

# A Life-Changing Vision of Ourselves

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[ 0 : 00 ] Today's scripture reading is taken from the book of Isaiah chapter 6 verses 1-7.! Please follow along with your Bible.

And again, if you don't have a Bible with you, please grab a church Bible from the front of the stage, at the back or near the door. Our passage today is on page 534-535 of the church Bible.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon the throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

Above him stood the seraphim, each had six wings. With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

And one called to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, and the whole earth is full of his glory.

[ 1 : 04 ] And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said, Woe is me, for I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar.

And he touched my mouth and said, Behold, this has touched your lips. Your guilt is taken away, and your sin is atoned for.

Let us believe and respond to God's true and living word. Great. Thank you so much, Lonnie. Okay, well, good morning, everybody, once again.

It's good to see you. Now, I know that we missed a number of you last week. Last weekend was a long weekend. It was a public holiday and also Father's Day. So, I know some people had Father's Day commitments, and we missed you last week.

[ 2 : 12 ] But last Sunday, we started looking at this chapter for, well, we're going to look at it for three weeks. Last week, today, and next week. And we're taking three weeks just to zone in on one chapter of the Bible and take it slowly and think about it.

And what we saw last week, we looked at just the first four verses of Isaiah chapter 6. And there we saw a picture of God's unrivaled majesty.

The fact that God is on the throne. He's the king over all creation. I'm not sure if you saw it when Lonnie was reading to us. It talks about in the year that King Uzziah died. There is a king, but he has died, and the throne is now empty.

But the throne isn't completely empty because there is a king on the throne. And it's a picture of God as the king. And this passage talks about his throne. And then again, verse 7 talks about the fact that I've seen the king.

And so last week, we looked at this idea that God is the sovereign Lord over everything that exists. There is an indisputable distinction between God and everything else in creation.

[ 3 : 20 ] Everything is created. He is creator. He sits on the throne. He is Lord and king over everything and everyone. And we spent most of last week just thinking about this picture of God's majesty, his sovereignty, his kingship.

And we were asking ourselves the question, what difference does this make to our lives? Is this reflected in our attitudes, in our decisions, in the way we handle things, in the way we think about life?

Is the bigness of God big in our hearts? That's the kind of question we were thinking about last week. And there's a quote here by A.W. Tozer. I read it last week. Let me read it again.

He says, What comes to our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. Because we tend, by a secret law of the soul, to move towards our mental image of God.

The most important fact about any person is not what he or she at any given time may say or do, but what deep in their hearts they conceive, they think God is like.

[ 4 : 25 ] And A.W. Tozer is absolutely right. We become like what we worship. And our mental image of God is absolutely important to shaping the kind of people we become.

If we've got a small view of God, we become small people. We pray small prayers. We have small faith. And part of our desire and our hope is that we will be people that will see the bigness of God. And the bigness of God will be big in our hearts. And that we will become big people with big faith and pray big prayers and live big lives because we know and delight in the bigness of God.

And so last week, we looked at just the first four verses and thought about this life-changing vision of the bigness of God. Now, in our passage today, I think God wants us to see that how we see God not only affects our worldview, how we see the world out there, but also how we see ourselves and will change us deeply.

And so in Isaiah chapter 6, Isaiah has a vision. And after seeing the sheer awesomeness and the unparalleled majesty of God, up until this point, he hasn't said a word. He's just responded to what he's seen.

[ 5 : 37 ] But now in verse 5, today we're going to look at just the next three verses, 5, 6, and 7. In verse 5, for the first time, Isaiah speaks. And look at what he says.

Verse 5, And I said, woe is me, I am lost. I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Friends, let me pray for us, and then we're going to look at this passage. Lord Jesus, as we come to this, your word, just these three verses, so short and yet so packed with power, won't you, by your Spirit, speak to us?

Open the eyes of our hearts. Help us to see you. Help us to see ourselves. Help us to see what you want to say in this passage. And speak to us, we pray. In your glorious name. Amen.

In this passage, I want us to see two things. Two things that we all need to change deeply. And first one is this. Confessing sin.

[ 6 : 40 ] In the first, Isaiah is this amazing book of the Bible. It's called the fifth gospel because it talks about Jesus so much. Even though it was written 700 years before Jesus was born, it's an amazing book.

