

# Counterfeit Faith

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[ 0 : 00 ] In 2002, Leonardo DiCaprio played in a movie based on a true story entitled Catch Me If You Can.

It was a story of a young high school student, Frank Abagnale Jr., idolized his father, who was in trouble with the IRS. And when his mother and father separated, he left with \$25 in his bank account and went to Manhattan, where he learned to pass fraudulent checks.

He learned to be a con artist. And a few years later, the FBI caught him in France. They arrested him, extradited him, and he was jailed.

He was tried, and he ended up being jailed for a few years. But not before he had passed more than \$4 million in fraudulent checks.

And he had also learned how to pass himself off as different people. During this period of time, Frank passed himself off as a Pan Am pilot, as a pediatrician, as an assistant attorney general, and as a history professor.

[ 1 : 29 ] So finally, he's caught, put in the prison, and he gets out a few years later. And he is taken by the FBI, and he is working with their fraudulent check division.

But not before his trail of false identities and his counterfeit checks had reached over 26 countries. You know, it's not always easy to spot a counterfeit or to spot a fake. And very often, we deceive ourselves into thinking that we are what we are not.

There are many people walking around today who have deceived themselves, and they have believed the lie for so long that they believe that they are who they think they are.

Well, this morning, we're going to meet up with a man who was something, who later believes in something, but ends up being a counterfeit.

[ 2 : 47 ] If you have your Bibles this morning, let's turn to the book of Acts, and we are still in Acts chapter number 8. In Acts chapter number 8, we find a man named Simon.

But before we go into the story of Simon, I want to give a little bit of history of what has been going on in the early church.

We find just a few chapters before this that the Holy Spirit comes down and indwells the followers of Jesus Christ.

Peter preaches a very moving sermon, and 3,000 people place their faith and their trust in Jesus Christ on that day, and the church is born with 3,000 people.

And the people who trusted Jesus are sharing their faith with everyone they come into contact with, their friends, their families, their neighbors, and people are being saved.

[ 3 : 54 ] Luke tells us in the book of Acts that every day people were coming to know Jesus as their Savior. And things rock along like this for a while.

Then a group of Greek-speaking Jews say that their widows are being forgotten, and they are not being taken care of like they should be in the daily distribution of food.

And so the apostles say, choose seven men who have a good reputation, who are full of the Holy Spirit, and set them over the food bank.

And so that these men that you trust can take care of not only your widows, but the rest of the Jewish widows as well. And then one of these seven servants of the church gets into a debate in a Greek-speaking synagogue.

And it's a rather heated debate, and they don't like what Stephen had to say because Stephen was talking about Jesus. And I found one thing about our society.

[ 5 : 08 ] People don't necessarily mind you talking about God. Every seven-step program talks about God or your higher power.

Well, the problem with that is, if you say God in pretty much any social gathering, people in their minds are going to come up with their own idea of who God is for them.

But when you say Jesus, you're not ambiguous. Because Jesus is who Jesus said He was.

History is full of accounts of a man named Jesus who lived, who claimed to be God, died on a cross, and rose again the third day, or was seen after He was buried for three days.

And they didn't like Him talking about Jesus. And so what they did was they took some people, and they said, we want you to kind of trump up. Here's some trumped-up charges, and we want you to lie about what Stephen said.

[ 6 : 14 ] And so they bring him to the religious council, and he ends up being tried by them and murdered by these religious leaders.

What happens after Stephen's death, there's a certain guy named Saul who was consenting to the murder of Stephen, and he ends up going out and finding and arresting those who were following Jesus.

He brings them back. They get tried. And there's persecution of the church, the church of Jesus Christ, those who were trusting and placed their faith in Jesus Christ alone, and those who were sharing their faith everywhere around.

People did not like hearing about Jesus. What happens is they leave Jerusalem, and they go around. They go to Judea.

They go to Samaria. And ultimately, they go all around the world, Asia and areas out from that.

