

Finding Restoration and Revival with God

A sermon by Nathan Leal



Today I'm coming to you with a very special program. I'm going to bring a spiritual message where we will break bread together, and I'm excited about this program, because I believe it is going to bring encouragement to those of you who are enduring the present season of darkness. Some of you know about this all too well.

The darkness has finally arrived my friends. The dark shadow from the abyss has made landfall. It is here and it has brought with it much confusion.

A lot of folks were expecting it. It arrived, and ill winds are now blowing in the spiritual realm. These winds are attacking God's people. Some are being hit by it mildly. But others are being blasted. Blasted folks!

It was prophesied that in the last days these things would happen, and until

recently, those words were merely prophecies in the pages of your Bible. But now that it's here, what are we supposed to do?

Over the last several years, we have talked about the darkness that was going to come. We have also discussed how it would arrive with deception. I have been laboring to talk about it, because God's people need to know the truth about the insanity that is taking place right now.

My friends, the world has gone crazy out there. Insanity has taken over America and a spirit of darkness has enveloped the entire country. It is like a black velvet cloth has come over the land, and its challenging a lot of people. Some of you may have observed how insanity has crept into the airwaves of the church. It is confusing the saints and it is weighing on the brethren.

In this message, I am going to share an introduction that may seem lengthy, but I have a lot of things to cover, and I also want to make sure that we cover many of the situations out there.



Darkness has Arrived

This darkness is not just metaphoric. It is an actual description of what's taking place over the land. There are a few spiritual ailments that are being inflicted on God's people:

- Some are getting stung by it.
 - Some are battling oppression.
 - Some are getting hammered.
- (Here's a fancy theological term) - some are getting walloped by it!

It is bad folks, the darkness has been accompanied by a swarm of demonic flies. Many of God's people can sense it and feel it. Many are in a raging battle, and some of you may be experiencing this very thing right now.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is a struggle taking place in the lives of godly men and women out there. The darkness is unbiased. It

will attack anyone with its bag of tricks; it will seek to oppress, stifle, and confuse. And when that's not enough, it will try to get you to stumble.

Brethren, the darkness will try to dim the light of your candle for the Lord. It will attack you and send a *bad-day-lousy-gram* your way.

I am not trying to give it praise, but it's out there, and it's at work.

Folks are struggling. Some are dealing with financial challenges. Others are in the midst of relationship problems. Some have been attacked in their health with sickness, or they have family members who are sick. Some have injuries. Some are facing diseases, and then there are some who are facing the deterioration of their body with the old temple breaking down through pain and rust.

For some, there is spiritual oppression, which brings with it a host of mental challenges.

I'm getting emails from some of you. I have seen that many are struggling out there. God's people are in disarray.

- Some of you feel alone.
- And some of you are alone, even in the midst of family where you dwell.

Perhaps you are alone, because you have been traveling solo in this journey. You gave your heart to Jesus. You are on the narrow path. You love Him and you desire to press-on to the end. But this darkness has been challenging you. It's been hard.

So we are going to address this today. We are going to talk about this darkness, and with the help of God, we are going to find encouragement and glean strength from God's Word.

As you read this, I want to challenge you to put everything else aside, if you can, get your Bible. Also grab a pen and paper, and prepare your heart to be touched by God.

I would like to open with a prayer. *Nathan prays a prayer.*

Heavenly Father, I thank You for every person listening to this message. I ask that You touch their hearts and their lives. I ask you to meet them where they are. I ask that the Spirit of your Word touches each and every listener in the mighty Name of Jesus. Amen.



As I stated a moment ago, a lot of people are struggling, because the darkness has arrived. Darkness is here. This makes it difficult to see, which brings added struggle. When the lights get turned down, as a child would say, it gets a little scary.

Please think about this - while we are in this life, that *old devil...slew-foot* will do all he can to thrust you into his darkness. But it doesn't stop there. In addition to the darkness outside, he will also try to

place darkness inside of your life. He does this, because he wants to hush your voice as God's child.

Brethren, the darkness wants to mute your testimony. The darkness wants to stifle the words of joy and hope that come from living victorious for God. It wants to replace the words of your testimony with defeat. The enemy wants you to be defeated, my friend.

But if you are a child of God, He has given us a promise if we hide ourselves under His mighty wings as Psalms 91 says, "*He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*" Then He will protect us.

That is where we need to be right now. We need to be under His shadow.

Granted, perhaps some of you are there. Perhaps things are going great for you, and if you are presently located in God's secret place. Then give God praise for the season of calm waters.

Many Christians are Struggling

But there are many others who are struggling. Some of God's people want to dwell in the secret place, but it's been difficult.

Perhaps that's you. Perhaps you greatly desire to be in God's secret place, but even though you want to be there, you can't seem to get there. And it doesn't feel like you're being covered by the feathers of His wing. As a result, the fiery darts of the enemy are being hurled at you, and they are difficult to dodge.

Did you ever play dodge ball as a kid? Were you ever one of the last ones remaining? Standing against the wall? And five big bruisers were a few feet away, laughing as they thrashed you with



those stinging orbs? - *And to think that was supposed to be fun! - Getting thumped by an unkind ball! Uh, no. That was not fun.*

That is what Satan wants to do to you, except he uses fiery darts and arrows.



Thus, we need God's safety. That's what this message is about. It is about getting under the protecting wing of our Lord. But isn't it amazing that while God offers that promise, the enemy wants you to be defeated.

... the enemy wants his fiery darts to get through to you.
... he wants to pierce your heart with defeat.
... and rob you of your confidence.
... and steal your boldness.

My friends, the devil wants to vaporize your blessed assurance.

We are in a Battle

The battle is raging and the struggle is real. There are people out there who are struggling with a lot of things including: strongholds, vices, and heavyweights. Some are battling through the tears of depression, and then there are even some who are feeling hopelessness and are tempted with self destruction.

- Maybe things haven't gone your way, or maybe you are facing one of the biggest trials of your life. Perhaps it is a struggle that you never thought you would ever face.

- Maybe you thought you'd seen it all, but now here's a new one, and you've asked yourself, "Where did this come from?"

Have you experienced this? Have you wondered about the present mountain that you are facing?

Have you been asking God, "How did this happen? Or, how did I get here?"

