

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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The Power Behind Christian Repentance

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:1-11



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In your Bible, if you want to look with me to the third chapter of the book of Colossians. If you're new of us, we've been just working verse by verse through this little book in the New Testament and we happen to be up to chapter one.

And we're going to read ... On the screen it says 1 to 11 and we're going to read 1 to 11. The sermon was actually written for 1 to 11, but I've proven twice that I can't get to the third point, and so we're only going to talk this Sunday by the first 10 verses, and we'll pick up verse 11 at the beginning of next week.

But what he really talks about here is something that's really important for us, and yet for many of us in the room, it's a word that we don't ... It's not appealing it's the word repentance. You hear the word repentance and it even feels heavy, it feels sad, it feels remorse, and judgment, and conviction.

But the word isn't necessarily one that you put on the wall with your house as that warm greeting for folks when they walk in. And yet what we find within the scriptures is that repentance is actually the pathway to joy and to the restoration of refreshment in our soul that God has given, that he has secured, and he secured it through his own son's blood. It's an amazing gift and yet it's something that we don't necessarily like to talk about.

In 1517, a man named Martin Luther he looked around at the world and he saw the landscape of the church and he became so convinced, and convicted, and grieved over the corruption that he saw within the church that he sat down with a piece of paper and he began to write out, and he wrote down 95 sentences; we know them as 95 theses. And these sentences, each one of them, was intended to identify something that he saw was out of place when you open up the Bible and says, "That does look like this and that doesn't look like this."

And then what he did, because he was quite a man of courage, is he took that sheet of paper that he wrote all of these sentences down on any he walked down to the church. And the doors of the church for wooden and he took out a hammer and nail and he nailed that thing to the church. It began the Reformation.

And what's interesting is you could ask well, "What came first?" One of them had to be number one right? And so which one was the first theses? What was the great injustice, what was the great corruption that he saw within the world?

And he talks about a lot of them, a lot of them dealt with the Pope assuming authority over the scriptures, they dealt with the priesthood and how corrupt they were. But there was a lot of them that deal with something called the selling of indulgences. And what that ... Basically we don't use the word indulgence that way anymore, we think of indulgence as like a chocolate cake or something.

But the selling of indulgences was actually ... It was certificates that the church had made and they made it a commodity. And what they were selling for money ... And so you could give the church money and they would give you a certificate, and the certificate was an amount of grace. And they promised people around the world that if you had enough grace that God will let you go to heaven.

He became so overwhelmed by the gospel that he saw within the New Testament that Jesus Christ came and he paid the penalty for us that by trusting in him alone so we're saved by his grace through faith in his son. That he looked at that he said, "That is going to be absolutely tragic for generations to come." You thought maybe that would be first, but that wasn't first either. Do you know what he put first?

What he put first was something that actually indicted his own life. He was aware that he too was a sinful man needing the grace of God. And so the very first thing that he said was this. He says, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent.'" Which was the first word of his first little sermon. Says that, "He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."

Now we can hardly imagine, "What do you mean the entire life?" Because we have relegated repentance, because it's such a heavy word, to the big sins in life. Like when you really blow it, you need to repent, "I should probably, I don't know, light a candle or throw some ashes up in the air, and wear some sackcloth. And now this is a big deal so I need to repent."

But what the Bible says is repentance is simply turning away from sin and to God; it's turning. And so it happens every single day that we find anything in our life, an attitude or behavior that's inconsistent with Christ. Let me show you what the Bible says about repentance so that we can define it accurately.

In Acts 3:19-20 it says, "Repent then and turn back that your sins may be blotted out, the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." Now just notice this verse for a second. He says, "Repent." And then he tells us what he means by repent; it means to turn back to turn around.

There's a sin in your life, you're moving in this direction, I need to turn. And he says ... And there's two amazing things that take place through a life of repentance. Just imagine how blessed a life it would be if your life was perpetually marked by your sins being blotted out and your soul being full of refreshment. That's a different definition isn't it?

