Greenwood Baptist Church
Brian Bond
October 18, 2026
The Fight
1 Corinthians 15:56-58

All right. How's everybody doing today? Hey, we appreciate you being here, and we appreciate those of you joining us online. There are between 700 and 1,000 of you that join us online. We appreciate you being here and being part of our church family every week. And for those of you who were able to come in person, we appreciate you being here as well.

Yesterday — I love college football. Man, what a day that was. I know all the Texas fans are like, "Man, would you just be quiet?" Y'all beat the Citadel. Calm down. But anyway, my team didn't even try in their game, so I don't know. But there were all kinds of upsets. And I love watching just the drama of competition.

And I'm a little competitive. Anybody else? My wife — I never lose to my wife at games. There's a simple reason for that. I do not participate in games with my wife unless I believe I can win. There are some games I know I can't beat her at, so I just don't play. I won't play them. I have my game, she has hers, and never the twain shall meet.

But it's fun to be competitive, and it's fun to win. And the Bible talks about victory. It talks about winning. Jesus came and won the ultimate victory, and that was the victory over death and over sin. And through him, the Bible says that we are more than conquerors. We have this opportunity to be victorious and to experience victory here on this earth.

And there are times when it doesn't feel like we're winning, isn't there? There are times in life when it's just a grind, and you go through the same thing over and over again. And there are things that we struggle against. Everybody in this room struggles with something — at least one thing, usually several. There are things in life that the Bible tells us clearly: this is how you do it. And we struggle to do them that way, because there's part of us that wants to do it our own way. Or we think, man, the rewards of doing it the wrong way seem pretty good sometimes. And that can be a struggle.

In this room, there are people who have experienced defeat when they fought temptation, maybe many times. I have. And then there are people who have experienced victory, and sometimes great victory — sometimes victory over something that has been a lifelong battle, nearly. And then there are some of you who have never really experienced either one. And the reason is that when the time for the battle came along, instead of engaging in the fight, you just did this.

I have a little prop today. How y'all like that? You just waved the flag of surrender. Maybe because you didn't feel like you could win, or you had tried and you didn't think you could

overcome it. Or maybe you just don't think it's worth fighting.

So today, the battles we're going to look at are those battles. Not that I don't understand that even when you do experience victory over temptation, sometimes you just have to keep fighting. And when you experience defeat, you've got to get up and start all over again. And I hope both groups get encouragement out of that. But here's the thing I want us to look at today: what about the battles where you've waved the flag? What about those?

So we're going to start out and look at the example of Jesus. Not only does the Bible talk about the victory Jesus gives us through his death on the cross, but there's something for us to do afterwards. So if you don't mind, open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. We're going to put the words up on the screen. If you don't have your Bible, that's okay. But if you'd please stand with me in honor of the reading of God's word.

"For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless."

Now, that's pretty encouraging right there. But there's a part for us coming too. When he says "so," he's talking about because of that — because we've been given that. So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable.

Thank you. You may be seated.

Be strong and immovable. One of the biggest things about defeating temptation is just the determination not to be moved. Jesus shows us what that looks like. In Isaiah chapter 50, there's a passage of Scripture that's prophecy about Jesus. And here's what it says: **"Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore, I have set my face like a stone, determined to do his will. And I know that I will not be put to shame."**

Jesus knew there were going to be difficult things he was going to have to face here on this earth. Before he began his ministry, he went out into the wilderness and he fasted for forty days and nights before the enemy came to tempt him. And what was the temptation? Satan offered to give him everything that God had promised him, yet without the struggle.

All he had to do was this. All he had to do was wave the white flag. All he had to do was surrender — to bow down before Satan, to agree to go his way. And Satan told him, "I'll give you everything God's told you you're going to get. You don't have to go through all that. You don't have to fight it. I'll give it to you, and it'll be easy."

And those are the same temptations the enemy comes at us with today. "Hey, you want this? You can have it. Easy. All you have to do is give up and give in." We know that's a lie. God's word

clearly tells us. But even in that, there are things in life where I bet you've thought, "You know what? It's just the way it is now. There's nothing you can do about it. This is the way things work now." Or even, "This is just the way that I am. I can't do anything about it." And we wave the flag and we give up without fighting.

But when Jesus came, he set his face like a stone. **"Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore..."** Now, whenever the Bible says "therefore," you go back and see what it's there for. What's the "therefore"? It says, because God helps me, I've set my face like a stone, determined to do his will.

