



Holiness – Part 3

Why Being Holy Is Such a Big Deal

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Well, now that they've come down, I can confess to you that this year was the first year that I actually put up Christmas lights on my house. And I did that because there is a rumor in my neighborhood that I was either an atheist or Jewish or anti-Christmas or something. No, that's not really the reason. The real, real reason is I got a six-year-old now who, you know, can pose a pretty convincing, guilt-ridden argument about, "Come on, Dad, you know, how hard can it be to put up lights?" I was, you know, I was keeping it all at arm's distance, not because I'm opposed to Christmas lights. It's just I'm opposed to putting them up.

So I was in Costco one day and I saw this box of, you know, three million Christmas lights for \$8. So my excuses were gone. I figured the economic hurdle wasn't all that high. So I bought the box and brought it to my house, put it on the workbench there for a week. I finally got around to opening it up and as I was pulling it out, I found a slip of paper inside of there that said, "Caution. For indoor or outdoor use only." You know, what are my choices? What am I left with? It reminded me of the back of a Nytol, you know, the sleeping pill back of the Nytol bottle, there's a warning on the back, if you read it it says, "Caution" it says. No, "Warning these pills may cause drowsiness." I'm kind of counting on that. That's the whole point.

I know a lot of you are allergic to peanuts. I realize that, I feel bad for you and all. But it was a little much when I was on the plane, on the peanut pack, on the back there was a warning and it said, "Warning, this product contains nuts." No peas in the peanuts, but be careful, they're nuts in the peanuts. But my favorite is my deodorant can. If you are ever really bored, just read your deodorant can. On the back of the deodorant can it says, "Do not spray in eyes," no matter how smelly they get. Just don't do it.

I understand that in our litigious society, we are surrounded. I mean, it's a culture fraught with warning labels, there everywhere. Dangers real or imagined, dangers near, far. It doesn't matter. There is going to be a label that's going to tell us, "Hey, be careful. This could hurt. This is dangerous." And as I thought about that, I was looking at this passage this week. I thought, wouldn't it be great if everything that could really cause profound and lasting danger to our spiritual walk if it came with a label? You know, you meet a guy on the patio of the church, Ted, you know, and it says, "Warning, a relationship with me, you know, could lead to spiritual, you know, disaster or whatever. That'll be helpful.

Or like a, you know, a product or, you know, a vacation or a deal at work or whatever, just came with labels, "Be careful," you know, "Warning. This will set you back, you know, ten steps in your walk with Christ." Those things would be very helpful. But of course, life doesn't come with those kinds of warning labels. And yet, if you read the Scripture carefully, I think when you really begin to allow your attention and your heart to be gripped by the general warnings in Scripture about sin, you'll start to see the world differently. You'll recognize when you got that little path of temptation that lays out there before you on Tuesday afternoon,



you'll say, you know what, I ought to be careful because the Scripture has warned me about that kind of thing. I better be careful.

Talking about holiness from First Corinthians Chapter 5. In the middle of this text, Paul begins to let this church know why pursuing holiness is such a big deal. And basically all it is, is a warning wrapped in a call to be holy people. He says be holy. You need to do that. You need to do the right thing. And then he starts to tell them why. And I think that's helpful because the more we understand the why of sin and holiness and we say this is important, then we'll start to look at our choices and say, OK, there is a lot at stake here. This could put my future in peril. It might have present consequences. And even as we'll find in our text, it has an impact on the past.

Let's take a look at it in verse 6 as the apostle Paul says to a compromising church, he says, "Guys, you know, you're boasting is not good," and the boasting was all about them looking in the spiritual mirror and going, you know, "You're good, good Christian people." In reality, Paul says that kind of arrogance is bad because here you are tolerating sin in your church. He says, it's not good. And then he says, don't you know? He frames it in a self-evident way. It should be clear to you. Don't you realize, he says, that "a little yeast," it says "works through the whole batch of dough?" OK, this is an analogy, obviously. But he's saying, don't you recognize that sin like yeast is something that has an effect, that has this kind of effect that goes, and it's not just, it can't be isolated, it can't be excluded to a corner, it has an effect on everything. It has this corruptive effect.

