

The Acts of the Apostles Transcription

The Acts of the Apostles - Jude 16-19 - Skip Heitzig

Good morning. Boy, it is so good to see you here, your faces. I can see your faces, and I can see your smiling faces. Even if you have a grumpy face, I'm happy to see it.

I really like this motif that we have up here. You know, Jude said, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend-- or put up a fight. Contend earnestly for the faith, once for all delivered to the saints. That's why we call it fight for the house.

We are here in church. We are gathered as the church. I've had an interesting journey in my lifetime, in my relationship to the church. Let me briefly explain.

When I grew up, I had to go to church. For me to have a meal in my parents' house and live in a room and breathe their air, I had to go to church. In fact, it was even called by our church a Sunday obligation. Anybody ever have that term, growing up? So Sunday-- so obligation means you have to do it.

When I was 18 years of age, I had an encounter with Jesus Christ. It was real. It was deep. It was profound. And everything changed. And my relationship with church changed. Now, I wanted to go to church. You couldn't keep me away from church. I went like-- whenever they had it, I'd go.

And then, by God's grace, I moved from the West Coast to Albuquerque, New Mexico to plant a church. We've been doing it about 40 years now. So I've seen-- thank you. I've seen lots of people come to church over the years.

I've also seen lots of people leave church. And I don't just mean leave our church go to another church. I mean leave church. And I've discovered that not everyone who goes to church, attends church, comes to church, hangs out at church, is actually part of the church. You might be part of the visible church. But not everybody in the visible church is part of the true invisible church, with a real, rooted, authentic relationship with Christ.

Here's an example. In the book of Acts, chapter 16, Paul goes to Philippi, right? He goes there to bring the gospel. A church is planted-- very humble beginnings. He goes to a riverside. There's a few women who are gathered. A woman named Lydia believes, is baptized. And a few people make that sincere, deep, authentic commitment to Christ.

But there was one girl, unnamed in the text, who hangs out at every church service. And she has something to say. Now, when you listen to what she says, you think, man, I want this gal in my church. I mean, this is like the best PR person you could ever ask for. Because this is what she said.

These men are servants of the most high God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation. Nothing wrong with that. Maybe Paul is going, yeah. Bring her with us wherever we go. But that didn't happen.

Because it says that she did this for many days. And I kind of think she just sort of like interrupted what was going on with that little message. Because we're told this. Then, Paul, greatly annoyed-- just picture Paul the apostle, greatly annoyed. that's. Fun right there.

Then Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit-- this is the demon spirit living inside of her-- in the name of Jesus Christ, come out of her. Now what's going on / here's what's going on. Paul had what is called discernment. He could tell the difference between somebody, in this case, who professed to know God, versus a genuine, authentic worship.

Now I remember hearing this story that years ago, the Chinese wanted a sense of security that they didn't feel, because they were being invaded so much. So they decided that they would build a wall that would be too tall for people to easily climb over, too thick for people to break down, and too long for them to go around. So they built the Great Wall of China. And when it was done, they felt really good, really secure.

But I read somewhere that within the first 100 years of the Great Wall of China's existence, that China was barraged, invaded, three times. And it's not that people got over the wall, or broke through the wall, or walked around the wall. They simply bribed the gatekeepers. That's how they got in.

So we need to be open to all. And we must be open to all. We want people to come. We want people to feel welcome here. But we need to build character into the gatekeepers, to be able to tell the difference, and just to have a heads up. Because we love God's sheep and want them protected.

And that's because the ministry of the church is a ministry of people. So if the church is alive, it's because its people are alive. If the church withers and dies, it's because the people in it are dead and outnumber the living people.

There was a young pastor who decided to take a little church over in Oklahoma. He knew the reputation of this church. It was sort of crusty. They were not open to change, and were highly resistant to new ideas, new things. And this young pastor knew what he was getting into. But he just had the ambition and the drive, and he felt full of the Holy Spirit.

So he went there, and loved them, and smiled, and tried new things. And they wouldn't budge. They wouldn't do anything. They didn't want to change. So he finally took an ad in the local newspaper and announced that he was going to bury the church. The church is dead, he said. And we're going to have a public funeral service for this church that is pronounced dead.

