

# The Story Behind the Story

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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**Bible Text:** Hosea 6:1-3  
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*Lord, tonight we gather as those as we've sung about that used to be called strangers and aliens. Lord, we recognize that because of our earthly backgrounds, the overwhelming majority of us have been grafted into your family. Lord, we confess tonight that we didn't grow up going to the synagogue school, we didn't grow up chewing our teeth on the prophets and the men of old, so Lord, as we walk down the path of these that we often refer to as minor, Lord, help us, O God, help us by your Spirit to overcome a lack of background, help us by your Spirit to overcome a lack of familiarity, help us, O God, as those who have been grafted in as children of the King. Help us to see the truth of your prophecies and your promises. Lord, may we rightly divide your word, may we allocate it to its proper place and may we submit therein. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

This evening, I want to encourage you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Hosea 6 as we continue a study this season through what we know as the minor prophets. For those of you that were here this morning, allow me just a brief overview. The minor prophets, Hosea through Malachi, are not minor because their message is such, but because of the quantity, or shall I say, the lack thereof. One of the things that we've done through our Bible reading plan, if you've noticed, for those of you who are good students and you've looked ahead, you will notice that throughout the course of the next couple months, there's really only two times where we have a complete six or seven day weekly reading, that's as we walk through Hosea and as we walk through Zechariah, both of them, great in length as compared to the other minor prophets. You will notice that on some of the weeks we will be studying Jonah that has four chapters, and you'll notice that in the Bible reading plan there are several days that just have X's on them, meaning there is no specific reading for that day. I want you to understand really there are two reasons for this. The first is this: we wanted to allocate at least on Sunday morning, at least one week or, shall we say, one week to each of the minor prophets, and if we began to just read a chapter a day, there would be some weeks where we would cover all three minor prophets and then we together on Sunday and none of them would get rightful attention. The second reason is this, and this is what I want to encourage you tonight, take those days that do not have a specific reading throughout the summer season and repeat the same minor prophets you've been reading. This is unfamiliar territory. You know, we read through Habakkuk and we say, "Okay, got that ready for Sunday." You might want

to read through it a second or third time because it is not that which is typically a part of daily devotionals within our culture and our faith, and so we want to give each of these individuals and their message their due diligence on Sunday morning, we also want to allow us the opportunity to study the word of God as 2 Timothy 2 says and to, if necessary, repeat the message that that which we have not been so familiar with.

Well tonight, we come to probably one of the most familiar of the prophets, a man by the name of Hosea. In chapter 6, I want to talk about the story behind the story. You see, Hosea is that, it is a story. His position is not just unique among the minor prophets, his position is unique among all of the prophets, and it is all of their lives and their stories that give context to how the Lord utilized them, whether it was Daniel in the famous lion's den or Jeremiah in his family structure, but Hosea was unique because his life is the story. In fact, it is in chapter 1 of the book of Hosea where the Lord comes to him and says, "I need you to marry a woman of whoredoms." And I know oftentimes we struggle with why would the Lord ask a holy man, presumably so, to be engaged to and to be intertwined with such unholy behavior. I know tonight we're going to spend our time in chapter 6 but let me give you a little review of chapter 1. It says that they got married and she conceived him a child, and then child number two and three, it says that she simply conceived them, and we discover that from a few miles away they began a relationship that appeared to be fine on the surface but her heart was corrupt. Eventually that which was internal began to manifest itself on the outside. According to chapter 2, she went and she lusted after these and those for that which they would provide. You see, it is the story of Israel, it is the story of humanity. We are Gomer in the story and the Lord is Hosea. Hopefully you've been reading along and you saw that this sin placed her, placed the Israelites, places us in the shackles of bondage and slavery, and what did Hosea do? He purchased her back as his own, much like the fact that we see all throughout the New Testament that we've been but with a price. It is the story of redemption. He is the Redeemer, we are the ones who need to be redeemed.

So the story of Hosea is simply that, it is a story of his life, his marriage, his family, the day to day life and how the Lord operated therein to picture for us waywardness through sin and rebellion, and redemption through the Lord's love, mercy and grace. But tonight I want to talk about the story behind the story because as we walk through the minor prophets not only in the context of Hosea and Gomer, but also particularly with Joel and Amos and such, we discover a lot of communication regarding the coming of the Lord, and when it comes to the minor prophets' message, the overwhelming communication of the coming of the Lord is not what we would call the first coming, it's not what we would call the Christmas season or even the Easter message, in fact, the majority of the words of the minor prophets is a fulfillment of Titus 2, it says, "Look for the soon appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." In other words, most of what we read in the minor prophets is about the actual second coming of Jesus Christ.

