

No One Greater

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Date: 13 September 2026

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[illegible]

Thank you.

I don't know if you, like, love that last song the way I love that last song, but I mean, all of them. And of course, you notice the theme throughout the songs this evening, and it's the greatness of our God.

And that's really what we're going to be looking at over the next several weeks together in the book of Hebrews entitled, Jesus is Greater. I mentioned, I think, last week in announcements that Hebrews is one of my favorite books, one of my favorite books, certainly in the New Testament, if not the entire Bible.

And I think you're going to see why over these next few weeks as we study this together. Now, you may ask, and oftentimes I get asked, like, why do you preach certain series or, you know, why the book of Hebrews?

[2:14] And kind of the thought that kept coming back in my mind as I thought about what I would preach this fall is this. I want to preach an irresistible Christ.

I want to preach an irresistible Christ. And the reason for that is because I believe there is nothing and no one greater than Jesus.

And the benefit of this series, first of all, if you're a Christian, if you're a Christian this evening and you would consider yourself a follower of Christ, if your experience is anything like mine, there are times in your Christian walk where your affections for Jesus grow cold.

Anybody? Anybody? There's times when your affections for Jesus grow cold. And what we need to be reminded, it's not as though we've, like, abandoned the faith.

It's just our hearts have become complacent or numb. And what we need in those moments is to be reminded how great Jesus is.

[3:21] How great Jesus is. The Puritans actually called this a felt Christ. Where you feel your affections are warm for Jesus.

And so if you're a Christian and you're in a season where that's you, your heart has grown complacent, kind of like the old hymn we sing, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

Prone to leave the God I love. What you need to be reminded of is how great Jesus is. Now, if you're a non-Christian, and I know that we have unbelievers that gather with us on the weekend, we're thankful for that.

To you, I would say, this series is to express to you, and there's really no other way of saying this, but if you are without Christ, your soul, your spiritual condition is in a desperate state.

It really is. And if you do not know Christ, you will eternally perish. And so what I want is that the beauty of the book of Hebrews and the understanding of how great Jesus is would win you to

Christ.

[4:34] Because the Bible says it's not the wrath of God that leads to repentance. It's the kindness of God. It's the beauty of God's grace and love in Jesus Christ.

And so here's what my desire is. Yes, this is the introduction before the introduction, but get over it, all right? Is what my hope is for all of us is that every single week over these next several weeks, that we will bring our, at times, our cold hearts, and that we would place them on the fire of the greatness of Jesus, and that we would be awakened anew in our walk with Christ.

And so today is going to be an introduction. We're just going to kind of just dip our toes in to how this book begins in these first few verses. So I'm going to invite you, if you would, to please stand as we honor the reading of God's Word.

And let's look at Hebrews chapter 1 and read down through verse 4. This letter begins, Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for this journey that we're about to begin through the study of the book of Hebrews. And we pray, as we've just spoken about, that whether we are a Christian, whether we are a non-Christian, we will see how irresistible Jesus is.

[6:26] That we would experience a felt Christ, that our affections for the greatness and the glory of Jesus would be awakened in us. And so, Lord, we cannot, and I certainly cannot do that work for us, even for myself.

And so I pray that your Spirit would come and do what only you can do. Show us. Show us how great you are. And I pray this in Jesus' name.

And God's people said, Amen. You can be seated. When Forrest Tucker left prison, his career as a veteran bank robber appeared to be over.

Now, up to that point, Tucker had spent most of his life as one of America's most notorious bank robbers. All of this started for Tucker when he was 15 years old, when he stole an automobile.

And that kind of led into the next six decades of robbing banks. It's estimated that over his lifetime as a bank robber, that Tucker stole somewhere in the neighborhood of about \$4 million.

[7:35] And he wasn't just good at robbing banks, he was also an incredible escape artist. In addition to robbing a lot of banks and being put into prison, he escaped from prison nearly 20 times.

His most famous prison escape was from San Quentin Prison in California, any Johnny Cash fans, where he built, the way he escaped was he built his own little like makeshift kayak and made his way across the San Francisco Bay.

The story of his life was actually so remarkable that, of course, as Hollywood always does, they turned it into a movie. The movie is entitled The Old Man and the Gun, starring Robert Redford. But Tucker's life as a criminal looked as though it had come to an end in 1993. At the age of 73, he was released once again from prison.

He and his wife, Jewel, purchased a home in Florida on a golf course, and they started experiencing something that they had not experienced in many, many years.

