "Bayless," Corrie leaned over and whispered to me, "I think that man would rather pose than pray." My friend said, "I was so convicted. I went home that night and fell on my knees, and sobbed like a baby. I realized that the anointing that God had given me and the grace that was on my life to move hearts toward Him was almost gone because I began loving the spotlight. And I loved being on the camera or in front of the camera." Lust of the flesh. Just sort of the opposite end of the spectrum.

I think we all know that the flesh is like a spoiled child. It cries out and cries out for what it wants. And it's hard to make it stop.

"I want some vodka. Give me a vodka, give me a vodka. I need some vodka. It's been a rough day. I need to take the edge off. I'll keep it to three. Just give me three, and we're done. Give some vodka." "No, we're not having any." "Give me some vodka. All right, two. Just give me two drinks, and I'm good." "No, we're not having any." "Come on. Just one. We'll put orange juice in it. It'll be healthy." "No." "Then cranberry juice. We'll put cranberry juice in it." "No, you're not having any vodka." "I need vodka, please." "No." "All right. Give me a glass of wine. Give me a glass of wine. I won't drink more than two or three. I promise. I promise." "No, we're not having any." "Come on, one glass. One glass." "No." "Well, I don't like beer. Give me a beer. I'll settle for a beer."

The flesh cries out and cries out and cries out, and it's never satisfied. It always wants to over-indulge, whether it's overeating, oversleeping, overspending, excessive drinking, excessive time in front of the television, the computer, or your mobile device. You got to get up in six hours to go to work at the place. "Just one more episode, one more episode."

"But I got to get up in six hours." "Come on. Keep scrolling. Keep scrolling. Something we like is going to come up. Keep scrolling." A half-hour later, "Keep scrolling. Come on. Come on. Just a little more. You know something you like is going to come." "I got to get up in four hours." "Come on, keep scrolling."

I think we're all familiar with how our flesh operates.

And the thing is, is that if we do begin to yield to a fleshly lust if we continue, it will capture our soul. And that's anything from forbidden passions to all of the things we named. In fact, you can look in Galatians 5. It gives a pretty extensive list of the works of the flesh. You'd be surprised at some things that are on there. The flesh cries out for these things, and literally, the devil is good

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at prodding our flesh because he knows that these fleshly lusts, they're waging a campaign, trying to capture our soul, trying to capture our will, trying to capture our thinking.

And if you yield and get caught up, yeah, you'll probably still go to heaven. You'll just live like a prisoner of war your whole time here on earth. And your witness for Christ will not only be muted, it might be silenced altogether.

Jesus used the metaphor. He said, "Look, if your eye offends you, if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out, cast it from you. It's better that you enter into life, into eternity, with one eye than to go into hellfire with two." And then He said, "Look, if your hand causes you to stumble and sin, cut it off, cast it from you, better for you to enter into life maimed than having two hands and going to hellfire." And then He said, "Look, if your foot causes you to offend, cut it off, cast it from you. It's better for you to go into heaven, go into eternity, with one foot than to have two to go into hell." And He's obviously using a metaphor, and there's a progression there. The eye represents our viewing habits. It represents our thinking, and that's where it always begins.

And listen, if you're toying with certain things that are wrong, fleshly lust, Jesus says pluck it out, cast it from you. He's not talking literally, but it's a metaphor. Deal with it ruthlessly. Don't play with it. Deal with it ruthlessly in that stage. That's the easiest place to deal with it. Because if you don't deal with it in the eye stage, it graduates to the hand. Now, I'm not just thinking about it, now I've reached out, and I've partaken. And it may just be occasional, but now it's affected my conduct. You see, my soul has been captured, and now my conduct may no longer be honorable.

And Jesus said, "Hey, cut it out, cut it off if that's the case, deal with it ruthlessly. Don't mess with it if it's in that stage because if you don't, it graduates to the foot." And that represents—it's now becomes a walk, it's become a habit of life, it's become a pattern, a way of living. And yeah, you can be set free. He said, "Deal with it ruthlessly there, you can be set free, but it's much harder then. It will, for sure, take the power of the Holy Spirit to set you free at that stage." Believe for the delivering power of the Holy Spirit to work in your life.

You see, when it comes to sin and the lust of the flesh, if you think of it, if you put a thread around yourself, easy to break it. You can say, "Hey, look, I can take that or leave that." True. Wrap it around once or twice; you can break it pretty easily. "I can take that or leave that." But you keep doing it; maybe not so easy.

