

Program Transcripts

December 2022



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

SEARCH PROGRAMS

December 2022

Topics subject to change without notice

DEC 4 – DO YOU CARE?

How seriously do you take God? Does what God says matter at all to you? Many today never give God or His teaching a second thought. One day, however, the choices we make will matter to our destiny.

DEC 11 – YOUR ATTITUDE MATTERS

Each day we choose how we view life and whether we will focus on the good or focus on the bad. In this lesson we will explore ten positive attitudes that please God and make life richer and fuller.

DEC 18 – A NOTEWORTHY MIRACLE

Peter and John healed a man over forty years old who had been born lame. Each day he was carried to the temple gate called Beautiful and begged alms. What the apostles did for him was a miracle no one could deny.

DEC 25 – A FRIEND TO JESUS

No matter where you turn, you'll never find a better friend than Jesus. Though He knows everything about you, He still loves and cares for you. In this study, we will explore how we need to be friends with Jesus.

Do You Care?

How seriously do you take God? Do God's ways matter at all to you? Today we're asking, "Do you care?"

Two of the biggest problems of our time can be found in the words, "I don't know!" and "I don't care!" Many recognize there is a God but know little about Him. They've gotten to a point where they want a socially proper view of God that really doesn't resemble the God of the Bible at all. They've chosen some favorite passages about God while ignoring other passages that are just as important. Others have simply dismissed God and His word; they simply don't care what He says about life or morality. They're determined to do whatever they think is right in their own eyes.

Proverbs 3:5 to 8 urges us, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body, And refreshment to your bones." When people forget God and follow their own desires and impulses, they lose sight of the One who created them and the One who will determine their destiny at the end of time. Trust in the Lord and in His teaching, and you'll be blessed.

Our reading today comes from the epistle of Paul to the Romans, chapter 14, verses 7 to 12. And in this passage it talks about our personal responsibility. "For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me,

And every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God." That's a reading from God's holy word.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father as we consider our accountability to You, help us to care about the things that You care about, to love the things that You love, to avoid the things that You despise. Father help us to love you and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

We're asking, "Do you care about Christ and His teaching?" Now caring means that what matters to God also matters to us. It means that we live recognizing the Lord Jesus died for our sins and rose from the grave. It means we regard God's words as inspired, inerrant, and authoritative. The Scriptures urge us to take God and His word seriously.

And there's a monumental difference between being careful and being careless. Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 12:32, "Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take away from it." In chapter 26 verse 16, Moses wrote, "This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and rules. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul." Again Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 28:58 to 59, "If you're not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God, then the LORD will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, and sicknesses grievous and lasting." I wonder how many problems we have brought upon ourselves today because we were not careful to listen to God.

God told Joshua in Joshua 1 verses 7 and 8, "Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. The Book of the Law shall not depart

from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Throughout the Scriptures, the Bible calls people to take God's words seriously. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 4:23 to 24, that “‘If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.’ And He was saying to them, ‘Take care what you listen to.’” Ephesians 5:15 to 17 says, “‘Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.’”

People who don't care about God are frequently deceived. 1 Corinthians 1:25 reminds us, “‘For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.’” Many have the idea, “‘Well, I'm wise and I don't need to listen to God.’” Well if you don't care to hear the truth from God, you'll fall for the lies of the world, lies that hold no promise and will lead you down the wrong path.

1 Corinthians 3:18 to 20 says, “‘Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he's wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, ‘He catches the wise in their craftiness,’ and again, ‘The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.’”

Colossae was a small city on the road to other places. And merchants and others who traveled that road through Colossae, often brought all kinds of strange and deceptive ideas to this town. Some of the people of Colossae bought into their lies rather than to follow the truth. And Paul warned the people in Colossians 2:6 to 8, “‘Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to the human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.’”

People sometimes say, “‘It doesn't matter what you believe.’” And they forget how their words affect those who are younger. A young person may think, “‘Well, if it doesn't matter what I believe, then I'll believe and do whatever pleases me.’” Well this foolishness may sound attractive, but it points to a way of life that destroys. Ephesians 5:5 to 7 says, “‘For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.’” Now you may think what you believe and what you do doesn't matter, but you see it matters to God.