But the first five chapters are kind of like the prologue, the introduction. And it really starts in chapter six, which we are reading these three weeks. In the first five chapters, Isaiah has been speaking about the brokenness and the sin of the nation of Israel.

The fact that they have rebelled against God. They've broken covenant with Him. And the first five chapters are not easy reading. And in chapter five, so the one just before we're reading, six times Isaiah uses this word woe.

It's a word of denouncing. And he's talking about the injustice of society. He says, woe to the greedy. Woe to those who pervert justice. Woe to the arrogant. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.

And he's talking about the injustice in society. But here, having seen God, Isaiah now sees himself with fresh eyes. And he starts to see his own sin.

[ 7 : 46 ] His own duplicity. And so look what he says. He says, verse five, woe is me. Or I am lost. Or I am ruined. I am undone.

For I am a man of unclean lips. And I dwell amongst the people of unclean lips. And my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Isaiah sees God.

And what it leads to is him seeing himself. And that leads to this confession of his own sin.

Admission of guilt. Now for some of us, when we hear the word confession, we may think of a very formalized structure.

Maybe you come from a Catholic background. And so when you have heard of confession, you think you've got to make an appointment. You go to the priest. You go into a little booth. And you kind of confess your sins.

And then the priest will tell you to say a bunch of Hail Marys or maybe some rosemary beads. And then he will pronounce you absolved of your sin. And you go out. But actually, look in the Bible how confession works.

[ 8 : 46 ] Here, Isaiah's confession is not planned. It's not organized. He doesn't make an appointment to go and see anyone. It's almost this natural, almost involuntary response that he has

in response to seeing who God is.

Isaiah sees God. And he almost cannot help himself but see himself rightly. And seeing himself, it leads to this confession. And that's what he says.

Woe is me. I've seen God. I am ruined. I'm undone. I'm a man who's transgressed God's glorious and holy ways. Friends, in many ways, this is actually how you know whether you are a Christian or not.

What is a Christian? A Christian is not just someone who intellectually believes the teachings of the Christian faith or intellectually understands the doctrines of the Christian faith. A Christian is someone who has seen God, seen that Jesus really is who he said he is.

And then because of that, they've seen themselves that we really are who Jesus says we are. And because of that, we have come to see God as we are one that has transgressed against God.

[ 9 : 56 ] We are one that has broken a relationship with God. That's what makes a Christian. David Powelson, I was reading this last night just by chance, but I read this in a book he wrote late last night.

He writes this, When Jesus crosses paths with you, he reveals you for who you really are. In response to that, people change, either for the better or for the worse.

When a person makes a turn for the better, transformation is happening. Sorry, different quote.

David Powelson is saying, when Jesus crosses our paths, he cannot leave us the same.

We see him and then we start to see ourselves. And then we've got a response. How we got to respond to that? And we see the same thing in the New Testament. When the apostle Peter, he is getting to know Jesus and he sees Jesus and he sees his miraculous power.

He sees Jesus doing this amazing miracle. And what is his response? Luke tells us, When Simon Peter saw Jesus, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, Depart from me.

[ 10 : 58 ] I am a sinful man, O Lord. And that's what's happening to Isaiah. Isaiah sees God and his response is he starts to see himself. And this leads to a remarkably honest confession of sin.

Woe is me. I am lost. I'm a man that has transgressed God's holy ways. Now, friends, if you're anything like me, when I first read this, and I read that Isaiah's confession is he says, I'm a man of unclean lips.

My first response is, that's not too bad. I mean, I'm sure we can all think of worse sins than having a dirty mouth, right? If Isaiah had said something like, I am a murderous racist that kills people that are unlike me.

Okay, sure. We would understand, right? Isaiah's got a problem. But for Isaiah to say, I'm a man of unclean lips. It's like, okay, well, what's the big deal with that? What's the problem with that?

It doesn't seem all that bad. But actually, many centuries later, Jesus Christ, 700 years later, would look at the people of his day. And he would quote Isaiah, not this chapter, but another chapter, to reveal the dark duplicity of the people of his day.

[ 12 : 09 ] Look at what Jesus says when he quotes Isaiah 29 to the religious leaders of his day. He says, Jesus would later on go on to say, And what Jesus is showing us here is there's two problems with our speech.