Once—I can break free, I can take it or leave it. A few times—I can take it or leave it. But you continue with it, and you can't leave it because it has you. And the thing is, when it gets to that stage, your soul has to really want it if you're going to be free. But you need to realize your soul can grow accustomed to being in bondage. Your soul can be accustomed to living in chains. And it doesn't always want to be free from what it has become accustomed to.

That's why he said, "I beg you, sojourner and pilgrim, you're only here for a little while." We only have a little while to reach a dying world with a living Christ. You don't want your witness to be muted or silenced. So, abstain, deal with it, don't let it continue.

And the next point that I want to share with you is sort of a two-sided coin, each side dealing with a different perspective or attitude. Here's the first thing, as pilgrims and sojourners, it's important for us to realize that very soon, grief will be swallowed up by glory. Very soon, grief will be swallowed up by glory.

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In speaking about the brevity of our time here on earth, the apostle Paul said this to the Corinthian church. Second Corinthians 4:17. He said,

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

Our light affliction is just a moment, but it's working for us this exceeding, amazing eternal weight of glory.

Now think about the apostle Paul. He was beaten with rods, he was stoned, he was slandered, he was shipwrecked, he was jailed, he was rejected, he was falsely accused, he was persecuted, chased from town to town, and referred to all of that as a light affliction when comparing it with the glory to come.

My friend, it won't be long. We'll be sitting down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. We will see Jesus Christ face-to-face. Every tear will be wiped away, replaced with an indescribable joy. This eternal weight of glory.

And the Amplified Bible translates that eternal weight of glory this way; that it's a glory: [beyond all measure, excessively surpassing all comparisons and all calculations, a vast and transcendent glory and blessedness never to cease!].

There will be a new heavens and a new earth, and we will be the residents. Our sojourning will be over. We will enter into our reward.

I remember when Janet was pregnant with our first child, Harrison. And we had gone through all the classes. I'm going to be her coach in the birth process. And her water breaks. So we rushed to the hospital. And we'd been praying. We think this is going to be great and easy.

And one hour of labor turned into two, turned into four, turned into eight, hard, hard labor turned into 12, 18 hours of hard labor. She hasn't slept. She's in pain. And she's struggling. And I'm trying to coach her, "Baby, breathe. Come on, come on, we're going to do this. The baby's going to be there soon." And all of a sudden, on the fetal monitor, the doctor says, "Look, something's wrong. Every time she has a contraction, this baby is going into distress. Something's terribly wrong. We need to do an emergency C-section." We said, "Doc, you sure?" He said, "Yes. We need to."

So she had an emergency C-section. It turns out the umbilical cord was wrapped several times around his neck. And every time she had a contraction, he was being strangled. That's why he was going into distress. So here's Janet, 18 hours, exhausted, struggling, in pain, but I will never forget the wonder and the awe that was on her face when she held Harrison for the first time. She forgot all about the struggling.

Listen, I did my best to coach her. I'm trying to coach you.

Soon, very soon, we're going to be stepping into glory. Your struggle will not last forever.

In fact, no matter how grievous things are for you right now, when you step into the world to come, whatever you're going through now, you're going to deem it but a light affliction.

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And I know some would think, “Are you trying to minimize my pain and suffering?” No, I’m not. I’m just magnifying the glory that is to come. Eye hasn’t seen, ear hasn’t heard, nor entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those that love Him.

I think about that often. It’s never entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those that love Him.

I would stack my imagination up against any 10 of you. I have got the craziest, wildest, biggest, most colorful, bizarre, wonderful imagination that I think a human being can have. And I’ll think about what’s to come. I mean, just crazy, outlandish. And God says, “No. Not even close, not even in the ballpark, Bayless.” Well, then I think, “Bigger, more.” It’s like, “You have no idea. No idea.”

And you may be going through a rough patch right now. You may feel like it’s hell on earth for you, but my friend, that pain, that grief will be swallowed up by glory, and soon.

You know, we had Harrison, and it seems like I just turned around, and he’s got kids of his own. We just celebrated Asher, our oldest grandson’s 14th birthday. How did that happen? I just turned around. He’s 14. I just turned around. I’m pushing 70. Now, I know for some of you, that’s like, “Eh, youngster.” But for others in here, that’s ancient. My point, though, all of those things seem to have happened quite suddenly.

And I know I’m just going to turn around, and I’m going to be stepping into the glory world. I’m just a sojourner. This earth is not my home. I’m a citizen of another world. That world is coming.