I know how difficult it can be. I've talked to enough of you, and I see it. I've even experienced some of these things myself. I know about trials. I know about physical pain. I know about struggling with an injured body.

My Journey with Pain

If you are a regular listener, you know that I recently broke my back, and my arm, and when it happened, boy did it hurt. It was the worst pain I have ever felt in my life. It occurred last November, so it's been half a year, and for the most part my back is now mended. My arm and wrist also mended. However, I am still going through a little bit of therapy to loosen up my fingers. Other than that, I am healed, but it was a challenge. At times, it was a very difficult struggle. There were moments when the pain was unbearable. I remember how the enemy would send thoughts of defeat. I experienced his fiery darts. I know all about them.

The enemy likes to tell God's children that they are not loved. He also likes to accuse and condemn. During my recovery, there were some folks who had the gall to email me and tell me that my injury was punishment for this or that. Some folks even said it publicly on social media. They said, "*Nathan is being punished, because he came against God's anointed and criticized Trump.*"

...So they hurled their stones, and congratulated themselves. Amazing huh folks? Do I have a rebuttal? Yes I do, "*May God have mercy on them.*"

I am sharing this, because I want you to know that I am not speaking from a vacuum. I know about the battle, my friends. I know about the attacks that seek to steal your joy and rob you of your faith. I know all about that stuff, but I also know about the One who can bring peace and hope. His name is Jesus. He loves you and if you have been born again, He is mediating for you.

"What do you mean when you say Jesus mediates for us?"

It means that Jesus has your back. It means that He stands up for you when the devil wants to bug you. It means that He tells Satan, to take a hike, on your behalf.

"Well that's nice that Jesus does that. But why can't I feel it?"

There could be a number of reasons, and that's what this program is about.



"Nathan, why am I struggling? I don't like it."

Today, we will talk about why some of you are struggling. Of course, for some, it is not easy to admit, because after all, in the age of, "winning" it's not easy to admit that you are struggling with defeat.

After my previous, message, I mentioned that I wanted to share a sermon to deal with this situation, and after it was released, some of you wrote me and said things like,

"Nathan I can't wait for your sermon, because I really need it. I need to hear something encouraging, because I'm struggling, and I'm downtrodden. Things are not going well."

So what do we do?

If you are a child of Jesus, the times require that we have our candles burning brighter than we ever before. A lot of you know this. You've also noticed how crazy things have become. That's why we need to get a hold of the Lamp of God. Of course for some folks, that's easier said than done. Some are struggling to get a hold of the light.

Can you relate to that?

Have you desired to make your Christian light brighter, but it's been difficult? Because you're not as strong as you use to be? If that's you, you're not alone my friend.

If we went back to how it was ten or twenty years ago, it seems that experiencing a prayer breakthrough with God was easier than it is now. Back then, it was simple. All a person had to do was grab their Bible, go into their prayer closet, turn on some praise music, and God would show up. Remember that?



But now that the darkness is here, it's like there's a thick fog in the air which makes it harder for the transmission to reach Heaven. Some of you are experiencing this, and you've probably also notice that there is an almost tangible darkness in the air. I know in the natural this sounds crazy, but it's true. There's a darkness out there that's not made out of sugar and spice, but rather, it is made of evil, and it consists of anti-matter from hell.

This is challenging, because as Christians, we need Jesus now more than ever. We need His Lamp and His Light so that we can see.

The Challenge

Some of you have been trying but you haven't made a breakthrough, and sadly, some are feeling the temptation to give up.

Others have settled for dismal Holy Ghost power that seems to be from an empty tank.

Have some of you said, *"I remember when I could feel the presence of God envelop me, but now, oh well, I guess that's just the way it is,"* and then you limp along as you continue your journey.

Or maybe some of you have been limping along with a spiritual hobble entirely by faith. What I mean by that is, *"lately, your cup has not runneth over,"* and you have not felt God's presence in a while. So your walk has been by sheer determination, by faith.

I know that this is a long introduction but this

is what today's message is about. My friends, I want to encourage you and help you make that breakthrough that you so need. Why? Because it's dark outside. And many of you need it so that you can possess the spiritual strength to lead your family.

Brass Heavens

How many of you could say, *"Nathan you are describing me. My spiritual strength has shriveled. I use to have it. I remember how it came easily when I prayed in the past. But now it seems when I ask God for help, it feels like my prayers are bouncing off the ceiling."*

Yes my friend, I am familiar with that ailment. It is called - ***"The heavens are brass."***

Brassy heavens are one of the hardest challenges to face, because when the person experiences it, they are usually in the midst of a battle and they need the waters to part. They need the Red Sea to open up for them. If that's you, you know what I'm talking about.

If the heavens weren't brass, and if the heavens would open while you prayed, then it would be easy, because your prayer request would leave your prayer chamber and flow up to Heaven and God would show up. And that is the goal, because when God shows up, He brings His peace and His comfort.

Perhaps for some of you, the transmission seems to have interference and static when you try to pray. And it seems like there's no answer. When this happens, it brings discouragement, because it feels like Heaven took a break.





And to make matters worse, the enemy will use the situation to attack you with his dark arrows. Satan will accuse and condemn, and then try to rob your faith. He will say things like, *"God won't answer you, because you are not worthy ... or ... He doesn't love you because you're a loser."*

He will do this my friend. He will bring condemnation and tell you - *"God doesn't want you anymore, and can no longer use you."*

That's how Satan operates. He will use barbed words and try to downgrade you to worthlessness ... but you know what folks? You are not worthless, because you were bought with a price. Jesus saw you before you knew Him, and in spite of that, He still loved you. He did my friend.

He saw you before you ever thought of Him, and in spite of that, He still loves you. That is why it says in - 1 John 4:19... *"We love him, because He first loved us."*

You know folks, the journey of our salvation, and the journey on the narrow path is very interesting, because on the first day of our Christian walk there is usually excitement and joy. Do you remember that day? Remember how great things were when you first got saved years ago?