The first is this, a tendency to be hypocritical or false or duplicitous. We say one thing, but actually our hearts are in a very different place. We say these good things. We praise people, maybe we praise God, but actually our hearts are hard to God.

And I find that deeply challenging, especially in light of the confession we said this morning, or the catechism, or the songs we sing. God, I love you. Jesus, you're amazing. But actually, my heart can be very far from God.

And so Jesus is saying that our lips can betray the duplicity of our hearts. We can wear a mask and our lips betray that. But there's another thing that Jesus is saying is, Jesus says that our words often reveal what's going on in our hearts.

It's like a window into our soul. You know when you go to the aquarium and you look into this window and there's this, you look through the glass and behind the glass is this dark water with sharks and stingrays and all sorts of horrible things or wonderful things, but dangerous things in there.

[ 13 : 34 ] You look through the glass and you see the deep, dark world of the deep. Jesus is saying that the words of our mouth is kind of like a window into our soul. And Jesus says that when we get angry and we shout or we rebuke or we scold or we lose our temper, we tell somebody, you fool.

It's actually showing that our hearts, there's something deeply unwell, there's something toxic in our hearts. And so friends, think about the last time you fought with someone or cut someone off or spoke negatively about someone when they weren't around or maybe said something to a car in the traffic like I did this week and my girls were horrified about what came out of my mouth as that truck cut me off and I was very frustrated.

What do the words of my mouth reveal? They reveal a deep darkness that's going on in my heart. Actually, the words of our mouth, the tone of our speech is like a window that allows us to see. And Isaiah knows that the angry words reveal a toxic heart. And so Isaiah is confessing, not just, oh, you know, I sometimes swear now and then, okay. He's actually revealing there's something going on inside me that's not well.

But notice something else here. Notice that Isaiah confesses that sin has both an internal and an external genesis. There's an origin that both comes from within and external.

[14:55] What do I mean? Well, look at what he says here. He says, I'm a man of unclean lips and I dwell amongst the people of unclean lips. We know that our worst behavior comes from deep within us, comes from inside of us, right?

Our angry outbursts, our losing our temper with somebody. It's not just our words, it's our hearts, right? We've just spoken about that. When someone gets angry or loses their temper, it's easy to blame someone else and say, well, if you hadn't, you know, you provoked me, it's your fault. But actually, that's just an excuse. Our anger comes from within us. So there's an internal genesis and an origin of our sin. But look here, in another sense, it's also true that the sins of our community, maybe the sins of our culture, our nation, the people that we identify with rub off on us and start to influence us and start to affect us.

One of the things that's remarkable here is that Isaiah identifies himself with the very people who sins he's just been denouncing in the previous five chapters. And if you think about it, one of the things that social scientists have often wrestled with is how is it that human beings can be so shockingly cruel, almost animalistic towards other human beings?

Think of Nazi Germany in the 1940s, right? Or think of the Japanese forces during occupation in the 1940s. Or think of apartheid South Africa, where I come from. How is it that educated, sophisticated, intellectual first world countries, in most of those cases, can treat other human beings so unbelievably shockingly?

[16:33] Almost like we've descended to become animals. How is that possible? Well, Isaiah's confession here reveals something of that. That though sin lies deep within us, it's often cultivated or nurtured or encouraged by the society, the culture, the city, the nation in which we're living in.

We're not nearly as autonomous or independent thinkers as we think we are. We often think, I'm an independent thinker. I would never do that. But as you put yourself in that environment, you become just like those people. It's like Lord of the Flies kind of stuff, right?

And here Isaiah sees God, and the result is that he starts to see himself. And he sees who he really is. And he sees his guilt. And he sees his shame. And he sees his transgression.

And that leads to this most honest confession. Now, friends, if you are new to church this morning, I wonder what is your impression of Christians confessing sin?

You may think, what a morbid thing that is. How terrible, right? You might find it strange that we all come here and we kind of remind ourselves of how bad we are, right? It's almost kind of a religious self-abuse.

[17:40] We just beat ourselves up even more. Or maybe if you're youth here, you think, that's why I don't like going to church. My parents drag me to church, and they just tell me how bad I am. But actually, I want us to notice just a couple of things here before we move on.