Go, "Well yeah, now that makes your repentance sound really good." It does. But this verse tells us something that's so critically important when it comes to repentance that many of us miss. We hear the word repent and it means the turn, and so we just think, "Okay I need to turn from my sin." But sometimes we don't necessarily know where to turn.

And so sometimes what we do is we turn to one sin and we just turn to a less culturally sensitive sin. Or sometimes we leave the pornography and we just move to self righteousness. We leave whatever it is that's so, "I don't want that in my life." And we just move to something else that's actually not the source.

And this is why this word from ... This is so important, this is where we're returning; it's the presence of the Lord. In other words, if our repentance is only a wallowing around in shame and we never actually draw near to the Lord, it's not repentance.

And this is why this is so critically important you see, because what we're learning here is the repentance, then, is the only path to a refreshed soul. But what we also know that repentance is it's the only escape from the inevitable moral collapse that will take place if we don't repent.

You see, you and I we see public figures, we see pastors, or leaders, or politicians, or teachers, or coaches, or people and suddenly they have this moral fall, this moral collapse. And we look at that and because we don't see under the soil that we go, "Man can you believe that person did that?"

And if God in that very moment would answer your question he would say, "Actually yes I did see this coming. For a long time I've seen the erosion taking place under the soil that is there simply because over a long period of time, I have seen in this person a hospitality and a refusal to repent to escalating sense."

In other words, this person became very comfortable with a level one level of lust. And they stopped defining it, and they were hospitable to it, and they didn't repent of it. And so what happened was eventually it moved to a level two level of lust, and then three and four; no one else can see it, but God sees all of it.

And you see Paul when he's writing the Colossians what he's doing ... When it gets to chapter three, he's concerned. You see he knows that we are the people of Christ, we're the Christians. Which means that people make evaluations about Christ's value and his worth on the basis of what they see in us.

And so he knows that Christ's glory is at stake, he knows that the joy of these believers in Colossae and future generations of believers, including us in Providence, is at stake. But he also knows something else is at stake and that is that when we have a moral fall because of erosion, he knows that there are people in our life that are close to us that are even leaning upon us: children, friends, relationships, parents, neighbors that are all close to us, and he knows that what's also at stake is the safety of people who are near us.

And knowing that is the case, what Paul does is he marches next in his letter to the Colossians by unpacking for us a life of repentance. What does it look like and what does God make available so that it's possible for us? And before I pray and then I'm going to read, I'm asking you for the good of your joy, your future, and the joy of people that you care about and love in your life, I know that there are people right now in this room that if you continue in your path of escalating sin, it will not only destroy you and shame you, but it will

destroy people in your wake.

No one ever thinks it's them. We all say, "Somebody else could do that, but never me." This is an invitation for us to see that something is personally at stake in our life that no sin, no sin's allowed to sleep on the couch of our life. It all has to go.

And some of you I know you're listening to me, I've been here 23 years so I know many stories at Providence. And I know that many of your stories, some of your stories it involves somebody in your life who had a significant eruption, a significant collapse and so you know how significant this is. So let me pray for us.

Father in heaven I ask according to your mercy that you would give us eyes to see and hearts to understand the truth of your word. Incline our hearts today to repent because of your kindness. And I pray this in Jesus name, amen.

Starting in verse one Paul writes, "If then you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above not on things that are on the earth for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears then you also will appear with him and glory. Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and covetousness which is idolatry.

On account of these things, the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked when you were living in them, but now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free but Christ is all and in all."

So what does God do? What does God provide that allows us to live a life of repentance so that we can face perpetual refreshment within our soul? The first thing he does is he calls us to set our mind on Christ, to set our mind on Christ.

Now some of you you play baseball, if you don't maybe you've seen baseball; most of us sort of know baseball. But if you don't let me explain just something so critical to this illustration. Okay when you play baseball, you get a hit, you got to go to first base. And you're like, "We get it." Maybe somebody doesn't.

