

This is something new to me . I give honor to God _____ mama for _____, to our pastor Bishop Johnson, and to our officers, members, and personal friends, and to all of God's people. We just trying to do what we asked to do. And this is a task that we are asked to do. And my daughter, I talk to my daughter, I said, "let's shed some more light on," and she was telling me what they one day _____ want us to do this morning __ of the students from Rhode~~s~~ed College, thank God for you this morning. They wanted to hear and learn what went on way back then.

You know what? Had I been strong enough, Sister Collins, I wouldda brought my whole _____, praise God. And I wouldda brought my cotton, I got it in my house. I would ~~have da~~ brought it to show you –

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– you know what a _____ look like? You know what a _____ look like? But you may not know what a cotton sack look like. Now, a cotton sack is nine feet long, and when you pick the cotton seed – I should have been able to bring all that stuff, but I just couldn't bring myself. It's okay. Thank God for being here.

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But we want you to have a good understanding of some of the things – this is what they want to know, some of the things, M~~m~~other Smith, you and I and M~~m~~other Forest went through with in our day. And we sure enough thank God for the things that we went through because we still here today. And they weren't easy. And I told my daughter, I said Sunday morning and the word is going on in everybody's church this morning, so I'm going to have to put God first, you know? And that's the way we supposed to do.

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I am _____ 'cause you know what? In the scriptures it tells is – was not anything made that was made without Him. So He did it all. So we shall go honor Him.

And I'm gonna read a little bit of this from Exodus the third chapter to let you know that before our time, long before our time, many, many, many, many years before our time, some more people had gone through similar situations. So it always be a turnover. This is history. What we've gone through and we just thank the Lord 'cause guess what, some people didn't make it through.

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So we are still here and we can praise God this morning, we can praise Him like the house is full. And I sure enough thank you for thinking about me and asking me to help with this. 'Cause listen –

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– I would have been right in some of the marches, but my children were young, and I had to work six days a week. So when I worked six days a week and then take care of my eight children, what time have I got to march? I was busy in my day. And M~~m~~other

Smith was my next door neighbor. She had eight children, too, so we was some busy women. And you know what? I'm excited. If nobody's excited but me, Mmother Smith stayed—right next door to me, she had eight children and I had eight children, and guess what? Our children played together. They fought sometimes. But we had never had a argument to my mind. We had never had an argument.

So – and then when the church started up, when this church – you told me I could talk about this church, too. When it started out in our home with prayer meeting through prayer.

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Prayer will keep you. Don't tell me what pray won't do. Prayer will keep you. And when we started out this church with prayer, Mmother Smith came to our home and joined this church from our home, and not did only Mmother Smith join from our home and start __ ____, the neighbor across the street was a deacon here and came and ame — —we just brought the neighborhood right on with us. Praise God.

Back in 1972, you could open your doors and tell folk, "Come on in." Everybody visit everybody. We had prayer-meeting from house to house. My brother-in-law said to us yesterday, "We need to do some more of that." I said, "Yeah. But we 'fraid to." Oh, drugs took over. Took over our streets and took over people home. You don't know whose home _____ you can't _____ your door and tell everybody, "Come on in."

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It's just different today. This is how things changes.

You know, our new president talking about the change. We are blessed to see the change. And you know who wouldda ever thought we'd have a black president thinking of the things that we've gone through? But God is able———. When we put God first, He is able. Oh, HalleluiahHallelujah.

[Begin Segment 2: 0:05:28:00](#)

Now, let me read you some scripture before I get too far, 'cause we don't get this together — the Lord said _____. These people are – these are the Israelites. They were very much like us black people today. They were struggling for equality, and pharaoh, you know that that pharaoh was tough on them just like a lot of people who we was ___ share croppers, we stayed on the white man farm. I'm a tell you about it in just a minute. Let me read you scripture before I get too far ___.

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It said, Now Mosses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the ___ ___ of men, and he led the flock to the backside of the desert and came to the mountain of God even to ___ ___. And the angle of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of light out of the midst of the bush, and he looked and beheld the bush is burn with fire and the bush was not consumed. That's saying something right there. Mosses kept the flock of Jethro. Jethro was Moses' father-in-law, and he was minding the flock on the hillside. And then he happened to see this bush –

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– that was burning but was not consumed.

