

# Sin and Iniquity in the Church

by Richard Langworthy

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*The sermon addresses the troubling rise of iniquity and carnality in the church, urging Christians to uphold righteousness and personal conviction.*

**Duration:** 1:02:43

**Scripture:** Isaiah 1:4, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:23, 2 Timothy 2:15-17, 2 Timothy 2:19

**Topics:** "Iniquity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the danger of playing with sin and iniquity. He uses the analogy of a spider's web, explaining that sin starts small but can quickly become strong and destructive. The preacher warns against drawing sin closer and allowing it to become as thick as a cart rope. He emphasizes the need for freedom from sin and encourages the congregation to seek God's help in breaking free. The sermon also references Bible verses, such as 2 Timothy 2:15, which urges believers to rightly divide the word of truth and avoid idle babblings that lead to ungodliness. The preacher concludes by reminding the congregation of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, which not only forgives sin but also addresses the rebellion and iniquity in our hearts.

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## Transcript

I have something on my heart that I would like to share with you this morning. It may or may not apply to us directly, but I think it applies, and I'd like it to be to the Christian circles in general. I have been increasingly concerned about the growing amount of carnality within our Christian circles as a whole.

I'm not just talking about Selva and Paki. I'm talking about the testimony of Christians worldwide, South Africa, Zimbabwe. It seems as though the Christian church, we have lost our ability to influence the community.

And rather than walk in righteousness and live lives that carry a testimony of holiness, there seems to be a competition among Christians to see how much we can include the world in the church. And there's actually quite a bit of pressure from many circles within the Christian church, that if you don't have a certain amount of element of worldliness within the church, that you're not moving with the times. I don't think God moves with the times, myself.

I really don't. I don't think God runs to catch up with carnality. But anyway, it's there.

And along with that, there's been a drop of standards, can I say, of righteousness. And it's all put under the brush of grace. So if there's immorality in our lives, it's brushed under as God understands.

He's gracious. More and more Christians are getting divorced and having affairs and doing these kind of things. If we are involved in pornography or worldly music or whatever it is, it's brushed under the understanding of grace.

God understands. And I was walking, I went for a walk the other day and I was just having a very long conversation to God about what, why? What's gone wrong? Why is the church like this and why do people not understand? In the early, in the 1800s and 1700s when there were the great revivals, pubs closed down. Dance floors were emptied.

People came to church and served God with all their hearts. What's the difference between the days of Wigglesworth and Woodfield and the days of Wesley and the days today? Please don't tell me we have a modern Christianity and that the Holy Spirit, you know, wears jeans and stuff like that now. And earrings and all the rest and has ear piercings.

I don't believe that God has changed. But I do believe the church has lost something. Yes.

And I saw a picture. It's like suddenly, I was walking along and suddenly it's just like boom, it hit me. And I saw first of all 1 John chapter 1 and we're not turning there just right now.

And the Lord said to me very clearly, you have a choice to walk in the light or we have a choice to turn our back on the light. And I saw a picture and I'm going to show you in a minute of people that have turned in order for us, in order for us to do the things that we do very often, we have to turn our backs against God in order to create an atmosphere where we can practice and do the things that we want to do. In a second, I understood it.

And I came back and I looked up a word. I said it has to be there. What I saw, I've got to find it.

And I looked up the word that God dropped in my heart and that word was iniquity. And when I started to go through the scriptures, the picture that I saw is exactly when I went back to the Hebrew and looked at what the Hebrew meaning of that word was and that's what it meant. And I want to share this morning on iniquity.

Iniquity in the church and what it is. And I want to share very carefully, but I think you'll understand as we look at it, the seriousness of it and the difference between that and just some of the things that we struggle with. That has come to a point where there are Christians who live in a state of carnality without conviction.

And it troubles me. It troubles me that we have Christians, and I'm not necessarily saying in this church, but we have Christians, people who go to church, members of the police force, and quite happy to live in corruption. We have civil servants quite happy to bribe the public.

We have doctors quite happy to book patients in for operations they don't need, only so they can get extra money. But they all go to church. They go to church.

But there's no sense of righteousness in their lives once they leave the building on a Sunday. It's as though their hearts are closed to conviction. But they will tell everybody they believe in Jesus and they

expect God to bless them.