Allow me to illustrate from the book of Hosea then we'll go to chapter 6. Remember that the first child was named Jezreel. Maybe that's a name that somewhat rings a bell. The Jezreel Valley just north or the northern part of Israel, is what we call modern-day Armageddon, Revelation 16, and remember what the Lord told Hosea and told the

Israelites in chapter 1, "In the place where you departed from me is the place that I will redeem and restore you." Is that not the place where the Lord ultimately returns and restores them and establishes his kingdom? That is the final great battle, the Jezreel Valley, the Valley of Armageddon. So from the very first chapter of the very first book of the minor prophets, there is this theme of what you and I today would call in context the second coming.

So as we see the story of Hosea and Gomer, our rebellion and his offer of redemption, she has been purchased back and in chapter 6 in three very simple verses, there is the story behind the story that their story is not just about redemption, it's not just about forgiveness, there's a bigger story. Beginning in verse 1 it says,

1 Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. 3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

Now those appear to be three simplistic verses but they are rich in context of what you and I know as the second coming of Jesus Christ, and so I want to begin by establishing this, what was the problem that we see in verse 1? The problem of all humanity is our rebellion, our consistent nature to gravitate away from the things of God and to the things of carnality and of flesh.

Notice it says, "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he has torn." That is the message not just of the minor prophets but all of Scripture, in light of the fact that we have rebelled, allow us to return unto the Lord. But what we see in this passage not only are we called to return to the Lord, but one day he will return for us. Let us never forget that all of the messages and all the prophecies and when you get to the end of the Bible, all of the descriptions of the wrath of God being poured out, it's not simply so the Lord can demonstrate his strength, it's because we've rebelled. We have played the part of Gomer. Israel played the part of Gomer. Humanity has played the part of Gomer.

So what does the Lord promise? In spite of our need to return, it says that he will "heal that which he has smitten and he will bind us up." Those are two fantastic words of prophecy.

First, he will heal that which has been torn, that which has been smitten. You know, Isaiah 53 is this great messianic passage. It talks about the fact earlier in 52 that Jesus, the Savior, would be one who would be unrecognizable to humanity. When he was placed on the cross, his visage, according to verse 17, was marred like no other man. You get to chapter 53, "By his stripes we are healed." He took on our transgressions and such. There's this beautiful passage of what we call the suffering servant. I think one of the struggles, though, is when we talk about his stripes being healed, when you talk about

here when it says that he will heal us, I think sometimes we forget that often that healing does not take place on this side of the grave.

Oh sure, there are times where the Lord heals. I believe the Lord does heal but you do understand that one day in glory that is the ultimate healing, and when the Lord says he will heal us, he will mend us, he will make us right, that's not simply so that we can have an extra 5 or 10 years here on earth, let me remind you of Hezekiah, the great king of Isaiah 39 who begged the Lord, "Don't let me die. Give me a few more years." You do remember that his last 15 years were the worst years of his entire reign. You remember that last statement he made in Isaiah 39, a scary statement, and I'm a going to allow the sarcasm to flow tonight, "Well, at least it'll be okay in my days." In other words, I don't care what happens to my kids, my grandkids or the next generation, at least everything will be fine with me. I think one of the greatest struggles of the modern day what we often call prosperity Gospel, is it's trying to make that which is eternal and that which is heavenly here temporarily and on earth. I'm all for healing, I pray for folks to be healed, I believe in it, but it doesn't matter how many times we pray and how many sicknesses and illnesses that we see healed on the side, you do realize we're all headed toward the grave.

But it says here, "I will heal." That's why these passages like in 1 Corinthians 15 are so important, that which is corruptible will take on incorruption, that which is perishable will be imperishable. Eventually you and I will receive a permanent eternal healing, not at the first coming but at the second coming. It says there that he will bind that which has been torn and smitten. Now the Meyers' house probably has a more graphic visual of this than many of your homes. If you've ever had a piece of carpet or a rug or such that's been frayed on the ends, you understand that binding is critical because it takes that which is torn and it prevents it from further destruction. You do understand that my house possesses three teenage boys and two full grown very large dogs, and so there's a lot of material on the ground, in fact, oftentimes Tracy and I say, "Why don't we get some new rugs?" To which she says, "Why would we do that, they're just going to tear them up anyway?" But when you bind carpet and you take that material and you place it on the edge, it keeps it from further tearing, it keeps that from further, shall we say, shredding.