Some think it's unkind to speak of God judging people after this life is over; but to fail to speak of Judgment Day is actually cruel, very cruel. To suggest God doesn't care what we believe or how we live denies reality and it leaves people with false hope and no future blessing. Deceiving people about God and the judgement is not simply a lie; it can lead people to be lost eternally. And that my friend is very cruel!

Some think, “‘I can sin in any way I wish and as often as I wish and still be right with God. They got this idea from the people who teach “once saved, always saved.” The Scriptures teach otherwise. Galatians chapter five was written to Christians to help them realize the consequences of sin. Galatians 5, verses 19 to 21 says, “‘Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality (that is fornication), impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. (And Paul says) I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.’”

Galatians 6, verses 7 to 8, also written to Christians, says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

Now some believe they can continually associate with sin and sinful ways, but none of it will rub off on them. But 1 Corinthians 15:33 to 34 says, "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals.' Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. (And he says) I speak this to your shame." You see, you can't walk through the mud and not get muddy. And you can't walk with sin, and sin not corrupt your thinking and your ways.

Proverbs 1:24 to 33 reveals the words of Wisdom, and wisdom's calling out to people who didn't want to hear the message of what the wise is saying and they don't care about what it matters. Wisdom said, "Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and no one paid attention; And you neglected all my counsel and did not want my reproof; I will even laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, When your dread comes like a storm, And your calamity comes on like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come on you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me, Because they hated knowledge, And did not choose the fear of the LORD. They would not accept my counsel, They spurned my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, And be satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive (the foolish) shall kill them, And the complacency of fools shall destroy them. But he who listens to me shall live securely, And shall be at ease from the dread of evil." The wisest thing that you can do in life is listen to the Lord!

Let God be at the center of your heart and life. Let Christ rule in your heart. Jeremiah 29:11 to 13 speaks of God's own promise to Israel, he says "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.'" God wants you to find Him; God wants to bless you. God has plans that reach into eternity!

You remember James 1:22 to 25 says, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he's like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he's looked at himself and gone away, he's immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does."

Caring about God means setting priorities. You know, a person who cares is willing to serve and sacrifice in order to please the God who created and blesses him. Romans 12:1 and 2 says, "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Now a caring person doesn't live like there is no God; rather, he wants to live according to the teaching of God, so that he can show the world that God's will is good and acceptable and perfect.

Caring about God means that you'll look beyond today. Caring is important, because life is short, and death is certain. James 4:13 to 17 says, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow, we're going to go to such and such a city, and spend a year there, we're going to engage in business, we're going to make a profit.' Yet you don't know what your life will be like tomorrow. You're just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and

also do this or that.' But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; and all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to the one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Hebrews 9 and verse 27 reminds us, that "it's appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." You see we don't have a second life to correct all the troubles we caused in this first life. After death comes judgment from God. We'll give an account for the life that we have lived. If we don't care what God says and we refuse to listen to His word, then He will punish us. John 3:35 to 36 says, "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

People who don't care about God today will one day wish they had cared. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 9:26, "That whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." Oh, I don't want anyone to face God unprepared. God really does mean what He says, and those who refuse to follow Him will face eternity without His blessing. Do you care about God? Do you care about your soul and your eternity? I want you to know that I care about your soul, and I care whether not God is a part of your life. And I hope that you will want to have that same care for God, and for others.

Let's pray. "Father, we're thankful that You have cared for us down to this day, and have blessed us in so many ways. Father, help us in every way to come to know You and to care about the things that You teach us, to live lives that glorify Your name. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

God cared so much about us that He sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins so that we could live with Him forever. If God so loves us, shouldn't we love and care about Him. Do you care? And if you care, how are you showing that you care? Do you love God enough to keep His commandments or do you live for your own pleasure?

Isaiah 55:6 to 7 says, "Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon." If life is short and death is certain, then you must be prepared for the day when the Lord Jesus comes again. On that day you'll give an account for what you've believed and how you've lived. Please get prepared for the day when you have to face God.

Now to get right with the Lord Jesus, believe in Him with all your heart; turn from sin to righteousness out of love for the One who died for you; confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, do that with your lips; and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Now baptism is the beginning of a new life in Christ. It's the time when God causes you to be born again, washes away your sin, makes you His child, adds you to His church, and makes you an heir of heaven.

Perhaps you once were a faithful Christian, living and serving the Lord, but you've wandered away. Come back home to the Lord. The Father hasn't stopped loving you; please don't stop loving Him or serving Him. Start caring again and be prepared for the eternal home with God. God loves you and wants you to love Him.