And so I want to look at this little subject this morning. And I'm going to read a little passage here in 2 Timothy chapter 2 from verse 15. So please come with me.

The tongues we heard and the interpretation I found interesting this morning because it was very close to what I had in my heart. Oh well Lord you are giving me some courage here. 2 Timothy chapter 2 in verse 15.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God. A worker who does not need to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth. That means not trying to misinterpret the scriptures to suit your own lifestyle.

But shun profane and vain or idle babblings for they will increase to more ungodliness. So there are people that are going to come along and talk nonsense. But all it does, it does not produce holiness in people's lives, it produces ungodliness.

And it says the message that these people spread is like these two characters in verse 17. And they at the time of Paul were saying the resurrection was passed and they had overthrown the faith of some. He used that as illustration.

Verse 19. Nevertheless, he says, a solid foundation of God stands, having this seal. The Lord knows those who are his.

And that everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. He doesn't use the word sin, he uses the word iniquity. Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

Therefore if anyone cleanses himself of the latter, the wood and the clay, he will be a vessel of honor, sanctified and useful for the master, prepared for every good work. And I took some time and I read through several commentaries, men who are obviously a lot more learned in Greek than I am, and went through what they felt Paul had meant when he wrote that little passage. And Paul is using the illustration of a house, and the foundation he said has been laid through the apostles and the prophets, meaning that they brought a gospel that we understand.

They brought a gospel of Christ and him crucified. They brought an apostolic gospel, that was the gospel that the church, the early church was founded on. Then he said a house has been built, and inside that house are different kinds of vessels.

There are vessels of gold and silver which are honorary vessels, and there are vessels of wood and clay which are vessels unto dishonor. Meaning that in the church you've got two groups of people. You've got those who are going to separate themselves out to the things of the Lord, and you've got those who come to church, but their heart is still set in the world.

They will come to church, they will raise their hands, they will have a Christian language, but they're not prepared to pay a price and to serve God and follow the things of the Spirit. They are actually more, their hearts are set on carnal worldly issues. They are attracted to the world, but they mix together.

And he says, these two are in the house. He said, and I'm writing to those who are the vessels of gold and silver, not to be distracted or misled by the voices of those who are carnal. And if you can separate

yourself from this, you will be a vessel unto honor, because you will see clearly.

We are not to allow the convictions and the standards of carnal Christians to influence what we know to be the road of righteousness. And there are many voices in the church today that are just like that. There are many churches where we are doing our best to listen to the music of the world, and then to write lyrics to it, and to bring it into the church.

And just because you put the name of Jesus to worldly music, we consider it worship. It's not. And there's a great emphasis in the church to entertain people with lights and smoke and colors and everything else.

But we are not building righteousness. And he writes here and he said that we are not to allow these things to undermine our faith. And it's easy for a younger Christian and those new in the faith to look around and to see this volume of carnality, this river that flows through the church, and to say, that is normal Christianity, that I should run that race.

Absolutely not. We must be careful. Before I look at iniquity and what it is and how it works, I want to speak for two minutes about the reality of the new birth in our lives.

Because we need to look at it from that perspective. And I want you to come with me to Romans chapter 6. Romans 6 in many ways can be considered a little controversial because it has some very clear statements in it. And it depends on how we interpret the word sin.

But according to Worst and his studies in the book on Romans, the concept behind the word sin in Romans chapter 6 is actually your sinful nature. And all that's associated with it. So we read it like that.

From verse 15. Okay. What should we say then? Should we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? Certainly not.

He's just dealt with the whole power of the new birth from verse 1. But now he starts and he says, church, here we go. Because we are not under grace, does that mean that we are free to go and live as we want? The answer is not at all. Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one slave whom you obey.

Whether of sin that leads to death or of obedience that leads to righteousness. Now he's talking to people who were slaves of sin, slaves to their sinful nature, who are far from Christ. He says, when you met Christ, your sinful nature was put to death.

You were set free from it. As a Christian, you are no longer a slave to your sinful nature. I don't know if you remember my little story a few weeks ago with the pirate.

The little pirate in the box. You should remember him. Okay.

We are no longer a slave to our sinful nature. A sinner doesn't have a choice. He doesn't have the freedom of Christ.

But a miracle happens when we get properly saved. And righteousness comes into our hearts and we are no longer bound by sin. Doesn't mean we don't sin.

