

# Home

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Date: 20 March 2022

Preacher: Nate Taylor

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if you have your Bibles, please open up to Isaiah chapter 35. If you're looking for it, it's kind of just a little bit past the middle of your Bibles.

Isaiah 35. For the past about a year and a half, my family has been thinking a lot about home. We've been in Glasgow for a little over six months now. We made it. Milestone. Thank you. Bring the cake out later. It's fine that it's not here yet. No, but we've been here for a little over six months. But I don't know if you know this. It took us about a year of making the decision that we were going to move here to kind of raise the funds and to sell the things that we needed to sell, to put our house on the market, and to sell it, to say our goodbyes, and all those things, to get visas.

So it's been about a year and a half that we were looking forward to moving here. And so what ended up happening was, as we were getting ready to sell our house, it was a weird feeling because my home started to not quite feel like my home anymore.

[ 1 : 11 ] And I would look at it, and I would give it a pep talk. Come on, house. Nothing break until we sell this, and it's somebody else's problem. But it felt, it was an odd feeling, honestly, to be this place where it brought kids home from the hospital and where they grew up, and to now all of a sudden to start to feel like it wasn't home anymore.

Our kids, they had their own worries about what home was going to be like, and so they would ask us, you know, what are we allowed to bring with the Glasgow? And one of the things they really wanted to bring was all of their stuffed animals.

Every single one. Daddy, Mommy, can we bring our stuffed animals to Glasgow? Can I bring this one? Can I bring this one? And so I ran on the platform, Operation No Stuffed Animal left behind, and we brought all the stuffed animals, and right now in one of their closets, there's a tub of just stuffed animals that nobody uses, but it came.

It just made us feel better. I think it made Aaron and I feel better about the move. Why did they want to know about their stuffed animals? Because they wanted to know, wherever I go, is it going to actually feel like home?

Is it the place where I'm going to be, is it still going to feel like home? The one time that it just kind of wrecked me was our oldest, unexpectedly, before we were getting ready to leave.

[ 2 : 29 ] It was a few months before we got on an airplane, and she looked at me, and she said, tears coming down her eyes. Daddy, can we bring our basement with to Glasgow?

I love our basement. It's my favorite thing. Can we please bring it? And man, if I had a shovel and I was able to bring it, I would have dug that basement up and put it on an airplane.

I think I said some parent thing, like, we'll bring everything that we need with us. It was hard. And just the feeling of homelessness is hard enough, much less actually being homeless in every major city of the world.

There's an issue of homelessness. Not only that, but you see around the world, you turn on the news and see what's going on in Ukraine, and there are people who are refugees who are fleeing their homeland.

And they have to look on the news and look back at these cities that they lived in and to see the buildings hit by missiles, to look back and to have the sense of where is home?

[ 3 : 29 ] What is happening to my home? I just want to go back home. Home. We all want a home, right? We want to have a home and to be home.

And I'm guessing maybe for some of you, you've grown up in Glasgow your whole life, and Glasgow is synonymous with home. Maybe for others, you moved here, and it's never quite felt like home.

You see, even now, you go back somewhere else, and when you get out of the car, you step out of the airplane, you smell the air, you see the sights, and you go, this is home. For others, we think about home, we think about family.

People say phrases, I don't know, they say it in America, I don't know if they say it here. We say things like, home is where the heart is. People throw around these phrases. Some of us are home bodies.

We just want to be at home all the time. That's what makes us feel safe. Some of us are restless wanderers. We're constantly going from place to place trying to find a home, a place to feel safe where you belong.

[ 4 : 36 ] Maybe for uni students, it's an interesting time, if you leave home to go to university, and you go back home during holidays, it's weird because you go home, but maybe it starts to slowly feel a little bit less like home, or as you start your career and the same thing's happening, you start to plant roots somewhere else, and you start to transition, and you're like, where is home?

Many of us might feel homeless politically in the country that you live in because you don't feel like you quite line up with any political party. Some of us might feel homeless in our own bodies because of the suffering that we're enduring.

