

Need a Comeback

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- [0 : 0 0] There we go. It's my pleasure this morning to introduce our guest speaker. And about the way before I do that, I'll also just mention that our drummer, Brendan, be sure to say thanks to him.
- That's Callie's brother, if you don't know who that is. And so Brendan is a great drummer and he was able to help us out today. And we appreciate it, brother. God bless you.
- All right. My flesh is tired, isn't it? So our guest preacher today, Charlie Hickman, I'll tell you a little bit about him and then tell you how I got to know him.
- He grew up around Olivia with a Sanford address, but just across into the Harnett County area down there. And I want to leave out that Brother Phil Stone has also helped lead worship many times.
- Many times. And Gretchen and her family. There never was anybody sitting out here. They were all up. That's right. We never have had anybody in the congregation before.
- [1 : 0 3] We all get up. It's a church total choir. Wow. Anyway, and others who have helped lead worship. There's many of you. God bless you. We appreciate you. Well, Charlie grew up in, like I said, around Olivia, which is just south of Sanford on the way to Fayetteville.
- And went to school down in that area and so forth. Ended up going to CCCC to finish up his high school there. Then he met a lovely young lady that I've met.
- Her name's Crystal. And they got married about 25 years ago. I know she didn't know what she was getting into. Of course, none of us know that.
- A little boy once at a dinner table. Hey, y'all going to be here a while today. Look, dinner's waiting. You got nowhere to go. We're just going to have a good time together.
- All right. It's a special day of worship here. So anyway, a little boy was sitting at the table with his family. And he says, Dad, you won't believe what they told us at school today.
- [2 : 0 4] There's some countries in the world where a man and a woman don't even know each other until the day they get married. And the father says, Son, it's that way in every marriage in the whole world.
- So his wife didn't know what she was getting into because she thought she was marrying a construction worker. Am I right? And ended up being a preacher.
- And a lot of wives have said to their husbands, you might have been called. God didn't call me, you know. But in his case, the Lord really called both of them. And I believe your wife's preaching for you today at your church.
- So God bless her. They've got two children, Colin, who's 19. Chaz Lynn, who's 17. And I'll tell you how I got to know him.
- Some years ago when I was still employed at Central Carolina Community College, we were needing to hire somebody to teach construction in the prison.
- [3 : 1 0] The prison that's down in Livingston. And I'm going to tell you what. You don't get 100 applicants who want to go teach in a prison. But we had a few good applicants.
- And Charlie was one of them. And I was with a group of others. We were interviewing the different ones. And there was Charlie, 20 years younger, young guy.

And I was talking to him. And I just saw a special spark there. Something you can't teach. Something that I don't know how to impart that.

But I could see that there was something special in this young man. And I thought, he knows construction. He's been building houses. There's something special about him.

Let's give him a job. And he went down to the prison and just left students. Loved him. He built that program up. There are guys out of prison today with good jobs as contractors and so forth that he helped train.

[4 : 12] And then he got involved at the Crossroads Church. I'm not sure he might. I don't know what he'll share. But I'm not sure just when he got his heart really right with the Lord.

But along that time, the Lord was dealing with him. And he started really being faithful at Crossroads and Broadway. And started getting more and more involved in the ministry there.

And at some point, God spoke to his heart and said, You need to go back to where you had your roots and plant a church. So he went back down to Olivia. And they started the 3D Community Church.

They've been meeting in Lemon Springs. Lemon Springs? Lemon Springs School for a few years. They've started groundbreaking. They will sometime here in the next year or whatever.

However long it takes. They'll have a building of their own. It's going to be right there on Highway 87. You won't miss it. And I've gotten to know this brother again. I first met him, like I said, hiring him to teach.

[5 : 09] And then we kind of lost touch after I retired. But for about 10 years now, I've been attending twice a month a pastor's prayer group that meets on Tuesday mornings twice a month from all different churches, denominations around.

And Charlie's been coming to that, too, for about 10 years or more. And as we got to know each other and reconnected and my admiration for him grew again.

And so when we were looking for a family day preacher, I said, I know just the guy. Praise the Lord. So, Charlie, we invite you to come and share whatever God's put on your heart.

And like I said, folks, we got dinner waiting. You got nowhere to go. So just relax, enjoy this, and may the Lord touch and speak to all of us. Come on up here, brother.

Good morning. Good morning. How is everybody? Is that too loud? Can everybody hear? We good? Okay. All right.

[6 : 13] I was looking at this podium about moving it because, you know, anytime you're going to drive a car, you need to adjust the seat, right? So I think we're good. I think we can. No, I think we're good.

I am getting older. I'm not old, but I'm headed there real quick. And I know from my 40th birthday, my body gave me bad vision.

It was like, hey, you're 40. Welcome. Here's glasses, you know. And so now it's just some days my eyes work good and some days they don't. I do want to say thank you so much to Pastor Matt.

You really do mean a whole lot to me. I was a high school dropout at the age of 16 years old. I grew up. My dad owned a bricklaying business, and he was a successful bricklayer for about 30 years.

He stayed around the Carolina Trace and Carolina Lakes area, and he built homes in there for about 25 to 30 years. And then about five years ago, my dad, he passed away.

[7 : 11] But growing up, I just, I didn't care about school. I was not a good student. And I dropped out of high school at 16 so I could just pursue a life in construction.

And so my dad, he needed some good workers, so he let me do it, which was probably not, at the time, a good decision on his part. But he did tell me, he was like, either you're going to go to work or you're going to go to school or you're going to move out.

It's going to be one of those. You know, you're not going to live here without learning a trade or going to school. And so I quit, and I met my wife when I was about 16 years old.

And we dated off and on, and we ended up getting married at the age of 18 and 19. And I've been married now for 25 years. And one of the reasons that we decided to get married is because at 19, we gave our lives to Jesus.

And at 18 and 19, we gave our lives to Jesus. And we, you know, in that, there's some things that we wanted to do that we could no longer do as Christians, if you know what I mean.

[8 : 16] You know, and she would say, well, we just got married. We can't do that stuff anymore. And I said, well, I need to go get a ring. And, but I did. I loved her, and I knew I loved her. And she loved me.

And like I said, we got married at the age of 18 and 19. And we just celebrated 25 years. And we have an absolute wonderful marriage. I do believe we were called to do ministry together.

We do marriage groups. We do marriage counseling. We have actually been and done some marriage conferences to help people with their marriage. I mean, you know, the enemy is after the family. And if he can get after your marriage, he can tear apart your family.

And the Bible is true when it says that the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy. And so we feel like we're called to help people through their marriages and things like that. And I laid brick all the way from 16, actually probably 14.

If I ever got school clothes, I had to go work for them in the summers, you know, picking up bricks and things. And I finally got tired of laying brick. And I said, you know, I really want to, I need a job with some benefits.

[9 : 20] You know, we waited five years before we ever had kids, you know, because we knew we got married young. And we wanted to enjoy married life together. And so we waited five years before we had kids. And right when we started talking about kids, I said, we need some benefits.

And I had got in some trouble in my teenage years. There was, you know, I'll fast forward this. There was a time I used to live in a dope house. By the time I was 17, 18, I had two drug charges on my record.

And there was a time in my life that if you smoked any weed in Harnett County or any marijuana, it probably came from our house that I was living at.

And just, but I had grew up with some parents where when I was about 14 years old, my mom and dad both got saved. But before that, they were just partiers. They just partied all the time and they had a good time.

