

Authentic Christianity #5

Dancing With The Darkness

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

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Crossroads Ministries
301 S. 8th Street
Opelika, Alabama 36801

Website: www.fbcopelika.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers

I want to encourage you this morning to open your Bibles to the book of 1 John 2. If you're a first time guest or visitor with us, I want to welcome you to a series that hopefully is becoming very familiar to our regular members and attenders here at First Baptist and we are dealing with the book of 1 John and a subject matter know as authentic Christianity. And it may seem kind of strange to you to think, "Well, Christianity has been around for 2,000 years. Why would we need to address authentic Christianity?" In fact, some of you may think, "Well, don't you have this figured out by now? Don't you know what real Christianity should look like?" However, we discover that humanity has not progressed as much in the last 2,000 years as we give ourselves credits for because the same struggles and issues that they dealt with 2,000 years ago are the same issues we're dealing with today. So many opinions, so many ideas, so many different perspectives on what it really looks like to believe and to behave as a believer in Jesus Christ.

Today in 1 John 2, we're beginning in verses 7 through 11. We're going to deal with a subject matter that I've entitled something very contrary to Baptist tradition, now, I'll be honest, this is a very theological statement: I've been a Baptist longer than I've been a Christian. Some of y'all let that sink in and you'll know what that means later. But I've entitled it "Dancing with the Darkness." Now, I know dancing is one of those words we don't use among Baptists but we all understand and we all at some level, we've danced somewhere, we just don't tell other Baptists we have. We know what dancing is and to dance, there is one who leads, there is one who follows, but it simply means to be in step with somebody else. And today we're going to see an undercurrent in the book of 1 John, much like we see in the Gospel of John, that there is light and there is darkness, and the Bible makes it very clear that Jesus is the light of the world, he came into the dark world that did not comprehend him, and in 1 John 1:5, it says, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." And what we see today is there is this thing that can creep into our lives, it's very subtle at times but becomes very dramatic, that if we embrace it, we begin to go step-by-step, we begin to walk with the world and with the darkness. If we reject it, we will walk in the light as "He is in the light."

In 1 John 2, beginning in verse 7, a subject matter that you might not have considered as being the determining factor of whether you are dancing with the darkness or walking in the light. Beginning in verse 7,

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard from the beginning. 8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, that thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines. 9 He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10 He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11 But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes.

It says that we can either walk in darkness or in light and the determining factor according to this passage is whether we love or hate our brothers.

Now, the first issue we must deal with in this passage is the fact that it communicates very clearly that God has revealed himself to us. It says, "I give you a new commandment but you have an old commandment." Notice the word is not a suggestion, it is a commandment, and what we see is all throughout Scripture that God makes it very clear he has revealed himself to me.

Now, we categorize this revelation. Oftentimes we speak of general revelation. This is very clear in the book of Romans 1 where it says that humanity is without excuse, that we can see that there is a God who formed us and fashioned us and wants to save us. We just have to look at creation out there and we see that there is a God. That is general revelation. But we also categorize how God reveals to us in what we call special revelation. Special revelation is when God supernaturally and at times personally communicates and speaks to and through humanity. One of the most obvious means of special revelation is the word of God, the Bible that you have in your hands hopefully, is God's special revelation to us. He has supernaturally communicated his words for and to our lives.

Now, the reason that this is important is because when we look at the commandments of God, whether they be old or whether they be new, and here he's communicating what this commandment is about walking in darkness versus light, I want you to see some very important aspects. The first one is this: that when God reveals to us through his word, it is not confusing. It's not confusing at all. In fact, I want to share with you today I believe that God's word is very clear for our lives.

Allow me to go back to the book of Genesis, Genesis 2. Humanity is in the garden of Eden. They are preparing to do as the Lord would ask and maybe I'm just of a simple mind, maybe I'm just a simple person, but I believe that God made it very simple and very clear what humanity's responsibility in the garden of Eden was. So allow me to be

overly simplistic this morning: one tree is good, one tree is bad. Pretty simple, isn't it? The tree of life, good. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, not so good. That's not confusing, is it? But in the next chapter, one known as the serpent, one known as Satan himself shows up and he asks this question, "Yea hath God said?" In other words did God really mean what he said or is there a better, maybe even a different way?