[ 7 : 20 ] Well, after this takes place, the believers had gone into the area of Samaria.

And one of these other servants, one of Stephen's colleagues, Philip, goes into Samaria, and he begins to proclaim Jesus.

And people were trusting Jesus in the city of Samaria, and we're told in verse number 8 that there was great joy in the city of Samaria.

And that's where we take up the story, in Acts chapter 8, verse number 9. But there was a certain man called Simon. Simon ends up being talked about by the Jewish historians, and we're not sure if this is the same Simon that Irenaeus and others talk about as continuing, starting the Gnostic or a certain false group within the church.

But this certain man called Simon says that he previously practiced sorcery in the city, or he had been practicing magic, practicing sorcery.

[ 8 : 47 ] That word there is the word from which we get our English word, magic. And so Simon was a guy who was going around and performing feats. He was doing things that astounded people.

He says he practiced sorcery in the city, and he astounded people. Some of your translations might say bewitched.

That word simply means astounded or confounded. He was doing things that people would go, how did you do that? That was awesome.

Do some more. Do it again. And so he was going around, and notice what he was proclaiming. Claiming that he was someone great.

Simon was going around doing magic tricks. He was going around doing things that just totally blew the minds of people, but he was doing it to make himself look more important.

[ 9 : 50 ] And so the people, so he was saying, I am someone important. You need to follow me, because I've got all this power to whom they all gave heed.

Now think about it. People were seeing this man who claimed to be somebody great, and he was doing things that they could not explain. He was doing things that would astound them and astonish them, and he got a following.

People were listening to him. People were, the same word earlier where we talked about the people heeded, they paid attention to what Simon was saying from the least to the greatest.

I mean, we're talking about the poorest to the most important in the city of Samaria. We're beginning to pay attention, to give credence to what this guy Simon was saying.

And it says, and they were saying, the people got to the point where they said about him that he was a great power of God.

[ 11 : 05 ] Now what happens when God does something great? Do you remember when Paul had the snake, the snake, some of you may have read that story before, that account when Paul was on this island and out of the fire comes this snake, this poisonous snake that bit Paul, and it was apparently one of the snakes that if it bit you, you wouldn't get very far because you would fall down

dead.

And they watched what's going to happen to him. And he didn't even have any side effects of it. They tried to worship him. Other instances where they tried to fall down and say that Paul and Barnabas were gods and what did they say?

No, we're just men. God is the one you need to glorify. And every time we see someone, Stephen, even Philip, performing miracles, God got the glory.

But Simon was taking all the glory for himself. They were saying, this guy is a great man of God, a great power of God. And they heeded, they paid attention to him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.

It's possible for us to have our faith in the wrong thing. It's possible for us today to have our faith placed in the wrong thing.

[12:33] The people were being misled by Simon. Today, there are a lot of people that are being misled by different things. There are a lot of people that are, would love to hear about the occult.

There are a lot, we hear about, we read a lot of people are just astounded by the occult. We have people that are called necromancers. These are people that allegedly can talk to the dead.

There are people that if you have a seance and you want to find out something from your dear uncle on your mama's side, they can somehow call them forth from the dead, a necromancer.

And we also have palm readers. We've got one on, I know we have a few in town, we've got one that's been here ever since we've been here for 20 years, there on Prion Lake. She's got her sign right up the street.

A palm reader, someone that allegedly can tell your fortune and tell your future. And people go and spend money for that.

[13:44] And then, we also have psychics. And I always like to joke, someone call the psychic hotline and say, tell me who I am. Well, you're supposed to know, you're supposed to be the psychic.

And they're the ones that supposedly has a connection with the other world, a connection with the other side. Well, do you want to know who they have the connection with?

They've got the connections with demons. And so, Simon was performing all of these magic tricks, performing this sorcery.

Simon was energized, and we find in the Old Testament that those who were practicing witchcraft, those who were practicing sorcery, were energized by Satan, energized by demons, not by God.

