

# What to Do With the Memory of Past Failures

by Ken Pierpont

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*The sermon addresses how to cope with the memories of past failures and the path to healing through repentance and understanding God's grace.*

**Duration:** 38:13

**Scripture:** Titus 2:3

**Topics:** "Past Failures"

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## Description

In this sermon, the pastor shares a personal story of a girl who made mistakes in her youth and felt ashamed. He emphasizes that despite past sins, there is hope and forgiveness through Jesus. The pastor encourages listeners to use accusations of past sin as an opportunity to praise God for His forgiveness. He also highlights the importance of being patient and kind towards unbelievers, reminding listeners that they too were once lost but were saved by God's mercy. The sermon references Bible verses such as 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and Titus 2:2-7 to support these teachings.

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## Transcript

I was driving up to camp this week and had an old memory come back to me that really wasn't good. As I was driving up, there's a gas station there. When you pull off at 75 and you go north at the Aldrax, there's a gas station there.

And years ago I was going up there to speak at camp and I had the kids with me and they were misbehaving. And I just kept threatening them, you know, warning them, breathing out threats and imprecations and telling them all the evil things I was going to do to them if they wouldn't behave. And they just kept horsing around, mostly Dan and Wes over here.

Raise your hand so everybody knows who you are. Yeah, thank you. And they were just little guys and they were just horsing around doing stuff kids do.

And I was telling them to cool it and calm down and quiet down and please behave and I'm going to beat you if you don't and stuff like that. So we stopped at the gas station and we went inside and I said, well, that's it, you know, you messed with me, now I'm going to have to spank you. So I gave them a token spanking, took off my belt and I spanked them and it didn't hurt them.

And I didn't really intend to hurt them, they were little, I just wanted to get their attention and get them to behave. And they laughed at me. And so when they did that, you know, I kind of got angry with them.

And I go, okay, fine, if that didn't hurt, I'm going to spank you so it will hurt. And then I spanked them really, really hard. And then after I got done doing that, I got in the car and immediately knew I had sinned against them and that I had sinned against God.

And it just immediately felt I knew what I did was sinful and wrong. And after that, I asked them to forgive me and they did forgive me, I do believe, and have repeatedly told me they've forgiven me for that. But I have a problem because I go by that gas station all the time.

And when I go by the gas station, I've never been by that gas station when I didn't feel a crushing sense of shame and sadness over what I did to my boys there. It doesn't help that they always remind me of it. They didn't realize it hurt my feelings until this week when I kind of talked to them about it.

We would go by that station and they would go, hey, there's the station where Dad beat us half to death. Remember that? And I would go, yeah, I'm trying to forget it, but it just keeps coming back to me. And this year, I had a plan.

If you know the geography a little bit, if you go on up to Twin Branch and cut across, you don't have to go past that gas station. So I said, let's go up to the outlets in Horsetown a little bit. Maybe we'll buy you guys a shirt or something like that.

And then we'll go on to camp and we'll have lunch. And we did that and we skipped the gas station part, and I was really happy. And in my mind, I was thinking about that, thinking I'm glad we're not going by that gas station again.

And when we got to the corner, we were going to turn north, one of the kids says, hey, Dad, we missed the gas station this year. If you'd gone the other way, you could have gone past that gas station where you beat us half to death. So they were the accuser of the brethren this week.

And it's interesting, though, because I want to talk to you for the next couple of weeks about what to do with a memory of past failure. Now, I told you a story that I'm ashamed of, but there are stories I couldn't tell you because the shame is so much deeper and it's so much darker. I wouldn't think of even telling people in public.

I just used kind of a smaller one as an example. And I'm thinking that maybe some of you can relate to this, that you have things in your past that are just too heavy to think about. They're memories that haunt you.

They're memories that you just can't get away from them. And I want to talk to you about this for two reasons. One reason is for you because you need to know what to do when you're haunted by the burden of a memory of a past sinful failure.

