

Series: The Familiar Stranger
The Way of Love; The Spirit Forms Christlike People

Second Corinthians 3:17-18

Sermon by Lead Pastor Paul Joslin

Waterstone Community Church, Littleton, Colorado

Sunday morning, July 12, 2026

Michael: Go ahead and stand up for the reading of the word of the Lord from Second Corinthians chapter 3, verses 17 to 18: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, and we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated.

Paul: Yeah, if we can thank them for sharing their story. Awesome. Michael and Christy, they are good friends. They were in a small group with us a few years ago when they were in town for an extended stay here, and just so you guys know, as you were sharing a story about your kids, my daughter was sitting next to me, and she goes, “Hey, dad, did you tell them that when they tell stories about their kids, they have to give them five dollars?” Because that is the agreement in our family, and I use them a lot as an illustration, so she wants to make sure your kids get paid too. So, hey, that’s one way to get your kids in church. They are excited about the Holy Spirit, I guess. Bribery? I don’t know. Let’s just keep diving in.

All right, so a few weeks ago, we were finishing a sermon on the Holy Spirit, and Erica, who is one of the vocalists who leads us, I was about to head out so I could pray with some people and talk with some visitors, and she said, “Hey, before you go, can I just tell you a quick story?” and I was like, “Yeah, absolutely. What’s up?” She said, “I need to tell you about what happened this week with my daughter, Adeline. She’s twelve years old, and she has been listening to these sermons on the Holy Spirit,” and that particular previous week, we had been talking about the gift of prophecy and how the Spirit speaks through the prophetic, not in like a future where this is how the world is going to end, but hey, this is where God is in your life and how He sees you, and she came to her mom and said, “I don’t want to miss if the Spirit is speaking to me. I want to listen. I want to pay attention if the Spirit is talking to me,” and so one afternoon, they were going for a walk, and as they were walking their dog, they were talking about the Holy Spirit, and Adeline turns to her mom, and she sees a woman across the street, and she says, “Mom, I think the Holy Spirit just told me to go and talk to that woman,” and her mom’s like, stranger danger, I guess, but sure, I’m here, so let’s maybe figure it out, and she said, “I think what the Spirit said is that if she talks to me, if she initiates a conversation, we are supposed to walk across the street and go talk to her,” and sure enough, right as she says that, the woman across the street just says a hello and engages in conversation, so they walk across and begin having a conversation. It turns out, as it would happen, this woman is going through an incredibly difficult time in her life. She is going through a divorce, and she feels like the Lord does not see her. She had grown up in the Catholic church and felt like she just had distanced from God and did not really know where He was in the midst of this. She was feeling incredibly overwhelmed and depressed, and as Erica and her twelve-year-old daughter crossed the street to talk to her, she just had the sense that God has not seen me in a very long time, and Adeline’s response to her story was, well, “I need you to know God saw you, because He told me to come and talk to you.” It is just

this beautiful picture of how simple it is to walk with the Spirit, to pay attention to the Spirit, and I know that as we have been going through this series, we have talked about this idea that Jesus has said, whoever believes in me will do even greater things than I have done, and that sounds just like this monumental, overwhelming statement that Jesus Christ, who sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father in heaven, and who walked this earth, performing miracles and healing lepers and healing the blind and raising people from the dead and loving the outcasts, it can feel like, how could I ever do any of those things? Sometimes what we miss in the midst of the spectacle is that simply following the Spirit, continuing the ministry of Jesus is as simple as walking across the street when the Spirit tells us to. It is as simple as looking for the caterpillar in the midst of your travels. It is paying attention. Jesus says, whoever believes in me will do even greater works than I have done, and I believe that He means whoever when He says whoever. Which means that when He says, whoever, that means that you have been anointed by the power of the Spirit, and you have been anointed by the power of the Spirit, and you have been anointed with the power of the Spirit. It is not for the religious elite. It is not for pastors like me, who get paid to do this for a living. It is twelve-year-old girls who listen to the voice of the Spirit and say, "I can do what Jesus did."

