

# Renewing Our Covenant with the Lord

## **Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 6:1-9**

“Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. “

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation describe a scene in which Jesus dictates letters to the 7 churches of Asia**

1. In those letters he both commends them for positive things that they are doing, as well as, reprimands them for deficiencies and failures
  - a) Two churches were only commended for positive things
  - b) One church had nothing positive noted in its letter
  - c) But in most cases, his message was a mixture of both good and bad
2. Christ's consistent message to those churches that were failing in some way was to repent; otherwise, he would come in judgment
  - a) It didn't matter how much good he saw in the church
  - b) He still demanded that they repent of any sin or deficiency

### **B. What would Jesus say, if he were to write a letter to our church?**

1. Would he only have positive things to say, or would he point out ways in which we are failing?
  - a) Would he think we are lukewarm, as the church in Laodicea was?
  - b) Would he say that our works were not complete, as he told the church in Sardis?
  - c) Would he say that we no longer had the love that we once had, like he told the church in Ephesus?
  - d) Or would he point out some other weakness or sin?
2. And if there are failures, what would he have us to do about it?

### **C. Before we try to answer those questions**

1. Let's see what we can learn from Israel's history that might inform us
  - a) I want to consider four examples of times when God's people found themselves in need of change
  - b) And actually did something positive about it
2. From these examples, I hope to glean principles that will inform us about what we should do

### **D. Before we look at those examples, let's first lay some groundwork for understanding them**

1. God made a covenant with the people of Israel at Sinai after having delivered them from slavery in Egypt
  - a) However, the people were stubborn and rebelled against God refusing to go into the land of Canaan.
  - b) God caused them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until that generation died off.
2. Then when they were on the verge of entering Canaan, Moses gathered the people together in the land of Moab to make another covenant with the LORD.
  - a) "You are standing today, all of you, before the LORD your God...so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the LORD your God, which the LORD your God is making with you today, that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. " (Deuteronomy 29:10-13)
  - b) The firm and binding nature of the covenant is emphasized by referring to it as a sworn covenant
    - (1) *The LORD had sworn to their forefathers that he would establish them as his people*
    - (2) *The expectation was that they would take their part of the agreement just as seriously*
  - c) From the scripture reading we see that God expected complete obedience
    - (1) *They were to obey all the commandments of the LORD all the days of their lives*
    - (2) *They were to love God with all their heart and soul and might*
    - (3) *They were to keep God's word ever present in their lives and in their hearts so that they would not forget it*
    - (4) *And they were to diligently teach it to their children so it would be passed on to the next generation*
3. But that isn't what happened
  - a) Instead, there was a constant drift away from God
  - b) And so, the need for correction



## II. Joshua (Joshua 24:14-27)

### A. *Some years after the children of Israel had conquered the land of Canaan and settled in, Joshua called the people together*



1. And spoke these words, "Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:14-15)

### B. *One question comes to my mind as I read this*



1. Why did Joshua deem it necessary to call the people together and command them to make a choice?
2. We read in Judges 2:7, "And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the LORD had done for Israel."



- a) And yet Joshua says, "Put away the gods that your fathers served...and serve the LORD" (24:14)



- b) And later in verse 23, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you..."

3. What is going on here?

- a) The people had been faithful as they drove the other nations out of the land

- b) And the text says that they remained faithful until the elders who outlived Joshua died

- c) Yet here in the middle, there appears to be some slippage

- (1) *Apparently, their faithfulness to the LORD is wavering*

- (2) *Perhaps they were not keeping the commandments of the LORD consistently*

- (3) *Perhaps they were beginning to incline their hearts toward other gods*

4. They had not outright left the LORD

- a) They still served him

- b) Note how the people responded to Joshua's challenge



- (1) *"Then the people answered, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods, for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed. And the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.'" (Joshua 24:16-18)*

- (2) *They knew full well what God had done for them and they readily proclaimed how ludicrous it would be to forsake the LORD to serve other gods*

(3) *Intellectually it made sense for them to serve him.*

c) But something must have been lacking in practice

(1) *Some behavior that indicated that they had not made a firm decision to serve God*

(2) *Some choices they were making that revealed that God was not first in their hearts*

