

Luccas Rodor: Hi, friends, welcome to the "Sabbath School Study Hour," here at the Granite Bay Hilltop SDA Church in the Greater Sacramento area. We are so glad that you have decided to invest this hour here with us, ready to study the Word of God, and today we have a beautiful lesson to study. The theme of our whole lesson this quarter has been "Rest in Christ," and today is lesson eight, and I hope you've studied because Pastor Doug has a great lesson for us. The title of this week's lesson is "Free to Rest," so I hope that you're ready. I hope you studied. I hope you have your notes down and even the questions to answer throughout the study of this week's lesson.

But before that, before we actually get into the lesson, I'd like to invite you to take advantage of our free offer this week. The free offer is called the "Amazing Health Facts," and here, you're going to find the eight biblical secrets to live a longer and healthier life. And so, if you'd like a copy of this magazine, you could call the number 866-788-3966, and you could ask for Offer Number 806. If you're in the USA or in North America, you could text "SH005," to the number 40544, and you'll also get a digital download copy. If you're outside of North America, you can go to study.aftv.org/SH005, and you will also be able to receive a digital download.

I'd like to invite you now for a moment of prayer. Dear Father in heaven, thank You so much for Your love for us. Thank You so much for Your guidance, and thank You so much for Your rest. Thank You for giving us the Sabbath where we can truly stop in this temple in time and dedicate this time to our relationship with You, Father. Lord, as Pastor Doug leads out this morning, please imbue him with Your Spirit, Father. May all the words that come from his lips come from the throne above. I ask these things in the name and the power of Jesus, amen.

Doug Batchelor: Good morning, friends. I want to especially welcome those that are here at the Granite Bay Hilltop Church. We've had an exciting week here at the time of this recording. We're just concluding a week of a VBS Live Amazing Adventure program. Pastor Luccas has been leading out. We've had a wonderful crop of young people, and you can probably tell, if they take a wide shot of the stage here, if you wonder why things are looking a little different, it's because we're all set up for this Amazing Adventure the young people have been enjoying, and that's been just great.

We're continuing in our lesson, dealing today-- well, the whole lesson is about "Rest in Christ." You know, the two great utterances of Jesus, you can find in Matthew, Matthew chapter 11 and Matthew chapter 28. And one says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." And then, as a result of that, He then says, "Go and tell all nations all authority has been given unto Me. Go and tell all nations." So salvation is a continual coming to the Lord, finding that rest, and then going for the Lord and telling other people about that rest. In our study today, we're going to be talking about two case studies of people who were restless, that found rest.

And we have a memory verse. Memory verse is from Psalm 27, verse 1. This is in the New King James Version, Psalm 27, verse 1. For those of you here at Hilltop Church, you can say it out loud with me if you've got that. You ready? "The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?"

Well, we've got a couple of cases here of people that were living in fear. Now I'll tell you where the two studies are: one from the Old Testament, one from the New. We'll start with the New Testament and go to the Old. The New Testament study, you can find in Mark chapter 2. If you have your Bibles, you may want to turn there. This is the story of Jesus healing the paralytic in Mark chapter 2, and you'll not only find this here in Mark chapter 2, but you can find this in Luke chapter 5, verse 17, and Matthew 9 verse

1 through 8. It was a remarkable experience in Jesus's healing ministry that's recorded by three of the four gospel writers.

So I'm going to read through verses 1 through 12, with you, just so you know because it's going to kind of run from one study heading page to another. The study headings are "Healing Rest," the "Root Treatment," "Running Away," "Too Tired to Run," "Rest and More." But, basically, we're studying two Bible stories today.

All right, so let's read Mark chapter 2, verses 1 to 12: "And again He entered Capernaum--" now, He's probably living at this point at the house of Simon Peter, and it says that He returned to His city. Capernaum was considered Jesus's city in Galilee-- "and after some days, it was heard that He was in the house." Again, it was probably Simon Peter's house. "Immediately many gathered together, so there was no longer room to receive them, no, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them."

I wonder, did people come because He preached the Word, or did He preach the Word because people came? I know some pastors, whenever they saw a crowd, they preached the Word, but I think Jesus had a crowd because He did preach the Word. "And many were gathered together, and then--" by the way, that's one of the simplest methods for church growth. There's all kinds of seminars and science and training that people go through to grow churches. You know what Jesus did? He preached the Word. If you preach the Word, many will gather together. People are hungering for the Bread of Life. "And there wasn't even room near the door. Then," verse 3, "they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men."

All right, let me just give you a little insight into this. This man, he could not come to Jesus without some outside help. I forget the ratio, but I think it's like 40% of the people that Jesus heals in the Bible were either brought by someone else, or someone else brought their case to Jesus, and Jesus healed them remotely, but so many people that were healed were healed because of the intercession or the efforts of someone else to bring them.

Now, there's a lot of people that will never find Jesus unless other people bring them to Christ for healing. Now, this man, he was paralyzed. He's not an old man because Jesus refers to him as "son." Jesus is only 30, 33, and, you know, if you call someone, "son," you probably want to-- I would not call a 65-year-old and say, "Well, son--" you know, just, it would not sound right. Of course, I'm about that age now anyway so--but I mean, Jesus is 33, so this is a young man who's been afflicted with this paralysis. You can read in the book "Desire of Ages," page 267, "This paralytic had lost all hope of recovery. His disease was the result of a life of sin, and his sufferings were embittered by remorse." He's not only physically suffering, he's remorseful that he's suffering because of his life of sin. "He had long before appealed to the Pharisees and the doctors, hoping for relief from the mental suffering and the physical pain. But they coldly pronounced him incurable, and abandoned him to the wrath of God."