I love the idea of that. In some versions, it even identifies the stone as being flint, because that was at the time probably the hardest stone they knew of. It didn't chip. It was used for molding other rocks. Flint was one of the hardest things you could come up with. I've set my face like flint, determined to do his will.

One of the hardest things about defeating temptation is being determined *before* you're tempted that you're going to do God's will. Because some of us, we kind of go, "Well, let's see what happens." And when the enemy comes and tempts us, we go, "Well, I don't know. That kind of seems — I mean, everybody says this. Everybody says that."

I get it. Our whole culture is arrayed against the things of God. Our whole culture is about trying to get believers — the enemy uses it to cause us to compromise. And it'll come well packaged. It'll look really attractive. It'll look really good. But on the other side, it's going to bite.

So Jesus is our champion. He's the one we look to. And what does he do? "I've set my face like a stone." And when he came to this earth, he went through his entire life being tempted, knowing that the greatest temptations were going to come after he began his ministry. So he goes through, he fasts for forty days. He spiritually prepares. He passes the test. He refuses.

Now, there's all kinds of theological discussion. "Well, could he have sinned? He was God." I don't know, but he was also flesh. And when the Bible says he was tempted as we are, you know what I think that means? He was tempted. Not just that something tempted him — he was tempted. He chose not to surrender to temptation. Now, what all that means, I don't know. But I know that my God became flesh, and he resisted temptation for me, and he died on the cross for me.

When he was about to go to the hardest part — you're familiar with the prayer. He goes into the Garden of Gethsemane. He says, "Lord, if there's any way this cup could pass from me." That's not the face of somebody that's like, "Oh, cool, whatever happens." That's a picture of somebody who knows how hard it's going to be and says, "Look, if there's any other way we can do this — nevertheless, not my will, but your will be done." In that moment he set his face, and he was determined to do God's will. **As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus**

resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Now, here's one of the lies, one of the things I think people buy into: they forget the cost of surrender. See, when you surrender, you put your future and what's going to happen to you in the hands of someone or something else. You understand that? When you wave the flag and you lay down your arms, they may have made you promises. You may think they're going to act this way. You may think it's going to end up being this way. But your future is not in your hands at that moment. It belongs to someone else. They set the terms. They determine what happens to you from that point on.

And that same thing is true when you surrender to temptation. **Anyone who sins is a slave to sin.** Once you give in to temptation and you sin, you've chosen to do the act. You've chosen to lay down the flag. You've chosen to give in to it. That was your choice. But the consequences of that choice, or what happens as a result of it, are not yours to determine.

You get to make your own choices in life — all of us do — but you don't get to choose your own consequences. You don't get to say, "Yeah, I'm going to choose this sin, but I don't want anything bad to happen to me or my family." You don't get to choose that. Those things are going to happen whether you like them or not.

Galatians 6:7-9: **"Don't be misled — you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant."** Or you will reap what you sow. Same thing. So you can choose, "Yeah, I'm going to choose to sow this seed," but you don't get to choose what it grows into and what it becomes. **"Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature."**

See, that's one of the hard parts about when you give in to temptation, when you surrender to it. And I want you to understand, I'm talking about things that you've chosen as a lifestyle, or habitual things. We all face temptation every day. We all go through, "Man, I did good with this one, I didn't do good with that one." We all get that. I'm talking about the things that you've just said, "You know what? I'm not even going to fight it anymore." You've waved the flag of surrender.

And here's the thing about the consequences: decay doesn't happen immediately. Decay comes over time. You ever go several years in between going to the dentist? Man, you talk about — I mean, dentists, if you're a dentist, I love you. I appreciate what you do. But I'm pretty sure there's a course in dentistry about how to subtly lay guilt on people. You know what I'm talking about. "We noticed you hadn't been here in seventeen years. You've got some problems now. There's some decay. We're going to have to do this and that and blah, blah, blah." And then that dreaded word "root canal" might even come up.

And in that moment, you're like, "Why didn't I brush my teeth for eighteen minutes a day?" — like they say, however many minutes it is. "Why didn't I do what they said? If I'd just done that, I wouldn't be here." But you can't go back, and you can't undo it. And all those moments you were like, "Man, I don't want to brush my teeth. It's too much trouble. I don't want to go to the dentist" — there comes a point where you've got to pay. They're going to stick this big old monstrous rubber thing in your mouth and you're going to be sitting back. I've had a root canal. There's a reason they have the reputation they have.