### **C. Because Joshua objects to their response**



1. "But Joshua said to the people, 'You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good.'" (Joshua 24:19-20)
2. You can't do it, Joshua warns. Why not?
3. First, He is a holy God
  - a) His ways are different from our natural inclinations
  - b) There is no evil in him, and he expects the same of those who approach him
  - c) He won't forgive your transgressions or sins
4. Second, He is a jealous God
  - a) He doesn't tolerate any rival, because he is the only God.
  - b) If you forsake him and serve other gods, he will do you harm and consume you after having done you good.
5. Don't say you are going to serve the LORD unless you are fully committed to serving him only and continuously

### **D. But the people double down on their decision**



1. "And the people said to Joshua, 'No, but we will serve the LORD.' Then Joshua said to the people, 'You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him.' And they said, 'We are witnesses.' He said, 'Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel.' And the people said to Joshua, 'The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.'" (Joshua 24:21-24)
2. The people are insistent that they will serve the LORD
3. Joshua impresses on them the seriousness and binding nature of their commitment
  - a) "You are witnesses against yourselves"
    - (1) *You can't come back later and say, "I didn't commit to that"*
  - b) They agreed wholeheartedly
    - (1) *"We are witnesses", they proclaimed.*
    - (2) *"The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey"*



**E. “So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone and set it up there under the terebinth that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD that he spoke to us. Therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God.’” (Joshua 24:25-27)**

1. Didn't they already have a covenant with God?
  - a) Yes, of course.
  - b) This covenant is essentially a renewal of that first one.
2. Joshua put in place statutes and rules for them
  - a) Specific things that they were committing to do.
  - b) Perhaps to address shortcoming or dangers that either Joshua perceived or that God informed him about
  - c) Whatever the case, these statutes and rules would be consistent with the Law of Moses
3. And he documented the agreement
  - a) Joshua didn't leave it to memory
  - b) He wrote the words of the covenant in the Book of the Law of God
  - c) Should there ever be any question about what they had agreed to, they had it written down.
4. Finally, he set up a stone as a witness
  - a) A visual reminder of their commitment
  - b) A permanent witness against them should they ever renege on their agreement

**F. And it apparently worked**

1. As noted earlier, “the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua” (Judges 2:7)
2. My take is that this renewal of the covenant and recommitment to the LORD had a lasting impression on that generation
3. Unfortunately, it didn't pass on to the next

**III. Asa (2 Chronicles 15:1-15)**

**A. Hundreds of years after Joshua, after the kingdom divided into two, Asa arose as king of Judah**

1. Unlike his father Abijah and grandfather Rehoboam, he was a faithful king
2. The scripture testifies of him that he “did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God” (2 Chronicles 14:2)

## **B. And yet, in spite of Asa's faithfulness,**

1. The LORD sent a prophet to Asa and his people with a message of both warning and encouragement.
  -  a) "The LORD is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest and without law, but when in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them...But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded." (2 Chronicles 15:2-4,7)
  - b) The prophet paints two extremes. Either you are seeking the Lord, or you are forsaking him
2. While things had been good under Asa, apparently, they were still in need of reform
  - a) They were not seeking the LORD as they ought
  - b) Otherwise, there would be no need to send the prophet
3. And it was going to take courage on Asa's part to make those reforms
  - a) Change isn't easy. It's not easy personally.
  - b) And It's not easy to provoke change in others
    - (1) *One, to convince others that change is needed*
    - (2) *Two, to encourage them to make the change*

## **C. Asa reacted quickly**

-  1. "As soon as Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded, he took courage and put away the detestable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim, and he repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the LORD." (2 Chronicles 15:8)
2. Asa didn't waste any time debating the issue
  - a) He took courage and got busy right away

## **D. He made visible changes on two fronts**

1. First, he got rid of the symbols of false worship
  - a) In all the places where he had control, he put away these sources of sin
2. Secondly, he reestablished the place of true worship
  - a) He repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the house of the LORD

## **E. With those changes in place, Asa called on the people to recommit themselves to seek the LORD**

-  1. "And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who were residing with them...They sacrificed to the LORD on that

day from the spoil that they had brought 700 oxen and 7,000 sheep. And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul, but that whoever would not seek the LORD, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether young or old, man or woman.