What do you do about past failures? You need that help yourself. But the other reason is because of this great area in which God has placed us. And the thousands of people whose lives are ravaged by sin and guilt and shame, and they do not know that there is a way for them to be free of sin and guilt and shame.

They don't know it. They don't get it. They know there are religious bodies around that are going to make them feel even more guilty.

They know there are religious bodies around, and as they perceive it, these religious bodies are there to just kind of add to their burden of guilt and shame. But that's not exactly true, but that's what they think. And wouldn't it be something if we could get really good at helping people be delivered from the burden of their past guilt and shame? So that's why I want to talk about this.

Now, where does this come from? When you feel guilty, where does it come from? We use some biblical examples. Obviously, when you feel guilty, it may come from the Holy Spirit. It would be a good thing then, right? Guilt is the pain of the soul telling us there's something wrong.

John 16, verses 8-11. Listen to this. And when He has come, Jesus speaking, referring to the Holy Spirit.

When He has come, He will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Of sin, because they do not believe in Me. Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more.

Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. The Holy Spirit, one of the functions of the Holy Spirit in mercy is to convict us of sin. It's like when we have our spiritual arm chopped off and we're bleeding to death.

The Spirit's function is to cause pain so that we attend to our problem before we die. And so when you sin, then you're in serious, desperate trouble. It's a terminal problem.

And so you feel guilt and that guilt may be coming directly from the Holy Spirit. And I want to tell you this. If you feel guilty and it's induced by the Holy Spirit, you ought to thank God for that.

That's a good thing. That's a very good thing. This is another place it may come.

It may come from just exposure to the Word of God. Guilt, feelings of guilt and remorse may come from exposure to the Word of God. That's the way the Word works.

That's one reason why we ought to get in the Word regularly. Because when you start reading the Bible, you see yourself like a mirror, right? That's what it says in James. The Bible's like a mirror.

So you're reading the Bible and you go, oh man, I don't like what I see. Got a big zit on my face. Well, I'm not speaking to camp, that's for sure.

Something really, I have a blemish. Is it better? Can I say that? I have a blemish on my face. Yeah, I've been spoiled.

The people I talked to this week laughed when I told a joke. So, you guys are in church and you're all serious now. So I've got to get used to you.

I love you, man. But you really have a bad sense of humor. You look in the mirror, you've got a big, hurting blemish on your face.

And then you go, wow, that's, you don't do anything about it, you walk away. That's what the book of James talks about. You look in the mirror, you walk away, you don't make any changes.

But it's interesting that what it does teach us about the Word, is that the Word is like a mirror that tells us what we're really like. And a lot of times, you know, our depravity is showing and it's really not good. You look in the, you read the Bible and you go, ah, this is really not good.

Anybody here have that experience? Anybody here have that experience? Like two people, really. You people need to read your Bibles, okay? Go home and read your Bible because you're sinners, and when you read a Bible, you will see you're sinners. I'm pointing my finger at you.

I don't do this very often, but you obviously need it. You're just sitting there looking at me today. I've got to believe you're not voting, right? That's the deal.

You weren't voting? Are you too hot? Is it something I said? Yeah. This is going to be a short message, but obviously I'm going to have to torture you into repentance. So we'll be here until you people start repenting.

No, no. Open the Word of God, and you will see in the Word of God like a mirror the things that are wrong in your life, and when you have that, you should thank God for that. Thank you, Lord, that before my life came completely unglued, you showed me my errors and you showed me my sins in the Word of God.

I will quickly attend to the blemish on my face. I will quickly attend to the sin in my life. That's good.

You also are gifted with a conscience. Now, you can mess up your conscience. You can retool your conscience so your conscience doesn't work right.

You can teach your conscience to not correspond with the Word of God. But the law of God is written on your conscience, and if you have an undefiled or an unseared conscience, your conscience also tells you, doesn't it? And sometimes your conscience burdens you. For instance, if I had mistreated my boys in anger and I had never made it right to them and I had never sought their forgiveness, then my conscience would just burden me until I did something about it, and that would be a good thing, wouldn't it? So when the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, that's a good thing.