This man had been looking for mercy and looking for healing, and they said, "No, you're suffering for your sins. You are abandoned by God." "The Pharisees regarded the affliction as an evidence of divine displeasure, and they held themselves aloof from the sick and the needy. Yet often these very ones who exalted themselves as holy were more guilty than the sufferers they condemned."

So this man, what's one of the principal concerns in his life? Is it physical healing or spiritual forgiveness? Either way, I think we'll agree he has no rest. He's very restless in his heart. He's physically suffering, and he is tormented because he's suffering because of bad choices that he made. Now, that's often true that we sometimes suffer with physical problems because of bad choices that we make. It might be lifestyle choices or health and eating choices, and then we're twice as restless because we're thinking, "I brought

this on myself." It's like a person, now they got a drinking problem, then they have a car accident, someone else is hurt, and they--crippled up for life, and they're thinking, "Look what my sin has done."

So this man is struggling with that, but he has some friends, and his friends, they hear about Jesus, and they notice that Jesus heals everybody that comes. And so they say, "Look, if we could bring you to Jesus, we believe He can heal you." And he thinks, "Oh, that'd be wonderful, but if I could just know-- He's a spiritual teacher. If I could just know that I could be helped by God?" Now, it says, "They brought unto Him one carried by four." This one man ends up being healed. I hope that's not a spoiler for you that he gets healed. You know that. Borne of four.

You know, I think that four is sort of a number in the Bible that represents something universal. Four is also the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Around the throne of God, there are four creatures. Do you remember what the different creatures look like? One had a face like a lion, one like the face of an eagle, one like a man, one like a calf. And some Bible scholars say these are different attributes of Christ, and they're also telling us they kind of describe the gospels. Matthew is thought of as the messianic gospel, that Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah. Mark is the gospel that appeals to the Romans. The Roman standard was the eagle, and it's a very fast-- you read through Mark, and it is rapid. It's a quick gospel. Luke is a physician. He shows Jesus the man. And then you've got John who shows Jesus as the sacrifice. He's the calf. And so I like to think these four men that brought their friend to Jesus represent the gospel that brings people to Christ.

I remember hearing an amazing fact that really got my attention. It was about someone named "Russian Jack." He was better known as-- his nickname was Russian Jack. His real name was Ivan Fredericks. He lived between 1864 and 1904, in Australia. He was a gold miner in the western fields when they had a gold rush. You know, after the California Gold Rush, they also had a gold rush in Australia and-- but it was very hard to get to there. It wasn't like the Sierras. They were in what they called a Great Sandy Desert, and it was terrible terrain.

Well, Jack and a friend of his had run short on food while they're out there mining in this remote area, and they decided to shoot a kangaroo, and his friend, then running after the kangaroo, fell and broke his leg. That's a bad place to break your leg, out there in the western bush of Australia. And Ivan put him, Russian Jack put him in a wheelbarrow, and the wheelbarrows, back then, were not like the, you know, fiberglass wheelbarrows today with the pneumatic tire. They were wooden, they were clunky, heavy steel, tire, and he put his friend in the wheelbarrow, and he pushed him to Wyndham, which was the nearest town, 100 miles away.

Now, that's a friend. You ever push 150 pounds a mile? Going down the road, it'd be tough. I've pushed a lot of concrete in a wheelbarrow before and to push it over--it's hard, rough terrain like that. When he got into town, people said, "Where'd you come from?" And he said, "Well, I just pushed this guy 100 miles," and they couldn't believe it, and they all came out and said, "No way, that's impossible." And his friend in the wheelbarrow said, "It's true, and he never missed a rock along the way." It takes a friend to do something like that, amen? And sometimes it takes friends to bring others to Jesus.

So they couldn't get near the door. They said, "We're going to bring you to Christ." And as they get to the house, they say, "It's crowded." I mean, it's just, they couldn't receive him at the door. Jesus is inside teaching. They can't hear through the windows, and there's a crowd there, so they try to press through the door, and they push them all back. They said, "You got here late. Forget about it." They tried to get through the window. They said, "Forget about it." They completely circled the house, and it's just completely jammed with people, a great multitude of people that are there. And, I don't know, maybe the poor cripple looked up at his friends and said, "Thanks, guys, for trying. I sure appreciate it. You can

just take me back." And I just imagine one of them saying, "No way. We carried you here. You're walking home." And so they would not give up.

Now, when you run out of horizontal options, what do you do? You go vertical. So often, whenever I run into a problem-- It happened yesterday. Encountered a problem. I start to try and think. I think I'm pretty smart, and so I start thinking, "What are the solutions?" And the first thing I should've thought of was looking up, but so often we think horizontally. They tried all the horizontal options. It didn't work. Then they decided, "We better look at the vertical options." And someone, maybe it was the--matter of fact, I think in "The Desire of Ages," it says it was a crippled man because, from his perspective, laying down, where could he look? He could just look up. And he said, "Maybe the roof?"

