

# When Called to the Stand Part 1

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] It's been a tough week for the Presbyterian Church in America. We lost three fathers in the faith in seven days, actually six days.
- Steve Smallman Sr. was a dear brother, dear man of God, faithful pastor in Washington, D.C. area. You might not know his name, per se. He blessed my life.
- Pastor McLean Presbyterian Church, one of the most influential churches in the Washington, D.C. area. A little punk intern preached there on a Thanksgiving morning.
- Scared me half to death. He retired and then went to Philly and started pastoring there. Of course, you know about Harry Reader, probably. Of the three men, he truly blessed my life personally.
- Pastor Broward Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. He was a Baptist preacher masquerading as a Presbyterian.
- [ 1 : 0 5 ] Brother Harry, he died tragically, but in God's timing. And of course, you know about Tim Keller.
- And he took a process. It was a year process for him. But now those three great men of God have gone to the glory.
- And we say amen. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. But that's a tough week. Tough week.
- And some of you know my dear little brother, Josiah Kutuma, pastoring our daughter church, Eastlake, resigned.
- His pastoring. So just a few days ago. That breaks my heart too. That one I knew was coming. I was praying I wouldn't.
- [ 2 : 0 2 ] But he has to be, he and his dear wife need to be where God wants them. Amen. Amen. Amen. They don't. That was, I got one amen, y'all.
- They need to be where God wants them. They need to be where they fit and where God can use them to the fullest. And so pray for Eastlake as they are looking for a new pastor soon.
- And pray for Josiah and Kiana as they are moving on to their next adventure with Jesus. Tough week.
- Tough week. But God is yet faithful. Yet faithful. And we're going to turn to the scriptures now. To John chapter 9.
- And we're going to hear from the Lord. And we're going to follow him no matter what. Father, as we come to your word, you heard what I just said. You know. You knew before I knew.
- [ 2 : 5 6 ] You knew before any of us knew. We thank you for those great men of God who you've taken to yourself who blessed so many people. You used them to bless so many people.
- Thousands upon thousands of people have been blessed through the ministry of those three great men of God. They passed the baton now. To lesser men like myself and others.

Here we are. We will do what we can. Help us to be faithful. They set the bar high. Help us to be faithful. Jesus is still Lord.

And pray for Josiah and Kiana. Lord, guide their steps. Lord, open doors for them that no man can shut. And our sister church, Eastlake, our daughter church, Lord, bless them. And lead the right man and wife to that church to pass through that flock.

May they not settle. May they search diligently. And may you, may they do it prayerfully, carefully. And may you bring the right couple to them.

[ 4 : 07 ] Lord, we need you to speak to us now in your word. Lord, we would be faithful to bear witness to Jesus. So help us, Lord. Help us. He is life.

He is everything. He is our hope, our joy. He is Lord. So, Lord, speak to us. And may we give us ears to hear.

May we follow faithfully in joy and grace. Use your unworthy servant now, I pray in Christ's name. Amen. John chapter 9, beginning at verse 13 to 23.

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight.

And he said to them, he put mud on my eyes. And I washed and I see. Some of the Pharisees said, this man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.

[ 5 : 14 ] But others said, how can a man who is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, what do you say about him since he opened your eyes?

He said, he is a prophet. The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight. Until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight.

And asked them, is this your son who say he was born blind? How then does he now see? His parents answered, we know that this is our son.

And that he was born blind. But how he now sees, we do not know. Nor do we know who opened his eyes.

Ask him. He is of age. He will speak for himself. His parents said these things because they feared the Jews.

[ 6 : 14 ] For the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be the Christ, the Messiah, he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore, his parents said, he is of age.

Ask him. The word of the Lord. Thank you, God. You may be seated. Thank you. Praise to him again.

Thank you. I don't know how many of you have ever been called into a courtroom to give testimony.

I've never been on a trial, but I have been on the stand, you know, to be questioned for jury duty. Most of us have probably experienced that if you've been around a little bit.

You know what happens? They swear you in and you promise to speak truthfully. Then the lawyers or the judge ask you a bunch of questions to see if you qualify for this particular jury.

[ 7 : 17 ] But when you give testimony on the witness stand in a trial, it is much more intense than what I just described.

You may be questioned very closely. The imposing lawyer questioning you may smile at you, but she is not your friend.

She'll be looking for holes, inconsistencies in your testimony to discredit it or discredit you. Lawyers actually prepare their people to take the stand.

