

Necessary Sins, Week 3

Pastor Craig Groeschel

thing:
go to
girls. Go
goodnight,
same
few
of
Tatum.
these
absolutely

INTRODUCTION VIDEO: Everyday, I do the same
Hit the gym, mainly to check out the hot guy in blue,
work, "blah blah blah," have a few drinks with my
home, read "50 Shades of" Whatever, kiss my husband
go to sleep and dream of Channing Tatum. Everyday the
thing, lust after the hot guy, "blah, blah, blah," a
drinks, "50 shades," kiss my husband goodnight, dream
Channing Tatum. Lust, drinks, "50 shades," Channing
Lust, drinks, "50 Shades," Channing Tatum. You think
sins are avoidable? If you ask me, I think they're
necessary.

to all
churches
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PASTOR CRAIG GROESCHEL: Hey, welcome today
of you at all of our LIFE Churches and our network
and those of you at church online. I wonder how many
are a little bit ready to get challenged today? If you
give me a little shout back wherever you are. We're in
third week of a four-part message series called
Sins." If you missed the last couple of weeks, you may
"What in the world is a necessary sin?" Well, in our
today, most people would agree on some sins, that there

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some big bad sins that wherever you are, everybody they're wrong. Murder is always a sin, rape is always Most people would say stealing is agreeably a sin. But are some sins in our culture that a lot of people today say, "Well, I'm just not so sure that they're always God may say they're wrong, but if you ask me, they're acceptable, they're more necessary. They're just kind part of life." And today, I want to talk about another what many people would say is a "necessary sin." Next we're going to deal with anger, with our temper, and the bible says about that.

the weeks
139,
comfortable,
with me
me, oh
thoughts.

Today, I want to open up as we have in all with a prayer from David in the Old Testament, Psalm verse 23 and 24. He prayed this. And if you're at all of our churches, would you just read this aloud and make it your prayer? Our prayer is this: "Search God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious Point out anything in me that offends you and leads me the paths of everlasting life." Search us, God, point anything in us that offends you and lead us along the everlasting life.

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God.

The necessary sin I want to talk to you about is the sin of sexual lust. This is an issue that really concerns me and, I believe, grieves the heart of

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In our culture today, a lot of people would say, "Well, you know, it's really not that big of a deal. I mean, kind of made us all this way any way. All men battle lust. In fact, today, I want to just be real clear is not just a man issue. This is a human being issue. Even though men may be more easily tempted, women are also hooked. In fact, according to an article in Today's Woman magazine, the author, based on their study, found about one in six women -- and this includes Christian about one in six women now struggle with an addiction to pornography, much, much higher than what was in the past. And according to conservative studies, 50 percent, and some way more, men struggle with pornography and a host of other lustful issues.

If you have children -- I don't know how many have teenagers, but we seem to have several, and we'll probably have several for decades to come with six kids. I don't know if you know this or not, but the highest users of pornography are actually 12 to 17 year olds. Okay? If you have children in your home, this is something that should have your full attention.

Let me tell you why I'm really concerned; really a couple of reasons. First of all, because the access to that which feeds our sexual lusts has never ever been higher. I mean, you take any type of mobile device and you can get into anything and everything that you would

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to, or never want to get into. So access has never higher, and at the same time, I would argue there's tolerance to lust issues than ever before. I mean, acceptable to be on T.V. now just in prime time is -- know, years ago would have been considered shameful. the standard of what is acceptable, I believe, has gone way way way way down. And a lot of people would argue, I'm doing is not hurting anyone. I mean, no one knows it. This is just who I am. This is just what I go In fact, I have a friend who's been a friend for over who stopped going to our church because of my stance on And I think it's a fairly clear stance, but in every aspect, my friend would say, "I'm a committed follower Christ." But he says, "I look at pornography and do things like that because I'm a single person. That's I get through life." And this is incredibly common people just to justify and rationalize, "I mean, I'm hurting anybody. This is just the way I am. It's not anybody's business anyway. So why make such a big deal it?"

Now, let me just say, for the record, "If a Christian, you're off the hook today. You're off the What I'm going to teach you does not apply to you you're not supposed to live by the standards taught

and
want to
hear
way

to Jesus." Some of you might say, "I'm not a Christian
I'm glad I'm not." When you hear this you, may not
be. But there may be something that draws you as you
this and you may recognize something is wrong with the
most people are living.

to take
said.