Well, do you know that at that funeral service, which was 3:00 in the afternoon on a Sunday, the church was packed, like for the first time in ever-- packed. Everybody in the community wanted to find out, what is this stunt?

So they're sitting in church, standing in church, packed in church. At the front of the church was a casket, with flowers on top. Pastor was in a suit. Got up, gave a eulogy. Talked about the history of this church. But now, it is dead, and it's time to bury it, move on.

And then he invited everybody who had attended the funeral to get up, single file, down the front. And he opened the casket. Come and pay your respects to the dearly departed. So as people walked forward and looked in the casket, they understood. Because the pastor had cleverly put a mirror in the casket.

So as they were there to see the church that had died, they saw themselves. Now, I told you you, Jude want to write this letter. That wasn't in his heart. He sat down to write a sweet, soft, light little note of encouragement, but felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to say fight for the faith. Why? He explained that certain people have crept in to the church unnoticed, and still hanging around, whose deadly ways and beliefs were influencing live, living, vibrant believers.

So Jude goes back into the Old Testament. I mean, it's a short book. But he, in the economy of words, is able to go back into the Old Testament, starting with Enoch, citing several examples of falling away, apostasy, defecting to the faith in the past, and how God judged it. We come now to verse 16. And verse 16 to 19 is sort of like a summary statement. Let's read it.

He says, these are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lust. They mouth great swelling, words flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time, who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause

divisions, not having the Spirit.

I've divided this into three categories of activity, three categories of these apostates' activity-- these detractors, these false professors. And they are words, walk, and warning-- the words they verbalize, the walk they personalize, and the warnings they characterize. So let's jump back into verse 16.

And by now, you know. You know the style. You know what's going to happen. This is a Bible teaching church. We're going to go through every verse, every nuance, every phrase. We're going to dig down. We're going to find out what it says and what it means.

So in verse 16, he says, these are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts. They mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. This brings up a good question. How can you tell an apostate? I mean, nobody wears the sign, I'm an apostate. Nobody believes, necessarily, that they are.

Nobody says to you, excuse me. Do you have 20 minutes of your valuable time? I'd like to try and deceive you, if at all possible. No, of course not. It's not always easy to tell. They're going to come in the name of God. They're going to quote their Bible verses. They're going to ride to your house on their bicycles. They're going to do a lot of things to make you think it's legit.

But there are some signs. There are some indicators that they are problematic. And it has to do with what they say, what leaks from their lips. Remember what Jesus said? And I'll remind you of it. In Matthew 15, he said, it's what goes into the mouth that defiles a man. It's those things which precede out of the mouth to come from the heart and defile a man.

So I remember when I was a kid. And I'd go to the doctor. And the doctor would take me in his little office. And he would say Skipper-- that's what he called me-- Skipper, stick your tongue out. And I always thought that was weird. It's like, I don't have a problem with my tongue. My problem is right here, in my gut.

But a doctor is able to tell what's going on in the inside by what's sometimes on your tongue-- what color is, if there's bacteria, if it's looks gnarly or whatever. They can tell something is wrong in the alimentary canal, based on what I see in the tongue. Jesus said much the same thing. He said out of the abundance or overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.

So I also remember as a kid, my mother was fond of a ritual that she would perform with her four boys, especially her youngest. Whenever we would say words that were inappropriate, she took us into the bathroom. And the ritual was a washing ritual. It was a bar of soap, stuck in the mouth. And she washed my mouth out with soap, more than once.

And she never figured this out, but it did no good. And it did no good, because the problem wasn't with my mouth. The problem was with my heart. And so Jude gives us an x-ray of the heart by telling us the verbal activity of these apostate people. He calls them, in verse 16, grumblers. It's a good word. Listen to the Greek word, [NO SPEECH]. Sounds like I'm grumbling, just saying the word, right? It really is an onomatopoeic word. That is, the word describes what it means.

And it's the only time it is used in the entire New Testament-- grumbler, [NO SPEECH]. But it is the same word in the Septuagint version-- that's the Greek version of the Old Testament-- to describe the children of Israel, who were grumbling for 40 years in the desert, and for which God judged them.

We saw back in verse 5 of the Book of Jude. He delivered them out of Egypt. And he destroyed them because they didn't believe. And one of the indicators they didn't believe is what they said. They grumbled. Children of Israel became experts at grumbling. I mean, they grumbled against God's law, against God's ways, against God's love, against God's leaders. They grumbled.