[8:45] It's called freedom. Freedom. And they began to enjoy that. For the next several years, Tucker worked in his yard. He played the saxophone.

He gave music lessons. He took his wife dancing. He even wrote a book called The Can Opener, which was a detailed account of his escape from San Quentin Prison.

Tucker was living the life of an ordinary old man. He was finally free, and he was living in that freedom. Are you with me?

But six years after enjoying this life at the age of 79, Tucker walked into the Republic Security Bank in Jupiter, Florida and robbed it.

And this left everybody asking this question, why would a 79-year-old... You're 79. Why would a 79-year-old man who had finally been given freedom rob again?

[9:51] And Tucker said the reason that he did it was not because he was desperate for money. He wasn't trying to seek revenge in any way. He simply said this, and I quote, it's all I've ever known.

It's all I've ever known. He went back to his old life, not because his old life was better, but because his old life was familiar.

And so it is with us. Do not we do the exact same thing, Faith Family? Now, our relapse probably isn't to prison, but how many of you personally have experienced this or you know people that have experienced being in an abusive relationship only to be set free from that and end up going back to

that same relationship?

Some of you personally or you know people have been set free from alcohol or some type of addictive substance only to at some point return back to that.

Some of us make progress in our diet and exercise only to, you know, like a day later, go back to unhealthy eating. We go back to the things that we enjoy.

[11:11] How many of you have ever experienced this? The alarm clock goes off in the morning and rather than getting up and tackling your day, you go back to sleep. How many plans has the snooze bar destroyed?

Yeah, you wake up, you know what? I'm not going to the gym this morning. Snooze. Eight minutes later, you hear the alarm. You know what? I took a long shower yesterday.

Snooze. Eight minutes later, you hear the alarm. You know what? I always wanted to go on welfare. Snooze. It's funny because it's true.

How many of you have ever gone back to sleep? All of us in one way or another, we know that feeling of going back to something. And if we're honest this evening, I think we would all admit this, that most of the time, our going back is not because that thing is better.

It's because that thing is familiar. Amen? And listen, this thing, this reality happens not just with addictions and not just with alarm clocks.

[12:17] It happens with us spiritually, does it not? I mean, how many times in our pursuit of Jesus have we been tempted to retreat back? We, like Tucker, have been given freedom.

We've been given a whole new life in Jesus, and yet we resort back to old ways of thinking or old behaviors or old patterns of disobedience rather than pressing forward in faith.

Anybody with me? Anybody ever struggled with that? Well, if you know that feeling, if you've ever experienced that personally or spiritually, you know exactly what's happening here in the book of Hebrews.

In fact, notice this thread that runs all throughout the book. In chapter 2, verse 1, it says, Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we've heard, lest we what?

Drift away from it. And then look in chapter 3. Take care, brothers, lest there be any of you with an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to what? Fall away from the living God.

[13:22] Chapter 4, let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall, that is, go back by the same sort of disobedience. Chapter 6, therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and do what?

Go on, press forward. Don't go back, but press on to maturity. Then in chapter 10, let us draw near with a true heart, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope, say it, without wavering, without going back, for he who promised is faithful. Later in the same chapter, but we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but those who have faith and move forward, that is, persevere in their souls.

And then lastly, Rick talked about this last week. Therefore, since we're surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside all the weight, the sin that clings closely. Let us run with endurance the race that's what?

Before us. Not behind us, but the race that's set before us. Do you see that all throughout the book? In other words, this book, the book of Hebrews, is a pastoral letter that is encouraging a group of Christians to press forward.

[14:45] To not be like Tucker and go back to what's familiar, but to press forward in your freedom and new life in Christ.

Now that raises the question like, why would they even be tempted to go back? Why would we even be tempted to go back in our faith or in our pursuit of Christ?

What's the context of this book? Well, this letter was written mostly to Jewish Christians. That's why the name of the book is the book of, you at least have to get that one right, okay?

The book of Hebrews. So you don't need like a New Testament PhD to figure out that these Christians have a Jewish background. They are likely living outside of Jerusalem.

The book was written probably in the mid-60s AD. They're somewhere in Alexandria and that particular area. And based on this letter, we know some things about them as you study it.

[15:47] For example, we know that they have faith in Jesus. I mean, all throughout the book, these Christians are going to be called holy brothers. Their faith is going to be referred to in the present tense.

