**12182022sm.mp3**

[00:00:03] We're skipping study number 17 today. We're going to do that on the 1st of January. So if you're using your encounter journal, we're on study number 18. And then also I want to let you guys know that we're really excited for our Christmas Eve services. Don't forget, we have a Christmas Eve Eve service and then on Saturday we have three services. Next Sunday we will not be meeting in person, but we have a special Christmas Day message for you that you can access online. It's a it's a lot of fun. I'm with the worship leaders and there's a gospel message that's presented. So I would just encourage you it's a great opportunity for you to have family members and friends that don't know the Lord just to give them an opportunity in your own home to hear the gospel. So encourage you to tune in to the We're in John Chapter ten today. Let's all stand together. Snow is still falling here. So. John, Chapter ten. We are going to begin in verse one. The Bible says this truly, truly. I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way. That man is a thief and a robber, but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him, the gatekeeper opens the sheep, hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice, a stranger. They will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. This figure of speech Jesus used with them. But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

[00:01:46] Not the first time that happened. So Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life. How does that go? That was pathetic, man. Now it's so bad. We have, like, a fun engaging service today. You guys can do better than that. Should I try it again? The feed comes only to steal, kill to steal, kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. Why? Because I am the good shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he's a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own in my own know me. Just as the father knows me And I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep and I have other sheep that are that are not of this fold. By the way, that's you. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

[00:03:20] I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my father and father, we thank you for your word today. We're thankful for the good shepherd. We pray, please Lord speak today and may your sheep hear your voice in Jesus name. Amen. You can have a seat today. Everyone does want to live their best life now. And by that I mean people want to be the best version of themselves. They want to be happy, they want to be prosperous. They want to make good decisions. They want healthy relationships. I think I could put the word you in there. You want to be the best version of yourself. You want to be happy and prosperous. You want to make good decisions. You want to have healthy relationships. Like I think that if you don't want that, there's probably a problem. And the reality is our culture offers a cornucopia. By the way, that's your word for today. Okay? You can look that up later. The culture offers a cornucopia of motivational podcasts and motivational books, and there are all sorts of motivational gurus and speakers and pop psychology that says it can get you to the good life. In fact, the self-help industry is a $44 billion industry in our country. There are 5000 U.S. health self-help speakers, and they make about $1.6 billion a year. There are 75 million millennials who use self-help services. And let me just say, wanting a good life is wise. Knowing how to get there is everything. One goes with me today. Okay? Like I thought that was I thought you'd be like, Oh, yeah, I'm in. Pastor, that's really that was solid. I guess not. I'll work.

[00:05:12] I'll work harder. Okay, let me say it again. Don't respond, because it just won't sound authentic. Wanting a good life is wise. Knowing how to get there is everything. Well, you didn't have to. You didn't have to. But thanks, because that that helps. Jesus knows the good life and as the good shepherd, he is able to take you there. Now, that's an open one right there for you guys. Okay. Oh, you failed. Okay. It's going to be a long morning. So this is what he does. He tells a story he knows he knows intuitively because he knows human nature that everyone wants everyone wants a good life in abundant life. And so he tells the story that would have been like simple for people in his day to understand. Not so much for us today, because when you're driving down the road or you're headed to the strip or you're going to Best Buy, there's not a lot of shepherds and there's not a lot of sheep. So there's kind of a disconnect for us with this particular story. All of that to say there still was kind of a disconnect within because they didn't get it either. He had to drill down more deeply into it. But the story goes something like this. Back in the day, you would have regularly seen, especially in Bethlehem, flocks of sheep and shepherds. And what the shepherd would do is this He would get up in the morning, he would go to a place that was a designated enclosure for his sheep, and oftentimes they were rented. So it was enclosed by a wall and there was a door with a gatekeeper at the door in the enclosure. There would have been multiple flocks. And so, you know, you get up in the morning and all of the shepherds would have gotten their coffee.