Now, keep in mind, in Bible times, you just need to know a little bit about the architecture in the buildings back then. It was a hot climate, something like--matter of fact, they're very similar climate to Northern California, there around Israel, and it gets very hot in the summer. They still cooked their food, but it's so hot, they have to let the heat out, and they have roof tiles. The houses were like a mud-straw stucco. They had wood railings across the roof, but they usually left us a hole in the middle of the roof, and the rooms would be formed around the outside of the wall. Kitchen area was in the middle, and when they cooked, then the smoke can go up, and they would pull aside some tiles. They had these tiles that would keep the sun out and keep the rain out, but when they were cooking, they could pull them aside in the warmer weather, and it created convection.

So I don't want you to think that they climbed up on this poor guy's roof, Peter's roof, and took a fireman's ax and started hacking through the guy's roof. That would not be a very Christian thing to do. But what they did is they got around back, and they found a ladder that went up, and they hoisted their friend up on the roof, and then they began to pull aside the tiles. Well, let's look in the Bible here, and we'll read about it. And it tells us, "When they couldn't get near because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through--" you know, sometimes we need a breakthrough-- "they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying."

Now, you could imagine this. Jesus is in there, and He's teaching, and if you read the story, He's-- not only has disciples there. Peter's there, probably Peter's family. Peter may have had a larger house. So you've got Peter and his wife and his mother-in-law. You got Andrew and maybe his wife. They often had big family dwellings. The little tribe would live together. The apostles were there. There are scribes and Pharisees there because you can hear them in the story, criticizing Jesus.

So there's all these people gathered in this house. All of a sudden, they hear a clamor up on the roof. They're also already hearing the clamor through the windows and the doors, and sunlight begins to pierce through, and all this dust begins to fall down, and they look up, and there's a big commotion on the roof, and these guys are lowering this man down on this rough hammock that they used to carry him. And the scribes and Pharisees are no doubt thinking within themselves, "These uneducated, rough masses. How rude."

What is Jesus thinking? How does Jesus respond? And it says, "When He saw their faith--" this is verse 5. Says, "So they'd broken through, they let down the man, the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith--" was it "his" faith? When you bring your friends to Christ, it requires faith. "When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven you.'"

Now, this is a wonderful passage. If you read this actually in Matthew, it adds a little more to it. In Mark, He says, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." In Matthew chapter 9, verse 2, same story, He says, "Son, be of good cheer. Your sins are forgiven you." Now, if you saw that man come to Jesus, and he's paralyzed, he's--you know, probably limbs are atrophied. He's gnarled up. He can't do anything, and he's lowered

down in front of Jesus, who is known to be a great healer. What would you think his problem was? You would normally think his problem was paralysis, right? He's sick. But what's the first thing that Jesus addresses? The big problem, which is sin.

What is the big problem that we all have? Would there be any sickness in the world if it wasn't for sin? All the thorns and thistles and all the problems in the world today are the fallout of sin. And so, ultimately, you have to deal with the sin problem.

You know, I believe in the health message, and I prayed many times, and God has healed me from, you know, various things, but I realized that any physical healing is temporary. The most amazing healing would be, like, if Jesus should raise the dead, right? I mean, do you get any sicker than being dead? Yeah, you do, actually. You can be dead and saved, and you can be dead and lost. So worst condition is to be dead lost. The Bible says, "A living dog is better than a dead lion," and "Where there's life, there's hope." But when Jesus healed Lazarus, do you realize that Lazarus eventually got old and got sick and died or he had an accident and died or he got martyred and died? But that healing was temporary. Any physical healing in this world is temporary.

You know, one of the most important reasons for the health message, it's not just to make you feel better. The most important reason for the health message is so that other people can live longer eternally. The Lord wants to heal us so that we can serve Him and our fellow man in telling them about eternal life because flesh and blood, your bodies that you're wearing right now, are not going to inherit the kingdom of God. That's what the Bible says, right?

Now, I believe in the health message. Everyone clear on that? I believe in exercise. But if all you emphasize is the health message and you don't emphasize the sin problem, then what good does it do us? When Jesus comes, we're going to say, "Look, I'm in perfect health." And then He throws us in the lake of fire. Jesus said, "What profit is it if you've got your eyes and your hands and your feet, and you're whole, and you go to the lake of fire?" He said, "You're better off going into heaven, missing an eye--" and not that it's going to happen-- "or missing a hand or a foot." He uses that as a metaphor.

It's like I know some people that they run Christian Schools, and they think, "The most important thing is the academics, academics, academics," and I think academics are important, but I heard a pastor, a school board, say one time, "We're not interested in having intelligent sinners." So the kids are not learning the Gospel in the school, then what good are we doing? We're going to have them be very smart and lost when Jesus comes. So the most important thing has to be the priority.

This man, lowered into the presence of Jesus, what was his big problem? Everyone there would've thought it was paralysis, but Christ was looking on the inside. Man looks on the outward appearance. And he said, "Son, be of good cheer." Now, that's the part you find in Matthew chapter 9, verse 2. What's the Gospel? What does the word "gospel" mean? "Evangel." It means, "good news." When you talk about an evangelist, he's someone who's bringing the good news. The Gospel is good news. Jesus tells us, "Man, I have good news." "Son," what does the word "son" mean? "Adoption."