It's an adversarial system. It is stressful. But here's the truth. If you are a Christian, every day that you follow the light of Jesus, you are in a spiritual courtroom of the world.

It is more stressful than being in a court of law because the stakes are so much higher. We are giving testimony to the glory of Christ and to eternity.

[ 8 : 33 ] So the question is, how equipped are you to take the stand and to be a faithful witness to the name of Jesus? How equipped are you?

The beggar, formerly known as the blind man, can see. I'm going to call him FBB or FB for short, just so you know. Formerly blind man or formerly blind.

Whatever. I'm just... I'm from West Philly. What can I tell you? He is bearing testimony now to others that it was Jesus who healed him.

But here's the trip. You got to file. Stay with me. There are no slides today, so stay with me. Here's the trip. He who has had his eyes opened by the light of the world has not seen the light himself.

Remember, he goes back. After he gets healed at the pool, he goes back and the crowd begins to ask him.

[ 9 : 36 ] And they said, where is Jesus? He said, I don't know. He's never seen Jesus. He knows the light. But yet he can see. He knows the light is real.

He knows that he has been touched by the light. He's even born witness to the light. But he has never seen the light. He's never seen the light.

He's never seen the light. He's never seen the light. Why is that important? Because that's us. 1 Peter 1, 9 through 10 says, Though you have not seen him.

That's Jesus. You love him. Though you do not now see him. You believe in him. And rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

Obtaining the outcome of your faith. The salvation of your souls. We are just in some sense just like that man.

[ 10 : 34 ] We've been touched by Christ. We've been saved by Christ. We know he's real. But our physical eyes have never seen him.

So we can learn something from this guy. His testimony is not perfect. Jesus is going to meet him later. We come back to the next week. And help smooth out his testimony.

But we can learn a lot from this guy. And one thing you got to keep in mind is that when you give faithful testimony, it will eventually be resisted.

The trial begins. Few points this morning. First of all, to be a faithful witness to the light. Remember who is really on trial.

To be a faithful witness to Jesus, you have to keep in mind, remember who is really on trial. The people who first heard our brother's testimony bring him to the Pharisees.

[ 11 : 37 ] Verse 13. They bring him to the Pharisees. They didn't bring him out of spite. Don't look at that. That's not what's going on here. They bring him because something extraordinary has happened. And they are bringing him to the experts, the religious experts, to get an explanation.

To get their input. To get their commentary. But these religious experts, the Pharisees, show no joy in this man's divine healing.

Can you see their harsh faces as FBB stands before them? Can you see them looking at him with a scowl on their face?

They're not thrilled about what's happened here. Their only concern, listen, is to discredit Jesus. They care nothing for this man who was healed.

Something you got to remember. Hard, cold, religious hearts care nothing for God's blessing.

[ 12 : 41 ] They only care about their agenda. We are no different. Our church is no different than that synagogue.

Church meaning church universal. Our churches have the same thing. We have hard, cold, religious hearts in our pews. And we have to ask Jesus to warm us up.

They look with frowns at this miracle. And all they're thinking about is in their minds is that Jesus broke the Sabbath by healing this man on Saturday.

The Jewish day of rest and worship. Actually, Jesus didn't break the Sabbath. You know this, right? He didn't break the Sabbath by doing good on it.

But he did break their rules for the Sabbath, which have no biblical authority. According to the rabbis of that day, you could only heal life-threatening illness.

[ 13 : 46 ] Jesus blew it. Because he healed a man whose life was not at risk. Of course, you could not work. But an even kneading dough for bread was forbidden on the Sabbath.

Jesus made mud. It was unlawful to take a journey of more than a thousand yards. And it is quite possible that the blind man, under Jesus' command, may have had to walk more than a thousand yards to the pool of Siloam, where he washed the mud off.

Lastly, believe it or not, there's some evidence that using saliva to apply as an eye salve may have been prohibited as well. So Jesus, in their mind, just blew up the Sabbath.

Again, they're looking for loopholes to say that Jesus is not the Christ. He's not their Messiah to condemn him and his work. They are what we call legalists, right?

They use their version of God's law to condemn others for their behavior while making themselves look good. Legalism is saved by your works.

[ 15 : 01 ] If you think you're going to show God your resume, if you think, like Islam teaches this, that when you die, if your good works outweigh your bad works, then you will be led into heaven, you are a legalist.

You are thinking that somehow you can appease God by your good behavior, which means you think too highly of yourself. Because none of us are good enough, including the preacher.