They'll be called sons in relation to their heavenly father. And by the way, the emphasis of this book is not for them to be saved. It's to grow up in their salvation.

That is to press on to maturity. So there's no doubt in my mind that the recipients of this letter are believers. Another thing we know about them is that they are not new in the faith.

They've been around a while. They've expressed faith in Christ for a while. Later in chapter 5, the author will say, For by this time you ought to be teachers.

You still need someone to teach you the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk and not solid food. So we know that they're Christians and we know that they've been Christians for a while.

[16:50] The third thing that we know is that they have suffered because of their faith. This is a theme that gets repeated throughout the book. And certainly if you've ever read any history from the first century, you know that Roman persecution of Christians was notorious.

It was not easy at all to be a Christian in Rome. It was hard to find a job, hard to have a friend. You were blamed for basically every natural disaster that happened.

And the reason for that is because Christians didn't worship the Roman gods. Are you with me? And because they didn't worship the Roman gods when a natural disaster happened, guess who the Romans blamed?

The Christians. Because they'd upset the Roman gods. Later in chapter 10, we get a glimpse of this suffering. Look at chapter 10, verse 32.

Recall the former days when after you were enlightened, you endured a what, faith family? A hard struggle with sufferings. Sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction.

[17:56] And sometimes being partners with those so treated. So while they have not resisted to the point of bloodshed, they've not been persecuted to the point of death, they have suffered intensely.

And some of you have as well, haven't you? I know that there are people in this room where you have suffered a lot. You have endured a lot.

Can I get an amen? And if you have ever gone through that, you know that if you continue to go through that, you start asking this question. You start asking, how much more can I take?

How much more can I take? How much more am I going to have to endure? You see, life becomes like this, like a watermelon that you put rubber bands on, and eventually the pressure becomes so intense, you just explode.

Now we kind of giggle at that, but you know what, that's kind of a metaphor for many of us in life. Like the pressure, the intensity is so much, we just want to explode.

[19:09] Now why was this for them? Because in Rome, Judaism was exempt from worshipping the Roman gods, and therefore they didn't experience suffering.

Is everybody with me? If you were a Jew under Roman rule, you wouldn't be persecuted for your Judaism. However, if you were a Christian, then you would be persecuted a lot for your Christian faith.

So just stop and think about it for just a moment. If your old life is Judaism, are you with me? If your old life is Judaism, and Jews aren't persecuted during this time, and now your new life as a Christian is full of persecution, and the rubber bands of suffering just continue to bring intense pressure in your life, what would you eventually be tempted to do?

Go back. Go back. I'm just going to go back to Judaism. I mean, after all, it's safe. It's not polytheism.

We're not embracing the Roman pantheon of gods. It's kind of like Christianity, right? You know, I mean, it's close. And so the temptation would be very real to just go back.

[20:32] To forsake the freedom that you have in Jesus and go back to what's familiar. And I wonder about you and about me, how much would you endure for Jesus?

How much suffering would you be able to take? How much ridicule and persecution and loss in life before you would say, I'm done.

I'm going back. It's just not worth it. So if you found yourself in that situation, what would you need to endure?

What would you need to keep going? What would you need to press on? Would it be like a seminar on positive thinking or maybe a self-help book? Maybe some kind of fortune cookie reminder that, you know, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

What would you need? Here's what you would need. If you've zoned out, I don't know how you possibly could, but what do you do? Okay, here's what you would need.

[21 : 39] Here's what you would need. If you were in this situation that they're in, what you would need is a fresh reminder of how great Jesus is.

He's worth it. He's worth it. What you need is not a self-help book. What you need is a glimpse of the glory of Jesus.

And by God's providence through the back streets of Rome comes a letter. And likely, in the gathering of a home, this small collection of Jewish Christians huddled around a light, unroll the parchment, and they read this.

long ago, at many times, and in many ways, God spoke.

God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. Now, on the surface, those words might not seem like much of an introduction to you, but given their situation, these words, I believe, were like spiritual ointment to their bruised souls.

[23 : 16] That this was such a comfort to them. First of all, it would have reminded them that there is no reason to doubt God. There is no reason to doubt God.

God knows the suffering of His people. God is aware of who we are. God is aware of where we are. God knows exactly what we are enduring in this very moment.

And what's more, God has proven Himself to speak to the people that He loves. How do you know that? Because He has. He has spoken to our forefathers bits and pieces over 1,500 years.