If you are a follower of Jesus, then we have
the words of Jesus seriously. And let me tell what he

it said
say,
the
what?

It's very very clear and also very convicting. Mathew,
chapter 5, verse 27 and 28, Jesus says, "You've heard
that you shall not commit adultery." Most of us would
"Yeah, that's probably a bad thing to do." He raises
standard and says, "But I tell you anyone who" does

at a
adultery

Let's all say this aloud. "Anyone who looks lustfully
woman has already" done what? "Has already committed
with her in his heart." According to Jesus, looking
lustfully -- "Hmm, mmm, Hmmm, mmm. Check it out!

Praise the
follower of
natural
wrong,
brother
says,
they do?
These
is

Lord for that!" Okay? Looking lustfully is equal to
committing adultery in your heart. If you are a
Jesus, you have to agree that surrendering to the
sinful desires of lust is wrong. And not only is it
according to James, it's very very danger. James, the
of Jesus, said this in chapter 1, verses 14 and 15. He
"Temptation comes from our own desires which" what do
Read it aloud. "Which entice us and drag us away.
desires give birth to sinful actions. And sin, when it
allowed to grow" -- in other words, when it's not

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birth to?
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and when you don't turn from it, when you just continue
your sin and it's allowed to grow, what does it give
James said, "It gives by the to death."

Death of what? Well, death of purity, death
intimacy, death of trust in a relationship, and
spiritual death. When temptation grows into actions
continued unchecked, it is incredibly destructive and
do not believe it, just continue to feed the fire of
lust and watch where you will wake up sometime from
of intimacy, void of depth in a relationship with a
being and void of spiritual life with God through
leads to death. If you don't believe it, just stay on
lustful path and watch where you end up.

In fact, the word "entice" -- it says this
us; this is actually a fishing term. I don't know how
you love to fish. I'm not very good at fishing. I can
actually catch them, but it's getting them off the hook
just wigs me out. I've got to give it to my nine-year-
daughter to help get them off the hooks. You know?
imagine there's some bait on a hook, and that which
to lust is our spiritual enemy's bait. "Oh, that looks
I think that will fill the emptiness. That will keep
being bored." And we go after it and then we are
we are enticed and we are dragged away.

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you

In fact, the Greek word that's translated as
is the word deleazo. If you're taking notes, it means
entrap, to allure, to entice or to hook. Now, how is
we're hooked? How are we hooked? I want to give you
real practical steps of what commonly happens in the
many people you know. And some of you might say, "You
what? This is kind of my story." Just real quickly,
first thing that happens, if you're taking notes, is
exposed to some type of sexual impurity. Maybe you're
little kid and your opposite sex friend comes over and
says, "Let's play doctor. I'll show you mine if you
yours," and then you're exposed to something, even as a
and your innocence is robbed.

Maybe you're a kid walking through the mall
see a Victoria Secret place. I saw a mom dragging a
12-year-old boy and she's walking along, and the boy's
[demonstrates his mouth wide opened] and he's like, "I
know what Victoria's Secret is, but will someone tell
now. I want to know what her secret is." Or maybe
online and there's an ad and you click on it and you
something else and before long, you see something that
weren't supposed to see. Unfortunately, tragically,
you -- and it's tragic how high the percentages are --
were a child, someone betrayed your innocence and
abused you, maybe an authority figure or someone that
trusted. And at a very young age, you just lost

something
something
over to
kid on
Magazine
this." We
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I'm so
but I
pull up an
happened
all,
what
was
were
injury of
and

that was very special to you. You're exposed to
impure.

For me, it was the fifth grade when I went
Stephen Black's house and he came in more excited than a
Christmas morning. He had found his dad's Playboy
stash. And he said, "You're not going to believe
went in and we, from cover to cover, read every article
those magazines. You know I'm lying. Right? Some of
like, "There are articles?" And, you know, we looked
mean, I'm in the fifth grade; I don't even know why.
young and I'm going, "I don't even know why I like this
like what I see." And to this day, if I try, I can
image in my mind of what I saw way back then. What
is I was exposed to something that was impure.