Your body stopped feeling like home a while ago. There can be a homelessness of relationship. A lot of times, somebody close, if there's a falling out, a rupture in that relationship, you don't feel quite at home anymore.

Maybe you feel the absence of a loved one who's passed away, like your home is no longer with you. Some of us are in a new church home right now, starting to settle in, right?

Maybe others of you, you've been in this church building for a very long time, and this place is your church home, and now all of a sudden, there's an American up there pontificating about things, and it doesn't quite feel like home anymore.

[ 6 : 00 ] I see you, I hear you. The Bible actually has a word for homelessness, and it's exile. And that's what our passage is about, the passage that we read in Isaiah 35.

It's about homelessness and home. It's about exile and the return from exile. And so we're going to look at Isaiah 35. It has these beautiful images in it of the end of exile from the perspective of this Old Testament prophet Isaiah living 700 years before Jesus came.

And he's writing to a community of people who are about to enter exile. But exile is never the end of the story. There remains a glorious future for the people of God.

Before we get into it more, let me pray for the preaching of God's word. Heavenly Father, in our longing, in our doubt, in our apathy, in our tears, in our questions, in our joy, in our anger, wherever it is we are right now, would you meet us?

Would you speak, O Lord? For if you don't, we will waste away. We ask this in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Amen. So we're going to look at our passage in three parts as we're talking about exile and the return from exile.

[ 7 : 30 ] And it's these three things. One, first of all, we have the homelessness of exile. Secondly, the return from exile. And then lastly, life in exile. The homelessness of exile, return from exile, and then life in exile.

First thing, the homelessness of exile. A little bit of context always helps when you plop in in the middle of a book of the Bible, right? You're like, Isaiah 35, what's going on here?

Well, Isaiah, he's a resident of Jerusalem. He's possibly related to the king's royal family. He's a prophet. And his ministry, it spans over the reign of a few different kings in the southern kingdom of Judah.

You see, what's happened is the kingdom of Israel has split into two. There's the north and there's the south, right? And Isaiah, he is ministering in the southern kingdom.

And during this time, there's lots of different threats on the scene. And the one current one is big, bad Assyria. And one of the things that these big, bad nations would do is if they came in and they conquered a smaller nation is they would take most of the people and they would bring them in to exile.

[ 8 : 43 ] They would take them away from their homeland. They would bring them to the place where their nation was. And a lot of times, the idea was they would try to indoctrinate them in the ways of that culture.

Okay? Because why? I mean, if, you know, an Assyrian isn't as big of a threat to an Assyrian, but a person who's Jewish, oh, yeah, absolutely. You're different. They're going to want to go home. They're going to want to rise up. But if they could start to feel part of the culture, if they could assimilate a little bit less of a threat, that was kind of the idea. And so, in the first 39 chapters of Isaiah, we're leading up to exile.

It's coming for the people of Judah. And with chapter 35 is Isaiah. He's had this gripe with the leaders of Judah because they're trying to avoid exile from big bad Assyria, but this is their solution. We're going to make a covenant with the nation of Egypt. That's what we'll do. We'll avoid one big bad nation by making a covenant with another nation and we'll have this little alliance and everything will be fine.

[ 9 : 49 ] In chapter 34, previous to this, it says that to trust the nations is to trust the glory of humanity rather than the glory of God. And so Isaiah is like, no, no, that is not the way.

The only thing that is going to save you is repentance and trust. And guess what? The people listen. Hezekiah listens. King Hezekiah listens and Sennacherib is turned away, go away, and it's only the northern kingdom of Israel that gets led into exile by the Assyrians.

Whew! Exile's avoided, right? Everything's fine? Nope. What happens is that Judah falls for the flattery of Babylon and they show their treasury to Babylon.

And Isaiah's like, what have you done? It leaves them vulnerable and so what's coming, even for the southern kingdom, is going to be exile.

But it's not just bad decisions of the king that the reason for exile coming. The very first chapter of Isaiah, it kind of sets the scene for the problems that are happening in Judah.

