

Fighting Hypocrisy in the Church

by Francis Chan

Francis Chan emphasizes the importance of God-centered theology and the need for purity in the church, encouraging listeners to put God at the center of everything and seek to do what He wants.

Duration: 46:17

Scripture: Matthew 25:35, 1 Corinthians 5:4

Topics: "Hypocrisy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a play he watched and how it made him question his own commitment to living out the Bible. He emphasizes the importance of not just preaching about denying oneself and following God, but actually living it out. The speaker also references Matthew 25 and the parable of the sheep and goats, highlighting the need to care for the poor and needy. He encourages the church to take slander seriously and confront those who engage in it. The sermon concludes with the speaker sharing how their church's commitment to caring for the poor has garnered attention and praise from people around the world.

Transcript

This week, my wife's grandmother passed away, Grandma Clara. And some of you guys know Grandma Clara, and she still writes letters to some of you. She was here from the start with the church.

And, you know, we just gave that series on being in love with Jesus. And I was trying to think, do I know of anyone on this planet who was more in love with Jesus than Grandma? And I thought, no, not even close. There are people that are committed to Jesus.

There are people who commit to serving the Lord, people that have sacrificed everything for God. But when I think about someone who was truly in love with Jesus Christ, I think no one holds a candle to Grandma. My wife would tell me that when she was growing up, she'd hear Grandma in the room next door to her just crying and praying every morning.

And she'd tell Lisa, she goes, you know, every morning I get on my knees right there by that corner of the bed. And that's where I meet with God. And she goes throughout the day, whenever I pass by that corner of the bed, I get weepy.

And I say to say to God, God, I can't wait till tomorrow morning just to be with you again and spend that quality time with you. And she was just talking to Jesus all the time, all day long. She would pray.

I mean, she was truly in love and she could not wait to see him. And so it was exciting when we got the news and going, wow, she's she's finally there. She's finally there.

She told me one time that she thought maybe that the Lord was keeping her alive because he was going to return, you know, before she died. And so that she was waiting for that. And the most impactful thing she ever did for me personally, and I've shared the story before, was this one time the whole family went over to the Moore Park Melodrama thing.

This was years ago. I know it exists anymore. But we're over there at the theater.

And during halftime, I look over at Grandma and I go, I go, Grandma, what do you what do you what do you think? What do you think of the play so far? Because it was clean, it was good, and she's very godly woman. And she goes, oh, I don't want to be here. And I say, OK, I go, well, there was nothing bad.

You know, they didn't say any bad words or anything that was wrong about the play. She goes, oh, honey, it's not that she goes. I just don't know if I want to be here when Jesus returns.

She goes, I'd rather be helping someone, I'd rather be praying for someone, but I don't want Jesus to return and just find me sitting in a theater watching a play. Wow. You take the Bible seriously.

I mean, we've all heard the passages, right, that Christ could return at any moment. We want to be ready. We want to be doing what he wants us to be doing at that time.

But she lived it out. Here was a woman who thought through every moment of the day, what do I want to be doing when Christ returns? Do I want to be doing this when he returns? Not even if it's something horribly evil. It's just because I want him to see that I'm serving him, that I'm praying to him, that I've been waiting for him.

And it's so weird when someone takes the word of God seriously, isn't it? It's convicting. And you go, you know what? That's the way we ought to live. And needless to say, I didn't watch the second half of the play.

I mean, I'm sitting there praying the whole time going, maybe she knows something. You know, I I'm just the whole time. Just seriously, I was praying for neighbors, praying for friends.

It changed the way I live, because when someone lives out the Bible, suddenly you don't have an excuse. When you finally see it, that's what Brad Buser did for us last weekend, right? Because it's one thing for me to come up and say, hey, deny yourself, pick up your cross, follow him. You know what? Let go of your dreams.

It's another thing for someone who actually did it to stand up here and say, you know, I don't see any other way around this thing. You just do what God wants you to do. Remember a few weeks ago, we talked about Matthew 25 and we talked about the sheep and goat judgment and how Jesus says that, you know what? That's me that's starving.