And I seen that side of life. And then at 14, mom came home one day and she was like, I got saved today. And I was like, what do you mean, from what? Like, I didn't know what it meant.

[10 : 25] We had never been to church, you know. And I'm like, somebody chasing you? What do you mean you got saved, you know? And she was like, I gave my life to Jesus today. And the crazy thing was she looked different. Like, you know, and I didn't know at the time, but you'll know this phrase now.

You ever heard somebody say, I could see Christ in them? I can see Jesus in you. And at that moment, I didn't know what it was. I just know that she won't cussing people out. She quit singing rock and roll music and country music.

She quit drinking. And next thing you know, all she could do is smile, laugh, and sing about Jesus. And then she kept inviting my dad to go. And he was like, no, I'm good. I'm good. I'll be here when you get back, you know.

And one day she invited him and she was in there. And if you ever have a situation where you're trying to get someone you love to come to church, the best thing to do is not beat them over the head with the Bible.

The best thing to do is live your life of Christ. Let Christ live through you to them. And so they are sitting there cooking. I come from a family that likes to cook.

[11 : 24] I know you can't tell. I know there's no evidence of that. But anyway, she's cooking one day. And my dad's sitting there drinking and peeling some potatoes at the table.

And I remember this. And she played a record. So a record is this round black thing. And if you take it. Is everybody good? Okay. We won't have to explain that.

So she's playing this record. And it was Loretta Lynn. And it said, if Jesus came to your house today, I wonder what would you do? You know, would he be allowed to come into the house?

Would he be allowed to look in the refrigerator? Would he be allowed? Would you have to put old magazines away and go knock the dust off the family Bible and put it out? You know, would he be allowed in the bedroom?

And finally, I think by the end of the song, I don't even think we're allowing him on the front porch. You know, because we're just kind of ashamed of the light. And I'm watching my dad. And at the time, I didn't know it. But I saw, I didn't know what it was called.

[12 : 20] But it was conviction. I saw conviction come over his life. And I saw a tear go down his eye. And I saw him go in the room. And mom went in there with him. And the next morning, he got up. And he went to church.

And he got saved. And I watched them completely change, you know, God changed their lives. And so I ended up, you know, seeing both sides of life.

And I lived both sides of life. You know, I lived the part where God wasn't a part of it. And the whole time that I was living that part, you know, there was almost like the prodigal son, which we're going to talk about in a minute, is I just knew I wasn't doing what I was supposed to be doing.

There was a time where I was going somewhere with a pistol in my pocket. And somebody had owed me some money. And I was going to get my money. And I remember sitting there in the parking lot that night.

And I thought to myself, what are you doing? Like, this is not you. Thank God for the Holy Spirit when we're in some very dark places in our life. And I just remember the guy went in the house and I left.

[13 : 25] I just left. And I started seeing that my friends was not hanging around if I wasn't doing what they wanted to do or if I wasn't living the life that they wanted to live.

And I just knew that the life and path that I was headed down was not a good one. And I could sit here today and talk to you for hours about how, you know, at 16 and 17, you know, I lost my two best friends back to back.

You know, I was hanging out with one guy and went home and three hours later he was dead, drowned in his own pool. And then the next year, almost a year to the date, I was the first one of the scene of an accident of my friend who lost his life drag racing over in Sanford.

So I'd been through a lot at a young age. And at 19 when I met Crystal, I just knew kind of what I wanted in life. And it wasn't what I was doing.

It wasn't the way I was living. And we decided we would watch the movie Saving Private Ryan. Okay? And it was, you know, at that time there was a lot more soldiers alive, you know, in 1998, you know, when that movie came out.

[14 : 31] And I just remember there was a real heaviness in the movie theater that night. Tears from people watching what happened on D-Day. And we just got in the truck that night.

We was like, so what do you believe? And that question has changed my life. And I used to ask all people, you know, my students and all that, like, what do you believe? Like, why are you at church today?

Do you believe that church is good for you? Do you believe in God? Do you believe there's a devil? Do you believe there's a heaven? Do you believe there's a hell? Like, what do you believe? You may have heard of this your whole life.

You may have read the Bible your whole life. You may have sit in here and heard a preacher preaching over this your whole life. But at the end of the day, you've got to ask your question, what do I believe? Do I believe this?

Yeah, at any time, you can amen, you know. Especially, I've got to give you something worth amenning first, you know. I'll do my part, you do yours, all right. Deal. Here we go. And so, we got married young.

[15 : 26] And like I said, ended up, I couldn't get a job with law enforcement. I passed the physical part, but then when they hooked me up to the lie detector, they started asking me questions. And the response that came back was they said, sir, we feel like your past isn't far enough behind you.

I said, okay, that's fair. And I was changing my whole life around. I went from, you know, running from the law to trying to run with the law, you know, because I was like, hey, maybe I can make a career in law enforcement.

I don't know. I just know I'm tired of laying brick, you know. And so, I ended up at the prison at 23 years old. I became a prison guard. And then one day, a guy came to me, and he asked me, he said, you know, don't you know how to lay brick?

And I said, yeah. And he said, we have a bricklaying program here at the college, and we're hiring. And sure enough, I went and applied. And the first time I ever taught anybody how to, you know, was in front of an interview board.

And this was my interview board at 20, I was 26 years old. This was my interview board. The president of college, the warden of the prison, and the guy who's over the school in there.

[16 : 34] And those three sat down in front of me in a classroom and said, you got to teach for 10 minutes. I'd never taught before in my life. I'm just a bricklayer, you know. And I did go back to CCCC and get my GED.

That was one thing that my wife asked us. She said, before we get married, I want you to go back and get your GED. And I said, yeah, I can do that. And I did. And so in that, at 26 years old, because of Pastor Matt here, he gave me a shot.

He seen something in me that I didn't see in myself. And in that, at 26 years old, I became a college professor for Central Carolina Community college.

And that was when the first Bible verse really come alive to me. For God, it says, for all things work together for the good, for those who are called according to his will and purpose.

For all things. I took, I was a bad decision at 16. But at 26, because I'm sitting here, here's when I, when I got the application, it said, here's the requirements.

[17 : 40] One, four-year degree in teaching. Huh? I'm out. You know, the second requirement. Or 10 years of experience in the related field.

I quit at 26. I mean, at 16. And now here I am at 26. Now, even though I got a GED, I know that's 10 years. Okay? And every day I feel like God's been developing me and developing me.

And then in 2009, at an altar call on a Wednesday night by Pastor Mark Whitfield at Crossroads Ministries in Broadway, I had felt this calling to preach.

I had been just so involved in the church for the last, like, eight years. I had, I had, my main things in life was this. God, family, work, and church.

God, family, work, church. Work was above church because at the time I had to work to provide for my family, which was number two. But if I wasn't working, we were in the church. Not because we had to be.

[18 : 45] It was something about it. God was doing something inside of us. And Crystal and I ended up starting a group in the church over there. It was a life group. And we ended up growing our life group up to about 100 people just within our life group between the ages of 20 to 30 years old.

And we would have events sometimes with just 100 people that were within that age group. And pastors started taking me to conferences with them. They started talking about church growth. And I started thinking to myself, I wonder if I could ride by that church, if I would see a small church.

It was like, could I make that church grow? And I'm like, why am I thinking this? I'm no preacher. I'm no preacher. I can't. And then in 2009 at an altar call, I asked God, I said, God, what is it that you want me to do?

Whatever it is, I'll do it. And he said, I want you to preach. And I said, Lord, from this day, I answered the calling. How many of you know that wherever God calls you to do something, the devil will be there too?

