

The Invitation of Easter

by Harrison Conley

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Let me say it again Church, Happy Resurrection Sunday. Happy Resurrection Sunday. There is nobody like our Jesus. If we've not met, my name is Harrison. I get to be one of the pastors here on the team, and I am so excited to celebrate with you—to celebrate our Jesus and His triumph over sin, hell, death, and the grave. There is no greater message that can be preached than the message of Easter. I realize that some of you are here for the first time. Maybe you're new to the whole church experience. You just need to know this: the reason we're making a big deal about Jesus is because He is not just some guy; He is not just some man. He is the God-man, and He is alive forevermore.

We believe that one encounter with Him can change everything in your world. It can change everything in your world. It's been my honor over the last few years to stand up here on Easter and open the Word of God with you. We're going to do that together today. If you want to get ahead of the game, you can pull out your Bible and find John's Gospel, chapter 21. John 21. As you're finding your place here, let me say hello to everybody watching online. We have people tuned in from all over the globe right now. Our online family, welcome. Thank you for being a part of the family. Again, what a privilege to be in God's house today because of Easter. Because of the resurrection, we have an unshakable hope that when we lay down these mortal bodies in death, we won't stay dead—we will put on immortality. We will get new bodies, glorified bodies like unto Christ, and His eternal life will be ours. That is the hope of the Gospel, and it is the hope and the message of Easter.

So please don't ever be lulled into thinking that what we're doing today is just another holiday on the calendar, and you come to church to check the box. It's not just the one day a year that you get to pull out your suit coat—which, by the way, this is the one time a year I do pull out this suit coat. I've worn it every Easter for, like, the last seven years, and I put it on this morning and thought, "Man, I must have either gotten buffer or wider." Then I looked in the mirror and was like, "I feel like I'm wearing my 14-year-old's coat." But Easter is not just about that one time of year when we can dress in our Sunday best and take family photos. Jesus didn't just die and then rise back to life in order to do Easter egg hunts with the kids and eat too much honey-baked ham. No, no, no. He invites us into far more than that. He invites us into something deeper. He invites us into something that is absolutely life changing.

I want to talk to you about the invitation of Easter today. If you're taking notes this morning, which I hope that you are, because statistics show that if you take notes, you have a better chance of getting into heaven. I'm kidding. But if you're taking notes this morning, I just want to simply preach to you a sermon called *The Invitation of Easter*. I want to take you to the Word of God, John's Gospel, chapter 21. The passage that we're going to read this morning, at first glance, probably won't strike you as the typical Easter reading, but I promise you, there is more here than meets the eye. By way of context, where we are going to pick up our reading, Jesus has already gone to the cross. He has been buried. He has already been raised back to life. As a matter of fact, at the point of our reading, Jesus has already appeared in His resurrected body twice to the disciples. Where we pick it up today, this resurrected Jesus, our resurrected Savior, is about to appear to His disciples for the third time. This time, He shows up on the shore of the

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Sea of Galilee. We're going to see Him extend an invitation to His disciples. I want to read this. John 21:1–7 NKJV says,

¹ After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, (which is another name for the Sea of Galilee) and in this way He showed Himself: ² Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. ³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. ⁴ But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." ⁶ And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some (food)." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. ⁷ Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.

Don't you love Peter? Impetuous Peter. He plunges into the sea. Verses 8–11 NKJV,

⁸ But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. ⁹ Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." ¹¹ Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.

And then verses 12–13 NKJV,

¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." (Come and eat breakfast) Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

If you would, just keep your Bibles open here. We're going to refer back quite a few times, but let's pray.

Father, we come to You now in the name of Your Son, Jesus. We say thank You for Your Word. We ask now that Your Word would be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Holy Spirit of God, we ask that You would reveal to our hearts afresh the person of Jesus. May we see Him in Your Word today. May we see Him in His beauty and in His majesty. May we see His kindness and His grace afresh. We ask these things because if we can see Jesus, we know we can become more like Him. We pray that the Lord Jesus would be lifted high in this service today. Would You now shut us in with Yourself and move from seat to seat and from heart to heart. Speak to us from Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen, amen, amen.