And Moses said, "I will now turn the side and see the great sight, for the bush is not burned." And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see God call unto him out of the midst of the bush and said, "Moses. Moses." And he said, "Here am I." And he said, "_____ hither, come off thy shoes from off thy feet, for a place wherein thy standing is holy ground."

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See, he had gotten close looking at the fire, burning but does not consume, and God told him to pull out the shoe 'cause he was standing on holy ground. Well, that's where we at today. On holy ground. This was a house, we came here –

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– and we bought this – well, we didn't buy it all of the sudden. We had to cook some dinners and sell some sandwiches, and sell some candy and we did this, that, and the other. We worked in the name of the Lord. We didn't have any money when we came here. We were poor and we asked ___ and still poor today. And here we go, we gonna try to build another one. But you know what, if the Lord – if it's the Lords will, He will take care of it—, 'cause we own all this _____ this land, half the block around here. We own it. We don't owe nobody nothing. And the Lord blessed us to pay for it. ___ Mother Smith and I __ get in the kitchen and—cook some dinners and sell some dinners and up and down the street, sell some sandwiches.

Oh, bless the Lord, and in the whole church, some of us have learned to give tithes. We still talking about we supposed to give that ten. That's the Lord's money. He already told us when we work, a dime out of every dollar belongs to Him, and when we spend that dime –

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– we spending His money. We need to give the Lord what's His.

And I'm a witness that He will bless you if you do what the word said do. The Lord knows how to bless you. I used to wear the same dress all the time, but didn't have much of nothing. This really ___ ___. HalleluiahHallelujah. But when I ___ ___ let my

hand ___ just give, you give and it shall be given unto you. **Good things is pressed down**, rolled together. **shaken—** together. When men give into your **bosom—**, it will happen.

I knew ___ this little ___ and this little _____. Said ___ I don't have room enough to hold it all. Junk. And then I calmly give away. Just give away. Just give away. Just learn to give. When you give, more be given to you. I'm a witness that it'll happen.

So we just thank God for the scripture today –

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– ___ he said ___ now hither and to take off your shoes, okay? Moreover, He said, "I am God thy father. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face. He didn't wanna look upon the face of God. Could we stand to look upon His face? Oh, I don't think so, because I'd be just ready to **fall down**. Woo! Said thank you, Lord. Thank God. He brought us all the way. Not part of the way. 'Cause – I didn't have to be here today. You didn't have to be here today. We here because God was so good to us. He let our **golden moments— — — —**

[Begin Segment 3: 0:10:45:00](#)

roll on a little while longer. And the Lord God said, "I have surely seen the afflictions," look at him. Look at him. "I have surely seen the afflictions on my people which are in Egypt."

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Listen, we when we have problems and we think we got these problems all alone, call on Jesus. He says that He knows ___ as the lady that gave the **welcome said—**. He will never leave you, nor will he forsake you. God is here for us all the time. When we think we alone with our backs up against the wall, we don't know what to do, call on Jesus. And if you keep on calling on Him, something'll happen. Yeah.

One day, I didn't know who the Lord was. I was like this man here ___ pharaohs. Pharaohs didn't know who God was. And when Moses went and told him what God had said, "Let them go. Let the children of Israel go," he said, "Who is this God?" He didn't know who God was.

Well, **one** day I didn't know who God was, and when I **didn't** know who God was, the preacher told me. He said, "Just call on Him." And just look –

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– **like you looking right—here looking right** at him, and said, "Lord, have mercy on me." And I kept on saying, "Lord, have mercy on me." And you what ___ about the

time I said the third time, look like something struck me in the...----- I had and went to the soul of my feet. I thank God. I could feel the power. That's the power of God. That's the power. And you can feel it if you call on Him instead of panicking and doing something to yourself, you haven't done anything. God loves all of us. All the time. Not part of the time. All of the time. He love you and then He's **with you**. He say, "I be with you and I won't forsake you." Don't depend on what comes out of a **bottle of drink**. Don't depend on buying a old ticket to get you rich. That won't work. Listen –

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– I been there. I tried it. I tried it. But when you **try to**, He won't let you down. He won't let you down, young people. You just got to call on Him. He is able. He made everything and He's over----- everything. And you got to recognize Him. See, He hung the sun and the moon and the stars. Who do you know that went to work on ---? Had to go fix the moon? Had to go fix the sun? Who you know did that? **Huh-uh**. He knew what he was doing when He put it out there, and when He put us here, each of us in here got a job to do. You got a job to do. That's to tell others. We have to spread the news how **of a** good God we serve. Yeah.