And I just said, I was at the altar in church. And as soon as I stood up, the first thing that come to my mind was, are you really about to turn around and tell somebody, hey, God just called me to preach?

[19 : 57] Like, is that you're going to say that? Because you're no preacher. And God brought this to my attention. The first thing I said when I was offered a teaching job was this. I said, I said, I'm no teacher.

I can't teach these guys. And then when they walked away, I sat there on my stool for 12 hours, because that's what you did as correctional officers. And for 12 hours, I thought, I have been teaching guys how to lay brick.

My dad would hire somebody. I had to teach them how to do things. Maybe I had been. I've been teaching and didn't even know it. And then when God called me to preach, I said, I'm no preacher. And this is what God said.

You weren't a teacher either. But I made you one. If you go, I'll equip you. And I said, God, from this day forward, I will answer the call.

No matter how big of a door, how small of a door, I will never ask anybody to preach. Whatever door you open, I will go through it. And ever since that day in September 16, 2009, God has just been opening doors for me in the ministry.

[21 : 10] And Crystal and I have given our lives to the ministry and to God and to the bride of Christ, the church, which is, I think, the greatest thing we could do on earth.

Amen. And we, listen, we've had ups and downs, man. I'm going to get into my message. Now, if you have your Bibles, turn to Genesis chapter 15, and then we'll go. But in that, guys, ups and downs.

Greatest and hardest decision I've ever made in my life. Following Jesus is not for the weak. Jesus said, you will be persecuted for my name's sake.

And buddy, have I? Have I learned that sometimes the people that you want to love the most, the people that you want to help the most, a lot of times they're the ones that will hurt you the most. You get involved.

And man, I'm excited about some of the stuff. One thing I want to talk to you, the title of my message today is I love a good comeback. I love a good comeback. Now, I had no idea he was going to stand up here and talk about everybody who used to be on the worship team here.

[22 : 13] If you all would come back. Sounds like we'd have a pretty amazing worship team here. So, yeah. That won't even in my notes. You got that one for free.

We're going to pay you for saying that. Is it? All right. I love a good comeback. Genesis chapter 15, starting in verse 12, and we'll go through 18.

Verse 14.

But. Everybody say but. But. We have a saying at 3D Community Church. I love big buts in the Bible. I love it whenever it says like something bad's about to happen.

But. God steps in. You ready? He says your people are going to be oppressed for 400 years. But. I will punish the nation that enslaves them.

[23 : 31] And in the end. They will come away. With great wealth. As for you. You will die in peace. And be buried at a ripe old age.

And after four generations. Your descendants will return. Everybody say return. Return. Here to the land. For the sins of the Amorites. Do not yet warrant their destruction.

Skip verse 17. And let's go to 18. And so the Lord made a covenant with Abraham. That's where I kind of knew he was on the right message today. Because the second song talked all about this.

It talked about the covenant of Abraham. And I'll say it. Here we go Lord. Love that confirmation. So the Lord made a covenant with Abraham that day. And said. That I have given the land to your descendants.

All the way from the border of Egypt. And to the great Euphrates River. Lord we thank you for this day. I ask that you bless me. And anoint me God. And give me everything I need God.

[24 : 29] To preach this in the way that you've given it to me. Open our ears. And open our hearts. To receive the word today. In Jesus name. Amen. I just asked Pastor Matt while ago.

How many years has Moncure Baptist been here. And he said over 110 years. And I thought that is very impressive. There's no telling what this church has seen in 110 years.

I know you've seen ups. And you've seen downs. And you've seen people come. You've seen people go. You've done baby dedications. And funerals of probably some of the same people. As some of the things that this walls.

These walls have seen here. And I love what God tells Abraham right here. As he's saying. Abraham I want to let you know. That your people is about to go into Egypt. Your people is about to go into slavery.

Your people are about to be captured. And matter of fact Abraham. I want to let you know too. That you're going to die at a ripe old age. You're going to live a long life. But this is what's going to happen.

[25 : 27] And this is what you're going to see happen. While you're here. Matter of fact while you're on your deathbed. One of the last things that you might see. Is your people enslaved to Egypt. As you're laying on your deathbed.

And you're thinking. God I did all this. God you made all these promises. God you said that I would have descendants. As far as the sand is on the shore. And God as many as the stars in the sky.

And now as I'm sitting here. At this ripe old age. And I'm about to die. All I can see is that my people. Are in slavery. My people have been captured.

But God made a covenant with Abraham that day. And what did he say? He said Abraham. I promise you. By the fourth generation. They will return.

By the fourth generation. They will come back. And not only will they come back. He said I am going to bless them. With more wealth than they ever had. Before they ever went in.

[26 : 23] Abraham. I am God. And I am setting up. A comeback story. And I know you've seen good things Abraham. Abraham you have trusted me with a lot.

Abraham you took your son. Up to the mountain to sacrifice. Just because I asked you to. Your faith has been amazing. Now how many of you. Have had great faith in God. And then you see something come along.

And it just kind of starts questioning your faith. Now if I was Abraham. I'd be like God. Why did you send me out. And give me all this land. And give me all these descendants. Only to tell me that when I'm about to die.

That they're going to be in slavery. For 400 years. This will be what I see when I die. This will be the reality of what's going on. And God says you can't live in the reality.

You have to live in the promise. You have to live in the vision. You have to live in the covenant. You have to live in the word. Of to which I am about to give you.

[27 : 20] I know this is what it looks like Abraham. But just watch. Watch what I'm about. I know you're in the fourth generation. I'm telling you. They're going to come back.

I'm making that promise to you. I love a good comeback. How many of you like a good comeback? I am a Carolina fan.

Because I am a Christian. As a Christian. I cannot pull for any devil. Whatsoever. You know. And I love Carolina basketball.

And how many of you know. The greatest comeback in Carolina basketball. Was against the Duke Blue Devils. They come back within eight points. With only 17 seconds on the clock. And they did not even have a three point line.

In that time. That's pretty impressive. Isn't it? There's all kinds of sports comebacks. And in sports. Man. We love a good comeback. We love the underdog. Start rooting for the underdog.

[28 : 15] You are the underdog. A lot of times. Because a lot of times. We feel like we are just beat up. Sometimes we feel like we can just look up at the scoreboard. One of the things I do is I am the chaplain. For the Fayetteville Tech basketball team.

And I go on Wednesday nights. Every Wednesday night. I go to Fayetteville Tech. And I sit with about 22 young black men. Who are on the basketball team. And I have been given an open door.

To pour into their lives. And give Jesus. And this year we have actually had. Three young men give their lives to Jesus. On the basketball team. And then just the other night. I actually had a Muslim guy.

Who allowed me to pray over his foot. For healing. In the name of Jesus Christ. Come on now. That's good right there. Ain't it? That's a good open door. That God's got right there. And so in that.

For the last five years. That I have been a part of this basketball program. We have hurt the last few years. Because even last year. The team that wins it all. Every year. Davidson.

[29 : 11] Over in Thomasville. We drove to Davidson County. And sure enough. This was our year to win it. We don't whoop Davidson in our own house. And then we got to go to their house. For the championship game.

And man. We beating them by 10. We beating them by 15. And they come back. And they come back. And the next thing you know. We're down. We're like up by two. With like five seconds to go.

And this is ours. All we got to do is play defense. All we got to do is stop them. All we got to do is hold on. And next thing we know. We get this one kid. My son still says this. And I think it's funny. The kid had alopecia.