With your Bibles open there, I want to draw your attention back to verse 12. I've already highlighted it, but I want to do it once more. We see the resurrected Jesus calling out to His disciples. He offers and extends to them an invitation. He says, "Come and eat breakfast. Come and eat breakfast." Like I mentioned a moment ago, at first glance, this text may not seem like a very powerful Easter verse. There are no stones being rolled away. There are no angels. There

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is no thunder and lightning. There are no soldiers, no trumpets, no fanfare, just breakfast. I can hear somebody in the back going like, “Why are we talking about breakfast?” We’re talking about it because in Jewish culture, back then in the first century and even today, the sharing of a meal wasn’t just about sharing food. Rather, there is deep and profound relational significance in a meal. Sharing a meal with someone in Jewish culture is the ultimate expression of fellowship and acceptance. In the case of our text, not only is this an expression of friendship and relationship, but we’re going to see that this meal sharing is actually about restoration, it’s about reconciliation, and it’s about grace.

You see, when Jesus invites His disciples to eat, He is not just feeding them; He is welcoming them back. Someone goes, “Welcoming them back from what?” Well, if you were to back up in the story a few chapters—go to John 18 and 19—on the night that Jesus was betrayed, arrested, put through a mock trial, and then beaten mercilessly, He was paraded around and then ultimately crucified on a cross. These men, His disciples, the ones who He counted on, the ones who He had lived with, walked with, taught, and tutored for three years, His closest friends. We read that they abandoned Him, they doubted Him, they betrayed Him and denied Him. The Bible says, “They were like sheep scattered without a shepherd.” Here, just a couple of chapters later, in John 21, we see Jesus inviting them back to the table, as it were. He is making breakfast for them on the beach. My friend, this is the heart of Easter—Jesus inviting broken people to come and sit with Him. Inviting broken people to come and know Him. Inviting broken people to come, experience, and receive His grace. Let’s be honest, food just makes everything better, doesn’t it?

But for a moment, as we examine the text, I want to, perhaps, reimagine the scenario. Imagine if Jesus had walked up to the disciples. He is standing there on the beach and calls out to them. They are in the boat, and after this long, frustrating night of fishing, not catching anything, Jesus calls out to them and goes, “Hey, boys, get in here. We need to talk.” That would make this scene a little bit more tense, wouldn’t it? But what does the text say? Instead, He calls them “children.” It’s an endearing term. He says, “Children, have you caught anything?” They say, “No.” So He says, “Throw the net over to the right side,” and He gives them this great catch of fish. Then He offers the invitation. He says, “Hey, get in here. Come and eat.” What I love is that Jesus is meeting these disciples right where they are. He is meeting them in their exhaustion. He is meeting them in their failure. He is meeting them in their hunger. He provides for them exactly what they need—not just bread, not just fish, not just food to fill their bellies—but He gives them forgiveness and purpose.

One of the things that I love about this moment is how personal it is. Jesus doesn’t show up with thunder and lightning. He doesn’t show up with legions of angels and a megaphone—which He could have done. Rather, He shows up with just a simple meal. Please get the picture. This is Jesus, the resurrected King, the Champion of the universe. And what is He doing? He is cooking breakfast over a small fire, reminding us that not only is He mighty, but He is also approachable. Jesus conquered death, yet He still cares about the small details of our lives, and He desires to sit with us, to know us, and ultimately to restore us. So today, as we celebrate the resurrection, I want you to hear this: Easter isn’t just something that we believe in; Easter is something that we can step into. It’s an experience. The resurrection is not just a past event; it is a present invitation. No matter where you’ve been, no matter what you’ve done, no matter where you currently are, Jesus is calling out to you and extending to you an invite. He is saying, “Hey, come, sit with Me at the table. Come and have breakfast.” When He invites us, He is inviting us to more than a meal. He is inviting us into a brand-new life. He is inviting us into a life of communion. He is inviting us into a life of restoration and purpose. This is the invitation of Easter.

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I only have a few minutes to share with you this morning, but I want to talk to you about this, and I want to start here. Easter is an invitation to a life of communion with Jesus. Hear me: the resurrection is not just proof that Jesus defeated death, which He did do, but Easter is also a personal invitation to walk with Him in our everyday lives. That is what *communion* is. Literally, it comes from the word commune—to commune with someone. It means “to live in close proximity and to live in close fellowship with someone.” In this case, with the Savior. What do we see in our text? What is the setting for this invitation to communion? It is not a throne room; it is not a grand ballroom; it is not a holy temple; it is not even a dramatic mountaintop moment or encounter. What is the setting? A breakfast table. It is a simple meal of bread and fish, cooked over a small beach fire. It is not a grand feast; it is not an elaborate ceremony; it is just Jesus, just some hungry disciples, and a meal.