What did Jesus say? I'm sorry--what did God say after Christ was baptized? "Behold, Thou art My Son, in whom I am well pleased." And when a person is baptized, God declares they are His son or His daughter. They are adopted into the family. Paul talks about us being adopted. Folks say, "Well, we're all children of God." And I know that sounds nice, but technically, Jesus said to the religious leaders, he says, "You are not children of Abraham. You are children of your father, the devil." You're not technically really children of God until you are adopted by surrendering to the Lord.

This man came to Jesus for mercy. Jesus called him "son." That's what happened to Zacchaeus. Afterwards Zacchaeus came to Jesus, He says, "This is a son of Abraham. He's adopted into the family."

So this man, in that one little statement, "Son, be a good cheer. Your sins--" "will be" forgiven? "Are forgiven." How long did he have to wait for forgiveness? As soon as he came to Jesus. The prayer of his heart was for mercy. Jesus forgave him. Isn't that good news?

Now, that man had a shriveled body but a perfect soul. When Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven," his body was a mess, but he had eternal life. So he had a down payment. He had a guarantee of a brand-new body. Isn't that right if you're saved? But Jesus wasn't going to leave him like that. It says here in the book "Desire of Ages," page 268--Christ makes that statement, "Son, be of good cheer. Your sins are forgiven"-- "Now, in words that fell like music on the sufferer's ear, the Savior said, 'Son, be of good cheer. Thy sins are forgiven thee.' The burden of despair rolls from the sick man's soul. The peace of forgiveness rests upon his spirit, and shines out on his countenance."

His face goes through a noticeable change. "His physical pain is gone. His whole being is transformed. The helpless paralytic is healed. The guilty sinner is pardoned. In simple faith he accepts the words of Jesus as the boon of new life. He urges no further request, but he lays there--" I mean, he's been forgiven and healed, but he doesn't even know he's healed yet. "He lays there in blissful silence, too happy for words. The light of heaven irradiated his countenance, and the people with awe look upon the scene."

Everyone saw something happen. They saw his face, and he went from restless to peaceful. And what made the difference? You know, our study is about how you find freedom and rest: forgiveness. Most important thing is forgiveness for sin. When Jesus says, "All you who are weary and heavy laden," "weary, burdened by--" what? "Heavy laden, burdened by--" what? It's sin. He read the book "Pilgrim's Progress," about Christian. He's on that journey, and he's carrying this burden on his back, and he can't wait to set the burden down.

This man, when he heard Jesus say, "Son, your sins are forgiven," his burden is rolled away. And does he care about the people looking on? No, he's happy. "Son, your sins are forgiven." But there's a problem. Says, "Some of the scribes were sitting there, and they're reasoning in their hearts, 'Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sin but God alone?'" Were they correct?

Can anyone forgive sin? I'm talking about--not talking about, now, if you step on my toe, I can say, "You're forgiven," right? But that's not forgiving sin. You know, when Joseph was tempted to sin, he said, "How can I sin against God?" It wasn't a sin against Potiphar or his wife. He said it was a sin against God. When David sinned with Uriah and Bathsheba, he said, "Against Thee, and Thee only, have I done this sin." All sin is ultimately against God, so who is the only one that can forgive sin? God. They were right. They knew their Bibles.

Let me read to you from Isaiah 43. This is verse 25: "I, even I, am He who blots out thy transgressions for My own sake. I will not remember your sins." By the way, in the previous verses, He says, "I am the Lord. I am Jehovah. I, even I, am the one who blots out your transgressions." You can also read in Isaiah 44:22, "I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions."

God is the only one who can forgive sin. So they thought, "Who is this that He's forgiving sin? God, and God only, can forgive sin." By the way, were they right? Only God can forgive sin. Did Jesus forgive sin? What does that tell us about Jesus? Is Jesus God? You know, the Bible says, "You're only to worship God." But do the angels worship Jesus? You with me? The Bible says, "In the beginning, God created all things." But the Bible says, "All things that were made were made by Jesus." So what does that tell us about Jesus? God was on earth in Christ, and only God can forgive your sins. Now, has He changed? "I am the Lord. I change not."

So if you come to Jesus, crippled in body and sick with sin, will He forgive your sin? He does if we come in faith. Christ is still the great forgiver. So they're wondering how in the world He thinks that He can forgive sin, and He knew what they were thinking. "Immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves--" did they say out loud, "Who can forgive sin but God alone?" or did they think it? Says, "Jesus perceived in His spirit." They didn't say it. They thought it.

You know another definition for God? Says, "God, and God only, knows the thoughts of men's hearts." Says, "Jesus knew what was in man." Can the devil put a temptation in your mind? But can the devil read your mind? The devil cannot read your mind. He can take a pretty good, educated guess, based on your expression and body language, but if you're married, you can do that with your spouse. So you can kind of look at your kids and tell what they're thinking sometimes. The devil can do that, and he's very good at it, but he can't read your heart. "God, and God only, knows the thoughts of men's hearts." Jesus knew what they were thinking. "And so He answers the thoughts in their hearts, 'Why do you reason these things in your hearts?'" There you have it. "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk?'"