We call it the Old Testament. You know He spoke to Adam in the garden. He spoke to Jacob in a dream. He spoke to Moses from the burning bush. He spoke to Elijah in the still small voice.

He spoke to Ezekiel through a vision. He spoke through David through songs and Solomon through Proverbs. He spoke through the prophets, these divine oracles.

[24 : 19] For heaven's sake, He even spoke to Balaam through a donkey. God has spoken. Again, don't you see, in the past, God in lots of ways and at lots of times has spoken, which means this, faith family, lean in, of all the things you might think God is in your suffering, the one thing He has not been is silent.

Let me say that again. Of all the things that you may think God is in your suffering, the one thing He has not been is silent.

He has spoken. Now, imagine, given their Jewish heritage and all of their Jewish background, the deep-seated feelings of comfort that this would have brought to the surface.

These were our people. God spoke to our forefathers. He spoke to our people when they needed Him to speak the most.

And so maybe, perhaps, we cannot understand what is happening to us in this present moment, but we have no basis of which to doubt God.

[25 : 45] He has not been silent. Now, let us this evening, faith family, pause for just a moment and consider, first of all, the compassion of revelation. The compassion of revelation.

Do you realize how gracious it is that God has spoken? Now, don't point to anybody in this, but have you ever been around somebody who doesn't say much?

Some of you are married to them, right? And you ask them, hey, how's it going? Fine. Okay. Good. Now, that's a struggle, isn't it?

Sorry, you can say amen, right? It's a struggle. Because it's very hard to have a relationship without communication, isn't it? God spoke! And He's been speaking for hundreds of years.

He did not have to. He could have remained silent, but by His own good grace, He so loved the world, He said something.

[26 : 48] He said a lot. And He spoke to us in a variety of ways through the prophets. Carl F.H. Henry says, quote, God chose to speak so that His creatures would know Him.

So let us this evening recognize this, faith family, that God not only reveals His grace to us through salvation, but God reveals His grace to us through revelation.

Do you know what a gift of grace it is that God has spoken to you? That God has not been silent in your situation. Amen? Secondly, let us consider this evening the comfort of revelation.

The comfort of revelation. There's a great encouragement in knowing that even in our suffering, God has not been silent. You know this. You've experienced this before.

That is that one of the worst feelings in the world when you're afraid, right? Imagine yourself in a situation where you're afraid, you've got a fear of something, there's uncertainty happening in your

life.

[27:55] Like, what's the thing that terrifies you the most? Answer, silence. When the doctor won't give you any answers.

When the friend won't call you or text you back. When the spouse won't respond. What's your feeling in that moment?

Your fears escalate and all you want is for somebody to just say something. Amen? Would somebody just say something?

God has. God has. He has not been silent. The good news for the suffering saint is that God has spoken.

And there is such comfort, not only grace, in knowing that God has not been silent to you. Amen? Now, note the phrase there in verse 1, in various ways and at various times.

[29:04] The literal reading of that is in pieces. That God spoke in pieces. He didn't like just give it all at once. At various times, in various ways, through various people, He brought about this revelation.

He brought about these words. It's actually, if you want to know the theological category, it's called progressive revelation. That is, God's revelation came in stages. Are you with me?

Now, the question would be why did God do it this way? Why did God speak in various ways and at various times? Well, again, this is something you've experienced before.

How many of you have ever eaten too much? All of you at some point, right? And what happens when you eat too much? Like, your stomach hurts, right?

And, that's actually a, never mind. Alright, so, I thought about making fun of somebody but I won't. Alright, so, so like, but what, like, why does your stomach hurt?

[30:04] Well, you know the answer to that. Your stomach can only handle so much food. food. It's not meant to just eat all of the golden corral, right?

Like, you are, you are designed to eat in bits and pieces at various times. I know some of you that's a news flash, do you? But, but you're not supposed to just take it all in at one.

Or, or imagine you're in the dark and someone turns on a bright light. What do you do? You turn away. Why? Because your eyes are only meant to handle, like, so much light at one time.

Is everybody with me? Say yes. Here, here's why God did it this way. Because He is so incredibly glorious that He had to reveal Himself a little at a time.

Like Moses, who wanted to see the fullness of God's glory, but what did God only allow him to see? His backside. He only allowed him to just catch a little glimpse.

[31:06] Why? There is no way human beings can grasp the greatness of God's glory in a single dose. And so, God spoke in a variety of ways at a variety of times.