We are no longer bound by sin. Now he's writing here and he says, you've got a choice. As a Christian, you are free.

You can present yourself to God so that you can humble yourself and serve the Lord. Or you can actually go back and you can present yourself to sin and put yourself back in bondage under the power of sin. But the choice will be yours.

Sin is not our master. Christ is our master. If we choose sin, we have to walk away from the master that is Christ and place ourselves under another master.

That is what he's saying. But God be thanked that though you were slaves of your sinful nature, yet you obeyed from your heart that former doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin and your sinful nature, you have become slaves of righteousness.

Now I say I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of unrighteousness and of lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness. Now in your New Testament, the word lawlessness is translated as iniquity.

Alright? It's the same meaning. So he says now you can present yourselves as slaves of uncleanness and slaves of iniquity, leading to more iniquity. So now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

So he separated out the two and he makes it very clear that we have a choice. I think we must put to bed the idea that I was just walking down the road and Mr. Sin jumped out the bush and ambushed me and I was a helpless little Christian and I just couldn't defend myself. Mr. Sin doesn't hide behind bushes, doesn't jump out the road and ambush us.

Okay, we are free from his power. Now I'm going to take two seconds and have a look at the definition of iniquity and then at sin. In the Hebrew, iniquity has a very interesting meaning.

It means a distortion of the heart or actions, or actions, a distortion of our heart or a change of our actions from that which is right to that which is wrong. Meaning that my heart was right and became distorted and now I have turned it around so I am pursuing wrong. I started right and I went wrong.

It means an action of turning around and going from one way to another. It's an act that is deceitful or insidious. It is dishonest.

It's dealing with things in secret. Iniquity. Sin, on the other hand, means to miss the mark.

It means to stumble or to fall. Now here's a picture with sin. It's a picture of an archer with a bow and arrow and he has a target in front of him.

And he takes his arrow and he stretches it out and he releases the arrow and it just misses the mark. What you have to realize is that his heart was set on reaching the mark. He was looking at the mark.

His face was fixed towards the mark. He missed it by a margin, but his heart was set on reaching it. Therefore, it's a picture of a Christian who has set his heart on Christ, who has set his life on righteousness.

He's given himself to take the road, but if he should stumble or fall on the way, he will immediately repent, pick himself up and keep himself going because his heart is set on the mark. Iniquity, there is no mark. Iniquity, I'm not going that way.

I'm not looking that way. I'm not running that race. I've stopped and I've turned my back around.

I've taken what is right and I've now made it wrong. It has a completely different picture. And that's why in the Scriptures God separates these two things out completely.

He deals with sin in one way and he deals with iniquity in another way because it's a state of heart. Can you see the difference? Are you with me in the picture? So come with me now to Isaiah chapter 1 and I'm only going to read verse 4 because it gives a little definition of iniquity here which I find is quite interesting. He says, Alas, a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity.

Then he goes on and explains it. He says, a brood of evildoers. Your Bible may say a seed of evildoers.

Meaning, they are a group of people producing after their own kind. But it also means they are not walking in the ways of their fathers. Their fathers brought them the law.

Their fathers brought them righteousness. Their fathers had all the testing of Jehovah. He said, Isaiah standing here, he said, you guys, you have turned away from the way of your fathers and you've got together and you are producing within your hearts another kind of seed after your own hearts.

You've turned away from what you knew to follow another road. Children who are corruptors. Meaning, people who are causing moral values to decay.

He says, they have forsaken the Lord. No longer looking at the target. No longer looking at the goal.

They have forsaken the Lord. They have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel. They have turned backward.

Meaning, they have taken God's laws and they have cast them behind them. They have taken what God wants them to do and they have put it behind them. They have turned away from God.

They have turned their back on the things of God. Iniquity. Alright, let's go to 1 John now.

I wanted you to get a definition and a picture of it. And I have two illustrations I want to show you this morning. Mr. Baum, can you come up here? Alright, 1 John 1 verse 6. Now, if we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Now, I took the liberty of bringing a nice torch here this morning with a big bright beam. Mr. Baum, I want you to hold it and shine it right there. Now, can you see how nice and clean and clear my shirt is? Hopefully my heart looks the same.

Amen. Now, here's the idea. If I walk in the light, as He is in the light, I am going to be confronted with every single attitude in my heart.