[00:06:55] They would have headed over to the enclosure. And then one by one, they would have gone into the enclosure to to retrieve their sheep. They would go into that enclosure. And the shepherds were so close to their sheep that when the shepherds spoke, their sheep recognized their voice. In fact, the shepherds were so. Close with their sheep. They they normally named all of their sheep. And so they would be able to call them by name. But here you have multiple flocks that are in this enclosure. And right away when when their shepherd spoke, the sheep would recognize the voice. The shepherd would walk out and take his sheep to green pastures. In fact, he would take them to another enclosure. That was a place where they were able to eat. It was an enclosure with an opening, and he himself would lay down in front of the opening. He literally was the door and nothing would go in and nothing would go out without the shepherd allowing it. And then he would take a sheep after they had a good day of feeding, and he would lead them back to the enclosure that was rented. And, and all along the way, because you remember, like, nighttime would have been the most dangerous time he would have because he was a good shepherd. He wasn't just a hired hand. He would lay his down, his life down for the sheep and protect them, whether it was a wolf or, you know, David said the bear and the lion came against his sheep. And so this was the picture that Jesus was giving. And, you know, as he explains that he is the door and he is the good shepherd, he also identifies people as sheep. He identifies people as sheep.

[00:08:33] Jesus is savvy concerning human nature. And of all of the animals He identifies human beings with, he identifies us with sheep I would have liked. Maybe a lion would have been cool or it would've been cool. He would have said, Yeah, you guys are. You all are like eagles, you know, or you know, some well respected animal. But he chose sheep and he chose sheep for a reason. I want to talk about this a little bit today. Number one, like sheep, people need a good leader. Like sheep, people need a good leader. Some people like to take the word sheep and people and combine it together. And, you know, it's the word sheep all because we are kind of we're kind of like we're kind of like sheep. All right. It's interesting. Sheep have no sense of direction. Maybe you're married to somebody like that, you know, don't point them out this morning. But sheep, literally, if they get lost, they can't find their way home. They have no ability to find their way to good food or good water. And so what God has done is God has hard wired sheep to be following critters. And they will they will follow for the good and they will also follow for the bad. Back in 2005, there was this story of a group of shepherds and they had about 1500 sheep. They weren't paying attention. And what happened was one sheep decided to walk off a cliff and all of the other 1499 sheep followed. We have a video this morning. No, I'm just kidding. It's a family service. It's a family service. All of that to say sheep are hard wired to follow. That's why shepherds lead sheep. They don't drive sheep. And I think that human beings are the same way.

[00:10:22] We are followers and we by nature, follow all the wrong things. And the world every single day is out there promising the good life to us, throwing out the date through advertisement, throwing up the bait by exalting what they perceived to be examples of people who have discovered the good life social media itself. The terminology is all built upon the concept of following. But I want to say to you today there is only one who is able to lead you to the good life and his name is Jesus. And I hope that you're following him. Peter said it like this, picking up on that on the, you know, the allegory of of sheep, you said for you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your soul. He's like, man, you all were like sheep. You were straying. You didn't know which way was up. You all were going the wrong way. But now you've returned to the Good Shepherd, the overseer of your soul, David, who knew something about leading sheep? You said this. He said, The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leaves me beside still waters. He restores my soul. Somebody can say amen to that. Today he leads me in paths of righteousness for his namesake. I love this, David. The sweet Psalmist the great shepherd of the people of Israel. There was a shepherd over his life, and it was Yahweh. Yahweh, he said, is my shepherd, and I'm the follower. He is the leader. He is the one who leads me beside the still waters. He's the one who restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his namesake.

[00:12:07] I would imagine today that there are many of us who are present at the gathering of God's people because we were going the wrong way and the Spirit of God convicted us of our misguided ways and brought us to that place where where we turned away from, from all of the ways the world was inviting us to come and supposedly had have the good life. But we chose to put our trust and faith in Jesus Christ. And He has been the one who has revealed to us life and that much more abundantly well, listen, we're like sheep. We need a good leader. But also like she people need help getting up when they fall down. People need help getting up when they fall down. I don't know if you know this, but sheep, when they roll over onto their backs, they are unable to get up like this. Poor little dude. He's not dead, by the way. All right? He's not. That was me on Thanksgiving Day. He's not dead. The problem for this guy is this. He has rolled over onto his back. His wall is so heavy and his back is so flat that he can't get up on his own. That's that's a big problem. The shepherd actually has to come along and grab him by the by the hoof and pull him by this little, little struggle. He's getting there. Come on, baby. There he is. He's up. I know. You know, you guys are so sweet like all poor sheep. Poor is a problem for the sheep. Because, listen, in that condition as he's on his back, gas is build up. And if he doesn't roll over, he dies because of the gas build up. Don't tempt me today. All right.