[ 11 : 00 ] It says, a sinful people laid in with iniquity. They're not acting with justice. They're not pleading the widow's cause. Even their worship is detestable because it's hypocritical.

It's trying to manipulate God. Trying to get him to do what they want through their sacrifices. And worst of all, idolatry. They're turning to these false gods.

And the punishment for breaking covenant with God is exile. It's not just a historical reality. God promises that when he makes a covenant with Israel in Deuteronomy 28, verse 64.

It says, the Lord will scatter you among all peoples if you break covenant with God. The penalty for sin is always expulsion.

Going outside the camp. Going away from home. Think of Leviticus 16. On the day of atonement. The sins of the people are laid on the scapegoat.

[ 12 : 02 ] What do they do with him? Do they just hang out? No. They cast him away. He goes outside of the camp. He goes away from home. And in our passage, even though it's focusing on the return from exile, you get all of these poetic terms here to describe just exile.

Verse 1. The wilderness and the desert. Verse 10. It's a place of sorrow and sighing. And the they, this pronoun in chapter 35, the they, they're returning from somewhere.

Returning from exile. And here's the thing. The homelessness of exile, it's actually not limited to Israel in Babylon. It's historical reality. But it's the way that the Bible talks about sin.

You see, there's this poetic vision in Isaiah 35. And it's for the nations too. Because even in Isaiah chapter 2, the vision of what is coming is that the nations are going to stream to Zion.

There's something that's going to happen so that Israel will be a light to the nations and the nations will come to know God. It's talking about a literal exile, but then also a kind of like a sort of exile that we all face.

[ 13 : 14 ] What do I mean by that? Well, think about the story of the Bible. The story of the Bible is that we're all created for a home. The very first pages of the Bible is God creates a world and puts man in it.

He gives us a home. Right? Where everything is perfect. The Garden of Eden. Garden of Eden where they dwelled in perfect union with God. And Adam and Eve could say in the garden, this is Emmanuel.

He is God and he is with us. In verse 2 of our passage, it says about the return from exile that they will see the glory of God. Well, guess what?

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, in the midst of a perfect creation, they could behold the glory of God. And the prophet Ezekiel, he talks actually about a return from exile in Ezekiel 36.

He said it's going to be like a return to the Garden of the Lord. You know the story though, right? Garden of Eden is not the end of the story. Humanity rebels and Adam and Eve, what happens is

they get exiled out of the garden.

[ 14 : 21 ] And from God's presence. They're exiled from God's glory. And what this thing that used to be the source of life and joy to commune with God and his glory now is like a threat to them.

And they're not allowed back in. And every single one of their descendants is longing, longing to go back home. To get some of that glory again. And so you see Cain.

What does he do? He rises up and he strikes Abel. What's his punishment? He's homeless. He's a wanderer. He wanders the earth. Abraham is called.

God asks him to do what? Leave your home. Go to the land of promise. And he goes to the land of promise, this new land, but he's just a sojourner in the land. It's not yet home.

And even though Abraham's family settles there, the family of Jacob, they get pushed down to Egypt because of a famine away from home. And it's in Egypt that the people of Israel become slaves and they're longing to return home.

[ 15 : 24 ] They're longing for God's glory to visit them again. And even after they're delivered from Egypt, they wander in the desert for 40 years. They're homeless. They just pitch a tent here and there and they wander around.

But it's even in the desert that God wants to dwell with them. And so it kind of creates like a mobile home of sorts there with the tabernacle.

And the glory cloud and the pillar of fire settle over it. He situates his glory right there. And so it's like they're home but they're not home.

They feel like they're home because God's there but they're not in the land of promise. And eventually, they do get to the land of promise. They get to go home. And lots of stuff, ups and downs and king comes.

And what did David and Solomon want to do? What do they want to build for God? A home. And so they build the temple. But idolatry grows very quickly right after Solomon and the kingdom, their home, it splits in two.

[ 16 : 28 ] And so many of the prophets, their basic message is come back home. Your home is in danger because you've strayed from the Lord. These are what the covenant curses are.