You know, at the second coming of Jesus Christ not only will we be eternally healed, we will be eternally bound. That's why Revelation 21 is so important, it says there will be no more remembrance of former things, no more crying, no more heartache, no more pain. All the stuff in life that tears at us, all the things that cause us agony and pain and appear to be not only to the eyes but to the emotions a struggle, he's going to bind all that up. There will be no more tearing. There will be no more heartache. There will be no more pain. You see, all the things that we truly desire in our flesh when it comes to our faith, are not realized on this side but on the other. Have you noticed how many of the songs of faith are about the other side of Jordan? How many songs of our faith are about when he returns and when he comes, because deep down inside we get it that we're not going to realize all that on this side but we believe and have faith that it will be realized on the other side.

He promises he will heal that which has been smitten, he will bind that which has been torn. Verse 2, maybe one of the greatest prophetic verses in all of the Bible. It says, "After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Now allow me to address what appears to be the obvious. You read that passage and your first thought is to go back to the crucifixion, your first thought is to go back to the empty tomb, the problem is the chronology of Scripture and the chronology from Jesus' mouth does not fit verse 2. What did he say in Matthew 12? After three days and three nights. Over and over again we celebrate three days, three nights, but what does it say here? After two days we'll be revived, in the third day we shall live in his sight. The chronology doesn't fit even what Jesus said about the crucifixion experience and resurrection reality. That does not discount the crucifixion, that does not discount the resurrection, what that tells us is that the verse 2 isn't about Christmas, it's not about Easter, it's about the second coming.

And so you and I, how do we grasp this? What does this mean? I want to encourage you tonight to turn to a couple of passages and the first one is found in 2 Peter 3. I want us to read a passage of Scripture that I think oftentimes is relegated to the book of Genesis when its actual reality is the book of Revelation. 2 Peter 3 begins by talking about the fact that in the last days there will be scoffers, there will be those who come and say, "Jesus said he was coming back, he hasn't come back, why do you continue to believe that?" By the way, let me give you a modern-day example while you're finding 2 Peter 3. For better or for worse, I found myself a resident of McClinton County, Texas or Waco, Texas in the early 90s when David Koresh and the Branch Davidians did their famous exposé. To this date some 25 plus years later, there are still people who show up to that concrete slab in Waco, Texas believing that David Koresh is going to raise from the dead, 25 years later.

You and I aren't waiting for him to raise from the dead, that happened three days after the fact, we're waiting for his return and it's been some 2,000 years approximately that we continue to wait and continue to desire. Notice what it says here in verse 3, I'm just going to begin in verse 1 of 2 Peter 3, it says,

1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand

years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

You know that famous passage in verse 8 that a day with the Lord is as if a thousand years, a thousand years is as if a day, you know in the context of 2 Peter 3 when they say, "Well, where is his coming? When is he going to return?" Simply put mathematically it's only been a weekend, why are we in such a rush? But oftentimes we take that passage and we relegate it to the book of Genesis with explanations of the length therein as far as creation is concerned but unless I read wrongly, and I don't think I did, everything we just read is about the second coming. It's not about Genesis, it's about the future coming of the Lord, in fact, it says with a fervent heat. What we just heard in that famous hymn, "How great thou art," that the heavens shall be rolled back, everything is going to dissolve and be renewed and restored. Everything in this passage is about the second coming. Notice what it says, a day with the Lord is as if a thousand years. What did Hosea 6:2 say? After two days he will revive us. What does it mean to revive? To take that which is dead and to cause life to come back therein.

That being said, go back to 1 Thessalonians 4. You didn't know you were coming to Bible drill tonight. 1 Thessalonians 4. I want to understand that the context therein. 1 Thessalonians 4 we have chronologically the first letter of the Apostle Paul that the Lord gives us, in other words, those early believers were beginning to expire physically. They were beginning to wonder, "Did Jesus really mean what he said, that he said, 'I am the resurrection and the life, he that lives shall never die'?" So in 1 Thessalonians 4, I want you to look at verse 18 and then we're going to go back. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Now in light of comfort, let's go back to verse 13,

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, [Did we not just read about ignorance in 2 Peter 3?] concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

It is this event, it is this passage that describes a revival, those that were dead in Christ being made alive. In fact, if we read a parallel passage in 1 Corinthians 15, it says that these that are changed, as we mentioned here, then we join them, are caught up, the

corruptible becomes incorruptible, that which is perishing will become that which is without perishing. Interesting that 2 Peter 3 says that a day with the Lord is as if a thousand years, Hosea 6 says after two days we will be revived, and we just read a passage about what happens when the people of God are made alive with the Lord.