Now here’s the other side of that coin. One: Very soon, grief will be swallowed by glory. Number two: Seeing that we’re sojourners, I think it’s important that we live life to the fullest. We should live life to the fullest. Yes, a new world is coming, but I’m not going to retreat into some sort of emotional hibernation while I wait for that which is to come. I think we ought to squeeze every drop of life we can out of each and every day. And we can do that while we serve God and while we serve the purposes of His kingdom. He doesn’t want any of His children, never intended us to be grumpy, discontented, unhappy people who live shrunken, withdrawn lives. That’s not God’s plan for any of his children.

Listen to the words of Solomon, Ecclesiastes 3:12.

¹² I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, ¹³ and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God.

First Timothy 6:17 says that God gives us richly all things to enjoy. And the point is that even though we are pilgrims and sojourners, we don’t have to be sullen and depressed. You can enjoy the ride if you have a mind to.

Now, our time here was never meant to be torturous. Yes, we do have trials, but He’s with us in those trials. Jesus said, “In the world, you’ll have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I’ve overcome the world.”

One of my best friends; we were close friends since elementary school and went through junior high together. In high school, he dropped out of high school, left his family, gave up every

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earthly possession, and joined a religious movement, another major world religion. He swore off every earthly thing. And he moved up to Los Angeles and started living in a temple from this religious order up there.

And I would go visit him mostly when they had festivals because the food was really good and free. But, I'd go visit him and talk with him. He even changed his name. They gave him a whole new name. And I was up there one day, and I think it was some festival or something. And I'm walking back to my truck, and one of the older acolytes stood in front of me. He barred my way and said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going to go get in my truck and go home." He said, "No, you're not." I said, "Yes, I am." He said, "Look, you're one of us now. I've been watching you. You come here all the time," says, "You have a new family now. Just forget your truck. Forget about that. You're one of us now. You need to stay." But he was so gloomy and so morose and so unpleasant. I remember standing there talking to him. I made the decision if that's what this religion does, I want no part of it. And I never went back after that day, not a single time.

I wonder if those around us in our workplace, our family members, or the people we interact with; does our countenance and our attitude, how does it make them feel about the kingdom? Man, if church makes you that sour, they look like they sleep in a jar of pickle juice every day. I don't want anything to do with it. Or do they see something about you and say, "Man, I don't get it. I know they got struggles like I do, but there's a light on their face. There is just something different about them. There's something good about them. They've got something that I don't have, and I want it."

My friend, I, for one, as a sojourner and a pilgrim, as a follower of Jesus, I plan to love my family, to be faithful to my friends, to do all I can, to lift and influence people for the kingdom. I plan to work hard. I want to laugh hard. I want to love well. I want to play hard. I want to live clean. I want to be courageous. I plan to live faithfully. I'm a sojourner. I want to forgive much. I want to be kind. I want to be transparent. I want to take risks. I want to believe big. I'm a sojourner. I want to live large. I want to cry freely. I want to sing loud, listen more, keep my word and keep my cool because I'm a sojourner. And I will live generously, putting the kingdom of God first because I'm not the owner. I'm only a steward of the things that I possess in this world, just here for a little while.

Which brings us to our third and final point: Seeing that we're sojourners and we're just passing through, we need to live generously. David got plans from the Holy Spirit to build a house for God. But God said to David, "You're not the one that's going to build it. Your son, Solomon, is going to build it. You just collect stuff and get ready."

And so, we read in 1 Chronicles 29. Actually, before I read that, let me read something that David said prior to that. This is in Psalm 39:4 (NLT). Listen to his perspective. He says,

⁴ "Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered—how fleeting my life is. ⁵ You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best, each of us is but a breath." ⁶ We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing. We heap up wealth, not knowing who will spend it.

Interesting. Some time ago, I remember reading one of the world's wealthiest man died. And there was just a buzz about how much exactly did he leave behind? I can tell you; he left exactly everything behind. He took nothing with him. He left it all behind.

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It's like the lady; her husband died. And he was a cruel man. He died. And after the funeral, her girlfriends were over. They brought their casseroles and everything to the house. She says, "Come on, I want to show you guys something." They go back in the bedroom. There's this old beat-up case on the bed. She opens it up. It's filled with cash. They said, "My goodness, how much is that?" She says, "A half a million dollars." They said, "Where'd it come from?" Said, well, "When my husband was on his death bed, and you know what a penny pincher he was and how he verbally abused me. Never bought me a new dress, never took me anywhere. He was just a mean man. He told me to go in the closet, and he had this hidden behind some stuff. So I brought it. He said, 'Put it on the foot of the bed,' and he's dying." She said, "I opened it up, and it's filled with cash. He looks at it and says, 'That's mine.' He said, 'What you need to do,' he said, 'I want you to put it up in the attic because when I die, on my way up, I'm taking it with me.'" Her girlfriends said, "You didn't do that, did you?" She said, "No." She said, "I put it down in the basement because I know his only chance; he's going that way. He's going down. He is not going up." She said, "I went down after he died. It was still there." Now friend, whether you go up or you go down, you don't take any of it with you, not a single penny. You leave everything behind.