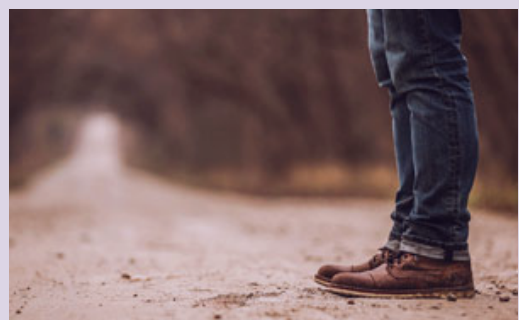
Of course, some of you might be new to the faith, but for others, it was years ago. And back then, the walk was glorious. You were a - ***high-fiving-heaven-bound-hallelujah shouting - Gladiator for God.*** Your candle burned bright. You were on fire.

- But then things happened!
- Life happened!
- Things showed up!
- People showed up!
- Events occurred in your life that were never supposed to happen.

And it didn't stop. The curve ball of life walloped you in the face. Events occurred. And life played a dirty trick on you, because it placed a giant bull's-eye on your back, or maybe on the back of a loved one.

Can you relate? Have you ever found yourself saying, *"I didn't sign up for this?"*

I'm pretty sure some of you have. I'm also pretty sure that some of you are not happy with where you are in your Christian walk. If everyone reading this was honest with themselves, and gave an honest assessment of their faith, some would admit that their bonfire for Jesus has turned into a smoldering ember.



If some of you tried to look at your location on the narrow path, there's a chance you are not pleased, because when you see where you are, the only thing you can say is, "Lord, what happened? I don't like where I am."

Others might say, *"How did I end up here? Because it doesn't really look like the narrow path anymore."*

Are you still with me? If I am describing you, I promise that there is hope. Please keep reading.

The Wanderer

I know I'm describing a lot of situations, but I have to, because there are a lot of situations out there that bring discouragement including ... Here it comes ... Wandering from the faith.

It happens folks! Even good people will wander from time to time. And it happens in the most unexpected ways.

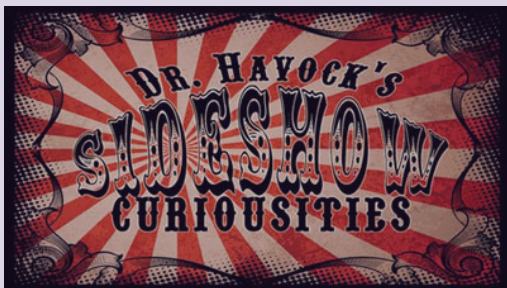
Take Christian Pilgrim, (which is what we all are.)



We all began our faith as Christian Pilgrim, a beginner with a journey before him on the narrow path. Things will go great for a while, but then the path will take a turn. It will go around a bend, and then there it is ... a distraction will show up - from out of the blue!

At first, the response is usually, *"well where did that come from?"* But Pilgrim must continue on the journey.

Then it will show up again. And the second response might be, *"Hmmm, that looks interesting."* ... but again, Pilgrim must continue on.



Then it happens once again. But this time, it will have made a few changes to be more interesting and alluring. And sadly, this time, Christian Pilgrim will look and come to a halt and say, *"I'm gonna to check it out. I know I shouldn't but it will only be for a second."* So he steps off the narrow path, walks into the side ... beyond the boundary of manicured grass, where the briers and thistles grow.

The narrow path has boundaries on each side. It consists of a manicured hedge, but beyond the hedge is a wasteland, and that is where the devil wants to lure you. He will place a curiosity there to get your attention. And if Satan can lure you over there, he will use his tricks to keep you there.

Remember when Abraham was going to sacrifice Isaac, but at the last minute God stopped him? A ram was caught in the thicket. Abraham gave God glory for His provision, but one thing that some folks don't think about is, "how did that ram get stuck?"

The answer? Briers and thorns are not friendly to a sheep's wool coat, and when you put them together, it's like strong bond Velcro; once stuck, it's hard to get free. This is another reason that sheep should not wander by thorny briers, lest they get stuck on them.



Unfortunately, there are a lot of well-meaning church folks who are stuck in the briers and don't know how they got there. They wandered from the path to check out a curiosity. But now they are stuck in the thorny bushes. So what is a person supposed to do?

Good news folks! Even in the midst of a struggle, God can set us free. There are options. But the worst thing a person can do is, not try to get free.

Are you trapped in the briers, my friend? There is hope for you to find freedom. Please read on.

Knowledge

Many mega churches are showcases for positive messages. But sadly they are not teaching Christians how to find personal restoration with God. As a result, there is a segment of God's sheep who are stuck in the briers, and they don't know how to get out.

They have not been taught about *the spoiler*, *the devil* who waits around the corner, ready to pounce on them with reminders that they failed.

Why is this a forgotten message? Because today's Christianity is about, "winning." It is not about stumbling, or tripping, or falling ... or despairing. And if it is not about those things, it is also not about finding restoration or revival with God.

So today's theology is just about, "winning," it requires a lot of pretending. But real Christianity it is not about pretending. It's about facing the challenge and arming ourselves with God's knowledge.

In the book of Hosea 4:6 it says, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."*

What does this mean? It means if people do not have the Word of God hidden in their heart, especially in these end times, they will be destroyed and defeated by the enemy. God gave us this Scripture to let us know about the challenge that we face, and one of the biggest challenges in these end times, is to make sure we have the correct biblical knowledge to face and overcome the enemy. So it is very important to get a hold of as much biblical knowledge as we can, so that when your season of temptation arrives, you will be able to say, "it is written."

"What you mean I can say, 'it is written.' Don't you know how beat up I am? I have been through the grinder. I don't feel strong enough to do that spiritual warfare stuff."

I understand my friend. I know that it's hard out there, and I know that some of you are feeling pretty crummy right now. Which, by the way, is a good start. Step one is knowing that we are in a mess and we need God's help. So if that's you, congratulations. Acknowledgment is always good, but now let's work to fix this mess.

Let's start with the basics.

If you have been spiritually defeated and dry, the remedy must be to find spiritual strength. One

of my favorite places to start is found in Psalms 32. This Psalm contains a point-by-point method to find God's strength, restoration, forgiveness, and assurance.

Psalms 32 was written by King David after he had his affair with Bathsheba. It is a very famous account found in 2 Samuel 12. He committed adultery with Bathsheba, got her pregnant, realized he did an, "oops." So he killed her husband Uriah, and then married her.... Time went by... The baby was born, and then Nathan the prophet approached David and gave him a word from the Lord which stated - *"thou art the man!"*



Think about that folks, when Nathan showed up, David was out of fellowship with God, but the Lord had mercy on him and sent Nathan the prophet to restore him. But this was about a year after the affair. We can surmise this because the Bible tells us that the baby who was born from their affair became sick.