So these people were being misled, and they're also people being misled by religion today. I remember growing up, going to catechism, and being told that in order to be right with God, I had to follow the ordinances, take part in the sacraments of the church.

[15:09] And I had to do this, do that, do this, do that, and ultimately one day, I might take a few years or a few centuries off my time in purgatory, and that I might get to heaven one day.

There are people today that are misled by thinking that I can pray, or I prayed a prayer a number of years ago, and I'm right with Jesus.

Or I came up, I walked down an aisle and came up after a time of worship one day, and I had a prayer with the preacher. And he said that I was saved, but their life hasn't changed for the last 30 years.

And they've misled themselves, they've deceived themselves, and they are a counterfeit because they believed that because they did something that they're right with God.

And that's all there is to being right with God. And so these people were being misled by Simon, who was doing great showy things, and it says, but then.

[16:19] You know, when you see but in the Bible, I love some of the but's in the but's. That sounds bad, doesn't it? But when you see this word, we are all sinners.

We are all, as I had a Bible college professor one time that said, we are all dirty, rotten, stinking sinners, deserving the lake of fire.

We are all sinners, but God demonstrated His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. That is an awesome truth.

There are others that talk about this, but this one here, they were being misled by Simon, but, in verse number 12, but when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

But the people believed the message of Philip. that made the difference. In what did they believe?

[ 17 : 37 ] He was talking about the kingdom of God. He was also talking about the name of Jesus Christ. There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved other than the name of Jesus Christ.

There are those who say, well, what about those who never heard Jesus? I don't know. But Jesus said, the Bible says, there is no other name by which people can be right with God except through Jesus Christ.

People only come to God through Jesus. If you don't know Jesus, you can't know God. The Bible cannot be clearer, any clearer, on that subject. And so what Philip does is he proclaims.

Last week, we talked about that word preach here, different, the people evangelized in the previous verse. Philip comes along and he proclaims, he acts as the town crier.

He is proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. And they heard the word and they believed the message about Jesus Christ.

[ 18 : 51 ] In order for us to be right with God, we have to hear the good news about what Jesus did for us on the cross of Calvary. And how do we hear?

Salvation comes through hearing and hearing comes from hearing the word of God. When we share the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, you know, you've got to share the Bible.

You've got to tell them what the Bible says, what God says. Because if you just tell them, you know what, you need to be saved, you need to be right with God, and you know, you need to pray this prayer, there's no power in that.

But the word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. And it's God's word that has the power to change men's hearts, change men's lives, and to give life to those who believe and trust in the name of Jesus Christ.

So it says, they believe Philip's message. But then we go on, then Simon, verse 13, Simon himself also believed, and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and he was amazed, the same word as in verse number 9, same word as bewitched, it was, he was amazed, he was astounded, same word that was used up in verse number 9, seeing the miracles and the signs which were done.

[ 20 : 18 ] I tried to find a single commentator that believed that Simon was really saved.

I could not find one. Because I believe, it is pretty clear from what we see here, it is pretty clear from what Peter says, that Simon was a counterfeit.

And you say, well how do you know? How can we know that Simon was a counterfeit? Well I think we can answer that question with another question. What was the object of Simon's faith?

What was the object of Simon's belief? I want you to go back to verse number 12, in what, what was the object of the people in Samaria's faith?

I want you to tell me, talk to me this morning. Yes, the name of Jesus. They believed and they trusted in the name of Jesus. But I want you to also notice in verse 13, in what was Simon's faith?

[ 21 : 28 ] What does it say he believed? It doesn't. He just believed. But then, I believe, we see the object of his faith in the last part of verse 13.

He believed. he was baptized. Now, some people say, well, why should he, why would Peter baptize him if he, you know, wasn't really saved?

Well, you know what? Satan is going to be planting counterfeits in the church. He has been planting counterfeits in the church ever since the church was born. Satan will be planting counterfeits in the church until Jesus comes back.

because Simon said the right words and Peter didn't proclaim to no men's hearts like Jesus does.

