

## Four Marks of the True Worshipper

Philippians 3

Pastor Richard Caldwell, September 15, 2019

Good morning. I want to say thank you to your pastor and his wife and their family for how they've taken care of Jacque and I since we've been here. Also, to you for this weekend. It's been a real joy. You're a sweet congregation. And everyone that we've spoken to, just a sincere godliness that encourages our hearts. And it really has been just a great joy and a privilege to be with you this weekend. So thank you for having us and for the opportunity that we've had to get to know you better.

I'm going to ask you if you would, to join with me in turning to the book of Philippians chapter 3, which is where we will spend our time this morning - Philippians chapter 3. And we're going to read beginning with the first verse and we'll read through verse 3. Philippians 3:1, Paul writes,

1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. 2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

Let's go to our God together in prayer and ask His blessing.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for this weekend we've had together, we thank you for the times around Your Word and for the times of just refreshment and encouragement that have come as we've spoken with each other and loved each other, and heard each other and been encouraged. We just give You praise.

Now, Lord, as we turn our attention to the preaching of Your Word now, we ask for Your help. Even as Paul writes, "we put no confidence in the flesh," we acknowledge that we are helpless to accomplish anything of lasting value in our own strength. Lord, if You don't teach us, we don't learn. If You don't deal with our hearts, we are unaffected and unchanged. Even as we encounter Your Word that is living and active and sharp as a two-edged sword, we are still unchanged unless You are at work in the proclamation and the reception of Your Word.

And so we look to the powerful working of Your Spirit in this next hour. May You, Lord, with the light that is Your Word enlighten our minds and hearts, and deal with us in a way that we leave this next hour different than we began. And we will give You thanks for this in the name of Jesus, amen.

We've been talking about worship this weekend, and we talked about the beginning of worship on Friday night. We talked about how it all begins with conversion. We looked at Christ's encounter with a woman at the well, an evangelism conversation that turned to a worship conversation, and how that is absolutely consistent because that's where worship begins. It begins with salvation. Salvation in the sense of justification, salvation in the sense of regeneration, salvation in the sense of reconciliation. This is where we became worshipers.

And then yesterday morning, we talked about how worship continues in the context of ongoing salvation, progressive sanctification. How in fact, worship is the key to personal

holiness. We need to connect in our lives that the battle with sin to the matter of worship. That all sin really is a matter of covetousness at its root. It's a matter of evil desire. And covetousness according to Colossians 3, is idolatry. It's desiring something in the place of God. It's putting confidence in something in the place of God, it's preferring something before God. And so the way to overcome sin is through worship. Worship is about desire, it's about devotion, it's about discernment, it's about dependence. We learned this yesterday.

This morning, what I want us to focus on is what the Lord has produced in us when He saved us, and what He's producing in us as He sanctifies us. What we see in these verses is a description of a true worshiper. Of course, we can state it in another way - what we have before us is the description of a genuine Christian. And those two things are synonymous. When you talk about a genuine Christian, you're talking about a true worshiper.

Notice again what Paul writes, he says in verse 2, "Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh." That's one of the clearest descriptions of a genuine Christian that you'll find anywhere in your Bible.

There is no more important question than this, is there? What does it look like if you're truly converted? What characterizes a genuine believer? No more important question than that. We live in a temporal world. We're used to things that belong to this temporary age, but we should remember always that this temporary age is passing away, and before we know it, we're going to be face to face with eternity.

When you talk about eternity, you're talking about what is everlasting. Either everlasting acceptance in the presence of God or everlasting damnation in hell. And people take both of those realities lightly, I'm afraid. We don't think about what really matters now in light of what's going to matter for forever. But a text like this one brings us back to that issue. I mean, are you ready to face eternity? Are you spiritually in a position to face eternity? Do you really know Christ?