Nathan the prophet said to him in 2 Samuel 12:14, *"However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die."*

The verse above tells us about the child dying. We are not sure how old the baby was, but it could have been approximately one to three months old. I do not want to digress with the details of the baby's age. I only mentioned the child's age to show that David had been wandering for a while and with a quick calculation appears to have been about a year.

Think about that folks! David had been out of fellowship with God for about a year when Nathan showed up. This means that he had not repented for that same length of time. So when Prophet Nathan confronted him, the Holy Spirit convicted David and broke through his hardened heart and softened it, which motivated him to mourn and lament his sins.

Hallelujah, what a merciful God we serve. He sent Nathan a David on a mission of mercy, and it was out of this beautiful account of forgiveness that David wrote Psalms 32. It is a beautiful Psalm, and I treasure it, because it offers hope for all of us.

It reveals that no matter where a person has been, or what they've done, they can find God's forgiveness, and I really love this Psalm, because it is so simplistic and offers a *step-by-step* approach to finding God's restoration and comfort.



My friends, if you haven't already, try your best to become acquainted with Psalms 32. Read it. Highlight it. If some of you have struggled with having a spiritual breakthrough or making amends with God, try adding this Psalm to your arsenal. So let's take a look at it...

Psalms 32

Beginning with verse one... *"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered."*

David begins this Psalm by saying, *it is a blessing to be forgiven*, and it also hints at the opposite scenario; if a man harbors sin, he will not be blessed.

And how can he be blessed with harbored sin?

- Harbored sin includes a heavy load.
- It wears a person down.
- It carries much baggage and robs from the mileage meter of life.

God does not want His people to live with harbored sin. That's what verse one is saying, it tells us that when a person finds forgiveness, it becomes a blessing to their soul.

By the way, there is a teaching out there that I want to address. It's a theory that says if a person prays the sinners prayer and gets saved, then from that point on, for the rest of their life, the theory says, *"they never have to repent again...EVER!!!"*

... that's just not true my friends.

Paul said, "I die daily."

"I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily."
1 Corinthians 15:31

To *"die daily,"* means we deal with our flesh everyday, which includes dealing with sin.

The theology of never repenting after the "sinner's prayer," is dangerous. Why? Because if a Christian navigates their journey in this manner, they will not deal with any sinful acts that they may have committed, including harbored sin. People who operate this way, do not understand the damage that it does to their spirit, and will lose out on God's blessings.

To live without repentance means a person is not covering their accumulating sins with the blood of Jesus.

Some people think that showing repentance means we are not saved, but saying "I'm sorry to God," does not mean we lack faith, but rather it means we have contrite hearts.

Our relationship with God is likened to being as a child toward a parent.

Paul tells us this in Romans 8:15... *"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."*

Think about it folks, our relationship toward God should be like a child calling out for their Daddy. This is one of the reasons that God gave us the family unit. It was to help us understand our relationship with Abba Father. This means that there are spiritual truths that are embedded in a

parent-child relationship.

Those of you who are parents have all experienced this - when your child gets into a mess, and they do something foolish or rebellious, you expect them to apologize don't you? I am pretty sure that you do. We expect our children to apologize when they blow it. And the same rules applied to us when we were younger.

How many of you can remember when you were a child and did something wrong? Do you remember having to apologize to your parents. I do. I remember having to stand there with my head down as my mother scolded me, and after she finished, I would apologize, because if I didn't, oh boy! - The earth would shake under my house. My tiny little mother knew how to make the earth shake, and even though she was short (4' 11") - she was never afraid to smack me upside the head if I talked back to her, because, as a foolish child I would have deserved it.

... And I would also had to apologize to her.

...Fast forward to our lives as grown-ups ... *BTW, I am sharing the following to counter the argument which claims Christians have no future requirement to ever repent after they pray the sinners prayer.*

I hope this does not offend anyone out there, but I find that logic absurd, because again, when we compare the childlike truths of Christianity to human relations, repentance and forgiveness must always be present.

Marriage

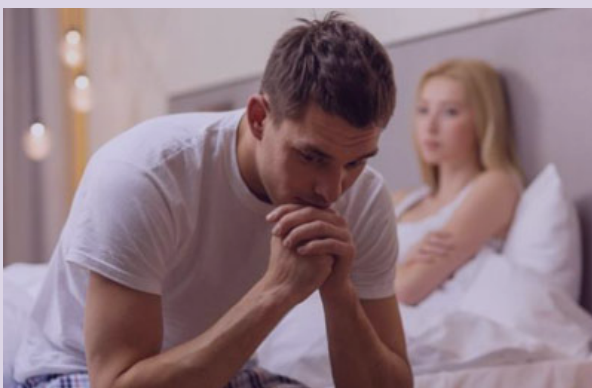
This includes marriage. When a couple gets married, they share wedding vows and promise to be loyal to one another. It is a beautiful thing and they seal the ceremony with a kiss.

At the very beginning, the couple begins the relationship with new life. They make promises to one another. After the wedding ceremony, they begin living as a married couple, and eventually, it will happen, they will have a disagreement. In time they will have more of them. They will have conflicts, and possibly even a knockdown drag out argument with drama, raised voices, hurt feelings, hurtful words, and other conflicts that most of you know about.

"Uh, no, Nathan. That has never happened in my marriage, it is only the loud neighbors who carry on with drama at all hours, but not me.... cough, cough"

Good for you, my friend, but for the rest of the other folks reading this, most of them can relate.

And they know it happens. Couples fight, but if they love each other, they will also forgive each other.



Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter, *"Love does not remember a wrong suffered... Love covers all...."*

Most of you are familiar with *the love chapter* in 1 Corinthians 13. If you're married, you know how it works. A marriage will only flourish when the couple operates in forgiveness.

How does it happen? Here's an example, let's say a husband was rude to his wife and upset her, because he was feeling impatient or grumpy. Maybe he was having a bad day. Let's also say it was his fault. He had no excuse. He was rude to his wife, made her cry, and now, she's not talking to him.

