

The Backslider

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Date: 11 October 2026

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[0:00] Proverbs chapter 14 this morning. You know, as you read through the Proverbs, the Proverbs cover a lot of territory. Because the reality is, if you're not going forward, you're sliding backwards.

You know, oftentimes we think we're being static or just staying stable. But, you know, the reality of life spiritually, if you're not moving forward with the Lord, you're sliding backwards.

Because it has to do with our attitude and our spirit about the things of God. And we understand, we're going to look at this this morning, it's something that you ought to be concerned with as a believer.

In your life, because we're going to look here this morning about what it is when the Bible talks about being a backslider. You know, you might have something that comes into mind when you hear that or that term is used.

I know it's not something we use very often anymore. I remember growing up, it was a term used all the time. I mean, it's a good biblical term because it's a biblical description of what's taking place.

[1:30] And so if you found Proverbs chapter 14 this morning, let's stand together as we'll read verse 14. And then we'll get into the message here this morning.

And this is what we want to look at here today in verse 14. It says, Let's pray.

Heavenly Fathers, we come before you this morning. Lord, we're thankful. Lord, we're thankful that you love us enough. Lord, even when we do backslide, Lord, that you will restore.

Lord, you'll forgive. Lord, we pray that you just would be with each one here today. Lord, as we look and consider this term, this direction that you've given here about the backslider in heart.

Lord, we pray that you would just guide the message, give the words to say. Lord, help to stir our hearts. Lord, we might not just look at others, but Lord, that this message might be introspective to ourselves.

[2:36] Lord, that we might think about the areas of our life, Lord, that need what we're going to speak about here today. And Lord, we pray that you just would bless, and that, Lord, your spirit would do its work here today in a mighty way.

And Lord, we ask it all in your precious name. Amen. May we be seated. You know, we understand that term backslider, you know. And we find that a backslider is going to be described in this verse very clearly because this verse sets two very different men in contrast.

Because it talks about a backslider, and it also talks about a good man. And we're going to talk about what it's referencing there and what makes the difference in that because that's important to understand.

Again, because it shows that the same law holds for both because it talks about something very particular, and that's what's in the heart. You know, your heart is where everything takes place.

You know, we talk about the heart. I'm not talking about your physical little ticker that keeps you alive. When the Bible's speaking about here in heart, it's talking about the core of who you are.

[3:50] It's speaking about why are you, you? You know, and we understand that a backslider and what he's been feeding on makes a difference, and what a good man is filled with is what the Lord puts within him.

You know, I want you to understand that oftentimes we think we mention backslider. Here, you think of all sorts of people. You know, how many can think of somebody who used to serve the Lord who doesn't anymore?

Who was faithful and then is not faithful? You know, we can always think about those, but I want you to consider today as we go through this and talk about what the Bible has to say about being a backslider.

You know, you can be a backslider that's faithful to church. You can be a backslider that might read your Bible every day. Because we're going to look and see what he means because it's greater than some of the things that we try to contrast it to.

We try to elevate ourselves because I'm not like such and such, that therefore I'm not a backslider, I'm not this. I want you to understand that even every believer can backslide in their life.

[5:04] because if you're not moving forward, you're going backwards. And we're going to consider that here this morning because we understand something because a backslider suggests that there had been a time in the past when something had caused forward progress to take place.

You know, that's the only way you can slide backwards if you're moving away from where you once were. So you've had to arrive someplace in order to go backwards. to move away from.

That's what it's talking about there, to withdraw from. And so we know and understand, I want you to, I'm going to make something clear at the beginning here because when we talk about a backslider, we know that the starting point is the moment somebody calls upon Jesus for salvation. because you cannot backslide from God if you're first not God's child. You know, I want you to understand, we're not talking about the wicked of the world, we're talking about those who have been washed and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Because that's two different people. When he's talking about a backslider here, I want you to understand what he's looking at and what he's comparing to because that forward progress of salvation happens every time somebody comes to know the Lord as their personal Savior.