[00:13:45] But then in addition to that, you know, he's really vulnerable when he's in that position. Also, he's he's vulnerable to predators, whether they come from the sky or maybe a wolf or a bear or a lion. You know, the sheep needs a shepherd in that place. When the sheep is stuck, it takes a good shepherd to come and get the sheep upright. The truth is this. We're all stuck. We're all stuck. We have fallen. And we can't get up without the Lord. That's right. Romans 3:23 says this for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Listen, this is our natural condition. This is the natural position that we find ourselves in where we're stuck. And no amount of moral effort, no amount of religious effort, no exercise of our willpower. It's not just the help of other people that will enable us to get back up onto our feet. We need the Lord to get us upright. And I want to say to you, man, the good shepherd will lift you up. The Good Shepherd will lift you up. There is no pit that is so deep that the Good Shepherd can't pull you out of. Well, hallelujah. And the great thing and the great thing about him is this. All you have to do is ask. All you have to do is, as you know, Peter got out of a boat and he was walking on the water and he was headed to the Good Shepherd. And, you know, he took his eyes off of the Good Shepherd. His heart was filled with stress. He began to sink. And you know what Peter did? Peter did the right thing. Peter did the simple thing. He did the good thing. But he did the thing that so often many of us refuse to do.

[00:15:25] He asked the Lord for help. He simply cried out. He said, Lord, save me. And Jesus, who was not some little skinny, scrawny guy too, took probably his right hand and lifted big old Peter up out of the water, biceps, triceps, forearms, deltoids, popping on the Lord. Because, you know, he was a muscular man and he rescued he rescued Peter. That's what he does today. He rescues you. Maybe you're stuck today. I got another video for you. Maybe you're stuck. Well, guess what? He'll pull you out. Like this little shepherd boy. This. The sheep can handle it. Don't worry, it's not going to just locate is like, hey, check this out. Sheeps liberated. Happy sheep. Happy sheep, sad sheep. Show that one more time. Let's check that out again. All right. Because this is I wish it was slow motion. This is what he does. He pulls you out, man. You got yourself in a pit. You're stuck. You can't help yourself. You're happy. You're happy. You're you're all. And then you did it to yourself again. You did it to yourself again. Hey, he'll get you out of the pit the first time and the second time and the third time and the fourth time. He doesn't get tired of it. He doesn't get tired of it. And you know what? The fact is this there are often times there are often times pits of our own making so that we can blame everybody else. Right. We're making decisions in our life that are the wrong decisions. And invariably, we find ourselves in this spot where we're stuck and we're miserable, we're trapped. And no matter what we try, we can't get out of that place. I would venture to say there's some of us here.

[00:17:10] You're in that spot. And you know what? You have tried everything except the right thing. You have called out to everyone except the one who is able to pull you out and bring you freedom and bring you liberty and bring you life and relieve you from the difficulty that you're in. And you know what? Sometimes sometimes we don't cry out because we just feel so guilty. Sometimes we don't cry out because we just feel so bad. We feel too bad to go to the Lord again and ask for his help. But it is the joy. It is the joy of the Good Shepherd. To hear your voice calling out to him, asking for help is the voice of the devil that says, Hey, you're not worthy. It's the voice of the adversary, the false shepherd that says, Really? Again, you've let him down again. Who do you think you are? Don't you know? He's tired of this game that you've been playing, and so don't go to him. He's got other things he's dealing with and he's got better servants than you. And all of that is a lie from the devil. Today, you just need to cry out and experience the goodness of the Good Shepherd delivering you. Hey, that. The next thing is this like sheep. People need a defender like sheep. People need a defender. You'll notice that with sheep there aren't claws, there aren't things there. And by the way, let me just say this. You're like, man pastor, I've been hanging out in church for like five weeks. I don't know. There's some sheep that seem like they got some claws and fangs because I'm getting all beat up and we shouldn't be like that. Right? Right. Church. We shouldn't be like that.