Sound familiar my friend? If you've been married long enough, most likely you have and don't try to deny it, hubbies, because God is watching.

"Deny what Nathan?"



You know. How many of you hubbies have been rude to your wife? ... You hurt her feelings. You saw her upset, and you know in your heart that you did it. Have you been there my friend? Again. Of course you have. So what did you?

Well, there's only one thing to do. We gotta fix it, because until we do, the wifey will remain upset. *And if Mama is upset, oh boy!* ... Right folks?

Isn't it interesting that as married people, whenever there's a brier of offense between a husband and wife, you can actually feel it.

It's like a wall between the two people. You can't see it, but it's there? The husband-wife unity gets interrupted because of that barricade. If it goes on too long, it will feel like a soul separation. And who wants to feel that? I don't.

As Christians, we are commanded to not let it linger for too long. Ephesians 4:26 says, *"... To not let the sun go down on your wrath."*

For Christians, that means we have until bedtime to fix it.

"What do you mean Nathan?"

It means we cannot go to sleep until we are reconciled with our spouse. Sorry folks, that's written the Bible, so that should be the goal, and if it is, the only way to remove that barricade from an offended wife is to go to her, humble ourselves, and admit that what we did wasn't right. We gotta own it.

So if we do what we're supposed to and apologize for being grumpy bears, then sad wifey will forgive, and it's amazing, after forgiveness, *the emotional wall barrier falls down*. It just disappears.



Gone. And unity returns.

This is the way it should be.

Of course, if it was the wife who was being a grumpy bear, the requirement is the same. She needs to apologize to her husband, and when she does, we will get the same positive result The offended soul barrier wall *gets torn down!*

Then comes the unity, and the hugging, and the restored relationship.

Now make note, restoration between the husband and wife will not happen without an apology. It will not happen without taking responsibility. It will not happen without saying, "I'm sorry." This is what we do in the relationship of marriage. And think about this, this occurs after the wedding vows; after the person said, "I do."

Marriage is a shadow of our relationship with God. And the same way that spouses should love one another, is the same way that we should love God.

For the record, God's love toward us is perfect. He doesn't purposely offend us. God does not have bad days when He is grumpy. Insults do not slip from His mouth. He does not wander away and forsake us. It is we who wander away from God.

... We're the ones who sin against God.
... We're the ones who have bad days from time to time.
... We're the ones who struggle with bad thoughts.
... We're the ones who say things that we shouldn't.



It happens. Christians have bad days. When we're young, the bad days may be fueled by foolishness and immaturity. But when we get older, and our bodies become rusty and frail, we may experience bad days for other reasons, like health and sickness. The battle against discouragement will bring with it different temptations like unbelief, despair, bitterness, anger, and a host of other things.

How many of you have noticed that it is difficult *to be your best*, when the body is weary, or when it is sick?

Peter found out about that the hard way. On the night that Jesus was arrested, Peter kept dozing off, because he was tired and worn out from grief.

"When He (Jesus) rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow." Luke 22:45

The verse above says, *"sleeping from sorrow."*

Why? Because just a few hours earlier, Jesus told them He was leaving. Most likely they were in shock, confused and wept over the news. This is why Peter was weary.

Keep that in mind, because a few verses later, Peter who had been sleepy, became grumpy and denied Jesus when he was questioned about Him. He even let out a few cuss words.

... But glory to God, Peter also repented, which I bring up to show that temptation will strike even harder when we are tired, weak, or when we have had a bad day.

Familiar with Repentance

So stuff happens, doesn't it folks? But then what? If we want to prevail, we must become

familiar with repentance, and repenting as a Christian does not mean that we are not saved.

Did you get that my friend? Let me say it again...

"Repenting as a Christian does not mean that we are not saved."

Instead, it means, we're taking responsibility for our actions, because that's what we are supposed to do as Christians.

Repentance is always necessary when we sin against God. Repentance is also necessary when we have a bad day which results in bad actions. Unfortunately, Christians have been falsely taught that they no longer have to repent, because at one time they prayed *the sinners prayer* and that prayer offered a blanket coverage for all future sins, and that is simply not true.

When we sin as a Christian, we must still seek cleansing and restoration. I can back this up with Scripture ... At the last supper, Jesus told Peter he was going to blow it. After Peter denied it, Jesus told him, "when you come back to Me, strengthen your brothers."

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." Luke 22: 31-32

Jesus told Peter, *"when you have returned to me."* The Greek word for, *"returned,"* means, *"to be converted, to turn back."* This means that Jesus knew Peter was going to briefly wander. But Jesus prayed for Peter to have the faith to return. And praise God, he did, because a few verses later in Luke 22, it says, *"So Peter went out and wept bitterly."*

Why did he weep? Because he felt conviction and sorrow over his sin, but then he repented. And my friends, if repentance is good enough for our brother Peter, then it is good enough for all of us.

Sadly there are believers walking around saying, *"I don't know why I'm not having a breakthrough with God."* But those same people do not pray like they should, or at least, not as much as they did at one time.

Does this sound familiar? Did you use to pray a lot more in the past?

"Nathan, I say grace before dinner, and also when I tuck in Pebbles for beddie-by. Isn't that good?"

Yes, it's good to thank the Lord for a meal and to ask that Pebbles has monster-free dreams, but unfortunately, that is the extent of prayer in some Christian households. I understand that life is busy. Some folks will say that they're too busy to pray, but is that ever really true?

In a hectic life, something will always get the priority, or wants to take the priority. Chaos will do that. Chaos always wants to be the priority, so that you cannot pray. But then, something will happen in life that requires prayer, but if the person has not been praying, it adds difficulty in making contact with God.

Perhaps some of you are in that situation? ... What to do? What to do? Addressing the remedy must first acknowledge the situation, which in this case, involves not praying enough.



Ladies and gentlemen, may I offer this suggestion if it applies ... *returning to our first love, and dealing with the issue of sin?*

There is a biblical remedy that can help some of those who are struggling. This is why I love Psalms 32. It offers a script that we can utilize as God's children. And verse one deals with the foundational issue that must first be addressed when we approach God.

Step One - We Must Deal with Sin First.