You know you could tell just. He had something going on physically. But that kid got that ball. And he threw it up from way past half court. And he drained that shot. With one second left on the clock.

And my son said. Well there was his make a wish shot right there. And he was right. You know. I don't know. Maybe that joke is not appropriate for church. You know. If you have a complaint.

[30 : 06] Just tell Matt. After I leave. And. But anyway. It's just. This year. I feel like we're on a comeback tour. You know. I walked in that locker room dude. And those kids were just.

Balling. Because you had kids that. They didn't have an opportunity. To come back and play on that level anymore. And they feel like they just missed their chance. And it was really over for them.

In doing it on that level. But see. As the church. It's not always over for us. On any level. See. You can sit here today. And say. And we've celebrated 110 years.

We've had these good things happen. We've had these bad things happen. But. You know. 110 years. I guess we're just done. You know. Maybe that's the end of us. But I'm here to tell you. If God has the doors of this church open.

Church. You are not done. There are still lost people. I got two messages. I really going to kind of preach to you. I was torn. I printed two of them off.

[30 : 59] But. I ended up going with this one. I felt the Lord have me go with this one. But another one I was going to preach to you. It was called. Let's build an ark. And the Bible says that Noah was 500 years old.

When God told him to build the ark. The Bible says that. When Noah was 600 years old. It started to rain. For a hundred years.

Noah preached the same message. It's going to rain. Get in the boat. Now how do you think the people responded to that?

The Bible said it had never rained. Didn't he look like a crazy person? Get in the boat. It's going to rain. No. Look at this dude up here preaching again and again and again.

And see. And that's what we do in churches today. Oh. Pastor Matt's been here for 25 years. And we've heard the same message over and over and over again. Y'all put a lot of pressure on us preachers.

[31 : 57] You know the biggest thing. Why I did not want to preach or become a pastor. This was the biggest thing the devil said to me. What you going to say every week? I'd preach a message and it'd come together.

And then as soon as Monday hit. Oh. Okay. Sunday was good. What you going to say now? You know. And sometimes we. You know. I'm having a good time today. Because I got a holster full of jokes that I've used before in the past.

And y'all never heard them. You know what I'm saying? So all this is new to y'all. You know. I get to pull my best out today. You know. When I do it in my church. They brought their eyes. They like. Oh. We've heard this one before. You know.

I'm like. Oh. Just get mad to leave. Whatever. Anyway. So. Give me a second. But for a hundred years. And the message ended up going like this.

The Bible says that God gave Noah the vision to build a church. God gave Noah instructions on how to build the church.

[32 : 58] God gave the leader of the boat instructions on how to build the church. And all through Genesis 6 the Bible says.

And Noah did as God commanded. We have a hard time doing that in our churches today. If the pastor stands up and says. Listen.

I feel like God's called us to build a boat. I feel like God's called us to build an ark. Matter of fact. He's told me to build it this high. This long. This wide. And out of this wood. First thing would happen.

Deacon board would stand up. Well pastor. I don't think that's a good idea. I don't think it's a good idea. I don't think it needs to be built that long. Because I think we'll have structural issues. Okay.

Well pastor. I don't think we should build it out of that wood. Because that's expensive. And I got a cousin down the road in a lumber yard. He can get this wood a whole lot more cheaper. And so I think you need to forsake everything you feel like God's telling you.

[33 : 52] And do it the way we need you to do it. The Bible says that God gave Noah the vision. The people need to grab a hammer.

And help Noah build the boat. It don't matter if the message is irrelevant. It doesn't matter if you hear it over and over again.

It doesn't matter if you feel like you're tired of hearing it. Noah said it's going to rain and you're going to die. Get in the boat. Every day we can stand up here and preach the same gospel over and over again.

Jesus is coming. And if you are not saved and you have not accepted his son Jesus. You will not go to heaven. You will die and go to hell.

Turn from your wicked ways. Repent for today is the day of salvation. Jesus all the time he was on earth never said go preach me.

[34 : 58] Jesus preached the kingdom. He was telling them about a kingdom. For the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For the kingdom of heaven is near.

I'm trying to teach you about the kingdom of God. And that's the message we need to be teaching. Is the kingdom. Because there's going to come a time. And it happened in Noah's days. Where it started raining.

And the door closed. And when the door closed. It was too late. There's coming a time. Where the church doors are going to close. We've seen it in COVID.

The church doors closed for weeks. They closed for months. And people couldn't get in. There's going to come a time where they're going to close. Because Jesus is coming back.

And he's taking all his righteous boys and girls with him. His sons and daughters. And it'll be too late to go to church then. It'll be too late to try to get in here then.

[35 : 58] The message is relevant today. Repent. Well I've done some bad things. Or I feel like God can't use me anymore. You know maybe things aren't the way they seem.

Well I think it's time for a comeback today. I thank God. We serve a God that's in the comeback business. We serve a God that need.

We need a comeback today in our lives. We need a comeback today in our marriages. We need a comeback today. Yes we're down. Everybody loves Rocky. Right?

All 15 of them. You know? The story is so great because that's what we feel like sometimes in life. No matter how hard I work.

I just get beat down and beat down and beat down and beat down. Until I get to the place where I'm like no more. It's time to come back. It's time to fight the enemy.

[36 : 57] It's time to take a swing. We are sitting here today. Our world is in a bad place boys and girls. Ladies and gentlemen. When we sit here today and we can blame the government all we want.

But at the end of the day the churches have gone silent. I had a guy. My old pastor used to say this all the time. He'd say. He was in the house of representatives. And Pastor John Salls.

And he would say all the time. Hey we need to start a campaign so we can get prayer back in schools. We need to get prayer back in schools. And he said that's fine. But here's the problem. We need to get prayer back in homes.

We've taken it out of homes. The average family don't even sit around the dinner table anymore and have a meal. If we're even together.

And then we're in front of the TV. Nobody's praying. Maybe you are. If you are that's good. But I'm telling you. Our government has gone silent.

[37 : 56] Our churches have gone silent. And the government is doing whatever they want. And this is not a political message. But I'm here to tell you. We can.

There's no doubt that you can look on the TV today and say. Nobody can look at the TV today and say. Man. We're in a good place. Nobody. I can't even tell you.

I didn't even watch politics in my early ages of late teens and 20s. And now you've got teenagers that are worried. TikTok and social media and all that have just put all this bad news in front of them all day long.

And to this day, even though I have one, probably the worst thing that we have here on earth is this thing right here. They said the average person will spend four years of their life looking at their cell phone.

The average person. And some of you are well above average in this area. This is taking our time. It's taking our focus. Now I'm guilty.

[39 : 02] I mean I have one myself. But at the same time, it can be used as a good tool. But we can use it as a bad one. And it has taken a lot of our time.

It's taken a lot of our attention. And another thing it's done, it gives us more information than I think we're even supposed to be able to process in a day. I don't think your brain is designed to take on that much information and to try to process it.

No wonder we live in an anxious world that is full with panic attacks and anxiety today. It's time for a comeback. Our country needs a comeback.

I want to talk to you today about some people who had a comeback in the Bible. The first one I want to talk to you about is Moses. Moses had a great comeback.

Moses had a calling on his life. Moses was born into the house of Pharaoh. He was next in line to be Pharaoh. He was going to take it all along. He was going to be the ruler. He was going to be rich.

[40 : 06] He was going to have it all. And the next thing you know, something starts stirring in Moses. And he sees some Egyptians kill a Hebrew. And it does something inside of him. So he goes and kills the Egyptians.