That is exactly the point I want to make to you, because hear me: Jesus meets us right there. Where? In the ordinary. He meets us right where we are. That is good news. I don’t know about you, but I’m really grateful that I don’t have to get my life in perfect working order before He is ready to meet with me. I’m really grateful I don’t have to memorize the entire Bible before He is ready to meet with me. I’m really grateful that I don’t have to learn how to pray with perfect poetic eloquence before He is willing to meet with me, but rather He comes to me, and meets me where I’m at. He simply says, “Harrison, come. Sit and have breakfast.” I shared this a moment ago, but in Jewish tradition, sharing a meal is more than just eating. It’s more than just breaking bread. It’s an act of deep connection and fellowship. To break bread with someone is to accept them into your life. It is to welcome them as part of the family. This is why we see Jesus throughout the Gospel. We see Him throughout His earthly ministry. He is constantly eating with people.

Again, this is the Savior of the world, and He is eating with the type of people we probably wouldn’t eat with. Constantly, He is eating with tax collectors, sinners, outcasts, and people of ill repute. He doesn’t just dine with them to fill their stomachs but rather to fill their souls and to give them a true revelation of who He is and why He came. I think about the story in Luke 24 about the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus is resurrected at this point. He meets them on the road. He walks with them, and they talk. But where do they get a revelation of who He is? It is not on the road as they walk. It is when they sat down at the dinner table. They get a revelation that it was Jesus. I’m reminded of the story we see in Luke 19 about Zacchaeus, the tax collector. If you grew up in church, you probably remember the song we used to sing in kids’ church: “Zacchaeus was a wee little man, and a wee little man was he. Climbed up in a sycamore tree, the Lord he wanted to see. And the Lord passed by and said, Zacchaeus, you come down, for I’m going to your house today. For I’m going to your house today.” I thought more people would sing with me.

Zacchaeus, the tax collector, the swindler. Jesus comes to dinner at his house, and where is it that Zacchaeus gets a revelation of the kindness, mercy, and grace of Jesus? It is at the table. Here in John 21, we see Jesus at it again. He is inviting His weary, confused disciples to a simple meal on the beach. Why? Because the heart of the gospel is relationship and communion with Jesus. But if we’re honest in church this morning, sometimes we struggle to see Jesus in this way. For many of us, we see Him as unapproachable. For many of us, we see Him as aloof and being distant from us—waiting for us to sort of figure it out before we can draw near and have fellowship and communion with Him. Listen, nothing is further from the truth. I like to think about it like this: Some of our closest friends in the world are Pastor Ryan and Grace. They are here on our staff. Every week, we do what we call “family dinners.” We rotate weeks. On one particular week, I’ll take my family and go to the Johnsons’ house. Then the next

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week, they'll take their family and come to our house, and we share a meal together. Because we've been doing this for a number of years, and because we're in such close relationship, when we get to each other's houses, there is no stopping and knocking at the door. We just throw the door wide open, come on in, and make ourselves at home.

Honestly, I feel like that's the way it should be. But I was thinking about that and our family dinners. I thought it would be really weird if, one time at family dinner, the Johnsons come to the house, and instead of coming through the door, Ryan just stands at the door and refuses to come in. And I go out to him. I go, "What are you doing, man? Get in here." And he's like, "No, H, I'd love to, but first, I got to get my life in working order. I got to pay my debts off, and I got to get answers for the confusion. I got to solve all of my problems and clean up my life, and then I'll come in." If my friend said that to me at the door of my house, I would laugh at him and say, "What are you talking about? Get in here. Sit down. We're about to eat."