All right, let's stop and ask the question. Which is easier? Which is easier, to heal a paralytic, or to say, "Arise, take up your bed and walk"? I'm sorry--or to forgive sin or to heal a paralytic? Physical healing is easier. It's a physical problem. Spiritual healing is something that only God can do. It's the power of God. The power of a changed heart.

You know, I need to tell you, I am impressed that, you know, some of these billionaires are now getting where they're taking ships into space. You heard, of course, Branson--was it?-- took Virgin Atlantic. He actually--they went suborbital, so they got weightless. They went up to what you would technically call "space" for about five minutes, and after he did it-- that was Sir Richard Branson. Is that his name? And then Jeff Bezos did it with his space company. And Tesla's not content to just go to space. He's still trying to get to Mars. Tesla's already putting-- taking rockets up to the International Space Station. He said his goal is to die on Mars. And, boy, if I had--all you need is about \$200,000, and you can take a trip to space for five minutes.

But you know how much power it takes to break the gravitational pull of Earth? That's a lot of power. But, you know, that's not enough power to forgive sin. It's not enough power to change your heart. The only one who has the power to change your heart is God, and when that man heard those words from Christ-- so whenever God is forgiving sin, the devil is angry.

Spurgeon used to ask his sons-- they'd come back from a revival, and he said, "How'd the revival go?" and they'd say, "Good." Well, he'd want more information. He'd say, "Well, were many converted?" They said, "Not many." Said, "Well, did the people get angry?" "No, they're rather pleasant." Spurgeon said, "Well, if no one was converted and nobody got angry, you probably didn't do anything because, when you're doing the work of God, the devil doesn't like it," and so he's got these accusers which is easier.

He says, "'But that you might know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sin'-- He then says to the paralyzed man, 'I say to you--'" and this is in verse 10, "I say to you--" I'm sorry, verse 11-- "'arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.'" And immediately he arose, and took up his bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so they were all amazed--" now, there's an amazing fact-- "and they glorified God, saying, 'We never saw anything like this.'"

This man, who was considered to be a hopeless case spiritually and physically, he could do nothing to save himself. Others had to bring him to Jesus. He comes to Christ, carried by the bed. He leaves Christ, carrying the bed. And the Bible, a bed sometimes might be compared to, like, a symbol of the carnal

nature. Paul, talking about marriage, he says, "The married bed is undefiled." And the man, when he came to Christ, was carried by the bed.

You know, so many people-- everyone's got a spiritual side. We got a carnal side. You get physical desires, and it's perfectly normal. You know, people get hungry, and they get tired, and there's all kinds of different passions, and God gave us most of these desires, but people typically pervert and corrupt them and abuse them, and we suffer the results of that. But if you're controlled by the flesh, the carnal side, you will die. "But if through the power of the Spirit--" I'm quoting Romans 8, now-- "you subdue the flesh and you're controlled by the Spirit, you will live."

When that man came to Jesus, he was carried by the bed. When Jesus healed him, did he still own his bed? Yes, but now who carries who? Is the bed carrying him, or is he carrying it? After you come to Christ, you will still have a carnal side. After you come to Christ, you will still have a fleshly nature, but it is not to have dominion over you. It does not carry you. You are not to be controlled by that. You are to be led by the Spirit now. You see the difference between when that man came to Christ and when he left? He left free. He was no longer a slave of his bed. It now is a slave to him.

After you come to Christ, you will still get hungry. You will still get tired. You may still get lonely. You can have all of those same natural desires that are normal to humanity, but you are not ruled by that anymore. You are ruled by the Spirit, and that's the difference between a person before and after encountering Jesus, and they saw that, and "They were all amazed."

All right, well, this is one story of a person who finds rest in Jesus, and he's brought to Christ by others. And, you know, they had made a movie out of--he was my friend before they made a movie out of him, Desmond Doss. You know, his first wife died. His second wife was from the little town her family lived in, Covelo, where I pastored. And so they would come up, and we got a chance to become friends with Desmond Doss, and I was so proud when they made this movie of him. You know why they made a movie of him? Because he carried sick people to safety. He was a stretcher bearer, these guys who brought that man in Mark chapter 2, they are the heroes of the story, in one sense, because that man never would've got to Jesus without them.

How many people are there that will never get to church unless you bring them? They brought this man to the house where Jesus was teaching the Word. Isn't that right? That's sort of an analogy of us bringing people to where the Word is proclaimed. And how easy was it? Probably took some effort. That's why they were the last ones there, and they couldn't get in. So it's a good, good story for us. That man found rest, and the root problem, of course, was the sin problem.

All right, now we're going to look at the next story, which is the story of "Running Away." Go with me to 1 Kings 19, and we're going to go to the 1st book of Kings 19, starting with the 1st verse. This story comes on the heels of one of the greatest stories in Scripture, the story of the showdown of Elijah on Mount Carmel.

And you remember, I mean, the nation's just experienced three and a half years of famine, severe famine, and there's, like, nothing even for the horses to eat, and then Elijah tells Ahab to call all of Israel together and the prophets of Baal and the prophets of the grove, and they all danced around, carrying on all day, trying to bring fire down from heaven. Nothing happens, but at the end of the day, about the time of the evening sacrifice, which is when Jesus died, by the way, on the cross, he builds the--, it said, "He repairs the altar of the Lord." He prays a 19-second prayer. Fire comes down from heaven, and the whole nation just goes through this radical change. "They fall on their faces. They say, 'The Lord, He is God. The Lord, He is God.'" Earlier that day, they would not speak up and even say who God was. So this is dramatic change.