In and of ourselves, we cannot show up in heaven, stand at the pearly gates, as it were, and show our resume and say, let me in. You don't have a resume.

That's how bad we are. We don't have a resume. All we have is the mercy of God in Christ Jesus to fall upon. We must fall upon the mercy of the court of heaven, not the court of man.

Don't let me, David said, don't let me fall into the hands of men. The court of heaven. Fall upon that mercy and grace. And there's life there.

[ 16 : 12 ] That's this blind man. This formerly blind man had nothing to offer God. He had nothing to offer Jesus. He couldn't even see Jesus. And all he had was his weakness.

Ah, now you're where he wants you. Show up to God blind. Admit you're blind. Show up to God in weakness.

Admit you're weak. Now you'll find he is most merciful and most welcoming. But these Pharisees didn't see this.

The religion, it is, legalism is a religious enemy of the gospel. For it masquerades as true faith. The Pharisees and their legalism accused the son of God himself of breaking his own law.

Wow. Nice blind. Our man, FB, is on the stand. But it really is Jesus who is being attacked. When you bear witness, faithful witness to Jesus, it's easy to feel the attack is personal about you.

[ 17 : 28 ] And it is personal, yes. You're the one who are feeling the pain if you're getting pushed back. Yes. But listen, it's not really about you. And you got to keep it straight.

The attack is really, the forces of darkness are attacking the Christ in you. Because he is the real threat.

We're not the threat. It is Jesus who makes people uncomfortable. And the demon scared. Here you are telling folk how the Lord has changed your life.

You have joy. Maybe, maybe you got off drugs. Maybe, maybe God has made you a kinder, you were an angry kind of person or selfish kind of person.

And God, and by the grace of God, there's evidence now that you are a kinder person. You are giving self-sacrificially of your time, talent, and treasure. You're seeking to do good in your community.

[ 18 : 30 ] Your life has been changed by Jesus. And what do people say? What's up? And then you start talking about Jesus, and then you hear things like this.

You know the Bible has contradictions. Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. Did you know that? He never said he was God.

It's amazing the stuff you will hear once you start talking about how Jesus transformed your life. I mean, you think people will be happy for you. Especially if you came from way down somewhere, and you were really, you know, you're one of those people, you were on the streets, man.

You know, you got out of jail. You would think people would be happy that your life is transformed. Realize this, saints.

The more you give glory to Jesus, the more discomfort you actually bring. It's not about you. Jesus makes all sinners uncomfortable.

[ 19 : 38 ] I ran for Jesus as fast as I could. Hey, man, I didn't want to be around no religious folk. And you know what I'm talking about. Someone you ran to. Someone you put up a fight.

You really got down and dirty about this thing, because you did not want to surrender to no Jesus. Thank you, sir. Appreciate you. Because he makes us uncomfortable.

Why, you say? Why is Jesus, the most loving being that ever walked the planet, the most gracious person who's ever lived, why does he make people uncomfortable? Because he's holy.

Holy means morally pure. And he's moral perfection. It also means he's not like us.

And that goes back to moral perfection, too. But he's really not like, God is not like us. And even though Jesus took on our humanity to enter into our world, yet he is still distinct.

[ 20 : 46 ] And that makes me uncomfortable. Like when Jesus, remember when Jesus, Simon Peter, he met when he first encountered Peter and his brothers.

And they're out fishing. And they come in. They're dejected. They didn't catch any fish. They're all upset. Their nets are empty. And Jesus says to them, medicine, man, why don't you go back out and cast your nets on the other side?

And they're like, they had heard him preaching. He had been around already. They had heard him preaching. They said, okay, humor the guy. So they cast their nets on the other side.

And they catch all this fish. And their nets were almost breaking. Peter drags the nets. And then he gets to Jesus. And he falls on his face and says, depart from me, Lord.

I am a sinful man. What? What the heck? I would have pulled out a contract and said, sign this. We're going into business, bro. Holiness is uncomfortable.

[ 21 : 49 ] You get around somebody who you know is better than you? Like God?

And you fall on your face. It's uncomfortable. That's why every time you see in the Bible people meet an angel full of the holiness of God, the first thing that angel says is fear not.

Because that's what's happened. And that's what makes people uncomfortable. It's not you. It's the holy Jesus in you. And if he's shining through you in any way, if you're being faithful testimony in any way, it will make some people uncomfortable.