In chapter 3 of the book of Genesis, you see humanity begin to debate, begin to discuss with himself, "Well, it looks good for food. It's pleasant to the eyes. It might even make us wise." You see, confusion did not come from God, confusion came from the enemy. Clarity came from God. He said, "It's real simple: you eat of this tree, you'll have life, the other tree, you'll experience death." Confusion comes in not when we hear from God, but when we listen to the world.

Now let's move a little bit further in the book of Genesis. There's an event known as Noah's flood. It begins in Genesis 6. If you're on the boat, good. If you're not, bad. It's pretty simple, isn't it? You're either on it or you're not.

Later on we have an individual show up by the name of Abraham. God tells him he's going to have this child of promise through his wife Sarah. His wife Sarah, good. Hagar the maidservant, bad. It's not difficult to understand, folks.

This is not confusing. In fact, you go on to what we know as the Ten Commandments. There the Israelites have come out of the bondage of Egypt. They've gone across the Red Sea. They're in the wilderness and the Lord comes down and says, "If you do these things, I'm your God, you'll be my people." I'm not going to go through all ten commandments this morning but let me share with you how clear God's word and his commandments are for our life. Let's just take one, "Thou shall not covet another man's wife." In our culture today, we call it adultery. Your wife, good. Somebody else's wife, bad.

It's real simple. There's nothing difficult. The confusion comes in when we say, "Well, what about this situation and that situation?" In fact, in 1 Corinthians 14:33, God makes this statement, that God himself "is not the author of confusion." What's interesting in that chapter of Scripture is the Lord is taking one of the spiritual gifts that was listed in chapter 12 and demonstrated in chapter 13 and he says here in chapter 14, there is this one gift and interestingly, they struggled with it then, we tend to struggle with it now, how many people are allowed to use it, what setting is it supposed to be used in. An entire chapter of your Bible is dedicated to one spiritual gift so that there would be no confusion. He says he is not the author of confusion. So when it says here there is an old commandment, there is a new commandment, this isn't confusing. It's very clear. You either love or you hate.

Now, it's also not contradictory. Now, when you look at this passage that says you've received an old commandment, I give you a new one, there is a natural tendency to look back and say, "Well, does this new commandment replace the old one? Is someone is it outdated? Oftentimes you hear this argument: well, there's the God of the Old

Testament, there's the God of the New Testament. Well, what you see is not only is God very clear in his message, he's also very consistent. There are no contradictory statements. There is no, in the academic world we call it the wall of non-contradictions.

Let me give you some examples. You do know you cannot have a married bachelor, right? It's impossible. You cannot have a tall midget. It's impossible. You just can't do it. I can get away with you with that analogy so I'll go ahead and say you can't do it. And so you cannot have a contradictory God, and let me show with you the pattern we have in Scripture beginning in Genesis 3 when humanity falls into sin, you never find a single place in the Bible outside of Jesus Christ himself where somebody shows up good. Not one. Everybody is messed up, including you. We're all messed up. We're all simple people. The Bible says that even our best works are like filthy rags. That is a very consistent message all throughout Scripture.

You also see back in Genesis 3:15 that when humanity messes up, that God says very clearly that he will send his seed from the woman who will crush the head of the serpent. It's the first Gospel. It's the proclamation that Messiah is coming. And all throughout the Old and into the New Testament, we see a consistent message that not only are we, humanity, sinful but God is going to save us himself, his way, his Son, from our sins.

Even in Deuteronomy 6:4, it says, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD your God is one God." There is this emphasis on the first of the Ten Commandments where it says, "Have no other God before me." Allow me to go back to simplicity: one God, good, many gods, bad. And so you see even later on when Jesus says that he is the way, the truth, the life, no one comes to the Father but by him, believe in Jesus, good, anything else, bad.

So what we see is not only a clarity of communication but we see a consistency. There is no contradiction so when he says you've heard an old commandment, I give you a new commandment, it's very similar to what Jesus did in the Sermon on the Mount when he said, "As you have seen it written, but I say unto you." He was not saying something different than the Old Testament, he was taking a statement or a concept from the Old Testament and he was exploring it, expanding it, and clarifying it.