Listen, Jesus operates in the same way. He is not waiting for you to get your life in perfect working order. He is not waiting for you to get your ducks in a row before you can come in, sit, and have fellowship with Him. The truth is, He already knows your struggles. He already knows what you're dealing with. He is aware of the mess that you've made in your life. He knows your questions. He knows your confusion. Yet He still calls out and says, "Hey, come on. Get in here. Come sit down. We're about to eat." Here is the best part: when we sit with Jesus, we always leave changed. You read through the Gospel, and as Jesus sits with people, they walk away changed. Jesus changes people. As a matter of fact, we see it right here in our text. The disciples came to breakfast. They were discouraged, they were uncertain, and they were exhausted. But by the time they left, they were restored. They were recalibrated, they were refocused, and ready to step back into their calling. Friend, that is what communion with Jesus does. It is not just about spending time there with Him—it is that—but it is also about being transformed by His presence.

So, let me ask you an honest question this morning: Where in your life is Jesus inviting you to sit with Him today? Maybe for some of you, you've been relying on your own strength, and you have been running on empty for a really long time. Today, maybe the Savior is inviting you and saying, "Come and sit. Rest with Me, because My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." He is saying, "Learn from Me; I'll provide for you." He is saying to you, "Look, you can keep trying to do this in your own strength, but there is nothing for you outside of My will." Maybe for some of you, you've been struggling and feeling like you've been held back because of the guilt you have over past failures. The Savior is inviting you, calling out to you, saying, "Hey, come to Me. Come to Me. Sit with Me, and I will restore you." Maybe for some of you, you've been waiting for that kind of dramatic mountaintop moment, for the spectacular to happen, and the Savior is calling out to you today, right now, just reminding you, "Hey, whether you can see Me or not, whether you can feel Me or not, I'm with you. I'm right there beside you in the mundane, everyday moments of life."

Wherever you find yourself, can I just encourage you, can I admonish you? Do not ignore His invitation. The risen Savior is calling you to the table, and when He says, "Come and have breakfast," He is inviting you to more than a meal. He is inviting you to experience communion with Him. But He is also inviting us to experience restoration and a renewing of purpose in Him. I know I mentioned this a moment ago, but I want to say it again: the resurrection is not just a triumphant moment in history. It is a deeply personal invitation, and it is an invitation for you and me to be restored and repurposed in Christ. Let me take you back to the text. We see Peter here in the story. He has jumped out of the boat. He finds out it is Jesus. He jumps out of the boat. He swims all the way to the shore, and now he is sitting there on the beach next to that

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early morning fire. I'm sure he is cold. He is dripping wet, and he is trying to warm himself by the fire, and then suddenly, a smell hits him. The smell of charcoal. It transports him back because it is the same smell that filled the air the night he stood in the courtyard of the high priest, where Jesus was under trial—that same night when he stood by a charcoal fire, warming his hands, and then would, in rapid-fire succession, deny the Savior three different times. Talk about a flood of unwanted memories coming rushing back. Smell has a really unique power to do that.

If you have ever walked into a room, caught a whiff of something, and it transported you back into a memory that you'd rather not remember, then you probably know how Peter feels right here. But now he finds himself face-to-face with the Savior. If you think about it, this is sort of a full-circle moment for Peter. If I'm him, if I put myself in his shoes in that moment, I've got to be honest with you: I'm a little nervous about what's going to happen next, because I'm not sure what is going to go down. I would be wondering, "Is the Savior going to shame me? Is He going to forsake me and deny me like I did Him? Is He going to embarrass me in front of the rest of the guys? Is He going to give me a lecture?" We have to see the picture here. We have to put ourselves in Peter's place. This is a tense and climactic moment. What happens next is either going to make Peter, or it's going to break him.

What we see from Jesus is perhaps the greatest example of what truth and grace look like when they are coupled together, because Jesus doesn't just ignore Peter's failure, but at the same time He doesn't shame Peter either. What does He do? He prepares a table for restoration—not with a lecture, but with breakfast. Jesus doesn't launch into some angry diatribe against Peter, saying, "Peter, let's talk about those three denials." No, He just makes him breakfast. He serves him and invites him to sit at the table of friendship and reconciliation to share a meal together. For the sake of time this morning, we won't read these verses together, but I encourage you to do it later this week. If you drop down in the same chapter and look through verses 15–19, after Jesus, Peter, and the disciples eat together, Jesus lovingly and gently turns toward Peter and says to him, "Hey, do you love Me?" Jesus doesn't just ask him this once or twice. He asks it three separate times, matching every single moment of Peter's denial. He matches it with a new moment of grace. Jesus isn't reopening Peter's wounds for the sake of making Peter relive the moment. What He is doing is opening the door for healing. Jesus doesn't avoid the failure, but He doesn't leave Peter in the failure either.

