

Satan's Attack Strategy

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Preacher: Dr. Daniel Heeringa

[0:00] I want you to turn to Genesis chapter 3, Genesis chapter 3. Tonight is the Super Bowl and I'm excited that one I still claim him as mine.

He apparently don't claim me anymore. Chris Jones, defensive tackle for all pro defensive tackle for Kansas City Chiefs and so I wear his colors today in honor of him.

So went to Houston High School and a dear friend, so sweet and a good guy. But anyway, the Super Bowl and in preparation for the Super Bowl, both teams have watched film.

They've spent time in preparation. They do that on the college level. They do that on the high school level. They watch their game to see their strengths, to see their weaknesses, to point those things out to the players, to allow them to see those problems.

Then they also watch film of their opponent and see what their tendencies are, what their strengths are, what their weaknesses are. And then you make a plan to combat that.

[1:11] Whether on offense, to try to beat their defense. Or whether you're on defense, trying to stop their offense. They strategize and make plans for that.

So this morning I want us to watch a little film together. It isn't a game. And honestly, it isn't a film. It's a narrative account. But I want to help us picture some images in our minds. More than that, I want you to understand strategy.

I want you to understand the strategy of the evil one. And I also want you to understand how we can defend ourselves against the evil one.

As I said a couple of weeks ago, Satan is a snake in the grass. But he's a convincing one. He's a slimy one. He's a sneaky one.

[2:13] And Adam and Eve were the first to fall for his schemes. But there's no need for us to point fingers at them. Because all of us have done the same thing. We fell for the evil one's schemes.

So my prayer this morning is we can get a handle on that. Get a better understanding of what we're dealing with. Better know how to combat it. But then another step that we won't know today, we'll know in the coming days, is do we carry out those combative strategies to gain victory in our lives? It's found in Genesis chapter 3, verse 1 through 6. And I'll just tell you, I don't believe this is just a one-time occurrence. I believe that this is a one-time occurrence that explains what happens again and again and again in our lives.

A blueprint of sorts for what we deal with. Genesis chapter 3 says this. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden.

[3:31] But God said, you shall not eat the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden. Neither shall you touch it lest you die. But the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God, knowing good and evil.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to her eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.

And she also gave some to her husband who was with her. And he ate. There was no need for her to sin.

She was placed in the garden of Eden. She had everything she needed around her, yet she wanted more. Even the garden and all its beauty was not enough.

And the one place that she was forbidden to go, the one thing that she was forbidden to do, that's what she wanted to do. That's where she went. So often that is the case.

[4 : 44] We often have so great an appetite for the things that we need to stay away from, the things that often lead us astray. So I want you to be well aware this morning that the devil is on attack.

He knows how to place things before us that would most lead us to fall. I told you a couple of weeks ago, it's not because he's omniscient that he knows all things.

It's because he and his army of demons watch us to see our tendencies, to see what we look at, to see how we respond and how we act and what we say. And he leads us to fall in those areas, just like he did with this first question that he asked in verse one.

He said, did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden? That's just a question. That's not just a question. It's a twisting, deceptive type question. He did not question the love of God.

He did not deny the existence of God. I'll tell you what he did. He went after the word of God. He attacked the word of God.

[5 : 54] So I want you to notice this process. First thing he does is he attacks God's word. He asked the question, did God actually say, and then he twists the question. Did God say you shall not eat of any of these trees?

Now remember, it was the word of God that gave Adam and Eve everything that they had. As we talked about a few weeks ago, God spoke and the sun and the moon were developed.

Stars in the sky were placed. The land separated from the water. All on the speaking of God.

Vegetation was created. Animals were made.

All on the voice of God. It all came from the word of God. His instruction came by his word. All that they knew was by the word of God.

And that's what the devil attacked. We base all of our faith on the word of God. We believe his word that Christ is the only way.

[7 : 03] We believe his word that we live by his instruction. That his will and his way is what's best for our lives. We believe his word that he walks with us in the valley.

That he will not leave us alone. That the peace that he gives us is beyond any of our understanding. We believe his word that he sent Christ to live as an example for us.

To die as a sacrifice for us. To rise as an eternal hope for us. To ascend to prepare a place for us. And to return to take us with him that where he is we may also be.

We believe his word. That upon that salvation we are empowered by the Holy Spirit. We are sealed by his spirit. We are guaranteed an eternal inheritance.