When the Bible convicts you of sin, that's a good thing. When your conscience convicts you of sin, that can be a good thing, unless you've messed up your conscience and your conscience is saying stuff to you that the Bible doesn't say, in which case you have a defiled conscience or a distorted or perverted conscience. Romans 12 9 talks about that.

Let me read that to you. Romans 12 9 says, Let love be without hypocrisy, abhor what is evil, and cleave to that which is good. The other places accusation can come from, accusation or feelings of guilt or shame or remorse can come from fellow believers.

Now this can be good or bad, right? Because a believer who loves you and they've earned their way kind of into your life, they might come along and they might say, Do you mind if I mention I've noticed something about your life that you probably would like me to tell you about? You have a blind spot and they help you. And if you're a wise person, you listen to that. Now if you're like me, let's be honest, the way I am is when somebody tells me I have a blind spot, I always hate it.

I always hate it. My insides are going, Okay, I know I'm supposed to listen to this, but I hate it. Are you that way? And so if you come and you tell me I have a blind spot, please do not do this this week, all of you together.

There's so many of you. It would be worse than getting like a boatload of zucchini. It would just be bad, you know.

But just like piecemeal your expectations. But you come and you say, Pastor, I love you, but I noticed something you're probably going to want to know. There's something you'd really be aware of.

Then my initial reaction is going to be kind of plastic. I'm going to go, Okay, thank you. Thank you very much.

Appreciate you coming to me. Inside of me going, You jerk. Don't you have anything better to do with your life than to bother me? You've got a big beam in your own eye.

That's what my insides are going to be saying. And then I'm going to go along with the Lord, and the Lord's going to go, He was right. And I'm going to go, He wasn't either.

Yeah, He was. Uh-uh. He's a jerk.

No, He's not. Well, He is. He's a jerk, but you are too.

That's the way. Does your inner dialogue with the Lord kind of work like that? Yeah. It's just exactly like that, isn't it? And then if you're a person that loves God and you know God, your heart's like, Okay, I was wrong.

I repent. I'm sorry. I'll make it right, or I'll make this correction.

God, give me the power and the power of the Holy Spirit. Give me the time, you know, face time at the cross where I will look at the righteousness of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit so that I can make some progress, so that my friend will come back and say, I see you're making progress. And then I can correct his faults because he has many.

That would be one thing, be fellow believers. Sometimes a fellow believer would say something that's wrong, and that doesn't come from the Lord. Sometimes you get attacked by fellow believers and people in your own family.

I was in my office one day. Not here. Not here.

I was in my office one day. A lady came in with a big knot in her head. A little big bald spot and a knot in her head.

I'm like, Whoa, what happened to you? She said, My nephew has a drug habit. He came over to my house and he wanted my money. I wouldn't give it to him.

So he hit me in the head with a hammer. And I'm like, Totally understand that. I'm a Baptist pastor.

That happens all the time. Right? I love you. Whack! Brother.

It's like when people come to church and get hit in the head. Did it ever happen to you? You're like, If I could just get to church this week, then, you know, where the brothers and sisters will encourage me. And you get there and somebody's up there going, You! I thought I should have gone to the Catholic church.

Sometimes we're attacked by believers who are like whatever's going on in their life. You know, they're having a bad day or they're guilty or whatever it is. Believers are sometimes going to treat you so nice and be so good to you.

Sometimes they're going to be way off and they're going to say something really stupid. And they're good folks. They love the Lord.

They got the Holy Spirit living in them. But they're like, they're like you are. They do dumb things sometimes.

And sometimes you get in the way when they're doing dumb things. And so that accusation may come from a person. That's very possible.

But that's not from the Lord. Not from the Lord. So then there are other times when we're attacked by hostile or disappointed unbelievers.

And an unbeliever like Balaam's ass, right, can say something to you that's very true. You want to call him Balaam's ass. That's probably not a good idea.

But that's what's going on, right? You got a donkey in your path. And they're going, You're this, that, and the other thing. And you're going, Well, you're a pagan, but you're right.