And then you go to first base, you got to go to second, then third, but the goal is to get home, the goal is to get home. And so once you get a hit, once the ball hits the bat and you start running, you become in danger of becoming out. You begin running, you make it to first base ... If this is first base and second's there, third's there, home's there every base runner ... There's other things to consider in the process, but when you get on base, the one thing that you have emblazoned in your mind, in your consciousness, in your heart, in your

motivation is home, “I got to find home plate. I have to go to second and through third in order to get there, but that is my goal.” And everybody on your team is trying to help you get there.

In baseball, you have to keep your eyes, when you’re on the bases, on home plate. Repentance requires a moral home plate. When you’re living, there has to be a place of safety, a place of accomplishment, a place where this is the goal, this is where I’m moving towards.

When it comes to a life of repentance, there has to be a fixed reference point for morality, an absolute truth they will never change, it’ll never shift, they will never modify. And when it comes to morality, that fixed point is Christ. And therefore notice what he says, in verse one he says, “If then you’ve been raised with Christ.” Now you notice the if, he introduces a condition and this becomes really important.

You see some of you who are here today in the room and some of you who are at home you’re listening and you’ve yet to trust Jesus Christ; that’s what it means to be raised with Christ. In chapter 2:12 he says, “That we were raised with Christ when we put our faith in Jesus Christ because God rose him from the dead.”

And so what he’s doing in the book is this, he writes two chapters to tell us that God loved us so much that he sent his son to die for us. That when he rose from the dead, it was a declaration not only of his authority, but also a declaration from God the Father saying, “His blood atones, it covers, it forgives everyone’s sin.” It’s sufficient to heal us, “I accept his blood as payment for your sin.”

Do you see what happens is this, is the ... So for two chapters he says, “For everybody who trusts in Jesus Christ, Christ comes and actually lives within us.” His love is within us, his power, his wisdom is within us. And then what he’s going to do in chapter three and four is he gives a vision for life that only takes place if the gospel is true and if Christ is living in our heart.

So he’s going to talk about mission and purpose of life, he’s going to talk about relationships, he’s going to talk about the home, he’s going to talk about sexuality, he’s going to talk about character, and he’s going to talk about repentance. All of this is possible if. In other words if you have yet to trust Jesus Christ, you can listen to chapter three and four, and we hope that you will, and you can see a vision for life that is absolutely possible for you.

But if you have yet to trust Jesus Christ, I beg you to study chapter one and two because nothing that you’re going to find in three and four is possible for you without Christ in you, the hope of glory. And so he says, “If then you’ve been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”

The word seek in the Bible is equivalent to our word prioritize; something has to be first in our life. In other words what he's saying is, "Prioritize home base." You know you can learn a lot from pets. We have a dog, his name is Champ, let me show you Champ, this is Champ.

And this is his little place. So he's got a back porch and back of that there's woods, he has a little door he can kind of go through, and his food and water, he's got a bed; I mean, that's Champ's home. And Champ, every now and then, he comes in and he hangs out with the family, he's got a little place inside the house also. But the fact is he's an active dog, he loves to run, the squirrels and deer, all kinds of stuff in the back.

And so he makes his life, he just goes through his entire day, and he does something, and then he returns here, and he looks in and he's like, "Hey what's going on in there?" And then he does something else, he eats something and then he looks. He drinks something and he looks, he goes and chases something and then he comes back and looks.

You can learn a lot from a dog because that's exactly what Paul is saying here. He's saying that, "Jesus Christ our eternal prophet the one who speaks to us, our priest, the mediator that brings us to God and our eternal king who has authority over our life is in heaven and, therefore, pay attention. Whatever it is that you're doing come back to home base and look. Pay attention, and seek, and prioritize things that are above and not things that are on the earth."