And all we can do is go on what people say. And so, he said he believed and he was baptized. But I want you to notice what comes after that. He hung around Philip.

[ 22 : 30 ] Why? Because he was amazed with the miracles. The people, the people went on from the miracles. The people believed in Jesus.

Philip, he was mesmerized by the cool stuff that Philip kept doing. And so, he stuck around Philip because he was just amazed.

I mean, it was like, it was always on the, always on his mind. It was, that's great. What are you going to do next? Huh, Philip? What are you going to do next? And so, he kept on following Philip because of this.

His faith was in the miracles. And I want you to know that miracles never saved anybody. And if people were trusting in the works, they were trusting in the wrong thing.

And I believe Luke was very clear when he stated in verse number 12 the object of the people of Samaria's faith. Their faith was in Jesus Christ. Their faith was in the message of the gospel.  
[ 23 : 34 ] Jesus died on the cross in their place. He rose again the third day to prove that God was satisfied with that payment for our penalty of sin.

And we need to trust Jesus for what he has already done. There's no more work left to do for us to be right with God. And so, that's what, that's what they trusted in.

But we go on to verse number 14 and we find that you couldn't keep their faith secret. Now, when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God.

Now, that was before texting. That was before Twitter. Well, or X as it is, or whatever it is now. That was before social media. That was before the mail.

But yet, news traveled fast. And it traveled all the way to Jerusalem. And when the apostles who were in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received, had accepted the gospel, the word of God, they sent the two apostles that were pretty much the primary apostles, Peter and John, to them.

[ 24 : 52 ] And in verse number 15, when they had come down, Peter and John prays for the people in Samaria who trusted Christ as their Savior that they might receive the Holy Spirit for, verse 16, for as yet He had fallen upon none of them.

They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. I want us to see here that true faith unites the body of Christ.

This portion of the book of Acts has led to many what I believe to be errors in the modern church. and the reason for that is we tend to misunderstand Acts 1 through 10.

So here's what happens. Day of Pentecost, Holy Spirit comes down, indwells everyone in Jerusalem who trusted Christ as their Savior.

[ 26 : 06 ] That was a public sign and it was also followed by evidence. people spoke in tongues and it was a language that everyone else was able to hear in their own language.

And it was the sign that God had come down in the form of the Holy Spirit to indwell His people just like had been promised Old Testament just as had been promised by Jesus.

He said, hang around here for a while and He said, I will send you the Comforter, I will send you the Holy Spirit and because I've left I'm going to send you someone that can take you the rest of the way.

That's the Holy Spirit. But then we come to Samaria. I want you to understand a little bit about the difference between the Jews and the Samaritans.

We talked a little bit about that last week in about the 700s B.C. Assyria had come down, had taken Jews captive and they ended up intermarrying with some of the other people groups and so the Samaritans were part Jew and part Gentile.

[ 27 : 18 ] They had their own worship system, they had their own temple on a different area and they did not like coming together. There was a social rift between the two people groups and so much so that if the Jews wanted to go cross country they went around Samaria.

They didn't even want to set foot on Samaritan soil. That was how much the hate there was between these two people groups. Now what if these people in Samaria had received the Holy Spirit the moment they trusted Christ?

What do you think would have been the attitude or how do you think the real Jews in Jerusalem what do you think they would have made of that?

I think that had it happened without the apostles coming and physically laying the hands on them the church today would be two separate sects or even possibly three.

There would have been the Jewish sect and there would have been the Samaritan part of the church and it was almost like the church would have run on two separate tracks. But the apostles come and they lay hands they receive the Holy Spirit by the real apostles by the real Jewish apostles and so it would have shown to the church because they trusted Peter and John and they would have accepted that oh now the Samaritans are part of us.

[ 28 : 52 ] The Samaritans are part of the true church the body of Christ. And then later on in Acts chapter 10 a similar thing happens and the Holy Spirit is given to the Gentiles.