Then -- if you're taking notes -- first of
you're exposed and then you're injured. And that's
happened to me. My mind was pure and suddenly my mind
polluted. You were innocent and then you were wounded.
Something in your thought process is not the same. You
exposed to some impurity and then you sustained an
the mind.

Then the next thing -- you're exposed, you're
injured, then you're confused. If you're like a lot of
people, you simultaneously feel this sense of enjoyment

shame. "I like this but I feel guilty," and then

you're like
do, I
I'm
So
many
probably
now.

wouldn't
must be
you tell

promise.
help me,
do this
again.
people
you're
know

long

up the
sexual

were
people
married,

Paul in Romans 7 where he says, "The things I want to don't do. And the things I don't want to do, I do and trying not to, but I am so I don't know what to do." because you're enjoying it, and yet you feel guilty, people become skilled at justifying it. "Well, I shouldn't but I'm single so it doesn't matter as much This just kind of helps me get through things." You're married and you think, "If my spouse met my needs, I have to." And so since he or she doesn't know, "This okay. It's just kind of how I cope with things," and yourself this and you hope you make it through. Then sometimes you get convicted by God and you make a "God, I'm never going to do this again. God, if you I'll never do it again. I promise, I'm never going to again." And then four days later, you're doing it Some of you know what I'm talking about. All the holy are sitting there going, "Huh? I don't know what talking about." All the real people are like, "Aw, I what you're talking about."
And sometimes, you're like you have these periods where everything is good, and you've got sexual sobriety for a long period of time. And then you open door and you get back into something and you go on binges where you find yourself in real trouble. What's happened? You're confused. You were exposed and you injured and you were confused. And I've heard some say, "Hey, I was single and I thought 'maybe when I'm

the
a
you're
been
changed and

this problem will go away.'" Then you get married and
problem didn't go away." You think, "Man, I must have
passion problem." You don't have a passion problem;
dealing with an injury that has not healed. You've
wounded by your spiritual enemy and your mind has
it is not yet healed.

series of
confess
confessions
them
want to
you're
exposed,
their

In fact, I, several years ago, taught a
messages called "My secret," and we allowed people to
openly their secrets. And I pulled a few of the
and I want to read a portion of them; I'm going to edit
some because we have children in the room. But I just
kind of read these to you. And if you'll listen, what
going to find is you're going to find those who are
you'll hear their injury, and you're going to watch
confusion.

and a
so
am. I
sickened at
to go
confusion,

This first woman says, "I'm a wife, a mother,
Christian who masturbates and views porn online. I'm
ashamed, yet it seems so totally separate from who I
want to be free but I also enjoy it, while being
the same time. Now that I've confessed it, I'm going
vomit." I mean, you can hear this, the injury, the
the wound along the way.

pornography for

This guy says, "I've struggled with
many years. I found myself watching -- and then he

lists the
but it's
even
"I'm
years
pray
you've got
My wife
to men.
-- "in
exposed and
doing
but I'm
family."
are
healed.
justify it
part of
sin." Or
dangerous
him, we
believe there
bit of
there

types of porn. I'm not going to list what they are,
a type that a lot of people would go, "Eww, I didn't
think of that," just way out there stuff. And he says,
so sorry and ashamed of myself. These things are not
attractive to me but I've distorted my mind for so many
that I've become bored with regular sexuality. Please
for me." You can hear it. You've got the wound,
the confusion, it's all in there.

This guy says, "I'm leading a double life.
and children have no idea that I'm secretly attracted
It started when an older boy touched me" -- an injury
Jr. high and it followed me through life -- he's
injured. "I've recently been lying to my wife and
things that would devastate her. I want to tell her
afraid she'll divorce me and I don't want to lose my
What do we see? You're exposed, you're injured and you
confused. You've got an injury that has not yet

So what do we do? What do we do? Do we
and say, "This is just the way I am. This is just a
life. I mean, dealing" -- "this is just a necessary
do we believe that because Jesus says it's wrong and
and destructive, and that Jesus declares if we know
can be free, do we just surrender to it or do we
is something better? With all of my heart and every
faith that I have, I know there is something better and
is a way out. And I want to keep it as simple as I

can, and
lustful

give you two words that will help us heal from the
wound.