It is so important that God's people remember this. When we first approach God in prayer, we must, must, must, make sure that we deal with any hidden or harbored, sin. We have to put it on the table, consider it, and if it is there, we must acknowledge it, and then we must ask God to remove it. We must do this to comply with Psalm 32:1, which says, *"Blessed is the man who sin is forgiven..."*

This is God's Word folks, and it tells us that a genuine child of God is not afraid to deal with their sins. It also means that they have learned to take the high ground of responsibility when they blow it.

Earlier I mentioned the husband-wife relationship, because it is an example that most people can relate to. When a couple argues, an invisible wedge will often form between them, but when they apologize to one another, their wholeness is restored, which is a beautiful thing, because it is something that can be felt. Restored love is beautiful, and the hug of forgiveness is powerful as the bond of unity is recaptured.

Have you been there? Have you ever offended your spouse or loved one, but then when you apologized, and they forgave you, you could feel the love return? It was beautiful wasn't it. The flow of love entering the heart makes it want to burst at the seams, because it feels so good. And often, the atmosphere of forgiveness and love will bring tears of refreshment and comfort.

This is what Psalms 32:1 is talking about. It tells us that the one who finds God's forgiveness is blessed. They are blessed because after they repent, they experience a restoration and reunification with God, and any hindrance that might have restricted fellowship with God is removed.

Oh to be reconciled with the Lord! If only everyone sought it.

Are any of these words hitting home? God does not want any hindrance to restrict our fellowship with Him. He doesn't want you weighed down with sinful burdens.

The book of Hebrews tells us in 12:1 - *"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,"*

Laying Aside the Heavy Weights

We have to lay aside the weights and the sins that ensnare, my friends. We have to make sure there's nothing sabotaging the journey before us.

"How do I do that Nathan? How do I know if something is hindering me?"

That's a good question. Now allow me to ask a few.

1. Has it been a while since you heard God's voice?
2. Has it been difficult for you when you try to pray?
3. Does it seem like God is far away from you?
4. Have you been battling Satan's condemnation lately? Does he often accuse you and tell you that you are worthless? A failure? A habitual sinner?
5. Do you find yourself not as hungry for God as you used to be?

If you answered yes to some of these questions, then there may be harbored sin deep in the closet of your soul, and step one is to address it. Maybe there are sins that have been overlooked, or ignored, and for whatever reason, you just haven't dealt with them. Perhaps you have wanted to, but it doesn't feel like you have the strength to do it.

Pain

Or maybe you don't want to think about your sin and failure, because it brings up regret and pain. Those who have committed adultery will often feel this way. They often feel so much guilt and shame that it becomes a barrier to repentance. This is what David experienced. He was miserable while he was out of fellowship with God.

I have often wondered why David took so long to return to God, because he allowed a year to go by without dealing with it, and his restoration required Nathan's involvement. Which by the way, reveals the love of God. God loved David and missed him, so he sent Nathan to confront him. And my friend, God also loves you.

For those who have been away from God because you've committed, "big whoppers," God misses you and wants to hear from you. Because until a person makes contact with God and deals with it, they will be miserable, and their life will not be blessed.



This is the reason that David says in verse one, **"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered."**

David was speaking from personal experience when he wrote this, and he meant, *there's no better feeling in the whole world than to be forgiven.*

If you can imagine, David had an oppressive cloud over him for a year, and during that year he was miserable. He felt horrible and rotten. His affair with Bathsheba resulted in their marriage. He loved her. They had a

child together, but he was miserable.

How miserable was he?

Well let's read on, and while we do, make note, the next verse says, **"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity,..."**

In other words, when God looks at a person who is repented, God no longer holds their sin against them, because they are cleansed and have been washed.

The verse goes on and says, **"... And in whose spirit there is no deceit."**

David mentioned deceit. Why? It's because when a person has sincerely repented, he no longer has a need to pretend or deceive himself.

David was in denial for about a year. He was pretending. When a person pretends that their harbored sin does not exist, they are in denial, and for a short season, David was in denial. He pretended everything was okay, but in truth, he wasn't, and even though he went through the motions, he was deceiving himself.

This applies to us, my friends, because when we deal with harbored sin, God washes us, and after that, there is no longer a need to pretend or deceive ourselves.

"... And in whose spirit there is no deceit."

When God forgives, and no longer sees the sin, the forgiven person is blessed. They are blessed for a lot of reasons. One of them is they no longer have to lie to themselves or behave with hypocrisy, because they have actually dealt with their sin.

"... And in whose spirit there is no deceit."

It is very important to get a hold of this. When a person harbors their sin, they are operating in deception. But this message is about remedies. It is about finding the source of the spiritual breach. It is about being an overcomer, and finding victory. So we must also deal with this possibility, just in case it is present in our lives.

At the beginning of the program, I mentioned the spiritual struggle that some are having to endure. I described where some of you may be. Not all of you, because there are different reasons that Christians experience challenges, but in finding a spiritual remedy, we must include the basics. In this case, there is a cost when a person harbors unrepentant sin.

Grieving the Holy Spirit

Harboring sin can be expensive to the soul and some of the collateral damage includes grieving the Holy Spirit. Why?

When we receive Jesus at salvation, God quickened our spirit, and also gave us a built in radar system to battle sin.

"A radar system Nathan?"

Yes. When you made your commitment to Jesus, God sealed to you with the Holy Spirit.

"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, **you were sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise,..."

Ephesians 1:13

When we believe in Christ for salvation, the Holy Spirit comes upon us and does something amazing. He seals us, which means *He stamps us with his divine mark for security and preservation*, and then He dwells within us, and from that point on, the Holy Spirit becomes a part of our life.

He dwells within us, and if we happen to blow it and commit a sin. The Holy Spirit is there to convict us, and tell us that we did wrong. His conviction also encourages us to stop it. At that point, it is up to us to listen to Him and obey Him.

However, if the Holy Spirit's conviction is ignored, after a while, He will no longer continue to remind us, because a person who sins willfully grieves the Holy Spirit, and we are not supposed to do that.

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Ephesians 4:30

The verse above, the Greek word for, "grieve," is "lypeo," which means - *to make sorrowful, to affect with sadness, cause grief*.

Translation - the Holy Spirit feels sorrow, sadness and grief when we sin. It also means Holy Spirit does not like it because since God hates sin, He will not dwell in a fleshly temple that is okay with sin. It also means that if the Holy Spirit is grieved and ignored, after a while, He will no longer prompt the person about their sin, and after a while, He will stop convicting them and leave them alone.