So we know that it's not confusing, we know that it doesn't contradict itself but here's the part where it gets difficult. What we see is that when we look at the commandments and the principles of God, it's not always comfortable. In fact, notice what it says here, it says that you are to love your brother. All throughout this passage it talks about loving and let's be honest with each other, we are simply, humanity, we are prone to selfishness. It's hard to love. It's difficult to love. It's not comfortable loving people.

But when you look at this passage and you look at this concept, if we explore it even in a little deeper level, it's even more uncomfortable. You see, we have taken the word "love" in our culture and we have messed it completely up. We use the word so flippantly. Allow me to illustrate. Now, I don't want to expose your life so I'm going to expose mine. Allow me to give you a little glimpse into the morning of the Meyers' household. It goes a little something like this in regards to this word. My wife typically gets up 30

minutes, maybe an hour ahead of myself. When I get up, I get a cup of coffee. I join her on the couch. I give her a kiss on the cheek. I'd love to give her a kiss on the lips but she doesn't let me until I brush my teeth. So I give her a kiss on the cheek and I typically say, "Honey, I love you." About 30 minutes later, we go and we retrieve our dogs. I have, you know, I have all boys biologically so I had to buy my girls. I have two girl dogs, they have four legs each, so I have my girls. I call them "my girls" and typically I'm like, "Oh, girls, I love you. I love you." I do that. Why do we baby talk dogs? I don't understand why we do that but we do. And so I'm telling them how much I love them and we go take care of business. Then about 30 minutes later, my boys wake up and I give them high-5's, fist bumps, "Hey guys, love you, guys. Hope you have a great day. I love ya." Then a few minutes later we'll sit down for breakfast and oftentimes Tracy will fix eggs or whatever and I'll say, "Oh, baby, I love these eggs."

I want you to see what I've done. I have just used the same word to affectionately describe my wife, my dogs, my kids and eggs. So it has lost the richness of the word and it says if you love your brother, understand when you begin to explore that word and it's a word we hear a lot in church, it's called agape, it literally means to put somebody else's interest above your own. You know, I'm sure most of us have been to what we call a Christian wedding, a wedding where individuals had a Christian, not only a foundation of faith but at least thematically with the music and the message. Oftentimes we hear a passage, 1 Corinthians 13, you know that famous passage, right? Love is kind, it's not jealous, it doesn't envy, it doesn't keep any record of wrong. If everything else fails in life, love never fails. We've heard that passage so much at weddings we just block it out until it's done reading. We know that passage. What's interesting, though, is if you go back 400 years in time when the first mass published English translation of the Bible, what we know as the King James Bible was published in 1611, in 1 Corinthians 13, the word "love" is not utilized, it's the word "charity." It says that charity does not envy. Charity is not jealous. Charity does not keep record of wrong. Charity, when everything else fails, it never will fail. Why? Because that word emphasizes putting somebody else's interest above your own. And in this passage when it says if you love your brother, you're walking in light, what it is saying is that that expression or that desire to walk in light means to put somebody else's interest above your own. If you hate your brother, you're saying that you're putting your interests above somebody else's. When we are selfish, we walk in darkness. When we are selfless, it says we're walking in light.

So how does God want us to redirect? How does he want us to go from darkness to light? From selfish to selfless? Well, I think the first place to begin is among our family. I know what you're thinking, spouses, kids. No, no, don't think in physical terms, think spiritual terms. Think those fellow believers in Jesus Christ. They have all kinds of ages. There is male, there is female. There is all kinds of family. There are brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts. But beyond that, all those individuals have a commonality known as the brothers and sisters of Christ. You know, there are times unfortunately that even believers in Jesus Christ get upset and have conflict. Marriages have difficulty. Parents and kids have difficulty. Even employers and employees have difficulties.

When it says that you're to love your brothers, let's start with just the family of faith. I am not a licensed professional counselor, however, because I'm a pastor, I've had a lot of people talk to me over the years and I could be absolutely wrong when I share what I'm about to share. I'm not an expert in the field but let me just share with you my observation of what I have never observed. What I have never observed. I have never had a couple meet with me, I've never had a family meet with me, I've never had friends meet with me who come to me and say, "Jeff, we've just got massive conflict in our home. We care so much about each other's needs, our life is a wreck." I've never. I've never had a wife have a conversation with me and say, "Oh, pastor, my husband and I, we've got marital discord. I mean, we may not make it." "Well, why is it?" "He is so selfless. All he does is think about me. He never thinks of himself. It's wrecking our marriage." I've never had a parent come to me and say, "Oh, pastor, I don't know what to do with these teenagers. They wake up in the morning, they say, 'Yes, ma'am. No, sir. What can we do for you? I don't care what you do for me, I just want to help you out, mom and dad.'" Why? Because we naturally see the...what we usually hear is, "My needs aren't being met." Or, "What about me?" Or, "Do I even count in the equation?" What happens is we begin to go toward a self-centeredness rather than being directed towards selflessness which means putting our spouse before ourselves, putting our family before ourselves, putting believers before ourselves. This is why Galatians 6 says, "Do good to everyone but especially the brethren."