Everybody say
example, I
a
you say,
is
used to
and do a

The first word is the word "protect."
"protect." We're going to protect the wound. For
don't know if I ever told you but I used to want to be
stuntman. You don't laugh very hard because most of
"I could see that. You could do it." And the reality
you're right. In the fifth and sixth grade, man, I
ride my bicycle straight into a curb and flip over it
power roll and come out completely unharmed. I mean,
suddenly, stunt men recruiters were seeking me out.

Not
would
sixth

really, but if they would have known I was there, they
have been. I had a trick that was so cool. In the
grade, I mastered something that no one could do, to my
knowledge, on my block in Beaumont, Texas. I could put
foot on the seat of a ten-speed bicycle, hold the
with both hands and ride along like this.

[demonstrates one

foot down and one knee bent with his leg behind him]

And then
seventh
wave

lift one hand off and waive. I'm here to tell you the
grade chicks dug this like you would not believe. I'd
when going by and they'd go, "Oh, this is amazing."

let go

Well, one time, I just decided I'm going to

second

for just a second with both hands just, I mean, a split
so fast you couldn't even see it. And I thought, "If I

do
world to
no
pow." So
I
know,
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a head
back of
and
you. The
to do is
opened up,
really
something
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Thousands
could
Isn't it
but

this then I'll be the first guy in the history of the
ride on a ten-speed bike with only his foot on it and
hands. In my mind, I visualized this. "Pow, pow,
fast you could barely even notice. The problem is all
remember was loosening the grip, and the next thing you
I woke up in the hospital with the back of my head
staples, stitches, glue, string, anything that can take
and put it back together was used all the way up the
my head. And the doctor said, "You have one assignment
this is the most important thing we could ever tell
wound is so deep and so long, the only thing you need
protect the wound. You have to keep it from being
exposed, because if this gets infected, this could be
really bad."

Some of you have been wounded. You saw
that you shouldn't have seen. You got excited and then
justified it. And the next thing you know, you've been
confused. And now, you don't want to but you do. And
sometimes, you just do anyway and you want to and you
into it. The problem is you've been injured. Guess
God heals wounds. But you have to protect the wound in
for God to heal it.

How do you do this? Psalm 119, verse 9.
of years ago, the psalmist asked the same question we
ask today. "How can a young man keep his way pure?"
interesting that this is not just a modern day question
one that has been asked from centuries upon centuries.

"How
it
keeping
Jesus,
your
Wow!
should cut
through
soul in
I'm
going
next
got to
there." But,
was
that you
about sin,
about
say
sexual

can a young man keep his way pure? By doing what? Say
aloud. "By guarding it according to your word." By
protecting the wound, by guarding your purity, by
distance between you and that which would tempt you.
in the New Testament, taught it this way. He said, "If
right eye causes you to sin, you should gouge it out."
He said, "If your right arm causes you to sin, you
it off." He said, "It would be better for you to go
life without all of your body, then to give away your
eternity." Now, was he being literal in his analogy?
kind of hoping not. Okay? Because if he was, there's
to be a lot of one-armed cyclopes walking into church
week. "Oh, praise the lord! I can't see much. You've
hold my bible with my other arm because it's not
Jesus, I don't think, was being literal as much as he
speaking figuratively. "You've got to do everything
can to stay away from that which would harm you."

In fact, the Apostle Paul, when he talked
he would say fight it or resist it. When he talked
sexual immorality, he didn't say fight it; he didn't
resist it. He said, "Flee from it." When it came to

immorality, he didn't say "fight." He didn't say,
"Resist."
He said, "Run for your life. Keep a distance between

you and
heal.
protect
a few
certain T.V.
more
get on
Okay?
out
don't come
myself.
years,
the
every
devices,
blocked
sometimes
of
stumbled
certain
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at this

anything that would hurt you." In other words, protect yourself. Protect the wound and give it some time to

Now, I don't know what you'll need to do yourself. I'll tell you a few of the things I do, just of them. One of the things is that I don't have stations that have inappropriate stuff, and I have the graphic ratings blocked, because every now and then, we our satellite, we get like free H.B.O. and "Skinamax." I don't know if you've ever seen "Skinamax" but I block those ratings so just in case my kids or any of us across it. So I decide ahead of time to protect

I have my computer monitored. For over ten there are two people who have the authority -- two of several people that have the authority to fire me, see click I make on every single computer. On my mobile my iPads, my iPhone, I don't have Safari; I have that out. I have a filtered browser; it's annoying because I can't see a lot of things. But there's a lot things, that if I ever tried to see or accidentally upon, it won't let me see those either. There are APPS that are very common, but have a window into what be tempting that I simply don't use on my devices.