[6:30] At that moment, you have made progress, you've been made a new creature in Christ, you've been changed, you've been transformed. Backsliding is moving from that. And we're not talking about losing your salvation.

We're talking about things that keep or hinder your relationship with God. That fire and that zeal that you might have once had in your life.

You know, that forward progress as a new creature in Christ, and as we walk with him, a walk that's designed to move forward and to be conformed to his image.

You know, you think about this for a moment. Go back in the Old Testament to Jeremiah chapter 8 for a moment. Because here, Judah is seen as an example of this. They've been established by the Lord, his people that were to be obedient to the word of the Lord, and yet they started out that way. Yet we see them slide back, and in the days of Jeremiah the prophet, he makes this declaration. He says, why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding?

[7:41] They hold fast deceit. They refuse to return. You know what? God's talking about a heart problem that's taking place.

A heart problem within that's causing a problem. They move from following the Lord to holding to deceit. You know, they were deceiving themselves.

You know, we see that a lot. You know, people are good at deceiving themselves. That deception that there's something that they're not. You know, matter of fact, we have people that even promote it.

You just tell yourself you're that, and it'll come to fruition. You know what you're doing? You're deceiving yourself. Because who you are is what Christ has made you. Christ transforms you. He changes you. He makes you a new creature in Christ. And we understand that people can deceive themselves, though, and even a believer can be deceived.

[8:40] You know, because we understand that our decisions always have impact. Every decision, everything you hold to priority and deprioritize in your life makes an impact.

Those things will alter the course of life. Proverbs chapter 1 tells us this in verse 31, You know, I want you to understand, even as a believer, the decisions you make will impact your life.

Being a believer doesn't insulate you from the result of sin. You know, just because you're a believer, if you break the law, guess what? You're going to pay the penalty.

Here on this earth, you're going to have consequences. As a believer, we ought not. But, you know, sadly, that's not always the case because of exactly what we're going to look at here today, this dynamic of being a backslider.

So I want you to understand, we're going to look at here today, what causes a believer to slide and what is the fix? You know? It's one thing to identify a problem.

[9:58] You know, the other thing is, is how do you fix it? You know? A complainer is somebody who comes with a problem. You know?

Anybody can complain. But if you come with a problem, you ought to come with, hey, I've been thinking about this and here's a few suggestions or ideas on how to fix it. You know what? God tells us what happens when we're a backslider, but he also tells us how to get it fixed. How to resolve the issue. Because let's look at the cause here this morning.

Notice what the text tells us here, the backslider in heart. It begins by simply having less faith, less love, less zeal.

You know? I want you to understand, this message isn't about somebody else, it's about me and about you. Because I want you to understand, the preacher isn't exempt from what I'm talking about this morning.

[10:54] Because it's easy for our heart to grab a hold of things and be distracted by many things. And we have to guard our heart. I want you to understand, most of us will never walk away from the Lord altogether.

But if we're honest, every one of us has drifted at some point since we were saved and needed to be restored. Because you know why? Each of us have a tendency to be filled with our own ways. Our own desires, our own thinking. It begins when a believer declines in any degree. You know, by having less faith. Don't trust the Lord in exactly what He said.

You know, this is a big issue in our life as a believer. Because you can know what God's Word says, and you know what you ought to do, but you consciously say, fill in the blank, I can't because. Or worse yet, I won't because. You know what happens? You begin to slide back. You begin to slide, to withdraw from the Lord.

[12:01] It creates a barrier. When we understand that dynamic, it begins when we decline with less faith, less love for the Lord, less zeal in our walk for the Lord.

You know, think about Hebrews chapter 3 for a moment. Look at Hebrews chapter 3. It tells us in verse 12, it tells us, it says, take heed, brethren, lest there be any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

But exhort one another daily while it is called day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. You know what?