And what Paul is doing in these verses is he's making a distinction. He's giving a warning concerning a group of false teachers who were making inroads and having an effect on the church in Philippi. He warns in verse 2, "Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh." And then he draws this distinction in verse 3, between what they represent and what is true – "For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit."

What does it mean, "We are the circumcision?" Well, I think in the immediate context, he is contrasting the Judaizing influence that is a false kind of Jew, a Jew that is not a Jew indeed. Not someone like Nathaniel who was a true Israelite, but a false professor of faith in Yahweh. Contrast that kind of Jew, Paul a Jew himself says, "We are the true circumcision. This is what it means to be a genuine Israelite. You've been circumcised in a different kind of way, not just physically in the body, but a circumcision of the heart. You've been internally transformed. You have the Spirit of God." And of course, what he says concerning a true Israelite is true also of the Gentile who has come to faith in the true God through faith in His Son, Jesus. We've experienced a transformation that is only explained by God.

So that's what I want us to think about together in the next few minutes. What does it mean to be a true worshiper? What does it look like if you're a genuine Christian? And what we have in our verse 3 are four characteristics of the genuine believer.

Now I came to Christ when I was 17 years old. I'm now 56 - almost 40 years. It is still good for me on a regular basis to examine myself in light of a text like this one. It never hurts as a genuine believer to examine what the Bible teaches about genuine faith and ask, "Have I known this? Is this really true of me?" That's safe for us. It's good as Paul says that he's repeating himself. He says in verse 1, "To write the same things to you, it's no trouble to me and it's safe for you." I mean these are things we need to go back over again and again. So I'm not afraid as a Christian of almost 40 years to go back over a text like this and really examine myself and say, "Lord, is this what You've done in my life? Is this true of me? It's safe for me to do that." But when I pass the test, so to speak, when I see God's good work in my soul, then it's a cause for celebration. It's a cause to give praise to God, to say, "Lord, this is indeed what You have done in my case, and I give You praise because I didn't do this for myself. I did not grant myself a new birth. This is something You did." So this morning, whether you have been saved a short time or a long time, it is good for us to go back over this text and ask, "Now, is this really true of me? Could this be said of my life?" And if the answer is "yes," then you can give praise to God because He did it. Four characteristics of the genuine believer.

By the way, the seriousness of this is seen in the way that Paul introduces it. The repetition of the warning, "Look out, look out, look out. Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh." And then the strength of the descriptions. I mean as you know, the Jew would often refer to the Gentile as a "dog." And Paul was saying concerning those Jews who didn't really know God, they are the true dogs. "Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers. Look out for those who mutilate the flesh." The strength of his descriptions; evildoers, dogs, mutilators of the flesh, what they call "circumcision" is, in fact, just a mutilation of the body. Because it doesn't represent in their case what it was meant to represent - an evidence of faith in the living God, an act of obedience to Him that proceeds from the heart. Didn't represent that in their case, it's just mutilation. So this is a serious issue. When you talk about genuine faith or not, this is not something we cannot be shy about. This is something we have to be clear about. There is too much at stake not to deal with these issues in the most serious terms, and that's what he's doing. So let's examine ourselves; four characteristics of the true believer.

Number one: the true Christian has been internally transformed. Now, listen, nothing I'm going to say this morning is new to you, and it's not particularly hard to understand or deep or complicated. But what we're talking about is profound because it is supernatural in nature. It is the work of God, it is not natural. It is supernatural, and the first thing we see in our text is that the true believer is someone who has been internally transformed. He says, "We are the circumcision," and he means by that of course, "We are the true people of God." And the circumcision that he has in mind is not just physical in nature but spiritual in nature. He goes on to say (we'll talk about this more in a moment), "We worship by the Spirit of God. Our worship is explained by God's Spirit, His work in our lives.