I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty. You gave me nothing to drink.

And I go, if we take that seriously. Then we've got to be living our life to try to help these people that are in need around the world, because that's Jesus. I'm not going to let Jesus starve.

And so we've got to be passionate about these things. And it's interesting, after I gave that message and the podcast went out, we've been getting emails all around the world. People, people emailing us going, are you serious? Your church is going to give away that much.

You guys are going to take that passage seriously. People say, finally, a church is putting its money where its mouth is. You're really going to care for the poor like that.

And it's just you're hearing these people because suddenly now church is going, wait, now we have no excuse. If they're going to do that, because that's that's that's the way it ought to be. You guys are passages in scripture that we have to take seriously.

I mean, every passage in scripture we have to take seriously. And again, I'm just tired of growing up in church and hearing the message and then not actually doing something about it. As this morning, I share a passage of scripture that we have to take seriously.

The elders discussed this a couple of weeks ago. It was either this last Monday or the Monday before, and we agreed that I need to teach on this. But let me just say this right now, because we're taking this passage seriously, some of you will not return next weekend.

Um, you know, don't clap for that. You're hoping for certain people, huh? No. No, by teaching this, though, seriously.

Yeah, last service guy just walked out after saying that really. Yeah, yeah. All right.

And that's a very sad thing. It's sad to me, but it's but it's OK, it's OK, and the reason why it's OK is you need to understand that ever since we started this church, we have taught a God centered theology. That means that everything revolves around God.

We don't teach a man centered theology, which is what most of the world teaches and most churches teach is a man centered theology where everything revolves around you and God is just trying to appease you and do things the way you want them done. That's why I don't ask you, hey, what do you guys want to do at church next week? Because it's not about you. It's not about me.

It's about looking at this book and saying, what does God want? It's a God centered theology. You see, and when you have a God centered theology that says that everything revolves around God, it answers the question when people ask, you know, or people say, my life is painful. I've been through some hard times.

Things aren't going the way I want them to. So there must not be a God. We hear that all the time.

I'm going through a hard time, so there must not be a God. Well, that's true. There must not be a God.

Whose actions revolve around you. But there could exist a God who believes that everything should revolve around him, that God could exist. And that's the way the God of the Bible explains himself, and that's why we pray thy kingdom come, thy will be done, not my will, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We grew up praying that prayer. A lot of us growing up in Sunday school, you learned in Catholic school. Did you know that God wanted us to take that seriously, too, that when we said thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

Not just to repeat it and just to say, oh, yes, I will be done on earth as it is in heaven. No, that we really mean it. God, I want what you want.

Forget my desires. Put my dreams aside. This is about you.

This world centers around you. And therefore, this church centers around God and. The God of the Bible, when he describes himself, he goes, you need to understand why I do certain things on the earth.

It's really for one reason, and that reason is me. In the Old Testament, if we look at Isaiah, I'm going to put a passage of Isaiah, chapter forty eight, verses nine through eleven. This is when God was telling Israel why he wasn't destroying them yet.

He says this for my own name's sake. I delay my wrath for the sake of my praise. I hold it back from you so as not to cut you off.

See, I have refined you, though not as silver. I've tested you in the furnace of affliction for my own sake, for my own sake. I do this.

How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. God is explained to the nation of Israel because you know why I don't destroy you. Is it because you're just such good people and you're such a wonderful nation that you know what? I just figured I'm going to take care of you because, no, the reason why I don't destroy you is for my name's sake.

It's for me. It's for the sake of my praise. He's saying, see, if I destroy you and everyone knows that you are my people, they're going to say that, see, your God isn't as powerful as our God.

And he goes, so it's for my own name's sake that I'm delaying my wrath. He goes, because I don't want to be defamed, I don't want other people to say, see, your God isn't powerful. He goes, so it's for my own sake.

He says it again for my own sake. I do this because he goes, I'm not going to yield my glory to another. Everyone needs to know that Yahweh God, the God of Israel, is the almighty God.

And that's why I don't destroy you, because you're rebellious and I should destroy you. But I don't for my own name's sake. You understand that it wasn't for Israel.