Your Attitude Matters

Each day we'll choose whether we'll find joy or be miserable. Today we're exploring the attitudes that can draw us closer to God. Stay tuned.

Proverbs 4:23 says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life." The heart is where we think, we feel, and we decide. When people let their selfish passions rule their hearts, they find much misery; but when they let God guide their hearts, they find life and peace. We're all in a battle over our hearts. And our hearts are choosing good or evil. The Lord said in Jeremiah 17:9 to 10, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (And then God says) I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds." What will the Lord find in your heart?

Romans 6:16 to 18 says, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, that you're slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." Now to whom have you given your heart? What is your attitude about God, about Jesus Christ, or about Scripture? Are you willing to hear what God says?

Our reading today comes from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 1, verses 18 to 20. Now the prophet Isaiah spoke from the Lord, and his words are the words of the Lord. "'Come now, and let us reason together,'" Says the LORD, 'Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. If you will consent and obey, You will eat the best of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword.' Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Let's pray. "Heavenly Father, we're thankful that You have given us Your word to help us to understand the important things of life. Father help us to keep our hearts right and our attitudes good, and to love You and serve You. In Jesus name, Amen."

Some attitudes lead to misery and troubles, while other attitudes lead to peace and joy. And we want to follow the things that make for joy, love, and peace. We want to please the Lord, so we need to choose those attitudes and ways of thinking that glorify Him and bring us closer to Him. We know God's ways are always the right ways to think and to live. They honor God and bless everyone. When we rebel against God and choose the selfish and hurtful ways, we dishonor God and bring shame upon ourselves; but when we humbly listen to God, we find abundant blessings.

God places great value on good attitudes, and those attitudes are worth pursuing. Let's consider them. First, we need a teachable spirit. Proverbs 1 and verse 5 says that "A wise man will hear and increase in learning, a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel." Some seek for wisdom from God, while others choose to please themselves. Proverbs 2:6 to 8 says, "For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; And He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones." When we close our ears and hearts to God, we actually rob ourselves of many blessings. You remember Proverbs 3:1 to 2 says, "MY son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; For length of days and years of life, And peace they will add to you."

Second, we need respect for God. God created us and has provided for us since the day that we came into this world. God sent His Son Jesus into the world to die for our sins. Should we not respect Him? Proverbs 1 verse 7 says, that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction." The fear mentioned here is really a healthy respect for God Himself and for

what He says in Scripture. Proverbs 15, verses 31 to 33 says, that “He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof, Will dwell among the wise. And he who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. The fear of the LORD (that is the respect for the Lord) is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor comes humility.”

The Lord said in Jeremiah 5 and verse 22, “‘Do you not fear Me?’ declares the LORD. ‘Do you not tremble in My presence? For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, An eternal decree, so it cannot cross over it. Though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail; Though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it.’” Yes, there are floods and tsunamis; but the water cannot remain there. It must return to the sea. And in the same way, sin cannot prevail. God will judge sin, because it contradicts and offends His nature and opposes His purposes. Romans 6:23 reminds us, that “the wages of sin is death.” And so we should respect God’s boundaries and live for His purposes.

1 Peter 3:10 to 12 says that “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” Now how we view God matters to our lives and to our souls. If we have no respect to God’s ways, we risk God turning away from us.

Third, we need to trust God. Proverbs 3:5 to 6 says, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.” Now if we lean on our own understanding, we may walk a path of destruction. We must let God show us the way. Proverbs 16:1 to 3 says, that “The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives. Commit your works to the LORD, And your plans will be established.” God will show us His way, and we need to trust Him. Jeremiah 17:7 to 8 says, “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He’s like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.” God knows your heart and He knows whether you trust Him.

Fourth, we need to hope in God. Isaiah 40:28 to 31 says, “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD, Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.” Oh, we can’t count on our own strength alone. We must have our hope in God.

Fifth, we need to practice humility before God. The Lord God said in Isaiah 66:2, “‘For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being,’ declares the LORD. ‘But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.’” The Lord Jesus said to His apostles who were wanting a high position in the kingdom, and He says this in Matthew 20:25 to 28, He says, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slaves, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

True Christianity is always selfless. It dies to self, that it may live for God. Paul wrote in Galatians 2 and verse 20, “I have been crucified with Christ. It’s no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for

me.” True Christianity sees there is something bigger than one’s own desires and pride. It willingly sacrifices its own for the sake of others.