And that's what comes. What comes is exile. First for the northern kingdom in 722, the Assyrians take them away. And then the southern kingdom of Judah in 587, the Babylonians take them away. And again, God promises to remember his covenant. And the people of Israel, they actually do eventually come back from exile. They rebuild their homes and they rebuild God's house, the temple.

Here's the thing though. They rebuild this temple and it pales in comparison to the first one. They rebuild the temple and everybody's, we're back home.

We've returned from exile. And they look around and it's not quite the same. You see, in the first temple, God's presence comes in a cloud and fills the temple and everybody's knees turn to spaghetti noodles and everybody falls on their faces.

[ 17 : 34 ] And the second temple, it's a home, but it's not yet home. They look around. And you even get to the first pages of the New Testament and guess what?

Israel, they're in the land, but there's a foreign power in power. Rome is there. They're home, but they don't feel like they're home.

It's like, have you ever had a house guest come and stay too long? So long, it stops feeling like you've got to get out or this is no longer my house. They're longing for it to end.

Okay, that was like thousands of years of Israel's history summarized right here. Let's bring it to a 21st century Scottish person. The Bible says that the real reason that you're so restless and desperately want to find a home, a place of safety and belonging is because we've all lost our original home.

We're all homeless because of sin. And so we go from thing to thing kind of trying to find a home, a place to belong in it. We write poems and we tell stories about love trying to find a home in them.

[ 18 : 45 ] There's this French philosopher in the first part of the 20th century named Albert Camus and he wrote this about beauty. Such an inspiring quote. He says, beauty is unbearable.

Love it. Beauty is unbearable. It drives us to despair because it offers us for a minute the glimpse of an eternity that we desperately want to stretch out over all of time.

But we do not have that consolation. What's this guy saying? What's Camus saying? He's saying, what we desire, we desire is a home. We desire beauty to get on the inside, to feel safe like you

belong but when we find it that home won't last.

We want it to last. We feel like it should last but it doesn't. Ah! Basically, the best you can do is, I heard one pastor say this, the best you can do is the Lion King, the circle of life.

See those grasslands over there, Simba? This whole kingdom's ours. You're going to eat the antelope. Eventually, you're going to die. Your body will be fertilizer for the antelope. It'll grow the grass.

[ 19 : 54 ] They eat it. It's the circle of life. It's about the best you can get. Enter C.S. Lewis. He's got an interesting quote on this. He once wrote to a friend. He says, if you're really a product of a materialistic universe, how is it that you don't feel at home here?

Do fish complain of the sea for being wet? Or if they did, would that fact itself not strongly suggest that they had not always been or would not always be purely aquatic creatures?

Then if we complain of time and take such joy in the seemingly timeless moment, what does that suggest? It suggests that we have not always been or will not always be purely temporal creatures. It suggests that we were created for eternity. Not only are we harried by time, we seem unable despite a thousand generations even to get used to it.

We're always amazed by it, how fast it goes, how slowly it goes, how much of it is gone. Where, we cry, has the time gone? We aren't adapted to it, not at home in it.

[ 20 : 57 ] If that is so, it may appear as a proof or at least a powerful suggestion that eternity exists and is our home. Now, C.S. Lewis, what is he saying?

He's saying the sense of homelessness and the desire for a home and for that home to last and to be safe and to be a place where we belong and for it to go on forever. It hints that there's a home we were created for, a far country, a glory, an eternal home that we've been created for.

We're all longing for a better home. So, it's the homelessness of exile. It's basically the story of the Bible. We've been created for a home to dwell with God in a sinless creation yet sin is here and so we feel homeless.

We feel like we're in exile. So, second thing, the end of exile. There's a lot about exile for a passage that's about the end of exile, I know.

Well, what is our passage? If you look down at it, what does Isaiah 35 say that the end of exile is like? First off, verse 1, God will turn the desert into a garden.

[ 22 : 08 ] All the thorns and the thistles brought by the fall get rolled back. Verse 2, creation itself is rejoicing with joy and singing at this great reversal.

Verse 2 again, the glory of Lebanon will be given to the wilderness. Lebanon was famous for its forests. This place of desolation now has the most glorious trees growing in it.