But it even goes beyond what we would call the family of faith. I want to go to the next one of what I call "friends," and the reason I've used this word is very theologically strategic. The Bible makes it clear as a believer in Jesus Christ that nobody in this world is technically your enemy. Now, there are people who perceive Christianity as the enemy. There are people that believe as a Bible believing in Jesus Christ that you are an enemy of them but we technically don't have any enemies because the Bible says in Matthew 28, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel." Not just the ones you like or the ones that you prefer, that we are to see everybody. You're either a missionary or you're a mission field. That pretty much sums it up. So when I say our friends, when it says that we are to love our brothers or we walk in darkness, it's not just other believers in Jesus Christ, that we're to be selfless to even the world around us. Years ago I had someone share a phrase with me, it just kind of resonated. It said: those who deserve love the least oftentimes need it the most.

Now, today if technology will cooperate, we have the opportunity to share with you a team of ours from First Opelika. There they are, there's Alan and our team. They're in southeast Louisiana in Greenwell Springs, Louisiana right now demonstrating what we're talking about.

Jeff: Alan, how are you doing out there?

Alan: Hey, Jeff, good morning.

Jeff: Good morning.

Alan: I have a new friend to introduce to you guys. This is Kelly. Kelly just bounced across the street and she wants to tell you thank you for some stuff.

Kelly: Yeah, thank you. These wonderful people came across the street in my neighborhood to help one of my neighbors and I introduced myself and then they came bringing gifts and I didn't have a chance to go through them until today and they brought them yesterday. And I'm looking through them and it's like, "Oh, my God, it's Christmas! I have bleach. I have Neosporin. I have Kleenex. I have mops. I mean, wonderful awesome gifts that you just don't think about and haven't had time so I am truly blessed. These are wonderful people. I am so glad they came down to help us and thank you for your blessings and your continued prayers. They prayed with me yesterday and my husband and I want God to bless you so that you can keep blessing others. Thank you.

Alan: Amen, Kelly. So good to meet you.

Kelly: Yes.

Alan: You're getting an applause.

Kelly: Yeah!

Alan: Folks, yesterday we took this house behind us, our team of 30 took this house and we completely gutted it and got it ready to begin rebuilding and as you see behind me, all of the contents of that home is there and pictures don't show it all. There is a bad smell here because of refrigerators. These people lost everything and probably 4 or 5 families on this street have moved back in, Kelly being one of them, and they're beginning to rebuild and they're going to make it. It's such a blessing for you to send our team here. We just want to thank you to be a part of this effort. And I've got some of our sweet folks here. I think Carla might want to say something to us.

Carla: Y'all, thank you so much for supporting us and allowing us to come down and your prayers are amazing to help us come down and love on these people. And we were able to help and get all of this man's, going through this man's stuff and help get it out on the street for him, that he couldn't do it. And it's not about the stuff that you have, it's about the seed that you plant in these people's lives and in these homes and the seed of hope and y'all thank you for your prayers and support that you were able to give us.

Alan: The most exciting thing that has happened is yesterday alone out of all the Samaritan's Purse teams that went from Greenwell Springs Baptist Church, 22 people prayed to receive Christ.

Jeff: 22.

Alan: One great story that we heard was there was an elderly couple who had had their grandchildren visiting them and they had bought an 8 foot inflatable swimming pool and for some reason they had not deflated it yet so as the water came up, they got in that pool, they got two of their neighbors and they had to row through two neighborhoods until they could be rescued. One of the Samaritan's Purse chaplains was sharing with them yesterday and heard their story and shared Christ with them and both of them prayed to receive Christ also. So there are a lot of people reaching out, a lot of love down here. One of the greatest things I've heard from a homeowner since I've been here was that the wave of love that they have felt from the body of Christ or the flood of love, was so much greater than the flood itself here.