It was for him. It was for his own glory, for his own name. It's no different in the New Testament, in Colossians chapter one, verse 16, it says, for by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by him.

And don't miss that word for him. Why did he make everything so that he could cater to the needs of all the things that he made? He made everything, it says, for him that we are supposed to revolve around him. We go, what do you want? Rather than God, why aren't you giving me what I want? We teach as a church, this God centered theology.

And I understand it flies in the face of everything you're taught all week long and other places where everything's about you. The customer is always right. It's all about you.

If you don't get your way, you know what? Fight for it. Fight for it. Fight for it.

And the Bible says, no, not my will be done, but thine. That's why Jesus prayed. Even Jesus, I only say what the father wants me to say.

I don't say anything unless he tells me to say it. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And having said this again, just want to make sure you understand that you realize this weekend is the 13th anniversary of Cornerstone Church.

We've existed 13 years. And I yeah, and from its inception, it's it's been about what does God want? And from its inception, this has not been Francis's church. This is God's church.

It's not my church. It's not your church. If it were my church, I would do a lot of things differently.

You wouldn't even want to know. The reason is the reason is I would do things differently because I disagree with this book a lot. I disagree with this book a lot.

But when I disagree, I still obey. Because you don't have to agree with someone to obey with, to obey him, see, because when I disagree with God. I assume I'm wrong.

Crazy, huh? I just give him the benefit that you probably know more. I when I disagree, I go, you know what, I assume that I'm wrong and you're right, and so I'll still obey you. See, the crazy thing is most people don't do that when they disagree with this book, they walk away and they go, well, forget it.

I'm going to go my own way. Or when I disagree with this book, you know what? I'm going to go with what I think. Because God gave me a mind.

And I'm not going to just check it in at the door. That's crazy. So you're going to go with your opinion over God's.

That's nuts, it's it's it's like the other day when two weeks ago we were visiting my wife's grandma and we're up up north and some other relatives were there and we went out to lunch and during lunch, my wife prays after she prays her her cousin's daughter was there, who's like three years old after my wife prays, she looks at my wife and goes. You did that wrong. And we just kind of laugh and then she goes, no, you don't do it right.

And Lisa's like, well, what did I do wrong? She says it was just wrong. It was wrong and you couldn't get anything out of her and pretty soon it's like, OK, it's not cute anymore. But but, you know, the whole it's just so funny.

I was a little three year old telling her, you know, you don't pray right. You don't you don't do that very well. And and I think how silly it must sound to an eternal God.

When someone who's existed 20 years, 40 years, 80 years, looks up and goes, you didn't do it right. That's not the right way to do it. I've got a better idea.

You see. When you and God disagree, when you disagree with scripture, whose viewpoint do you take? It's very important, because if you don't follow God's word, then you're really not a follower of God. I mean, you just follow God as long as he agrees with you.

So in reality, who's who's your God? It's yourself. You know, at some point you just got to say, you know what, I disagree with this, but you know what? God, this is God. So I'm going to submit to it anyways.

And that's what we're doing as a church. That's what we've always been striving for as a church. If this were my church, I wouldn't practice First Corinthians, chapter five.

So if you ever Bibles, turn to First Corinthians five, because we're going to do it anyways, because God has written his word. First Corinthians, chapter five. First Corinthians, chapter five, starting in verse nine, it's written.

I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, not at all, meaning the people of this world who are immoral or the greedy and swindlers or idolaters. In that case, you'd have to leave this world. But now I'm writing that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother, but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler.

With such a man, do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside, expel the wicked man from among you. So what do we do with that? Let's ignore it.

I don't like it. I don't agree with it. Sounds harsh.

Let's not do it. Where do we go? You know what? That's what God says. And because this is his church, you got to understand, God says, this is my church.

This isn't Francis Church, not your church. This is God's church. He goes, look, I want things done a certain way in my house, in your house.

If you want to have all sorts of immorality, that's your home with your bride, whatever you whatever kind of bride you want. That's up to you. But for my church, my bride, my house, I want a house that is pure.