None of us are exempt. The devil wants to get you distracted from the Lord. He wants to create a barrier.

He wants to create a separation. Now I'm not talking about losing your salvation. I just want to make that clear. I'm talking about a hindrance in relationship. Because we understand this on a practical level all the time.

[13:05] We all understand the reality of conflict in the family. Things that are unresolved cause a conflict in the family that cause a separation of fellowship.

Until that's resolved, it cannot be in the fellowship designed the way it was intended. It doesn't change the relationship, but it definitely changes the fellowship.

That's the dynamic when we have with salvation, with God, to understand the deceitfulness of sin. You know, Galatians, Paul tells him, you did run well who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth.

Because I want you to see here, notice his name here, the backslider. It means he stopped pressing forward. Have you ever considered nobody slides up?

You know, we never hear this, he's an upslider. That just don't happen, does it? We slide down. We slide down, going away.

[14:09] You know, I want you to understand, it results in going backwards. You'll notice something. Look at Philippians chapter 3 for a moment. Because here we find the Apostle Paul. And he tells him here, at the church at Philippi, and he says this, and he says, brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.

Now notice, but this one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are what? Before, now notice verse 14, this is a key.

What's he say? I do what? I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Think about this in contrast for a moment.

What's Paul saying in his life? He says, I must continually do what? Press forward. Because if you're not pressing forward, guess what?

You're sliding backwards. That's the reason we have to understand the picture here. He had to keep moving forward for if he did not, he would begin to slide backwards.

[15 : 18] The same as with my life and yours when we stop pressing forward to the high calling of Jesus Christ, and we can stop for all sorts of reasons. You know, sometimes we get complacent.

Some very simple things. Complacency, I'm happy where I'm at. Let me put it another way. Well, I'm comfortable where I'm at. The Christian life ought to always be I'm never comfortable with where I am with God.

There's always things God's working on in my life. that God's developing. The Bible tells us that we're to be conformed to His image. You know what?

That takes a lot in our life, that sanctification that takes place. It's moving forward in that to allow God to continue to work and to guide.

Complacency, you know, that less zeal. Or to look at ourselves first, you know. When you look at yourself, you know what you're doing? You're loving God less. Because you know, one of the problems we find in our world today is people say, love yourself.

[16 : 25] Fill yourself with yourself. You know what God tells us? We need to be filled with His Spirit. Because that's what enables us to walk. That's what enables us to press forward. That's what enables us to live as God desires for us to live.

Now, I want you to see here as we understand that, you know, sometimes it might be just not trusting or obeying the Lord in an area of your life. That's called less faith. When you know what God wants for you to do and what you ought to do but you're more concerned about what everybody else thinks or what you have thought about it instead of what God thinks about it.

Like I said, this is going to get personal this morning. Because I want you to understand I'm not preaching at you, I'm preaching with you. Because you know what?

This is just as big a problem in my life as it is yours. We need to understand the picture and the importance of this because sometimes we're held back when the truth of scripture doesn't fit what we have thought or considered and we resist it rather than submit to it.

You know what you're doing? You're sliding backwards because you created something that's in conflict between you and your Savior. And notice where it starts. It starts, notice it, look back at our text, he said the backslider in what?

[17 : 41] Heart. I want you to understand backsliding begins in the heart. It begins within you and what you think and consider and how you trust God.

Backsliding doesn't begin by an action that takes place. It takes place within the heart. You know, Proverbs chapter 4 and verse 23 tells us this, keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the what?

Issues of life. You know, as a believer, you don't have an action problem as much as you have a heart problem. Because the one thing I've learned in life, what people love and desire, they find a way to do.

They will change, they will put away things, they'll put things off, they'll do all sorts of things for something that they desire to do, what their heart is pushing them, where their heart is placed.

They will put that as a priority. It starts in the heart of an individual. individual. We know, you know, when we understand this picture of a physical heart, you know, we know that heart trouble is always serious whether it's your physical heart or the heart that the Bible talks about within you.