You say, "Well how? How then do we seek things that are above?" And he tells us how in the next verse which is the next verb, and it's verse two. He says this, "How do you seek, you set." You set your mind. This is actually one Greek word, it means think. When we, "Think on things that are above and not on things that are on the earth." What he's saying is this, "You got to think regularly." For a life of repentance to be your daily life, you have to keep thinking about heaven. You have to keep thinking about Jesus, you have to keep imagining home plate.

You see this isn't the first time that Paul has introduced the importance of our thoughts. In Philippians to a church in Philippi he writes this, he says, "Whatever is true." He says, "Whatever is honorable, whatever is just." He goes on and he says, "And if anything is pure." And then he lists several others I just didn't put up them up here, "If any is excellent, praiseworthy." He says, "Then think about such things."

Now let me ask you something. You look around this world today, even the best of things that are on the earth, and what qualifies? What's perpetually true, perpetually just, perpetually pure, and honorable, excellent, praiseworthy? What qualifies?

Well in Psalm chapter 19 I believe Paul, this is what he meant. I think Paul was actually saying ... Psalm 19 says, "The law of the Lord is perfect. And the testimony of the Lord is sure, and the precepts of the Lord are right, and the commandment of the Lord is pure."

In each of these, it's a parallel of these amazing attributes of what we're supposed to be thinking about and what the Word of God is. In other words, what Paul was saying is this, "The way that we seek the things are above is we set our mind on the word of God where we can admire Jesus Christ, and defer to his authority, and soak up his wisdom, and repent when we are not conforming ourselves to him instead when we're conforming ourselves to the world."

Let me show you how this works. God Almighty in his grace, he's the the eternal king; he's the king of kings and Lord of lords. Before there was any kings and lords he was still the king. The Bible says, "In the beginning God." He was there, he's always been there; he's just God. And he is stationery, he is home plate, he never moves, he never shifts like the shadows.

And in his vast love, he decided to create a place called the earth that would be habitable for humanity. He would create humanity, the only part of his created order in his image, that we can have a relationship with him. We could know him, and talk to him, and hear from him, respond to him.

And the Bible says during this period of time where before there was any sin in the world, that this was a time that was marked by absolute peace and purpose. It was the majestic time in terms of personal relationships, in terms of work and creativity. And then a Bible says that man sinned against God.

And when we sinned against God what happened is we distanced ourselves from the Lord, we moved further away from him. Our relationship was severed and, therefore, all of the goodness and being near the Lord we lost. And as a result of that, life became marred by things like insecurity, and shame, and guilt, frustration, and personal strife with one another eventually leading to death.

And so God in his vast love for us, the Bible says, "While we were still sinning, God Almighty he demonstrated his love by sending Christ to die for us." And his son, Jesus Christ, came the eternal Christ, our Creator, the God of all. He took on flesh and he came to this earth and after living a righteous life, he went to a cross and there he paid for our sin.

In order to mediate between God and man and for all of those in the world that would trust in him, they could come back to a relationship with him. And that's exactly what happened is the message of the gospel that he died and rose again, it started to go out and people begin to believe.

And what was amazing is as we think of the cross as a symbol of Jesus Christ, the Bible says, "That for everyone who has trusted Christ." He says, "That they're marked by a crucified life where we follow him and take up our cross." Where we now are restored. We live in the world and yet we're not of the world, and we are now in relationship with God Almighty.



But this is what happens over a period of time, because people continue to sin and are creative in it, is the world and cultures, they continue to drift further and further away from the Lord in rebellion. That's why, even in America, and in every other culture ... You can study any culture in the history of the world and what you find is this, is that at one point in time, if that culture had some kind of God ethic, some kind of, "Hey the Bible is true." Even people within the culture there was a social makeup, a fabric of acceptable behavior that even unbelievers they said, "You know what? That's probably a better way. Let's not lie, let's tell the truth, let's not get drunk, let's be sober." There's something about it that even culture were like, "Hey, this is a better way."