And I think about what Paul wrote in Romans chapter 2 for example. I mean, he mentions this sort of truth more than once in the New Testament. Colossians 2 - he does, Ephesians 2 - he does. But in Romans 2, it's so clear and striking when he writes in verse 25, "For circumcision indeed is a value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your

circumcision becomes uncircumcision. So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?" If you take what circumcision was really meant to indicate - a genuine faith in the living God who had brought a people into covenant with Himself - if that's true of you, then your circumcision matters. But if it's not true of you, if you've not been internally transformed, then your circumcision is nothing. It's meaningless. And in fact, show me a Gentile who's never been circumcised physically, if they've been internally transformed so that now the desire is to obey God and walk according to His truth. Now, that is equal to what circumcision was meant to be. In other words, they're in a right relationship with God. They stand in the place of the genuine Israelite. It doesn't mean they've become a Jew, it doesn't mean that the distinctions God made regarding the nation of Israel and the promises He made to them, that all those are obliterated. What it means is this is what really matters with respect to salvation. Do you have genuine faith? Have you trusted in God's provision for your sins? Has your heart been transformed?

Paul goes on to write in Romans 2:27, "Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law." One day this Gentile who really knows Christ - not that the person himself will verbally condemn the Jew - but his salvation will stand as a condemnation to those who only knew a kind of worship that was external in nature. The contrast will underscore the difference with respect to this one who's just circumcised physically but doesn't love God.

Verse 28, "28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God." His entire outlook on life, everything that motivates this person has been changed. So that now what he really longs for is not the applause of men or the approval of mankind, but the praise that comes from God.

And so as Paul describes the contrast to the dogs and the evildoers, and the mutilators of the flesh, he describes them as the circumcision, the true circumcision; those who had been transformed in their hearts. Have you been transformed in your heart? Has your heart been circumcised? Are you a child of God because of a secret, in the sense of it's unseen, but the evidence of it is certainly seen? The Spirit of God's work in your soul, where you went from death to life, where you went from blindness to sight, where you went from bondage to freedom, where you went from a God-hater to a God-lover. Has this happened in your case? Has this really happened in your case so that you're one of those who can be described as a lover of God?

I love first Corinthians 16:22. It says, "If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed." What a way to describe the genuine Christian. Who is the person under the curse, but the person who has no love for the Lord? Which means those who have been delivered from the curse are those who love the Lord. This is God's work in your heart, now you love God. In fact, that verse ends with these words, "Our Lord come." You love the Lord Jesus, you long for His return. You desire Him.

In fact, by the work of the Spirit of God in your heart, now you're someone who really confesses Jesus as Lord. And it's not just a confession of the lips. As you know, Matthew 7 teaches that many on the final day will say, "Lord, Lord, did we not preach in Your name, perform miracles in Your name, etc." "Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. I never knew you." No, not that kind of confession. Listen to First Corinthians 12:3, "Therefore I want you

to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says ‘Jesus is accursed!’ and no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit.” Now, clearly he doesn't mean they're just words that roll off the tongue. Anybody can say, “Jesus is Lord.” What he means is you can't say it and mean it. You can't say it with meaning, with truth, with sincerity, unless the Spirit of God has done a work in your soul. Can you say today that Jesus is Lord? Is He your Lord? Do you love Him? If so, you are one who has been internally transformed, and that's what characterizes the true Christian. We are the circumcision.

Second characteristic of the true Christian. Not only have we been internally transformed - second, we're those who've received the Spirit of God. We are those who have received the Spirit of God. Every genuine Christian has the Holy Spirit. He writes in verse 3: “We are the circumcision.” That points to an internal change. Then he says this, “Who worship by the Spirit of God.” Let that sink in. We're talking about true worship this weekend. The true worshipers are those who have been internally transformed so that now, their worship reflects the Spirit of God. Now, however you understand that preposition, whether he means here, “In the sphere of the kind of life that Spirit of God has brought to God's people” or whether he means, “In the strength of the Holy Spirit”; “by the Spirit” in the sense that He empowers our worship and makes it real and vital in living, either way, you understand that.