[18 : 52] You know, that's the reason the psalmist tells us this in Psalm 139. He says, search me, O God, and know my what? Heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be what?

any wicked way in me and lead me in thy way everlasting. You know what David's asking here? A very simple question. Lord, is there anything that's causing me to withhold or to draw back from you that needs to be dealt with?

Let's give you a clue. That's a dangerous question because if you pray and ask God that, he's going to show you some things. You're going to have to make a decision. What are you going to do with it? Are you going to stay where you are, sliding back away, or are you going to press towards the mark?

To press forward into what God would have. You know, high blood pressure is called the silent killer because it often has no symptoms.

You know, for many people, the first sign is a heart attack. You know, I want you to understand a heart that's cooled from the things of God is going to slip away from Christ.

[20 : 00] And I want you to understand this idea of backsliding it's all good until it isn't. It's kind of like a heart attack. It was all good until it wasn't. You see people today, well, they were such a

follower of Christ and all of a sudden this devastating thing comes out about them.

You know what? That slide to that happened a long time before that. They didn't wake up one day. You know, in my lifetime, I've seen guys and preachers, once I went to school with, I had personal friends who left their wives.

If you would talk to them, you would think they were godly. Everything was on track. Things were going good. But you know what? That decision to what happened didn't happen in a day. It happened when their heart began to backslide away from the thing slowly, slowly, slowly, and then it's manifest.

Just like our physical heart, you can have a lot of things going inside that everything looks good until it isn't. You know, spiritually, in the life of a believer, that's exactly what happens too.

Looks good, looks good, looks good. I want you to see here the course of what causes it because this is important because notice here what it says. We find these dynamics.

[21:15] It also says the backslider in heart shall be filled with what? His own ways. It's not hard to find people to say this is the way I think it ought to be.

This is the way I think it ought to be done. I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I. Instead of saying, Lord, how do you want it done?

How does it need to be done? What's your response to this? Because those things begin to happen in a, when we fill it up with our own ways.

You know, oftentimes that might just be a preoccupation of something. You know, maybe it's business or social life or entertainment. And what it is, it begins to move in and to crowd out the things of God.

To move away from the things of God. You know, that's the reason Jesus warned in Mark chapter 4 talking about, you know, sowing. And he talks here about sowing among the thorns such as hear the word.

[22:21] And the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things entering in, choke the word and it becometh unfruitful. You know, he's describing somebody looking after their own way.

You can know the truth and still look to your own way. To say, what do I want to do? How do I want to do it? What do I expect? You know what? The heart gives an accurate report.

You know, how many of you ever looked at the little report on your phone that tells you how much you used it each day? How many hours you looked at it last week? How many didn't know your phone tracks that?

Your phone tracks it. It can tell you how much time you spent looking at it. I encourage you to look at that for a moment and then consider something else when you say, I don't have time to pray or to read the Bible.

Half what you look at on your phone, if not more, is probably not worth really looking at. Call it doom scrolling. Really, it's wasting time assuming those things.

[23:25] Look at this slide for a moment. Who knows what this is? Hey, it's in the back. It's a cuckoo bird. There's an interesting thing about a cuckoo bird because they're one of the few birds that don't nest.

What they do is they find a nest of another bird, kick one of the eggs out and put their egg in. Then they allow the other bird to hatch their young'un.

And you know what the young'un does as soon as the young'un gets hatched? He turns around and boots the other chicks out of the nest that he might consume everything.

You know what? Today, I think we have a lot of cuckoo birds in our life that have put things in our life that begin to consume our life that kicks out the things of God.

We need to be careful because remember, where does it begin? In the heart of an individual.

Secondly, we find self-justification. You know, one of the things of backsliding is when you start to defend sin and start calling it by kinder and gentler names.

[24:42] You know, we understand this in today's society. Society loves renaming things, you know. It's an alternative lifestyle. You know, we understand the big things.

