

A Crisis That Develops Faith

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church, Alfred, Georgia. This is the next message in our series on the book of John, entitled, Jesus is God.

Take your Bibles, if you would, and turn to John number four. Thank you very much. Did not expect that. You are a wild and crazy bunch.

Thank you very much. I don't deserve it, but I am very, very appreciative and thank God for you. And Chris Fees is here. Hadn't seen him in a while.

So good to see all of you and glad to be in the house of God tonight. Thank you for being kind to our family. And I think Brother John said I'd want to get rid of him.

But really, any time I've ever been wanting to get rid of anybody has been me. And so I'm excited about being a pastor here to work here with you. And if I ever do get a bear, I will gladly show you a picture of him.

[1 : 02] And he will be bigger than that. Because I've got a friend over here going to take me a bear. I've got a friend right here. I'm going to do this somehow. Amen. Never killed anything in my life except a steak.

Take your Bible, if you would. John chapter 4, verse 43 to the end of the chapter. This exciting part of the Bible that we're in. And where Jesus has just finished his cross-cultural ministry over in Samaria.

Not finished it, but he's finished a part. And he's now moving back to where he's not really all that welcome. It's always hard to go where you're not welcome. And Jesus says himself, he said, these people don't treat me very well.

A prophet is without honor in his own country. And that's probably what goes on in your mind when it comes time for you to witness. You realize, man, my family doesn't want to listen to me. My friends don't want to listen to me.

My neighbors don't want to listen to me. If I were to talk to people I didn't know, maybe I could get further. But the truth is that Jesus goes right back into them. And that's what you're going to need to do. The next thing that's in this passage that we're about to read is there's a man going through a crisis.

[2 : 10] I mean, his life is really falling apart. His son is about to die. He's at the very point of death. Jesus is going to prove again that he is God. Again, that he is the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one, and the sent one.

Because when he turned the water into wine, he was able to overcome time. He said, hey, you know what? It doesn't take long. It may take you a while to get something to go from a seed all the way to wine.

I can do it with just speaking. Then, now he's going to say, I can heal a man and I don't even have to be there. I'm used to doing that. I'm from heaven. And from heaven, I can rule and reign. And he says, I'm still God.

All through, he's saying, I'm God. Now, look, if you would, a crisis that develops faith. John chapter 4, verse 43. Now, after two days, he departed thence and went into Galilee.

For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. Then when he was coming to Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast.

[3 : 14] For they also went into the feast. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. And when he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him and besought him that he would come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Then said Jesus unto him, except ye see signs and wonders you will not believe. The nobleman said unto him, sir, come down ere my child die. And Jesus said unto him, go thy way, thy son liveth.

And the man believed the word. The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, thy son liveth.

Then inquired he of them of the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour which Jesus had said unto him, thy son liveth.

And himself believeth, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did when he was come out of Judea into Galilee. Let's pray. Father, I love you. I thank you for the wonderful privilege of being your son.

[4 : 23] I thank you for saving me. I thank you for saving your children here in this room. I thank you for the privilege of being a part of Vision Baptist Church and all the sweet and kind gestures.

I pray, God, you bless your people for how good they've been to us tonight. But I pray, God, you'd open the scriptures, help us tonight to face the crisis that are in our life, and to face them knowing that you will take care of them, and we can trust you to work in our lives, and help us to step out in the middle of trouble, in the middle of crisis, simply believing what you say in your book.

And I'll give you praise and honor and glory for all that you do. In Jesus' name, amen. If you would, we'll go down to verse 43 in a second. This is the second miracle that he's done, and it's to prove he's God.

Now, in the story, many people believe Jesus only for personal benefit. They don't have real faith. They want to see signs and wonders. There are going to be a ton of people that follow Jesus.

They're going to come for the food. They're going to come for the miracles. They're going to come for the healings. They're going to accept him. They're going to receive him, but they're not really going to believe him. Many do not worship Jesus, but use Jesus for their own benefit.

[5 : 35] That's really worshiping yourself. And today, there is a prosperity gospel that is self-worship because you use God, and you use Jesus for yourself.