Are we on the same page? Amen. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. When I got born again, God took His moral laws, He wrote them upon my heart.

I don't have to read the Old Ten Commandments. I know them. There it says, Thou shalt not lie.

Here it says, Thou wilt not lie. Do you understand? There it says, Thou shalt not steal. Inside my heart it's rewritten as, You are not going to steal.

I have no desire to steal. The moral code of God is written upon my heart. There it is.

I'm walking in the light. There are no shadows in my heart and in the Spirit there can be no shadows in our life. Do you like that kind of Christianity? It's a bit confronting, isn't it? So, I tell a lie.

The moment I tell a lie, what do I have? I have a shadow in my heart. There's the little eye and look, there's a shadow. You can see it.

And it's going to convict me and it's going to make me uncomfortable and it's going to make me like, oh my goodness, my fellowship with God is impaired. It's in the way. The only way I can deal with that is to repent, confess my sin and put the shadow away so that my heart is clear and I can walk in the light again.

It's ABCs of Christianity, correct? Are we all in grade one? ABCs. Alright. But now here's the problem.

What if I don't want to deal with the lie? Or I don't want to deal with what I stole? Or I don't want to deal with my boyfriend? Or my girlfriend that I'm sleeping with? Or I don't want to deal with my pornography? Or I don't want to deal with my dishonesty? Whatever it is, what happens if I don't want to deal with it? I turn my back on the light. Now I have a shadow. And now I can walk in darkness because I'm no longer going to be convicted in the same way.

I am going to turn my back on the light and now I can hide. I can justify my lie. I can justify my theft.

I can justify my immorality or whatever it is I'm doing. I can justify my lifestyle. I can justify my worldliness.

I can justify whatever it is because I put the light behind me. As Isaiah said, we have put God backwards. And that is iniquity.

A Christian who has got his eye on the mark, who's going to stumble on the way, where sin means to miss the mark, simply means I'm walking towards the light, I'm in the light, something happens, I've missed the mark, I see it, it's exposed, I deal with it, I repent, I put it away and I keep on going. I have one desire to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Iniquity means I stop doing that and I turn my back on the light.

So that I can now create a world where I'm not so convicted and I can do what I want to do. Still call myself a Christian. Still go to church.

But I've closed off the grace of God. I've closed off the voice of the Spirit. I've closed off conviction.

And I'm creating an atmosphere where I can justify my state. And it's a decision of my heart to do that. I create an atmosphere, thanks Mr. Baum, don't go away.

I create an atmosphere, a breeding ground for darkness. And I create a breeding ground to justify my state. Hence, I can go to church and be sleeping with my boyfriend and it doesn't bother me.

Week after week I can go to church and I can raise my hands and serve the Lord and I can tell people I'm under the grace of God. It doesn't bother me. You know why? I turn my back on the light and I've created an atmosphere in which I can now practice my immoral lifestyle.

That is called iniquity. It is not called sin. If it was sin and I was shooting for the mark and I stumbled, I would immediately see my state, repent of my state, be very clear, because I have one desire in my heart, to keep my heart clear so there's no shadows in the light.

Hello, anyone? True? But the moment I start to justify worldliness, whatever form, the only way I can justify worldliness is I've got to shut down the Holy Spirit. I've got to shut down conviction. I've got to shut down the clarity of God.

I've got to create an atmosphere in which I can hide and be content. And that says God is iniquity. It is turning your heart backwards.

It is taking what is right and making it wrong. Amen. Come with me to Isaiah chapter 5. I want to take one second to, you'll excuse me, but I do best if I think in pictures.

You know what the secret to eternal youth is, isn't it? Never grow up. All right, Mr. Baum, we're going to take a little bit. This is my mother's ball of wool.

I've got to give it back to her. I'm in trouble, you know that. Now, we're going to take this, undo that for me.

There we go. Take this off here, this off here, like this. Just take this like this, like this, like this.

All of it. Unfortunately, this is a bit longer than I wanted, but what can we do? Now, we're going to tie this little piece of string to this little piece of wool like this. Because we're a good boy scout, we do a reef knot.

There we are. This generation doesn't know what reef knots are. There we are.

Then I want you to tie that end to here, like this. There we go. There we go, like this.

We'll be fine. Off you go. Do it one more time.

Can't afford to lose it. Right. You take that down there.