All because of his word. We believe that we've been changed by salvation. We've been challenged by his commission. And that we've been empowered by his spirit. To share with others the hope that God has granted to us.

[8 : 10] And we believe all of that based upon the word of God. All that we believe is the word of God. These truths are not only printed on a page.

They are God breathed. They are God breathed. Into the writers of scripture. And God indwelt within us. When we give our hearts and lives to him.

All we know about God. Is the word of God. If you attack his word. You attack him. If you attack his word.

You attack his salvation. If you attack his word. You attack the hope that he has given to us. The foundations of our belief. Is found in the word of God. Therefore the evil one attacks the word of God.

Notice how he attacks the word of God. He questions what it says. He said you shall not eat of any of the trees. It's not what he said. At all.

[9 : 10] We believe his word. And he attacks his word. Now I'll tell you what he attacks when he attacks God's word. He attacks that Christ is the only way. A lot of philosophies about that today.

Christ is still the only way. He attacks that we live by God's instruction. That that's the best way for us. We often question that.

I know God says this. But what about my circumstances? He attacks that. He attacks the fact that we. Is God really walking with me? Does God really see my circumstances?

Does God understand where I am? The word says God never leaves me alone. I feel alone. Can God really give me a peace in the midst of my circumstances?

He attacks the fact that our salvation. Can come. No better way to cripple a Christian. Than make them question their salvation. And so if you question your salvation. Let's clear it up.

[10:12] Before we leave here today. I will take the time. To meet with you. And let's clear it up. There's no need for you to doubt. Your salvation. Because it's the best way. How are you going to share your faith with anybody?

If you're not even sure about it yourself. How are. How are you going to live. In the power of the Holy Spirit. If you struggle. With your salvation.

No need for you to struggle. With that at all. But that's where he attacks. He attacks the fact that we've been challenged by the commission of the Lord Jesus Christ. That his last words told us to go and tell others.

And make disciples. And baptize them. Not only do we not want to travel the world to reach somebody. We only want to walk across the street and share Christ with somebody. You know. He attacks that.

I've said before. I've said recently. That there's always going to be two tides against you. When you try to do two things for the Lord. One is to share your faith with somebody.

[11:13] You're always going to be under attack when you do that. And prayer. There's always an attack for prayer. You'll think of something else you need to do instead of pray. So you'll get up and stop praying. And the devil loves to get us not to evangelize people.

And not to pray. Because that's where the power is. So he attacks those things. He attacks the fact that we're empowered by his spirit to share. You'll say, well, I don't know what to say.

I don't know what to do. He'll give you the words to say. When he opens the door and you walk through it, you're empowered by the spirit of God. But the devil's going to whisper in your ear, you ain't adequate.

You can't handle it. He attacks the word of God. Not only does he attack, but he also questions the word of God. Satan is trying to bring doubt.

He says, did he really say that you could not eat of any fruit? No, he didn't. It's not what he said. He said, you may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but this one.

[12:18] But what God said and what the devil said is polar opposites. And that's how he questions God's word. The devil has convinced the world to ask us, is God's plan really what's best for me?

I mean, if I know what the word of God says, and I see how it tells me to live, I mean, is that really the best plan for me? I don't know that you ask that out loud.

But every time we're tempted to sin and we struggle with it, that's exactly what we're asking. Is God's plan what's best? Maybe how about this question?

How can a loving God hate those who disagree with God's word? How can he do that? That's a question the devil loves to throw out. Is the Bible really relevant today?

Come on, thanks, 2,000 years old. Is it really relevant today? That's a question the devil loves to throw out. And all of that is twisting. All of it is a perversion of God's word.

[13:25] I'll tell you what God said. God said adulterers and perverts and liars and thieves and murderers will not inherit the kingdom of God. That's what he said. If they come to Christ, he will wash away their sins.

He will remove their sins. When people come to Christ, they are a new creation. They are not the same. Listen to me. They don't do the same things they used to do.

Their minds are being transformed. They're not perfect. But the process begins of a mind transformation. The will is empowered by the spirit of God.

Do we always listen to him? No. We're in the process of being transformed. We are in the process of growing in the Lord. The process for living that changes.