One final passage in the New Testament, go to the book of Hebrews 4. Hebrews 4 is an incredible passage not only in relationship to our reviving but to the potential chronology thereof. Hebrews 4, I'm going to go ahead for the sake of context and forgive me for the sake of time, I'm going to begin in verse 1. It says,

1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. 3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Listen to verse 4,

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Do you notice this theme over and over of entering into his rest? Matthew 11, Jesus made it very clear that his burden was easy, his yoke was light, this entering into his rest, very picturesque of this time where we shall be with the Lord not striving and toiling on the earth as of today, but in his sight, in his presence, as living breathing children of his kingdom, and yet even in this passage, notice it speaks of the seventh day, the day of rest.

All that being said, if you would, return back to Hosea 6 as we talk about this procedure, after two days, in the third day, we shall live in his sight. I know, and by the way, I throw the proverbial darts as well, I know there are a lot of people who have tried to make a lot of predictions about what we know as the chronology of the second coming, but tonight I'm going to give you my chronological prediction of the return of Jesus. Are you ready? We're closer today than we were yesterday, that's all you need to know, and if tomorrow comes, we'll be closer tomorrow than we are today.

You and I, according to Matthew 24, you and I do not have the privilege of knowing the day or hour but he does say we will know the season. He says, "As the fig trees begin to blossom, you will know that it is the last generation." You and I have the privilege, according to what we've just read, that we're living two days on this side of an empty tomb and there's a third day coming. Now I'm not about to get into all of the chronology of the Gregorian calendar and the Jewish calendar and all that stuff because I'm here to tell you that anybody who tells you what they think they know about the chronology has got it all wrong anyway because Jesus said, "In the day you think he comes, he will not." But if you just look at it from a very broad perspective, how many times have you heard me and others say, "Well, it's been about 2,000 years"? Well, that depends on how you do all the dating because we don't know the exact dates thereof, but 2,000 years, according to 2 Peter 3, is two days, and Hebrews 4 talks about the seventh day being a rest, Hosea 6 says in the third day you will see him in sight, and by the way, for those of you who are quick with math when you do the chronology of the Old Testament, that's right, you get about 4,000 years or four days described from the events of Genesis up to the time of Christ. What does all that mean? It means that there's a story behind the story. It means there's a day when the Lord shall return for his own and you and I are closer to that day than anybody who has ever walked on the face of the earth.

Now it may or may not occur within your lifetime or mine, but Hosea made it very clear after two days he will revive us, on the third day he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight. There is a day coming where not only our bodies will be transformed but our sight will be made whole.

You know, the great hymn writer, Fanny Crosby, for those of you that may not be aware, she was blind, she was unable to see physically, and one time and I'm sure it happened numerous times, she was confronted about her blindness and someone asked her, they said, "Do you wish that you could see that which is around you?" She thought for a moment and she said, "No, I actually like my blindness." And they said, "Why would you say that?" She said, "Because the first thing I'll ever see is Jesus." Think about that for just a moment. There's coming a day that we'll live in his sight. We believe on the Lord, we have faith in the Lord but there's coming a day when he returns we will live in his sight.

Verse 3 of Hosea 6 has the particulars here, it says, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Here are the particulars here.

There are two analogies that the Lord uses for this reviving, this catching up, this gathering unto himself his children. One of those is agricultural and the other has to do with rain, and I know the two go hand-in-hand, and what we see in the agricultural is in the book of Ruth and in other passages where it talks about the firstfruits, the harvest and the gleanings. Here it speaks in context of rain, that there is the former rain and the latter rain, and the rain in totality. What we know as the agricultural season not only of Israel, but it has a threefold aspect, there are rains that come early in the season that are brief but prepare the ground, then and it is this time of the year where it is the rainy season, this is

the time that the crops in the ground receive its true nutrients, but it is in that latter, early, mid-fall time that if the latter rains come, there can actually be an additional opportunity to receive or to retrieve the crops. Why is this important? Because in a complete non-altered sense, the Israeli agricultural system has firstfruits, the harvest, and the gleanings. What did he say here? There will be the rain but there's also the former rain and the latter rain.