Decay happens over time. And you can see the decay all through our society of choosing not only to give in to temptation, but to normalize it. "Well, this is the way things are now. That's old. That doesn't matter anymore. That thing they're talking about being a sin, or being wrong — it don't matter anymore. This is the new modern way of doing things."

"You will harvest decay and death. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up."

What a promise. Keep resisting. Keep doing good. And there will come a point where you're going to harvest. You're going to reap a harvest of blessings that come from God.

Now, what's the flip side of that? When you surrender and you continue to make choices that are against the ways of God, at some point you're going to reap too. But it ain't going to be a harvest of blessings. It's going to be a harvest of regret and pain. Decay hurts.

One of the most clear-cut ways you can see that in our society is when it comes to sexual sin. It's one of the easiest ways to see. You sow this, you reap that. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20: **"Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body."**

Sex is a gift from God, but that gift is meant to be enjoyed between a man and a woman who've made a covenant before God of marriage. It is the great unifier, because the Bible says that **for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.** That's talking about the act of sex. There is something supernatural that bonds a man to a woman through that act. And it is a tremendous tool in marriage to bring closeness, to build.

But here's the deal: if you choose to take what society says — "It's not a big deal. Everybody ought to be — you don't have to do this. You can do whatever you want to do. Be this, be that" — now we're seeing in society the beginnings of the results. It is unraveling our entire society. It's destroying the family. People aren't getting married like they used to. And then they're

getting married so late, because they've done all these things, that they're realizing they can't have kids, or it's more difficult than they thought. We're not even reproducing ourselves anymore. Our population is dwindling. And that's bringing all kinds of other problems.

"Well, man, Social Security is not going to be there when I get to be —" You're probably right. You want to know why? Because through abortion, we've removed thirty-plus million people out of the workforce that would have been contributing to it.

You see people all the time: "Well, I don't understand why I can't find the guy. I can't find the one." Because we're not doing it the way God told us to do it. We're using these gifts he gave us in ways he told us not to. We've given in to temptation. "Well, this is just the way it is." But we expect that when we're ready for it, it'll all work out just fine. And it's not.

It makes it incredibly difficult for a man and woman to bond together, even through sex, when that gift that God gave — along with warnings — is ignored. When you ignore the warnings, people don't commit. They can't commit. When they do try, it doesn't work. They've brought so much baggage into the relationship, there's no way it can make it. And we wonder why.

Because here's what it says: if you don't get tired of doing what is good, in due time you're going to reap this blessing. It sometimes takes time. But if you continually ignore doing good and do things that are opposed to the things of God, there's going to come a time where you're going to pay the price. And it's going to be painful.

Now, I know some of you are like, "Well, gosh, I've already made those choices, so I guess there's no point in me trying to do right now." I'm going to get to that in a moment. But for right now, what you do going forward is going to matter.

And I'm not just talking about that one sin. That's just one of the easiest examples to see — because you can look around and see how marriage is being destroyed, how people's ability to find a mate for life and to have a family and to receive those blessings that God's given gets harder and harder every year. It's not unusual for people to come and say, "Hey, would you pray for me? I'm looking for a godly young man," or "a godly young woman to marry, and I can't find them." And it is difficult, because even in the church people have bought into this. "Well, what are you going to do? You can't swim against it. If you do this, people are going to look at it." It's going to be hard for a while if you want to do the things that God's called you to do.

It means resisting. It means fighting. It means being in the battle. And you're not going to win any fight that you're not in. If you've already surrendered, you're not going to win that fight. So you've got to choose to be in the fight.

Run. Very seldom does the Bible say to run. It tells you to be of good courage, to be immovable. But when it comes to sexual sin, what does it say? Run from it. Don't just say, "Hey, I don't think so." Get as far away from it as you can.

The things that are constantly coming up now that are happening to people — like the incident with the young girl and those young men at Cornell. I don't know what happened. I don't. None of you do. But let me tell you something: that whole thing was wrong. Period. And if people had said, "Nope, I'm not doing this, I'm getting away from it" at the beginning, maybe none of that would have happened. And now you've got people whose whole lives are turned upside down. "Well, I think this person is right. I think they're right," or whatever. It don't matter. It was a horrible thing. I don't care if it was all chosen or not. It wasn't good.

Psalm 119:98-101. I want you to see something here. Psalm 119 is a love song about the word of God — about being obedient. Not just reading it, but being obedient. And these passages right here talk about what the benefits are from following the word of God, being obedient to it. But I want you to know there's another side to it.