My friends, when a Christian gets to this point, it is bad, because that person will notice that their sin no longer feels as wrong as it used to.

A Clash of Conscience - God's Backup Plan

While this is going on, God still loves the person, and wants them to repent. If they do not respond, then God goes to Plan-B, and David talks about it in Psalms 32; 3-4.

"When I kept silent, my bones grew old. Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer."

Psalms 32:3-4

In the verses above, David describes the misery that he went through when he was in denial of his harbored sin.

When a healthy Christian sins against God, they will feel rotten after they commit it. They will often experience guilt, regret, sadness, sorrow, and many other grievous emotions. This is the response of a healthy conscience.

That's the other thing that must be kept in mind. We must protect and guard our conscience so that it never loses its ability to be convicted. It can happen folks. It is called a seared

conscience.

First Timothy 4:1-2 tells us that in the last days, people who attend church will leave the faith, forsake the true gospel and accept a false gospel. The Bible also tells us why it will happen:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"

According to the verse above, it will happen because these people ignored the clash of truth against their conscience, and allowed their conscience to become hardened and seared. Why will this happen? A number of reasons including; people no longer obeying the prompting of the Holy Spirit's conviction. So my friends, it's very important for us to guard our relationship with the Holy Spirit. We have to make sure we do not grieve Him.

God's Conviction

Again, when we blow it, it is God who brings the conviction. In the natural, human flesh does not experience conviction when it sins. On the contrary, the flesh enjoys sin. It desires it. It celebrates it and wants to make a trophy out of it.

But the spirit within us that has been renewed by Jesus does not enjoy it, because after the sin occurs, the spirit feels *the caking of sin's horrid residue*.

This feeling comes from God. It only occurs because at salvation our spirit within was quickened by Him. At that time, our conscience also receives a spiritual awakening and seeks to do good.

If a Christian sins willfully, they will feel conviction in the aftermath. Some preachers will argue that feeling guilty after a person sins is not good. But I am not talking about condemnation from the devil. I'm talking about the old-fashioned, healthy "*Godly sorrow*" which is a conviction that Christians should feel when they sin.

(Note - please do not confuse this with the accusatory and condemning type of guilt that Satan will often thrust on a person after they have repented and received forgiveness. That is a different matter.)

I am talking about healthy conviction that leads to sorrow and repentance. Paul talked about it in second Corinthians 7.

"Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

There is a healthy sorrow my friends, and those feelings are necessary because they will lead us to repentance.

As an example, if my child does something wrong, I want them to feel sorry about it. Why? Because, I want them to know that it was wrong. And I do not want them to repeat their offense. Godly sorrow and conviction will do that, it will motivate a person to want to fix their mess. Or at

least it should.

Don't Grieve Him

But what happens when a person doesn't respond to the Holy Spirit's conviction? In a nutshell, they will be miserable and it's important that Christians understand how miserable it can be.

When a relationship with Jesus is healthy, the person will experience the peace of God. They will operate in their day-to-day life with the peace of God. The peace of God is priceless. It helps us to cope with the affairs of life. It helps us to deal with the challenges that we face. God's peace allows us to be bold and strong, and it gives us confidence to run the race. However, when a person harbors sin, they will not be covered with the peace of God. Nor will they feel it.

And essentially, they will face the struggles of life on their own.

That's no fun! Who wants to be alone? I don't. I need His peace, and so do you. We all do. All of us need to be sheltered under the peace that passes all understanding.

Unfortunately, when the Holy Spirit is grieved by someone, the Spirit will not linger in that atmosphere, so He will leave, and He will take his comforting peace with him, leaving the sad result of a person with no peace, and that my friend is misery!

This is what David went through when he languished in harbored sin, and he tells us about it and verses 3 and 4...

**"When I kept silent, my bones grew old. Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer."
Psalms 32:3-4**

"When I kept silent..." In those words, David admits that he was playing the pretend game and ignoring what he did. *"Keeping silent,"* means that he didn't talk to God about it. Instead, he kept it to himself. I wonder if he thought it would go away? I don't know, but his silence resulted in the Holy Spirit's grief over it.

I am sure that the Holy Spirit convicted David at first, but for some reason, he ignored it. Why? Probably because he was a typical human. Perhaps he felt a darkened regret that suppressed his ability to repent.

I assume the devil was also there to accuse him, *"David, you're such a loser. Your victory days are gone. What kind of king are you? Those Psalms that you wrote in the past are a bunch of hypocritical lies. God no longer has use for you. Loser!"*

Can you see it folks? Satan beating up on David?

And then to make matters worse, David's silence was making him physically ill. He said, **"my bones grew old."** The Hebrew word for, **"grew old,"** means, **"waxed old, became aged, rotted away like old garments,"** and it describes the inner pain and misery that he was going through. It made him feel like his bones were aging and rattling within him. Does this mean he also had joint pain? Did he have bouts with inflammation? We don't know, but he does mention his bones, and his bones suffered because he failed to pray.

He continues and says, "...through my groaning all the day long..."

The Hebrew word for groaning means, "*The moan and cry of a wretched person.*" It means David might have cried about it from time to time. He might have thought about his wretched condition and wondered how he could have committed such things. Perhaps he remembered how it used to be when he was a young shepherd boy, and he would worship God with his instrument as he cared for his sheep.

But then, when he considered his predicament, he moaned with deep regret, because he saw that he was no longer the innocent child who became a king. And instead of prophetically gifted lad, he might have concluded that he was a murderer, a thief, a betrayer, an adulterer, and a hypocrite. Perhaps he was also perplexed, because didn't have the inner strength to find restoration.

The Heavy Hand of God

On top of his perplexity, David experienced the heavy hand of God. He said, "*For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;...*"

The Hebrew word for, "*heavy,*" means, "*to be grievously afflicted.*" This means God placed challenging obstacles and circumstances in front of his path to get his attention. Some of the affliction might have also involved the spiritual realm. It might have included bouts of depression and oppression. God might have allowed spirits to torment David. David might have had to endure the flood of overwhelming darkness.

It could have been any number of things, because God is very creative, and at times He will allow the vexation to infect us if it will help us to cry out to Him.