Notice two things in particular, two implications. First of this, what marks true Christian faith is not perfection, but confession. What marks true Christian faith is not perfection, but confession.

Barry Webb put it like this in his commentary. He says, ironically, it's not the fact that Isaiah is a sinner, like his fellow Israelites, but it's his confession of being a sinner, like his fellow Israelites, that sets him apart from them.

So what separates Isaiah from all the rest? Isaiah is different from them. What's different? It's not that they bad and he's very bad, or that they bad and he's good. That's not what makes Isaiah different.

The difference is Isaiah recognizes his badness and confesses it. What makes Isaiah's faith true and genuine is not that he's perfect, but that he knows he's not perfect and acknowledges it.

[ 18 : 44 ] Friends, Christian maturity is not marked by moral perfection, by coming to church and pretending you've got it all together. Friends, can I be honest? None of us have it together.

Not me on the stage, not you, none of us. Christian maturity is not marked by pretending you've got it all together, but by honest confession. I've got a friend in India, in Delhi, called Akshay.

Akshay says, you'll either be a real pretender or a real repenter, but you cannot be both. And that's true, isn't it? It's easy to come to church and we put on the mask and we pretend, hey, my life's all together.

I've got it fine. But actually, we never meet grace there. Christian faith is marked by confession, not perfection. Here's the second thing. I want you to notice the difference between Christianity and most modern popular thinking.

How does modern culture, modern popular psychology think of the brokenness of our lives, right?

We tend to think that the greatest problems in our lives are out there. It's the government.

[ 19 : 47 ] It's my parents. It's my siblings. It's the economy. It's my boss. It's big tech, right? It's Elon Musk. They, the problems out there. And if only they could sort themselves out, my life would be so much better.

And modern psychology tells us the problem is out there and the solution is found within yourself.

Just look within yourself. Find your authentic self. Be true to who you are.

If you are true to yourself, then you will really be free. Jesus Christ turns that on its head. And Jesus is actually the biggest problems in our lives are found within.

It's my pride. It's my ego. It's my self-sufficiency. It's my self-love. It's my arrogance. It's my looking down at others.

And the solution is not to look within myself. It's actually to look outward to the one who came to us to rescue us and save us. Amazing, right? Jesus Christ gives such freedom when he tells us to look outside of ourselves to him.

[ 20 : 50 ] Now, friends, for some of us, maybe you are zoning out of the sermon. Maybe you've already left the room in your mind many minutes ago. And I'll tell you why that is, right?

Come back. Come back. You with me? I'll tell you why you're zoning out. I think the reason why we tend to zone out is because many churches, many pastors, many preachers, we love to stop here. We love to tell people, you're a sinner. You're a sinner. You're a sinner. You're a sinner. You're bad. You're bad. And then we say, and best of luck. Okay? Go sort yourselves out. Or maybe we'll say, your preachers love to pile on the bad news, almost as if the worse the pastor can make you feel, the better job he's done.

Right? So there's some churches where you don't feel like you've listened to a real sermon unless you've really been beaten up badly by the pastor. Okay? And then maybe we'll say, here are a couple of tools to help you fix yourself.

Friends, I want you to know that is not where the Bible ends. Because that's not where this passage ends. The message of the Bible is not, you're a mess, fix yourself up.

[ 21 : 56 ] Or, you're a mess, here's some tools to help you. As confident as Jordan Peterson may be, the message of the Bible is not that God helps those who help themselves.

Friends, look at what happens here next. Isaiah acknowledges and sees his sin. And then Isaiah encounters grace. Isaiah encounters grace.

Look at verse 6 and 7 with me. One of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar.

And he touched my mouth and he said, behold, this has touched your lips. Your guilt is taken away. Your sin is atoned for. Friends, here we have the good news of Christianity.

As clearly as you'll see anywhere in the Bible in three simple verses. Written 700 years before Jesus Christ was ever born. The good news of the gospel. Here we have the message that in Isaiah's helpless state, God takes all the initiative.

[ 23 : 00 ] God moves towards him. This imperfect fallen man. And he meets his failure. And he meets his shame. And he meets his guilt. With healing and renewing and liberating grace.

Friends, here we see what happens when the real God meets the real Isaiah with real grace. Isaiah says, I am ruined. And God says, you are saved.