This is God speaking. Because if you want to do things on earth as it is in heaven, you really mean that. Well, here's what I want in my church.

I want purity. When I come back from my bride, I want to see that my bride is pure. And I want to see that you've expelled those who call themselves Christians.

But are living these immoral lifestyles. Now, he makes it clear he goes, look, I am not telling you because Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians and he said, you know what? In my letter, I told you not to associate with the sexually immoral because I wasn't talking about the people in the world. I'm not telling you just to die and go to heaven.

I mean, you wouldn't be able to talk to anyone because you need to be out there. You can understand this. I think the church has got it all wrong.

What we end up doing is the same thing the Corinthian church does, is we avoid the people in the world that are immoral. We run from them and we curse them and we judge them. And God says, what are you

judging them for? You have no right to judge them.

That's God's job. He goes, but inside the church, you are supposed to judge him. See, we allow sin in the church and we go, well, that guy's leaving his wife and I would have left her to, you know, whatever type of thing.

And I'll put my arm around you and the Bible saying, wait, no, no, no, not in my house. Not in my church. And we let these things go on in the church, and then we say how evil those people are out in the world.

You guys, that's completely opposite of what God desires. God says, you know what? The people who don't know me, they're going to do what they're going to do. And you need to love them.

You need to go after them. Isn't that what Jesus did? He was out with the alcoholics, with the prostitutes, with the murderers, with the thieves. That's who Jesus hung with.

Out in the world, we're seeing in the church, it's supposed to look differently. God says, I want the church to be pure. See, and I know that some of you are thinking, man, Francis, you preach this type of message and we won't need a, you know, a building project.

We we you're going to get rid of everyone. Um, you know what? What if what if unbelievers hear this message? What if people outside of the church walls hear this type of message? It's going to turn them off to Christianity. And I think you'd be surprised.

I believe the world is waiting for the church to preach this message. They are waiting for the church to get serious about judging the sin that's inside of the church and quit judging them. And then suddenly we'll be a light to the world and they'll be attracted to it and say, OK, now I want to be a place like that.

Because how many times have you shared with people and they said, I don't need to be a part of that church. I know so-and-so. He goes there, calls himself a Christian.

He's twice as immoral as I am. Who needs your Jesus? Well, what if the church was serious about purity and suddenly in here we loved each other enough that we went after each other and confront each other on the things that are not pleasing to God? And we started judging those inside the church. I tell you, that's not going to turn people from this place.

It's suddenly going to be the salt of the earth. It'll be the light of the world. So in First Corinthians five and verse 11, he says, I'm writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother.

Very key phrase, calls himself a brother, but is sexually immoral. OK, so we're not supposed to associate, not even eat with someone who calls himself a Christian, but is having sex outside of marriage. If you're unmarried, having sex, call yourself a Christian.

I shouldn't even talk to you, should never eat with you, according to the Bible. If you're having an affair, call yourself a Christian. Unless you're going to turn from that sin, I don't want to associate with you.

I will not associate with you if I know it. Other than to confront you, because that's what God tells me to do, and so I'm bound to that. He says the immoral or the greedy guys, this one's a little more difficult, because how do you judge when someone is greedy? And sometimes this is one that we belittle here in Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks, you know, because aren't we all greedy? You know, aren't we all materialistic? And so it's hard to judge on that one.

It's like, when is a person truly greedy, like greedy enough to not associate? You know, I don't know. That's that's necessarily the whole point of it to say, well, that's the line, you know. But it's more just the attitude of this person's heart.

It's all about stuff. You're always just thinking about stuff. You're always just thinking about this earth.

The greedy, the idolater, and we're not as associated with those who call themselves Christians yet worship other idols or worship other belief systems. It's not OK to say, well, Jesus is one way and here's another way, here's another way, here's another way. If you're going to do that, call yourself something else, but not a Christian.

A slanderer, that means if you say negative things, untrue things about other people. You gossip about other people. Then we shouldn't associate with you, but that's a pattern of your life.

Again, it's not saying that you slipped once. We're all going to do that in different areas. It's talking about the person.