And when we ought to come to him saying, I am nobody, and I am nothing, and I am here to lay down before you, and to worship you, and to honor you, I'm here to do nothing more than give to you because you have done so much for me.

And then I'd like you to look with me as we go through this on how a dad's faith can influence his entire family. Well, I hope you'll think about that. Verse 43. Number one, there is no honor for the prophet in his own country.

No honor for the prophet. After two days, he departed thence, where did he depart from Samaria? And he went into Galilee, for Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

When he was come to Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast, for they also went unto the feast. The people rejected the message.

[6 : 35] Many people reject the message because they reject the messenger. They're too focused on the messenger. These guys looked at Jesus, and they said, This is the carpenter's son. This guy has no education.

He has no preparation for what he's doing. We know him. Isn't that Joseph's boy? Isn't that Mary's son? Doesn't he have brothers and sisters? Didn't we watch him grow up? But notice, Jesus did not let their attitude toward him stop him from doing the work.

Jesus didn't let their attitude stop him from doing what he ought to do. He returns to a place where he knows he's not respected. He returns to a place where he knows he's not respected.

He works in the face of criticism and doubt. He works his first and second miracle in the same place. Here's a lesson for us. Your family and friends may not act like they will listen to you because you're like the prophet in your own country.

And they won't honor you, and they won't say whatever he's got to say. But you should handle it like Jesus did. Keep living who you are in Christ. Keep living who you are in Christ in front of your family.

[7 : 41] Don't go into hiding. Don't hide the gospel. Don't hide your testimony. Don't develop a bad attitude. Sometimes people in our own family, they get really rough on us.

You know, you're trying to witness to them. They don't respect you. They don't look up to you. They don't believe in you. They think you're trying to be hypocritical of whatever words they use. And I bet most of us have experienced some of that.

I bet we've had our families reject us. I grew up getting very tired. I was 11 years old when I said God had called me to be a missionary. I got very tired of always being told, every time I did anything wrong, every time I did anything wrong, my own family would say, is that how a missionary is supposed to act?

Maybe you ought to quit going out to the altar so much because you don't seem to be changing any. You know, and that's how your own family can treat you. And that's the prophet is without honor in his own country.

Sometimes their rejection leads to our arrogance. Boy, we get ugly, don't we? We strike back. Who are you to talk to me? Who are you to tell me what's right and wrong?

[8 : 42] You don't live right. You're doing this wrong. And we become the judge. That's not what Jesus does, is it? He does go right back in the place and he just keeps on doing right and he keeps on working miracles and he keeps on loving people.

But he doesn't become arrogant. He doesn't get a bad attitude. And he doesn't hide. Jesus has just been in Samaria among the people that accepted him. They aren't accepted by others, but they'll accept Jesus.

They listened to him and they believed. And he comes now. They receive him. But they only receive him because they like to watch him work miracles. Before I go to the next thing.

Could I just say to you, we're living a Christian life in the southeast. That's the hardest place in the world to live it, really. In a lot of ways, we have as much religious persecution. Not physical.

But you know, we're intimidated, aren't we? Because they'll point their finger at us. And say we're trying to be judgmental. And say we're not tolerant. And say all these things. And maybe you've gone into hiding. Maybe you have the idea, I'm not, I can't be a prophet and nobody respect me.

[9 : 43] So you're giving up. Or you're getting a bad attitude. Or you're becoming the mean guy and the arrogant guy and the arguing guy. That's not who we want to be. We want to take the gospel of Jesus Christ in love and kindness and gentleness.

We want to live out our faith. We don't want to condemn and criticize. We want to share good news. It's sad to say, but a lot of our bad attitudes that people have towards us, we brought them on ourselves.

Be careful. Second thing I want you to look at. Here's the crisis. This is where the message really goes. Verse 46. Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine.

There was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. And when he heard that Jesus was to come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him and he besought him. And he would come down and to heal his son.