And He did this through prophets and priests and kings and temples and sacrifices and laws. And He revealed Himself in a variety of different ways. Now, now listen, listen, that's verse 1.

all of these appetizers that God served at a variety of times in a variety of ways were to prepare you for His main course.

Verse 2. But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His, say it, Son.

That is now, in this final act of revelation, God has spoken in His Son. All the appetizers of revelation that you know as your Old Testament has served to prepare you for the main course that is His Son.

[32:26] God spoke words, but now He has spoken a final word. And all of those words were preparing you for one thing, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

And there's a contrast here in the original that you don't necessarily see in our English translations. On one hand, verse 1, the writer says, God spoke through the prophets.

And that's easy for us to understand. And then He contrasts that in the original by saying this, in these last days, He has spoken to us.

The original does not say, in the Son, but in Son. In Son. In Son. And that kind of contrast in the original is for the purpose of stressing the nature through whom God has spoken.

Are you still with me? In other words, in the past, God spoke to our fathers through prophets, ordinary people like you and I. Right?

[33:38] When we, just because they're in the Bible does not mean that they're extraordinary. They were ordinary people just like you and I. And God spoke through them.

But now He has spoken in someone who's in a class all by Himself. He has spoken in Son.

In other words, notice it on the screen, you have something greater than the prophets had, your forefathers had, because you have someone greater. You have a greater Word than all those who came before you. You remember in Matthew chapter 17 and other passages in the Gospel at the Mount of Transfiguration, the radiance of Jesus' glory is revealed there.

And do you remember who is with Jesus? You have Moses and you have Elijah. They're with Him. And Peter's response to this is He wants to build three shelters for all three of them.

[34:42] After all, you have Jesus. He's really important. You have Moses. He's the giver of the law. He's important. You've got Elijah. He represents the prophets. He's important. But what does God say?

God says in that moment, this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. And what is God doing in that moment?

Oh, Peter. Peter, Peter, Peter. This one is more than a prophet. This one is more than a priest. He's greater than Moses and Elijah. He's my son. The greater one has come.

And He is in a category of a different kind. Son. This word is unlike any word God has ever spoken.

[35:45] This word is Son. And notice how He is in a category all by Himself. Pick it up in verse 2. Whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world.

He is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of His nature. He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

Having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs. What an introduction. Like, are you following the flow of the text?

Like, God spoke in the past and He spoke through all these ordinary people, these prophets and priests and God did it in a variety of ways at a variety of times.

Oh, but now! Oh, but now! Those appetizers are over and the main course has come and God has spoken in a greater word.

[36:51] Son. And let me tell you about the Son. He is the Son of God that is the heir of all things. To be Son is to be the heir.

You know that. You know your Bibles. You know your Old Testament. Everything that belongs to the Father belongs to the Son. And that is why all things are placed under His feet.

He is given a name that is above every name from Him and to Him belong all things. Jesus occupies the supreme place in all the universe.

He's Son. He's heir. Faith family, do you know how great Jesus is? And He is not only the Son, but He is the source of creation.

Paul says in Colossians 1, by Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, rulers or authorities, all things were created through Him and for Him.

[38:01] In the beginning was this Word and this Word was with God and this Word was God and without this Word nothing was made.

He was the very Word in Genesis 1 when God said, let there be that Word that Word God spoke and there was and nothing exists without Him.

Faith family, do you know how great He is? He is not only the Son and the source of creation, He is the very signature of God, the exact imprint of the Father's nature, so much so that Jesus says, if you've seen Him, who have you seen?

You have seen the Father. He's the true image of God. Do you know how great He is?

He's also the sustainer of life. He upholds the very universe by His power. Paul says that in Him we live, we move, we breathe, we have our very being.

[39:17] Oh, Jesus not only created everything, He not only preserves everything, He guides everything to its intended destiny. Every single thing that comes to pass comes to pass by His providential Lordship, including the very intimate details of your life.

And guess what? He does it all effortlessly with the power of His rhema. Oh, don't miss the play on words. That the Word upholds it all by the power of His Word.

And He does so, faith family, with no sweat, no stress, no anxiety, no ulcers. He's got the whole world in His hands.

He's got the whole world. In His hands, He's got the whole world. in His hands. He's got the whole world in His hands.

Do you know how great He is? And He is also the final sacrifice for sins. This One who is the heir of all things, source of all things, sustainer of all things, offered Himself for your sins.

[40 : 35] His life of perfection for your life of imperfection. And after His crucifixion and after the resurrection, do you know what He did?