Notice what's next on the list-- complainers. Now I know. You're thinking, well, that sounds redundant. Like he says, grumblers and complainers. But it means the same thing. Well actually, it doesn't. Because this word complainer means to blame, to place blame on somebody.

And the idea is that describes somebody who is always discontent, always dissatisfied, but blames somebody else for it-- complainers. By the way, did you know that God takes complaining pretty seriously? It's like, oh well. I know you're having a bad day. Go ahead. Just gripe. You know, gripe in the name of the Lord. Gripe in Jesus' name.

No, he takes he takes us really seriously-- so seriously that the children of Israel, their complaining was immortalized forever, so that every time the story would be told to subsequent generations about God delivering them from Egypt, this point would be made.

I'll just give you two examples. So fast forward from the children of Israel in the desert to the Book of Psalms, written by David, largely. Psalm 106 says, they despise the pleasant land. That's the promised land. They did not believe his word, but complained in their tents and did not heed the voice of the Lord.

It's like man, it's been hundreds of years. And you're still bringing that up, that they complained? Uh huh. Now, fast forward to the New Testament. Paul the apostle, 1 Corinthians 10, verse 10, says about these people, the Israelites in the desert, these things became our examples, that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted, and do not become idolaters, as some of them. Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, nor complain, as some of them also complained and were destroyed.

Think God takes it seriously? I do. And you want to know why I think it is? I think complaining insults God, because it attacks God's sovereignty. See, if you claim to be a follower of God, and you're always grumbling, and always complaining, what you, in effect, are saying is God gives a lousy job taking care of me. God's love, God's care is not all that great, when it comes to me.

So just remember that when you complain, half the people who hear you complain don't care. And the other half are probably glad you're finally getting what's coming to you. That's how that works.

So their approach, these apostates, these false teachers, false professors, would murmur, complain, and cause other people to become dissatisfied with the church that he is writing to here, and plant those thoughts of discontentment. Because once those thoughts are planted, you can manipulate people like that.

Now, let me just throw this out. You want to end complaining? The solution, I think, is worshipping. It's like the opposite. A praise-er, or a worship-er, somebody who's thankful and grateful, and that's the overflow of the heart-- you know, it's just inconsistent to have griping, grumbling, and worship and praise come out of the same mouth.

That was James' whole point in his little New Testament book. How can you have sour and fresh water come out of the same fountain? So I love with the Psalmist said. He said, your praise shall continually be in my mouth. I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. But these are grumblers. They're complainers.

And then he says, walking according to their own lusts. I'm going to get to that in a bit. But their speech continues, in verse 16. And they mouth great swelling words. The Amplified Bible renders it, they are boastful and arrogant. The NSV-- that's the New Skip Version-- I'm letting that sink in, to see if you are listening. I really don't have my own version.

But I'm translating that this way. These people are full of hot air. They're full of hot air. So this morning, this happened to me this morning. I get up in the morning, take my dogs out. Beautiful, crisp day. One of the things I love about this place are called hot air balloons. And I couldn't see any yet.

But I'm out there with the dogs. And I hear this noise. And what is the noise? Oh, you guys are so good. You're filling this place with hot air. That's what I heard. And then I hear it again. And I know there's a hot air balloon somewhere. And I just waited, wait for it, wait for it. About 20 hot air balloons in all were up in the sky.

But one in particular was close to the house. And my dogs look up. And what's the first thing the dog does when that happens? Start barking really loud. But that noise, right, that Darth Vader noise-- there's some people, that's how they live their lives. They come into the room, puffing up hot air. Look at me. They mouth great swelling words. They turn on the flame.

One commentator says, they pompously puff themselves up with an elaborated, sophisticated, religious vocabulary that has an external spiritual tone but is void of truth. Proverbs 10-- in the multitude of words, sin is not lacking. But he who restrains his lips is wise.

Consider this. The Lord's Prayer has only 56 words. That's the model prayer. Jesus said, pray this way. You want to pray? Do this. 56 words. The Gettysburg Address has 266 words. The Ten Commandments, 297 words. The Declaration of Independence has 300 words. But a recent US government order setting the price of cabbage has 26,911 words. Just saying, it's not how long we talk. It's what we say that counts.