What is He doing? He is rewriting the narrative, because that is what grace does in our life. You'll notice, every time Jesus says to Peter, "Do you love Me?" Peter says, "Yeah, Lord, I love You." So Jesus says, "Okay, then feed My sheep." I don't have time to go into the depth that I'd like to, but this is a big moment, because Jesus isn't just forgiving Peter, He's recommissioning Peter. He is saying, "Look, your failure doesn't disqualify you. As a matter of fact, your failure prepared you. It set you up for what is going to come now." We see the same Peter. If we follow his story, the same Peter who, as a coward, denied Jesus three times, would stand boldly and preach the resurrection. As a matter of fact, he preached so boldly the message of the gospel—the message of Jesus and the resurrection—that he would give his life as a martyr. Oh, what grace can do in the life of a person. Friends, that is what resurrection power does. It takes the ashes of our worst moments, and it repurposes them and builds them into something new. Grace doesn't pretend that our failures never happen. Rather, it redeems them and it repurposes them. It doesn't just restore a relationship with Jesus; it reawakens our reason for living.

This morning, I want you to consider that. Because how often in our own lives do we disqualify ourselves over our worst moments? We tend to think, "If people really knew me, if people knew the real me, if they knew where I had been, if they knew what I had done, if they knew what I

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was thinking, they certainly wouldn't let me back into their life." Truth be told, often, that's the way the world works. The world and the love that is offered is based on, "What have you done for me lately?" But the problem is this: Often, too many Christians then take that thinking and that assumption of, "What have you done for me lately?" and place it on the Father. We place it on our relationship with God. We think, "If He really knew me, if He knew what I was thinking, if He knew the thoughts that consume me, where I've been, and what I've done, He wouldn't want anything to do with me." Listen, His grace and love toward you are not based on what you can do for Him. He loves you because you're His. He loves you because He made you.

Recently, I was on a flight and, sort of by chance—maybe it was God, or providence—I was seated next to a celebrity. What is funny about it is I didn't know it was a celebrity at first, because I sat down and just thought, "This is a really weird guy sitting next to me." He was wearing a full ski mask. I thought, "Who wears a ski mask on a plane?" Then, after everybody kind of passed by, sat down, and the plane took off, he took the ski mask off. I was like, "Oh my gosh, no wonder you wore a ski mask." He didn't want to be recognized. I tried talking to him, but he wasn't very talkative. I totally get that, because everybody wants something from him. About halfway through the flight, he got up to use the restroom, and he was wearing this big, baggy hoodie. On the back of the hoodie, it said, "See front for good news." It kind of piqued my interest. I go, "I wonder what the front of his hoodie says." A couple of minutes later, he comes walking back, and the front of his hoodie, in big letters, said, "Jesus loves you." I thought, "Ah, Lord, thank You. There is my in." I leaned over to him and said, "Hey, I like your hoodie." He goes, "Thanks, man." I said, "Hey, that thing it says on the front, 'Jesus loves you,' isn't it funny how we think that is true for everybody but ourselves?" He goes, "Yeah, man." He put his head down. He said, "Tell me about it."

For the next couple of minutes, we talked about the kindness, the mercy, and the grace of Jesus. But isn't it true? Because we know ourselves, and we know the depths of our own depravity, oftentimes we think Jesus' love is reserved for everybody else except us. If you feel that way, or you have felt that way, can I just encourage you to look no further than our story? Because Jesus knew exactly what Peter had done. Not only did He know what Peter had done, He had felt the very depths and the pain of that betrayal—yet He still said to Peter, "Come and eat. There is a seat at the table. Peter, come and sit with Me." I really want you to capture the significance of that, because, my friend, that is Jesus' heart toward us. Yet so many of us carry quiet shame, even into church on Easter Sunday. We may serve, we may sing, we may even bring our Bible and amen the preacher, but inside we still feel like Peter sitting by that charcoal fire, disqualified by something that we've done in our past.