For he was at the point of death. A certain nobleman comes to Jesus with a need. He's got a sick child back in Capernaum. His child's at the point of death. He's needy.

[10 : 42] This is a big step. This guy's a nobleman. This guy's a big shot. He's probably working in the government in some kind of official capacity. He comes down to an itinerant preacher.

He comes down to a Jew wandering around preaching. He comes down and asks him, would you help me? Most people are rejecting Jesus, so they're only seeing him as a sideshow in Galilee.

But this guy walks up to him and says, hey, everybody else may be here. They just may want to see you do some miracles, but I got a problem and I need some help. It's amazing how tragedy humbles us.

It's amazing how crises in our life can bring us down and make us willing to go seek help and ask for help. I'd ask you now.

I'd ask you now. Are you available for all the crises that are going on all around us? You do know our country is going through a mess. You do know that your family and friends are hurting right now.

[11 : 38] They really wish they had some answers. They need somebody to talk to. They need somebody to care about them. They need somebody to share truth with them. They need somebody to be available in a crisis time.

That's what we ought to be here for. We're the salt. We're the light. We're here to help people. Are you ready to help hurting people? And people are hurting everywhere.

We need to open our eyes and see how we can help. This is what the psalmist said in Psalm 142.4. I looked on my right hand and beheld there was no man that would know me. Refuge failed me.

No man cared for my soul. That ought never be the testimony of anybody who knows you or works around you. They ought to say there's this guy at my church that knows Jesus.

Excuse me. At my work that knows Jesus. There's this guy that goes to the gym with me. There's this guy that's my neighbor. And I can tell you he's very different. He knows Jesus. And when I'm hurting, if there's anybody I want to look for.

[12 : 36] You know, this is a bad time, isn't it? But instead of a bad time, this is really a good time to be a child of God. It is a good time to be able to help people. It's a good time to be able to share with people.

It's a good time for all the junk to be stripped away. They got to turn somewhere. And Jesus is standing there ready to talk to them through you. Go and be a prophet even in a place where there's no honor.

They're in a time of crisis. Look what happens. Look at verse 48. Believing enough to take the first step is all that was needed. All he needed to be able to do was believe enough to take the first step.

Verse 48. Then said Jesus unto him, except you see signs and wonders, you will not believe. The nobleman said unto him, sir, come down and ere my child die. I don't know.

I'll get to this. I'll say it to you one more time in just a second. I love 48 and 49. You see what that does? They don't go together. If you could be there.

[13 : 32] If you could be there and see it. If we could have a skit put on by these guys up here. Do you see what he said? The guy says, hey, Jesus, my son's about to die. I was wondering if you'd come down and help him.

You don't want anything unless you could see a sign or a wonder. And this is what the guy says. Just come help my kid. Look at that. I mean, it was right back. I do believe. I want you to come.

The nobleman said, sir, come down ere my child die. And Jesus said unto him, well, go on. Your son's alive. Your son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him.

And he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, yesterday at the seventh hour, the fever left him.

And Jesus boldly and directly challenges the man's faith. He says, unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe. This man doesn't even acknowledge that.

[14 : 29] It's like he ignored that statement. It's like he said, okay, I need your help anyway. And he looks directly at Jesus and repeats the question.

And he says, will you come help my son? And so Jesus said, well, go on. Jesus has proven something big here. Don't forget what John wrote the story about.

Every verse in this, every book, every, he's got an underlying message he wants to get across to us. He wants me to know that Jesus is God. That Jesus is the son of God. And that Jesus is the Christ.

And he's trying to prove that. He's trying to say, let me bring the witnesses before you. And here's a man that says, hey, I need my son to get help. And Jesus simply says this, go on home. He'll be alive. It'll all be all right.

He said, I don't have to go touch him. I don't have to go down there. I don't have to put on any kind of scene. I don't have to be there because I am God. I can hear and I can answer from a distance.

[15 : 24] Did you know that right there ought to give you confidence to pray? Did you know that right there ought to give you confidence to pray? You say, I wish Jesus would come down and touch my kid. He didn't need to hear. All you got to do is ask.