But here's what happens, the culture continues to drift. And what happens is we have to make a decision, and the decision always comes down to who are we conforming to? And you know who you're conformed to by looking at who's your home plate. And what happens is the church moves.

You see any time Christians are called to be holy as he is holy, but we live in a culture that's drifting away from the Lord, to be holy as he is holy we'll, over time, look more strange to the world. And because we don't like to be viewed as strange, we kind of look for that moral equilibrium between God and culture.

We're like, "All right, it's kind of a fluid thing and so I think we'll just ... If culture's moved that far, we'll only move this far." Now we're still holy, we're still different and yet ... Or the the world doesn't think that we bark at the moon. And so we're sort of in between. Right?

But what happens is this is over a period of time ... And this is exactly what's happened in our culture, is today what happens is the church of Jesus Christ, believers in Christ, because we've kept our eyes off of heaven, and off of Christ, and have conformed to the world, is that our behavior is actually the same as the unbelieving culture was 50 years ago. We're no different because we're taking our cue from living halfway between a moral holy God and an immoral culture that's constantly moving.

Don't you see that if we, as a people, do not look to the Bible and we don't look to Christ, a life of repentance will not be ours. And if a life of repentance is not ours, than a life of moral collapse, and a life where soul refreshment is missing will be our lot in life.

Why should we do this? Well he tells us in verse three and four. Look what he says, "For you've died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears then you will also appear with him in glory." He says, "Look here's four attributes, your whole life is wrapped up in dying with Christ and being hidden." That means our identity is in Jesus, our righteousness is in Jesus, our purpose for living is in Jesus. He's going to appear one day and when he does, we're going to appear with him in glory. He's saying, "Jesus is everything to us as believers."

And so let me encourage you and us, let's invest time thinking on God's word. Let's read the Bible, and let's pray over what we read, and let's discuss with one another what we're reading. Romans 12:2 says that, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." In other words a life of repentance leans on the word of God to renew a picture of home plate every day. So where are you looking?

The second thing that he does ... And we're only going to get to this one is that God calls us to turn from anything inconsistent with Christ. He calls us to turn, or repent, from anything inconsistent with Christ. We all know that if we want to have a beautiful garden, then the weeds have to die. And if you want to have a beautiful life, then your sin must die. Which is why in verse five he says, "Put to death what is earthly in you."

You know I don't know why, but this year, we've had three copperheads, separate times, in our garage this summer. And I had options of what to do with them. I could hide them, because my wife, Tabitha, she's not too crazy about them. So I could just pick them up and slide them underneath the workbench. She can't see them, I can't see them, it's all cool; you can hide it.

I could justify it. I mean, God has created them, they got these unique unbelievable pattern on their back. I mean it really is ... If you're not freaked out by them, you look at them it's like it really is amazing design that God is woven within the back of a snake. I could justify it being there.

I could also dance with it. I could pick it up, and dance around the garage, and say, "This is my snake." And throw him back under to hide him. Or we can do what we did and that's relocate them. We relocated some of them over there, and some of them over there; we killed the snake. That's what you do with the copperhead in your garage, you kill it.

And what Paul is saying is this, is that when we find behavior or attitudes that are inconsistent with Christ, we're not to hide our sin, we're not to justify our sin, we're not to dance with our sin, we're to kill our sin. And he has two different lists, in verse five he lists sins of twisted love, verses eight and nine, he lists sins of twisted hate.

So in verse five, notice what he says. He says, "Put to death what is earthly in you." And then he starts listing some of them. Now look at this: sexual immorality. The Bible says the sex has been designed by God for a husband and wife in the covenant of marriage, and it's when it's used outside of that for any reason, he calls it sexual immorality.