This is the pattern of your life. You refuse to repent. This is just what you do to you are.

I mean, you guys understand this is a good thing. It really is. Everything in Scripture is good.

It's for our good. I mean, Chris, could you imagine what it would be like if you knew that every time you walked inside the church, that no one in that room slandered you that week? I'd be crazy to imagine how happy I'd be if I walked up here every morning and knew no one spoke negatively about me this week. I mean, what if the church was that type of place where we took slander that seriously that you could walk in and go, you know what? I know no one slanders me here.

I mean, the workplace everywhere else, but not in the church, because they take it so seriously that they confront and they don't even allow people who are slanderers to stay in that place. What a light this place would be, how people would run for a safe place like that. A drunkard, I recognize some of you, you have some addictions and you struggle with those addictions and you fight those addictions.

Some of you, you wake up every morning, you say, Lord, just get me through this day. I don't want to sin against you. I want to fight this thing.

You've got people holding you accountable. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, you're fighting the fight. And I say, praise God for you.

You know what? Because I know it's not easy. I talk to people all the time with different types of addictions, whether it's whether it's, you know, alcohol, drugs, sexual, whatever it may be. And it's a fight.

It's a fight. All of us have our addictions in some area and it's a fight. This is referring to the person, not the person who's fighting, the person who just says, you know what, I'm both.

I'm a Christian and I get wasted on the weekends. I'm a Christian and, you know, I'm a drunkard. He says, or a swindler, that's a person who rips other people off.

Wouldn't that be great to know that, man, if someone, you know, goes to Cornerstone, I can trust his business. He's not going to rip me off. And if you are, if you have any unfair practices, don't you dare put a fish on your business card and make it look like you're a Christian to get more business.

That's just the lamest thing you could do. You're dragging the name of Jesus Christ down with you. You see, this stuff is to protect the church, but it's also to protect the reputation of Jesus Christ.

Do you understand something? See, here's here's something we don't talk about a whole lot. I call myself a Christian. That's an honor.

Whose name did I take when I called myself Christian? I took the very name of Christ. Man, it's not more about Francis Chan, I I'm a Christian, I took the name above every name at the name of Jesus. Every knee is going to bow, every tongue is going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, the glory of God, the father.

And now suddenly I've taken that name for myself. And you guys, that's an honor. That's a sacred thing.

And Jesus, don't call yourself a Christian if you're going to live that type of lifestyle. Don't allow that in the church. Paul was telling the Corinthian church, they see the Corinthian church was proud because of their immorality.

The Bible says that there was some immorality going on in the church and they were proud of it. They were saying, look, we're an open community, we allow everyone. You know what, you can be a Christian and do whatever you want.

See, we're not judgmental, we're tolerant. And Paul says, you're proud of that. This is God's church and he's saying, I'll have none of that.

This is my house, this is my bride. And that's why he's saying, expel, expel the wicked man from among you. So how do we do this? I believe that scripture outlines this and explains to us the process of how do we expel the immoral person from within the church? And I believe that process is laid out in Matthew chapter 18.

I'm going to put it on the screen for you in case you don't have your Bible now there. And then before I go through this, let me explain that some people look at Matthew 18 and say they don't believe that this this is this applies to all sin. And I can understand because the first part of it says, if your brother sins against you, I understand there's some ancient manuscripts that don't have the against you in it.

But because the the main ones do, we leave it in if your brother sins against you. So people say, well, this is only a sin if someone is sinning against you. And I agree that that is what this is referring to.

However, I don't see a better pattern of how to confront sin. I think this is such a loving way, because how else do you expel the immoral brother? How else do you get out, get him out of there? Do you just see him sin once and kick him out? No, what what Matthew 18 explains is it's a loving, loving process. It says, if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault just between the two of you.

If he listens to you, you've won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.

And if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. OK, there's a process here, you know, because people are saying, man, are you going to kick me out? You can kick me out. Man, that's not what this is saying.

There's a process. Man, it's a loving process. OK, this is so loving.

You can kind of get this because you're going, oh, man, this seems harsh. It seems extreme. No way.