Sixth, we need to submit ourselves to God. Matthew reveals a little of deep sorrow that’s in the Lord Jesus when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Matthew 26:38 to 39 says, “Then He said to them, ‘My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.’ And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.’” Though Jesus knew all the things He would suffer at the trials and on the cross, He was willing to submit to the Father’s will and not demand His own way.

When people don’t like what God says or don’t understand what God says, they tend to bristle up at God and turn away from Him. You remember, James 4 and verse 7 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” Humbly obeying the Lord follows the steps of Jesus who willingly sacrificed Himself on the cross.

Seventh, we need hearts that are thankful. 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 18 says, “In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” Christians are thankful for all things, whether they’re good or challenging. And even our troubles can be a blessing. You remember, James in his words in James 1:2 to 4 says, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” When God is your Father, even your struggles can lead to a better life.

Philippians 4:6 to 7 says, “Be anxious for nothing (that is, stop worrying about anything), but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Some people are humbly grateful, while others are grumbly hateful. Give thanks always. And we need reminding sometimes of God’s blessings. 1 Corinthians 3:21 to 23 says, “So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” In Christ we have an abundant life with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. And so be thankful.

Eighth, we need to focus on what is true and good. What you focus your heart upon determines whether you see good or bad. Some are forever miserable because they focus on the rotten and the evil, complaining and criticizing others. Philippians 4 verses 8 and 9 says, “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there’s any excellence or anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you’ve learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” Now if you dwell on the good, you’ll be blessed with the peace of God. If you dwell on the rotten and the evil, you’ll be drawn to it. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, “Don’t be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals.’” And what you’re feeding your heart and you soul will make a difference.

And so, ninth, we need to seek peace. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God” (Matthew 5 verse 9). My friend, Hugh Fulford recently observed, that “Some folks are peacemakers, and others are ‘piece makers.’ That is they break in pieces and make a wreck of everything they touch and every relationship of which they are a part – in the home, and in the workplace, and even in the church.... And, he says, unfortunately we’ve all known such people.” Romans 12 verses 18 to 21 says, that “If it’s possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he’s thirsty, give him something

to drink; for by so doing you'll heap burning coals on his head." Don't be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good."

And then tenth, we need to be people of prayer. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing"; that is we should keep praying and not quit on God, not stop praying all together. James 5:13 says, "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray." You see, God wants to hear from you about every trouble that's in your life. You see prayer is how we come close to God and how we share our hearts with God. Prayer is what blesses God, because we feed our hearts to Him, and blesses us because we've come into contact with Him, and are reminded of His great and wonderful power and love for us. I tell you, we're losers in life when we fail to pray. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 26:41, "Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." My friend, do you pray? Have you drawn close to God?

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father, we're grateful that we can come close to You, that we can call upon You, and that You hear our prayers. Father, help us to be humble, to be loving, to be servants, to care about You and to care about others in need. And Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

Your attitudes matter because your attitudes determine your choices. If you ignore God or see God in a negative light, you'll never respect Him; but if you see God's love, wisdom, and kindness, you'll gladly and lovingly serve Him. 2 Chronicles 6 and verse 9 says, "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." And you must ask yourself whether your heart is with God or against Him. God has always loved you, and He desires your love.

Moses said in Deuteronomy 10:12 to 13, "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today (and He's doing that) for your good?" Now even today, every law of God is given to us for our good.

When we obey God, we show Him our love; but we also find devotion to God blesses our lives. Now to become a Christian place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, turn from sin in repentance and please the Lord and live in His ways, confess Jesus as the Son of God, and be baptized, be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Now baptism into Christ is a burial and a resurrection with Christ that takes place by an immersion in water. Now baptism is an immersion, that's what the word means. And baptism into Christ is a baptism into His death (Romans 6 and verse 3). Now we're crucified with Him whenever we're baptized, so that we can be set free from sin (Romans chapter 6, verses 6 to 7). Now baptism is a death to the old man of sin, but it's also a new birth, a beginning of a new life in Christ.

A Noteworthy Miracle

Some people question whether the miracles found in the New Testament really happened. Today we're exploring a miracle that reveals the power and authority of the Lord Jesus.