2. "They swore an oath to the LORD with a loud voice and with shouting and with trumpets and with horns. And all Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and had sought him with their whole desire, and he was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around." (2 Chronicles 15:9-15)
3. Asa gathered everyone together
  - a) All the people of Judah and Benjamin
  - b) As well as others who had deserted their homes in Israel to be with Asa
4. They all entered into a covenant
  - a) They committed themselves to seek the LORD "with all their heart and with all their soul"
    - (1) *Had they not been seeking the LORD before?*
      - (a) *Presumably they had.*
      - (b) *In chapter 14 they called on the LORD to help them defeat the Ethiopians.*
    - (2) *The distinction here is that it was with "all their heart" and "all their soul"*
      - (a) *Whatever was lacking in their commitment before they now committed to correct*
      - (b) *No more lackadaisical worship*
      - (c) *No more half-hearted effort to seek him*
      - (d) *They were all in*
  - b) They swore an oath to the LORD with great celebration
    - (1) *There was shouting, and trumpets and horns blaring*
    - (2) *Everyone was rejoicing. Why?*
      - (a) *Because they had sworn with all their heart and sought him with their whole desire*
      - (b) *There's nothing like total commitment to the LORD to fill one's heart with joy*
  - c) And it pays off
    - (1) *The result was that they found God*
    - (2) *Just as the prophet had said, "If you seek him, he will be found by you"*
5. But note one other thing that they agreed to in their covenant
  - a) "whoever would not seek the LORD...should be put to death" (2 Chron. 15:13)
    - (1) *Talk about incentive to recommit!*
  - b) The people weren't just concerned with themselves
    - (1) *They wanted the whole community to commit*
    - (2) *Why? Because we all affect each other*

(3) *It's much easier to stay committed when everyone else in your community is doing the same*

#### **IV. Josiah (2 Chron. 34:29-33)**

##### **A. Josiah is an interesting case**

1. Josiah reign over Judah around 250 years after Asa.
  - a) The northern kingdom of Israel had already been destroyed and the people taken captive
2. In the 8<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, when he was only 16, he began to seek the God of David his father
3. At age 20, he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the various idols and places of worship. He even went into the cities of the other tribes of Israel and did the same.
4. At age 26, after having cleansed the land and the house of the LORD of idolatry, he decided to repair the house of the LORD
  - a) It's then that the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD, which apparently had been lost
  - b) Josiah had done all this without having read the book
5. But then he reads the book and he is terrified
  - a) The expectations of God are very clear
  - b) God's judgment for unfaithfulness is also very clear
6. Josiah consults a prophet who confirms that God is very angry with the people for their unfaithfulness to him

##### **B. And Josiah reacts**



1. "Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites, all the people both great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD." (2 Chronicles 34:29-31)

- a) He wanted everyone (both great and small) to know what the LORD had said and the danger that they were in
- b) He took the time to read all the words of the book – the whole counsel of God



2. "And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book." (2 Chronicles 34:31)

- a) Josiah made a personal commitment to follow the LORD and keep his commandments

b) And he did it publicly – “he stood in his place and made a covenant”. He wanted all the people to witness his covenant

(1) *To make him accountable before the people*

(2) *As well as, to serve as an example*



3. “Then he made **all** who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin join in it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. And Josiah took away **all** the abominations from all the territory that belonged to the people of Israel and made **all** who were present in Israel serve the LORD their God. **All** his days they did not turn away from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.” (2 Chronicles 34:32)

a) Did you note how many times it says “all”?