The problem is we fail to understand that Acts chapter 1 through Acts chapter 10 is a transitional point in the book of Acts.

The church is growing, the church is being formed, and it's transitional. We must always be careful that we don't fall into the danger of making a doctrine or a practice based on Acts chapter 1 through

10 because otherwise those who believe that receiving the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation and is a second blessing and you need to have your hands laid on them have a problem with Acts chapter number 10 and those who believe it's just if we come to the point and realize that Acts 1 through 10 transitional climax being Acts chapter 10 and everything forward everything forward of Acts chapter 10 everything after Acts chapter 10 people heard the word trusted Christ received the Holy Spirit were baptized.

baptized. That's how it happened. No longer laying on of hands no longer receiving the Holy Spirit sometime after you were saved. Everything after Acts 10 occurs the way we believe the Bible teaches today the moment a person comes to know Jesus Christ because later on in the New Testament it says there was a test.

If you don't have the Holy Spirit you are none of God's. So if that were the case well what if I trust Christ but I don't receive the Holy Spirit for two weeks and I die between then and you don't go to heaven.

[ 30 : 56 ] Sorry Charlie. And so just a little bit of a this kind of a parenthesis here that I'm taking because we need to understand this transitional point in the book of Acts.

Gentiles gospel goes first to Jews and as we said a couple of weeks ago Stephen's death marked the end of the focus of the primary preaching of the gospel to the Jews.

Scattering of the disciples going out across marks then the gospel going out to the Samaritans and then when Peter has his vision and he goes out to Cornelius that is now becomes the focus and Paul takes up the mantle from that point forward and becomes the apostle to the Gentiles.

So let's come back to Scripture. So this is what is happening and so you know what Simon's doing all this time?

Simon's watching. Simon's looking and Simon is an entrepreneur. He is an entrepreneur through and through.

[ 32 : 07 ] I want you to notice verse number 18. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money.

He offered them money saying, give me this power also that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.

true entrepreneurial spirit. Simon thinking to himself, you know what? I can do some cool stuff. But these guys, they are off the charts. You know what?

They're probably going back to Jerusalem. And if I can buy in on this franchise and get exclusive rights to Samaria, I can be rich.

rich. I can get a following thousands of people. I can finally have a platform and I can be an influencer.

[ 33 : 17 ] So Simon is thinking to himself, this is the opportunity that I have been waiting for. And so he offers them money.

And he wants the ability to be able to lay hands on people. And I'm sure some stuff happened because it wouldn't have been, you know, lay hands on people and go, oh, thank you, that Simon would have thought it would have been some cool thing.

So apparently it was something that was very profound that took place when these Samaritans received the Holy Spirit. And Simon's thinking, if only I could have that power, I can really be some body.

But let's move on and realize who was Simon's faith truly real or was Simon a counterfeit.

But Peter says to him, here his misguided motives are revealed. Peter says to him, your money perish with you.

[ 34 : 23 ] Now I want to stop here just a moment and say here that Peter was pretty straight in what he said.

In effect, what Peter said, may your money rot in hell with you. Let's read it. He says, your money perish with you.

Same word perish as used in John 3, verse 16. For God so loved the world that we should not perish. Perish means die and go to the lake of fire.

Eternally separated from God. And so what Peter was saying, in effect, may your money go to the lake of fire with you. Your money perish with you.

Because here's the thing, Simon did not understand the grace of God. He thought, being right with God, he thought that the things of God could be bought, could be purchased.

[ 35 : 28 ] So when we think of Simon's faith, Simon's faith was in his mind simply a transaction. I do this so I can get that.

I place my faith, I believe in Jesus so I could get something out of it. And I want you to notice in verse 21 what Peter says.

This is very revealing. He says, you have neither part nor portion in this matter. The word matter is the word logos.

The word logos. The word logos can mean word, can mean message, can mean matter, can mean thing. So what Peter is saying is, Simon, you have no part, no portion in the gospel.