Number one, in verse 98: **"Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are my constant guide."** When you follow the word of God, it makes you wiser than your enemies. It gives you discernment. You're able to see things that are coming that you wouldn't have seen before. There are those that may try to destroy you, but wisdom comes from being obedient, from holding fast to the word of God.

Now, what's the flip side of that? When you ignore the word of God, it's going to make you dumber than your enemies. "Hey, you said 'dumb' in church. That's not right." I hope it doesn't apply to you. But if you're ignoring the things of God and you're always saying, "Why are these people always getting the best of me?" — because the flip side is also true. If you become wiser because you hold on to God's commands, you're going to become dumber than them if you don't. So I'd rather be wiser than than dumber than.

Is there anybody here that just goes, "Would you stop? I just like losing. I'm a loser. I love it"? Anybody here just say, "I want to be a loser"? No. You want to win. God's given you a blueprint for winning, but you've got to follow it.

"I have more insight than my teachers, for I am always thinking of your laws." Even the people that are teaching him — he has insight beyond them. The flip side is also true. When the word of God never crosses your mind or your heart, you have less insight than the people around you. "How come everybody else always knows? Why can't I?" Because you have less insight.

"Yes, I have even more insight than my elders, for I have kept your commandments." Wisdom is about knowing how to apply things. It's not just knowledge. We have a society where people have more knowledge, more access to knowledge, than at any time in human history. Would you say that the world we live in is smarter and better? I wouldn't. There's all kinds of knowledge, but there's very little wisdom.

Knowledge may be knowing that a tomato is technically a fruit. Wisdom is knowing you don't put it in a fruit salad, because that's ridiculous. That's wisdom. We don't have much wisdom in our world. We've got lots of knowledge. People can tell you facts, but they don't know what the application of those facts is, because they don't have wisdom. Wisdom comes from obeying the commandments of God. That's where wisdom comes in.

"I have refused to walk on any evil path so that I may remain obedient to your word." When you refuse to walk on that evil path so that you can remain obedient, there are blessings that come as a result of it. But when you choose to walk on the evil path, guess what? There are consequences.

Now, you can experience victory. The Bible gives us a couple of ways to do that. 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: **"If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall."** And that's one of the things about defeating temptation: you can defeat it once, twice, three times, a hundred times. There's always going to be more temptation. Don't ever get to the point where you think, "Well, I'm kind of immune to it now." You're not.

So how can you experience that victory? Here's one of the great promises in Scripture: **"The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience."** The enemy's been trying to tell you, "Oh, you're different. That may work for them, but that don't mean it's going to work for you." Or, "Look at all that bunch. They've got it all under control. They've got their lives straight. You're just a mess."

Now, you look around at people in this room. When we all come to church, we get up in the morning, we get clothed, we get in our right minds, we come to church. And everybody's like, "Hey, how you doing? Bless you, brother. Good to see you." We all look good for an hour or two while we're here. But here's the truth: we're all a mess in some way, because we've all sinned. We're here by the grace of God and by the goodness of Jesus.

And that brings me to the other thing I want to talk about. Look, I know I really harped on the consequences of some of those sins. And some of you are sitting there going, "Man, what do I do now? I've spent a long time reaping this or reaping that because I surrendered. So what do I do now?"

Let me give you something from the Scriptures. There was this guy — I don't know if y'all have heard of Moses. Anybody heard of Moses? Good. There were two requests that Moses made of God that he said no to. One of which was, "I want to see your glory." And God said, "No man can see my face and live. You ain't doing that." He probably didn't say "ain't," because that would have been incorrect Hebrew. But anyway, he told him no. He said, "Look, I tell you what, you can be in this little cleft of the rock and you can get a little glimpse of me as I'm passing by. That's it. But no, you cannot see my glory. You cannot see my face." And so he does that.

And then later on, he's out there. One time God told him, "Strike the rock and water will come," with his staff. And he did. And then the next time, God says, "Speak to the rock and water will come forth." And Moses took his staff and smacked it, because the people were just aggravating the fire out of him. Because even though God had already provided water once, they're like, "We're going to die out here. God just let us out here in the wilderness to die. There ain't going to be no water. We're so thirsty." And Moses got so angry — you know what he did? He struck the rock again when God told him to speak to it.

Now, I don't know about you, but out of all the good things Moses did, if I were God I'd say, "You know what? All right, man, that wasn't that big a deal. You should have spoken to it, not struck it." But you know what God said? "Because you did that, you ain't going into the promised land. You're going to wander around the wilderness with all these people and deal with all their issues for forty years, even after you got them out of Egypt. But you don't get to go to the promised land."