This is the most loving thing you do for a person. In fact, this this is Matthew 18, verse 15. You know what verse 14 is about and the stuff before that? It's the parable of the lost sheep.

Remember that? That's where Jesus says, hey, which of you, if you have a hundred sheep and one of them strays off, aren't you going to leave the ninety nine and go after that one? And we look at that pass and go, wow, what a what a loving passage. You know, like a good shepherd, you go after that one that strays away. Well, then in the very next verse, what does it say? So if your brother sins against you, what do you do? You go after him.

See, people say, well, that's not loving to go confront someone on their sin. And the Bible saying, no, it's not loving to leave him alone. You're just going to let him stray.

You're like that one sheep that just wandered away from from the flock and you're going to let him go in their sin. Now, if you love him, you go after him and you show him his fault. And he goes just between the two of you.

It's a private matter. That means if you see someone in the church and sin, don't come running to me. You're supposed to love that person enough to talk to them and show them biblically.

Look, the Bible says this is wrong. You can't go down this road. And the Bible says that if he listens to you, you win.

You've just brought your brother back into the fold to you. You just did it. That was the goal.

That's the goal of this thing. The goal is not to get rid of people. The goal is to win them back.

And he goes, and if he listens to you, you've just won him back. But then it says if he will not listen, then take one or two others along so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. He's if you confront this person and they don't listen, bring a couple more people with you.

Maybe if three or four of you love on this person, then they'll turn around. You know, in the secular world, they call this intervention, right, is to get the people that love this person, let's all circle around him and love him and let him know that you can't go on living, even the world does this. This is in the church, can you get a couple of people who love this person and all go to them and show them that it's wrong, because maybe he'll listen to two or three of you, maybe several of you in love, come to him and tell him how much you just want to see him walk with the Lord again.

That'll turn him around. What a loving thing to do if he refuses to listen to them. Then tell it to the church.

See, if you've gone down the process and you've talked to the person, you've brought some others along and you talk to them, then you can tell one of the elders of the church. And as the elders discuss it and go, you know what, this is legitimate, then we're going to bring it before the whole church. And we will name names and say, you know what, this person we've tried, we're loving him, everything else, maybe if we all in love, just go after this person and say, you know what, you got to walk away from her, you got to walk away from this addiction, you got to walk away from that.

Maybe if we all love on him, maybe then he'll come back, maybe then he'll repent of his sin. Then the Bible says if he refuses to listen, even to the church, the church leaders, the church body, he refused to listen to all that, he goes. Then I believe that's what First Corinthians five is about, then you expel the wicked.

Brother, from among you now again, remember the context of this passage, because right after this passage, he talks about forgiveness and talks about how you know what, you've got to keep forgiving. You got to go after that lost sheep, but there's a process in there, so it is love. And so let me just say this right now.

If you are in this room this morning and you call yourself a Christian, but you have decided to continue in on in these sins or any of those sins that we mentioned. You need to know that we love you and we love you so much that we're willing to ask you to leave. We're so committed to restoring you that we'll even take it to the point of asking you not to come back until you've turned.

And in fact, if you have your Bibles, go back to First Corinthians five. I want to explain one more passage to you, just two verses to show you how serious this is. In First Corinthians five.

Verse four, and this, again, is something that we're going to we're going to start doing, verse four, First Corinthians five, when you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. I know most you read that you go, that's weird. What does that mean? Hand this man over to Satan when you're assembled in a public assembly, these people have refused to repent after everyone's gone after them at that point, publicly to say this person is no longer under Christ and God, we hand him over to Satan.

And why would you do that? Well, one, because the Bible says so, but what sense does that make? OK, why does the Bible say hand him over to Satan so that what? Yeah, it's about his salvation. It's his hand, this man over Satan, so that what his sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved. On the day of the Lord, what's the goal here, the person's salvation, right? You see, the point is, is when I say, you know what, this person's been handed over to Satan and just publicly, God, we're handing him over to Satan, have Satan have his way with him.