One of my favorite passages, in fact it's an enigma to many, is in Matthew 27 beginning in verse 51 where it says that when Jesus Christ breathed his last breath, it talked about the rocks rending, the veil of being torn, then it says that after his resurrection many of the saints walked in the holy city. It's a picture of the firstfruits. It's a picture of the, shall we say, the former rain. We also know that there's a time coming toward the end, the Bible speaks over and over about right before his coming that harvest that is collected, those final gleanings, that latter rain. But you and I today, we are on the forefront, we are on the doorstep of the rainy season and of the harvest. Just as we read in 1 Thessalonians 4, there is coming a day when the trumpet shall sound, the Lord shall descend and those who are alive in Christ shall be raised up together with those who are dead in Christ, and we shall forever be with the Lord.

Now just this week, I was asked by somebody via electronic communication to repeat a statement that I've said numerous times but I understand that it can be difficult, and allow me to so once again. It's a statement that's not my own but the person who gave it to me is now deceased and he told me that on his death I could take ownership of it, so now it's mine. Here we go: there is nothing that has to happen before Jesus Christ comes back for us. In other words, he can come back at any moment. There's a lot of things that have to happen before Jesus comes back with us. Some of the things that have to happen before Jesus comes back with us may, in fact, happen before he comes back for us. In other words, you and I don't get caught up in all the is happening and that is happening, for he can descend at any moment and at any time. It says after two days he will revive us, and the third day he will raise us up. He shall come in verse 3, "as the rain, the latter and the former rain." You and I today live our faith because a tomb was discovered to be empty three days after the inhabitant went in. The declaration by the modern prophets, the declaration by Hosea 6, the declaration by numerous passages in the New Testament is that he did ascend and one day he shall return. Hosea 6 says after two days he will revive us. I'm not about to put a strict chronology on that but, folks, we would be fools not to realize it could be any moment, it could be any time.

I want to leave you tonight with a very well-known story of a very prolific preacher who lives about 100 miles northeast of here, an individual who was a young child growing up in a single home with his mom, claimed that his mom made the best chocolate chip cookies in all of the world. He would come home from school and he could smell them when he got on the front porch. When he would enter into the house, from the back of the house his mom would always yell out, "Now Charles, don't take any of the cookies. Save them until after dinner." Well, you do realize that when you tell a third-grader not to eat the cookies, what are they going to do? They're going to go straight to the cookie jar, right? He recounts the story as of a young child where he very quietly and softly tiptoed

into the kitchen, got up on a little stool, put his hand in the cookie jar, out of order. He recounts that his mom walked in with a smile on her face and said, "Now Charles, is that really what you want to be doing when Jesus comes back for you?" It's kind of late to discipline your children, is it not? Let me make all of this somewhat heavy theology make real practical sense. What we've discussed tonight is simply this: Jesus could come back at any time. Let me ask you this: do you want to be doing what you're doing when he does? Do you have your hand in the cookie jar or do you have your hand in his word? Is what you're doing what you want to be doing when he comes back for you? The choice is yours.

Let's pray. As we prepare for our time of decision, maybe tonight you are that person or maybe you're that individual who said, "Do you know what? I need to be saved. I need to repent of my sins. I need to believe on Jesus. I need to be saved." We would love the privilege of talking with you, praying with you and seeing how the Lord is working in your life. Maybe you're an individual tonight that there's another decision that the Lord has impressed upon your heart, maybe tonight even in the context of Sunday evening, you're that person that says, "Do you know what? This is our family of faith, this is our church home, this is where we need to get plugged in." Maybe you just need to pray with somebody. Whatever it may be, I want you to understand that we're just here to celebrate what the Lord is doing in your life.

*Lord, as we come to this conclusion of our service where we realize it's really not the end, it's a beginning, Lord, this is the beginning of taking that which you have given us and not leaving it here in this room but making sure as we walk out the doors that we not just embrace it but we walk in the truth thereof. Lord, for those who you are dealing with when it comes to salvation and forgiveness, God, I pray right now they would realize the truth of their error and their sin and the goodness and the grace of Jesus Christ. Lord, for those who are struggling with their hand in the proverbial cookie jar, God, I pray that we would be more desirous to be in favor with you than to simply feed our flesh. Help us, O God, as we await your soon coming return to live like we're actually excited about it. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

I'm going to ask you to stand as we have our time of invitation, any decision, I'll be right down here at the front.