And the next thing you know, he's now wanted for murder. Boy, what a big shift in that life, isn't it? You went from the palace to now you're wanted. And the next thing you know, he runs. And Moses runs and sits in a field for 40 years tending Jethro's sheep.

He went from being king in the palace to sitting in a field looking after his father-in-law's sheep. Big difference in what he was called to do, right?

And next thing you know, here's the comeback moment. He's sitting there alone. And sometimes this is where a comeback will start. You need to get to an alone spot. You need to get to a place where you're in the field.

You need to get to a place where you're by yourself. You know, that's why the Bible says to go into your closet and pray. There's nothing special about the closet other than you're the only one in there. And it's quiet in there.

[41 : 07] And sometimes you can get quiet and you can hear what the Lord says. You know, a part of my prayer life isn't always me doing this. A lot of times it's me doing this. Listening, opening my ears.

God, what do you want to say? And just start hearing and hearing what God is saying into your life. And Moses is sitting here in this field and God starts calling. God starts tugging at his heart.

And he's like, I want to give you a new calling. I want to give you a new purpose. And he calls him up to the mountain and he goes up on Mount Sinai and he gets an assignment from God. And it's time for a comeback for him.

And what does he tell him? I want you to go to Egypt. I'm sorry, God. Apparently you're not paying attention to my life right now. If you knew this, I was wanted in Egypt. They want to kill me. And I left there because I'm wanted for murder.

That's like me going into the Lee County Sheriff's Department, you know, and walking in. And just, STs, Sheriff STs.

[42 : 03] God said, let all these inmates go. And I just killed somebody and they're looking for me, you know. I need you to let my people go, you know. But this is what's happening. This is what's happening.

He's sitting there and God gives him this moment and gives him an opportunity to come back. Not only does he go back to Egypt, he goes back with a new purpose.

And see, some of you, you've been going into your work. You've been going into your families. You've been going into all these places. And you've been going there with the mindset of what you thought your calling was. But God wants to give you a new calling.

And when you go back, he's going to fulfill you with a new purpose. A new desire. A new assignment on life. And I don't know about you, but I needed a new assignment in life.

The path that I was headed on was not working out well for me. The path that I was headed on was one for the enemy and it would lead to destruction. But God saw a comeback for me in my life.

[43 : 03] The other person I want to tell you about that had a comeback is the prodigal son. Oh, I love the story of the prodigal son. The prodigal son is living in the father's house. Everybody say father's house.

Father's house. He's living in the father's house. And we say this, oh God, give me what's mine. He went to the dad and he said, listen, I want all my inheritance.

I want everything that's owed to me. I want everything that's mine and I want it now. I don't want to wait till you die. I want everything. And that's what he does. The father gives him his inheritance.

He gives him all the money. He gives him all his riches and he takes off and he leaves the house. And he goes out and he does life his own way. He completely turns his back on the father and the father's house.

And he goes out and he starts living life his way. And it didn't take long before he ran out of money. It didn't take long he ran out of riches. It didn't take long he ran out of wealth. And the Bible says that next thing you know, he found himself very hungry.

[44 : 07] He found himself starving to the point that he thought he was dying. And he ends up working in a pig pen. He ends up feeding the pig slop.

And the Bible says that he looked down and thought, man, hmm, this looks pretty good. I think I'll eat some of this. Imagine this. His life went from a palace, went from riches, went from doing it my way, living it up, not doing it God's will, God's way.

And he finds himself in a pig pen eating pig slop. And then the Bible says, then it came to his mind, hmm, the servants in my father's house eat better than what I do.

Let me return to the father's house. It started in his mind. He had a thought. In his lowest point, he had a thought.

Let me return to the father's house. Your greatest comeback will happen when you decide to return and do it the father's way. And the Bible said when he decided to turn and he started making way to the father's house, that as soon as the father seen him, that the father ran to where he was at.

[45 : 24] When you get ready to start your comeback moment, you will not have to do it alone. When you get ready to come back, and this is something I want to tell you. The enemy will try to tell you God is disappointed in you.

God is upset with you. God is mad with you. And that's all condemnation. And when you hear condemnation, God is not a God of condemnation. That's the enemy. Now the Holy Spirit will convict.

But God comforts. God brings you into that resting place. God brings you into that welcome place. And I've been to that place before. Even as a Christian before. I had some things going on in life.

And I found myself where I wasn't praying a lot. And I'm like, God's got this. God's got this. And that just felt like I was saying the Christian thing. You know? And I was, you know, yeah, God's got this.

But I didn't find myself really praying, really praying. And then it got to a point to where I got ashamed of myself. And I said, there's no way I can pray now. How can I go to God about this problem now when I haven't been praying?

[46 : 25] How can I go to God about this problem? And I should have been praying about this a while back. He's going to be ashamed of me when I come to pray. He's going to be ashamed of me when I start back to pray to Him. And I remember finally I just got to a place.

And it's like, you've got to start somewhere, right? You've just got to go. You've got to make that step. And I remember I got down on my knees. And I said, God, I just want to repent. And I said, I'm so sorry that I haven't been praying like I should.

And this is what I heard. Where have you been? I have been calling and calling and calling. That is not what I heard. I heard welcome.

Welcome back. I love you. I have never left you. I have never forsaken you. And just like the prodigal son, when he decided to turn and come back, the Bible says the father ran and met him where he was at.

Now watch this. And then he took a coat of righteousness and he put over him. And here's why he did it. Because you can't make it back on your own.

[47 : 31] You've got to have the covering of the father to meet you where you're at and to walk you back to the palace. And the Bible says that they had a party because the son had returned.

Let me tell you another comeback story. We have one of Lazarus. For the Bible said that Lazarus was dead. And they called Jesus and said, hey, your buddy over here, he's dead.

We need you. He's very sick. We need you. And then finally Jesus didn't come and Lazarus died. And he waited before he went. And then finally the lady said, look, where were you, Jesus?

When Jesus finally gets there, like, where were you? It's too late now. Now, I read in one of my studies, and I think it's the Matthew Henry commentary, that one of the reasons the scripture said it was too late, because in the Jewish culture, they believed that if there was ever a chance for a body to be resurrected, it had to happen within three days.

And Jesus shows up on the fourth. And it starts talking. The body is starting to stink. Remember that in the scripture? The body has started to stink.

[48 : 39] It's too late. It's starting to, you know, he's rotten. It smells in there. You can't even probably go in there, Jesus. I wouldn't recommend it right now because it's just bad.

Where were you? You waited too late to come. And what did Jesus tell you? You remember this? He said, I am the resurrection.

She said, if you would have been here, you could have resurrected him. He said, I am the resurrection. It doesn't matter when I come. When I come, I am the resurrection.

There is no culture. I am culture. I have the word. I have the say. And when Jesus decides to show up, it doesn't matter what it looks like. It doesn't matter how far it's gone.

It doesn't matter if it looks dead. It doesn't matter if it doesn't look like it's coming back. When Jesus speaks to it, he is the resurrection. And he brings life to whatever he speaks to.

[49 : 39] Anytime God speaks, he creates. He bursts. And when he's speaking into your life, he's creating something in your life. He's resurrecting something in your life. Peter.

Peter had a great comeback moment. He walked with him. Jesus called him out of the boat. He said, you're a fisherman. But I will make you fishers of men and follow me.