All he's got to do is speak. All you can do is trust. There's a God in heaven who hears and answers prayer. This man believes without seeing. I love verse 50. I wish you'd underline it in your Bible.

Look at verse 50. Jesus said unto him, go thy way, thy son liveth. Look what the man did. He believed the word. He believed the word. If there's anything that worries me about us is what's your attitude about this book?

Do you believe this book? Do you believe his word? Real faith takes Jesus at his word. We have his word. We can believe it.

We can step out in faith and do what he tells us to do. We don't need any more discussion. We don't need anything else. This man just looks at him. He says, will you come help my, will you come heal my son? You won't do it.

[16 : 22] Y'all don't, you've got to have a sign, don't you? Sir, would you just come help my son? Would you come heal my son? Your son's okay. Go home. And the guy just simply said, yes, sir. And turned and left. Spoken, believed, gone.

Spoken, believed, gone. No confirmation. Confirmation. He didn't have any way of knowing, did God really do it except this? I believe God. By faith, he stepped out.

By faith, he quit praying. By faith, he accepted as a true. And he doesn't get any confirmation until he gets on his way home that the boy is better. You can step out believing.

You can pray and seek God's face and study his word. Then act on what you know to be true. Stop just a second. Let me just say this to you. We've been taught all our lives too much feely, feely, neely, emotion, gushy, goosebumps, stupid stuff.

If the book says it, you don't have to feel it. Just believe it. If the book says it, it's true. You can trust God's word. You say, well, I just don't know if I feel it.

[17 : 25] I don't care if you feel it. It doesn't affect the thing. It's God's word. Amen? I don't know if that guy looked at Jesus and said, oh, I got goosebumps. I think I'm all right. I don't think that's what happened.

I think he said, okay, if you said, I don't know what that man was feeling. I just know this. He turned around and walked away. Did you know God's looking for people that will believe him and believe his book? The results of this man stepping out by faith are found in these verses.

Verse 53. Verse 53. The father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus had said unto him, thy son liveth, and himself believed, and his whole house. This is, again, the second miracle that Jesus did.

Look what happened. God heard and answered his prayer. I said, God. You say, well, that was Jesus, not God. I know. Because Jesus is God.

And when he spoke to Jesus, he spoke to God. And God said, it's okay. Your boy's all right. And this guy has joy of finding God and seeing God's power.

[18 : 24] You know, he doesn't know it until he gets home. When he runs into the servants on the way up, the servants say, master, no need, no need. And asking him to come down here and heal him anymore. He's fine.

And the guy looks at him and said, really? Well, what time did he get okay? And they said, well, it was the seventh hour yesterday. He said, that's exactly what he told me he was going to do it. And the guy said, now I know.

I know. I trusted him yesterday. I took a small little step believing. I didn't have any confirmation. I didn't have anything. But I just believed what I knew to where I was. And now look what God has done.

He believes not the words, not the words of a miracle worker, but the words of God. He becomes a believer. He gets saved. His whole house gets saved. His son is alive. And everyone else is doubting.

And this guy's got great results. Just a real quick thing for you. If I live on feelings, I'm going to get up and down and in and out and upside down and over and around.

[19 : 23] Man, we're too much driven by our feelings. We're too much driven by our fears. We're too much driven by our emotions. And somewhere along the way, we let a bunch of preachers talk us into, you got to have the goosey-goosies and the feely-feelys and the woolly boogers and everything else go on in your life before you can know God's going to do it.

But the truth of the matter is, it's not about your emotions. It's about the power of the God you believe. It's not about your prayer, but it's about the God who hears prayer. It's not about your believing.

Even it's about the God who's big enough that he don't, it just takes a little bit of believing on your body. Just ask him. Just ask him. What great results. Gets home.

Boy's fine. I can hear him now. Son, you're not going to believe this. I went to see Jesus. They say he's the son of God. Yesterday, he told me that you were all right.

I got home, and the servants were sitting by you, and they were wiping wet claws on your forehead when the fever was burning in your brow. Your body was ached and troubled at the same time he said it.