Here is the challenge for us, though, I think, is that many of us want the power of the Spirit. We want to experience life with the Spirit. We want to listen to the Spirit. We want encounters with the presence of God, but for so many of us, there is something holding us back, and what I want to do with our final sermon, our final message in this series, is talk about a few of the things that I think often hold us back from experiencing life with the Spirit. So, what we are going to do is we are going to look at these short two verses from the apostle Paul to the church in Corinth, where he talks about three things that the Spirit of God does in our lives, and these are the three things the Spirit of God does in our life. The Spirit sets us free, the Spirit brings us face to face with God, and the Spirit forms us into people of love. So, as we walk through these three things, what I want to give you is the antithesis of this, of how you can in your life prevent this from happening in your life, prevent yourself from experiencing the freedom that Christ has for you, prevent yourself from experiencing life with God face to face, prevent yourself from experiencing what it is to be formed into the person of Christ and to become a person of love like Him. Because there is a part of us that deeply longs for life with the Spirit, and I also believe that there is a part of us that deeply resists life with the Spirit, and if we want to experience life with God, then we have to understand what it is that sometimes holds us back.

So, Second Corinthians chapter 3, verses 17 and 18, says this: "Now, the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, and we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." So, let's talk about freedom. Paul says that wherever the Spirit of the Lord goes, not that you can have freedom, but there is freedom. Freedom exists where the Spirit goes. This freedom language, I think in our modern sense, we have, oh, freedom is this idea that I get to do whatever I want. Or it is this image of people with big trucks and American flags on the back of their car and like, "Don't tread on me" stickers, and like, I can do what I want. I am an American. I am free, but it actually is rooted in this sense in ancient rabbinical tradition around Egypt. When the first century Christians would hear the idea of freedom, they would picture being liberated from Egypt, God rescuing and redeeming the people out of Egypt. They would have in mind, not that they got to do whatever they want, but they had

been brought out of slavery into freedom because they belonged to God, that they owed God their allegiance. It is not about getting to do whatever you want. Freedom is millions of slaves walking into the freedom that God has given them, walking out of whatever owns you.

I think there are many things that look like Egypt in our lives. There are many things in modern evangelicalism, in our Christian walk, and even if you are not a believer, I believe there are things that can own your spirit and your life. Often Egypt looks more like addiction. Maybe it is to that bottle or to those pills, to that drink, to that gambling. It is that space where you expect something else to fill you up, that screen that you can't put down. Sometimes Egypt looks a little bit more respectable. It looks like the career you would sacrifice your family for. It looks like the image of trying to win the approval of those who are paying attention to you. It is chasing after the thing that you believe will fill you up. For some of us, what owns us looks like a grudge we have been holding onto for thirty years. For some of us, it looks like that one person's opinion you have been chasing their approval of. For some of us, slavery doesn't always look like Egypt. Slavery can look like trying to get the corner office or chains that look like applause. It is the fear that makes your decisions for you. It is the places where you have given yourself, that every time you try to walk away, you can't, because it owns you, and what Paul is saying is that wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, chains break. The things that enslave us, we can find freedom from. The addiction that has its hooks in us for decades, that fear that has been making our decisions, that shame that is keeping your head down, the bitterness that you have carried so long, the Holy Spirit, when He comes into your life, does not come into your life to inspect your chains and see how bad they are.

Sometimes I think we have this image of the Christian life, of walking with Jesus, of the Spirit empowering us, and it is really nothing better than, hey, you are going to struggle really hard with that habitual sin you have, and then the Spirit will sometimes convict you of that, but then you will go back to struggling again and again and again, and then when you start to read scripture about that place you were struggling, then maybe the Spirit will make something come alive that will give you a little bit of energy for resistance for a short time, and then you will go back to slavery. That is how many of us live our Christian life, is we just continually pretend that we are slaves, and I say pretend very intentionally, because where the Spirit is, there is freedom, and you are no longer a slave. Why do we live as if we were still slaves? That is one of the ways that we can resist freedom in our lives. If you want to never experience the freedom that the Spirit has for you, the easiest way to do that is to make peace with your chains, to make peace with those things that own you, to be content in the cell.