Our purpose for living changes. All of that changes. And when people remain in their sins and do not come to Christ or when they struggle in their walk with Christ, God does not hate those folks.

[14:30] God does not hate them. When we speak against sin, I want to be clear about something. When we speak against sin, I'm not telling us to hate the sinner. I'm telling us to hate the sin.

And no matter what the sin may be, we have a responsibility to share the gospel with folks. To not let them be brainwashed by an evil world in which it's led by the evil one.

to convince us that the sins of yesterday are somehow not sins today. It is a twisting and a perversion of God's word. God does not hate those folks.

God loves those folks. God loves those enough to send Christ to die for them. That's how much he loves them. The word of God is timeless. It is always on time.

It is relevant. It is God breathed. It is spirit filled. And it is a book that reads us like a book.

[15 : 31] I want you to listen to what Hebrews says about it. Hebrews 4, 12 and 13 says this. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit and of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and the intentions of the heart.

You know why it's such a struggle for you to spend time in God's word? Because the devil don't want you to read God's word and to sense the spirit of God discerning your thoughts and the intentions of your heart.

We'd just soon stay distant from that. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

So I don't want to be naked and exposed, so I'll just not spend time in God's word. That's why we don't like it. That's why we struggle with it. That's why the forces of the evil one come against you and get you struggling.

Those of you who are trying to be on a reading plan and you get behind a little bit and you get discouraged and get overwhelmed by that and say, I'm just going to give it up. Don't do it. Don't do it. I don't know what they're telling you to do. Skip it and start today fresh and new.

[16 : 36] But you stay in God's word every day. If you can't handle the chapters you got to do, don't do them all. I'm giving you permission. Don't do them all. But you be in God's word every day. You spend time in God's word every day.

You need it. You're going to be saturated with this whole evil world the rest of the day. You better take time out to hear from God. I'm just telling you. Don't tell me you don't have time. You don't have time not to.

You've got to take in God's word. And if somebody asks you if you believe that only people that believe like you go to heaven, you tell them no. No. No. Tell them this.

I believe Jesus. I believe what Jesus says. That's what I believe. And you know what Jesus says? Jesus says in John 14, 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

And no man comes unto the Father except through me. So I don't know all the things that I believe. I don't know if all they're correct. But I know one thing. I believe in Jesus. And I believe what Jesus said. And Jesus said you have to come through him.

[17 : 35] You just point, folks, to Jesus. He's the one that said it. You got an issue with it? Take it up with him. But take it up with him. Get on your knees and get before him and take it up with him.

All of that is questioning the word of God. And when Satan questions God's word, he wants us to question his word. He wants the, he works hard on us questioning the word of God.

Not only that, but he distorts God's word. He rephrases this question in a negative way. He says, did God say that you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

Well, they'd starve to death. That'd be the case. He didn't say that at all. What'd God really say? He really said, you may surely eat of every tree in the garden, but of one.

I'll tell you what the devil's trying to do. He's trying to cast doubt on God's motivation. He's trying to cast doubt on, is God holding me back from opportunities? I mean, what looks like out there in the world looks like the best thing to do.

[18 : 55] That's the stuff I want to do. If I do what God tells me to do, I'll be held back from those things. I won't be able to enjoy all those things. Somehow God don't want you to be happy.

No, I'll tell you what. He's trying to keep you from getting trapped. That's what he's trying to do. He's trying to keep you from getting trapped. We can get trapped in habitual lifestyles of behaviors that we were not designed to be a part of.

God didn't make us for that. And when we go outside of God's purpose for our lives, we get hooked on stuff we don't need to be hooked on. Satan tempted her by telling her she would in fact be like God.

He was making God out to be so jealous that he was holding her back from her potential. I want to be clear because the Old Testament is clear.

We serve a jealous God. We do. I don't know how that hits you where you are. But I'm sorry. We serve a jealous God. But I want to be clear about something.

[20 : 05] He's not jealous of us. He's jealous for us. He wants all of us. He wants all of us. He wants the best for us. And the devil does not.

And so the devil is going to limit, try his best to limit our potential because our greatest potential is found in Christ. Christ. And one way the devil does that, the one way he works in this world is through distorting God's word.

But that's not the only thing that happened because this wasn't all the devil. So let's turn to Eve for just a minute. What did she do?