[00:18:42] But sheep don't have claws. They don't have fangs. They don't have big muscles. They don't strategize their defense. It's not strength in numbers to stop when the the wolf pack comes that the sheep gather in a big circle and and fight off the defenders. Really, the only thing that a sheep can do is flee. And you'll notice that they're not all that fast. And so they are. Absolutely. It's interesting that Jesus chose to liken us to sheep totally defenseless, absolutely vulnerable, unless there's a good shepherd. David said this. He said, Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you are with me. You're Rod and your staff. They comfort me. Now, when David was talking about the valley of the Shadow of death, of course he was talking about the fear of death itself, but really in the mind of a shepherd. Remember, the most vulnerable place to be is in the valley, because when you're in the valley, you're in the lowland, you're susceptible to all the predators. And David said, Man, when I'm in that place of vulnerability, when I'm exposed, when I'm at great liability, when all of the predators are around me, my heart is at peace. I'm not filled with anxiety. I'm not worried. I'm not overwhelmed with fear because the Good Shepherd, he's with me. He's with me and his rod and his staff, they comfort me. Now, if you were a shepherd back in the day, you would have had two implements that you would have used. You would have had a staff. Staff was a long rod with a hook on the end of it, and the staff was used when the sheep would go wayward getting off the path because, you know, the sheep like to go their own way.

[00:20:27] And so they wander off. And the shepherd, as he's walking along, leading his sheep, because shepherds lead the sheep, they don't drive the sheep. When they see a sheep going astray, they would take the staff and they would gently and lovingly bring the sheep back into place. Oftentimes, you know, they would see too late. And so the sheep would put yourself in a difficult, vulnerable position, maybe falling off a cliff. And so they would take that hot end of the staff and they would get it around the the leg or the neck of the sheep, and they'd pull the sheep to safety. On the other hand, there was the rod, and the rod was not for the sheep. The rod was for the bear, it was for the lion, it was for the wolf. And the good shepherd would never use the rod on. She would only use the rod to defend his sheep from the predator. You know, I just I think about this and I think, man, we need to be so careful how we talk about our good shepherd. Right. I think we have terminology sometimes when we go astray, when we're not walking the way that we should. You know, sometimes we say things like, man, he took me out to the woodshed and he, man, he took the two by four out and he got me straight. And I just want to say, your good shepherd is not an abusive shepherd, all right? He doesn't pull the do by for all. He does chase those whom he loves. But he does that in love. He defends you. He protects you. There is an adversary who wants to steal, kill and destroy. And I want to remind you today, the good shepherd is your defender.

[00:22:02] When the devil comes knocking. Let Jesus answer the door. That's right. Hey. Also like sheep, the voice of the shepherd calms our anxieties like sheep. The voice of the shepherd calms our anxiety. So the shepherd would go into the enclosure in the morning. Like I said, he would call the sheep by name. The voice of the Good Shepherd not only identified who the shepherd was, but it would also pacify the sheep, because sheep are super anxious creatures, always stressed out, always filled with anxiety, always filled with worry. And so as the shepherd would enter the enclosure and speak, not only would he identify himself to the sheep and his presence would bring the sheep peace. But in addition to that, science tells us that and I know that you've like long to know this all of your life. When the shepherds spoke to their sheep, their heart rate actually would go down. So just the very voice of the shepherd would pacify the anxiety of the sheep. But I think men don't. We need that today. Man is the voice and the presence of the good shepherd in our lives that calms our anxieties. I was reading just this week, 31% of U.S. adults reported symptoms, symptoms of anxiety disorder in 2022. And so we're talking about excessive anxiety like we all do battle in and deal with certain levels of stress. But we're talking about to the extent of a disorder and that percentage is increasing and multiplying on a weekly and monthly basis. People are just stressed out today. People are overwhelmed. People are filled with anxiety. And the solution isn't to inebriated yourself. The solution isn't to numb yourself with drugs. The solution is not to distract yourself with entertainment. The solution is the voice in the presence of the Good Shepherd.

[00:24:05] And this is what he does. How he leads you besides still waters, he leads you besides still waters. He calms your soul when you sit in his presence in stillness. You and I need to learn to live in the presence of the Lord. And on a daily basis, let me just say to you, it starts every morning when you wake up and spend time with him. I mean, there's nothing there's nothing better than beginning your day in the presence of the Good Shepherd. And I don't know about you, but but, man, I need that because some days, you know, I wake up and my mind's already moving a million miles an hour. The second I open my eyes and I've got this project and this issue and these people and and this problem, and it's all about solutions and solving and fixing. And it's like, No, no, wait a minute. Before you frame your day as an issue to deal with, you need to sit at the feet of the one who loves you in stillness and in peace, and open the good book so the Good Shepherd can lead you and guide you and speak to you. And not only reading from the Bible, but praying and lifting your supplications and your petitions and your needs and then having time just to sit in stillness as he speaks back to you. Starting your day in a place of supernatural peace will transform and change your life. It's the voice of the Good Shepherd. It's the presence of the Good Shepherd. And then also, I don't know if you realize this, I know you'll you'll be excited to learn this, but sheep can actually recognize the faces of other sheep. They can recognize up to 50 other faces of sheep.