I think one of the reasons we make peace with our chains is that when Jesus says, whoever can experience a life with me, whoever can do what I have done, whoever can experience the freedom of the Spirit, is we automatically retreat to this place of, "Yeah, but you do not know me. You do not understand what I have done. You do not know my failures," and what we do is we guilt ourselves and count ourselves out because of some sort of moral disaster in our lives, some sort of space where we continually go to instead of to God. We hide from God, and we do not experience the freedom that He has for us. The first place that shame shows up in the Bible is in the very first chapters, where Adam and Eve sin against God and then hide because of their shame. They cover their face, and they pretend that God cannot see them. How many of us are living in a space where we believe, "Oh, it is not that bad. God can't see it. If I just hide enough behind this shame and this wall of guilt, then I will find freedom," and it is locking us in

chains? Some of us, we live in a space where we are so in debt, we are so enslaved to our shame, that we are afraid God could never free us, that God could never bring his redemption to us, and we believe in Jesus. We know the truth of what He did on the cross, and yet we live as if we were still slaves. Paul says, where the Spirit of God moves, there is freedom. Not there can be freedom. There is freedom. The only thing you have to do is step into it and believe that it is true.

Some of us, the reason that we have never experienced the chain-breaking freedom of the Spirit is not that God is withholding it from us. It is that we have made peace with our chains, and we are still living in shame, and next, Paul takes us to this interesting place. He says that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, and then he says this, “and we all,” we are going to come back to that in a moment. This is really important, “and we all who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory.” I want to talk to you for a moment about what he means when he says “unveiled faces.” Now this is a confusing passage. Kyle, if you can throw it up. It says this, “Now the Lord is the Spirit.” That’s a weird statement, and then at the end it says, “which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit,” and it is almost as if Paul is trying to say like, “Okay, Jesus is the Lord, is the Spirit,” and you’re supposed to think like, “Okay, are you just saying they’re like one person? I thought we talked about earlier, Paul, that the Spirit isn’t just like the force of Jesus.” They are two distinct persons. There is Jesus and the Spirit. How are we then saying that the Lord is the Spirit here at two different times in this passage? What is it talking about, and then what does Paul mean when he says unveiled faces?

I think to understand what Paul is talking about, he is working through something that happened in Exodus 34, where the people of God are brought into the presence of God in the wilderness to the mountain, and as they come to the mountain, God’s presence comes to rest on the mountain. I want you to imagine thousands of years ago, a desert with a mountain, and suddenly as a group of people, thousands of people who have just been freed from slavery, come to this mountain, God’s presence comes and descends on it in flashes of lightning and thunder. It is as if this mountain has become a type of volcano that is just so overpowering and so overwhelming that as God invites the people to the mountain to experience his presence, they all flinch and step back, and they say, “Uh-uh, not going there. That is too much. That is too scary,” and for some of us, that is the relationship that many of us have with the Spirit. Too much, too scary, not sure, I am just going to stay content over here in the pool.

Well, not Moses. He is invited up by God, and so Moses goes onto the mountain, where he stays for forty days, and what we’re told is that he talks to God as if to a friend. Could you imagine that, talking to God face to face as if he were a friend? In the midst of that cloud, in the midst of that storm, in the midst of that tempest, he experiences the presence of God, and forty days later, he comes down the mountain, and he comes back to the people, and they all get a look at him, and they are terrified. They are terrified, because what we are told is after spending so much time in the presence of God, Moses’s face is literally glowing as if he like swallowed the sun, and then it is just beaming from him, and they’re terrified. They are not sure what to do with that, and so what Moses does is because they are so afraid of the presence of God, they will not go up to the mountain. They send him, and then they’re so overwhelmed by the presence of God that they ask Moses to veil his face, because they do not want to come that close to the glory of God, because one man could enter into the presence of God and everyone else stayed outside

because they were afraid, and then notice what Paul says: “We all who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory.” What is he saying?