You have no part, no portion in the message that Philip has been preaching. I don't know how you can get any clearer that Simon was not a true believer.

[ 36 : 37 ] He was a counterfeit. Now this is what Peter says in verse 22. He says, here is the antidote, repent.

And the word repent normally used in the New Testament refers to a person repenting of their unbelief in Jesus Christ and turning to believing in Jesus Christ.

A shift of turning and turning from your unbelief to your belief in Jesus Christ. So what Peter says to Simon is, you don't have any part in this message.

Repent. Repent, therefore, of your wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you for I see that you are being poisoned by bitterness and bound up in iniquity.

Simon had misguided faith. He, and what we see is his true motives are revealed. As a matter of fact, we get the word, we get a word for this practice from his name.

[ 37 : 54 ] It's a word called simony. Simony. Simony means the buying and the selling of religious offices or favors, if you will.

That was one of the things that Martin Luther, the Roman Catholic priest, put in his 95 statements on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany, was the selling of indulgences.

And they even had a slogan for it. He says, the moment your coins drop, he says, your loved one will go, will be in heaven.

I mean, they were literal. I mean, they were just saying, you drop your money in the plate and you get something out of it. it's called simony. It's called a transaction.

And there were people who would pay money to the church, and, you know, your son could become a priest, or your son could become over this particular little village, or this, and if you had a whole lot of money, you could be the vicar, you could be someone over a pretty big city, and so they were buying and selling church offices.

[ 39 : 15 ] Simon is what it's called, because that's what Simon did. He didn't understand grace. He wanted what the disciples, what Philip did, and he thought he could pay them enough money.

So, let's go on. He says, you have neither part nor portion, for I see that you're poisoned by bitterness and your iniquity. But let's notice, Simon's response, and I believe Simon's response is also very telling.

He says in verse number 24, now if, I hate to put myself in his shoes, but I would think most people would pray to God that that wouldn't happen to them.

I pray, Father, that you wouldn't send me to the lake of fire. But no, what does he do? He says, pray. I want you to pray to God for me.

You pray to the Lord for me that what? Not that my heart would be made right with God, but he says, pray to the Lord for me that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.

[ 40 : 31 ] He was more afraid of the consequences than he was of having a right relationship with God. God. He wanted fire insurance and so many people today, when they pray that prayer, trust Jesus, simply want fire insurance.

They have no plan on following him. They don't plan on dying to themselves, making their whole life revolve around Jesus Christ and put him on the throne of their life.

it's a transaction. I pray, I get out of hell, and I go to church every now and then just to keep up appearances.

I don't really serve, I don't really, nothing really changes. I might get a little more respectable, but it was a transaction, it was a get out of hell card.

And so he says, you pray for me. Here's the thing, no one that's not willing to pray for themselves will end up with God in heaven. Because I can't pray you into heaven.

[ 41 : 40 ] You can't pray your son or your daughter or your mom or your dad or your uncle into heaven. It's their decision. As God's Holy Spirit convicts them, as they hear the truth of the Word of God, it's up to them to trust Christ as their Savior.

So he says, you pray for me. You pray for me. The bottom line is we must trust what Jesus has already done for us instead of trusting what he will do for us.

We've got to be able to trust what Jesus has done for us instead of what he will do for us. Do not be a counterfeit Christian.

I want you to make sure that you look inside introspectively and say, God, am I really trusting Jesus as my Savior?

I need to make sure that it is you that I'm trusting. examine yourselves. As a matter of fact, I don't think I have it up on the screen, but 2 Corinthians 13.

[ 43 : 03 ] 5. 2 Corinthians 13. 5. God's word says this. The apostle Paul says, examine yourselves.

Paul did not want anyone to be a counterfeit. He says, examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Because Paul knew that people could be deceived.

They could even deceive themselves that they were right with God because they attended church or prayed a prayer or took part in this particular sacrament. He says, test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you unless indeed you are disqualified?