It's interesting. Right? Right? So then there is the direct, and this is chilling, but the direct accusation of Satan and his demons. And this accusation may be, it may be just as simple as this.

Like, you're going to church. And you think, you get up. And often, I've talked with people who don't go to church often.

And it's kind of a hobby, an interest, and a desire of mine. You see, people who have not connected with the Lord connect with the Lord. And then when you hear their stories and you watch it happen, it's really cool.

A lot of times, what's going on is they've had a big disappointment in their life. There's a lady out of state right now. And I can tell you her story because she's out of state, I suppose, just a little bit.

I invited her to church over and over again. She didn't come. But she did come.

One Sunday, she said, What happened was a guy asked her out. And then he stood her up, and her heart was broken. And she said, I guess I'll just go to church.

Yeah. I've heard stories over and over again of people that had these bitter disappointments. And they said, Okay, I'm going to get up this morning and go to church.

I never was going to go to church before, and now I am. And now the person gets dressed to go to church, they're not a churchgoer. It'd be like me going to a bar.

I wouldn't know what to do with my hands. I'm like, Well, here I am in a bar. Don't do this very often.

That's a trick. I never do that. I'm just kidding.

I'm just kidding if you're paying attention. I never go to bars. So if I went to a bar, I'd be like, What do I do? What do I do? I wouldn't know what to do.

And they're like going to church, and they're going, Well, here I go. You know, church. Well, the good people are.

And I'm bad, and I know it. And it's like I've got a sign board that goes, I'm a bad person. And they're going to church.

And they think I probably don't have the uniform down right. Do you remember the first time you went to church? Was it like that? Or did your parents bring you when you were little? And you're like, Man, I hope everybody doesn't have a tie on. Because I couldn't find a tie.

You know, so here I am. And then they walk in, and they're new. Right? So what do you do to new people? You look at them.

You're like, They're new. And the new person goes, See? See? Right there. They're looking at me.

It's my, I don't have a tie on. It's my tattoo. It's my earring.

I knew I should have taken my earring out. I don't have a Bible. They all have Bibles.

Now, where does that come from? Where does that come from? The devil. The devil will whisper in people's ears. Satan and his demons will whisper in people's ears frequently.

And he will say to them, You shouldn't go in there. You're not. You can't go in there.

That's just for good people. That's not true. That isn't true.

That doesn't come from the Lord. That comes from Satan. And that comes from demons.

And that happens all the time. And in dealing with people, I hear that kind of thing all the time. And the reason I know it's that is because you'll hear unrelated reports that a person incidentally has gotten the same report from here and here and here.

And you're like, Wait a minute. This has been lined up by the devil to condemn them. So now we have this kind of zoo, if you will, of where all this could come from.

So how do you figure out whether the condemnation you're feeling is from the Lord or the or the burden or the or the memory of that past guilt is from the Lord of that shame from the Lord or it's not from the Lord? Here's how you do it. I would just suggest use the process of elimination. You start by just repenting of your sin.

Once you've repented of your sin and you've gone, this can happen very swiftly because it's not your righteousness, right? You're right with God. If you are, if anyone is ever right with God, it is never because of their own righteousness. It is because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

So that can be imparted to you instantaneously. And that in the Bible is called justification, what we call justification. And so then you are right before God.

Like, judicially, you're right before God. You're not guilty before God. Now, when that happens, then you think about that.

Then you are not guilty. So when the devil or anybody else comes along and says, I know what you are and I know who you are. You say, let me correct that.

You knew what I was and you know who I was. But that's then and this is now. And right now, I'm a child of King.

I've justified the sins under the blood. And I'm not excusing it and I'm not hiding from it. Maybe I'm not advertising it, but I'm just saying, yeah, you're talking about my sin.

And I'm just saying my sin is taken care of. So then you eliminate that false accusation. You see, you eliminate the accusation of your heart because you're free of the sin.