And I come into the knowledge of knowing who God was, and come into the knowledge of knowing how to give –

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– give and it shall be given back unto you. And that's what it is. We got to learn the way. He say, "I am the way, the truth and the light." No man comes through the father but by me. We gotta let Him know He has authority of everything, and that's what it is.

I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of the **land** unto a good **land-man** and a large **land---**, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Unto the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Ammonites, and the **---**, and the **---**, and the **---**. This is God – is telling Moses who he is. But you know what? He told Moses when Moses went back to pharaohs, He said, –

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– "Tell him I am. That I am." 'Cause that was it. "I am, **then** I am." 'Cause He is able, and He knew **---** him, it's hard to **---** he caused pharaoh's heart to harden, but when pharaoh was telling him what God said to him, instead of making things better for the children of the Israelites, the things got worse. Things got worse. He made their load double. He would double responsibility on the children of Israel. And this hurt Moses 'cause he wonder, "Why did God send me down there to make their burdens heavier?" He had hoped to make them lighter.

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But you see, that's what the old devil will do. Don't serve the devil. Leave them bottles alone. What's in the bottles ----- leave all that stuff alone, call on the Lord and get in the church, and find what it is –

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– that you supposed to be doing. And God will ----- Halleluiah. He gonna help you. He will help you. Just depend on Jesus 'cause you can call him any time the day or night. The Lord is never busy. Just call on Him.

And Moses said unto God, “Who am I? And should I go into pharaoh?” Okay, Moses didn't wanna go. You know how ----- they saying that, ----- call him and I didn't wanna go. I didn't wanna go. Y'all remember that -----? But yeah, but you know ----- when you ----- is better -----, and he said, “Certainly I will be with thee. And this shall be a token unto thee that I have safety when thou has brought **both** the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon the mountain.”

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And Moses said unto God, “Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, what shall I say unto them?”

[Begin Segment 4: 0:17:08:22](#)

The God of your fathers has sent me unto you, and they shall say unto me, “What is His name?” He shall say unto them, “And God said unto Moses, I am that I am.” Now I'm gonna try – is the children of Israel that had these hard taskmasters of making brick, and so instead of using a small amount of straw that they had – you know bricks are made from straws, y'all. And instead of making the brick from straws, he doubled the load so **it** couldn't be that same small amount of straw that they was making the brick from, it needed twice that much.

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He made the load twice as hard on them because Moses had come asking to free the children of Israel from this hard taskmaster. He was a hard taskmaster.

Now, what you wanted to know, yes, I am **Evangelist** Modessa Johnson from Greenwood down and around, I **say** Greenwood, Mississippi. I live – I was born at Hollandale, Hollandale, Mississippi. That's about 19 miles this side of Greenwood. And there was a custom back in my day that the first borns would go to the grandparents. So when I was born, my grandmother told me when I was three weeks old she took me from my mother. And so my mother came here to Memphis to live. You know, a lot of people flee'd the south –

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– like they saying people are fleeing Memphis now. They flee’d the south because the work was so hard and so little **pay**. A lot of people went to Memphis ‘cause we did. Went to St. Louis, went to Chicago. They went north trying to avoid the hard labor that they put on us in Mississippi. I know **somebody chopping cotton**, I know **somebody picking cotton**, I know something about gardening and raising fruits and vegetable ‘cause we basically raised what we ate. But we were share croppers. We stayed on the farm, and this is the way we made our living. The men would plow the rows and we would go down the rows with a hoe and dig a hole. Dig a hole, I said three to five inches, that’s like five inches –

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– into the ground. And we would plant two to three grains of corn about – oh, let me see. **about** by two feet. Maybe a foot or two feet apart. You just go with your hoe and you dig that hole, and you put those grains of corn **off** in that hole **seed** fall into the ground and it dies, then it bring forth much fruit. That’s what it’s gonna do. You put that corn, you plant that corn into that **soil**, and it would **grow**.