Here's something you can say for certain about the true believer - they worship God in a way that is impossible without the Holy Spirit. They worship God in a way that the Spirit of God made real. This is the great difference in true Christianity; true Christianity versus a shell of Christianity, a false form of Christianity. The difference is those who truly know Christ have the Spirit of God, and they worship God by His Spirit. Romans 8:1 (you know this text well),

1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us...

I believe what he's talking about there is life, living according to God's standards. This is now fulfilled in us.

...who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death

the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

I mean there it is, an entirely different life because you're no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit; the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ dwells in you. You are putting to death the deeds of the body by the power of the Holy Spirit, whom you have from God.

What is it about your worship that has changed because you now have the Holy Spirit? Examine your life. Examine what you once called worship, before you knew Jesus, before the Lord saved you. But He saved you and now you have His Spirit. What has changed for you as a result? What is there about your worship that now is really worship because you have the Holy Spirit? As you think about that, listen to Romans 15:15, “15 But on some points (Paul writes) I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” Paul says, “I look at you like an offering to God, and this is only possible because of the work of the Spirit of God. You are His work.” So what is there in your life that has changed (specifically as you think about worship) because now you have the Spirit of God?

I can remember as a teenager professing to know Jesus. I made a profession of faith when I was seven. I was baptized when I was seven. I was not truly converted until I was 17, but I can remember when my parents began to go to church regularly in my teenage years. And now, there I am, a professing Christian, but unregenerate sitting in a church service week after week. What was that like for me? I can tell you what it was like. It was boring. It wasn't a matter of my desires. At times, my mind might be engaged in a way that was somewhat interesting to me, but it wasn't coming from a place of worship. In fact, it was more of a sense of duty than desire, and I was always ready to be done with it and always ready to move on to what else I wanted to be about in the afternoon and all the rest. I mean, that was what my life was like, but when the Lord saved me, now I desired what I didn't desire before.

I desired the Word of God. I enjoyed the fellowship of God's people. I had a love for the church. I desired to see other people come to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. This shy young man who hated to give a speech in class, now all of a sudden was witnessing to his friends at school, carrying a Bible on the bus to go to baseball games and witnessing to coaches and teammates. And the Lord transformed me and gave me loves that I never had before and hatreds that I never had before.

Do you know something about that? Has the Lord changed you, so now you have knowledge of a different kind? Not just intellectual facts, but in your mind and heart, there's a sense of the things you read about, you know these things in a different way. Have your affections been changed, your priorities, your desire, your fellowship, your joy? Do you know joy in the things of God? I mean, this is reality that only the Spirit of God produces.

So the genuine Christian (verse 3) has been internally transformed, a circumcision of the heart so that now they worship by the Spirit of God, the sphere of that life and by the strength that He supplies.

Here's the third characteristic: the true Christian has placed his confidence in Christ. He says, “And we glory in Christ Jesus. He is our reason for boasting. He is our confidence.” Where is your confidence stationed? Or I could say to you this way, what do you really delight in?

What do you really take pride in? What do you see as your reason for praise? Galatians 6:14, Paul writes, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” “My relationship to the world has forever been changed. I've been crucified to the world and the world's been crucified to me. I'm dead to the world, and the world's dead to me. God has forever changed my relationship to the world, and the change is found in the cross of Jesus. I boast in Him.”

First Corinthians 2:1, “And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” “I didn't come try to impress you with my rhetorical abilities, I came to present Jesus to you. I boasted Him.”

First Corinthians 1:26, “For consider your calling, brothers...” “Really reflect on what your salvation means,” he says,

...not many of you are wise, according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

I'll tell you who really gets that message - a genuine Christian gets that message. They understand it. It's amazing how those who belong to the world are constantly trying to give us their reasons for boasting. The world is caught up in its credentials. People boast about their family, they boast about their accomplishments, they boast about their education, they boast about their possessions, they boast about their appearance, they boast about their talents and abilities. We are by nature creatures that praise. And what you find in a soul that hasn't been transformed is the praise is centered on the self. We are praising creatures. But the lost man, the natural man, praises in a way that is centered on himself. The Christian has experienced this great shift in the realm of praise.