And so, David, who said those words, in fact, Timothy said this, or Paul said it to Timothy, "We brought nothing into this world. It is certain we can carry nothing out."

So, here's David. He's got all these provisions for the house of God that's going to be made. And he says this, 1 Chronicles 29:3 AMP. David says,

³ Moreover, because I delight in the house of my God, the [personal] treasure that I have of gold and silver, I give to the house of my God, in addition to all that I have already provided for the holy house:

Now, he had given national treasures. The government of Israel had given for the house of God. And David said, "I'm giving my own stuff on top of that." And the leaders were so inspired as you read on the leaders gave extravagantly. And then all the people caught on, and they gave extravagantly and gave joyously. And David watches them give willingly and joyously. And this is what he says. He begins to pray, and here is his prayer. Verse 14, he said,

¹⁴ "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from You, and from Your own hand we have given to You. ¹⁵ For we are sojourners before You, and tenants, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope [of remaining]. ¹⁶ O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy Name, it is from Your hand, and is all Your own. ¹⁷ I know also, my God, that You test the heart and delight in uprightness and integrity. In the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things. So now with joy I have seen Your people who are present here, make their offerings willingly and freely to You.

(Now, listen to this),

¹⁸ O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the minds of Your people, and direct their hearts toward You;

"Keep forever in the thoughts and minds of Your people these things, and direct their hearts to You." What things? David is praying for us, for God's people in every generation, "forever, keep

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this in their hearts and mind.” Number one, we’re sojourners. God, keep it in their hearts and minds that they’re just passing through. This world is not their home, and that ultimately we’re just stewards of things that belong to God. And because of that, we should live with open hearts and open hands toward God’s house and towards His kingdom.

In fact, I think it’s a good policy, and I’ll just tell you, I live this way. I think periodically, it’s important to give something away to someone else that you really value. It doesn’t have to be great monetary value, but to you, it genuinely has value. Give it away. I do that periodically. I don’t hang on to stuff that I really like very long at all. A couple reasons why: One, it brings great joy to the person you give it to generally. And secondly, it’s a reminder that you’re not taking it with you. It helps us keep in mind that we’re just sojourners. And so, I’ve lived that way for many, many years, and I think it’s an important practice. Just periodically, something that you really, genuinely appreciate and love, give it away. Now, give it to somebody that’s going to appreciate it. Don’t let the gift be wasted. But it’ll help you keep your heart right. You give it to the right person. It’ll give them a lot of joy.

And very little has been said about it up until now, but the truth is that when we give generously, especially to God’s work, He sees to it that we’re blessed. When we water others, we’re watered also ourselves, the Scripture declares.

One man was asked, “How is it that you can give so often and give so much from your limited income?” His response was, “Well, when I shovel out of what I have in obedience to God, He shovels blessings back to me. And His shovel is a lot bigger than mine is.”

More than anything else. It’s about bringing a living Jesus to a dying world because we’re just here for a little time, and we need to work while it’s day. The night comes when no man can work.

The truth is, is whether you’re a follower of Jesus or not, you are a sojourner. You’re only here for a little while, a little while.

It’s strange to me. I mentioned earlier that I’m pushing 70. And the more years I tack onto my life, it seems like I have to make more and more new friends because a lot of them are leaving this world. It’s a strange thing the older you get, the more friends you have pass away, it’s just a fact of life, and it does go quick.

Now, I believe that you’re not here by coincidence today. Whether you’re out on the plaza listening, sitting in your bedroom, or wherever you happen to be, or in this auditorium. I think you’re in the middle of the plan of God. And maybe some friend said, “Look, come today, and we’ll get lunch,” and you came because of the promise of lunch. I don’t know. Maybe you got bribed into coming here today. But there’s a God in heaven that’s reaching out to you. He loves you desperately, and He wants you to know Him.

And I’ve got really good news. It’s not about rules and regulations. It’s not about adhering to some endless list of things you’re no longer allowed to do. It’s not about having all the joy siphoned out of your life. It’s not about you becoming some cookie-cutter Christian that you have to act and look and sound just like everybody else. It is becoming like Jesus and acting and sounding and looking like Him. But that’s going to look different for all of us in a whole lot of different ways.