It is that where Moses was the only one who was allowed to go into the presence of God, who had the courage to go into the presence of God and had to veil his face because people were afraid of encountering the presence of God, now you and I, if we are believers in Jesus Christ, experience that same presence of God. When Paul says that the Spirit is the Lord, he is saying that same presence that was on the mountain is now inside of you. It is now alive inside of you. If you are a believer, you no longer have to veil your face. You have the experience of the presence of God inside of you, pouring out of you, as it was with Moses, and you no longer have to veil your face, because that instinct to flinch away from the presence of God has been removed by Jesus Christ. When we hold that picture in our minds, Moses met in the tent with God, and the church now meets that same God in the presence of the Spirit, and he says, we all, everyone, all of us can experience that reality, not just the spiritual elite, not just the inner ring, and not just those who have it all figured out. Everyone, including little twelve-year-old girls who remember to walk across the street when the Spirit prompts them, every believer has the Spirit. Romans 8 settles it. If you are in Christ, the Spirit is within you. We do not have to beg for what we have already won.

Some people, they have asked a question in this series like, “Okay, you say that the Spirit is already in us, but then we pray for the pouring out of the Spirit.” What are we talking about? What are we talking about there? If I already have the Spirit, why do I need more of the Spirit? We already have everything we need, right? Well, yes and no. I want you to imagine in a house that you own, and it is your house. You live in it. It is all yours, but there is more available to you. There are doors that have been locked in that house that you have never stepped inside before. That is an image of what it means to be filled with the Spirit. You have the Spirit inside of you if you are a follower of Jesus, but there is more available to you than just simply owning the house. What this passage says is that where the Spirit dwells, we experience God face to face, and that does not mean that we see the physical features of God, but living a life unveiled by the Spirit of God means that He is no longer just a concept we study, but a presence we live in.

A.W. Tozer said that what we have sacrificed in much of our Christianity is this ideological or theological relationship with God where we know things about God. He says we have sacrificed that for true encounter with God. Face to face doesn’t mean you see all of his features. It means you finally live without the distance between you and God, no veil, no shame, no fear, and Moses could only experience it on a mountain. You can experience it on a Tuesday afternoon in your kitchen. That’s how accessible it is to you. Driving, at the grocery store, in line at King Soopers, as you’re getting your morning coffee ready at the kitchen counter, you can experience God in any of those places, because the Spirit of God has moved in, and God’s glory is present with you, but here is how you can resist ever living face to face with God. Here is how you can resist experiencing God’s presence in your life.

If the first was shame, the second is this, unrepentant sin. Part of the Holy Spirit’s role in our life is to convict us of the places where sin has gotten in the way of more, and that conviction is never for the purpose of shame or for guilt. The purpose. What is that beeping? Is that an alarm? Is that something outside? It is outside? Awesome. That’s great. That is the Holy Spirit buzzing you about your unrepentant sin. That’s what, Jesus, Juke. Gotcha. All right. There are places in our lives where we have been living with sin that we know goes against God’s design for us.

It goes against the very way that God has told us He wants us to live, and that buzzing going off is the alarm telling you that you need to pay attention to it, because here's the reality. It is that the unrepentant sin always gets in the way of more. If the glory of God is dwelling inside of you, that does not leave when you are living in sin. It is no longer transactional or dependent on how faithful you are, but your experience of intimacy with the Spirit of God is dependent on your relationship to holiness and glory, and if you are content to live in a place where you look at your sin, and you say, "It is not that big a deal. It doesn't really matter. It is not really hurting someone," then the Spirit of God can never flourish in that space. It can never flourish in that space where you are choosing to fill yourselves up with things other than the Spirit of God, and so if you never want to experience the fullness of the Spirit of God in your life, just continue with the sin that you keep going back to. Do not repent. Do not ask for forgiveness. Do not turn your face back to God. Just say, "Yeah, you know what? It is not that big a deal. I'll be just fine," and I truly am not trying to place conviction on you this morning. That is actually not my role. What I'm hoping to do in this space is to create a little bit of room for the Spirit to speak and for you to pay attention, because sometimes we are so quickly moving through life, we do not stand still long enough for the Spirit of God to just press his thumb on the places of our life where we have been living in unrepentant sin, and He is not pointing it out to condemn us, but to free us so that we can experience life with God as we were intended to.