Now it looks away from us to the One who has saved us. Our praise is in Christ. We delight in Him. We understand that the only thing impressive in the equation of salvation is Jesus. He's impressive. I'm not impressive, you're not impressive. Name whatever it is that you have that you think is impressive, and I can tell you this, you didn't do it for yourself, God gave it to you. And if God gave it to you, why do you boast as if you did it for yourself? And I don't care what you want to talk about; whether it's your intellect or your training or your accomplishments or your money or your family or your looks - it doesn't matter. What do you have that wasn't given to you? And if it was given to you, why do you boast as if you did it yourself? Now, the only thing worth bragging about is Jesus. We boast in Him. He is our reason for confidence.

We all stand on the same ground, don't we? It doesn't matter what our backgrounds are. We all stand on the same ground. We were dirty, undone, undeserving sinners, and God had mercy on us. And God had mercy on us in His Son.

So what do we see in verse 3 about the true Christian? Internally transformed, the true circumcision, worshiping by the Spirit of God, glorying in Christ Jesus. Fourth thing he mentions; a true Christian is one who has repented of confidence in self. Our confidence is in Christ, which means we have repented of that life in which we once had confidence in us. He says in verse 3, "We put no confidence." Underline that word "no" in your mind. "No confidence in the flesh," not a sliver, not an ounce of confidence in what we can accomplish.

So what he means by "the flesh," he means fleshly works, fleshly deeds, fleshly accomplishments. In fact, he goes on to say, "If anybody wants to talk about that kind of stuff, I could talk about it. Do you think you have reason for confidence in the flesh? I have more." And he goes to this whole list of accomplishments that he could boast in, but he has come to understand that it's all garbage. It's all rubbish. It all means nothing. And what Paul knew, we know the same truth. That all that self-confidence adds up to something - that's worthless.

Our only answer, why should God receive me forever in His accepting presence? Our only answer to that question is Jesus. What is good in you? "There's nothing good that dwells in me that is in my flesh." The only good I know is Jesus. And the only good I've known in my life is what He's produced. There's nothing else. Have you received that as the truth? Do you believe that?

Do you know what it is to find your identity in Christ? So many people are miserable because they don't really know who they are. And my question is where do you discover who you really are? You discover who you really are in Christ. There's your sense of identity. A creature, a small, frail, powerless creature now reconciled to his Creator through the finished work of His Son and now one who has been loved and is loved forever; not because I deserve it, but because God's so good and gracious. That's my identity. Is your reason for living in Christ?

We saw it last night in Colossians, "When Christ who is our life appears." Who is our life? Paul writes, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." You'll never be able to say death is gain until you can say that life is Jesus. Is He your life?

Your sense of acceptance with God, where's it found? When your conscience is plaguing you and accusing you, and you recognize how you fall short in so many ways - the Book of James says, we stumble in so many different ways. Richard mentioned it earlier in his prayer as he confessed on our behalf, our sinfulness. When your conscience brings that truth to your attention, and the devil seizes upon that and says to you, "How could you have eternal hope being such a wretch?" Do you answer the enemy with the truth that your acceptance is found only in Christ; His righteousness given to you as a gift, received by faith?

Your comfort, your peace, where is it found? When it seems that everything is falling apart, when the things that you love so much are taken from you, do you know what it is to still have your peace and comfort in the Lord Jesus Christ? Is your treasure in Him?

Is your reputation in Him? When people slander you and accuse you of things that are not true, can you find a sense of contentment and peace in the knowledge that God knows, Christ knows? My reputation is in His hands.