She fell into temptation. Why did she fall into temptation? I'll tell you why. She diminished God's word. She did. When she began to think about it and continue to look at opportunity before her, God's word got smaller.

The whispers of that snake got louder. And if you ignore God's word, walk away from God's word, or don't apply God's word to your life, it's going to happen every time.

[21 : 14] I promise you. I'll tell you how the devil does it. He does it in two different ways. One is he works in our world and the world gets so loud in distorting the word of God that that's what we hear, and that's all we hear.

I mean, listen folks, it's being shouted all around us. It's being shouted in the news we watch. It's being shouted in the twisting of science.

It's being shouted in the polarizing focus on politics. Tear God's people up through politics instead of on the power of the gospel.

So he does it loud like that, but I'll tell you how else he does it. He does it by whispering to us individually. Did God really say, do you really think?

Does that apply to you? What about your circumstances? man, that is easy to fall to.

[22 : 24] We have an inborn nature within us that pulls us toward it. And the first one to face it who didn't have an inborn tendency like we do fell for it.

He fell for it. Adam and Adam just dumbly following along joined right in. And we've been dumbly following along, joined right in ever since.

Every time. Tell you what, James 1 describes what happens to us. James 1. I pray that when I read this passage you'll see if it applies to your life and what's really happening in your life.

But each person is tempted when he's lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived, gives birth to sin.

And sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. And I want you to understand the New Testament concept of death.

[23 : 48] You say, well preacher, what I do, I'm not going to die doing that. Yeah, you are. Yeah, you are. My grandmother went home to be with the Lord years ago and I didn't lose her.

I know where she's at. Okay? And I miss her. And the reality is that she never died.

Scripture tells me that when she closed her eyes in death here, because of her commitment to the Lord Jesus, she opened her eyes in glory. It was a transition.

She left the shell behind. I lived away from her. I didn't see her in her last days. And when I saw her corpse, it broke my heart that I hadn't seen her alive.

she died, but she still lives. So I want you to understand that there are deaths that happen in our lives spiritually that don't stop our heart from beating.

[25 : 05] Our brains keeps going, but we find out that our relationships with others become very strained because of our sin patterns. We find out that our honesty with others becomes very strained.

There's a death that takes place, a separation that takes place, a chasm between us and others. There's a chasm that happens between us and God.

As we continue in sin patterns, and don't acknowledge them. If you fail to spend time with the Lord in the morning or in tomorrow evening or whenever you do it, if you fail to spend time with him tomorrow, Tuesday it's going to be easier to not spend time with God.

Wednesday it's going to be easier not to spend time with God. Thursday you're going to start getting good at it. Friday you're going to be that much worse shape.

By next Sunday you're going to be putting on a fake smile when you come to church trying to hide the fact that you ain't seen hide or hair of the Lord in the last week. That's a death that's taking place.

[26 : 28] You understand that? Because we have an ongoing relationship. relationship. Okay? If I live with my family for the next week and I never speak to any of them, I hope I make it to church next week.

But that's a death that's taking place. And that's the kind of death he's talking about. Now, stupid sin patterns that lead to habits, that lead to degradation, will lead to death as well.

And we all know cases where people got too caught in sinful patterns and they lost their life because of that. But I want you to understand, there's death that can happen before your heart stops and your brain stops functioning.

And God wants to protect us from that by doing the baby steps of living out our faith for the Lord on a consistent basis. Eve considered the temptation, just like James 1, 14, 15 tells us.

Eve considered the temptation. She grew an appetite for the fruit of temptation and her perspective changed. When you entertain the options the devil throws out, be careful, it'll change her perspective.

[27 : 44] You'll see it differently. Now she saw it was good for food. What started as a question to consider became a temptation. And I'm going to tell you, those questions can be subtle.

They really can be. And that's the problem. The subtle nature of the questions that he asks us sometimes. Before you know it, the thought begins, if God really loves me, why would he deprive me from that? I mean, that looks like the best tree in the whole garden.

Why shouldn't I do that? If he really cares for me, why would he deny that? You see the twisting of the truth there? The psalmist tells us how to combat it.

All of Psalm 119 tells us how to combat it. But Psalm 119, 11 says, I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against God. The best combat you have toward the evil one is to know the word of God, to spend time in the word of God.

It is when these questions come that the word must not be diminished in our mind but be amplified in our mind. Because I'm telling you, you'll go in a hole if you are not careful.