Notice what else they do, what they say in verse 16. It's all about the speech, flattering people to gain an advantage. That is, they tell people what they want to hear, in order to influence them. So they give the impression they want to help you. But really, it's all about them. They want to gratify themselves.

You know-- you do know, I'm sure. If you've ever read the book of Proverbs, you know that flattery is never a good thing, right? The Bible has a lot to say about that. One particular verse is Proverbs 29. Whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his feet, and that the Hebrew word for flattery means literally smooth.

They're smooth talkers, man. They oil you up. They butter you up. And by the way, the English word flattery comes from the French word that means to stroke or caress with the flat of one's hand, flattery, stroke with the flat of the hand. As a Puritan preacher, Thomas Brooks, said, while a donkey-- though he used a different word in old English-- while a donkey is stroked under the belly, you may lay on his back what burden you please.

That's the whole intent of these apostates. They want to manipulate so they can lay their trip on you. Now, I just want to, before we move on, say this, give you a little note on this. I don't want to turn you into a reactionary. I don't want every conversation you have in church, you give people the stink eye. It's like yeah, you're acting really nice and spiritual. What's up?

I don't want you to do that. I don't want you to be the gospel Gestapo. But I do want you to learn to discern. I do want the gatekeepers to have character, to be able to tell truth from error. As Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5, test all things. Hold fast to that which is good. And part of the testing comes by what people say. And if they're always grumbling and always complaining, or using flattery, and bragging about themselves, you've got a problem.

Now, what a person thinks on the inside and then says from their mouths is going to spill out into their behavior, which brings us to the second category of activity, their walk. So the first is the words they verbalize. That's verse 16. Let's look at the walk that they personalize. Notice in verse 16, after describing a couple of noticeable elements of their speech, grumblers, complainers, look at this. Walking according to their own lusts-- just means strong desires, their own desires.

Go down to verse 18. How they told you-- they being the apostles. I'll get to that in a minute-- how they told you, that there would be mockers in the last time who would-- here it is again-- walk according to

their own ungodly lusts. Their talk points to their walk. Now, you know that walk in the Bible is a figurative expression. Just like you have legs that walk, you have a spiritual walk.

And the idea of one's walk is one's lifestyle, one's outward conduct, one's behavior. I've always loved the story about Moody, DL Moody, the Chicago evangelist, having a conversation with his buddy. As they're talking, the man he's talking to has a friend who's in the background, who's kind of walking back and forth. And Moody says to his friend in the conversation, I bet your friend was in the army. And the man said yeah. How did you know that? Moody said, I can tell by the way he walks. He has that military kind of gait.

And so you can tell by the way a person walks. You can tell by what they say. But you really tell by how they live, their lifestyle. And notice, they walk according to their own lusts. He says that twice in the passage. Simply means they follow their own cravings. That's their rule of life. That's their walk. It's self-centeredness.

They give reign to their passion. Got to follow my passion! No, you don't. That's bad advice. Because a lot of times what you want isn't good, isn't godly, and isn't necessarily what God wants. But they walk according to their own passions, their own lusts, their own desires. He adds a little more color to that. Look in the 19th verse.

These are sensual persons who caused divisions, not having the Spirit. Now, the word sensual persons, right-- that's English, sensual persons. In Greek, it's one word. Jude says, these are [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH], which means soul-ish persons. Now, get this. That word is important.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] was a word used in ancient Greek times, which was the opposite of another word, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] means spiritual ones. The opposite of a spiritual one is a [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH], right? Paul translates it, in 1 Corinthians, chapter 2, the natural man. The natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit.

So simply what Jude is saying is, they're not led by the Spirit. They think and they act like a natural man. They're driven by their own fleshly desires. Which begs the question-- because Jude said, in the beginning, these people have snuck into your church, and they're staying there. Why would anybody who's soulless and not spiritual, who's driven by their own lusts, want to hang out and stay in church?

Well, I think I know why. I think it's because they want religious sanction for their sinful deeds. I think it's simply so they can say, I go to church. I'm a believer. I love God, all the while just sort of hanging around, staying there, never changing. It's never rooted. It's never real. It's never authentic. So they can live how they want to, and have stamp of religious approval.