You know, think about what Isaiah chapter 5 tells us. He says, Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil that put darkness for light and light for darkness but that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

You know, Proverbs 28 tells us, He that covereth his sin shall not prosper and whosoever confesses and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Let's go back to our modern euphemisms that we use.

You know, oftentimes people will start talking, I'm just processing. It's a good name for gossip. I'm just telling you about what somebody else did to me so I can process this.

No, you're gossiping about something. You know, greed gets re-masked in business, I'm just building my brand. I mean, we're masters at moving things to where it some way becomes acceptable.

[25 : 46] You know, you think about today, there's people, we have a generation who's seeking and looking for answers and you know what the world tells them? Don't turn to God, turn to self. You know, you have people that say, well, I didn't come to church today because I need some little self-care.

You know, I want to do what I want to do. That's my time. You know, they may be a believer but you know what it is? They're starting to slide. It may be subtle, it may be small, but it's definitely something that takes place.

You know, indulgence. Where little matters give way to known sin and one sin leads to another.

You know, we have a great example of this in the Bible.

David. David was a man after God's own heart but when he began to slide back from the things of God, not doing what he was supposed to do, doing what God had instructed him to do, taking care of the things God had told him to take care of, he gets caught up in adultery.

I want you to understand the David and Bathsheba thing wasn't a moment decision. It began in David's heart a long time before that. And then the ramifications always take you farther.

[27 : 00] He ended up having a faithful man killed. And when Nathan the prophet came and pointed out to David, David was mad and then Nathan looked at him and said, well, it's you.

You know, David had a decision to make right there. He knew he had slid away from God but yet we find David said, Lord, I've sinned against you. When we understand the ramifications, the indulgence that brought that away.

You know, in Psalm 32 it tells us this, when I kept silence, my bones waxed old through all the roaring all my day long. For day and night my hand was heavy upon me and my moisture has turned into the drought of summer.

Say, you know what happens? When sin of indulgence happens, it begins to dry up your life. You slid into a desert. And we see this happening but I want you to understand that this is the slope that we go down.

We begin to indulge but you know what? If you're a child of God there's another thing going to happen and that's called chastisement. Correction. God's going to correct you.

[28 : 10] You know, one of the things I've learned that if you don't see God correcting somebody, you might begin to wonder are they really a child of God? Because you know what God does to His children? He corrects them.

They get correction in their life. The Lord will chastise His own. You know, Hebrews chapter 12 makes it clear. It's often when our backsliding we begin to eat of the bread of our own making, we begin to think that the things of God are dead or are not what we think because we don't have a relationship with Him and we understand the consequences become both personal and relational to everybody else around us.

You know, Hebrews chapter 12 tells us this, For ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him for whom the Lord loveth, he chastens and discourages every son whom he receiveth.

You know, oftentimes this is the point the backslider begins to look elsewhere. You know, oftentimes today I think we have a lot of people that are upset. You know, one of the terms that I just, I'm not quite sure settled on how to deal with is this whole thing today of church hurt.

I've been church hurt. I think it's another one of them steps of victim mentality because if your relationship to God is based on a preacher, you've got a problem.

[29 : 39] Or some church didn't do what I expected it to do. You know, I want you, I'm just going to put it this way and put it out there. To me, oftentimes it becomes selfishness when it affects our relationship to God.

I'm not saying those things don't happen, but I want you to understand that that's that person's sin. God gives us things that we ought to do in those moments and how to walk through that. And we need to be obedient to it. We don't have time to get into all that this morning. You know, you can start over in Matthew chapter 18. That'll give you a good starting point. But I want you to understand that often when the backslider begins to look elsewhere, they consume things, then try to compare and they try to contrast and they try to self-justify. You know, it's like being a restaurant critiquer and all you ever do is just taste, never feed on things. You know, we live in a generation today, there's a lot of people tasting on the things of God, but never feeding on the Word of God.