[20 : 25] It stopped. He's God. Let's trust him. And all of a sudden, a family of believers is born, and a boy is alive. Last thing, and I'll quit.

Your crisis can make or break your faith. Your crisis can make or break your faith. In all the years I've been in the ministry, I've seen many, many people come to the Lord Jesus in the middle of a crisis.

Things are falling apart. Their life is at an end. Sometimes we've got to get knocked on our backsides to trust him. As long as we can stand up and as long as we can go forward and as long as we only add God as kind of a flippant thing to our life, we don't really get to know him.

So sometimes God uses crisis, and he brings us to him. I've got several questions for you. I wish you'd consider. Will you get past all your reasons and excuses for not believing?

Will you get past all of your reasons and excuses for not believing? He's just a prophet without honoring his own country. I don't like the preacher, and so therefore I don't believe the message.

[21 : 32] That is a ridiculous thing to say. They were ridiculous to say it, and this guy got an answer because he looked past everybody's criticism and he believed. Everybody else is there just for the sideshow.

Heal somebody, feed somebody, do some big miracle. We'd like to watch it, but we don't really believe because we know who you are. You're the carpenter's son. This guy says, I'll just believe.

What is it that keeps you from trusting him? What is it that keeps you from just stepping out in a simple act of faith that said, God will work in my life. God will hear my prayer. God will answer.

His word does work. What is it? So you got burnt sometime in your past, so somebody didn't teach you right. Some of us hold on to bitterness so long, God won't work in our lives. Some preacher hurts you somewhere along the way.

Well, your eyes were supposed to be on the Lord Jesus all along. Amen. Your eyes, you got two places to put your eyes. Number one, you put your eyes on the word of God, and number two, you put your eyes on Jesus. Not on preachers because they're all men and they all mess up.

[22 : 29] So look unto Jesus. What can we do to get you past all the reasons and excuses? Will you see Jesus for who he really is? He is God in human flesh.

What in the world had that man to think in his mind when Jesus, he goes up to him and says, Hey, would you come down? My boy's about to die. I mean, this guy has got to be scared to death.

Do you have any idea what it would be like to look at your son and know he is just about to die? He doesn't have a fever. He doesn't have a tummy ache. He's not just a little bit sick. He's at the point of death.

I came home in 1974, I guess, or five, six maybe. I don't know. Chris was about a year old. Betty, there were no cell phones.

I didn't know what he'd get in touch with me. And I got word that my son had fallen and his head had hit on a concrete floor and I was all swollen and we were scared to death. I remember sitting in that hospital and all I could think was, God, please take my eyes.

[23 : 27] Please, God, if something's going to happen to this boy, let it happen to me. Don't let it happen to my son. And I sat there in abject terror about what was going on with my son. Daddy was probably feeling that.

And he walks up to this man and he says, hey, my son's in trouble. All you want is to see another miracle. Sir, just come help my boy, please. Your boy will be fine.

Go on home. You guys says, okay. I don't know what you think. This is a noble man. This wasn't a peasant. This wasn't a non-thinking guy that never went to school. This guy was a graduate of the university.

This guy works for the government. This is a nobleman. And he said, okay. And he walks off. He's believing God. Something had to let him know. God had to do a work.

He just said, I believe. Who else can talk like that? Maybe you could have got a shaman, a witch doctor, a curandero, a healer. Maybe you could have got somebody to go with you.

[24 : 25] But Jesus just said, you can go home at the library. All right. And he goes home. And Jesus is who he said he was. He's God in human flesh. Will you boldly and confidently present your need to the Father in spite of everything in you screaming that you shouldn't trust?

You know, I know we got people that are hurting in our church. I worry for you. And I feel for you. And I hurt for you. And everything in you may be screaming, well, the economy's got to change.

Or it's the president's fault. Or it's the government. Or it's my job. Or let's go sit down. Let's go to Wall Street and sit it out. Let's go downtown Atlanta.