He further describes them as those who cause divisions in verse 19. Now, that's probably the consequence of letting people like that stay around. They get in groups. They talk to people. They cause dissatisfaction. They divide the church. It could even be their motive.

But then, look at the very end of that-- not having the Spirit. So that kind of tells us their true spiritual condition. They're unsaved. They're unsaved. They are not regenerated by the Holy Spirit. They are spiritually dead.

I bet some of them claimed to have more of this Spirit than everybody else. No, we're really spiritual. We're the real spiritual ones. Actually, you don't even have the Holy Spirit, Jude is saying. So whatever they claim theologically, in reality, they're grumbling, and murmuring, and complaining, and smooth talking, and living and acting very unspiritual.

OK, this is deep stuff. This is hard stuff. As we said and every message in Jude, this is some slogging through the mud here. You know, this isn't like happy times sermon. So I know this was written to the church, authentic believers, to watch out for those apostates among them. But this is probably a good time to let this be a Warning to any one of us who claim to name the name of Christ, anybody who claims

to be a Christian.

Do you realize that all of us should really think if that's the case? you say, what do you mean? Doubt our salvation? No, just examine yourself. That is exactly what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 13, verse 5. Listen to what he writes.

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. I mean, just really check it out. Make sure. Is this real? Is this true? Is my profession reality? Examine yourselves, whether you were in the faith. Test yourselves, Paul writes.

Keith Miller wrote this. It has never cease to amaze me that we Christians have developed a kind of selective vision which allows us to be deeply and sincerely involved in worship and church activities, and yet almost totally pagan in the day in, day out guts of our business lives and never realize it. You can be a theological Christian, while at the same time be a practical atheist.

If you think about it, this is the worst form of blasphemy, to claim to know God, but live as though God didn't even exist. That's their walk. That's their words. That's their walk. That takes us to the third category, and that is the warning that Jude gives, the warnings they characterize.

Look at 17. And I'm glad he says this. But you-- know he's pivoting. And next week is the really great pivot. But he says, but you-- he's turning the corner here. But you, beloved, or loved ones, the ones whom I deeply have affection for-- remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So who are the apostles? I can think of a few. Peter's one. John's another one. James is another one, right? There were several apostles that followed Jesus. They wrote books in the New Testament. Paul said he was an apostle born out of due time.

So think of the words of the apostles. Remember the words that were spoken by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time, who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.

Now, go back to the day of Pentecost, when the church was born. What an exciting time that must have been. Spirit gets poured out. Thousands of people get saved. The church is pure. The church is powerful. They meet daily. They're so geeked. They're so excited. They devoted themselves steadfastly to the apostles' doctrine, breaking of bread, fellowship, prayer, all that.

And then you keep reading in the book of Acts, and you have the record of church history, the early church, the apostolic church. And they're evangelizing all over the world. They're planning churches everywhere. The Roman Empire is greatly impacted by that. But even in those early days, the apostles were given the privilege of seeing into the future. And what they saw terrified them.

It terrified them. It was bizarre. So what did the apostles prophesy? Of the coming of Christ? Yes. Of the rapture of the church? Yep. Of the new heavens and the new Earth? Yep. Of the eternal kingdom? Yep. Of joy and bliss forever in eternity? Yes, yes, yes.

But they also predicted something horrifically frightening. They predicted that the church would defect from the truth. They predicted that the church would abandon the Gospel. Jesus did. Paul did. Peter did. John did. In fact, I told you a couple messages ago, every single New Testament book, except for one-- that's Philemon-- has writings about falseness, falsehood, apostasy, false teaching.

In fact they predicted it, would engulf entire congregations. It's got to have-- must have been the greatest prophetic shock to these apostles. God's letting them see into the future. Like oh, that's cool. Jesus is coming back! And oh man, joy! Peace! Wait a minute. He's telling me something else. Whole

congregations?

You want to know when? Want to know how quickly? So Jude is written. And about 25 years later, just 25 years, John writes a book of Revelation, next book in the New Testament. Chapter 2 and 3 are seven letters to seven congregations-- churches. Five out of seven-- so that many out of this-- were already fulfilling the predictions made by the apostles that the church would fall away, already.