And then the whole idea is we no longer associate with him, we no longer eat with him, this person, he or she goes off in his or her sin, which he or she loves so much that she wasn't willing to let go. She has indulges, indulges, indulges, indulges. And then at some point, hopefully the hope is that her flesh and these fleshly desires, as she's fulfilled them all, she goes, this isn't that great.

I miss what I had, I remember the way it used to be when I was a part of the church, I remember what it was like to be close to God and I gave all that up for this. The hope is that at some point they come to the end of themselves and they go, man, OK, I want to come back and then we with open arms say, yeah, come on back. This is what we've been hoping for is what we've been praying for, that you've had enough of Satan and you want all of God now.

And that Bible says that that leads to salvation because the Bible says that the godly sorrow leads to repentance. Which leads to salvation, whereas worldly sorrow, it says, leads to death. You see, it's not enough for when you're confronted in your sin to go, yeah, I know it's wrong, it's wrong, it's wrong, but I'm not going to stop where, where, where that's that's I'm not going to put my arm around you seriously, because that would only lead you to death for me to say, oh, it's OK, you can keep calling yourself a

Christian and keep living this type of lifestyle.

I'm not helping you. I'm only enabling you and leading you to death, the Bible says, and I love you too much to do that. See, even though we explain these things, I guarantee you, people will walk away from church this weekend and say they're judgmental, which, yeah, we are.

We're supposed to be within the church. Bible says that. And you're going to say that we're unloving and to that, I respond, no, the truth is, is that you are unloving.

And you are also very arrogant. Because you believe you have a better way of restoration than what Jesus laid out, you read this and you're not denying what the passages say, you're just saying you have a better way. I mean, unless you can tell me now that verse really means this is go ahead, try.

And try to convince yourself that it means something else, I mean, it's black and white, how else do you read it? But you think you have a better way, and the reason why I say that you're unloving. Is the truth is, is by you not going after these people and allowing them to have this worldly sorrow and not really bring them to repentance, it says you lead them to death. And the truth is, here's the here's the bottom line is you care more about your friendships.

Then you do about your friends, that's what it comes down to, it's selfishness on your part, you're more concerned about your friendship than you are about your friend. You can't imagine not having that person as your friend is selfish. You can't imagine them looking down on you or thinking that you're judging them or doing something bad to them.

You can't handle that. And so rather than doing the right thing that would lead them to life, you're going to do the easy thing that will help you keep your friendship, even if it means your friend goes to hell. And if you want to call that loving, so be it.

But to me, I say that's evil, that's self-centered, it's arrogant and it's very unloving. You guys, this is a topic that is tough to talk about, obviously, but it's also something that's very dear to my heart. And the reason is, is over these last 13 years, there have been times when I've had to look at some of my friends, people that I love.

I mean, really love, not acquaintances, not just some guy that stepped into the church, some of my absolute best friends that I've been friends with for over 10 years. And I've had to look them in the eye over dinner and say, this is our last meal together and read this passage and say, how else do you read it? Unless you want to tell me to my face that you're no longer a Christian. Otherwise, I can't talk with you, associate with you, eat with you.

This is it. This is goodbye. And it's killing me to say this to you.

You think there's any bone in my body that enjoys doing that? To walk away from these friendships of years, some of the funnest people in my life. But I go, you know, God, I don't want to do this. I don't even know if I agree with this, but I'm a follower of you.

And my hope is that someday those guys will look back and go, man, Francis did what he hated doing, what he didn't feel like doing in order to honor God. Maybe I should do the same. I don't want to leave my sin, but I've had an example of someone who was willing to even let go of a friendship for the sake of honoring God because he believed so much that this is a God centered world.

Now, for those who are visiting, I mean, weird weekend for you to come. But honestly, I think you understand this better than the people who go to the church. I think you and your heart are going, amen, and some of the churchgoers are angry about this because you're going, man, I've been waiting for the church to address its own hypocrisy.

But here's what I don't want to leave worried about, because some people, if you're visiting, you're not a Christian. You don't call yourself a Christian. I don't want you to go home and think, OK, well, then I got to get my life together before I become a Christian.