Isaiah says, I'm cut off. And God says, you are made whole. Isaiah says, I'm guilty. And God says, your guilt has been taken away. Isaiah says, I am undone.

And God says, your sin has been atoned for. Your shame has been dealt with. Your transgressions are gone as far as the east is from the west. Never to be remembered again.

Isn't that amazing? We sang it earlier. It is done. It is finished. No more moral debt I owe. Because our sin was credited to Christ.

[ 24 : 01 ] His righteousness was credited to us. Friends, notice what Isaiah does here with the sin. He doesn't parade it through the streets. He doesn't boast about it. But he also doesn't hide it. He doesn't try and cover it.

He doesn't pretend it's not real. He doesn't blame it on somebody else. He simply owns it and confesses it. And in that place, God comes and frees him.

Sets him free. Friends, how do people change deeply? How do you and I change deeply? Friends, how are marriages restored?

How are relationships healed? How are addictions overcome? How is destructive behavior brought to an end? How are egos dismantled?

Fears overcome. Families restored. Hope made new. We see God. We see ourselves. We encounter God's amazing grace.

[ 25 : 03 ] And notice a couple of things here in this picture. Notice how we encounter God's grace. Notice what it looks like when we encounter God's amazing grace. Notice firstly, the altar here is a place of sacrifice.

What happens here? The seraph, who's a picture of an angelic being, he takes a burning hot coal from the altar and he touches Isaiah's lips. Now, what does that mean for us? Well, notice here first, the altar is a place of sacrifice.

It's a place where burnt offerings and sin offerings are brought and they are burnt with fire and consumed before God. The altar is a place where sin offerings are given to God and forgiveness of sin is made and atoned for, right?

Now, what does that mean for us? Friends, the Bible tells us that the ultimate sin offering was given when Jesus Christ died on the cross at Mount Calvary. Now, you know what that means?

Where Jesus bled and died is an atoning sacrifice. The sin offering to end all sin offerings. What does that mean? It means that in order to encounter God's grace, in order to have our sin and our guilt atoned for, we must go there.

[ 26 : 10 ] There. You must go to the altar. We must meet Christ at the cross. There's no other way. There's no other place. If you only meet Jesus in his teachings, you may be amazed, but you won't be changed.

If you meet Jesus simply in his wisdom, you'll be inspired, but you won't be transformed. If you meet Jesus in his example, you'll be encouraged, but you won't be forgiven.

The place to encounter God's transforming grace is to meet him at Calvary, to meet him at the cross, to meet him at the place where Jesus died as a sin offering for your sin and my sin, to take it away, to atone for it.

You've got to meet not just the doctrine of Jesus, not just the teachings of Jesus, or the philosophy of Jesus, the person of Jesus, the living person of the Lord Jesus, to meet him at the cross.

That's where grace is found. Here's the other thing. Encountering God's grace is often painful before it's liberating. In this picture, the seraph takes this burning hot coal and he touches Isaiah's lips, right?

[ 27 : 19 ] Now, obviously the burning hot coal is a picture of the consuming holiness of God. I'm sure we've all burnt our mouths before, right? Maybe you're eating some, you know, and it's steaming hot, and you take that bite, and you're like, ah, it burns your mouth, right?

Or maybe you take a sip of coffee and it's way too hot, and you scald your mouth. And the roof, every time I eat pan-fried dumplings, the roof of my mouth is scalded for the next few days, right?

We've all burnt our mouths, right? Friends, when Jesus, when God confronts Isaiah here, he doesn't give him a back massage. Isaiah does not meet God in the spa.

He brings this burning hot coal and he touches his lips. Why? He wounds him. He hurts him. And yet he heals him. He heals him.

Think about in the Old Testament when Jacob, remember Jacob? Jacob's this wrestling, scheming, hustling guy. He's always cheating everyone. He's cheating his brother. He cheats his uncle. He's wrestling with his dad.

[ 28 : 25 ] And he meets God one day, and God changes him. But how does God change him? God wrestles him, and he hurts him. He hurts him, but he heals him. He saves him.

Well, think of Saul of Tarsus, right? Saul is this murderous, nationalistic racist. He hates the Christians. He's going everywhere to kill them. How does Saul encounter Jesus?

Jesus knocks him off his horse, and he blinds him for a few days. He wounds him, but he transforms him. He changes him. He sets him free.