Therefore, you want to tolerate a little area of sin in your life or a little area of sin in your church, what you don't realize or you should realize, it should be self-evident, that is a dangerous thing to do because it's never isolated. It always sends its tentacles into other parts of my life or other parts of my church. Note it this way in your outline and then let's unpack it on a variety of levels. Number one, we need to be holy, here's one reason, just because "Sin Is Dangerous." It has a corruptive effect. It is like yeast something you can't just put in the corner of the batch of dough. It will finally infiltrate the whole thing. It has its effect that goes beyond the immediate concern.

Now, let's think about it on the most mundane level here. Let's think about it on the maternal level, where a mom kneels down and tells her kids in grammar school, be careful who you hang out with, because really the context here is a corporate one. Right? Why should I care whether someone in my Bible study group is living in sin, isn't that between him and God? The bottom line is, if you allow compromise within the church or within your Bible study group or your adult Bible fellowship group, really the question is why should that matter? And Paul says, because it has a corruptive effect. Now, let's think about it in the way, you know, we were told by our parents, be careful who you hang out with.

If you're looking for a verse to kind of back that up, as you say that to your kids, First Corinthians 15:33 is a good summation of the principal. And it's put this way in the Bible. It says this, don't you realize, don't let anyone mislead you, it says, "Bad company corrupts good character." That's just how it works. Surround yourself with compromised people and



sociologically speaking, if you will, it will eventually have a corruptive effect on your ethical standards. See? You will eventually begin to adopt the lowest common denominator philosophy of ethics and morals, because that's how it happens in our churches or in our circle of people that we hang with in our Christian community. We eventually say, you know what? It's just an issue of comparing myself with others, instead of comparing myself with Christ.

Now, I know that's not real dramatic, it's not really exciting. You learn that as a five-year-old. I realize that. But it is an important biblical truth. Why is it dangerous? Because it can have this slippery slope effect where all of a sudden when I'm around people that are compromised, that I am tolerant of their compromise, eventually in my life, I will tolerate compromise and then someone else who's my friend, and it spreads. And the Bible says that's just the way sin works.

But it's much more profound than that. That's one level on the corporate scale. Let's talk about another and more profound level of concern, danger, if you will, with sin on a corporate level. Turn with me to Revelation Chapter 2. Paul had to be more concerned than just, well, you know, the bar will be lowered ethically in the church. And if you tolerate one guy, you'll tolerate two. Okay. OK, fine. That's true. It's a biblical principle. And I'm sure that was part of the concern as it's wrapped in this analogy of yeast and the dough and it just continually infiltrates. But I think the real concern about the whole thing being affected has to be seen in Paul's eyes from this perspective of God's favor. You see because God has this weird equation where if there's part of the thing that's gone bad, he begins to look at the whole thing and says, now I'm not going to work with the whole thing the way I would if they maintained a holy standard throughout.

See, it's a bizarre principle. It may seem odd to you, but let's look at it in the text and see if we can't identify with it in real life. I'm thinking here of Revelation Chapter 2. And these are seven postcards to these churches. Look at the first one to Ephesus and there are a lot of great things described about the church, verses 1 through 3. But in verse number 4, he says, "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love." See, now it's not their first love in terms of time. They fell in love with Sally on the schoolyard in the Jewish school or whatever. No, they're not talking about first in time they're talking about the first in priority. See, when you become a Christian, that is the priority love. That is the priority relationship. Much like last week we said, I'm willing to risk relationships here on earth for my relationship vertically. Therefore, my holy commands or demands or standard of a holy God, that comes first over relationships horizontally. That is a first and supreme priority love. And he says you guys have lost that.

No longer is God's priority, and what does God think about this? Really the priority now it's, you know, "Well, I don't want to be judgmental. I don't want to play the Holy Spirit in their life. I want to be accepting, you know, it's about grace anyway. And we all have our flaws. Well, we're just clay and Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven." Whatever our mentality is we tolerate the sin in someone else's life. And we just say, "Well, God, you know, I know you understand." The first love was gone. The first priority, the first loyalty was gone. And he says,



"Remember," keeping this spatial analogy going, "the height from which you've fallen." Remember that. Think back to that. You used to have that high standard, you use to have that high moral plane. It's gone in the church. And it's not because everybody in the church of Ephesus is now corrupt, it's because they have this tolerance of the same kind of First Corinthians 5 thing going on.