Also, verse 2, it has the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. These were the places of bounteous cultivation and just pure beauty. Verse 6, waters are breaking forth.

There's streams in the desert. Verse 7, the burning sand will become like a pool. I've been to the beach in Scotland. I don't know if you guys quite get this illustration. I grew up in Florida where it's a lot hotter and you go to the beach and a lot of times you'd have to cross over the really powdery stuff and it's just burning hot outside.

It turns that sand into something that will like burn the bottom of your feet off until you kind of run on tiptoes. Ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch! Until you get towards where the water comes in, that sand, and you cool your little toes in it and it's the most wonderful feeling.

[ 23 : 27 ] Isaiah says the return from exile is like that times a gajillion. Isaiah is saying that it's like an Eden 2.0 is being described in Isaiah 35.

But it's interesting. What are those who are in this transformed desert now bursting with water and trees and glory and beauty, what are they transfixed by?

Verse 2. The glory and the majesty of the Lord. Be like, imagine a couple getting married in front of Ben Nevis.

That's the big one, right? Got it? And it's beautiful. And everybody's looking around and they can't, they just can't take it in because it's so amazing. And yet, the bride and the bridegroom stare at one another and don't look at any of that because they're transfixed by a greater love, something that's captured them even more.

That's what it's like. That's what's being described. All of these beautiful things, the most amazing thing that you can't take your eyes on is the very glory of the Lord. What we're created for, to dwell in Eden and to behold the glory of the Lord.

[ 24 : 44 ] That, right there, that is home. That's what we've been created for. I mentioned that as the New Testament begins, there's this sense, even amongst the people of Israel who are back in the land, the sense of exile, the sense of homelessness because they're occupied by Rome.

They want to get Rome out, otherwise it's not going to feel like home. An angel comes and she tells Mary that she's going to have a son and his name is going to be Emmanuel, which means God with us.

And the Gospel of John says in John 1 that to look at him is to behold the very glory of God. And there's this guy named John the Baptist and he's wondering if this guy, Jesus, who's called Emmanuel, is really the one, if he's truly the Messiah, if he's really the one who has come to end exile and that the glory of the Lord will again return and their home will become their home again. And Jesus tells the messengers of John to go back and to say what? He quotes Isaiah 35 verses 5 and 6, the blind see and the lame walk.

Could this be the one who's going to bring us home? Who's going to bring an end to exile? Maybe not just the exile of the Israelites, maybe the exile of humanity.

[ 26 : 11 ] You know, he's constantly, as he's going around, he's welcoming the stranger, inviting the estranged into fellowship and feasting. And just like our passage talks about streams in the desert, Jesus stands up and he announces, if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

And just a chapter later in John 8, he's at the feast of booths. And you see, it says where he says this one thing. He says he's in the treasury. And if you knew about the temple, in the treasury, there would be this massive candelabra, this huge light, and it would get lit every single year at the feast of booths.

And Jesus stands up right next to it. And it's a beautiful, it would be a beautiful thing to see, to see this light on a hill and the temple. But it would also make them sad because it's this temple, they're looking and they're saying that light, that light reminds us of the Shekinah glory of God that rested over the tabernacle.

And it is not back yet. It's not back. And Jesus stands up. And right as it gets put out at the feast of booths, he says, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. What is he saying? That pillar of fire, that glory, what you've been created for, it's here.

[ 27 : 39 ] It's here in me. And to come to him is to come home. And that all sounds great, but if you keep reading in the Gospels, unusual stuff starts to happen.

This one who is the very glory of God is not born in a home, but in the back. He's not placed in a crib, he's placed in a manger. And his family, they immediately have to flee their homeland. They've got to go down to Egypt, away from home. And during his ministry, he's actually homeless. He in fact says, foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.

And ultimately what the Messiah experiences is exile. He goes to the cross. He's crucified outside of the city walls, like a scapegoat, put outside the camp, away from home.

and he experiences the covenant curses of exile in himself. And yet, in Jesus becoming homeless, we find out in a remarkable way that is actually how we can be brought back home.