And Peter walks around. He's like following God. He's like God's like, I am your dude. I am top of your security. I got you. You know, and then they even find themselves in the garden. And Peter's over here.

You know, the Roman soldiers come. And they're like, hey, Jesus, like now it's time. And then they grab Jesus. And then Peter pulls a knife out. He cuts a Roman soldier's ear off. That's Peter. He's ready. You know. And then Jesus is like, Peter, you're saying you're going to do all these things.

You're saying you're going to stick with me. But Peter, before the rooster crows, you're going to deny me three times. And Peter's like, no, man, not me. Not me.

[50 : 38] I'm with you to the end. I would never deny you. And the next thing you know, they arrest Jesus. And Peter finds himself in the temple courts. And three different times he was asked.

One of them by a little girl. Peter was scared to admit who Jesus was to a little girl. But three times he said, I don't know who he is.

I don't know that man. I've never been with him. And then as soon as they crucified Jesus, the Bible says, you ready? That Peter left from there and went fishing.

Peter, he said, well, it's over. They got him. They killed him. I guess I'll just go back to do whatever it is I know how to do. All I know how to do is fish.

All I know how to do. When I'm in my weakest moment and even God has elevated me. God elevated Peter to the point he was performing miracles and casting out demons with Jesus. And Jesus told him all along.

[51 : 39] Those whole three and a half years he walked with Jesus. He said, I am going to be with the Father. I'm teaching you to do what I'm doing because it is good that I go away. He tells them. He tells the church. Listen, we have an opportunity to do more than Jesus ever did on earth.

That's scripture. He said, because I'm going to be with the Father. And you're going to be here to do the work. And then Peter denies him. And Jesus resurrects. And he comes back.

Who's the first person he goes by? Peter. And what's Peter doing? He's fishing. He says, Peter, it's time for a comeback story. And I love it that he asked him three times.

In my mind, it just gave Peter an opportunity to, hey, you denied me three times. I want to give you an opportunity to confess three times. Jesus said, Peter, do you love me? Yes, Lord.

Peter, do you love me? Yes, Lord. Peter, do you love me? Lord, you know I do. He said, then feed my sheep. Now watch this. All alone, Jesus said, it's better that I go away so the Holy Spirit can come and live inside of you.

[52 : 43] Guys, we are powerless on earth without the Holy Spirit. You need the Holy Spirit. And I know a lot of churches might have, the talk of Holy Spirit may have scared you.

I was that guy. When my dad first got saved, we was in every church that was open after that. It didn't matter what it was. And then we started learning that there was different denominations.

Yeah, buddy. But I'm going to tell you something. We are powerless without the Holy Spirit. Jesus died. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.

The Bible said that it came in like the sound of a mighty Russian wind. Now watch this. Then Peter stands up and addresses even the people who crucified Jesus.

And he said, it's for you people that put him on the cross. Today you need to be saved. For today is the day of salvation. He stands up and preaches one of the boldest messages.

[53 : 43] Read it in Acts 2. He preaches the boldest message. But yet just a few pages over, he denied him and ran from a little school girl. But Jesus called him back, filled him with the Spirit.

And Peter had an amazing comeback story. The last comeback story. Everybody say last. Look to your neighbor and say, thank God he's about to hunt. The last comeback story I want to talk to you about is this.

The story of Samson. Samson was probably the greatest comeback story of all time. Samson was big, strong, a lot of men's idol, you know.

I heard one preacher say one time that he goes, he said he went to a church and they had this statue of Samson in the lobby and he looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger, you know, like ripping chains.

And he made that, you know, he said, kind of, Lord laid it on my heart and said, Samson didn't look like that. And he was like, why, why, he said, because the Bible said that no one knew where his strength come from.

[54 : 49] He said, if you looked at him and he looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger, everybody would know where his strength come from. But he said, I just kind of feel like maybe he looked like a regular guy.

And they couldn't figure him out. But he had a calling on his life from the time that he was born. And he messed it up over and over again. A part of his vow was the Nazarite vow.

And he wasn't supposed to touch a dead animal. And what did he do? He touched a dead animal. He wasn't supposed to get drunk. What did he do? He got drunk. But he was a warrior for God. And he was called to fight the enemy.

And he messed up over and over again. And God would give him strength. And he ends up, knowing he has a calling on his life, he ends up laying with a woman that's not his wife.

He finds himself over and over again with his head in the lap of another woman. And in that, she keeps telling him, what is the source of your strength?

[55 : 49] What is the source of your strength? What is the source of your strength? Over and over again. And finally, she breaks him down. And he tells her, my power is in my hair.

If you were to cut my hair, I would be just like any other regular guy. And so what happens? He gave the enemy some information. Personal information.

In a personal place that he had no business even being. And they came in. And they cut his hair. And they stripped him down. And they arrested him.

And then we get to Judges 16 and verse 21. So the Philistines captured him and gouged out his eyes. And they took him to Gaza, where he was bound with bronze chains and forced to grind grain in the prison.

If the enemy wants to take you out and keep you down, there's two things he'll do. The Bible says he gouged out his eyes. The enemy wants to rob you of your vision.

[56 : 56] And I don't mean your physical vision. I mean your spiritual vision. The Bible says those without vision perish. People with no vision perish. If the enemy can get you to a place where you can't see anything better.

You can't see yourself getting out of it. You can't see yourself not living this way. One of the things I tell people, when they're just really struggling and we're going through, and I'm telling you, as a pastor, I can't even believe some of the stuff I have to counsel with people about.

But there's a promise I tell them. I say, listen, I'm promising you, there's coming a day you will smile again. There's coming a day you will laugh again. There's coming a day you will feel peace again.

There's coming a day you will be whole again. And we give them vision. We give them hope. There is hope in Jesus. There is hope in our Savior.

And you've got to get them with their eyes on the Father. But if the enemy can gouge your eyes out and take away your vision and let you see that there's no hope, this church mess is all a hoax.

[58 : 06] Everybody's a hypocrite. That person is sitting in my seat. What are they wearing this morning? I'm never going to get anything out of this. If I can take your vision away, if I can keep you negative, if I can take away anything positive, then you'll never even try to come back.

You'll never attempt to come back. And not only am I going to take your vision, I'm going to bound you up and change too. The Bible said they bounded him up. The enemy has put strongholds on some of you.

And some of you have changed this morning. Chains of addiction. All kinds of change. You are bound to things that you just can't seem to break loose. You can't seem to get out of it.

And as I'm talking about it, I know a lot of you are probably thinking of things right now. Things that you're praying over and over again. God, please let me go of this. God, I'm trying to beat this.

Lord, I can't beat this. Lord, I am just bound up. And then of course the Bible says they're standing there and he's chained between two pillars. And the enemy's laughing at him. And this is exactly where the enemy wants to keep you.

[59 : 19] See, sometimes we, even as a church, we can celebrate 110 years and think, man, we had a good run. That don't mean it's over. God told Abraham's wife, Sarah, you're going to have a baby.

And she laughed. I'm too old. I've been here way too long. My baby stuff don't work. Says who? When God speaks, He births.

When God speaks, He creates. This morning, when God speaks, what is the new assignment? What is He giving you? What vision is the enemy taking away from you?

And some of you, it's ministry. Luckily, I said, with my back turned, I don't know nobody that used to be on the worship team here. But there's a chance to come back.

Maybe some of you, you used to be in ministry and you messed up. You did something that was bad. You did something that society would look at as a moral failure.

[60 : 28] I would encourage you, go study the book of David. Who God says, who was a man after my own heart. See, there's a difference in just saying, oh, okay, I messed up.