A miracle is an act or event that occurs outside the bounds of natural order; it's supernatural. Some say they cannot believe the Scriptures because they include miracles that go beyond the natural. Well, they haven't personally seen a miracle and they've decided that miracles aren't possible. Of course, Christianity is built upon the conviction of the miracle that God raised Jesus from the dead. The Lord Jesus, in addition, had performed many signs, wonders, and miracles before He arose from the dead.

When they learned Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, the enemies of Jesus said, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs (that is miracles). And if we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him" (John 11 verses 47 to 48). Now they admitted that the miracles of Jesus were real and He was worthy of believing. And they determined that Jesus must die, because He posed a threat to their way of life and their nation. And if His miracles were not real, He wouldn't have posed a threat. They even decided to put Lazarus to death (John 12 and verse 10). Now such facts help us to understand the miracles of Jesus in His day were undeniable. They would be astonished at anyone who would claim that they didn't happen.

Our reading today comes from Acts 2 verses 22 to 24, these are the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost referring to Jesus, His death, burial and resurrection. "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power." Yes, Jesus was able to be raised from the dead.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father we're thankful that Your word tells these wonderful stories, not only of the Lord's death upon the cross, but Father also how You raised Him from the dead. And Father help us to have faith in these events that took place so long ago. Help us always to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

The things that Jesus did weren't done in a corner (Acts 26:26); people throughout the land of Israel knew about them. Peter said the miracles of Jesus were attested by God to the Jews, so we can believe them as well. Not only does the four gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) tell of the Lord's miracles, the book of Acts also reveals how the apostles worked miracles by the power of God. Acts chapters 3 and 4 discuss a specific miracle that took place in front of a multitude of people at the temple.

In Acts 3 and verse 1, Peter and John went up to the temple at the ninth hour to pray. The ninth hour was three in the afternoon, a time when many people gathered at the temple to pray. God, however, had more in mind for them that day than merely praying. What they did there that day would leave an impact on their lives and open the door for them to preach the gospel.

Acts 3:2 to 3 says, "And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms." Well this lame man from birth had to be carried to his location at the Gate called Beautiful. He was more than forty years old, and his inability to walk was evident to the people in Jerusalem. He had been in that same location every day, begging for alms to stay alive.

Acts 3:4 to 7 says, "But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, 'Look at us!' And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, 'I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!' And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened." What Peter and John did for this lame man was far better than the alms the man asked for. "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Now alms may have fed this man for a day or so, but the ability to walk gave this man a whole new life!

More than merely trying to help a man, Peter and John wanted all Jerusalem to know of the power of Jesus Christ. Acts 3:8 to 10 says, "With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God; and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him."

Peter uses this event to preach the gospel. Acts 3:12 to 16 says, "While he (that is the man who was healed) was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement. But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, 'Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we've made him walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of your fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.'" The power of miracles doesn't originate in men but in God. God can do what men alone cannot do.

Now because they rejected Jesus and crucified Him, Peter called the people to repent. Acts 3:19 says, "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." Peter clearly proclaimed the authority of the Lord Jesus and the need for all the people to hear and obey Him. Acts 3:22 to 23 says, that "Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to him you shall give heed to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'" Well these of course were very strong words and they challenged the authority of the council who had condemned Jesus.

And so in Acts 4, verses 1 to 4 that gives us the result of this message: it says "As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of men came to be about five thousand."

On the next day the priests, rulers, elders, and scribes gathered in the council. The group that sat in judgment of Peter and John was the same group, which put Jesus to death. They asked in verse 7, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" Verses 8 to 10 they reply, "Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he said to them, 'rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised

from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health.” They revealed God who raised Jesus from the dead also, and how He had the power to heal this lame man’s legs, feet, and ankles.

Peter not only told them the Lord Jesus is not only the prophet prophesied by Moses, He’s also the stone prophesied in Psalm 118. Peter said in Acts 4 verses 11 to 12, that “He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, which became the chief corner stone. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” Now just as Jesus is unique in His death upon the cross for our sins and unique in His resurrection from the dead, so He is unique in His ability to save. In this chapter, two things reveal the uniqueness and power of the Lord Jesus: the prophesies from hundreds of years before and the miracles themselves. Now no one but God could know the future, and no one but God could immediately and completely heal a man born lame.