Then Elijah prays. Not only fire comes down, then the rain comes down. Fire and rain in one day in a miraculous way. And then he kills all the prophets of Baal. Of course, he kills them after the fire, then the rain comes. At the end of the day, he runs before the chariot of Ahab. Now, he's been fasting all day long. He told Ahab, "Arise to eat and drink, but I'm going up to the mountain," and he goes up, and he prays. The carnal king goes to eat and drink, and Elijah goes to pray. Then he tells the king, "There's the sound of an abundance of rain. You better make your way to Jezreel quickly, or you're going to get caught. Chariot wheels are going to get stuck in the mud like Pharaoh."

And so he--Elijah is filled with the Spirit of the Lord, and he runs before the king's chariot, and he leads the king all the way into the gates of Jezreel. King does not invite him to the house. He knows Jezebel is not going to be happy about all of her prophets being dead. Elijah has got to sleep with the servants at the king's gate. He's out on a damp bench somewhere sleeping, and he gets a message. He's wakened from his sleep, and he gets a message from Jezebel, this wicked queen.

Bible says the worst king that ever reigned was Ahab, who his wife, Jezebel, she was the daughter of the king of the Sidonians and worshiped Baal, and she turned the kingdom to Baal worship, and she said-- she sends this message-- well, let me read it to you: "And Ahab told Jezebel--" this is, again, 1 Kings 19, verse 1. "Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. And then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So let the gods do to me, and more also--'" notice, she says, "the gods." She is polytheistic. She doesn't believe in Jehovah-- "if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." She even sets it on her calendar. She says, "By tomorrow this time, you're going to be dead." "And when he saw that--" Elijah inquired of the Lord what He would have him to do--he didn't.

He was tired, he was hungry, he was exhausted, and instead of praying--every other time in Elijah's life, "The word of the Lord came to Elijah and said, 'Go to Ahab.' The word of the Lord came to Elijah and said, 'Go to the Brook Cherith.' The word of the Lord came to Elijah and said, 'Go to Sidon. I've got a widow there that's going to feed thee.' The word of the Lord came to Elijah and said, 'Go show yourself to Ahab.'"

Now he does not wait for the word of the Lord. He jumps, and he bolts. He panics. He's tired, he's exhausted, and he thinks, "You know, after everything I did to kill off all the prophets and turn the people back to God, Jezebel is still telling the king what to do, and all that I've done is a waste." The devil starts to give him words of discouragement.

Isn't that amazing? This is amazing. You would think that a guy that has just experienced something like this is going to be on cloud nine, that his faith is going to be unshakable, but sometimes after our greatest victories, we experience our lowest defeats, and it's not long after David kills Goliath that he's running for his life from his own king. Sometimes it's after the high point. It's after David conquered all the other nations that-- then he falls with Bathsheba.

See, you've got to watch out. You know, after these high points, after the mountain, sometimes you hit the valley. He went from Mount Carmel to the Valley of Jezreel, and he got discouraged. He does not inquire of the Lord. He panics. "When he saw that, he arose, and he ran for his life--" I also think it's interesting: Peter said, "Lord, thou all men forsake thee, I'll not forsake thee." And they come to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Peter pulls out a sword. You remember, Peter was not afraid to die for Christ at first. He pulled out a sword to fight the men, the soldiers that came to arrest Jesus, but a little while later, a girl starts to make fun of Peter, and he cannot stand that intimidation, and he denies Christ.

Elijah was not afraid of 450-- you know, there's actually-- altogether there was about 850 false prophets. There were the prophets of the groves, prophets of Baal, so it's like 850 to 1. Elijah is not afraid. One woman sends him running. What is it about men that they are so intimidated by women? And he gets up, and he runs. He was not afraid to stand up to the king. He got in Ahab's face and said, "It is you and your father's house that have sinned." "He arose and he ran for his life, and he went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah. He left his servant there." He had a servant just like, you know, Elisha had Gehazi. "But he himself, he went a day's journey into the wilderness--" he's just heading off into the desert where there's this trackless wilderness, and he can't be found-- "and he came, and he sits down under a broom tree." And that tree is kind of what it sounds like. It's a tree that, when it was dry, they would make them into brooms. "And he prayed that he might die."

Now, is that the only time that God's people have gotten so discouraged that they wished they were dead? I won't ask for a show of hands, but have you ever despaired of life? I have. You know my testimony. Jonah, prophet of God, does miracles for him, and he says in Jonah chapter 4, verse 3, "Therefore now, O Lord, take away my life from me, for it's better for me to die--" prophet of God, thinking suicidal thoughts. Actually, it's not suicide. He's asking God to do it. Job 6, verse 8, "Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant me the thing that I long for, that He would be pleased to crush me, that He would loose His hand from me, that He would cut me off." That means, "That He would slay me." Job wanted to die.

Numbers 11, Moses is speaking: "If You treat me like this, then please kill me here and now." Moses is praying to die. Jeremiah 20:14, "Curse be the day in which I was born. Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me."