In the book of Revelation, the Church of Ephesus left its first love. The church at Pergamus was full of corruption and heresy. The Church of fire Thyatira was so wicked that Jesus even threatened to kill some people who were in it. The Church of Sardis was pronounced dead by Jesus. He said, I know you have a name, that you are alive. But you're actually dead.

And then there's the famous church of Laodicea, that made the Lord so sick that he said, I'm going to vomit you out of my mouth. And it's still the first century. It's 95 AD. Doesn't take long, does it? Happened very, very quickly, like all the apostles said. So when he-- go back. When he says, but beloved, you remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how they told you that there would be massacres in the last times, who would walk according to their own godly lusts-- he's simply saying, just remember you were always told it would be this way.

Now, here's a question. Why would the Holy Spirit inform the apostles about that? Why didn't they just talk about heaven, rapture, new heaven, new Earth, all the good stuff? Why would you tell them that? I think it's pretty easy to figure that out. He told them that so that when it would happen, they wouldn't be what? Surprised. They wouldn't be shocked. They wouldn't go something has gone terribly wrong with the church! He's saying no. Nothing is happening now that hasn't happened in the Old Testament, that hasn't happened even in heaven, that didn't happen with the children of Israel in the desert.

It happened with the children of Israel after the greatest deliverance in their history. It happened in the very throne room of heaven with Satan himself. So this shouldn't shock you. That shouldn't surprise you.

Now I WANT to land the plane. So let me give you two practical suggestions to walk away with, two simple words. Investigate. Number two, evaluate. Investigate others. Evaluate yourself.

And when I say investigate others, let me get specific. Investigate leaders, people like me. Don't just swallow what everybody says to you because they stand on a raised podium behind a pulpit. You know, Paul the apostle congratulated the Bereans, because they received what he said with readiness of mind. But they searched the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. So investigate every leader.

You go, well how do I do that? Let me give you a few simple tests. The test of character-- what is their character? The fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5-- love, joy, peace, suffering, kindness, gentleness. The test of character.

Then there's the test of creed. What are they saying? What are they preaching? What these are-- what are their sermons like? If they never preach about the narrow road, if they never preach about holiness, if they are denying the historic Christian faith, or loosely talking about it, if their messages are always pep talks, and the service is just a pep rally, red flag, red flag, red flag, red flag. That's a test of creed.

When they're more interested in tickling your ears rather than telling you the truth, red flag. So investigate every leader. Test of character. Test of creed. Another test is a test of converts.

What's the influence of these people like? What is the effect of their teaching on followers of them. Again, I don't want to make you all you know weird around people. I just want to say this. Stay in the world, and don't be fooled by sheep costumes. Hey, not everybody who goes baa is a sheep of God. Because Jude said they're still among you.

So that's the first one. Investigate leaders. Evaluate yourself. This is just a good day to ask a very basic question. Are you saved? Are you sure?

In fact, it's not just a question. It is the most important issue of all of life. In 100 years, the CDC guidelines won't matter. You'll be dead. In 100 years, post-election politics won't matter. In 100 years, what will matter the most is are you saved? That's what matters. It's the most important thing that does matter.

So you want to ask yourself the question, is my relationship to Jesus Christ authentic and real? Is it personal? Have I made a point in my life where I've turned my life over to him? You say yeah, I've done that. But I have a tendency to kind of go astray, and kind of wander. Welcome to the human race. I'm not saying you have to be perfect. All we, like sheep, have gone astray.

But like that hymn says, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love-- there's a great little phrase in that that says, here's my heart, Lord. Here's my heart, Lord. Take and seal it. Seal it for thy courts above. That's the solution, where have taken one step, 100 steps, or you just haven't taken a step toward God at all.

It's only one step to him. Well, I've taken 1,000 steps from him. I need to go in a 12 step fine God program. No, it's a one step program. It's called repent. That's all it is. Turn around. It just means turn around. So you turn around, do an about face, and place your faith and trust in him.

Father, thank you for the gutsiness of Jude to write this letter. He didn't want to. He didn't plan to. But he did, in obedience to you. And under the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, in such graphic language, and in such a short amount of time, with the economy of words, he was able to warn us, and to get our attention.