Acts 4:13 to 14 says, “Now as they (that is the council) observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.” What could they say? Everyone saw what had happened.

And so the council in Acts 4 verse 16 asked Peter and John to leave and they convened and they asked one another, “What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.” The crowds at the temple had seen the miracle, and there was no way that they could say that it didn’t happen. They couldn’t deny the truth when the evidence was so clear. Let’s remember the evidence was clear to both those who were believers and those who were enemies. It was beyond dispute! People who deny miracles cannot explain why the enemies of Jesus would not deny this miracle.

They did the only thing they could do. They tried to keep the apostles from preaching Jesus to the people. Acts 4:17 to 18 reveals what the council told Peter and John: “But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.” And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. Now here were some very powerful people who couldn’t deny the miracle but felt that they could silence the apostles. They didn’t realize they were fighting a power bigger than they were.

Acts 4:19 to 20 says that Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.” In their hearts God came first. They had a message so powerful and so true they could never stop speaking. They knew they were telling the truth, regardless of what the council commanded them. They would obey God!

Acts 4:21 to 22 says, “When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.” They could threaten but they couldn’t stop the apostles from preaching Jesus. You see the Apostles were eyewitnesses of His resurrection, and the power of God that healed the lame man only confirmed the truth of their message.

Remember Acts 4 and verse 4, Peter and John delivered their message at the temple before they were arrested. And it says, “many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of men came to be about five thousand.” You see, the healing of the forty-year-old man who was lame from birth, a man they all knew, convinced them of the truth of what the apostles taught. And there’s no doubt, no doubt at all that his healing showed serious physical changes in the man’s legs, feet, and ankles. And

they could see it for themselves. Seeing a man who couldn't walk leaping in the temple was truly astonishing. They knew that God had done that. And if God could do that, He could also raise Jesus from the dead.

So, why does all this matter to us today? Well it matters because we today are having to decide as to what we believe, just like the people at the temple that day. Will we believe in the power of God to raise the dead and heal the lame, or will we deny His power? Will we look to Jesus for salvation? Will we be numbered among the believers? Will we obey God or will we obey men? Will we listen to the doubters who can't deny this noteworthy miracle or acknowledge the truth? You see, the teaching of Scripture often calls us to decide whether we will follow Jesus in faith or follow men who doubt but cannot explain. Since Jesus saves, since He is risen from the dead, let's follow Him!

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful for these stories, these true stories about those who were believers and those who were enemies, seeing the same miracle and knowing that it was true. Father help this to build our faith and our commitment to follow You and Your son Jesus. Father in all things we pray that we may obey Your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

Peter and John remained faithful, they lived up to their faith in Christ. Peter would later encourage Christians in 1 Peter 4:14 to 16, that "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God."

We don't have to be ashamed of our faith in Jesus Christ or in what He taught. The historian, Gary Habermas told Lee Strobel in the Case for Christ, "Without question, the amount of testimony and corroboration of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances is staggering. To put it in perspective, if you were to call each one of the witnesses into a court of law to be cross-examined for just fifteen minutes each, and you went around the clock without a break, it would take you from breakfast on Monday until dinner on Friday to hear them all. After listening to 129 straight hours of eyewitness testimony, who could possibly walk away unconvinced?" Placing your trust in Christ is based on a solid foundation not a leap in the dark.

To become a Christian place your faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, repent of sin and turn to the Lord's ways, confess your faith, and be baptized into Christ. And just as God gave new life to Christ, God will give newness of life to you when you're baptized according to Romans 6:3 to 7. Your old man of sin will die, and you'll be born again free from sin. Your new life in Christ will be an abundant life, and you'll have eternal life. Yes, obey the Lord today.

A Friend to Jesus

Everyone needs a friend, and the best friend you'll ever have is Jesus Christ. Today, we're exploring the friendship we have with Jesus. We go to God's Word, because we know God is our friend. He loves us fully and freely. His love is greater than we can imagine. Romans 8:32 says, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?" Few treasures in life exceed the value of friendship. Heaven is beautiful, not only because God made it so, but more because of who will be there. The Lord yearns to be our friend, now and forever. I know you're thankful for His love. Someone said, "A friend is one who knows all about you and still likes you." The Lord Jesus went to the cross for sinners. He gave His love freely to people who didn't deserve His love. Yes, He knows all our sins and our weaknesses. He knows our thoughts, good and evil. He knows all our secrets. In spite of it all, He created us and gave Jesus to save us from sin. He loved us as sinners, but wanted to provide something better for us than the pleasures of sin.