Now, you may say, "Craig, are you really that Actually, I'd say no, I'm that smart. Because 364 days a year, I am not that weak. I honestly am not. I mean, point in my life, I'm not nearly as vulnerable as I was

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of

when I was 18 or 21 or 23. Okay? But if I ever am vulnerable, guess what I've already done? I've set up

to keep me far from that which would be tempting.

Now, I don't know what you will need. You be honest about it. You are only as strong as you are. Some of you, you might have to say, "I can't travel anymore." Or "I may not need to go to a certain gym when I go there, it's more difficult." Or you may need to learn to bounce your eyes, if you see something that's inappropriate, you just train your eyes; just look else. Some of you may go to the gym, you may get You're like [he demonstrates walking in circles with looking all over the place.] What do you do, or But you train your eyes to bounce away so that you do into trouble. You may get rid of certain books that been reading, or get rid of some, you know, even what people would consider appropriate magazines that come home. You do what you need to do.

Now, some of you may say, "But I'm so down on because I'm still struggling. I've been a Christian long and I'm still struggling. God couldn't use me this." Or "I could never have a good marriage because

struggling this." I'd say to you, "The fact that you're still isn't necessarily a bad sign." The fact that you're

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eyes,
peeking.
Not
Don't

struggling is an indication that you have not been yet. There's still fight in you; there's still fight. The problem is when you surrender to it and say, "I up." If you're still struggling, what's happening is sinful person bent towards sin who has not surrendered temptation of sin, and you're still fighting with the God. And as you learn to depend on his power, he can you free.

So if you are on the receiving end of a someone opens up to you, don't look at them like loser." Realize you're talking to someone who's been who's hoping to be healed. Maybe, on the other hand, going to open up to someone and say, "I'm really with this." Don't beat yourself up, "I'm a loser, no pervert, jerk that God doesn't even love." No, no, no. You're someone who's been injured who's seeking healing God. You protect the wound so you can heal.

Then number two, you pursue. You pursue. protect and you pursue. You don't just try to have a defense. Okay? You still play to win. For example, told this, if I told you all -- everybody close your a minute. Everybody close your eyes. Just close your no looking around. No peeking, no peeking, no peeking. There's someone peeking. Someone in Fort Worth is How do I know? God just showed me that; I'm that good. really, I'm just guessing. Okay. Close your eyes. think of a pink elephant. Don't think of a pink

elephant. Do

Open up

pink

elephant?

And

Okay?

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not, do not, do not think of a pink elephant. Okay?

your eyes. What do you see right now? [Video shows a

elephant.] What do you see? Why do you see a pink

Two reasons. Number one, because it's on the screen.

number two, because I told you not to think about it.

If all you do is say, "Don't have lustful thoughts,

lustful thoughts, don't have lustful thought." Listen,

going to drag you back into it. Okay? If instead, you

"I want to pursue God. I want to know him. I want to

him," that gives you a good offense as well as a good

In fact, this is what Paul said. I'm going

you more than is actually in your notes. He said this,

Ephesians 4:18 and 19. "They are darkened in their understanding," and they are what? Read that part

"And they are separated from the life of God because of

ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts." Some people's hearts are hardened and they

separated from the life that God intended for them.

lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over

sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity."

What happens? When we sin like this, we are

separated from the life that God intended. Why do we

to lust? Why do we look? Why do we fantasize? Why do

pull up memories from the past? Why do we fool around

just
was a
quick fix
better.
What life
another
to
shoulder,
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some bait
that's going
most
God. When
waking up
and
distracted
higher
temptations
only
can be
you're
by the

we're married? A lot of people would say, "Well, I was bored. I felt empty. This kind of filled a void. It distraction." What happened is you were settling for a counterfeit. You were settling for a quick hit, a the thrill of the moment when God has something way You are separated from the life that God intended. did he intend? He intended a life of intimacy with person. He intends for a life of purity. He wants you have no fear of getting caught, no looking over your no regret at all. He wants there to be absolute trust relationship, absolute security in intimacy. He wants something far better, but your spiritual enemy puts on a hook and wants you to swim towards something to take you from the life of God.