He sat down at the right hand of God, which is a way of proving the very thing He said on the cross when He said, it is finished.

Oh, family, you're going to see this later on in the book, but notice this here on the screen. Of all the furniture in the temple, the one thing it didn't have was a bench. There was no sitting down.

And why was there no sitting down? Because the work was never finished. Until now. But now it is finished. Now He has sat down.

There is no more trying to earn your salvation through your sacrifices. Jesus is the sufficient forever! eternal sacrifice for your sins.

[41 : 34] It is done. It is finished. Do you know how great He is? And in addition to all of this, He is superior to angels.

In Revelation chapter 5, when the slain Lamb is seated, what does all the hosts of heaven, multitudes and multitudes of spiritual beings, proclaim this mighty roar that echoes throughout all of heaven, and what does it sound like?

It sounds like this, holy, holy, holy, worthy is the Lamb who was slain. And do you realize that anybody at any time in the Bible that experienced a spiritual being fell on their face?

And yet, what do spiritual beings do? What do angelic hosts do? They fall on their face at the glory of Jesus. Do you know how great He is?

Amen. So how could you go back? How could you go back?

[42 : 55] what an incredible introduction. Amen? That's four verses. And already you're seeing what the author is trying to say, not just to them, but to us.

How could you go back? Why would you want to go back? You're going to go back to a prophet when you have son? You're going to go back to artificial when you have the real thing?

You're going to go back to what's dead when you have life? You're going to go back to what cannot take your sins away when you have the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world?

You're going to go back to spiritual beings and angelic hosts when you have the one to whom angelic hosts cry holy? You're going to go back to old relationships when you have a relationship with Jesus Christ?

You're going to go back to the substances when you have salvation? Faith family why go back to what's lesser when you have the one who's greater?

[44 : 09] the answer to our suffering the answer to our sin and our sorrow is a fresh vision of Jesus a fresh vision of the greatness and glory of Jesus so I ask you this evening what is it in your life right now you're tempted to go back to old ways of thinking old patterns old behaviors and today I ask myself and you to do what this author is asking us to do by the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit he's asking us to behold the greatness of Jesus to see how great he is to look away from your suffering and see the glory and the beauty and the majesty of your

Savior he's worth it he's worth it close with this back in the late 1800s there was a gospel movement that was spreading throughout India many places to that point had been closed to the gospel and yet were becoming transformed by the gospel but it did not come without great cost many of the early converts were brutally persecuted because they converted to Christianity and there's a story of a Welsh missionary who moved to one of the most brutal villages in India and he led a particular family it was a husband and his wife and they had two kids and he that missionary led that family to faith when the village leaders heard that that family had converted to Christianity they decided they would make an example of that husband in front of the entire village they arrested his family and basically demanded that he renounce

Christ what they did is they took his children and they looked at the man and they said if you do not renounce Christ we will kill your children and the man replied I have decided to follow Jesus there is no turning back and they killed his children and then they took his wife and said if you do not renounce Christ we will kill your wife and the man replied the world behind me the cross before me there is no turning back and they killed his wife and then they took him and they said this is your last

chance if you do not renounce Christ we will kill you and the man replied if none go with me I still will follow there is no turning back and they killed him as a result of that family's death death many of those village leaders would end up putting their faith in Jesus

Christ and some of you are listening to that story and you're like those words seem real familiar and they likely are because that man's dying testimony became the very basis of the hymn that we've sung here many times I have decided to follow Jesus it's a song about a man who unlike Forrest Tucker refused to turn back he could have gone back to what was familiar but he couldn't he had to press forward like the Lord Jesus who like Jesus was willing to take up his cross and not turn back because he knew faith family that no matter how hard life may be and I can't imagine it being any harder than watching your family killed before your very eyes he knew this there's no one greater than

Jesus and all God's people said amen let's pray father thank you for your word to us this evening I pray that it too is spiritual ointment upon the bruised soil that Lord if we are here this evening and suffering struggling tempted to go back that through your word we have got a glimpse of the beauty and glory and greatness in Jesus so stir our hearts and do your work in us and as we come now to a time where we we think about the cross Lord may it be afresh may it not be routine but may we see how this one who is the son heir of all things radiant of the father's glory offered himself as purification for our sins oh there is nothing greater and more glorious than that so be with us in this moment as we remember the cross and remember how great is our

[50 : 54] God we pray it in Christ's name amen may may