[28 : 45] When we open our mind to consideration, when we begin to dialogue with temptation, we're in trouble, folks. You're in trouble. I like what scripture says, snatch them from the fire.

I tell those men on Tuesday morning sometimes, the reason why we meet at 6 a.m. on Tuesday and the reason why we meet at 9 a.m. on Tuesday and the reason why we read through books together to talk about how to live out our faith for the Lord and the reason we discuss that is I'm hoping, dear God, I can snatch some old boy from the fire, keep him from doing something stupid in his life.

God, wake us up. Wake us up before we go too far. The steps of temptation are there's a reflective question.

As Barney Fife says, nip it in the bud when that comes, okay? There's a reflective question. The second thing is there's a desire. There's a desire. And then the third thing is where the sin comes in and that's a sinful action.

And the answer to walk away from temptation is don't focus your attention on the question. Get back to the word of God.

[29 : 58] Instead of considering the temptation, consider this. And if you don't know this scripture, you need to write it down. If you don't write nothing else down, you need to write this down and live by it. It's 1 Corinthians 10, 13.

It'll pull you out of a hole. No temptation has overtaken you. That's not common to man. You're not an exception to the rule. We all face temptation.

It might be slightly customized. But I got news for you. If we were to stand up this morning, and we're not going to, if we were to stand up this morning and confess all our sins to each other, and I had a big board up here, there ain't a board big enough to cover Pickens County to cover all our sins, okay?

And I were to write them up there, you know what you'd see? You'd just see four or five categories. You wouldn't see that many different things. I mean, there's nuances, and I know you're different than the rest of us. See how he does it?

Somehow you're different. The reality is, no temptation sees you except what's common. God is faithful. I want you to hear me.

[31 : 03] You've got to hang your hat on this. He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability. But with the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape.

That you may be able to endure it. God will provide a way out. The way to sin may be this big old wide open door right in front of you.

That's so easy. And you feel this sucking feeling that you're just going into. Like a vacuum. Take a second look. Look around a little bit.

God's provided another way out. And when you fail to amplify God's word in your life, that's a key passage.

Psalm 119, 11 is another key passage. Memorize them. Say them. When you fail to amplify God's word in the midst of your temptation and instead diminish God's word, you're going to fall to it.

[32 : 10] You're going to fall to it. She also added to God's word. I want you to notice what happens once she starts having a conversation with Satan. I hope that raised a red flag when I said that.

When she starts having a conversation with Satan. She said that God said not to touch the tree. He said neither shall you touch it. That's not true.

He didn't say that. He didn't say that. We need to stick to God's word. And we don't need to be conversing with Satan. Converse with God. Call out to God.

We don't take away from God's word because we don't like that part. We don't need to add to God's word. God said enough. He said all we need. Let's just follow what he said.

Don't add to God's word. Not only that, she ignored God's word. When she saw that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she's on a slide at this point.

[33 : 15] You're in a mess at this point because you're already reaching for the tree. First John 2 verse 16 tells us how we sin. It says, for all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life is not from the father but is of the world.

All three aspects of sin is mentioned in that scripture and all three aspects of sin happen in her life. I want you to see this. It's kind of like diagramming sentences in English.

What a God forsaken activity. But anyway. But I remember having to make those little things. I don't think kids know what I'm talking about now. But diagram sentences, you know.

Break it down. Well, let's diagram our sin and our temptation. Let's see what that's about. It says the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, the pride of life.

The desires of the eyes, she saw what she's looking for. Okay. The desires of the flesh was that she wanted it. And the pride of life was that she could become like God if she did it.

[34 : 23] She'd call her own shots. She'd do it her way. Temptation got loud. Her attention got distracted. Desire got strong. And the word of God got ignored. And sin comes when we do things our way.

Every time we sin, we try to become our own God. We try to run our own life. And when our appetite gets wet for worldly opportunities, and when we look at the things that God has told us not to, when we seek to do it our way, we sin against God.

And the ramifications are huge. They're much bigger than they appear. It's kind of like the message that used to be in those side view mirrors. The things you're looking at are much bigger than they appear. Don't back into it.

And I'm just telling you, the ramifications of our sin are much bigger than they appear. And we will look at those in the days ahead. But I want you to see it for what it is.