But you know what? There's a lot of people who have sex with one another who aren't married, they don't hate each other. They may love each other, dating one another, living together. He says but what happens is when your love becomes twisted, it's when we use something that God has created in times, and places, and in ways that he's not ordained he says, "Now all of a sudden it's twisted love, its sexual morality, impurity."

Some of us, we love sensuality; that's what the word means, sensuality. We love the feeling of pleasure and so what happens is if you love the feeling of pleasure so intensely is you give yourself up to more and more kinds of impurity.

And then he talks about passion. Passion is the same word of lust. Some people when you look at the human body how God created it, he created it good. All the curves, and all the shapes, and everything is there and you're like, "Hey, this is really good." But if it becomes an inordinate amount of love towards something and then it's twisted then what happens is this, is we begin to take a love for something God created and we begin to objectify it looking at a body without seeing a soul, and so it becomes passion.

He talks about evil desire. This is probably the most confusing one of all of them because it's like this doesn't look like twisted love; but actually it is. The word here, evil desire, is [Greek 00:30:24]. Epi, epic, [Greek 00:30:24], desire. Magnified desire, inordinate desire.

What that means is if something is this grand and yet you're asking it, and you're loving it with this much of your heart, there's a problem; it becomes an evil desire. And then we covet. There's nothing wrong with money, money can buy all kinds of things. It can buy food for somebody that's hungry, but you can love it so much that it becomes covetousness.

And then he says, "And let me tell you what all of these things have in common and that is idolatry." Idolatry is when we make a good thing into an ultimate thing. Exodus chapter 20 tells us this is true of all of us. In the 10 Commandments, the very first commandment, "I'm the Lord your God and you shall have no other gods before me." He doesn't give us a third option, "Or you don't have to worship anything." No, he knows we will be worshiping, we will all be worshiping something, and so he says, "This is it, you're either worshiping me or you're seeing something else."

It's not possible not to worship, it is impossible not to build up something as a tower of hope, and pleasure, and power, and protection over our life. And yet like this picture you look at it, when the storms come we all look for something. Bad stuff happens and immediately we turn around and we look for the towers that we believe can protect us and provide for us. So we run to these places and the Bible says that everything outside of Christ is an imaginary tower.

And yet even for us ... In this picture, obviously, it's not inconspicuous, it's like there it is. But here's the deal, for us, for our life, it's really interesting idols they are very stealth, because they're originated on something that we love.

So we need to have a test how do we understand what our idols are? Well, instead of writing these down ... Okay, all the notes of these, they're always on the website. So if you're [inaudible 00:32:31] write it down, instead of writing these down and not thinking about it, I would encourage you to answer the question in

your heart.

The first question you can ask yourself is this: what thing when it's withheld elicits your strongest emotions? What this week created greater pleasure and emotion than when you were just worshiping the son of God? Was it a touchdown? Or it can be the opposite; it can be bad emotions.

You see if you make a promotion, it's just a promotion and you don't get it, it's a bummer. Say, "Yeah, man I was kind of hoping for, but that's okay." But if you make that promotion, and the title, and the money, and the ambition, and the achievement an idol, you have an inordinate ambition, then what happens is you don't get ... It's not a bummer when you don't get it, it's bitter when you don't get it. And so what is it in your life right now that when it's withheld it elicits the strongest emotions?

Let me give you another test. What thing, when it is threatened, leads you to vilify its competitor? See idols are always weak, so they need somebody to protect. And the way that they tell us to protect is by vilifying whatever it is that competes.

Let me give you an example of this. It would never happen around here because we don't really care about basketball. But let's just say that there was a place and it had a bunch of basketball teams, and everybody really loved those basketball teams. And they had different colors and all of a sudden you started to like one of those colors so much that when a coach of another team they're wearing royal blue and they're coming out, and there's a guy who's won a bunch of games as the coach. Now if you have an idol towards one of the other teams, what'll happen is this. As a believer in Jesus Christ instead of seeing that man has a soul that will live forever in heaven or hell, you will take your idol that needs you to be fiercely competitive against its opponents, you need to vilify them and so now you can justify hating those people, "I hate them, I hate them." That is idolatry, it's what it is.