You know, a backslider, when all these things are left unchecked, where does it end? You know, oftentimes we think of backsliders, we think of apostates, you know.

[30 : 52] Let's use Judas for an example. You know, Judas walked with Jesus for three and a half years. Nobody had a clue what was going on in his heart.

He looked right, he smelled right, he talked right, he dressed right, he... Ever thought about something? Judas went out and preached the gospel to people. He helped Jesus feed people. It's very likely when you read through the gospel that the disciples were sent out with the ability to heal people, it's very likely that Judas might have even healed somebody.

You know, the Bible doesn't tell us that, but being as the disciples were given that, when Jesus sent them out to cast out devils and to heal and to take care of things, you know, that Jesus enabled them to do, Judas had all the right attributes.

Then he openly forsakes the Lord. His forward progress was in profession only, never in the heart.

You know, when we understand that people will sometimes put on a good show and depart from, you know, John tells us this, it says, they went out from us because they were not of us.

For if they'd been of us, they would have no doubt continued with us. But they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. When it comes to church, remember one of the things that Brother Ammon, most of you here might not remember Brother Ammon, the preacher before me, but he always had on his back of his door of his office, he said, through these doors, some are going, be thankful for both.

[32 : 28] And we sometimes had, some people had a hard time understanding that, but you know what? Sometimes there's people who are putting on a show, they're going to do nothing but cause you a problem.

Sometimes you're just as thankful to see them walk away and not cause a problem than they are to stick around and cause a problem. And if you hold to the truth, you know what happens?

Oftentimes those people self-weed. Take care of themselves. You need to be thankful for it. But I want you to understand the cure. The cure is very simple.

The only way to regain ground that's been lost in a slide is to return to the Lord. You know, think about what John tells us very simply. Here in 1 John 1 and verse 9, he says, if you confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Now let me give you a little biblical context. This is not a salvation verse. 1 John is not talking about salvation. The book of 1 John is talking about our fellowship with God.

[33 : 32] If you doubt what I say, you can go ahead and read it. The theme is fellowship.

Fellowship is different than relationship. You can be related to somebody and have no fellowship. The thing is, you can have fellowship and not be related.

Sometimes people have fellowship with evil that ought not. I want you to understand that if we come to God, He is always faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Why?

Because what Christ did on the cross of Calvary covered everything. It's just and right to forgive us our sins because of what He has done.

Not by what we do or what we've accomplished, by what He's accomplished. Confess it. Don't cover it up. Come to Him. You know, press forward. Come towards Him.

You know, I want you to understand, Jesus is waiting for you. He hasn't moved. If your relationship has changed with the Lord, you know what? He didn't go anyplace. He bled backwards.

[34 : 32] Press towards the Lord and acknowledge those things that you've done that hindered you in your walk with the Lord. You know, you think about the prodigal son, that picture.

You know what? He had to come to Himself. He had to come to the place that He realized and knew that He had sinned and that He had sinned against God. He had sinned against His Father.

You know, David, when he's confessing to God in Psalm 51, you'll find he didn't have an easy road. You know, he asked God and he longed for the restoration of the joy of His salvation. God's Spirit within him to fill him, to control him, to impact his life. Think about the story of the prodigal son.

You know what? The Father, there's a great picture of God because when you return, you know what? He's ready to meet you. Not to beat you up, not to beat you down, not to tell you all the things you did wrong, but to tell you, welcome home.

[35 : 35] God wants you to return to Him because I want you to understand He's willing to give the supply. Look back at our text here this morning. Notice this.

It says, and a good man shall be satisfied from himself. Notice this man. He's good. I want you to understand here the implication from this verse is he's not good of himself.

He's good by the grace of God that God, the one who is good, is lives within him. He is not good of his own merit, but he's good in the sense that he has the one that's good that dwells within him because he's satisfied from himself, not with himself.