But I trust that you will know that you are not disqualified. Let me illustrate. illustrate. I've heard different illustrations that are saying, that I've said, let me illustrate faith or belief.

If I believe that this chair can hold me up, then I have belief. I believe that the manufacturer did a pretty good job of putting it together.

[ 44 : 20 ] together, I believe that this chair can hold me up. That's a way that I've even used to express the gospel before is belief is believing that this chair can hold me up.

I can believe it with every fiber of my being. This chair will do nothing for me if all I have is intellectual belief. It won't do anything for me.

it's just a nice stool. But if we say, I believe this chair will hold me up, the moment I sit upon the stool, I have placed my faith in the stool, and the stool can hold me up.

But I would like to say that for many, this was simply a transaction. I place my faith in Jesus because he can keep me out of hell.

Now, don't get me wrong. Salvation is by grace through faith alone. No amount of works, nothing other than by grace Jesus died on the cross, paid for our sin.

[ 45 : 46 ] When he said on the cross, it is finished, he had completely paid for our sin. When he rose again the third day, it proved that God was satisfied with Jesus' payment on the cross.

But many people place their faith, and they pray a prayer, and they trust Christ, their life never changes.

And I want to share with you what I believe the gospel really involves. I have faith in this chair. I have faith in Jesus.

But I believe what Jesus wants is, I love this chair. I love this stool. I value this stool.

I cherish this stool. This stool has changed my life. And there's enough of this stool to go around. You can have stool too.

[ 46 : 48 ] You can have part of the stool. And it can change your life too. I want to share my stool with you. That sounds kind of weird too. But I believe this is what Jesus, I'm sorry, I believe this is what Jesus wants.

Jesus wants not only for us to have a transaction with him, but he wants to become our life. Do you cherish Jesus?

Because what happens very often is we let down the moat bridge of our mind, and we let Jesus come in as a trophy, but we relegate him to a side room as an honored guest, but we're still the king of our castle.

And we show Jesus off as an honored guest, but we're still calling the shots in our own castle. Life never changes, too much, I want to share with you this morning, and I want us to end here, is are you just believing that Jesus can make you right with God?

Has faith in Jesus just been a transaction to make sure you don't go to hell? or do you trust him and cherish him, and he's your entire life?

[ 48 : 32 ] And you bring him with you everywhere you go. And everywhere you go, they'll say, your stool's not, your stool's not welcome.

And you say, you know what, if my stool's not welcome, then I'm not welcome either. Because it goes with me everywhere I go. Because I cherish, I love this stool.

I love Jesus. I love him so much, he's the king of my life. I love him so much, he's making all the decisions in my life. And I want to share him with you.

This morning on the way here, I heard a recording of the late Billy Graham. This is what he said. He said, I believe the greatest act of love is to share the gospel with someone else.

Why? Because it's the only thing that will make any difference in their life for eternity. Are you a counterfeit? I trust not. Make sure this morning.

[ 49 : 42 ] Father, this morning as we pray, I pray this morning that we would, as the apostle Paul said, examine ourselves to see, to test ourselves if we really are in the faith, if we really are trusting God, trusting Jesus as our Savior.

And we're following him as our Lord, our master, the king of our life. And Father, the more we get to know Jesus, the more we will submit and surrender to his rule in our life.

Father, I pray this morning that we would not be counterfeits, passing ourselves off as someone who we're not, but that we would know, that we would know, that we would know that we're trusting and living by faith each day.

I pray this morning that your Holy Spirit would make real to anyone here this morning that may not be sure of their salvation, that may not be sure if they truly have trusted Christ as their Savior and are following you with their entire life.

This morning I pray that not a single one of us who leave this building, not a single one of anyone who is watching this sermon today would be able to walk away without knowing for sure that they're right with you, that by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone that you change their life, give them a brand new life because of what Jesus has already done for us on the cross of Calvary.

[ 51 : 30 ] And we haven't come to you for what you can do for us, will do for us, but for what you've already done. And that's enough. Thank you father. This I pray in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.