And you got all these excuses. And here's exactly what God's trying to do. He's saying to us, come. Get broken enough to believe me. Let the crisis drive you to your knees. Get to the point your boy's hurting and there's nothing else you can do but trust and yield.

Come boldly and confidently and say, God, I've just got to believe you. I've nowhere else to go. Will you simply take him at his word without a need to see or feel something?

[25 : 30] That really kind of, the gripey thing in the chapter is this. Everybody wants to see Jesus working miracles. And this guy's like, I don't have to see anything. You don't have to go with me.

You don't have to touch my son. You don't have to make the sign of a cross over him. You don't have to lay rags on him. You don't have to lay a staff on him. You don't have to lay down on top of him. You don't have to do anything. You just speak the word and it'll be done. I trust you.

And the man sees God do a work. Will you believe and just walk away knowing God has done what he says he'll do? Here's the wonderful thing. God doesn't answer you because you beg him a lot.

God doesn't answer you because you beat your chest or scream a lot. God answers you because he's a good God. They say Hudson Taylor was walking down the beach and he just simply said, God, I need this many workers.

He prayed the prayer once or twice and it was done. He just said, I know God will hear and I know God will answer. Paul prayed three times that the thorn would be removed three times. I'd have prayed three times in three minutes.

[26 : 26] But you can talk to God. He's a real God. It's not about willpower. It's not about your believing and you're working it up and you're screwing up enough faith to get things to happen. It's a God in heaven who hears you and answers you because he's a good God.

Are you teaching those that live in your house now to believe and live a life of faith? I don't know if you get anything outside this story, but it's what I say. Daddy got home.

The boy was alive. The boy was well. I don't know what happens except what I see here, but he believed and his house believed. I think he had to do some talking. I think when he walked in and the sun was setting up and everybody was fine and everybody in the house was like, yesterday he was dying.

Yesterday it was over. Yesterday at one o'clock in the afternoon, we knew he wouldn't see two o'clock. And he's alive. And he's well. No signs of the disease.

And I think I can just see the man say this. Sit down. I got a story to tell you. I walked up to him yesterday. He was Jesus. Man, they're talking about him everywhere.

[27 : 28] And he's become the sideshow and he's become the guy everybody likes to laugh at. But I just walked up in simple faith and I said, would you heal my son? Would you heal my son, please?

And he was kind of rude to me. He said, all y'all want to do is see a miracle. And he said, I just said, well, would you heal my son? And he said, go on home. It'll all be all right. You know what time it was when he told me that?

It was one o'clock in the afternoon, seventh hour. One o'clock in the afternoon. That's when it happened. And that's when you got well. Do you know that God's on earth? Do you know that Emmanuel is here? Do you know that God and power has come down?

We serve a real God. I want you to trust him right now. We can know that he's real. And I think something happened. I ask you a question. What kind of spiritual heritage are you leaving for your children? Will your children learn to believe or doubt from you?

Will your children learn that money solves problems or Jesus solves problems? Will your children learn that you go to the Lord in prayer and talk to him about stuff?

[28 : 28] Will your children learn that in the time of crisis and everything falling apart, you're trusting Jesus? Is that what's being taught? And man, I'm going to talk to you. It's not the wife in this story.

It's not the kid in the story. It's the daddy. It wasn't the wife that went and asked God to heal his son. It was the daddy. It was the daddy. It wasn't the wife that sat everybody down and said it was yesterday at the seventh hour.

It was the daddy. You know what the spiritual leader in the story is? It was the daddy. Sit down and listen, guys. We serve a big God. Will your children know how to seek God with their problems because of what they've seen and learned from you?

Or will God be the last place they look? Because that's the last place you look. I hope it's not. I hope your family knows that on a daily basis you set aside time to seek Jesus in his word and in prayer.

Are you leading a household of faith? I want my little house with my little children and my grandchildren now.

[29 : 33] Man, I want it to be a house of faith. I want, when I die and my casket's laying there, I want my grandkids and my children and my great-grandkids, if he lets me live that long, I want him to come by and say, he loved Jesus.