You want to know why? There's a consequence to sin. Moses represented the law, and to get right before God through the law, you can't make any mistakes. You can't ever blow it. You've got to be perfect. Moses wasn't. And part of him not allowing Moses to go into the promised land — it was a gift to us, because we could see in his life that the wages of sin is death, and it brings destruction, and it brings decay.

And you could look at that and go, "But that just doesn't seem fair." Moses was more faithful than all these other people. Moses used to walk and talk to God like a man talks to his friend. Moses brought the Ten Commandments. God used him to part the Red Sea. He did all those things. He stood up to Pharaoh. He led them out of Egypt, into the wilderness, to the promised land. He did all those things. He told them over and over again, "Don't do this. This is how you live. This is how you do it." But he failed.

And some of you today, you're in a place of failure, and I want you to know there's hope for you. The first thing you've got to do is lay down the flag of surrender and start to fight again. You've got to repent of what you've done, and then you've got to trust.

You see, Moses' story doesn't end there. That's not the last we see of him in the Bible — when God finally tells him, "You can go up on the mountain and look across the river, but you can't go there." See, Moses comes back in Matthew chapter 17. The Bible says that Jesus took a couple of them up on the mountain, and when he gets up there, his face begins to shine like the sun. We labeled it the transfiguration, when Jesus was transfigured from being his earthly self to being who he is as God. His face shone like the sun. His clothes became white light. And guess what? Somebody's seen standing there talking to him. Moses is one of them.

And so Moses, to whom God said, "You can't see my face," is now standing and speaking to Jesus when his face is transfigured — when he's revealed as being God. He was always God.

And so Moses gets to see then what God told him he couldn't see.

And you know what else? You know where he's at when he's doing this, when he's seeing Jesus? He's standing in the promised land. He's standing in the place that God said, "You can't go into." But through Jesus, he sees. And through Jesus, he stands. Even though he didn't deserve it — he couldn't see God because he was a sinful man, he couldn't cross the river and go to the promised land because he'd sinned — but now in Jesus, he's seeing exactly what he wanted, exactly what he asked for and what he longed for.

It says in Deuteronomy 3 that he pleaded with the Lord to allow him to go into the promised land. And God said no, and finally said, "Talk no more of this." You know how, when you're a parent — "All right, that's it. I don't hear any more." God tells him, "That's enough." He wanted to walk in the promised land. And through Jesus, the cries of his heart are granted.

So here's what I'm saying by that: it doesn't matter what your history is. It doesn't matter how far you've fallen. Because listen, every sin that we commit — any sin you commit — is enough to keep you out of the promise and the blessings. But in Christ, in Christ, he can overcome. You can overcome. You've got to repent of those battles that you've waved the flag on. And you've got to be determined to stand. And you've got to trust that Christ will be with you, like the word of God says.

James 4:7-10: **"So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy."** Those seem like hard things. It's talking about repentance. But then it says, **"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor."** He will lift you up in honor.

The last thing: God calls us to resist temptation. He also promises us that he'll give us what we need to escape it. He'll give us a moment, a way of escape. **No temptation will overtake you except that which is common to man.** But you have to choose to resist it. God will give you the opportunity to say no. None of us can say, "Well, sin just happened to me. I didn't know." Nope — it's always a choice. But God also promises he will give us a way of escape. And we have to be determined. We have to be resolute that we're going to be obedient. We have to choose to do things God's way and not our own.

Some of us wonder why we're not getting anywhere. It's because we're entangled. Hebrews 12:1-4: **"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith..."** — because it goes through and lists all these people of faith, people that believed God and God was faithful to them, because that's what God is. And there's all these witnesses to God's faithfulness.

And so we have to decide: am I going to trust in thousands of years of people trusting God and God being faithful? Or am I going to trust what people around me tell me? Am I going to trust what the enemy puts in front of me and says I can have the easy way, when I know it's not God's way? Am I going to trust what God says, or what man says?

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up." Some of us — the reason you're not getting anywhere, you're not being able to move forward, is because that very thing you've surrendered to is hanging on to your legs and keeping you from moving spiritually and keeping you from getting where God wants you to be. And the only way to strip it off is to repent.