(1) *All the people were compelled to join in the covenant*

(2) *And they made all the people of Israel serve the LORD*

(3) *And they took away all the abominations from all their territory*

b) This was full commitment

c) And it was effective

(1) *The inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the agreement*

(2) *And they didn't turn away from following the LORD all the days of Josiah*

## V. Nehemiah and Ezra (Nehemiah 9 – 10)

### A. *Fast forward 150 years*

1. Judah is destroyed by Babylon and many people are taken captive.
2. Babylon is conquered by Persia and many of the Jews are allowed to return from captivity
3. Nehemiah is serving as governor under the rule of Persia and Ezra is serving as priest
4. But some things haven't changed
  - a) There is still a constant drift away from the LORD and his word
  - b) The problem was not so much explicit idolatry, as before
  - c) But a failure to keep the commandments of the LORD and serve him faithfully

### B. *Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, the people were again restoring their relationship with the LORD*



1. “Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.” (Nehemiah 9:1-2)
2. We don't know what occasioned them to come together, but there is clear remorse for their own sins

3. Perhaps it was because earlier in the month, Ezra and other Levites had read from the Law and explained its meaning to the people.
  - a) That clear understanding of the Law shed light on the unpleasant reality of own sinfulness, as well as the gross wickedness of their forefathers.
  - b) Presumably they came together to do something about it.

### **C. What did they do?**



1. Verse 3 says, “And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God.” (Nehemiah 9:3)
2. Then some of the Levites lead a prayer in which they recounted their history, acknowledging...
  - a) First, the stubbornness and unfaithfulness of God’s people.
    - (1) *How they would not obey God’s commandments*
    - (2) *But committed great blasphemies against him*
  - b) And second, the righteousness and faithfulness of God, along with his great mercy
    - (1) *Who after repeatedly warning the people and trying to turn back*
    - (2) *Finally removed them from the land and sent them into exile*
    - (3) *Now they find themselves as slaves in the very land that God gave to their fathers, and their produce goes to the kings of Persia that God has set over them.*

### **D. But they didn’t stop there**



1. In verse 38, they continued the prayer with these words, “Because of all this we make a firm covenant in writing; on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests” (Nehemiah 9:38)
2. They made a firm covenant.
  - a) One that would not change
  - b) No going back or renegotiating
3. They made the covenant in writing
  - a) When you put something down in writing, it takes on a more serious tone
  - b) You know exactly what you are agreeing to.
4. They sealed it with the names of the princes, Levites and priests
  - a) Each leader put his “signature” on the document
  - b) Their names are recorded in the beginning of chapter 10
  - c) Signing your name to an agreement adds another layer of seriousness to your commitment
5. And it wasn’t just the leaders who entered into this covenant



- a) “The rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants...join with their brothers, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath...” (Nehemiah 10:28-29a)

**E. What were they agreeing to?**



- 1. “...to walk in God's Law that was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and his rules and his statutes.” (Nehemiah 10:29b)

- 2. Then they enumerated the things that they were committing to do. They committed to:



- a) Not intermarry with the people of the land



- b) Keep the Sabbath by not doing business



- c) Forgive debts and refrain from planting every 7<sup>th</sup> year



- d) Faithfully give

- (1) 1/3 of shekel annually*

- (2) A wood offering to burn on the altar*

- (3) The firstfruits of ground and trees*

- (4) The firstborn of their sons and of their animals*

- (5) The first of their dough and contributions of fruit from trees, wine and oil*

- (6) Tithes from their ground*

- e) All these gifts were given to support the regular service of the house of God, as well as the Levites and Priests who ministered before the LORD

- f) They were committing to not neglect the house of God

- 3. These were not new things.

- a) They had been prescribed in the Law of Moses

- b) They were just being very clear that they intended to avoid neglecting their service to God as their ancestors had done.

**VI. Conclusion**

**A. Time doesn't allow me to talk to you about**

- 1. How Samuel encouraged the house of Israel to return to the LORD with all their heart and serve him only
- 2. Or how Jehoiada made a covenant with the king and the people to be the LORD's people



**B. So what do we gather from these numerous OT examples?**



- 1. The idea of making a covenant to recommit to the LORD by is a biblical concept



- 2. These covenants were made collectively

- a) It wasn't only about their individual relationships with God
- b) It was about their collective effort to be God's people



3. Every person was expected to participate

- a) Josiah made every person who was present at his reading of the law to join in the covenant that he made before God
- b) Under Asa, the people were threatened with death if they did not participate



4. They documented the covenant in writing

- a) Joshua wrote the words of the agreement in the book of the law of God.
- b) Under Ezra and Nehemiah, they made a firm commitment in writing in which they enumerated the things they would do