Now, I'll be real honest. The times when I'm vulnerable are the times when I've stopped pursuing I am pursuing him, and waking up with a mission and with a calling, and serving him with reckless abandon listening to the voice of His Spirit, and making myself available to him all day, I don't have time to be by the lower things of this world. You see, I've got a calling that fills me up on the inside. And the of this world don't look so good when I am serving the one who is good.

And no matter where you might be today, you free. You may still be struggling, but the fact that struggling proves you have not yet been defeated. And power of Christ, you can protect the wound so God can

heal it.
have a
something
glory,
about you,
the lower
did. You
that
as we

would
embarrassed by
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back
Everybody
put your
between
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them up.
sincerely
us the

And then you don't just have a good defense, but you
good offense. You're pursuing him, you're doing
significant, you're laying down your life for his
you're making a difference. Because life isn't all
it's all about him. And when you're glorifying him,
temptations of this world do not pull on you as they
can be free by the Power of God. "Father, I pray today
your Holy Spirit would do a healing work in our hearts
seek you.

All of our churches, those of you today who
say honestly, don't think about it, don't be
it, you were exposed, you got hurt and now it's caused
problems and you need God's help. Would you just lift
hands right now? All over the place, just lift up your
right now. Lift them up. Put them back down, put them
down. There are way more of you who you are lying.
take your hands off the person next to you, everybody
hands in your lap. Nobody looking around. This is
you and God right now. Those of you who would say, "I

help," lift up your hands right now. Be honest, lift
All over the place.

"Father, today, I thank you for those who
want to please you. God, we pray that you would give

would
could
God, not
God,
Jesus, the
your
in our
your
have the
of this
help us
different
sinned
number of
there
God. He
without
that
name would
God,
was
overcome. The

divine wisdom to distance ourselves from that which tempt us."

"God, help us to protect the wound, that you heal and renew our mind according to your truth. But only do we want a good defense, we want a good offense. we want to awake everyday with our eyes focused on author and the perfecter of our faith."

"God, we want to run toward you, living out calling, your purpose, serving in our church, serving communities. God, being available to the prompting of Holy Spirit, so much on mission for you that we don't time to be tempted and distracted by the lower things world that do not please you and only hurt us." "God, to protect and to pursue you with everything in us."

As you keep praying today at all of our churches, there are those of you who you're going to recognize, "Oh my goodness, man. I've messed up. I've in a big way." It may be this sin, it may be any sins. Let me tell you the good news. The good news is is no sin you've committed too great for the grace of still loves you and he sent his son, Jesus, who was sin to die on the cross and be raised from the dead so anyone -- and that includes you -- who calls on his be saved.

I remember, back in college, wanting to know wanting to give my life to Christ, but afraid because I into some things that I didn't know if I could reality is Jesus wanted me to come exactly as I was,

and he
it.
of you
turning
and be
would say,
toward
high
well.
Thank
this
need your
Others of
forgiveness. I
you
Pray,

loved me through it. And by his strength, I overcame

At all of our churches today, there are those here today, you recognize you need his grace, you're your life to him. You're ready, today, to call on him made new. At all of our churches, those of you who "Yes, that's my prayer. I turn from my sins and I turn him. Save me. I give my life to you," lift your hands right now. Just lift them up and say, "Yes, that's my prayer." Lift them up high. Right here in the middle section. God bless you guys! Right back over here as Up here, both of you close to me. Praise God for you! you. Both of you, gentlemen, right back over here in section, saying, "Yes, Jesus, I need your grace. I mercy." Church online, you click right below me. you today, who would say, "Yes, I need your I turn my life over to you. I want to pursue you and put first."

Would you all pray with those around you.

died for
with Your
heart.
name, I
welcome

"Heavenly Father, I surrender my life to Jesus, who me, and rose again so I could live for you. Fill me Spirit so I could pursue you and serve you with all my Thank you for new life. I give you mine. In Jesus' pray." Would somebody shout really loud, worship God,

those born into the family of God.
(End of sermon.)