It's nice and long. Too long. Off you go.

Right down the bottom there. Keep going. You wonder what I'm going to do, don't you? Priesthood church wasn't fun.

Okay, Mr. Pom, that's fine. There we go. I want to volunteer.

Another volunteer. Young, you can come up here. All right, my friend.

I want you to just do something for me in a second. Isaiah chapter 5, verse 18. Look here.

It says, Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of vanity and sin as if with a cart rope. Now, what it means is this. Oscar, just start to pull this, Oscar.

But as you pull it, I want you to turn like this. So you wrap it around yourself. There we are.

Pull it some more. Pull this and wrap it around you, Oscar. Keep pulling it.

I'll pull it. You wrap it. You're drawing iniquity.

Don't hold it, Mr. Pom. Just help me here. I don't want my little cord to snap.

Keep going. Keep going. Keep going.

Keep going Are you bound yet Oscar? Come on, keep going. Because, I want this church to see what happens to Christians who play with iniquity. Keep going.

Keep going. Keep going. Ooohhh! My friend.

Now you can look at this. This boy was playing with a bit of wool and he thought it was fine. Okay? All right.

Now that's called freedom. Amen? You can go sit down now, Oscar. Woe to those, he said, who start to draw sin with the strand of a spider's web, and keep on pulling it, because it will become to them as thick as a cartridge.

If you don't understand me, this rope, this particular deal is rated to 8 tons. Okay? It's an 8-ton snatch rope. So, it's a bit thicker and stronger than what we had.

It was my mother's ball of wool, right? Oscar has one great desire, and that is for freedom. All right. Now, Oscar, you're going to have to walk in a straight line right after this.

Okay, boy. There we go. Now I suggest you take one spin the other way.

Turn the other way fast. This way. Get your ears back.

That's it. Isn't that a good picture? That's what it means in Isaiah. You see, iniquity is not a mistake.

Iniquity is not me just doing something wrong and not expecting it. It wasn't something that just happened. Iniquity is premeditated.

Iniquity is something that I do, I have thought about on my bed, and after having thought about it, I go and implement it, even if it means going against my conscience and going against the voice of the Holy Spirit. So, God says iniquity is difference to someone running the race, looking at the mark, and losing their temper on the way, or having a mistake. God can put it right.

We all do. We all fall off the road. We all miss the mark.

He hasn't got a problem with that. He has a problem when I turn my back on righteousness, and I start to pursue a lifestyle that's in opposition to truth, opposition to righteousness, opposition to the Holy Spirit. I create my own world of darkness, and I start to pull on the spider's web.

At the beginning, it looks innocent. It means I can control it. It means I can play with it.

It means I can justify it. But slowly that web becomes thicker and becomes a little rope, and slowly my heart becomes darker and darker. And finally I find myself in a place of total bondage, struggling to get out.

Now I can't quit my immorality, and I can't quit my habits, and I can't quit my lifestyle. But I'm going to church, and I'm saying, God, deliver me. God, help me.

Lord, I want a word from you. But I am wrapped around with iniquity, not because it's stronger than Christ, because my heart won't let it go. I premeditated that stuff.

I've committed my heart to it. I've justified my lifestyle. All right.

Now for the shock. Matthew 7. If you understand that, then some scriptures come a little clearer. Are we clear so far? Do you like my pictures? I hope so.

I like them. Matthew 7 from verse 21. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? Have we not cast out demons in your name? Have we not done many wonders in your name? Then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice iniquity. Lawlessness and iniquity are translated, if you've got the Old King James Bible, it'll say iniquity.

Depart from me, you who practice iniquity. Not you who failed. Not you who weren't super spiritual Christian.

I've had so many people come to me and say, in that day, how do I know after serving the Lord, he won't say, depart from me. Jesus Christ is not going to throw one Christian away. Do you understand that? Not one.

Unless we have set our hearts against righteousness, unless we have set our hearts to become vessels of wood and clay, unless we have created in our lives an environment of darkness, so that we have a pretense of going to church, we have a form of godliness without the power of it, but we have set our hearts to love worldly things. So the guy who lives his life in adultery in the church, when he stands before the Lord, he'll say, depart from me, I never knew you, you workers of iniquity. Because you practiced sin knowingly, having thought about it, having cultivated it, having pursued it, it was not something that you fell on the wayside by.