And then if you still have condemnation, you can count on that. So what do you do when this condemnation, a sense of condemnation, is not coming because you haven't confessed your sin and repented of your sin, but it's coming because you just are burdened by the memory of your past sin. What do you do? This is why I want to talk about what I'm talking about here today.

Jesus, the Bible teaches us that Jesus bore our shame on Calvary and He plans to bring us to glory, which would like to be the opposite of shame. Wouldn't it? He plans to bring us to glory. This is what the Bible says.

Isaiah 50 and verse 6 is a prophetic statement about Jesus on the cross. I gave my back to those who struck me and my cheeks to those who plucked out my beard, and I did not hide my face from shame and from spitting. And in Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 3, consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

The Bible says it was fitting for him who are all things, to bring many sons to glory. In Hebrews 12 and verse 3, the Bible teaches in Hebrews 12 that Jesus bore our shame, and in Isaiah that he bore our shame, that he bore our guilt. And in chapter 2 of Hebrews and verse 10, it says that his purpose was to, and I like this, and it's rendered male, but it includes men and women.

Jesus did what he did to live a life of perfect righteousness and to die on the cross for our sins to do this. And I like this. This is a phrase, if you forget everything else I said, I'll take this phrase home with you.

This is a musical, beautiful Bible phrase. To bring many sons to glory. Isn't that nice? Is it just me, or do you love that too? Bringing many sons to glory.

That would be me. Shame, who only deserves shame and guilt, to glory because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross for my sin. Not because I have it together, not because people can't point to my past and say things that I've done that I'm ashamed of, but because all that shame is washing the blood of Christ on Calvary, and now I'm on my way to glory.

He replaced my shame with glory. That's pretty exciting. You ought to tell somebody about that this week.

You ought to quit being so shy and tell somebody. They're drowning in their shame. They're drowning in their guilt.

They're dying in their sins. You ought to tell them. Even if they think you're some kind of religious weirdo, just go ahead and tell them.

At least one day they can't say, nobody ever told me that. You should tell them. So what do you do when you are the one that's drowning in your shame, even when your sin is confessed, and your sin is forsaken, and you did repent, and now you still have this accusation.

For instance, when you're driving along and you see the old gas station again, and you think, God, I'm so sorry. What do you do then? One of the things you do is you preach the gospel to yourself again. You remind yourself.

You don't discredit God by saying He doesn't care about holiness. He cares so much that He made a provision for holiness through His Son. And often we're in bondage to accusation for this reason.

We still are self-righteous. See what I mean? You're saying my standing with God depends on my self-righteousness. No, it doesn't.

Your standing with God depends on the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So if you're overburdened with when you confess and repent and turn from your sin, and the memory of it keeps haunting you, it might be because you still are falling prey to self-righteousness. Instead of going to the righteousness of Christ, you go back to Calvary, sing about it, pray about it, talk about it.

David did this in Penitent Psalms, Psalm 32. Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven and his sin is covered. In Psalm 103, listen to this, this is sweet.

The Lord is merciful and He's gracious. He's slow to anger. He's abounding in mercy.

He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins or punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy to those who fear Him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Do you realize that He just drew the cross in that passage? As high as the heavens and as wide as the east and the west, the cross of Jesus Christ. In Psalm 103, as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.

David said in Psalm 25, remember not the sins of my youth. Can anybody relate to that? There's the woman taking in adultery. Jesus said, woman, where are your accusers? Has anyone condemned you? She said, no one, Lord.

He said, neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more. Paul was a murderer.

He understood the sweetness of forgiveness. He understood the freedom from condemnation. It was He who said and wrote under the power of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8, verse 1, there's therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

No judgment to come for those who are in Christ Jesus. So you want to quote those passages back. Isaac Watts wrote a hymn about it.

We're going to sing it later. They did a version of it. And can it be.

Philip Bliss did too. My sin. Oh, the bliss of this glorious thought.