[00:25:49] And it is scientifically proven that when they see faces that they recognize, it calms the heart of the sheep. And so there's a there's a peace that fills their heart when they're surrounded by ones that they recognize, other sheep that they recognize. You say, man, how does that how in the world does that apply to me today, Pastor? Well, listen, when when you're stressed out, one way to relieve your stress is to be with the people of God, to be with people that you recognize. I want you to think about this promise. It's amazing. Jesus said this in Matthew 18:20, For where two or three are gathered in my name. They're my among them. For where two or three are gathered in my name. There am I among them. We have two things coupled together that bring peace to the heart of the Christian number one, the presence of Christ, and the number two, the people of God. And when those two things go together, there is a special promise that comes from the Lord. He is always with us, but He is with us in a special way when we together are worshiping him. I think this is important, especially today, because we have a COVID hangover. Brothers and sisters, we have a COVID hangover as Christians. Did you know that churches across America, pastors are trying to rebuild their congregations because a good percentage of people that were going to church before 2020, before COVID hit, have chosen not to come back. The average is about 10% of congregations across America have suffered loss because people have. And this is a difficult one to unpack, right? I mean, there's lots of reasons for this, but there are a lot of people who've just opted to watch online.

[00:27:41] And 10% is probably like for some congregations is 20% or 30% of the people are like, you know what? I can get the same thing watching from home in my jammies with my French toast, with some bacon and some coffee. And I just want to say to you, I just want to say to you, online is not the same as in person. Online is not the same as in-person. And I say that knowing I say that knowing that there are times where it's a it's a benefit. It's a blessing. There's no doubt about it. If you're sick, stay home, get better. Come back when you're better. If you're at if you're in a situation where you're a shut in and you can't get out, thank God for technology and our team that puts together all of the different services. But man, if you're able to be present with God's people, there is no substitute and it is time for you to come back to church. In Jesus name, amen. The final thing today is this like sheep, people have a tendency to settle for less. I don't know if you know this, but sheep are known as they're being led to the Stillwater. As they're being led to. The Stillwater sheep are known to stop and to begin to drink out of muddy puddles. So even though still clear, mountain water might be 20 feet away because sheep don't know better and because sometimes sheep are really lazy, what they'll do is they'll stop at a muddy puddle and they'll stick their face in the muddy puddle and start to drink. And the Good Shepherd has to come along and lovingly say, Hey, listen, no, you know, I don't know how to talk to sheep.

[00:29:22] I'll just be honest with you about, you know, maybe they say something like, hey, hey, buddy, hey, buddy, this is not the best thing for you. Come on. Like, get your face out of the dirt. Get your face out of the mud. Get your face out of the muddy water. You're going to get all messy and all dirty is going to jack you up and you're going to feel it for a long time. It's probably not how they talk to sheep there. There's better water right over here. There's better water right over here. And you know what the world every single day is saying to you, Hey, this is the place to be satisfied. This is the good life right here. No, you don't need Jesus. You don't need the Bible. You don't need the people of God. You can have the abundant life look at how it's offered to you and the world advertises it and the world markets it. And the world sets a system system up where it's almost like you feel as you're looking at the world around you and as you're listening to advertisements and commercials, it's almost like you have this feeling that you're missing out on something really good. And if you could just have a little bit more of that, a little bit more fun, a little bit more entertainment, a little bit more money. You know, J.D. Rockefeller was asked this question, super rich guy, you know, I mean, more money than he could ever. More money than you could ever imagine. Right? He could not spend all the money that he had. And there was a journalist who said, Hey, Mr. Rockefeller, when is enough? Enough, right. You've got everything. You've got everything. When you hit that point where it's like, man, I don't need anymore.