I remember one of the few times I was bold enough to talk back to my father. I was exasperated, a teenager, and having a hard time, and he was mad at me, and I said, "Well, it's your fault that I'm here." He didn't know quite what to say because it was true. I said, "It's all your fault that I'm here."

Have you ever said, "Lord, just take me life," "I don't want to live anymore"? But Elijah got so discouraged, then he runs. Well, no, wait a second. He falls asleep, exhausted. "As he lay, he slept under the broom tree, and suddenly an angel touched him." God had not forgotten him. "'Arise and eat.' And he looked there, and by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water, and he ate and drank, and then he lay down again." He's just exhausted, and he ate.

Sometimes after a meal, you're tired again. "And a second time, the angel came back and touched him, and he said, 'Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you.' So he arose, and he ate, and he drank, and he went in the strength of that food 40 days and 40 nights as far as the mountain of God."

When we're discouraged and ready to die, you need angel's food. There's the lesson. Sometimes you just need to claim the promises of God. What is that bread that comes from angels? It's the Word of God. "Man doesn't live by bread alone but by every word of God," amen? Elijah was exhausted. He needed rest. He needed peace. "And he went up, and he went in that strength of that meat 40 days and 40 nights."

Does the Bible talk about others who fasted 40 day and 40 nights? Moses fasted 40 days, 40 nights. Moses did it twice, actually, but Moses did not eat or drink 40 days, 40 nights. "Elijah went in the strength of that food and water 40 days and 40 nights." It's telling us how you can be sustained by God.

And then who's the other one that went 40 days and 40 nights? Jesus, right? And was Jesus ministered to by angels? You know, it doesn't say it in every gospel. It says, "And angels came and ministered to Him." How do you think the angels took care of Jesus after He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights? They fed Him. Took care of Him.

So what happened to Elijah is a reminder to us. And he went to Mount Sinai, which is where Moses fasted 40 days and 40 nights, and Jesus went into the wilderness 40 days and 40 nights, and there God spoke to Elijah in a still small voice. God was not in the wind. He was not in the fire. He was not in the earthquake. He was in the still small voice, and that's when he found rest after eating God's food and drinking the living water. It's talking about through taking Christ in, he finally found rest.

You can tell I've run out of time. I want to remind our friends that are watching, we do have a special free offer. This is a premium offer. It's a beautiful magazine on "Amazing Health Facts: Bible Secrets for a Longer & Stronger Life." We'd like to send this to you for free, and you'll see the information there on the screen, how you can obtain that. God bless you, friends. Lord willing, we'll study His Word together again next week.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the key word on your screen to 40544, or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts, wherever and whenever you want and, most important, to share it with others.

Announcer: "Amazing Facts Changed Lives."

Gary: Early 1980s, all the baby boomers were turning 21, and the nightclub scenes were exploding, and I started a entertainment lighting company.

Female: I was the president, and there were six divisions, doing the raves in the '80s and '90s, you know, in some warehouse where you're setting up lighting and fog and, you know, who knows what's going on in there, and nightclub installations. I loved it, and it was who I was.

Gary: Bought a new house out of town, and we moved about two or three times, but we were always going into different churches. We were in a Lutheran Church, and then we were in a Methodist Church. I think we were in three different Baptist churches. My wife was raised Catholic. I was raised Methodist. Currently, I've been up, reading all the Hal Lindsey books and watching all the, "Left Behind" movies, and so I really wanted to understand what the book of Revelation was all about, but nothing really ever made sense to me.

Female: One day, Pastor Lloyd Logan came knocking, and he had that Net '99 flyer.

Lloyd Logan: We were preparing for an evangelistic series, and different people were going different directions with handbills to invite people to the meetings.

Female: I saw that coming at me, you know, all the colors, and I thought, "Oh, no, this is some kind of cult thing."

Lloyd: And she said, "Thank you very much, but I'm not much interested myself, but my husband likes that kind of thing."

Female: And Lloyd said, "Would you give it to him, please?" And I said, "Okay, I will." So I took the pamphlet, and I put it on the calendar. Gary came home, and he walked by it.

Gary: Ran to the kitchen to quickly eat and take a shower and go back out and work a show.

Female: Two, three days went by like this, and I had moved that brochure from the calendar, put it on the dining room table, put it back on the counter, and I actually threw it in the garbage. As I threw it in that garbage can, I could hear him and see his face saying, "Would you give it to him, please?" And I actually took the garbage out. And that night, lying in bed, I kept seeing his face and hearing his voice, and thinking, "Oh, boy, I got to get that brochure out of the garbage." And I took that, and I put it right underneath the remote control. Bright colors. He'll see it.

Gary: I finally sat down in my living room, and I picked up the remote, and I saw that angel holding out that scroll.

Female: "Whoa, cool. What is this?" And I was in the kitchen cooking, and I thought, "Oh, no."

Gary: And I looked at it, and I turned it over, and then I saw a little building, a little church building, and it wasn't too far away. It was about six houses down, and it said, "Friday night."

Female: And I certainly wasn't going. I mean, it wasn't my intention to go.