Finally, lastly, it says this in the passage we have been looking at, unveiled faces, contemplate the Lord's glory. "We all," all believers, "are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. That word, "transformed," there, metamorphosis, it is the caterpillar to butterfly language. It is a verb used of Jesus actually in the transfiguration, where Jesus was revealed in his full glory. He was transfigured, transformed, where people saw the true glory that was behind the man. What is interesting is that on that mountain, the only three places in scripture where this particular word is used are here and in Romans 12, and then at the transfiguration, where Moses is also present. This is an interesting play that I think Paul is doing here, because at the transfiguration, Jesus, who was veiled in his humanity, his full glory is revealed, and Moses is there as this happens, and Moses, who did not have any inner glory, but was a normal man, and then the glory of the Lord came to dwell in him, but it faded, and then now there is you and I, we all who are being transformed, and the tense of this language, it is so good. It preaches itself. It is present, in that it is happening to you now. It is ongoing, in that it is something that never stops, and it is something that is ever-increasing, so that we are constantly becoming more like Jesus. Where Moses' glory faded, ours is ever-increasing and never stops until the day of redemption. What we are saying and what Paul is saying here is that the Spirit does it. It is actually this passive thing that happens to us, and our job is to simply stay unveiled in the presence of God and keep beholding Him as the Spirit continues to do the work of transformation in us.

What is that image that we are being transformed into? It is the way of love. Where the Spirit works, we become like Jesus, and Jesus is love. The unmistakable image of Jesus Christ is the shape of love. When you look at his life, it is a love that touches lepers. It is a love that eats with outcasts. It is a love that forgives from the cross. When we look at the life of Jesus, as we are being transformed into his image, if we are not looking more like the way of love, then we are walking the wrong path, because we are to be transformed into the image of Jesus, which is always love.

Martin Lloyd-Jones said this about the Christian life. He said, “The chief thing for all believers is the love of God, the love of souls, the love of others, a knowledge of the truth, and the Holy Spirit within you.” I think many of us have been living our Christian life with the first three and not the last, in that we understand we are supposed to love God. We get that if we are following Jesus, we are supposed to love others. We know that we are supposed to study scripture and understand the truth and have our faith rooted on the truth, but many of us have been living and trying to do those things without the Holy Spirit within us. We cannot become more like Jesus without the Holy Spirit in us, and Billy Graham said this about the role of the Christian life: “It is the Holy Spirit’s job to convict, it is God’s job to judge, and it is my job to love,” and what I would say to you is that many of us have forgotten that this is the call, and we have flipped that narrative, so that we say, “No, the Holy Spirit does not need to convict. I can convict them. I can tell them where they are sinful, where they are wrong, where they are going to hell. I can make sure they know all of the ways that God is displeased with them. I can look out there at all of the others and condemn the ways that they are living,” and the way of love says no. That is the Spirit’s job. You actually do not have a right to judge. You do not need to convict. You simply need to love. Some of us are exhausted, because we have been working outside of our department and our assignment. We have been trying to convict people or judge people, and that is the Spirit’s job and God’s job. Our only task, the only task that has your name on it is the job of love. Jesus calls us to be a people who have been transformed by the power of the Spirit to love those around us.

Here’s how you can resist becoming more like Jesus, and I honestly think this is the most dangerous of the three, because I think we are really gifted at this in a church like ours. The way that you can resist the work of the Spirit in your life and becoming more like Jesus is to become a student of Jesus, not an apprentice of Jesus. A student learns. A student gathers information. A student acquires a lot of knowledge that they place into their mind, and they have understanding. They have knowledge. They get truth. They can talk about scripture. They can dialogue about theology. They can explain things to you, but an apprentice learns to live in order to replicate. They learn not for the sake of information, but for becoming like something. A student of Jesus can fill their Bible with a bunch of notes. They can fill all the journals in the world with all of their thoughts and all of the things that the Spirit has revealed to them, but it is not a life of apprenticeship to Jesus without actually stepping into walking like Jesus walked.