Jeff: Thank you, Alan. Thank you for all that you're doing. I know you're going to finish up that house today, right? You're going to start on a new one or just finish that one?

Alan: I'm sorry, Jeff, I didn't understand you.

Jeff: Are you just finishing the one we started yesterday or is there another project today as well?

Alan: We're about to go to start another project. The rest of our team is at worship and right after lunch we're going to go and we're going to start and we plan to finish one more house before we come back tomorrow.

Jeff: Can I ask one very selfish favor?

Alan: Yes.

Jeff: Make sure my wife and kids behave.

Alan: Make sure what?

Jeff: Tracy and the boys behave.

Alan: I'll take care of it.

Jeff: I appreciate you, brother. Thank you very much. Thank you so much, Alan, for all that you and the team are doing. Thank you.

Now, beyond the pictures of the damage that's there in southeast Louisiana, what you saw on that screen is about 30 of our folks here who were willing to give up their Labor Day weekend in some cases, and there's nothing wrong with going to a ballgame. They were willing to give up going to the first home game. Some of them changed their plans, redirected to go and to clean out three week old water and I can't even describe to you the smell that was there. I was on the ground yesterday there in southeast Louisiana. For people they had never met before. People whose names wouldn't ring a bell. Why? Because of those 22 decisions that he talked about. When we love, when we put someone else's interests above our own, God does amazing things with that and what happens is you end up walking in the light versus walking in the darkness.

So what happens if we decide to reject it? What happens if we say, "I know what God has said about all this but I'm not real comfortable with it and I'm just not real interested"? Look at verse 10 and 11, it says, "He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." Now, the first thing that's going to happen in your life is you're going to begin to literally walk in darkness.

Now, I have this issue in my life when we close down the house at night, I don't know why I'm made this way but I literally cannot see my hand in front of my face in a dark house. Now, those of you that are law enforcement officers, don't panic. I don't have night blindness. I can see driving at night, I just can't see in my house at night. I don't understand it. It's just my life. That's how I am.

Well, over our 20 years of marriage together, Tracy and I, I have stumped every toe I have at least three times. I have crushed fingers. Do you know what I've done many times? I don't even know I pull this off, I'll be turning the corner going into our bedroom and I will hit my head on the doorjamb going into the bedroom. I just beat myself up. I'm not able to see. Do you know what happens when you walk in darkness? You hurt yourself. You see, when we are selfish, when we want to say, "Well, it's all about me," do you know who you hurt? You hurt yourself. You notice what they said in that video, that they received the blessing by being selfless. We actually harm ourselves by being selfish. When we walk in the darkness, we end up hurting ourselves.

But there's another concept that happens and I know this word isn't specifically used in this passage but allow me to just extrapolate a word in quotes called "dizziness." You remember when you were children and particularly at camps or vacation Bible school and it goes by all kinds of different names, do you remember the game Dizzy Lizzy? Where you would have several teams and you have a baseball bat and it would be 10 or 15 feet away, about like from here to Brian and Mike, somewhere in that area. You'd have a team with a baseball bat and you would run 10 or 15 feet, spin around that bat about 10 times and then run back and the whole point was who could get back and tag the next person to go. I have administrated that game so many times. It's one of my favorite games to be the leader of, not the participant, but the leader of and here's why: because as those young

people go around that bat so many times, on their way back they hit each other and they have a mid-air collision right there in the middle of the field. You see, when you spin around the same object over and over and over again, what you end up doing is hurting other people, and what happens is when we begin to think that it's all about us, what we do is we focus on our lives, we focus on our wants, what I feel like I deserve, and we allow it to spin around consistently and when all we do is let our lives focus around what we want, what ends up happening is we end up harming others.

I cannot tell you how many times I've deal with not only family members but individuals I've never met who have had addictions, struggles, strongholds and when you confront them about their struggle in life, do you know what they often say? "Well, I'm not hurting anybody but myself." That's a lie. You've bankrupted your family. You've caused shame and pain and agony. Because you think you're only hurting yourself because all you see is the one area you're spinning around and around. But ultimately when we walk in darkness and allow ourselves and others to be hurt, it causes destruction.