Whereas salvation comes when we stop doing it our way, sin comes when we start doing it our way. And when we do, it's an attack on the word of God. It's an attack on the truth of God.

[35 : 28] It's an attack on the character of God. The apostle Paul said this, and I relate to it so well, I know you do too, whether you admit it or not. Romans 7, verse 15 and 17 through 20.

I'll read it and I'll get close to closing. For I don't understand my own actions. For what I do not do, for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

You've been there? So now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me that's in my flesh.

For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Now, if I do what I don't want, it's no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. There is a way that is right.

[36 : 32] And Jesus said, I am the way. Any other way interrupts our relationship with God. And the ramifications of that sin is great.

And we'll study that soon. However, let's make a commitment today to walk away from our sin. Carlos Villas was a Spanish monk who lived in India and wrote a book about living in India. And he talks about a bicycle ride that he took across the Indian countryside. And as he was riding, he noticed an unusual silence that came across nature.

The birds stopped singing. Crickets muted their calls. Everything got still.

With no clear explanation. And then off to the side, he looked and the mystery was solved because what he saw there, not that far away, was a snake.

[37 : 48] That snake had his head raised up and he was waving it back and forth with his eyes fixed on something. And Carlos looked to see what the snake was looking at and he saw a bird not far away.

And the bird was transfixed. It was glued on the snake. It was paralyzed like a deer in the headlights, like a mule at a new gate.

And in reality, mentally, he was because some snakes have the ability to do that and it leads to their domination. Vilas just braced for the impact in anticipation of what was going to happen.

And then he thought, maybe I have time. And so immediately, Carlos threw his bike down, started screaming at the bird, waving his arms and yelling at the bird until the bird stopped staring at the snake.

Looked at this crazy man and flew off. I've come today, folks, to throw down my bicycle, to raise my hands and to scream if I have to, to tell you, don't get caught in the stare of the snake.

[39 : 24] Let's break it today. That habit in your life. That pattern that you're leading to.

That thought that you're entertaining. That that you're already caught up with. Whatever it is, today's the day to stop it.

Today's the day to realize what the evil one's doing to you. Today, will you tell the Lord, Lord, give me the power and strength to walk away from what displeases you.

Help me to live in a way that honors you. Answer my questions. Give me the faith to trust you.

Guide me, oh God, all the way.

Now listen, you may be here this morning and you've never surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. There's never been a time when you've asked him to forgive you and to cleanse you of your sin. There's never been a time when you've committed your life to Christ.

[40 : 26] It's never happened in you. And I'm going to tell you, the power that I speak of, the way out that I speak of, is not available to you outside of Christ. It's not. Scripture says you are a slave to sin.

A servant to follow his leadings. And so I'm telling you today that if you'll call upon the name of the Lord, you shall be saved. And if you'll ask him to forgive your sins and to come into your life and change you, he'll empower you with the spirit of God and he'll enable you to walk away from the patterns in your lives that have been so destructive in the past.

And I am thankful that you don't do that alone. Not only does the Holy Spirit come to dwell within you, but you've got a church body that would love to come alongside of you and support you in your struggle to help us all become stronger in the Lord.

That's what this is about, folks, is growing in the Lord. If you've never done that, I'd love to guide you in that process. I really would. You come as we stand and sing in just a moment.

I mean, maybe you're here and you have done that, but there's that sin pattern in your life. You can't get a handle on it. Can we confess it before the Lord today?

[41 : 40] Can we see it for what God sees it and commit ourselves to follow him from this day forward? To trust him with the unanswered questions?

To trust him with the uncertainty of tomorrow? To know that what he knows is best for us? To just leave it with him? I want you to know all week I prayed for you to walk away from the stuff that so encumbers you and live freely for the Lord.

Maybe you're here and God's drawing you to this church. You know this is the place that you'd join us. We're not perfect, nor are you. So we'll join each other along in the journey and struggle till Jesus comes for his sake.

You come and obey God. Maybe you've made a private decision for the Lord. You've never made that public. Today, you come. We'll baptize you. Not today. We'll line it up.

You come and obey God as he speaks to your heart and life. Stand together if you will. Obey the Lord as he speaks to you. Lord Jesus, I ask today that you'll move and you'll work in our lives as

only you can, oh God, I pray.

[42 : 52] In Jesus' precious name, amen. Amen.