I better get my life together before I get baptized. You guys, if you're going to wait for that, it's never going to happen, OK? Because the Bible teaches that it doesn't matter what your past is, don't you understand? I don't care how many people you've slept with. I don't care how many people you've killed.

I don't care what you've done in life, you can be forgiven today. It's all wiped away. That's the grace of God.

I mean, the Bible says you come that way and you recognize that you've sinned against God and you recognize that God loved you so much that Jesus already paid that penalty on the cross for you. And the Bible says you can be forgiven. You can come up here and get baptized regardless of what you did this week.

God's forgiveness is that great. It's that huge. And it's when you get baptized is when you give your life to Jesus, that God's spirit comes inside of you.

Now, the Holy Spirit of God comes into you and he empowers you to put to death the deeds of the flesh. Many of us in this room are testimony of that. You're going, man, you know, the way I used to live and then God came into my life and man, I had the power to get rid of this.

And I'm so glad I'm through with that old life. And man, how great it is to know God and his power to put to death the deeds of the flesh. Man, that's that's the truth.

And we want you to experience that. And then you walk on this journey with us, a bunch of imperfect people that are striving for this perfection, striving to live a life that's honoring to the Lord and having our lives revolve around him. We would love for you to experience that and you can experience that today.

And I want to make sure you understand that. In fact, right now, we're going to take communion. And another thing the elders have talked about in the last couple of weeks is is how you know how we used to have the tables up here with communion.

I mean, right up until last week. And we did that initially because we wanted you guys to come early or stay late and hang out as families and take up communion together and give you some time. But we recognize that while we were doing that, some people would just walk up and take up communion, not really knowing what they're doing.

And the Bible says that's a very serious thing that you want to avoid in First Corinthians 11. And so what we've decided is we're no longer going to do that. And what we are going to do is we're going to pass communion.

But every time we pass it at the church, which will be like once a month or so, we're going to explain to you again that this is only for believers. This is only for those who have taken the name of Jesus Christ on for themselves. And it is and it's not for the believers who are in ongoing sin that they refuse to repent of.

In fact, we're going to use the time of communion to announce those people and to ask you to pursue those people. Because biblically, it seemed like that was what part of what communion was for a time for us to to look within our own body and make sure that we're worthy to do this. And so we're going to take the bread, which represents the body of Christ, and take the cup, which represents his blood.

And if you're visiting, you're not a Christian. Man, it's so good for you to be here just to watch this, not to partake of it, but to watch because the Bible actually teaches that we do this to proclaim his death to you until he comes. It's a sense in which we preach to you when you're watching.

And it's a beautiful thing for you to observe as we take the bread. It represents the body of Jesus Christ that was broken for us. When we drink of the cup, it represents his blood that was shed for us.

And it's time for us to remember what he's done. And so the usher is going to come, the worship team is going to come and we're going to pass the bread in the cup. And I'm going to ask you as they do this, if you would hold on to the bread and hold on to the cup and we'll take of it together.

I'll come back up after we worship God for a little bit and then we'll take of it together. But during this time, oh, man, you guys listen to this. OK, our hope is that you hear this passage and you won't need anyone to confront you.

You'll do it yourself, and that's what I do when I read scripture, it's like, oh, I need to change that. I want that's what the Holy Spirit does in our lives. Right.

And we get convicted when we read those passages and like, man, you don't need to confront me on that. I know I'm pursuing this. I'm going to get this right.

That's called self-discipline. And it's only when self-discipline isn't there that church discipline takes place. It's only when the Holy Spirit isn't convicting you that the Holy Spirit in us, you know, hopefully will help convict you.

But if you to this morning are convicted and saying, you know what, I shouldn't call myself a Christian and continue on in this sin. And you need some prayer. There'll be people up here at the prayer room.

And I ask that you come and pray with someone during during this communion time. If you want to get baptized, you want to become a Christian today, understand this is what you're committing to saying, you know, I want to live a life that revolves around God and his desires. And I want a body of Christ to come alongside and help me.

Then you can get baptized this morning as well. And so as the ushers come and pass the elements, if you need prayer, we'll be at the prayer room.

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