[ 28 : 50 ] The good news of the gospel is you could not get home. So God came and got you. Isaiah 35, it keeps referring to the they, verses 2, verse 8, verse 9, it keeps saying they, and it doesn't name the they until you get to the end of verse 9 and verse 10.

It says the ransomed and the redeemed. Those who have wandered get brought back home at the cost of another. And what's the result?

This final result of exile being over? Verse 10, sorrow and sighing will flee. That's the ultimate end of exile in this world, as sin will be tossed aside.

Revelation describes a restored earth, a redeemed humanity. It says, the dwelling place, the home of God is with man, and he will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

There will be no more sorrow and sighing, and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away. In other words, exile is going to be over.

[ 29 : 53 ] It will be home. So we all experience this homelessness of exile because of sin, and yet, in Christ's coming, we have an end of our exile.

But here we are. It's March 2022, and we still struggle with the sense of homelessness, a place to belong, a place to feel at home, a place that we love, where we feel safe, and we want it to last forever, and we still go from thing to thing at times trying to find that security.

We feel exile in terms of isolation and exclusion, suffering and sorrow, longing, and oh, maybe there's an already not yet to the end of exile.

That's the last point, life in exile. Actually, the New Testament authors pick up on this theme of exile, and Peter, he writes in 1 Peter chapter 1, he refers to those reading his letters as the elect exiles.

exiles. We live as exiles, those who are home in Christ, and yet they're still longing for their true home in the new heavens and the new earth, where they'll behold God's glory in all its fullness.

[ 31 : 04 ] So, you and I, we live as exiles. We're home, but we're not home. So, what's Isaiah's encouragement and instruction for people like you and me who live in exile?

It's very applicable because he's writing to those who are waiting. He says, in verses 3 and 4, strengthen your weak knees, be strong and courageous, don't fear.

Why? Your God will come. Your God will come with a recompense. I love that word. He will come and he will set all things right.

Your God has come and your God will come. Recognize that he is going to put everything right. What are you supposed to do with this?

I was reading one commentator a little while ago. He's a great quote, so I'm just going to read it to you. He said, the question for a 21st century person upon engaging Isaiah 35 is not, how do I apply this to my life?

[ 32 : 02 ] That would be a trivialization of this text. When a sufferer of terminal cancer is told a cure has been found, they do not say, great, now how do I apply this to my life?

They're going to live again. They're going to be restored. They immediately order their entire existence around that great anticipation. With Isaiah 35 open before us, the question for us is, are we swimming in the mental and emotional universe of what God has told us our future is?

Here is what God is saying to us through this text. if you are in Christ, one day you will find yourself on this earth minus sin and disease and hospitals and medicine and alarm clocks and apologies and tears and resentment and dashed hopes and relational friction and unexplainable sadness and shame and boredom and mustered up happiness.

And you'll find yourself in a transformed but fully physical body, unable to sin at rest, feeling better physically than you ever could even in your earthly prime, enjoying this earth as it was meant to be enjoyed, the food, the flowers, the mountains, the sunsets, the friendships, the uproarious laughter, the games, the songs, the smells, the fishing, the knitting, the running, the learning, the conversations, and shot through everything and over everything and giving meaning to everything, the everlasting joy and glory of God that we were created for.

This is, in Isaiah 34, excuse me, Isaiah 35, it is both a comfort and a challenge to us. Strengthen your weak knees. The comfort is, listen, God will come.

[ 33 : 44 ] God has not forgotten about you. There will be an end to exile. Don't fear, be strong and courageous. And yet there's also a challenge within that. Recognize that he will put everything right and act in accordance with it.

Live into that reality. Live into that future even now. Because here's the thing, life is going to knock you down. It's going to come again and again and go right for your knees.

But get up. Strengthen your weak knees. God will come. There is an end of exile. There is even an already, not yet.

Illustrated this way, stealing from another pastor who I really like, I heard some years ago. he talked about the movie A Fistful of Dollars. It's an American western.