"Repent." There's the directive. Turn around, "Metanoia." Go the other way. "Do the things you did at first." Remember when God's standard and God's loyalty came first. Go back to that. If you, here's the part I'm concerned with, what's the danger in it? "Well, let's just continue on how we're doing it." No. "If you do not repent," notice this, "I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place." Now, if you didn't read Chapter 1, you don't know what that's talking about. But this is obviously an analogy of the church. This is how the churches are viewed in Chapter 1. Like Christ is going around Asia Minor and planting lampstands. Now, we don't have lampstands anymore. But picture these little places where God is saying it's dark here. We need the light. We need truth. Bang. I'll set up a church there. I'll work in that church. They'll infiltrate society. Bang! Let's do another one over here in Ephesus, Laodicea, Philadelphia. All these lampstands come up.

He says, you know what? If you don't raise that standard, if you don't make me the bottom line, the arbiter of your ethics in your church, if I'm not going to reign supreme here, then you know what? I'll just come in and you know "BOP." I'll pull the lampstand down. And basically, as Laodicea proves, just go out and meet if you want, but I'm not showing up. You know, that's what Christ is saying. If you want to meet, I'll stand on the outside and knock, but until you're ready to play by my rules, I'm not going to bless this thing.

Now, again, that's dangerous for us. Do you want to tolerate something in your small group in someone's life and say, "I don't want to confront it. I want to be a nice guy. And who really wants to get involved in anybody else's life." Do you want to do that? That's fine. But what you risk is that God's favor, not in a salvific sense, but in a sense of God blessing this thing. "I'll just step out then, if that's the way you want to do it."

Now, why would God be so hard-nosed about this? Why is that danger or even a reality? I would not act that way. I mean, it's just one part of the church. Right? The same reason you would act that way when you're trying to pick out a place to drop off your kid at childcare or the nursery. The same reason you say, "Well, you know, not all the childcare workers are pedophiles. Just a couple, you know, so that's all right, you know." And the whole place isn't a mess. Just the bathrooms, "I mean, they're germ-infested. There's, you know, whatever. It's OK. Most of it's clean." See does that connect here?

The idea is I don't want to drop off my little precious bundle in a place where the standard isn't consistently high. And what's the church all about? Let's make the connection. Here's Christ saying, "I want to build my church, I want to put these lampstands out. I want to attract people under the lordship of Christ. I want to see the kingdom advanced. I'm going to..." He's not dropping off his spiritual babies in places that don't hold the high ethical standard, the biblical standard, the standard of Christ's holiness.



See he's saying, "I'm not going to compromise the churches that I support. You can meet if you want to. But I'm not showing up." He says, "because I'm not interested in blessing those organizations, those Christian churches, those Bible studies within the church, those adult Bible fellowships within the church, if they're going to tolerate sin because I got to drop my spiritual babies off in a place where the standard will be the right standard." Same reason you're very picky about where you want your kids to stay. You're going to say the whole thing needs to be right. It needs to be at an acceptable standard.

Sin is unholy. Why? Because it's dangerous for us corporally. Do you want to put it in an Old Testament context? Sure you do. Let's turn to Joshua Chapter 7. Joshua Chapter 7, all the Sunday school graduates immediately compute it. "Oh, yeah. I know what happened in Joshua Chapter 6." Right? What happened in Joshua 6? You can cheat if you want. Look at it. What happened? A little song, flannel graph story "and the walls came tumbling down." You know this. How does it go? Joshua fit the battle of Jericho. Why is that so important? Because Jericho was the main stronghold of the land of Canaan and God was using the Israelite army as an extension of God's judgment on these people. He wanted these people to be shut down. Then he was going to give the land as an inheritance to Israel and they were going to set up shop in Canaan and go on their merry way and God would bless them.

They had to start with Jericho. It was the stronghold. It'd be like us saying, well, we got to take California. Where do we start? Well, we ought to start in L.A.. And that's how it was. And you know what? It was a piece of cake. They didn't have to do guerrilla warfare on the streets of L.A. They marched around the freeways for a while and all of a sudden the whole thing collapsed and they go, "Wow, we won. That was easy." That's how it happened.