That puts the scripture in context, doesn't it? Yes. It got a bit quiet here, didn't it? All right, it's going to get quieter. Matthew chapter 13, this one makes you very quiet.

From verse 24. Now in this Matthew 13 verse 24 is a parable of the wheat and the tares. The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed, but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and he went his way.

When the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. And so the servants of the owner came and said to him, Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares? He said to them, An enemy has done this. The enemy said to him, Do you want us then to go and gather them up? He said, No, no, no, not lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat.

Let them both grow together until the harvest. At the time of the harvest I will then say to the reapers, First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, and gather the wheat into my barn. Very nice.

Okay, verse 41. Okay, now he starts from verse 37 and he speaks about the parable of the wheat and the tares. But before he does that, he speaks about why he has to say parables, etc, etc.

Then he comes down to verse 37, and he says verse 38, He says, The field is the world, and the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, and the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore the tares will be gathered and burned in the fire, and so will be at the end of the age.

And the Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice iniquity. Now, if you read that very quickly, you read it as, okay, you've got a comparison between those who are in church and those who are out of church. But he's not saying that.

He's talking about everybody being in church. Did you hear me? He said, The farmer went and he sowed a field, and he put good seed in the field. Those people were all born of the Spirit.

He said, And while he was sleeping, an enemy came, and he sowed tares among the good seed. Meaning that people came into the church who had a pretense of Christianity, but were not going to serve God. And the danger was this.

When the tares and the wheat grew, they both look alike. Both plants look the same. But it's only at the end that you can tell the difference, because the tares produce a different kind of fruit, or a different kind of seed, to the wheat.

A seed. So the farmer says, The problem with putting the tares in there was to weaken the wheat crop, was to suck up the energy, and to make the wheat weak. The problem the enemy does, by putting carnal people into the church, is to cause Christians to reduce their passion for righteousness, because the man next to them is saying, Why live like that? I serve God, and I live like this.

Remember the house that Paul spoke about? He said, And God has a foundation, and in that house are vessels of gold and silver, wood and clay. The wheat and the tares, it's exactly the same thing. He says, And in the last days, when I come, I'm going to gather together with my angels those who practice righteousness, and those in the church who practice iniquity will be taken out.

Suddenly, playing with sin doesn't become fun anymore. Suddenly, it's not me who decides with God what's right and wrong. Suddenly I realize that Jesus Christ is very serious about the issue of righteousness.

Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 9. David said in Psalm 66, He said, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Not if I have sin in my heart, but if I regard iniquity. If I have a state in my heart in which, having known what God wants, I deliberately walk another way in rebellion to God and create an atmosphere of darkness so that I can inculcate my world of sin.

He says right there, God says, I don't listen to you. If I regard iniquity in my heart. Hebrews chapter 1 speaks about the throne of Jesus Christ.

And he said this. Is it chapter 1? Yes it is. Chapter 1 verse 8. Your throne of God is forever and ever.

A scepter of righteousness is a scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness or iniquity. It doesn't say he hated sin.

He hated iniquity. And as I've gone before the Lord, I've really felt a huge warning from God. To say, the deception we have in the church, the modern church today, is that holiness is not important to God anymore.

Number one. Number two, we have a lie and deception that says, God knows my heart. So I can live in sin, and I can live in rebellion to God, but he knows my heart that I'm just struggling and one day I will get there.

God does not know that heart. He knows the heart of someone who falls and has repentance and comes back on the road. But someone who turns their back on the light and starts to pull in the cords of iniquity and pursue it further and further and further for their own selfish gratification, so they can live in a carnal lifestyle.

God does not know that heart. And if you look clearly through the scriptures, very often he speaks about how he deals with those who practice iniquity. Because iniquity in its real term is the rebellion against the authority of Christ in our lives.

That's what it means. So, I'm a policeman, and I take bribes from motorists. Does that please the Holy Spirit? No.

Is that sin? No, it's iniquity. Because I have purposed in my heart every day to rob a motorist. I go to work thinking, how many bribes can I get? Yes.

I go to church on a Sunday, raise my hands and say, Hallelujah. On Monday I'm like, Hallelujah, how many bribes can I get? That is iniquity. That's not sin.