Now, I want to step away just for a moment from individuals, from families and structures, I want to talk about the church for just a moment, the body of Christ, believers in Jesus Christ. Our team that's on the ground there in southeast Louisiana, they're actually in an area in a community that I personally lived in for about three years. I was on the ground for about 24 hours. Let me share with you some of the saddest news that I heard while on the ground. Sure, you saw the homes that were destroyed. Over 40,000 homes are completely destroyed in the area. Over 100,000 people have been displaced. Cars are gone. Jobs have been lost. Businesses don't exist anymore. It is a natural disaster war zone, is the best way I can describe it. But let me share with you some of the saddest news I heard. There are at least three that was communicated to me, local church congregations that in light of what's happened have decided to close their doors and say, "We're done."

Now, I know what some of you are thinking, "Well, if we're going down there to help those folks, we can rebuild those churches." Let me share with you, as Paul Harvey would say, the rest of the story. You see, I lived in that community. I lived in that area and when I heard, I wasn't surprised because all of these agencies, these entities, these churches, they kind of had a reputation that they were more concerned with their own well-being than ministering to anybody else. You know, studies have been done as of late that show that churches that grow versus churches that decline, do you know what one of the common threads of churches that decline? Inward focused. They're more concerned with what they possess, with what they have and what makes them happy than ministering to others.

I want to give you a statement. I say it in a variety of ways. When it comes to "church," I'm not so interested in how many people we have in the seats, I want to know how many feet do we have in the street. And what I mean by that it's not just about us coming, it's about us being and going, and what happens is when we begin to love others and have their interests...when we are more concerned that people who don't know Jesus are ministered to than people who already know Jesus, then all of a sudden we'll start

walking in light and we won't experience darkness at all. Here in 1 John 2, it says we can either walk in darkness or we can walk in the light. It all is based on how we perceive others in comparison to ourselves.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed as we prepare for our time of invitation. Maybe you're one of those individuals today who would say, "Yes, I'm walking in the darkness but even to a greater degree, I don't know this Jesus you've talked about. I heard about those 22 people in Louisiana, I need to be one of them." I've got great news for you. It doesn't matter where you've come from, what you've been involved with or who you've been involved with, if you're here this morning and you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you've messed up and you need Jesus, I've got great news, all you have to do is have a real serious conversation with him. Technically we would call it prayer. You don't have to say anything out loud. You don't even have to say the same words I would say but maybe that conversation would go a little something like this, "God, I realize today something that you already know about me, God, I'm the problem and I understand that Jesus is the answer. I believe that I've sinned. I've messed up. But I also believe that Jesus Christ loved me enough to come and to live and to give his life on my behalf. So, God, I come today. I don't have all the answers but I know the answer to my sin problem is Jesus Christ alone. I'm asking you to forgive me. I'm asking you to save me. In the best way I know how, I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed. Maybe that's a decision you made years ago, maybe even decades ago and maybe today is the day you declare you need to follow in believer's baptism, or maybe today's the day like one couple in an earlier service who said, "I want to make this my spiritual home. This is our church family." Whatever decision it is and let me just encourage you after I pray, just step out, step forward. We would love to celebrate with you today.

Lord, as we come to this time of invitation, God, thank you for inviting us or thank you for not leaving us to our own demise. Thank you for not putting us on the shelf. Thank you for not saying, "Enough's enough." God, thank you that you desire for us to be more than when we came today, greater than we came today, by the power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Thank you, God, that you're willing to save, you're willing to forgive and you're willing to empower. God, I just pray now as you've invited that we would respond. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

I'm going to ask you, church, to stand with me as Brian leads us. Whatever decision, we'll be here at the front.

"Lord, I come, I confess
Bowing here I find my rest
Without You I fall apart
You're the One that guides my heart

"Lord, I need You, oh, I need You
Every hour I need You

My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You

"Where sin runs deep Your grace is more
Where grace is found is where You are
And where You are, Lord, I am free
Holiness is Christ in me

"Lord, I need You, oh, I need You
Every hour I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You."

As we prepare for some exciting news to hear in just a moment, I'm going to ask, Brian, if you'll just kind of share that chorus with us one more time. What a great line to leave on, "Oh Lord, not I want you, but I need you. Every hour I need you." Just one more little chorus and then we'll share an exciting decision.