5. They affirmed their commitment to keep the covenant

- a) Either by swearing an oath or by putting their names on the document
- b) The people affirmed to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey"
- c) Joshua set up a stone as witness against the people who agreed to it
- d) Under Asa, "They swore an oath to the LORD with a loud voice and with shouting and with trumpets and with horns"
- e) Under Nehemiah, the leaders sealed the document with their names and the rest of the people entered "into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law that was given by Moses"

**C. What is the application to us?**

1. All of us entered into a covenant with the LORD whenever we became Christians

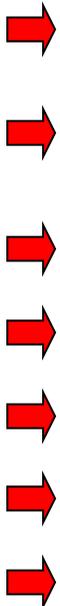
- a) But have we been faithful to our covenant?
- b) If not, what should we do about it
- c) According to the apostle Paul, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction" (Romans 15:4)

2. Your shepherds have been discussing this concept and believe it would be appropriate and beneficial for us to follow these Biblical examples by recommitting ourselves to the service of the LORD

3. Consider the following

- a) I think we are all aware that the pandemic had significantly impact on our church
  - (1) *Not that there weren't weaknesses present before COVID-19 came on the scene*
  - (2) *But the pandemic seemed to draw them out and make them apparent*
- b) A number of members decided that they no longer wanted to worship with us and either went elsewhere or stopped assembling anywhere

- c) Some of our current members no longer attend our worship assemblies or bible studies in person
  - d) Our overall attendance on Sunday morning averaged 193 in January and February of 2020.
    - (1) *In August of this year, we averaged 142.*
    - (2) *August is a travel month, so some may be out of town*
    - (3) *But what about May? The average attendance was 155.*
  - e) Attendance at our Wednesday night bible studies has dropped from close to 90 pre-pandemic to around 70 today.
  - f) According to our database, we have 141 adult members of this church.
    - (1) *This morning, there were \_\_\_\_ present in our bible classes.*
    - (2) *Where are the rest of our members?*
4. Obviously, attendance isn't an accurate or sufficient measure of faithfulness, but it does say something.
- a) We, your elders, struggle with how to shepherd people whom we rarely ever see.
  - b) In our opinion, something needs to change
  - c) We need a dramatic change in our commitment to the LORD and to one another
5. Therefore, we are proposing that we all enter into a covenant together. For that purpose, we have drafted a recommitment statement for your consideration. We are suggesting that the statement read as follows: I commit to...
- a) Seek first God's kingdom and his righteous, not letting the pursuit of possessions, pleasures or status interfere.
  - b) Seek God with all my heart and all my soul, regularly reading and meditating on God's word and participating in bible studies with my brothers and sisters so that I might understand God's will for me.
  - c) Not neglect meeting with the church, but attend every assembly, bible study or meeting of the church that I am able to attend.
  - d) Strive to excel in building up the church, using the talents God has given me to support, encourage, and/or strengthen this church.
  - e) Consider how I can stimulate my brothers and sisters in this church to love and good works, putting thought into how the things I say or do will affect others.
  - f) Submit to the leadership of the elders of this church, complying with any decisions or requests that they make that do not violate my conscience.
  - g) Live a holy and blameless life before God, recognizing that I am subject to being disfellowshipped from the church for failure to repent.
6. We would like your feedback.
- a) Next Sunday is group meeting day
  - b) In your groups, we would like for you to discuss this idea as well as the specific points of this commitment statement.



c) Consider it in this light:

*(1) Is there any reason why you could not commit to these things?*

**D. Invitation**

1. Perhaps there are some here this morning who have never committed to the LORD
  - a) You understand that you are a sinner condemned to eternal destruction
  - b) But the LORD has offered to forgive you through the blood of his Son if you will commit your life to him.
  - c) If you will put your faith in God, repent of your sins, you can have your sins washed away
  - d) You can put your old life behind you by being baptized in water,
  - e) From which you will rise a new man with a new life of service to God
2. Or perhaps you are Christian, but you have not been faithful to your covenant with the LORD
  - a) You can make that right this morning by repenting of your sins and asking God for forgiveness.
  - b) We would all be happy to pray with you and encourage you.
3. Whichever the case, if this church can help, please come forward and talk to me while we sing this song to encourage you.