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I got saved in a street mission. I had pretty major league problems with substance abuse and alcoholism and was up to a lot of trouble. I'd been in a lot of trouble. Yes, your pastor has had handcuffs on before more than once. Okay? We've all got a story.

But in that little street mission in Medford, Oregon, God opened my heart to the gospel, and I said yes to Jesus Christ, and He changed my life. And I am so thankful, so thankful that He did.

You have not done anything so terrible that God would turn you away, I'm telling you right now. Though your sins are like scarlet, He can wash you as white as the driven snow, my friend. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin if you put your trust in Him. The truth is we've all sinned and come short of the glory of God. The Bible paints us all in that picture. It says there's none righteous, no, not one.

And even if you look at the Mother Teresa types that have given their lives to minister to and to lift up the poorest of the poor, that is noble and that is to be commended, but it is not worthy of salvation. You cannot pay for your salvation. You cannot merit it. It cannot be earned. Jesus is the way to the Father. And I realize that's narrow. Some people stumble over the narrowness of the gospel. But Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through Me." He said, "Narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it." "Broad is the pathway that leads to destruction, and there are many people on that road."

I know the gospel is narrow. I know the claims of Christ are narrow, but there's no other way into a relationship with God except through Him. Because when we could not reach God on our own, He reached down to us, and He sent His Son Jesus. He lived a sinless life. He showed people what God was like, not aloof and uncaring and distant, but that He was near and concerned, that He's concerned about our health; Jesus healed people. He was concerned about lifting, broken, and bruised humanity. That's the kind of God that we know and that we serve.

And an innocent, perfect Jesus was taken by jealous hands, put through a mock trial, and beaten without mercy, and He was crucified. And there, suspended on that cross between heaven and earth when the sky turned dark, the plan of God unfolded. And the sin of the world, the penalty for your sin, the weight, the horror of your sin, and my sin of the whole world was laid on Jesus, and He willingly took our penalty, and He died under the weight of our sins. Three days and three nights later, when the claims of God's eternal justice were satisfied, He raised Jesus from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He showed Himself to the disciples. He showed Himself to about 500 people more. And the Bible says this, if you believe in your heart, God raised Jesus up, and if you confess Him with your mouth as Lord, God brings you into a relationship called salvation. He makes you family.

Again, not about ritual, not about ceremony; it's about relationship. And if you've never done that, you might have attended church your whole life, that doesn't make you a Christian. Sitting in a garage doesn't make you a car. Sitting in a church doesn't make you a Christian. Now, Christians should go to church. A Christian that doesn't go to church is like a sailor that never goes to the sea. There's something wrong with that. A Christian should come to church. But going to church doesn't make you a Christian, but embracing Jesus Christ does.

And He can wash your sins away and give you a new life, friend. I know I've been walking with Him for about 46-47 years, and He's been wonderful to me. And He loves you.

This World Is Not My Home (The Pilgrim Lifestyle)

I want to pray with you. Maybe close your eyes just for a moment if you would. If you've never made Jesus the Lord of your life and you want this wonderful gift of salvation out on the plaza, in here, wherever you might be, I'm just going to count three, and if you want in on this prayer, I'm going to ask you to lift a hand. And by that lifted hand, you're just saying, "I'm in. I want in on this." It's just considered a reflection of your heart. Your heart is reaching up to God. Your hand is just a mirror image of that. One. This is your moment, friend. If you're a backslider, you're away from God, it's time to come home, prodigal son, time to come home, prodigal daughter. Two. We're going to pray a prayer together in just a moment. You ready? Three. Just put your hand up. "I want in on that prayer. I'm saying "yes" to Jesus. I'm going to confess Him as Lord." I see those hands. Just keep them up. Let me see them. Just lift them high. Nothing to be ashamed of here. My gosh, we're all jokes without Jesus.

All right. That's awesome. Quite a few hands up. All right. Put them down. Put a hand on your heart, and let's pray. I'm going to give you the words. You tie a sincere heart around them and speak them to God. He'll hear you. Just say it out loud. Say:

Oh God, I come to You. I want to say thank You. Thank You for being so patient with me. Thank You for not turning me away. Thank You for letting me live long enough to make this decision. And this is my decision. No one else makes this for me. I choose Jesus. I believe He is the Son of God. I believe He was raised from the dead. Jesus, I asked You now to come into my life. For all I have and all I am, I put it all in Your hands, Jesus. And wherever You lead me, I will follow You. Amen. Awesome.
Awesome.

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