But listen, there'll be others who are willing to look at the evidence in your life and ask some good questions too. That's what they did here.

There's a division among the Pharisees. And one group says, he's a sinner. He doesn't keep the Sabbath. And the other side says, hold it. Can a sinner do these kind of works, miracles?

[ 22 : 58 ] They're asking. See, they're open. You're going to find people. Praise God for people who are open. And look at the evidence and start asking good questions. Maybe God, through you, is drawing them to Christ.

Second, part of being a faithful witness is simply telling what Jesus did for you. This beggar's testimony is not perfect, like I said.

But no matter the situation, when called to the stand, stick to the facts of what Jesus has done for you. Just the facts, ma'am.

Just the facts, sir. You're on the stand. I formerly blind beggar told the crowd in verse 11 the same thing he tells the Pharisees. Now he's in the synagogue.

His same story. He never changed the story. The guy named Jesus made mud, put it on my eyes. I washed. Now I see.

[ 23 : 58 ] Same story. Tells it twice. Before the crowd and before the Pharisees. Listen. This is his story. He's sticking to it. You do the same.

Tell people about your life before Christ. Tell them about the fact that you were blind. What did it look like for you being blind?

What did it smell like, taste like in your blindness? Tell people how blind you were. You can remember, right? Then tell people how did Jesus intersect with your life and give you sight?

This is a good witness, y'all. This is great stuff. Now again, the beggar's testimony is not perfect. Yours will be better. He didn't know about the cross and Christ dying as a sacrifice for the sins of those who trust him.

That's your story. You got to tell that part. That's the part of the story you need to add to your testimony. As a matter of fact, that's the part of the story that's even more important than your personal testimony.

[ 25 : 03 ] What did Jesus do? Not just what did Jesus do for you. Stop. What did he do? Period. You see, there's an objective witness and a subjective witness.

The objective witness is the gospel. Jesus dying on the cross to save humanity. All those who believe in him paying the price for their sins.

That we might be the first fruits of a new creation because he's not going to stop with us. That's the objective testimony of the gospel.

Then, how does that intersect with you? That's important. That's important. What does the cross and the empty tomb mean?

Tell the story. Are you able to tell your story briefly? Are you able to tell your story succinctly? Because people don't want to talk all day with you.

[ 26 : 04 ] Some might. But can you tell your story? And more of the story of Jesus succinctly. Third, to be a faithful witness, you must be clear about who Jesus is.

Now, this whole scene here is not linear. So, don't think you have to follow this step by step or something. But you still, being clear about who Jesus is. Now, I want to refer you.

Verse 17. They say again to the blind man, What do you say about him? Since he opened your eyes. And the blind man said, He's a prophet.

He's a prophet. Now, remember I said his testimony is not perfect. He testified to what he knew. His limited knowledge.

He calls Jesus a prophet. And many people of his day believe that Jesus was a prophet. He was probably thinking, and they were thinking of the prophet that Moses said would come after him.

[ 27 : 09 ] In Deuteronomy 18.15, Moses said, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers. It is to him you shall listen.

Now, in the short term, that's a reference probably to other prophets like Samuel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. But the New Testament and even Jewish scholars understood it had a larger connotation that it was speaking of a supreme prophet who would come.

Huh. This would certainly refer to Jesus, who is that prophet, and much, much more.

The more is what you need to be clear about. As disciples of Jesus, our testimony must be unashamedly clear that Jesus is much more than a prophet like Moses or Daniel or Elijah.

You understand? Sir, ma'am, do you mean to tell this court that you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? That he is God in human flesh?

[ 28 : 25 ] That's the question to you. In the court of public opinion, that's the court to all of us as followers of Jesus. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?

That he is God in human flesh? And the second question goes with it. Do you believe that there's only one way to heaven, and that's through him? Hmm.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that he is the light of the world? We cannot speak of a lesser Jesus, because that would mean being unfaithful to him.

You know he's more. If you have, if your eyes have been opened, and you've beheld the light, and the light of Christ himself, if your eyes have been opened, and you know for sure who he is, you know he's much more.

But there's pressure to say, no, he's not. You know without him, we're all in the dark and blind. If people of that day didn't want to hear that Jesus is the prophet, today, we're certainly not wanting to hear that he's God.

[ 29 : 46 ] But that is our testimony. And only that truth will set our neighbors free, delivering them from blindness, just like the Lord of light himself delivered you from blindness.

And the last point this morning, to be a faithful witness, don't let the unbelief of others shake you.