Now, Chapter 7, they got to move on to the next city on the map and the next city on the map they're supposed to catch was a little place called Barstow, basically. You've taken L.A. and it was easy, slam dunk. Barstow ain't looking all that bad. The problem was in L.A., one of the things that God told them not to do is take anything there. See? No matter how many miles your camel had on it, you don't steal a camel from the lot there in L.A., you leave it. Think about that. That's hard now. Right? I'm driving a Dodge Dart or whatever, and I'm coming through L.A.. We're walking through Brentwood here and there are Beamers laying around and keys to, you know, to the Lexus. It's just no problem to take one. You know, I've got my Casio digital on, you know, \$8.99 Kmart, and I'm seeing Rolexes on the dressers of these people's homes. And yet God said, "No, no, no, don't take that. Fresh start. I'll bless you guys. Fresh start. Don't take the devoted things."

That's the scenario of Joshua Chapter 7 verse 1. The Israelites, unfortunately, had acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things. Here's our star. His name is Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zaddi, as though we knew his family. You don't, but whatever. He's a guy from the tribe of Judah. He took some of the stuff and "Yahweh's anger burned against," Achan. Is that what it says? No. Isn't that interesting how God works? See, it's when I've got compromise in this corner of Israel he says now I'm not real hot on Israel anymore. See, just the same way you think about daycare centers. Right? Now there's a problem here and some of the staff are

corrupt. "I'm not real hot with dropping my kids off there. I'm not big on that daycare center anymore." God says, I'm mad at the whole place. Why would that be? Because as you read later in the text, there's a lot of compromise, there are a lot of people winking at it. "Well, you know, Achan's camel was really kind of a, you know, piece of junk, I'm glad he got a new one. He deserves it. Yeah. Take the Rolex, it's fine. It's cool. I'll cover for you." That was going on. "The Lord's anger, Yahweh's anger burned against Israel."

Now Joshua sent some men from L.A. to Barstow, near Blythe, or wherever it is, east of that. We don't know the geography, but there it is. Go up and spy out the region. So the men went up and spied out Ai and they return to Joshua and said, "Piece of cake. Not all these people are going to have to go up against Ai. Just send two or three thousand men. Don't worry all the people let them drink their lemonade and lay by the pool and sit under the palm tree. They're fine. Just only a few men are needed for this." So about 3,000 men went up and they were routed by the men of Ai. You lose and they started to kill these Israelites. And by God's grace they only killed 36 of them, but that 36, they're not used to losing anybody in battle. 36 Israelite soldiers were killed. They were chased. They chased the Israelites, the Ai guys did, from the city gate as far as from the stone quarries, as though we knew where that is. We don't. But struck them down on the slopes and the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

You've taken L.A., you're in the Barstow area. Let's take that. You get wiped by those guys, those truck drivers from Barstow. Right? We're just killed. People die. What happens? It says Joshua tears his clothes, a sign of grief in ancient Near East, falls face down on the ground before the Ark of the Covenant, the Ark of Yahweh. And it says he stayed there until evening and the elders of Israel do the same thing. So a bunch of leaders, they're just crying. They're sprinkling dust on their head. Joshua starts whining in verse 7, "So Lord why have you brought us over the Jordan to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? What can I say now? The Canaanites and their people are going to hear about this and wipe us out. What are you going to do then for your great name?" And the Lord says to Joshua, verse 10. Shut up. "The Lord said to Joshua, 'Stand up. Get over here. Why are you on your face?'" Joshua continues whining, "Well, I was on my face because we lost, you know, I didn't think we're going to lose?" Israel has sinned. Daah... God says, "I promise to give you victory. I promised to support you. I promised to be a part of this. If I'm not a part of this, hey, guess what? You guys aren't being obedient. Because this is how I work. If you're not going to do my way, I'm not going to be a part of it." See?