But hear me, Jesus, the Son of God, did not just die and then rise from the dead to keep us in that place of shame. No, the resurrection is His way of saying, "You are not defined any longer by your worst day. My love for you is not based on your performance. It's based on My promise. By the way, here's My promise: I came to seek and to save those who were lost. I came to seek and save those who knew better and still messed up anyway. Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, come. Come and know Me. Come and sit at My table and be embraced by My grace." Listen, if nothing else, this story we've read this morning reminds us that our failures don't get the final word, but that our resurrected Savior does. He doesn't restore us because we've earned it. He doesn't invite us to the table because we have accolades and achievements attached to our name. No, He restores us and invites us because He loves us. That is what grace looks like. It doesn't excuse sin, but it always makes room for redemption. It makes room for restoration and a recommissioning of our purpose.

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So, this morning, if you came in here carrying guilt—if you have, for whatever reason, let your past keep you distant from God—can I just say this: Easter is your moment. The risen Savior is calling out to you. He is inviting you not to condemn you, not to throw your failures in your face, but to come and sit at the table. Here is the good news: He already has breakfast waiting for you. There is great hope. There is great joy for those who sit at His table, because it is there, we experience the wonder of His grace. My time is gone this morning. There is much more we could talk about and pull from the text, but we'll trust the Holy Spirit to fill in the blanks. Can we pray together?

Lord Jesus, we come to You, and we thank You for today. We thank You for what today signifies. Not just that You rose from the dead, not just that You're alive forevermore. We thank You for those things. We take great hope and joy in those things. But we also thank You that today You offer us an invitation. An invitation to come and sit at Your table, an invitation to commune with You, to know You, to have fellowship with You, an invitation to be repurposed and restored in You. Father, I pray for those in the room today. I pray for those under the sound of my voice today who don't know You. I pray that today, through the teaching of Your Word, You would reveal to their hearts their need for a Savior—that You would reveal to their hearts that there's an invitation waiting: an invitation for grace, an invitation for mercy, an invitation for forgiveness, an invitation for salvation. I pray specifically for those in the room and those under the sound of my voice who are troubled about the state of their souls. I pray that even right now, by the Spirit of God, You would go to work revealing to their hearts their need for a Savior. Revealing to their hearts that there is a way, there is an answer, there's a peace, there's a hope. There's a Savior named Jesus. I pray that You would go to work convicting hearts of sin. I can't do that, Lord, but You can. In the same breath, would You go to work convincing hearts that although the sin is great, there's an even greater Savior that gave Himself for us. And that if we put our trust in Him, we can experience grace, we can experience mercy, forgiveness, and salvation. If we put our trust in Him, we can come and sit at Your table.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, if you're in this place today, and the Holy Spirit has been revealing to your heart the invitation of the Savior—the invitation to come and be restored, forgiven, and saved—and you want in on that, you want to say yes to that invitation. It's as simple as accepting it through words, but not just any words: sincere words, words that are tied to a heart of humility. A heart of dependence. A heart that says, "Lord Jesus, I submit myself before You, and I ask that You would rescue me. I'm not worthy to be a part of Your family. I'm not worthy of rescue, but Lord, I trust that You love me, and You gave Yourself for me. Today, if this is real, I ask that You would save me." If you'll pray a prayer like that—if you will mean it with your heart, if you will genuinely cry out to God for healing, for restoration, and for salvation—the Word of God promises us that He meets us in that moment.

What happens in that moment is so supernatural. Jesus said it is like being born again. The apostle Paul would say in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that it is like becoming a new creation where, spiritually speaking, all of the old is gone. We become brand new. Romans 5:5 says that in this moment, the love of God gets poured into your heart by the Holy Spirit. The best part about God's love is that it changes us. It changes us. If we allow it to do its work in our life, it changes us. It points us back to Christ and what He has done for us. So if you're ready to accept this invitation, why don't you begin to form words on your lips from right where you sit. Words of dependence, words of submission. Asking God to save you, to rescue you, putting your faith and your trust in Jesus.

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Lord, upon every life and every heart that is crying out for salvation, I thank You that right now, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, You're applying that salvation to their life. You're taking them out of the kingdom of darkness. You're transposing them from death and bringing them into life. Bringing them to the table. May they know the love of the Father. May they know the grace of our Lord Jesus. May they experience the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Father, today, as we get ready to go, I pray that You would bless Your people, that You would keep them, that You would cause Your face to shine on them. Lord Jesus, I ask that You would be gracious to Your people, that You would lift Your countenance upon them and that You would give them Your peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen, Amen. Amen, Amen.

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