You hear me? Don't let the unbelief of others shake you. They were disputing this man's testimony to his own life situation before he met Jesus.

They didn't believe he was born blind. They didn't believe. Listen, verse 18. It says, the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight. Can you imagine that?

They are saying to this man, we don't believe your life story, what you've experienced. We don't believe it. Probably sounds a little familiar.

[ 30 : 59 ] Unbelief can be shocking. People will say to you, you weren't really that bad. Come on, Broderick. You weren't the old man.

Here's where we need to be a little bit careful, okay? It's not our job to convince people or even to provide evidence of our sin before Jesus. Why let me prove to you how bad I was.

No, no, no. Calm down. Down, Kimo Sabe. Easy, easy. That's not your job. Don't embellish your story to make it sound more desperate and miraculous.

Just tell the truth. You grew up in a Christian home and came to Jesus? Just tell the truth. You didn't grow up in a Christian home and came to Jesus. Just tell the truth.

I was blind. But now I see. If someone doesn't believe you, don't be surprised. You know, I listen to many testimonies in this church.

[ 31 : 56 ] And it's hard for me to believe that some of you were as bad as you said. I'm serious. I'm not going to say any names. Just initials. No. I'm not going to say any names.

But when I hear some of your testimonies, I'm going, I can't. That's a good thing, saints. Do you understand?

That means that you've been walking in the light with Jesus. And he's been working in you over the years, changing you. Come on, somebody. Changing you. You're not the same person you used to was.

You, you, you, you have a, you, you've changed. Now, you're not perfect, but you've changed. Somebody knows what I'm talking about. You have changed. God has been working in you. And people see the difference.

And they have a hard time when you tell them you used to be like son. Give God praise for that. Give God glory in their presence.

[ 32 : 54 ] As you are talking, tell them it's because of the grace of God. Not because I, well, you know, I worked very hard. You know, I really, I got educated.

I went to school. I worked nights. I just, I mean, I get mad. That's not the grace of God. Well, it is in some respects. Don't get me wrong.

But the grace of God that transformed you is the good news that Jesus is Lord and life and love. You need to talk about that. Talk about Jesus.

Talk about him. See, we get scared because we're talking about ourselves. Start talking about him. Don't worry about dinosaurs and how many, the 144,000 and all these crazy.

No, talk about Jesus. Tell people what Jesus did. Now, here in our text, I'm almost done. Here in our text, now something, another scene takes place.

[ 33 : 56 ] They call his parents to the stand. Now, this is deep. Now, this is where it gets real deep, y'all. This is sad. Here we see how lack of faith can cause us to give into fear when under pressure.

Mom and dad show up. To their credit, they back up his story about being born blind. They back that up. They know.

He told them. You know he did because he told everybody. He told them Jesus healed him. But they don't want to admit that fact. Because they don't want to be put out of the synagogue.

Keep in mind, being put out of the synagogue did not mean they got put out of the service. Being put out of the synagogue meant excommunication. It meant that they could be excommunicated from the whole community, which means no contact.



It could be a short-term or a long-term situation. We don't know which one it was, but they didn't want that to happen. So they were terrified. So they did what some of us do when people confront us about our faith.

[ 35 : 08 ] They took the fifth. They took the fifth. You know, they basically said, you know, the fifth amendment says that no person shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself.

That's from the fifth commandment. Fifth amendment, excuse me. And people will usually say something like, I refuse to answer on the grounds that it may incriminate me.

That's basically what they did. Now I'm no lawyer, but in most cases, it's not considered an admission of guilt in this country. However, spiritually, it's not too good.

It is an admission of lack of faith. It's an admission of fear. It's an admission of fearing man more than we fear the Lord. God is gracious.

There's forgiveness. There's goodness. We've all done it. But understand what it is. Okay? Understand what it is. There are times when your testimony to Jesus will cost you.

[ 36 : 18 ] Early Christians faced the cult of the emperor. They were told to say, Kaiser ho Kyrgios. Caesar is Lord. And it meant that he was God.

And they couldn't do it. And if they didn't do it, it was over. Sometimes being witness to Jesus will cost you.

Paul said it so wonderfully in Acts 20. I want to pray for this in my own life. 20, 22, 24. He was talking to a group of elders. He didn't think he would see again.

He says, Now, behold, I'm going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and affliction await me.