Brother Johnson, I want you to **sing** for me, “We come a long way.” When I **at** the end of this sermon, I want you to sing, “We’ve come a long way,” ‘cause we have. We have indeed. ‘Cause we used to get up early in the morning and go out to the fields and chop cotton or pick –

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– cotton or whatever we had to do all day long. And ladies and gentlemen, at the end of the day they would pay us like \$2.00, \$2.50, \$3.00. It wasn’t even \$5.00 and we worked hard all day.

And listen, I worked right here. My son and I – my oldest son, Otis, Otis Jr. and I used to work at German restaurant called **_____** and **torn** it down, it was right down **_____**. And it was a German restaurant. I was the cook. Hallelujah. And he washed the dishes and mopped the floors and whatever. At the end of every day, eight hours of work, they would hand me four \$1.00 bills, and him two \$1.00 bills. That’s right here in this city.

And when my husband and I had gotten married, and we called ourselves working, he was working and –

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– I was working, and we’d go out and we’d work hard all day. Scrubbing people’s stoves, scrubbing they bathrooms, scrubbing they wall, under they beds, whatever needed cleaning, you clean that for that lady. And at the end of the day, I got three \$1.00 bills and car fare. See, y’all got something to be joyous about ‘cause they saying in a few days

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____ say you gonna be making \$7.25 a hour, I think they said that. Isn't it? That's a – oh, that's rich. Oh, that's rich 'cause we didn't even make that in eight hours. We didn't make – \$3.00 and car fare was what we got.

And another thing that we have to do, we had to ride on _____ I'd catch the street car right here in Hollywood, and we always had to stand back and let the –

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– white folk get on first. That was my subject. God loves a variety. He made us all. Whatever color we are. We didn't have no choice. When we got here, this is what it was. But this didn't mean that we should be mistreated just 'cause we black. We are all human. And we all have to have the same expectations in life.

[Begin Segment 5: 0:23:27:10](#)

Yes, when I go to the store I have to pay \$2.00 for a loaf of bread, just like you do.

But back in those days, we paid \$0.15 for a loaf of bread. But you know what, if you always put God first in your life____, if you know _____Jesus what I'm talking about, He will make a way for you. 'Cause I had eight children and Mother Smith **done** had eight children. And we look fine today, don't we? God took care of us.

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We got in the church and we went to work telling others, singing and praying, and --____ anybody that would ____ come on _____ 'cause her whole family, her father came in here and one Sunday morning said, "Hey there____," we say, "Come on in." We was so glad to see him. And he told us what a beautiful family he had, and he said, "I'm gonna bring them," and he did just that. He brought them all.

And we just love you all working in here, they were ushers, they had on their uniform, they would walk around, they're serve in the Lord. Serving the Lord will pay off. We still got faith. We still got hope. 'Cause the Lord has made a way for us and I don't think he gonna let us down now.

You know____I don't think He gonna let us down. Put your faith in God. Always. When things look dark and it look like **He** not gonna make it, just trust God. Trust God. He say –

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– "I am the way. The way, the truth and the light." No man come into the father but **by** me. We all have to do have ____ I don't see how people can say, "I don't believe there's a **G**god. I don't believe this **G**god." How can they say that? Sometime you hear the thunder roll and it scares you, doesn't it? (*Thunder noises*) Under your feet, you get

scared. It get dark. And some people say they have heard that train, that train is that tornado coming through. I haven't experienced it, but I've heard a lot of people talk about it. Say it sound like a train coming through. I don't even want to see it. I don't want to see it. I'm doing fine.

So I just put my trust in God, 'cause I know He's able. And I tell you, I go back and tell you about that little baby, my grandmother and my grandfather. My grandfather passed away when I was seven years old. This is down in **Moore's** Lake, Mississippi –

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– near Greenwood down in **Moore's** Lake. My grandfather got sick and he passed away. But I'm telling you, it's not all bad. 'Cause we was working on the fields – in the fields and share cropping, and I had cousins that was working with me. Lots of them. And we could really get them bales of cotton, y'all. They could **get down** and we'd just be picking cotton. Picking cotton. Or **we'd** be chopping cotton. You could just hear the **we'd**. But you know what, that white man, I guess that was Mr. J.P. Cole, I really don't know, but it was a white man but set on the end of the rows and he watched to see that you keep working. See that you keep working, keep **up** with the time. Now that was hard part because you got tired, and **was** really desire to rest, but there wasn't no break. When dinner came, you got an hour off for dinner. You could hurry up and eat and then stretch out and rest a little bit.