God, please forgive me. And there's a difference in messing up and crying out. And David would get to a place where he would cry out. David had some strongholds on his life and every time he would mess up, he would overcome and that's why you start reading in Psalms, oh God, help me, forgive me, save me, look upon me just one more time.

Look upon, let your face shine upon me again. God, forgive me of everything I've done. See, there's a difference in saying, oh God, if you can forgive me, I wish you would.

You know, God, I'm sorry. You know, no, you need that comeback moment. You need that rocky moment. You need that music that start playing. The da, da, da, da.

You know, get in your Bible, get in your words, start throwing some jabs at the enemy. Start knowing who you are in Christ. You are forgiven. You are saved. You are free.

[61 : 33] You are a son and daughter of Jesus Christ, the King of kings, the Lord of lords. You are not defeated, but you are achiever. You are a winner. You can conquer the enemy and take your life back this morning and have a wonderful comeback.

Just like Samson did right here. Guys, go on and just get down to verse 28.

And Samson's chained between the pillars and this is it. He's like, this is the end, this is the end, this is the end, this is the end. And verse 28, then Samson prayed to the Lord, Sovereign Lord, remember me again.

Oh, please strengthen me just one more time. This is my prayer for you today. That you will get to a place where you're saying, look, I have messed up over and over and over again.

But God does not run out of grace. His love for you is sufficient. He will never stop loving you because you are His kids. And He is ready to save you.

[62 : 54] He's ready to forgive you. And He's ready for a comeback story with you. But you've got to get to that place to where you cry out, Oh, Sovereign Lord, Oh, Sovereign Lord, please strengthen me just one more time.

With one blow, let me pay back the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes. I love this because He's ready to come at the enemy. Some of y'all, we need to get mad at the devil.

We need to get mad that the enemy is winning in some of the places that he is winning. I'm not telling you you need to stand up and buck the government and buck the system and get on Facebook and cuss everybody out and tell everybody what's wrong with the world.

But we can't be silent. The government is not your enemy. Listen, we're starting a series at our church in January called The Necessity of an Enemy.

It's a book written by Ron Carpenter. In the book he says, people are not my enemy. Anyone who has an agenda against what God is doing is the enemy.

[64 : 07] And it might be someone you love sometimes. It might be someone in your house that's not doing what God wants done in your house. I love you but right now you're acting as the enemy.

And we're fighting the enemy. When you vote, you're not voting against Democrat. You're not voting against Republican. You need to be voting for godly principles.

And no one is going to have all the godly principles you want. Well, who's going to hold the most? Who's going to line up with this? God's word.

I tell people all the time, I don't have an opinion. I have a word. I have an instruction. Well, what do you think about this?

It don't matter what I think. This is what I'm called to portray. This is what I'm called to put out. This is what I'm called to teach. And he said, this is a light unto my feet.

[65 : 06] It is a love unto my path. It will guide you. It will protect you. This is the measuring stick for your life. I just want to be a good dude. Or what are you using to measure if you're a good dude or not?

Does this say I'm a good dude? Does this say I'm a good person? Does this say I'm a good husband? Does this say I'm a good wife? Does this say this will guide me into what I need it to guide me into?

Ephesians, put on the whole armor of God, for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but of evil spirits and principalities. You were in a fight. And you were getting beat down over and over again.

And some of your fight might be Budweiser, some of it might be porn, some of it might be your marriage, some of it might be your finances, but you were in a fight. And God didn't call you to be this way.

And we need to get to a place where we're sovereign Lord, remember me again. Not that he ever even forgot you.

[66 : 16] And this is the last thing. The Bible said, verse 30, he prayed, let me die with the Philistines.

And the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people. And watch this. So he killed more people when he died than he had during his whole entire lifetime.

I love this part because this man thought that his purpose was to defeat and fight the enemy. And in his whole life, he killed a lot of the Philistines, which is what he was designed to do.

He was fulfilling his purpose well. But when he was at the end, and see, some of us, we think, man, we're close to the end, man, it's almost over, man, you know, if you've lost your vision, it's almost dead, I'm almost out, I can never be effective again.

What if we celebrated 210 years in this church? What's the next hundred years look like, if God should tarry? What would it look like if God decided, I'm going to use this church, with all the people moving into Moncure, with all the growth that's taking place, and I live in a place where growth is taking place.

[67 : 36] I live in a place where everywhere I used to ride on dirt roads is now housing developments. One of the reasons God called me to start a church is because I went to go vote one year at my high school that I went to, and there was a thousand people there, and I didn't know one of them.

I said, who are all these people? Why haven't I ever met these people? Because I come from that town. I come from the small area when you see somebody walking up the road, you go, oh, who's this coming?

Who am I about to talk to? And now when you see somebody walking up the road, you go, who is that? What are they doing? Why are they walking up the road? You know? But there's so many people coming around here.

And I'm so glad this church has celebrated 110 years. It's amazing. You didn't give up, but man, have you probably been in some fights. I still feel like a rookie in this thing.

I was called to preach in 2009, and we started 3D Church in 2016. We just celebrated. In May, it will be nine years.

[68 : 44] Tuesday, I will leave to go to West Jefferson. We have a little micro campus. in West Jefferson that meets in the mountains. About 20 some people that live in West Jefferson watch us online every Sunday live.

It's something that kind of started up, don't I? I'm taking 60 men to West Jefferson this weekend into the mountains, and we're going to go up on top of a mountain, and we're going to pray for hours.

We're going to worship for hours. And for two days, we're just going to pour into men, because we need men to be godly leaders. We need men to have vision.

We need men to come home with purpose. We need men who know how to fight. We need men who know how to stand up to the enemy. We need godly husbands and godly fathers and godly people to lead our church and our community.

And we're in an identity crisis. Who would have ever thought that we would have stood on this ground in America and watch Congress try to define what is a woman and what is a man.

[69 : 50] We are in a major identity crisis right now. And if you don't believe the enemy, listen, when you get to a point where your identity is being attacked, that is one of the major hardest tools that the enemy will throw at you.

Well, how do you know that? Well, Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And the first thing he said to him was this, if you are the son of God, he tried to get him to start second guessing who he was.

Tried to get him to think he's just a man. But no, you don't understand. I am a man who is called by God. I am a son of the father. I am born into his kingdom.

I am saved, I am forgiven, and I am an heir to Jesus Christ. And in that, he says, right when you think it's almost over, right when you think, he said at his last breath, at his last move, he said God, give me one more time, one more gust of strength.

In that moment, he was more effective at the very end than he had ever been in his entire life. See, in that comeback, when you make that decision, here's how you make a comeback.

[71 : 03] You ready? It's got to start in your mind. See, that's where it started for him. The Bible says his hair started to grow back on his head. Anytime you're going to have a comeback, it's got to start in your head.

Jensen Franklin said where they really messed up with Samson is they didn't put a barber in his cell. It's got to start in your mind. In Romans chapter 12 verse 2, what does it say?

Don't be conformed of this world, but be what? Transformed by the renewing of your mind. You've got to start renewing your mind.

You've got to wake up in the morning and say, I know who I am in Jesus. I am saved. I am forgiven. I am free. I am a child of God.

I am wanted. I am chosen by God. Look in the mirror and tell yourself that every day. This is who I am. Because when we look at ourselves without the lens of God, we start saying, I did bad today.