Friends, if you know the stories of Narnia, it's the episode in the Voyage of the Dawn Treader where there's this little brat called Eustace. He's a horrible little brat. And Eustace turns into this dragon. His skin starts to go scaly, and he turns into this fire-breathing dragon, but he hates the person that he's become. He hates the dragon that he's become, and he's desperate to be free, but he can't free himself until he meets Aslan.

[ 29 : 21 ] Aslan's a picture of Jesus. But how does Aslan heal Eustace? He takes his claw, and he puts his claw under the dragon's skin, and he tears it off, and it's painful, but it's liberating.

Eustace is restored to a human being again through the painful liberating process of being humbled. Friends, why is it painful? Because the part of our identity, the part of us that says, Kevin, you are great.

You are awesome. You are amazing. You're the center of the world. That part needs to die, and that's always painful. Friends, notice thirdly and finally, notice the specificity of God's grace.

I don't know if you know people who for every ailment in the world, they've got one kind of blanket remedy, right? You've got a headache? He has Panadil, right?

You've got blood pouring out of your eye sockets? Here's Panadil, right? You've got an appendicitis? Take some Panadil, right?

[ 30 : 19 ] And if that doesn't heal it, you've got a gallbladder infection? Burn it, just take some Panadil, right? And if that doesn't heal it, you're not taking enough Panadil. Just take some more, okay? Friends, Jesus does not just give us Panadil.

Jesus comes and specifically deals with the things in our lives with the brokenness of our lives, and he deals with it very specifically. Look at what happens here.

Notice how specific and particular God's redeeming grace is. God's painful, liberating grace from the altar touches the very aspect of Isaiah's life that is in most need of deep healing and redemption.

He touches his lips. And what that means is that God doesn't dish out Panadil. Friends, when Jesus Christ comes to you and I, he's going to put his finger on the very aspects of our lives that are most broken, most awkward, most painful, the parts of our lives that we most want to cover up and hide and pretend aren't hurting.

Jesus is going to pull out a stethoscope and say, let's see how that's doing. And he's going to bring the fire, the coal of the altar, and he's going to say, let me bring my healing grace to that area there.

[ 31 : 30 ] Jesus is like a master physician that's going to apply his grace to the areas of our lives that we most need it. Friends, where do you need God's redeeming grace? Your insecurities, your fears, your anger, your addictions, your relationships, your hurts, your agonies, your doubts.

What are the idols of your heart that keep you so consumed and far from God? Jesus Christ doesn't want to just give you a pen at all. He wants to come and touch that area and say, let me set you free.

God brings the coal from the altar and he touches the very aspect of Isaiah's life where he needs God's grace. Friends, it's painful, but oh, it's so necessary. God isn't out to hurt us, he's out to heal us.

God's not out to blame us, he's out to redeem us. Friends, will you let him do that? Will you let Jesus, the king, come and touch the areas of your life that you most want to keep hidden, want to keep covered up, want to keep away from him?

Jesus wants to bring healing there. Isaiah's life radically changes the day that he sees the glory of God. He sees God and what does it do? It leads him to see himself. And when he sees himself, he doesn't hide or deny or blame or blame his parents, he acknowledges and he confesses.

[ 32 : 49 ] And in doing so, he encounters unbelievable, transforming grace. Isaiah says, I am ruined. God says, you are saved. What about you? Have you encountered Jesus this way?

Have you seen the Lord Jesus in such a way that allows you to see yourself afresh? God wants to heal us. He wants to change us. Why don't we come to him now and ask him to do that?

Let's pray. Well, Jesus, amazing that every passage of the Bible speaks your gospel grace. God, on one hand, if we're honest with ourselves, we must confess that we need your grace.

And yet, God, you haven't come here to shame us. You haven't come to tell us how terrible we are. You've come to heal us. You've come to lift the burden off of our shoulders, the burden that weighs us down, the burden that keeps us awake at night, the burden that we have tried to shed in 10,000 different ways but cannot.

You, God, have come to shed that for us. Jesus, I pray, come and do that. Come and help us. Help us to see you. Help us to see ourselves.

[ 33 : 54 ] Help us to encounter your grace in your wonderful, redeeming, healing, liberating, freeing name I pray. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.