Warning to you, it's going to be about cowboys and there's guns involved in it. And A Fistful of Dollars, it's a spaghetti western. They're called spaghetti westerns because they were filmed in Italy.

[ 34 : 48 ] They filmed them in the arid places of Italy because it was cheaper to do that. But it was supposed to be set in the American west. And there's this character in this Sergio Leone movie, A Fistful of Dollars.

Clint Eastwood is the star of it. And he is the man with no name. And in the movie, the bad guys led by Ramon think that they've killed the man with no name.

They think they got him. And they're hanging out in the town and all of a sudden two sticks of dynamite, kaboom, right in the center of town. They scramble.

They go outside to see what it is. And at first you just hear the clink, clink, clink of the man with no name Spurs.

And he comes through the mist. Their faces Ramon and all his bad guys. And Clint Eastwood comes out. He's got his cowboy hat and his poncho on. Kind of stands there and pops his hip exposing his gun on the side.

[ 35 : 50 ] And he says, what's wrong Ramon? Got to aim for the heart. And Ramon, he starts to panic. And the man with no name taunts him a little bit more.

You got to aim for the heart, Ramon. So Ramon takes his gun and bam! Shoots the man with no name. Hits him. Down. On the ground.

Falls down. Everybody looks. The man with no name stands up. The heart, Ramon. You losing your touch, Ramon?

Aim for the heart. Again, bam! Hits him. Falls down. Gets back up. What's wrong, Ramon? Come on, Ramon. Come on, aim for the heart.

You got to hit the heart, Ramon. And this time, Ramon and all of his bad guys take aim at Clint Eastwood. Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Down he goes.

[ 36 : 50 ] And again, he stands up and he moves poncho to the side and he's got an iron plate. Takes it, drops it on the ground, riddled with bullet dents.

And he dispatches with all bad guys. why do I share that? You're like, why are you sharing that, mate?

Besides that, it's awesome. No, it's this. Listen, if you are in Christ, you are Clint Eastwood in that iron plate.

The homelessness and exile in this life will come and it will boom! Hit you and it's going to knock you to the ground. but in the name of Christ, get up.

It's a comfort and a challenge. You can get up. If Christ has taken ultimate exile for you, every sense of exile that hits you does not end you. Because there will be an end, ultimately, of all exile.

[ 38 : 00 ] So stand up. Get up. You can get up. There's so many things in this life that are going to knock us down again and again.

So many things, so many times that we discover that are running to other things to try to find a home. It's not our true home. So many things in the suffering of this life are going to hit us and it is going to hurt.

It is going to knock you off your feet. It doesn't just say, hey, just stand up all the time in your own power. Do this. No. Strengthen your weak knees. Our knees can be weak.

Don't fear. You don't have to fear. Christ has come. The very glory of God has come back. It has visited us from on high.

And everything of being cast outside of the garden, Jesus experienced. Not as an I told you so, but in order to bring us home. To an everlasting home.

[ 39 : 05 ] A home that we can even experience now in Him. A home that we can experience with His people because we all are united to Christ together. There's going to be times where we don't feel very strong at all.

And where we need to comfort and challenge one another. Strengthen your weak knees. There will be an end to exile. There will be an end to your suffering. There will be an end to your sin.

It will not have the last word. Christ has come. Christ has risen. Christ will come again. Thanks be to God. Let's pray together.

You, O God, are our help in ages past, our hope from years to come. You're our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home. Father, we pray that we, your people, would find our home with you.

That we would mourn the exile due to sin. The exile that we still face because sin remains and the last enemy to be defeated is death.

[ 40 : 13 ] But that we would rejoice. That we would be courageous people, not in our own strength, but in Christ's. Father, I pray that you would give us a vision of the end of exile.

and that we can even experience it now, that even in the desert place that you long to make your home with us. Even in the sufferings of this life that you are here and that your presence will not go away.

And if you are for us, who can be against us? Father, would you assure us of these things and help us to live and rejoice into this reality and to this promised future?  
that we would be a people who live the future right now. We pray all of this in the name of Christ.  
Amen.