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And then 1:00 you right back at it until sun down.

[Begin Segment 6: 0:27:04:08](#)

That was a hard work that we had to put up with, and I wasn't nothing but a child because my grandmother passed away when I was 12 years old. And that is when I came to Memphis to live right here on Hollywood street. My mother and my stepfather lived at 1673 Hollywood. I won't forget those address. That's where they were living. And so when my grandmother passed I came here to live with them. So I had to get used to this 'cause I thought of my mother as my sister. I thought my grandmother was my mother.

But you know I had to grow up. I had to learn to call my mother mama, 'cause I had always thought of her as a sister and I called her Rebecca. My mother was named Rebecca. And my father was named Emanuel. They had ___ for _____. Praise God.

But you know what? Life was good. My mother was working at Madison and Seafood Café down on –

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– Madison, 149 Madison. Some addresses just stick with you and you don't forget. And my mother – the man where my mother worked, she was the cook at that place. And he told her she could bring me to work with her and that I could peel shrimps and wash dishes. Thank you, Lord. It was a job. It was a job after I left Mississippi, then I could peel the shrimps and wash the dishes. And I did that 'cause it kept money coming in little bit at a time for our family.

So we just thank God for all the things we been through. After all the things we been through, guess what? I still got a job. **Right?** I'm still happy. Listen, **the work didn't kill me** because I'm still here. But you know it was God that gave us the strength to endure whatever you have to endure. Is the Lord that gives you the strength. And so we have to –

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– thank and praise him because sure enough He is good to us all the time. Even when you seem **dark**, He is good to us.

Reverend, what is it you wanted me to tell them about? ___ I went on through school, guess what, I went on through ___ _____. Went on to high school, and I met this man right here. Halleluiah. In my English class one day I had an orange and he pretended he was gonna take my orange and that's how we met. I said, No, you ain't gonna take my orange, 'cause that was all I had to eat. Praise God. Halleluiah. But I met my husband in my English class. And so we got to know each other.

And you know, it's just been a joy. Yesterday I just looked – he and his brother was sitting talking in the living room and saying how we need to go back to the old landmark of having prayer meeting from house to house. But they was some wonderful –

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– men. I'm talking about my husband and his twin brother. I said, "Oh, they were wonderful." I never had to go hungry or wondering, "Have I got a place to stay?" They ain't nothing but a blessing, y'all. We always had a place to stay, a car to ride in, and I think we's all right. I think it's all right.

So I just thank God for the way he blessed me, and then I told you he'd blessed me with those eight children. They all finished school. Boom-de-boom-de down the aisle and graduated with them tassels on. And they did the same for their children. They love the Lord. They love to work in church. To me, this is the right pattern. This is the pattern of life. Don't follow after worldly things. Worldly things get you in prison.

So you want to go right, just follow after righteousness. I spoke on that one time.

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Follow after righteousness and you will be right. But you see, you get in all kinda trouble when you disobedient, when you hot headed and you ___ here, and just going, "I'm gonna do what I wanna do.

It's not like that. We not ___ our own. We ___ the price. I mean that's all of us. And that price is the blood of Jesus Christ. Oh, how I love Jesus 'cause he first loved me. And he showed me a way. I was converted and baptized down in Mississippi by Reverend Elliot Morgan ____, and sure enough, I didn't make ___ this day. Stop ___ my head and went to the soul of my feet and made me love everybody. People don't even love me. Guess what? I love them. They don't have to love me for me to love them. 'Cause when I look at them, see I know who they are. God made everybody and everything that was made. And without Him was not nothing made that was made. Oh –

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– thank God for that.

Sister ____, Sister ___ you gotta come on back here and help me preach this thing. It's good. It's good. It's good. Halleluiah. Glory to God. Pass out ___ thank you so very much. Let me see. I think my time is just about up. It's just about up really.

And I thank God for all you wonderful young people. Don't forget these messages. Stay with the church. Stay with the Lord. Do the work of the Lord and He will bless you. I am blessed.

Brother Johnson, I want you to sing, Just look where I came from –

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