When I go to work and I wonder how I can, from the public, I'm a civil servant, how much money I can put in my pocket through corrupt means in the public, it's iniquity. It's premeditated. It's calculated.

It's something and thing. Does the Holy Spirit say no? Of course the Holy Spirit says no. So, you can't tell me that a person can sit behind a desk and rob the public every single day and the Holy Spirit not go crazy.

So if they can do it, it means they shut something down. They've turned their back on God. In order to do that, they've had to create an atmosphere in their hearts where their conscience has gone dull.

They've made shipwreck of their faith and they are pursuing iniquity. They've lost their conscience. And God views that in an entirely different light to a person who's running the race and stumbles.

He separates the two, the two different camps. You tell me that someone who is sleeping with their partner outside of marriage, that the Holy Spirit does not say no. He's not interested in it.

He loves me. I love him. One day we'll get married.

It's going to happen. We are so in love. He's not interested in that.

The moment that you got together, he said stop. And you looked God in the face and said, you don't understand God. I love my sin more than I love you.

Turn my back on the light. I'm going to pursue this relationship with all my heart. God says that's iniquity.

It's premeditated, calculated sin, knowing that it's wrong, I turn truth into unrighteousness and I pursue it with all the intentions of my heart. That is what iniquity is. Oh my, God quiet.

We must understand that God has never changed and holiness is holiness and God holds us accountable. We can't create these little scenarios in our lives and pretend that God will justify it because when we die, we're in for an enormous shock and discover that He does not justify our stories. Isaiah 53, let's go back there before you guys burst into tears and leave church or something.

From verse 4, Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our... Hallelujah.

When Jesus died on the cross and He took that hiding, when He died and He took that punishment, He did not just do it for sin, He did it for iniquity. He knows the state of the human heart. He knows how full of scrap we are.

He knows the rebellion in our lives. He understood something. He said, Father, when I die, I'm not only going to die for sin, I am prepared to give my life for those who have rebelled against you, those who become slaves to sin, those who become wrapped up in the power of sin, those who have taken the course contrary to truth.

I am prepared to die for them so that no matter how far they have gone, I will still provide a way back. Until the moment we die, the grace of God is there for true repentance and His death is sufficient no matter where you have been and what you are doing or what you have done to bring you back to the cross. He died for iniquity.

Hallelujah! You can say, but brother, I've been ten years on this. I mean, God, I am so far on my little journey. Is it possible? God does not measure your life with time.

He measures your heart with one thing. The moment the heart turns to Him and says, Here I am. I want to come home.

He rejoices and the death of Jesus Christ is powerful enough to cleanse us, to forgive us, to set us free, to break the bonds of whatever we have done. And He will say, Welcome home. Iniquity has no authority over the power of Christ.

What has to happen is that we are mostly willing to turn our lives back to the light. Titus chapter 2. Look here. I'm going to read from verse 11.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. Hallelujah! Teaching us, this is what God's grace teaches us, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts that we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age. Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every iniquitous deed, every deed of iniquity, every lawless deed, and purify for Himself His own special people zealous for good works.

Isn't that amazing? Isn't it amazing that although we may have taken a road, although we have made a stand, although we may be involved in a hundred different things that we regret and we realize that we stood against God, the door of grace, the door of forgiveness has never been closed. When He died for us, He died knowing that we would have the possibility of turning our backs and getting involved and pursuing things that are going to be detriment to our lives and our relationship with Him. He stands there with arms wide open and says, I died for that.

I paid a price for that. I am prepared to forgive that. What did David say in Psalm 32? My sins I will confess, he said I think, my iniquities I will not hide anymore.

His premeditated adultery with Bathsheba, His premeditated murder of Uriah was not sin, it was iniquity. He didn't fall off the planet, He jumped off. And he said, God I'm not prepared.

For a year I pretend everything is fine. I will not hide the state of my heart anymore. I will make it known to God.

Yes, I rebelled against your word. Yes, I killed a man. Yes, I had adultery.

Yes, I had a baby. Yes, I premeditated. Yes, Lord, I am guilty of everything.

I laid before you all I can do, so here I am. Forgive me. He said, and now forgive me my sin.

That's the hope. The hope, folks, is not in playing games. The hope is not making adjustments.

The hope is not trying to barter with God. The hope is not saying, well, Lord, if I make a little bit of a change and I only see my boyfriend once a month, it will be much better. There's no place of bartering with God.