Jesus came to break the power of sin. **Therefore, keep standing firm, and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. Anyone who sins is a slave to sin.** When you surrender to something, it has control over what happens to you to a degree. But when you repent of it, and when you stand against it, and when you take up the battle and you're determined to fight against it — **through him, we will overwhelmingly conquer.**

"Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin."

The one that we trust, the one we follow — he gave his life in the struggle against sin to defeat it. The cross is a horrifying thing. And he went through that for us so that we could have victory. And none of us have to endure what Jesus endured to defeat sin. Jesus already paid the price. All we have to do is be in the fight.

Be in the fight. What have you waved the flag over? What have you given up on? Maybe, "Well, I tried once and it didn't work. I don't think I can overcome that." Or, "I don't think it's that big a deal." Or whatever it is. What have you waved the flag over? That's what's entangling you. That's what's keeping you back. You wonder why you can't get where you feel like you've been called to get to? It's because you've allowed things to attach themselves, and you can't get there because you can't move. But all you've got to do to get rid of those things is repent. Jesus already paid the price to banish them. Get rid of the sin that so easily entangles us.

And you know what? Some of you — my biggest prayer for you is that you'd be willing to fight long enough that you could experience what victory looks and feels like. Because some of you, you ain't fought anything enough to know real victory. You think it's just going to come to you. You think it's just going to be handed to you. But it's not. You've got to be in the fight. Get in the

fight.

Would you bow your heads and close your eyes, please?

The beginnings of getting in the fight are beginning a relationship with Christ. And if you don't have a relationship with Jesus, we want to give you the opportunity to begin one today. Here's how you do it. You see, Jesus already did everything that's necessary for you to be forgiven, for you to be in right relationship with God, and for you to be his forever. He died on the cross for your sins, and he rose on the third day to give you life.

So here's what you've got to do. It's simple to receive the gift. Number A: admit that you're a sinner and ask forgiveness of your sins. B: you've got to believe in Jesus. **For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.** Jesus is God's Son. He died on the cross for you. He rose on the third day. And the third thing is, you've got to confess him as Lord.

When you come to Christ and you believe in Jesus as your Savior, it means you're submitting your life to him. That is the only good surrender in life: to surrender to him. And when you surrender to him, you have given your life to the one who gave his life for you. He's already proven how much he loves you. It says in Romans 10:9-10, **"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."**

So what's keeping you? What's holding you back? Would you be willing to begin that relationship today? If you'd like to know your sins are forgiven, that you're right with God and you're his forever, I'm going to invite you to pray this prayer of salvation with me. You can repeat it after me or pray in your own words. Just pray in your heart — God will hear you. But pray it with me right now.

"Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for loving me, and thank you for Jesus. God, I know I'm a sinner. Forgive me of my sins. I believe Jesus is your Son. I believe he died on the cross for my sins and that he rose on the third day. Today I trust Jesus as my Savior and confess him as my Lord."

Now, without anybody looking around — if you prayed that prayer today, I'm going to ask you to do something. There are a couple of different ways on the screen that you can contact us. There's a QR code, and a number you can text, also in your bulletin. You can take that home with you and do it later. We'd love to hear from you, because we'd love to get in touch with you, set up a time to meet or talk, whether it's in person or on the phone. We don't want anything from you. We're not putting you on any list. It doesn't even mean you've joined the church. But we'd love to help you in your journey of following Christ.

And I'd like to begin that by just praying for you right now. I'm not going to call any attention to you. I'm not going to ask you to stand up. But if you prayed that prayer today and you meant it,

would you just look up at me right now until I see you, so that I can pray for you this morning? Okay. Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Okay, yes, sir. I see you guys. Okay. I'm going to pray for you.

If you're here with your parents, I want you to tell your parents after the service. Everyone else, I'd like for you to contact that number so that we can pray for you and encourage you. And we'd love to hear from you.

Let's pray for you. Let me pray right now. Heavenly Father, I pray for those who made a decision today to trust you. God, I pray that you would continue to lead them. That, Father, you'd help them to find the right church, whether it's here or somewhere else. Lord, I pray that you'd just fill their hearts with joy at the knowledge that they are now a new creation, that old things are passed away and all things are become new. Thank you, God, for bringing them here, to allow us to be a part of their journey to you. And Father, I pray for those, Lord, that just need to drop the surrender flag and get back in the fight. Lord, victory is not easy. Your Son showed that by dying on the cross so that we might have it. But Father, we still have a part in it too. And I pray for those, Lord, that are even thinking right now about how they might drop the flag and stand with you and follow your word. Lord, we pray and we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.