This is what David was talking about. And for about a year, David endured the horrible things that I just mentioned above. God's heavy hand was upon him, and because he harbored his sin, God had no choice but to thresh David.

And isn't it amazing that in the first four verses of Psalms 32, David describes his misery in such a concise way that helps to clearly illustrate the consequences of harbored sin. This is a benefit for all of us, because it helps us to understand the collateral damage that sin will bring when it is tolerated.

Can you relate to any of these words my friend? We're almost finished. Let's move on.

The Drought of Summer

When the Holy Spirit becomes grieved and departs, His departure will leave a spiritual vacuum, because without the Holy Spirit, the joy of the Lord cannot be experienced, nor can we approach the wellspring of God and take a drink.

This is one of the other consequences of harbored sin. When a Christian, "*keeps silent about his sin,*" as David put it, they will not be able to get a drink from God's well.

Why? Because God will not allow us to partake of the wellspring of His holiness, if we do not respect His holiness.

David said, "...my vitality was turned into the drought of summer."

The Hebrew word for, "*vitality*," means moisture and it means, "*inner moisture*." But what moisture could David have been talking about? Did it mean he was dehydrated?

Well, in a way, yes. But he wasn't talking about physical water. He was talking about, "*the Water of Life*." He was talking about Jesus who is able to offer a drink to quench our spiritual thirst.

When the Sons of Korah wrote Psalms 42, they mentioned our thirst for God being like the thirst of a deer.... "*As the deer panteth for the water, so my soul pants for thee Lord.*"

This is a beautiful description of the thirst that a healthy Christian will possess towards God. And it is not just figurative. As Christians, we must continually partake of His water if we want to remain spiritually strong.



"How do we do that Nathan?"

Partaking of God's water is accomplished by regular worship and prayer, and by reading, studying and meditation on the Holy Scriptures. But this cannot be accomplished if our soul is stained with sin.

Have you ever been alone in your prayer closet, and God showed up in such a beautiful way that your response was humble adoration and worship towards Him? When we experience God in this level of fullness, it replenishes us with spiritual strength, assurance, and it fills us with the peace that passes all understanding.

Saints of God, the peace of God that passes all understanding is priceless.



The wellspring of God is powerful enough to restore the sanity of the most distraught person.

... It will cause oppression to flee.
... It will repel the flood waters of despair and desperation.
... It will motivate a stormy soul to come to the quiet.

And that my friends, is what all of us need. We all need a drink from His well. But when David was in rebellion, he had no access to the well, and it made him miserable.

In essence, King David was dying of thirst, and he needed to be rescued.

We all need to be Rescued

As you have read the words of this sermon, can you relate to what I have shared?

1. Do you feel like your Christian walk has experienced a rupture?
2. Is it not how it used to be?
3. Do you have difficulty approaching the throne of God?
4. Are the heavens brass?
5. Have you been in a drought?
6. Have you been harboring sin?
7. Is your heart not as soft as it used to be?
8. Does your heart beat for God the way it used to?
9. Has spiritual victory, eluded you?
10. Do you need to experience an old-fashioned revival with God?

These are a lot of questions, aren't they? But if we are going to find spiritual victory, it is necessary to visit all of the essentials and deal with them.



The basic essential to finding victory requires that we examine ourselves. Paul tells us in second Corinthians...

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified."

2 Corinthians 13:5

That is what this sermon is about. It is about self-examination and confrontation.

My friends, if you want to have spiritual victory, we must look inward and examine our heart. After we do that, we must confront what we find. We must not tolerate or harbor it, neither should we embalm it, and keep it permanently within us. Because if it is harbored sin, and we allow it to linger, it will cause us to wither away, and perish.



Brethren of the faith, if you have been struggling in your walk with the Lord, it is time to approach the Lord for healing.

It doesn't matter what it is, because most likely, what you have done is not as bad as David.

David had a long list of sins. He betrayed and murdered a good friend. He stole from the poor. He was deceptive. He committed adultery. He operated in hypocrisy.

.... And after all that, he was miserable.

But God loved him, had mercy on him, and restored him.

God Loves You

Jesus loves you my friend, and no matter what has happened in your past, the Lord can remove the old things, and resurrect your spirit.

So I want to challenge you to put away the things that have been weighing you down. The past is the past.

...And there is a road in front of you. It is the road of life in Christ, and that road is headed for a city, a heavenly city, whose builder and maker is God.

Eventually, the end of the road will come for all of us. But if you are a child of God, the end of your road has loved ones waiting for you.

... Waiting...
... along with the cloud of witnesses.
... and those who also overcame.

They are waiting for you, my friend, they wait under the glimmer of the light of God.

And they want you to know, that the trials, and the pain, and the struggles, that you have been facing will become a distant memory when you meet them at the end of the road.

So let's get there. Because it's time. It's time to purge your life of the things that may be besetting you.

...It's time to say, "no more," to that dark temptation that lingers.

...It's time to say, "no more," to the thoughts of pretend.

...It's time to say, "no more," to the enemy who tries to sabotage your relationship with Lord.



...It's time to say, "no more," to the excuses, and the procrastination.

And it is time to say, "yes Lord," to the voice of the Spirit who us calls out by name.

The Lord is calling you, my friend. Will you answer?

A prayer -

Heavenly Father, I thank you for this message, and I pray that you would touch the people out there who are struggling and hurting. I pray that You would reach out to those who are struggling in the faith. Show them that You are still there. Touch them with your Holy Spirit and whisper to them that it's going to be okay.

Father I pray that you would forgive those who have been harboring hidden sins. Meet them where they are. Some of them have struggled with their prayers. Some of them have experienced brass heavens, but God I pray that you would open up the heavens over them. Let them have a breakthrough. Send them your love and your peace. Cleansed them. Revive them. ... And restore onto them, the joy of thy salvation. In Jesus precious name, amen.

A Final Word from Nathan

I appreciate you taking the time to read this sermon. I pray that it ministered to you. And I also pray that it ministers to many souls. There's a lot of people hurting out there, but God wants to touch those souls. So please share this sermon with everyone that you know. I have provided the sermon file in a PDF format. So you can download it and read it at your leisure, and also forward it to others.

If you want to hear more sermons, you can go to my website at [watchman's cry.com](http://watchman'scry.com).

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In His service,
Nathan Leal
Watchman's Cry

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