If whatever your idol is has a competitor and you have to vilify it in order to prop up what you love, it's called an idol. Now we happen to be in election season, so let's talk about this, "Oh it's about time, I was wondering what he was going to tell everybody how to vote."

No, I'm going to tell you not to have idols, that's what I'm going to do, and here it is. Ready? It is very possible, and it's right, for you to have an understanding of how the country should be led, how you hope that it will be led. But if you have to vilify one of the two people, and you hate them with a visceral emotion, there's a really good possibility that you're dealing with idolatry.

The third test ... I know this is going well, isn't it? The third test what thing, if it were lost, would lead you to ultimate despair? What would lead you to ultimate despair? "I just can't even live anymore If I don't get this." Let me just tell you something, everything you have outside of Jesus is going to be lost: your wife, your parents, your children; everything will be lost. So what is it among all the things that will be lost, if it were lost,

you would say, "I just cannot live here anymore?" That's a good possibility that's an imaginary tower.

Remember Jonah? God calls Jonah, "Hey, I want you to go to these people. I know you hate the people, and I know that they're ungodly people, go and preach repent." He goes, sort of, took some prodding, and a fish, and other ... Finally gets there. And he's like, "Fine I'm going." And he preaches then everybody repents.

You get to chapter four, and this is what Jonah says to the Lord, "Please take my life from me for it is better for me to die than to live." Now this is an amazing thought what he's saying. He's speaking to God, "I am the Lord your God, no other gods before me." He's speaking to the one who's supposed to have all of his affection, and what he's saying is this, "I have nothing now to live for."

Well why would he say that? This is why, it's because he had an idol of Jewish nationalism, "We're the best people, this is our country, we're the special people, the holy people, the appointing people from God. And if God does anything kind and other people ... And those people respond to God's kindness and they become part of his people, then we're not special anymore."

So when they all repent, the prophet of God says, "Just kill me now God because I have nothing left to live for." We need to remember Jonah's words the day after the election. There will be a bunch of people around the country, and in our church, that says, "It's all up in flames, dumpster fire. I have nothing to live for." You have everything to live for because you have Christ.

It's amazing that time just moves so fast. Okay, Paul changes metaphors; I got to go. Paul changes metaphors as he targets the sins of twisted hate. I just got to say it real quickly, we'll pick the next week here. But he says, "But now you must put them all away." Now he's not talking about life and death, he's talking about putting things on, taking these off. And he's talking about it like clothes.

And he talks about them, these sins of twisted hate he says there's anger, which is hatred. Wrath which is rage. Malice which is cruelty. Slander which is to insult somebody. Obscene talk from your mouth. Don't lie to one another. Then he says this is why, he goes, "You've put off the old self with this practice and have put on the new self."

You see when we trust Jesus Christ, we get new clothes. And therefore, any other time in our life we look down and we see the old clothes on, he says, "Just change clothes." It's a sign you need to repent right now and when you do, it's going to protect you from a fall and it's going to provide for you refreshment for your soul.

So let me finish with a few applications; there's actually three of them here. First, let's admit our need and trust Jesus Christ. I know there's some of you listening right now and you've never trusted Christ, and so when you read verse six and seven and it says, "Because of these the wrath of God is coming." You read that and you say, "That means the wrath of God is coming to me." And friend it is, but it doesn't have to.

He says, "This is how we used to live, but if you're outside of Christ, this is how you're living." Our only hope to avert wrath and to leave the sin that's going to strip us of our dignity and of our joy is to trust Jesus Christ and be forgiven of all of our sin; and he will do that.

If you repent of self righteousness and believing that you can save yourself, and you place your faith in Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection, confessing him as Lord of your life, the Bible says that he forgives us of our sin and fills us. He gives us himself so that we now have within us the source of love, and wisdom, and truth. You can trust him now and I plead that you would.