The more we get to know God, the more we love Him. The more we love Him, the more we want to serve Him. The more we serve Him, the more abundant our lives become. Friendship with Jesus is the greatest blessing of life. Let's explore friendship with the Lord.

Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to John chapter 21:15-17. Jesus is having a conversation with Peter. "So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said it to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend My sheep.'" Love is not just about saying we love someone, but also living it out in our lives.

Throughout His days, Jesus faced people who wanted to take His life and end His ministry. Matthew chapter two tells how Herod tried to kill Jesus as an infant after the wise men inquired about the birth of the king of the Jews. Sadly, Herod did kill many infants in Bethlehem, fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy that Rachel would weep for her children. Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, is buried in Bethlehem; you can visit her tomb even to this day.

The New Testament tells of Jesus coming to His hometown of Nazareth to preach. The Lord taught things they didn't wish to hear. They had a hard time believing a hometown boy could be the Messiah. Luke 4:28-29 says, "When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and they drove Him out of the town and brought Him to the brow of a hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw Him down the cliff." Jesus was able to escape, but you can imagine His heartbreak and disappointment over the loss of His lifetime friends at Nazareth.

John chapter eight tells of the experience Jesus had in Jerusalem in the temple as He defended Himself before the Jews. Jesus spoke of Abraham's rejoicing to see His day. John 8:57-59 says, "So the Jews said to him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.' So

they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.”

Again, in chapter ten of John, Jesus revealed to the Jews that He and the Father are one. But this didn't set well with the Jews. They thought He was blaspheming by claiming to be the Son of God. So John 10:31 says, “The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.”

John chapter eleven tells how Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. When the report of this miracle reached the ears of the Pharisees and chief priests, they convened a council. They said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation” (John 11:47-49). Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said it would be better for one man to die than for the whole nation. So, from that day on they made plans to put Jesus to death. Matthew 26:4 says they plotted together to arrest Jesus by stealth and to kill Him.

The disciple, Judas Iscariot, whom Jesus named an apostle and entrusted the moneybox, became greedy and was a thief. Matthew 26:14-16 says, “Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?’ And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.” Judas led the mob who brought swords and clubs to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus frequently prayed. Judas had even agreed with the Jews on a sign. He said “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” The Bible says, “And he came up to Jesus at once and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ And he kissed Him” (Matthew 26:49). Ah, this kiss must have broken the Lord's heart. It was cruel and selfish. There was no love to be found in that kiss. They bound the hands of Jesus and they led Him away.

During His trials and crucifixion, they humiliated Him; they mocked Him falsely; they accused Him, slapped Him, scourged Him; and they forced Him to carry His own cross. Pontius Pilate found no fault in Him worthy of death, so he tried to find a way to free Jesus by offering to release a prisoner the Jews wanted. The people refused to free Jesus and cried for Barabbas.

When Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus who is called the Christ, the people showed no mercy on Jesus. Matthew 27:22-23 reveals that they all said, “‘Let Him be crucified!’ And Pilate said, ‘Why, what evil has He done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Let Him be crucified!’” Though Pilate washed his hands of this matter in front of the crowd, the people said, “His blood be on us and on our children!” These bloodthirsty people callously called for the death of an innocent man because they were envious and they were afraid of what Rome might do.

So, they led Jesus away to Golgotha, and there they crucified Him. While suffering on the cross, His enemies showed no mercy. They were not content just to do away with Him; they had to humiliate and slander Him as well. The Bible says, “And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you're the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ‘He saved others; He cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him come down now from the cross, and we'll believe in Him. He trusts in God; let God deliver Him now, if He desires Him. For He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way” (Matthew 27:39-44).

Jesus endured terrifying physical pain on the cross; but when the crowds watching added insult to injury, it must have pierced his heart. Jesus could see a bigger picture. He went to the cross to save the very sinners who put Him there. The Lord endured evil against Himself without becoming ugly to others.

The Bible says, "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He didn't revile in return; when He suffered, He didn't threaten, but He continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:21-24).