My sin not in part, but the whole. It's nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. Oh, my soul. How about you? Do you have a testimony like that? You can sing a song of praise because you got dug out of the mire? I want to tell you from my own life and my own life and a number of years ago, I felt I was actually mowing the lawn and I felt this sense of great condemnation over something that was taken care of.

Some things that were taken care of a long time ago. I made them right with the Lord, made them right with the people. But they were a part of my memory and they were like icy fingers choking me.

And I felt like I maybe shouldn't even be a pastor or maybe we shouldn't even serve the Lord. Because, I mean, what a scum you are anyway kind of thing. I'm mowing the lawn.

And so three things came to my mind. And from this word of God. And these are the things I've been eager to tell you.

They're very short. They're very helpful. I've used these for years.

I'm excited about telling you these things. Here they are, alright. When you have a memory of past sin, here's what you do.

Number one, use that accusation as an opportunity for praise. You say to the accuser, he says, you're a sinner. You go, right, Jesus died for my sin.

He forgave my sin. Isn't he wonderful? Isn't he wonderful? You just turn it on him. He wants you to grovel and he wants you to go back to your sin.

He wants you to medicate your feelings. He wants you to go buy a whole bunch of stuff so that you don't think about it anymore. But Jesus forgave you that sin.

So all you need to do is say to him, praise the Lord because he forgave me of my sin. In other words, when you have a lot of past sin. And it comes up in your mind.

One of the things that you should do with that is just turn it into a worship service. Turn it into a praise service. Read you a couple of verses on this.

1 Corinthians 15, 9. Paul's saying, I'm the least of the apostles, so I'm not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church. By the grace of God, though I am what I am, and by his grace toward me, it was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all. Yet not I, but the grace of God which was within me.

Paul never skirted that he was a sinner in the past. He never lied about it. He was very open about it.

When he said, forgetting those things which are behind, right, that was his accomplishment. It's not his sin. He brought his own sin up because it was always an opportunity for him to show how wonderful his Savior is.

And that's what you ought to do, too. I mean, be discreet about it. But basically, and you can be general if you want to, but you don't ever hide and pretend that you're not a really depressed sinner.

You are, but you can say, but I went to Calvary and he washed me. And then I'm not counted as a sinner now, but as righteous. It's pretty exciting.

Ephesians 1, 6 and 7, read the whole book of Ephesians piece of work. The praise of the glory of His grace by which we are made accepted in a beloved in whom we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. 1 Timothy 1, 12-17 I thank Jesus Christ, my Lord, who has enabled me.

He counted me faithful, putting me in ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man. But I obtained mercy. I obtained mercy.

That's good stuff, isn't it? There's a faithful saying worthy of acceptance. Jesus Christ came in the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. However, for this reason, I obtained mercy that in me first, Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering.

First thing you want to do when accusation comes on you, when the memory of past sin is, have a praise service. Praise God. Use it as an opportunity to praise Him.

Yes, I did sin and it was horrible and He forgave me. Isn't He wonderful? Second thing is, use accusation to stimulate humility. Let him who thinks he stands be careful because you still may fall.

So you remember what you were like and what you did, that can happen again. This makes me really careful, if you don't mind me using my little illustration again. It makes me very, very careful.

I go back past that gas station over and over again and I say, God, never again, never again. I love those boys. I desperately love them.

I want them to know I love them. I don't ever want them to have a memory like that again. I realize I could.

I have that in me. It's good to humble yourself. Scriptures say He gives grace to the humble.

Someone said it's a desire power to do God's will, God's grace. It's much more than that, but it is that. And how do you get grace? You humble yourself.

And so if you find a new way to humble yourself every day, you have a continual flow of God's grace and gifts coming into your life. And so when the memory of past sin comes up, don't run from that. Just say, yes, that's true.

That's what I was and that's what I did. That's under the cross, under the blood. I love Jesus.

I praise Him for that. Yes, that's true. And that could happen again, but for the grace of God.

And so I walk humbly with my God. Third thing, then, is this. Use accusation as a reminder to exercise patience with other people.