I want you to think about the early church for a moment. The early church did not have a copy of the New Testament as we have it today. They did not have commentaries. They did not have the Bible project or the Bible app. They did not have any of the information available to them that we have today. There were no commentaries explaining what Paul wrote to them. They had to write letters back asking Paul, “What did you write to us? We don’t understand that.” What they did have, this group of illiterate peasants that the world looked at and said, “They are uneducated and have no business proclaiming the things that they proclaim,” what they did have was a desperation for the Spirit of God to move amongst them. They were desperate for the power of God, desperate enough to risk, desperate enough to step out in faith, desperate enough to pray, even when those prayers would go unanswered, desperate enough to cry out and ask God to move in their day, and what they did, we just like to study. We just like to study it. I wonder if the Spirit of God is inviting us to live it out.

Where the Spirit works, we become like Jesus, and the way to resist that is a place of apathy. It is a place of apathy, where you are content to stay in the pool, where you are content with a life where you understand who Jesus is, where you love Jesus, but you are not living the way that He lived. There is more available to us. There is so much more available to us, and who has the most to gain by you settling for less? Who has the most to gain and profit from you just living a comfortable, unexpected, chain-decorated life? The church fathers and the earliest apostles and those who have followed after them have continually said that the thing the enemy does not want is a church that is filled with the Spirit of God, because that is most dangerous to the enemy of the kingdom. So many times, we squabble and we argue about the things we believe and who has it right and who has it wrong, and I'm not saying that doesn't matter, but the truest evidence for the Spirit and who Jesus is, is not the spectacular or the arguments. It is the Christ-like.

So as we close, I want to take you back to the beach one last time, because for the last several weeks, we have returned to this metaphor where I have been standing on the edge of the beach, and I have been saying, Waterstone, we have been content staying in the pool, and the pool is beautiful, and the pool will leave you in a place where you live a life for Jesus, and you love Him, and you go to church, and you engage with small groups, and you maybe even reach a few friends for the gospel, but deep inside, you will always be longing and questioning, "Is this it? Is there something more?" Because many of us are staying chained. Many of us are not experiencing intimacy with God the way that He has invited us to, and many of us are not becoming more like Jesus the way He has called us to. It is because we have the Spirit within us, but we are not opening the doors for Him to live through us. There is an ocean that is available to you, and sometimes it comes in a crashing wave that overpowers you and knocks you off your feet, and sometimes it comes in a rushing flood that you have no control over, and sometimes it comes in the slow, consistent ebb of the tide that slowly forms you more into the person of Jesus, but will you step out of the pool and into the ocean to experience life with Him that He has invited you to? As we close this series, my prayer for us, Waterstone, is not that we would have a better understanding of a theology of the Spirit. To be honest with you, if we finish this series, and all the takeaway is like, "Man, I really understand who the Spirit is now," I am going to be so disappointed and a little bit frustrated, not because of you, but because there is so much more available to us.

Tyler Staton, who wrote the book that we have been talking about throughout this series, asked this really poignant question that I want to leave you with: "If Jesus were to follow you in your life and just follow you for a week, everywhere you went, everything you did, He just watched and observed quietly behind you, I think many of us think that Jesus would maybe be angry at us or disappointed in us," but Tyler takes a different track. He says that He would finish that week, and Jesus would simply weep, because He would be so sad at how unexpected our lives are that we are living, that there is so much more available to us that He is so desperate to give us, and we are just content to unopen the present. We are just content to stay in the pool.

As we close today, I wanted to share a story, one of the many stories that have been coming out of this series, the story of Martha who had an experience, an encounter with the Holy Spirit a couple of weeks ago when we were doing baptisms, and so we compiled her story. We have a video that I would love for you to take a look at and to see how the Spirit has been working in her life.