Gary: I didn't have any shows going on that night, and so I thought it was a one-night deal. I went, and as I heard about the millennium man, I was just blown away. I didn't want it to end. I knew what I was hearing was all from the Scripture, and it wasn't based on Hollywood movies or other books that were written. They said, "Come again tomorrow night," and I thought, "Wow, great, two nights." So I tried to tell my wife about it, and she still wasn't interested, and then she decided to come.

Female: I started to hear the truth, you know, and I started to get fed.

Gary: Every night, after the seminar, they would hand us an Amazing Facts study guide. I couldn't do those fast enough.

Female: The business kept us going seven days a week, and it was night and day.

Gary: Crews working all around the clock, and so, when we finally heard the Sabbath message, you know, so far, everything's been true, right from the Bible.

Female: Church on Saturday, no work. Anyway, it all clicked.

Gary: Both our heads turned at each other. Our jaws dropped open.

Female: I said, "We can't do that."

Gary: And the first thing that came out of my mouth was, "We have to."

Female: I knew that it would be a sacrifice, and I was in fear about it.

Gary: We didn't know how we were going to do it, but we talked to the pastor about it, and the pastor said, "Well, just pray about it, and God will open doors."

Female: I didn't want to give up all the connections I had made, all the networking, all the money, all the investment.

Gary: We went to the board and ask them if they would consider closing on Saturday, and they agreed to, so we closed the storefront on Saturday, but we were still doing productions, and that kind of

bothered us, so a couple months later, God opened the door for my wife. She exited the company. I prayed about it, and God opened the door for me too.

Female: Gary, shortly after, was offered a job being paid more money than he made as an owner of the company.

Gary: He said, "I'll give you a thousand-dollar raise, and you will never work another weekend.

Female: And we were able to keep the Sabbath and enjoy the wonderful blessings that God had for us on the Sabbath day.

Gary: My kids never again had to say, "Quit talking about work." After the seminar was over, my wife and I, and my children were all baptized into the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Even if I gave up everything, I knew that God would have something better.

Female: I have much more understanding, and there's much more depth in my Christian walk with the Lord.

Gary: We started an Amazing Facts Bible School at a church that allows anybody to understand the Scriptures, understand the end times. Church changed my life dramatically, and I'm very happy and excited to be a part of it.

Announcer: "Amazing Facts Changed Lives."

Male: When I was 15, I bought my first bag of marijuana out of curiosity, and from the age of 15, on to 23, was a constant experimentation with different substances. By the time I was 23, there was not a drug I had not tried. I had worn myself out, searching for happiness, and one day I came home, tired as usual, and I started drinking, and as usual, after I started drinking, I started looking for a higher buzz. Someone came by with some Xanax. Someone also came by with something else that I liked, and that was cocaine.

This time, not thinking, I took the whole thing. So I went to bed about 5 in the afternoon. My roommate went off to work that night. When he came back from work the next day though, he noticed something was wrong because I was still in bed in the same position. He tried to wake me up, and he couldn't wake me up. And when my parents found me, they found me curled up in a fetal position in my hospital room, unconscious still, and I stayed unconscious in this coma-like state for the next week.

I stayed the next month in the hospital, slowly getting better to where I could sit up in bed, and I had to learn to walk again, but my parents found this one facility out in the hills of Tennessee. I had to admit that I liked the place, but they were Christian, and even worse than that, I said, "Yes," when they asked me if I wanted to go to church that week.

Before the pastor said the benediction, I was so excited because I was planning my escape. And so, after everybody was all in bed that night, I made sure that they were snoring and that they were asleep. I went into the kitchen and stole a few bananas, got my backpack ready. I figured I could get sober on my own. My favorite song was "I Did It My Way." Of course, my definition of "sober" was a nice supply of marijuana each day and alcohol on the weekends. And, of course, if I had a bad hangover, I might need some of those relaxing pills to take, but other than that, that would be it.

So here I am, stranded on the street in the big city of Houston. My bag of clothes is gone. My cell phone was gone. My wallet, my bus tickets gone. I don't have anything but the shirt on my back. It's at that

point that this man comes up to me, this mysterious man. He's actually very short and appears to be homeless, and he led me to some food and even a place to stay that night.

Looking back, it is my firm conclusion that that was an angel. So my dad was able to come down to Houston and pick me up and take me back up to the health retreat at Wildwood in Tennessee. They had a satellite. On this channel, there was a man named Doug Batchelor. I liked what I heard. I liked the way he explained the Bible. It was so simple, and he also had an experience similar to mine, and I had talked to Lou about him, and they happened to have a whole set of cassette tapes.

I would wake up at 4 in the morning sometimes, and I would get up, and I would watch two of those videos before breakfast. I would sit this close to the TV, watching what Doug Batchelor was saying, just eating up every word of it. I was so tired of hearing lies and even believing my own lies that it was so wonderful to find something that was solid and that I could rely on.

And so, when I got home from rehab, in my local church, Eric Flickinger from Amazing Facts was holding an evangelistic series. They solidified my conviction, and it was then I made the absolute decision to follow Jesus. I praise the Lord Jesus Christ for Amazing Facts. I praise God for Amazing Facts because they're so Bible-based. They send out evangelists who are willing to teach the truth to people. I'm thankful that they're preaching right now all over the world, changing lives, just as they changed mine.

Announcer: Together, we have spread the Gospel much farther than ever before. Thank you for your support.