He believed the Bible. He's a man of God. Is that the atmosphere at your house? You say, well, you're a preacher. It's supposed to be like that.

No. You're a child of God. It's supposed to be like that. For all of us. Is your house full of praise and worship or complaining and selfishness?

I think that's the story. I think that's the story. So tonight, what decisions do we make? The very first one is, I want to lead my home.

When my family's in need, I want to be the one that goes and finds the Lord Jesus. I want to go find him. I want to talk to him. And I want to get help from my family. Sir, that ought to be you.

[30 : 38] Secondly, I want my family to believe. And I know I can't make them believe. And I know I can't make the decision for them. But I can sure set the example. I can sure teach them.

And I can sure pray with them. And I can sure give them an example. And I can beg God every day of my life. Oh, God, save my kids and raise them for your honor and glory.

I can do that much. I want to witness. I know it's hard. The last people that want to listen to us are our family. They see us when we're not shaving. They see us when we haven't had a bath.

They know us when we're in a bad mood. They know when we're gripey. They know when we walk in the door. They know all that. So it's so easy. Because, you know, when you're the pastor, you know, you get dressed.

And you get all cleaned up. And you come and you stand behind a pulpit. And you're not really seeing the real me. You're not seeing the guy that got up this morning and hadn't shaved in three days. And shaved before he came to church.

[31 : 32] You're not seeing the guy that had bad breath. You're seeing me. But your family's seeing you. But you can listen. You can witness to them. You can share Jesus with them. They know you.

And the strongest testimony of faith. Though you say you have no honor or respect because you're the prophet in your own country or in your own house. The greatest witness in this world is you, sir.

To your children. And to your wife. And I want my grandkids to say. I want to believe like granddaddy did. I want my kids to say.

I want to read my Bible like granddaddy did. Don't you? Do you? Are you? Should you make a decision now? Because you are having a lasting impact.

Story's over. This man now has a son that's alive. A family that's saved. And a household of faith. Father God in heaven, would you do a work? Would you magnify yourself?

[32 : 33] Would you bring glory to your name? Thank you for everyone that's here tonight. Thank you for the kind things that have been done. God, drive our hearts and minds to Jesus and help us to look to him and believe in him and expect great things.

God, I do magnify you and glorify you and praise you. God, help us in the time of crisis to be available to help our neighbors and our friends. Help us to witness where nobody might, we might think they don't want to listen to us.

Help us to lead our homes. Help us to be people that seek you on a regular daily basis. Not just in crisis. God, work in our church.

With your head bowed and your eyes closed, there may be some people here that aren't saved. You're not sure that if you died, you'd go to heaven and maybe God's doing a work in your life and he's brought you to a place to say, it's time to trust Jesus.

It's time to trust Jesus. If you'd let me tonight, we'd take the Bible and show you how you can put your faith in Christ. Is there anybody here to say, I'm not saved yet and I need somebody to help me? Just hold your hand up.

[33 : 33] Let me send a test, a testifier, a witnesser, a counselor to you to show you from the Bible how to put your faith in Christ. But to be any Christians that would be honest and say, I've been making excuses for not witnessing.

And I've been acting like I'm a prophet without honor in my own country. So I've not been very clear about my faith to my own family, to my mom, my dad, my brother, my sister, my cousins.

I've not been clear about that. And tonight I need to make a decision and just say, God, I will be clear. I will share the gospel. We can so jump, say more of the Lord's dealt with me about that. And I'm going to share the gospel with my family more openly and readily.

Is there anybody like that? Would you raise your hand? Anybody? Is there anybody in this room that say, hey, I need to be, I see your hand. Anybody? I just need to share more openly that I'm in love with Jesus. Is there anybody in a crisis tonight and you need to lead your family?

Are there any dads that would say, hey, I'm not doing all I ought to do. Tell him right now, Lord, here it is. I'm in business. God, do a work in our people's lives.

[34 : 35] God, do a work in our people's lives. God, do a work in our people's lives. And I'll give you praise for all that you have. You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church. For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to www.visionbaptist.com.