[72 : 07] I had a bad thought today. I didn't do good today. I'm not a good. No, I am a conqueror. I am chosen. I am accepted. Not because of what I've done, because of what He done for me.

Amen? And the other thing you've got to do is you've got to get your mind right and then you have to trust the Holy Spirit to guide you.

God will call you into places that you can't go by yourself. And you need the Holy Spirit to get you there.

And the last one I will tell you is this. If you're ever going to have a good comeback, you've got to stay motivated. This is the power of this church.

It's hard for me to look in the mirror and motivate myself sometimes. church and going to the gym has a lot to do with discipline. As you can tell, I struggle with discipline.

[73 : 11] I can wake up in the morning. I tell people all the time that inside here, there is a bodybuilder. See? I don't appreciate y'all laughing at my misfortune. But inside of here, there's a bodybuilder.

The problem is I don't have the discipline to meet him. Inside of you, there is something great. Listen, you're not waiting on God to give you anything.

You have everything you already need. Now you're waiting on God to start developing it in you. And you've got to start asking that God to develop it. I need motivation.

I need somebody to... Listen, there is nothing greater than when my wife tells me I did a good job. Do you know why I think I love it when she tells me? Like, y'all can tell me. Y'all don't know me. Y'all going to tell me, hey, good job.

He told you to say that. Okay? And then when I leave, I don't know if I'll ever be back. You know, it depends on who I made mad during my message. And that's fine. But you don't know me.

[74 : 12] Now for my wife to tell me you did a good job, I'm proud of you. That means something because she sees me all the time. She sees me in the home.

She sees me at my weakest. She sees me when I'm vulnerable. And for her to say, hey, I just want you to know, I know everything you went through this week.

See, last year, I want to share just something. I don't know what time it is. Y'all didn't give me a clock, so we're good. Last year was the hardest year I've ever had in ministry.

This time last year, I went to the mountains with the same group of men. And I had a tough week.

My name was smeared. I was accused of stealing money from the church. I was accused of having an affair.

[75 : 17] I was accused of murder. You would not believe the things I was accused of. And then I was sitting there and I preached on a Friday night and I sat down and got an email from apparently we had got sued for copyright laws on our logo.

And they were taking us to court for thousands of dollars. Every time I turned around, I felt like God's saying, build this building and everybody else is saying no. Everything I'd come through, it was just hurdle after hurdle after hurdle.

people, let me tell you something. God showed me something. Sometimes, you know, back in the day if I would hear a story, I'd say, well, you know, with everything like that, there's a little bit of truth to it.

How many of you have ever said that? Keep your hands down. Nobody won't. Dude, there was stuff coming out about me and my family. I just couldn't believe it.

No ounce of truth whatsoever. None. And I'm like, God, why is this so hard? But I never felt like I could quit.

[76 : 29] I wanted to. I didn't say I wanted to, but I really started envying people who didn't do ministry for a living. Because it is a calling. Guys, be good to your pastor.

He has a hard job. The Bible says in Hebrews, be good to those who teach you the word. For they are responsible for your soul.

This is not a job that people just decide to do. There's a calling that goes in behind it. I come back from, we call it man camp.

I come back from man camp. Had an amazing time. And then as soon as I hit the county line, it's just rumors and rumors and rumors. And I go in there and go to bed and then I wake up at nine o'clock.

My wife's waking me up. She said, look, the sheriff's on the phone. So and so passed away tonight in a car wreck. And it was the guy who was just spreading a lot of rumors.

[77 : 40] And here's the sad part is that guy, he was my friend. For eight years, he poured eight years into this dude's life. He started going through something and I became the enemy.

There was a lot of mental stuff going on. I had people just leaving the church like left and right, left and right, left and right. And then I had a, you know, then you turn around and you, you know, promote somebody and then they turn around and leave and take half your church with you.

And I was like, why? Why? They're like, what am I doing something wrong here? And God said, I told you it would not be easy.

It's not easy. Folks, it's not going to be easy. We can sit here and say, we need to stand up. We need to do this. And we can go, amen, and leave out of here.

It's hard. It's hard to do it. But I believe if we can get our mind right, and you've got to get your mind right, am I going to do this?

[78 : 48] And you start moving forward and you trust the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit will give you power to do what you can't do. Here's one of the things I pray all the time. Lord, I'm going to do what I can.

You do what I can't. And stay in church. This is an ark. And the doors open.

And get as many people in here as you can because it's going to rain. And they need a comeback. And they need somewhere to come back to. And the last thing I'll say to you is this.

When you have your comeback moment, don't do like Lot's wife. Lot, God sent an angel to deliver Lot and his wife out of Sodom and Gomorrah.

And they had one instruction. When I get you out of here, don't look back. Today, God is going to bring you out of something.

[79 : 50] But don't look back. That's the only rule. Don't look back. Because when God brings you out of something, He sets you free.

And the Bible says, who the Son sets free is free indeed. Now the enemy will say, you didn't get saved.

You're not forgiven. That whole church, that was just a bunch of mess today. There's no power in what you did.

But there is. Why not? How are you saved? If you declare. It says, the Bible says, if you believe in your heart.

That's a mind thing. When your mind and heart start to line up, I believe. Remember I asked you again and the biggest question changed my life. What do you believe? I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

[80 : 52] I believe that He died on a cross for my sins. I believe that it said, while we were sinners, Christ died for us. When I didn't deserve it is when He went through all the pain for me.

And I believe through Him, I am forgiven. And I believe through Him, that old man is dead. And in me, a new man was resurrected through Him. I believe it.

I believe God has much more for my life. I believe God has much more for this church. I believe God has much more for your pastor. He said, in the last days, I will pour out my spirit.

And your young men will have visions and your old men will dream dreams. God's going to give dreams. God's going to give vision. And God needs people to say, hey, I will carry that out.

And it don't matter where you come from. And it don't matter how you messed up. Because we're on a comeback tour. God is on a comeback tour. And I believe that we're going to see our sons and daughters prophesy.

[81 : 56] He said, in the last days, I'll pour out my spirit. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. We say, you know, my son and my daughter is on drugs. My son and my daughter are addicts. And I'm here to tell you, through Jesus, they will repent.

Through Jesus, they will come back. Through Jesus, they're going to get to a place where they're in that pig pen. And they're going to say, you know what? I had it better in my father's house. And I'm going to return.

And this morning, when you return, God's going to meet you right where you are. And he's going to cover you with his righteousness and bring you back to the house. Not so you can warm up you.

So you can do the work of the ministry and build the kingdom and invite people into this ark and go preach the message. It's going to rain. Every head bowed.

Lord, we thank you for this day. We thank you for what you're doing. God, I thank you for Moncure Baptist Church. God, I thank you for Pastor Matt. And God, I thank you for your spirit, God, that is in this place today.

[82 : 55] God, I just pray right now in the name of Jesus that if there's anyone here, God, that says, I need a comeback moment, I need that I'm coming home, God. You know, a lot of times we call these homecomings and Lord, we need to come back home today, God.

We need to go back to the Father's house. And God, if anybody, if that's you right now, I'm just going to say this prayer and I want you to say it with me. Say, dear God, come on, say it out loud. We do it together. Say, dear God, forgive me for all I've made things.

Lord, I need a comeback. I need a comeback. Lord, help me. Guide me. Lord, fill me with your spirit. Forgive me of all my sins.

And I thank you. I ask you into my life. I ask you into my heart to be my Lord, my Savior.

And I thank you for what you're going to do in me. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Thank you, Moncure Baptist Church.

[84 : 02] Amen.