This is what characterizes true worshipers; internally changed forever, a new creation in Christ Jesus, the true circumcision, worshiping God by His Spirit, glorying in Christ Jesus, repenting, having repented and continuing to repent of any other confidence but Christ. That's the true Christian.

Martin Lloyd Jones preaching on this text gave his listeners some questions by which they could test the reality of these things we've heard about today. I want to give you his four tests. I want to paraphrase them, but I think they're helpful. Examine yourself in the light of this.

Number one, "Do I worship as a matter of duty or am I aware of a desire to worship?" And we talked about it yesterday in the Q&A. There are going to be times that the desire is stronger and less. We're frail creatures and our emotions rarely cooperate with what's right. But nonetheless, if you're saved, there's a desire to worship God. Do you know that? So is worship a matter of duty for you or is it desire?

Second, he says, "Is my worship something loving and warm and free, or is it cold and formal?" And he says this, "As men worship God more and more by the Spirit, they become less and less dependent upon means." By means, I mean buildings, liturgies, priests, or even other people. What do you need to worship God? We worship Him in spirit and truth. Do you know that? I mean, do you have that experience? That even when the building's not the nicest (this is a nice place), if the surroundings are not the nicest or the weather's not the nicest or whatever the case may be, do you know what it is to have a worship that comes from your heart that's not dependent on means, it's focused on God?

Third, he says, "Do I realize in my worship the presence of God? Am I aware of His presence?" I was reminding myself as I'm sitting on the front row, we're seeing songs, "Lord, you are here. You are here." He is here. I think about Spurgeon who would walk up the steps (not steps in this direction, I think another direction behind) up to the place where he would preach. But he would say to himself, "I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe in the Holy Spirit. Lord, I'm entering this time of preaching, not depending on me, but depending on You and You are here. You are here." Are you conscious of the presence of God as you worship?

Fourth, he says, "Do we know a perfect admixture of reverence and godly fear and the spirit of adoption whereby we cry out Abba Father?" So we worship God in fear and trembling, yet at the same time we worship Him in intimacy and nearness. He is our heavenly Father. He is our Father but at the same time, God in heaven to be reverenced. Do we know that mixture of intimacy and fear, respect?

So this morning as we close our time in God's Word, thinking about worship, we've finished on the note of whether or not you're a worshiper, and these are the tests. Have you been internally transformed? Do you have the Holy Spirit? Do you glory in Christ Jesus? Do you repent of confidence in your flesh? And if you do, if the Lord has done this, give Him praise. He's the one who did it. But if today you were to say, "You know what, this isn't me." Well, here's the good news, I think about Jesus, the woman at the well, "If you knew who said, 'give Me a drink,' you would have said to Him, 'Give me living water.' And He would have," He would have. And so if today, you know you've never been saved, then cry out to Christ, cry out to God in the name of His Son. Look to Jesus for salvation and you will find that God is willing to save. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, thank you for what You have done in Your Son, through Your Son in our lives. We who know You, we who have been rescued by You, delivered by You, we give You praise that we are not who we once were. We are in fact new creatures, new creations in Christ Jesus. You have circumcised our hearts, You have given us Your Spirit. We find desire for You in our souls and this is Your doing. Our confidence is in Jesus, not in us. And we thank you that You've had such mercy upon us because we are truly aware of what we deserve by nature. Thank you for this. Thank you for this.

Thank you for my brothers and sisters. Lord, continue to warm our hearts with the knowledge of the truth. Where our feet had been wandering and our hearts had been straying, O Lord, thank you that You hold onto us, that You don't let us go, and bring us back to a place of fresh devotion. Revive us, Lord. We need it, need it daily.

And I pray for anyone hearing me today who doesn't know Your Son. Like I was, Lord, sitting in a worship area, professing Jesus with their lips but not knowing Your Son in truth. O, Lord, would You have mercy upon them. And even today, grant them repentance and faith so that they cry out to Your Son for life. We love You and thank you for loving us first, in Jesus' name, amen.