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself. If only I might finish my course and the ministry that I receive from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

[ 37 : 25 ] I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself. Just let me be faithful to Jesus. Family, when you see the light, when you see the light and you're walking in the light with Christ, he gives you this.

He begins to develop this in us. Because we find that Jesus is our most valuable possession. Paul said having Jesus is more important than having physical life because he knew he had eternal life.

Do we see Jesus like that? Has Jesus so come into our lives that we are those people who will say, I count all things rubbish that I may gain Christ?

Another Paul statement. In Faith in the Wilderness, a book by Chinese pastors, sermons by Chinese pastors, modern day Chinese pastors living under persecution, Pastor Chen Yi preaches about, he says, saving faith is about resting in the promises of God.

No matter how bad the situation is, no matter how much it changes, I remain faithful to Jesus Christ so that my life is a continual witness to the glory of God.

[ 38 : 44 ] writing to a persecuted Chinese pastor, writing to his flock. Today, he would say amen to Paul.

Have you taken the fifth lately? When brought to the stand for Jesus? What were you afraid of? Do you see Jesus now, do you now see that Jesus is better than what you thought you were going to lose, which led you to take the fifth?

Do you? By the way, at the end of this situation here, we'll see it next week, the blind man, FBB, was excommunicated from the synagogue.

His parents were not. They were safe. Or were they? It's a good place to stop because we've got to have communion and I want to try to get out here on 10 at the time.

It's meant to be out earlier, forgive me. But we're getting ready for our big outreach on Memorial Day. What an opportunity to bear witness to Jesus.

[ 39 : 55 ] I hope you're coming. We call it an all-church mobilization. I hope you're coming. I hope you're planning to be there to serve, to give, and to maybe pray for opportunities to bear witness to Jesus in the way that we've just been talking.

What do we have to offer our neighbors that is more beautiful, more fulfilling, and more healing than Jesus? A barbecue sandwich? Do you really believe that's what we have to offer?

A bounce house? Those things are inconsequential. What we have is the living Christ. What we have is eternal life. What we have is hope that is in this life and goes beyond this life.

That's what we really have to offer. Talk about being blind and now having your eyes opened by Jesus. Jesus.

The story is told of a group of mass gunmen. It's always a city in Africa. They broke into a church one Sunday morning and they had all the parishioners stand up around the church.

[ 41 : 10 ] They pointed their guns at them and said, how many of you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the only way to heaven? Less than half the church raised their hand.

Some trembling. Some in tears raised their hand. Some defiant and full of joy raised their hands. But there's still less than half the church.

The gunmen said to those who didn't raise their hands, get out. They walked them outside. Get out of here. They walked back into church.

Put chains on the door. Looked at the rest that were left. The ones who dared to name the name of Jesus and hold to it.

They took off their masks and said, we're Christians too. Now that the hypocrites are gone and the spies for the government are gone, now we can have church. I've heard that story so many times.

[ 42 : 16 ] I think it might actually be true. I don't know, family. We don't know how we were acting until we get there, right? We can talk about having that kind of faith all day.

I want to believe I'm there. I want to believe it. But here's the thing. I'm just going to walk with Jesus. I just want to ask God to open my eyes and give me better vision of Jesus.

I want to get in the word. I'm sorry if I talk about the Bible too much for you, but I want to be in this book. I want my blood to bleed by Bible. I want to stay in this book. I want to say, Lord, open my eyes to behold Jesus in this book.

And I want to see him in creation as I go out and behold his work and cry, worthy is the lamb that was slain. That's what I want. That's what I'm saying. That to me is Christianity. Christianity.

Living with him according to his word. Hallelujah. And then, when I'm on trial, which happens from time to time, by his grace, because he's with me, he's my companion, he's in me, I can stand up and say, let me tell you a story.

[ 43 : 35 ] Let me tell you a story. Let me tell you about Jesus and my story with Jesus. Hey, saints, do it.

It's okay. He's prepared you for it because you're walking with him. He's preparing you for it. He's working in you. He's for it. He'll give you words.

Trust him. But do you see him? Do you see him? Father, in Jesus' name, open our eyes even wider to behold your glory and majesty.

Oh, Lord, give us passion for Jesus. Give us, oh, deep love of Jesus. Because he first loved us, you did it. So, Lord, as we come to the table now, we come looking at Jesus.

And we pray you would strengthen our faith as we feast together upon Christ. In his name we pray. Amen. Session members who are serving, come forward.

[ 44 : 38 ] And if you also, you've been asked to help, you can come as well. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.