[00:30:50] And his answer was so interesting. He said, just a little more like, in other words, it's never enough. It's never going to satisfy you. All the entertainment and all the money and all of the wealth and all that the world has to offer, it will always leave you wanting something more. That's why, as pastors like, we're we're signposts, we're we're signposts. We're saying more in this direction. And the arrow points to the person of Christ. You can have more when you have Jesus, you can be satisfied when you have the Lord in your life. In fact, He is more than enough for us. I hope you've experienced that. Sheep have a tendency to settle for less. I want to encourage you today to choose the things that bring life. Are there areas where you've stuck your proverbial face in them and in the muddy puddle and you're drinking from what the world has to offer? And it's not just not satisfying you. It is leaving you sick and it is leaving the people around you sick as well. Go to the still waters, go to the green pastures, be disciplined. Right? Sometimes following the Lord takes effort and discipline. The easy way is to defer, is to divert and go right to what the world has to offer. But you need to be disciplined because you love the Lord. You need to say no to those things and yes to him. Adoration is the greatest expression of rebellion somebody wants you to set against the world. I love that. Hey, you will never get the best your life has to offer without Jesus. Satisfaction and safety are directly proportional to proximity. The closer you live to the Good Shepherd, the more abundant your life will be.

[00:32:36] Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for The Good Shepherd. And we pray that you would help us. We pray that you would help us today to to find more in him. To pursue him and to seek him to stay close to him. That safety and satisfaction are correlated to proximity. And we don't want to wander God. We don't want to be distracted. We don't want to take the bait. We don't want to satisfy ourselves by sticking our face in the muddy puddle. Lord, we. We want you. And so bring us bring to your sheep the good life, the abundant life. Help us to receive it by faith. And today, as her eyes are closed and listen as our heads are bowed, it just was maybe today you've never you've never chosen to follow the Good Shepherd. And you know what? It's not that he hasn't been speaking to you. You've heard the voice of the Good Shepherd. You've heard him calling you to himself. You have felt that conviction of sin. You have been been made aware that. That you have fallen and. And nothing that you have tried in your life has been able to lift you up. And yet, you know, there's still that resistance. And I would just ask you this morning, why are you saying no to him? Why are you saying no to the voice of the Good Shepherd? Who's calling you to himself? You need to be led. And there's only one good leader who will lead you to the abundant life. You need help, and he's ready to help you. It doesn't matter what situation or circumstance you find yourself in today. He warned you if you cry out to him. He will not turn you away.

[00:34:50] He'll be your defender. He'll lead you to real satisfaction and purpose in life today. You know, if you find yourself in a place where you've just you have been resisting, today is your day to stop fighting against him and to say, yes, I hear your voice, I'm choosing to follow. I'm choosing to follow. I'm choosing to humble myself. I see that you are the good shepherd. And that you laid your life down for your sheep. Today. If this is you, I want to lead you in a prayer. And I would also add to that this may be your if you are a Christian and and yet you find yourself in a place where you're wayward again. You've been satisfying yourself and set in settling for less. Maybe you've gotten yourself into a difficult situation. I'll tell you today, he can. He can help get you out of it. And as a Christian, you know, you just you need to come back. You need to come back to him. In either case, today, I want to lead you in a very simple prayer. And this prayer is you asking Jesus to help you. Crying out to him in faith and believing that he did lay his life down for you. And I believe because it's a promise that he makes that he is going to hear. He is going to help. He's going to do an amazing thing in your life. So this morning, if this is you. I want you to pray this prayer after me. Jesus today. I realized that I need you. And I'm crying out for help. I've sinned. I've made a mess. And you're the only one who can help me. So I asked today, as I choose you. As I choose to follow you.

[00:37:24] As I choose to believe in you. That you would hear. That you would help. That you would cleanse me. And give me a new beginning. Today. I'm choosing to follow you all the days of my life in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Hey, this morning. Yeah, it's good. This morning if you followed me in prayer. I just want to thank God for the work that he's doing in your life. Would you just raise your hand today if you followed in prayer? Don't be afraid or ashamed today. Stretch your hand up high. Awesome. Thank you. Thank you. I see your hand in your hand. I see your hands in the back. I see your hand right here. Awesome. Right over here. Right here in the front today. What we're going to do, Pastor Tony, is going to lead us in a song of worship. And I'm going to have our follow up. Leaders on both sides of the worship center today is on my right and my left. Flip that around for yourself. They'll be leaders today. And if you raise your hand, maybe you're putting your faith in Christ for the very first time. Well, we want to pray for you and we want to give you a Bible. Maybe you're a Christian and you're just rededicating your life. We want to encourage you and we want to support you. And so as you all stand today, I want to encourage you during this time of worship, just make your way on over to our leaders and get some prayer. Go ahead and stand on up today. God bless you guys. I will see you Friday or Saturday, God willing, in Jesus name. Amen.