Jesus blesses us and blesses all, even when people do their worst to Him. He bore our sins, so that we might leave an old life of sin to live to righteousness. The Lord so befriended us that He opened the way for us to have a new and better life, filled with faith, hope, and love. The Lord Jesus does not leave people where He found them. He heals what is broken in our lives. He lifts up those who are down. He forgives our sins. He gives us hope that we can leave old habits of which we're ashamed and can have new lives filled with love and righteousness.

No one, I say to you, no one will ever be a better friend to you than Jesus Christ. Proverbs 17:17 says that a friend loves at all times. The Lord loves you for who you are and who you will become. Remember, God sees what we can become with His grace and help. By His grace, He forgives our past, helps us day to day, and guides us to an eternal home in the future. His love helps us every step of the way.

Christianity is friendship, friendship with God and with everyone who loves God. The New Testament describes Jesus as the "friend of sinners" in Matthew 11:19. Jesus called His disciples "friends" (Luke 12:4 and John 15:14). He wants everyone to stand with Him not against Him. He wants their friendship to be real, to be strong, and to last forever. He wants more than to just be an acquaintance or fair-weather friend. He wants people who will pledge their faith and loyalty to Him.

The Lord Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13-14). Then He said, "You are my friends if you do what I command you." Jesus was willing to die for you to save and bless you. Do you really think He would do anything to hurt you or to lead you astray? He asks that you befriend him by being obedient to His commands. The Lord wants you to obey Him because you love Him. But the Lord is not being overbearing or cruel to us when He asks us to obey Him.

The Lord is not trying to enslave us with His commands. This is crucial. Some hear the word command and they get the wrong idea. The Lord never gives us a command to hurt us, to manipulate us, or to subdue us. God's commandments don't enslave; they set us free. Some people don't like following the rules or being told what to do. Our Father in Heaven is indeed a loving Father to us. He gives us His commands because He knows that His instructions will bless our lives and keep us from hurting ourselves.

Every commandment, in the Word, leads to blessing. Every commandment helps us to avoid the pitfalls of life. Every commandment keeps us on the straight and narrow road that leads to an abundant life. Love leads us to do what is right, what is best, and what brings a blessing to all. The commandments of Jesus are designed to teach us how to do just that! The

more we walk in the Lord's way, the more we see how God was loving us through His commandments. God's commandments are God's gift to us.

In the Old Testament, Moses reminded Israel as they were about to enter the Promised Land, "For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon Him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?" (Deuteronomy 4:7-8). If that were true of the Law of Moses, how much more true is it of the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament? We have a great God who has blessed us with the way of righteousness. Oh, what a wonderful gift!

The Lord has also blessed us with a spiritual family, the church, who are friends. The little epistle of Third John ends with the words, "The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name." The Lord has blessed me with the opportunity to travel all over this country and into other countries to meet my brothers and sisters in Christ. Because of Christ, they are my brethren and also my friends.

The Bible calls us to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15). Friendship means that we care about others personally, sharing their joys and their pains. We take care of each other. Being a friend to Jesus means being a friend to His church and all the people who are in it. They are indeed family.

Being a friend to Jesus means that we'll take our stand with Him. We believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. We pledge our lives to serve Him and Him alone. We lovingly, respectfully but firmly stand up for His teaching and for His teaching alone and for His morals. To be a friend to the Lord Jesus means we trust Him fully and freely. What He calls sin, we recognize as evil. What He calls false, we recognize as wrong. Friendship with Jesus calls us to serve Him, to preach the gospel, and to sacrifice ourselves. Oh, we do this with love, and joy and thankfulness for the opportunity. Are you a friend of Jesus?

As the Gospel of John closes, the Lord Jesus has his first personal conversation with Peter after the resurrection. Only days before, Peter had denied the Lord three times. "When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' He said to him a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to Him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep'" (John 21:15-17).

I've wondered if the Lord Jesus might ask that question to you or to me today, "Do you love me?" or "Do you love me more than these?" Friend, how would you answer? Can you say that you have been faithful to the Lord, that you're attending church faithfully, you're reading your Bible, you're praying daily, and you stand up for what is true and right? Are you a friend to Jesus? To become a friend to Jesus, the Lord said we should obey His commandments. You must believe; without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Then you must turn from everything sinful and offensive to Jesus and turn to what is right and pleases the Lord. That's repentance. Confessing Jesus as the Son of God is also necessary and being baptized into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins is also necessary just as the Bible teaches in Acts 2:38.