And here we are today. Our attention, you have it. And Father, I pray for those who have wandered away from you. Maybe they made a choice earlier in their life, but they're not walking with you today. Or maybe they've never just authentically given their lives over to Jesus personally. It's not a reality in their everyday experience. It's not a real genuine thing in their life. I pray, Lord, that would change today.

Hey, listen, if you're gathered with us this morning, heads bowed, eyes closed, if you've never given your life to Christ, or if you've walked away from him and God is saying, I want you to come back home, you are my beloved. You are my loved ones. I want to nurture you, and nourish you, and forgive you, and reinstate you, and throw the robe around you, and bring you in. But I want it to be real. Then come back to him.

And if either one of those describes you, I want you to do something right now. If you are willing, today, to give your life to Christ, or to come back to Christ, with our heads bowed, eyes closed, I want you to raise your hand up. And I'm not doing this for you. I'm doing it for me, so I can see who you are. I can acknowledge you, I can pray for you.

Raise your hand and keep it up for a minute. God bless you and you and you In the back, on my right. Anybody else? Raise that hand up, so I can see it. God bless you and you. Over on my left hand side, there are more. Who else? Raise your hand up. Do it right now.

Maybe the lights up just a little bit more, in the back, on the left. That's much better. God bless you, and you. Yes sir. Anybody in the family room? If you're in the family room, there's just glass that separates us, nothing else. Anybody else? God bless you and you. Yep.

You might be outside. You raise that hand up. There's a pastor right there. Just raise it up. Father, all those hands are connected to people. You love them. You love them so much. You sent your son for them. You rearranged the universe for them. We call it salvation history. You did it for us.

We pray, Father, that as they come to you, that you'd receive them, you'd fill them with a sense of love and joy and peace, as they understand your love for them and your forgiveness to them. Make them bold.

Make them strong. Make them vibrant, our brothers and sisters, as they come into the fold, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Hey, listen. As we sing this final song, if you raised your hand, it's been a while since we've done this. I'm so glad to do it this morning. I want you to get up, let's all stand up. If you raised your hand-- and I saw 10, 15, 20 of you do that-- I want you to get up from where you're standing. Find the nearest aisle, and walk down, and stand right in the front. I'm going to lead you in a word of prayer.

We're going to make it personal. We're going to make it real. We're going to make this your day, your appointment with God. It's all about that right now. So if you raised your hand, please come, Come on. Come and stand right here.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Resurrection power that can save.

The power in your name. The power in your name.

If you raised your hand, and you're in the back, come . If you're in the family room, come through the doors.

With power that can empty out a grave. There's resurrection power that can save.

Come on up just a little bit. Thank you. Power in your name. Power in your name.

Come on up. Come on up. We're going to wait just another moment. This is so good, so good. Just come on. You might be outside. If you raised your hand, there will be a pastor who will walk you inside. Just come and stand right here.

Anybody else? Anybody else up for the free gift of salvation, freely given in Jesus, washed clean from all your past, all the guilt taken away? Anybody up for that? Anybody else? Anybody else?

Now is that time. Hey, those of you who have come forward, welcome. I'm so glad to see you. I'm so glad you're here. Glad to welcome you into God's family. And I'm going to lead you now in a prayer. I'm going to ask you to say these words. Say them out loud after me. But say them, mean them from your heart, as you say them to God. It's a very simple prayer of giving your life to Christ.

Say Lord, I give you my life.

Lord I give you my life.

I know I'm a sinner. Please forgive me. I believe in Jesus. I believe he died on a cross, that he shed his blood for my sin, and that he rose again from the dead. I turn from my past. I repent of my sin. I turn to Jesus as Savior and Lord. It's in his name I pray, Amen. Amen.

Hey, man, congratulations. Antonio, can you see Antonio here? See that happy guy? He's a happy guy. You know, he was a Marine? He defended our country. Thank you for doing that, by the way. Thank you for all who served in the military. Question-- are all Marines that happy? Yeah, OK, so, but you're saved. So if you have come forward, and so many of you have, would you follow our team and Antonio right over here to a prayer room?

Boy, it's so good to be back.

We hope you enjoyed this special service from Calvary Church. We'd love to know how this message impacted you. Email us at mystory@calvarynm.church. And, just a reminder, you can support this ministry

with a financial gift at calvarynm.church/give. Thank you for joining us for this teaching from Calvary Church.