Second thing is as you continue to walk with the Lord then ... So if you have already done that at some point in your life, this is the next step for you, and that is to unmask sin by confessing it as God describes it. One of the great problems that we have as people is minimizing our sin. We love to take our sin and sterilize it. It's like we have a poodle so we need to put a sweater on the poodle and say, "Well it's a sin, it's yeah. He needs some warmth, let's talk about him this way."

Don't do that with the Lord, this is what I mean. If the night before you spent time with a friend and you happened to gossip about somebody else, and all of a sudden you feel guilty about it, don't come to the Lord and say, "You know what God, I said too much last night." No what you didn't do was just say too much last night.

Instead you need to call it what God describes it, because only by calling it what it is can you identify and say, "This is what has to go." So instead of saying, "I said too much." We can say, "God I gossiped about that person last night that was made in your image which means I also maligned you. I slandered them, I judged their motives without knowing their motives, and I sowed seeds of discord because I said it to somebody else. But one of the biggest problems God is I also liked it, I enjoyed it, I felt good when I was doing it."

And so what you have to do is you have to trace your sin to its source and then you confess it to God. Now what do you do then? Now all of a sudden we have it, it's sitting there like, "This is the sin in my life, what do I do with it now?" You take that sin to the cross.

And there's another place you can take it, and I want to talk about that real quick. I know I'm out of time, but this is probably the most important thing I can tell you because otherwise you walk out of here and you think repentance is all about feeling bad about yourself. It's not, it's about running to the Lord.

There's two places you can take your sin. You can take it to a place called Mount Sinai and that's where the law of God came. This is like a ... You can think of these two things like it's a metaphor; you can't actually run to these places. But there's Sinai and then there's the cross or Calvary.

Sinai is where the law came. And so what happens is this, is when you feel guilty about something and then you suddenly you say, "Okay God this is what it is." The most natural thing to do is to run the Sinai because the Sinai is where we feel self loathing, and that feels so remorseful when we self loath.

But here's the problem, meaning we get there and we go, "God I'm horrible, I did this again, I'm just such a terrible person, I will never amount to anything. My family's not going to love me, they're not going to respect me, it's just terrible, terrible, terrible." Self loathing hates shame but it doesn't necessarily learn to hate sin.

And so once the shame has worn off, Sinai provides no power whatsoever to resist the sin the next time because we have not learned to hate the sin; we still love it. Which is why we have to go to the cross where we see Jesus hanging there for us, paying our price, committed to our purity, bearing our shame.

You see it's at the cross that sin loses its power; this power is desire. The greatest problem that you have with your sin is that you want to. The only way to change your want to is to change your love. And the only way you can do that is at the cross sin loses its power, because at the cross we're staring at a more attractive power.

And when we see what our sin did to him, now all of a sudden instead of just feeling icky about our sin, now we hate it because of what it did to the greatest man of all. So whatever it is that you find in your heart that the Lord reveals when you look to home plate, run to the Lord and take it to the cross, and you'll find power to say, "No." Tomorrow. So what I want to do is give you an opportunity right now just to take a moment and pray and confess your sin to the Lord. So why don't you do that.

Father in heaven, your word says that, "If we confess our sin that you're faithful and just to forgive us of our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So because of your kindness in offering us such a gift, we come to you and ask that you would forgive us. I pray for those who are here who have yet to trust Christ that they would run to the cross and see Jesus, the savior of their soul, and that they would trust him now. And I pray for those of us who've already done that who continue to wrestle with our sin, and fail, and I pray Father that you would help us to take our sin to the cross. And would you strike our attention by helping us to see the greatest of all in the person of Christ. So thank you for your love for us, thank you for your forgiveness. We sing to you now, we magnify you, you're the one and only. And we pray this in Jesus name, amen.



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