Jesus made it clear when he was talking in Mark 10 where he says, why callest thou me good?

There is none good but one, that is God. He's satisfied from himself, not with himself.

He's good because God has made him new and he's filled with the Holy Spirit, the one that is good.

You know, I want you to understand at the moment of salvation, you become God's workmanship.

[36 : 49] Ephesians chapter 2 tells us this, for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus under good works with God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Let me ask you a question. How many have ever gone to a car show with old antique cars restored? It's like going. You like looking at the cars and you appreciate but you know what?

The true appreciation isn't the car itself. The true appreciation you'll find when you're looking at those is the appreciation of the craftsman who rebuilt it.

In our life, I want you to understand something, it's the craftsman that's rebuilding you that makes the difference and deserves the honor. We are his workmanship.

He took that which is broken, distant from him and brought it in, cleaned it up and is restoring it.

[37 : 52] Back in place what he intended. You know, the interesting thing, I'll just add this about car shows and things. Oftentimes, the cars you see there look better than they did when they were new because the craftsman had better intention to detail on it than even the original maker.

You know what? God, when Jesus comes in, he pays attention to every detail. He's going to work through every little nuance.

Is this individual satisfied from himself? His joy is not in the circumstances of life, but in the one that saved and restored him. It's not dependence upon the praise of others.

He is secure as a child of God. He is filled instead with faith and hope and love, rejoicing in a good conscience and a great testimony. This morning, I want you to consider where you are in your life and your walk with Christ.

One, do you know him as Savior? Because if you never began a walk with Christ, all the things we talked about today don't make a difference.

[39 : 01] You can't backslide in sin if you were never his child. You're already a slave to sin. You're already in your trespasses and sins. If you don't know Christ as your Savior, I'd encourage you to say, Lord, today I recognize who you are, who I am, and what you've done for me.

And the Bible says, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. That's the starting point. But if you know beyond a shadow of a doubt there was a time that you could draw a circle around and say, I know this is when I called upon Christ to save me, recognizing I was a sinner.

The question is, what are you doing forward? What are you pressing for? Are you being obedient to the things of God? You know, the first step of faith is to be properly baptized.

You know, you can be improperly get wet. We won't get in deep on that one today. To understand that God has a means and a way and a purpose for baptism.

It has to be done under His authority and His picture, His image. There's a lot of elements of it that needs to be done. And sometimes people stumble at that. The first step of obedience. That's just the beginning of pressing towards the mark.

[40 : 19] To press towards the mark is to say, Lord, I want to allow You to transform and change my life and when I slip away I need to come and confess and forsake those things and say, Lord, I

seek and desire for You to restore me once again.

Turn You away. This morning are you pressing towards the mark? Mark. You're not the big backslider. You're not the David at this point.

You're not the Judas. But you know the majority of people fall into the third category of being a backslider in heart. This morning.

Pressing towards the mark? Being filled with the Spirit of God? Or is your heart being filled with yourself? What about you today?

His heads are bowed and eyes are closed? I spoke to you about some things in your life. There's a lack of faith. There's a lack of just moving forward in the things of God.

[41:22] You know, maybe you say, well, my relationship to God has kind of plateaued. You know what you need to ask, Lord? What do I need to deal with? What's hindering this going forward?

What's causing me to slide backwards?

What place of faith do I need to take? What step of obedience do I need to put into action? Lord, what thing do I need to do away with that's distracting and filling me with things that shouldn't do today?

Heavenly Fathers, we just give a commitment time here, Lord, to think and consider on this reality of the backslider. Be restored to you as we come and we confess and forsake those things to you. Lord, that the joy of our salvation may be restored. A zeal, a drive for you, trusting you day to day, hour by hour, minute by minute.

Each heart today, Lord, I pray that your spirit would just work. Lord, I pray that they would be obedient to what the spirit tells them today. And Lord, we ask it all in your precious name.

[42:29] Amen. As heads are bowed,