If we're going to, we've got to see what iniquity is. We've got to see the trap of it, the poison of it, the destruction of it. We've got to be prepared.

Turn around and say, Lord, that's me. That's me. Well, if I don't get, if I don't take bribes from the public anymore, then I won't get a nice salary at the end of the month.

I would rather trust God for my salary than go to hell. Maybe that will help you wake up. Do you understand? You don't play games with God.

We can't live in a life of a sham and be the vessel of clay and wood in the house of God, and because I go to church and sing songs, when Jesus comes back and He sends out the angels, He says, those guys on one side, these guys, who practiced iniquity and rebelled against me and my word, now the time of judgment. When I offered you grace, you turned it down. You chose a premeditated road.

I am sorry. No way. And you can't pull out your dirty Zimbabwe dollar and say, can I bribe you? Jesus, Jesus, a hundred bucks, two hundred, three hundred.

How much is heaven worth? Four hundred. Don't work like that. You see, iniquity is more than just a mistake.

It's a state of heart that needs to change. Yes? We're going to pray. I may not have said everything that would make you very pleased today.

I don't really have a ministry of making people very pleased, that's for sure. But anyway. But I cannot, I cannot allow God to put things in my heart and not stand and blow a trumpet for the Christian community when I feel a trumpet needs to be blown and things need to be made clear.

We are going to have time to pray. And I'm going to ask the music team to come up right now. We're going to have an altar call.

If you want to, you know that you have crossed a line with God and there are things in your life that you have been justifying, whatever it may be, whatever. Do you want to bring your heart before God this morning? Make this altar your altar. I'm not necessarily here to pray for you.

I don't think that's important. It's important that we bring our hearts and say, God, this is me. And if you're not, if you're here today and you're not born again, and you listen to me and thinking, yeah, yeah, yeah,

yeah, I want to help you right now.

The time comes when we have to surrender our lives to Christ and stop wriggling and justifying and trying to make excuses. We've got to come to the point where we realize He is holy. He is God.

He died for us. And the time has come for me to lay my life down and understand that until I get His forgiveness, I stay a sinner. We know that.

We know what it is for God to speak to us and we wriggle and justify. The day comes we're going to lay our lives down. All right, shall we pray? Father, today I ask you through the power of the Holy Spirit to turn the soil of our hearts.

Sometimes, Lord, the soil has gone hard and we need we need you to turn it over, make it soft again. To open the cupboards of our hearts, Lord, where things inside there that we've been running away from for a long time. We found it difficult to come near you and to pray because we want to serve you on one hand and justify and righteousness on the other.

Lord, you love us. Your love never changes. It's often us who walk away and choose a road contrary to your grace.

Father, I can only pray this morning that you open the eyes of our understanding that we would realize Lord, you're touching this in my heart. It's a big one. It's something huge.

But it has to be put right. It has to be put right. Today I'm willing to humble myself and ask your forgiveness, Lord.

Knowing that you died. And when you died upon the cross you understood that this Sunday morning I would be here struggling the way I'm struggling. Needing your help.

And I'm coming today to avail myself of your help. With everything within my heart I bring my life. But I want to be free.

I thought it was just a spider's web that I was playing with. But I'm bound by something that has held me captive more than I could understand. And there's no way out for me unless I come to the cross.

So, Lord, today I come. Today I come. I come with all my heart.

I come without excuse. I come just to say, Father, wash me in the blood of Jesus and restore me to a fellowship with you that I once knew. Clear.

Simple. Peaceful. Oh, Lord Jesus.

I ask you to touch hearts and lives today. Hidden things. Chains.

I don't know. But I know, Lord, that you cannot and you never will turn away the heart of a man or a woman who looks you in the face and says, I'm here, Lord, help me. Help me.

Such is your goodness. We're never too far. We can walk far, but we're never too far.

So, Father, set your mercy and your grace upon every heart and every life here. For I thank you for it. In the precious name of Jesus.

In the precious name of Jesus. Folks, let's stand. We're going to sing.

And if you want to come and make this altar your altar this morning, it's entirely up to you. I have shed my heart. I have shed what I believe is true.

May the Holy Spirit do the rest in our hearts and our lives. We thank you, Jesus. This message was brought to you by Southern Park Christian Church.

We hope you have been blessed.

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