This, I hope, a wave of this just goes over and over our church. This gracious, merciful, patient spirit. Not people who do not believe in holiness.

Not people who are going to redefine the Bible so everybody can kind of sign on even if they don't repent. That is not right. That's not a church at all.

What I am saying is that there ought to be a place. There's got to be a place where people know that there are others that are this community of grace and a community of God's mercy and love. And patience with people.

Give them time to grow and give them time to learn and give them time to get the rough edges off. I mean, look how many years it took to get you to be where you are today. And still there's a lot of work that needs to be done on you.

So why on earth would we expect people to be where it took us 20 years to get or maybe we're not yet? God doesn't treat us like that. Yet He's absolutely holy. So what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6 and verses 9 through 11 is, don't you know.

By the way, you know these verses. I'm telling you again so you can get them written down so that you can use these same things to be a blessing to all the people out there who are suffering, suffocating under guilt, condemnation and shame. And they're everywhere.

Kids in our culture. And God put this in my heart deeply this summer and just sitting and talking with teenagers over and over again. And it's true here.

And I'm so excited. As I drove back through the night last night thinking about the teenagers in our area who are burdened with amazing guilt and shame and the things they've been put through. They don't have a clue any of them.

And their parents in many cases are clueless. And we have this wonderful opportunity, this wonderful church, this wonderful placement right in the heart of this where we can. And those young people, if we will give them the talking stick and if we will listen to them and if we will love them, if we will show them Christ, many of them.

I know this. Many of them. They will look at their life and they say, why would I want this kind of life? Why would I want to live like this? We had a boy that came to our youth group and somebody said to him, can I friend you on Facebook? Remember this story? I'm going to repeat it.

Can I friend you on Facebook? The guy goes, I don't have Facebook. I don't have a computer. I don't have a bed.

I don't have a bedroom. I don't have anything. I have a pillow and I have a blanket.

Mom and dad are drug addicts and atheists. And his story can be repeated over and over and over and over again. And here we sit.

We have the gospel. We have the good news. Those kids lives could be completely changed.

We should light it up here. Oh, OK. Very, very candidly, as I was driving back last night, I thought I could be a youth pastor again.

I don't like getting hot dogs together and stuff. That's the part I really don't like. But to help young people.

And I know you. I know this church. You've invested your heart and your time in young people.

Think of that. And it could be, there's a lot of old people too. And they have been worked over hard.

And they don't think there's any place for them in Christ or in church. They have no idea. That's the first thing on my mind.

You know what they need? They're not coming here either. Some will. It's amazing how many will.

We have a couple arms of our church that are particularly effective as a magnet for folk. You come here on Monday night. You see a lot of stuff going on.

And people, there's some pretty neat stuff going on here. You see our youth ministries. And just anything you do with youth ministries, kids will just show up.

Sweet kids. They'll just show up. And they'll listen.

And they'll talk. And we can love them. They'll just show up.

But a lot of people are not going to show up here. They need to know a gracious Christian who understands the gospel. And who can explain the gospel.

And who's burdened and passionate about explaining the gospel. Who's going to not give up on that person. They're going to have a special Christian that's going to make a project out of them.

A loving project out of loving them. And inviting them. And gracing them.

And helping them to really clearly understand the gospel. So that they can get free of their guilt and shame. Don't be thrown off by what people look like on the outside.

They are burdened with guilt. They are burdened with sin. They are burdened with shame.

Jesus is their only hope. Their only hope. And you know Jesus.

So you should be telling them. I heard a guy say it this way this week. And I thought it was pretty cool.

I thought I got to immediately tell our people this. You know, you think about evangelism. And how am I going to do that? And I feel overwhelmed.

I want to get people saved. I'm almost tempted to try to do it on my own power. Right? But that's not a good idea.

One of the things this guy said was figure out what it is that you really love to do. And do it with lost people. For the sake of influencing them for the Lord.

Figure out what it is that you really like to do. You like shooting guns. They like shooting guns.

You shoot guns with unbelievers. You want to make sure that they're at least moral unbelievers. They might shoot you.