Video: I came to Jesus when I needed Him, and when things were going well, I'm embarrassed to say I forgot about Him for a little bit, and then things would, something would happen, I would come back to Jesus. So, I had my teenage years where I thought I knew everything, thought I could do things on my own, life on my own. God gave us His only Son. That is the biggest present anybody will ever give us, and then sixteen years ago, we moved here, and I missed my siblings terribly. I was having a hard time just finding the new community here, so I joined a church right away. That's what I wanted to do, join the church, and then twelve years ago, I was talking with a friend of mine, and she asked me, "Have you given your life to Jesus?" and I said, "Yeah," and she said, "That doesn't sound very convincing. Have you spoken the words, 'Jesus, I am a sinner. Jesus, you are my Savior. Jesus, I give my life to you'?" and I said, "Well, I haven't. No, I haven't spoken those words," and she said, "Do you want to do it?" That happened twelve years ago, when I gave my life to Jesus, and I said, no more, no more in and out. If people ask me, "Do you believe in God?" Of course, the answer is yes, but the harder question is, "Do you believe Him? Do you believe Him?" Did I always believe what He says, that I am His daughter, that I am perfect? Maybe not. As a teenager, maybe I did not believe that. Now I do. I know we are all His sons and His daughters. It is not a life without problems, but like I said, Jesus will be with us every step of the way.

So, five years ago, I had a brain hemorrhage, and that came out of nowhere. I was sitting with my sister, and we were talking, and all of a sudden, I felt like someone just hit me with a big rock, and I looked at my sister and I said, "My head, my head," and she said, "What happened?" and I said, "My head is going to explode." She said, "Oh, what do you want me to do?" and she called 911. Had she not been there, I would not have been able to call 911. I was throwing up. I couldn't even get up from the floor, and I spent two weeks in an ICU, and it was during COVID. It was August of 2020, so my husband couldn't visit me, but I just kept saying, "Holy Spirit, I know you're here with me. I know you're here with me. Thank you for saving me again." God uses everything for his purpose, for his glory, for his honor.

Throughout my life, I have seen the Holy Spirit work in me and in situations and be with me. I had been thinking about being baptized. I was baptized as a child, very young, as a baby, but I was thinking about, I want to be baptized as an adult. I want that outwardly confirmation that I'm all in. So, I had been thinking about being baptized, but I had not signed up to be baptized. I certainly wasn't thinking that day of being baptized. I mean, I did my hair, and it was all nice and pretty, and I was going to go to work with my pretty hair the next day, so I wasn't thinking about being baptized. Then Pastor Paul said, "We're going to play a song, and if anybody wants to be baptized, just come on up," and I was singing. I was singing a praise song. I felt a little push from behind my back, like when someone pushes you gently, and I turned around, and of course nobody was there pushing me, and I thought, "Well, that's weird," and I continued praising, and I just felt, I just felt moved. I felt something. I now know it was the Holy Spirit saying, "Go, go, go be baptized." As I was singing, the feeling became so strong that I started crying. It was just so strong. The emotion was so strong, I couldn't contain it, and I turned to Pam, who was sitting next to me, and I said, I was crying, and I said, "I want to be baptized." She took me by the hand, and we went and talked to Pastor Paul, and I said, I mumble, I don't remember, but I think I said, "I want to be baptized," and he said, "Great, let me ask you some questions," and I was baptized. I am so glad that I was obedient. I would encourage anyone who has that strong emotion to be baptized, do it. I have been walking on cloud nine since I was baptized. Look, I don't have all the answers. I don't have all the answers. All I can tell

you is, all I can do is give you my testimony. All I can do is tell you that my life is better. My marriage is better because God is in it.

Paul: As we close our time together today, we're going to close with a moment of prayer, and as people continue praying here, I want to invite those who are going with Royal Family Kids Camp to also come down front. We're going to pray over them. We have about forty volunteers this week headed out to Royal Family to love the foster kids in our community, and so we're going to say a prayer over them and send them. As we started this series, I shared with you that my prayer for Waterstone over these last number of years has been Ephesians 3, and I just thought it was an appropriate way to capture this series, to stamp this series, and then also to pray for those who are leaving today and tomorrow for student camp and for Royal Family Camp, so here is the prayer and the benediction. I would encourage you to open your hands if you would like to receive it, Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesus and my prayer for Waterstone: "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may experience him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, in order that you may experience the hope to which He has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength He exerted when He raised Christ Jesus from the dead and seated Him at his right hand in the heavenly realms." Waterstone, may you be filled with the Spirit and know his peace and love and joy. You may go in peace.

44:56 minutes

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Message #959