I don't know. But you know. But you're shooting them.

Shooting guns. And you do it with unbelievers. It wouldn't be so hard, would it? If you.

And then they're going to kind of ask you questions that you're not going to be able to answer. And then all of a sudden now Sunday school is a lot more interesting to you. And you're getting some ammunition to go

back to the shooting range.

And you're going to talk to them. Now you're going to answer the questions or you're going to nudge them toward the Lord. Here's another verse.

I love this. Here's a verse in Titus. By the way, I didn't finish 1 Corinthians 6, 9 through 11.

So here we go. Do you not know the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous drunkards, revilers, extortioners, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

You know the next verse, though. And such were some of you. Is that a beautiful phrase? And such were some of you.

I mean, it's like they went through this list that was really bad, right? And then he said, and such were some of you. And listen to this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And by the spirit of our God, there are people in our neighborhoods that are connected with our church. They might be some of your own relatives, your kids, your grandkids, your mom, your dad, your aunts, your uncles, your brothers, your sisters, the people that you work with. And they could be washed.

And they could be sanctified. And they could be justified by God. And they could be delivered from their shame and their guilt and their participation in things that have only ruined their lives.

That could happen. Titus 2-3-2-7 Tell us why it's so important for us to be patient with unbelievers and people that are in process. Speak evil of no one.

Be peaceful, gentle, showing all humility to all men. We ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, and deceived. We ourselves were also once serving various lusts and pleasures.

We ourselves were also once living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us. Can you imagine how much fun it is to read these verses to people? The washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

And He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. That having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. When I speak to young people, I almost always talk about romance one night.

Because they're so interested in it. There are people that act like they're not interested in it, but they're all interested in it. Everybody.

And it's so cute, man, the chapel packs that night. Everybody who's anywhere on the camp gets in there and they listen. And almost always, if I talk about romance, I tell the story of a girl who gave me permission to tell her story, who in her youth made some mistakes that she thought she could never take back.

And I show a picture of her, and I show a picture of her and her family, this beautiful Christian family. And then I say to the kids, you may have made some mistakes, but it's not all over with. You may have made mistakes that you're ashamed of, but there's an answer for that.

And I have never done that, that I didn't have people come to me flocking forward saying, that's me, I made mistakes. And even this week, talking, sitting with our toes in the water, talking to some kids. I made mistakes.

And you listen, and you realize we're talking about a 14-year-old girl here. How tragic that you're 14 or you're a 15-year-old girl, and you made mistakes. And then you go, game over, you know.

I just, there's no help for me. It's like I've done these bad things, and nothing can be different now. Somebody needs to go tell those 14 and 15-year-old kids, and their moms and dads, that it is not game over when you've made mistakes.

Somebody needs to tell them that. That's pretty simple. Somebody needs to tell them that with love in their eyes and compassion and caring.

And I have a vision for a great church that the entire heart of the whole church is beats with that. To go into this great community of people and tell them that there is a way out of guilt and shame. Are you with me on that? Amen.

Thought you were. Let's sing a song to close, 238, And Can It Be. I'll lead it here, and you stand and just sing your heart out in response to the Lord.

Makes me think you really believe it. So when you go back past the gas station this week, when you go back past the gas station this week, just say, Jesus, you're so wonderful that you died for my terrible sins. When you go back past the gas station this week, just say, God, please help me walk in humility, because I know the kind of guy I am without your help.

And when you go back past the gas station this week, say, God, give me a ministry of patience and mercy with other people who have a long way to go down the road. What a wonderful thing it would be then if we had the accusation, the devil tries to mess us up with accusation, and all it does is just set off all that praise and thanksgiving and work. Thank you so much.

I want to offer a word of blessing over you before you go. Heavenly Father, I pray if there are those here who are outside of Christ, that they would seek out help and find the confidence that we have that our sins are washing the blood. And thank you, Lord, that we don't have to live under condemnation and help us to walk in praise and in humility and patience with others.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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