Look how he explains himself. "Israel has sinned. They violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. I thought the rules were pretty clear. Right? Leviticus says, 'Don't sleep with your father's wife.' And now you're just putting up with that." They've taken some of the devoted things in this case. They've stolen, they've lie, they've covered it up. They put it with their own possessions. That's why the "Israelites cannot stand against their enemies. They turn their backs," and run because they have been made, underline this, "liable to destruction." That's a powerful statement. They've been made liable to destruction. "They didn't do it my way. They've decided to disregard my words. So here they're on their own now. They are liable to destruction." God's pulled out.



"I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted for destruction." Go, and here's our Hebrew word if you were at communion a couple of weeks ago, "Kadash," go consecrate yourself, verbal form. Go separate yourself. Be holy people. Tell them be holy. "Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; For this is what Yahweh, the God of Israel says, that which is devoted is among you O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it." Does that sound like First Corinthians 5? Same concept. Part of the church messing up, they're standing in opposition to God's Word. They don't want to submit to it. If you don't want to deal with that, he says, you're liable to destruction. I'll just step out here. Paul is concerned a little yeast and it'll work through the whole batch of dough. What's the point? It infects and violates and defiles the whole thing. Is God being hard, not any harder on them than you are on KinderCare? You know? Not any harder. You're just saying, "Hey, if that's the way they're going to play, I not going to put my kids there. Forget it, they're not getting my money. I'm stepping out." God says the same thing corporately.

I mean, that's the context, and we need to hammer the context. Do you want to talk personally? We don't have time to. So don't answer that question. But Galatians 6, let's just at least jot down a reference, verses 7 and 8. Do you know what that says? It says, "Don't be deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows that, he will also...." Let's talk about it on a personal level. We don't have time to, but let's just pretend we did. OK? Here's the bottom line. It doesn't just work corporately. God removes his favor, liable to destruction. It says we reap from the flesh. If we want to sow to the flesh, we reap from the flesh. What? Corruption. Corruption. I don't want to sin because sin is dangerous personally and it's dangerous for the people I fellowship with. It's not good. I need to recognize there's danger involved. Hazard. Caution. Sin's dangerous. It will have an effect on my future and the future of my Bible study group and the future of my church. Boy, I'd better do right. I'd better work on holiness. Why? Cause a little yeast, man, it works through the whole batch of dough.

OK. That was easy. Right? Verse 7, back in our text. It gets a little harder here. A little more complicated. Give you my warning label. Here it comes. The tough part of the sermon coming up. Tough not, you know, because it's morally tough, it is that, too, but it's difficult to understand. Look at verse 7. Get rid, it says of the old yeast. OK. We're going to continue the analogy. "Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch," without yeast. No problem? Guys look fine. The light bulb's still on. Right? Everything's computing, hard drives humming away. No problem. You're telling me to be holy. Get rid of the old stuff. Don't do that stuff. Don't do that evil stuff. Be a new batch without yeast.

That's not the hard part. Here comes the hard part because it seems to be on a collision course with itself. Verse 7, "as you really are." Does that bother anybody? I don't see any heads spin around, but I know that's a bit of a problem. Here he's saying "get rid of the old yeast, that you may be a new batch without yeast, as you really are." Do you see the connection there? Grammatically, it's interesting because the grammatical construction helps us with the theological construction of this thought. The grammatical construction is first we have an imperative. An imperative is a command. When you say to your kid, "Go take a



shower, go take a shower, you need a shower, go take a shower." That's a command, an imperative.

But this command is based on an indicative, an indicative grammatically, the mood of the verb that's an indicative. an indicative is a statement of truth that's already true. See? Now we wouldn't tell our kids, "Go take a shower. You need a shower. Go take a shower, cause you're already clean." What? See, it doesn't make any sense. And yet in this text, we see, and people have written volumes of books on it, the relationship theologically in Paul's discussion, the relationship between the indicative and the imperative. Or let's put it this way, the imperative becomes predicated on the indicative. I'm telling you to do something because you already are that. Is that weird? Do it because you already are.

Let's put it in terms of our series. He is telling me, get rid of the old yeast. What is that mean? Be holy. Why? Because you are holy. You already are a new batch. Put it down this way in your outline. Let's see if we can make sense of it. Number two, "Be Holy Because You Are Holy." Okay, that helps. Let's illustrate it. You and me are in prison together. How's that? Cellmates, me and you. We are bad criminals, done bad things, and there we are, striped outfits, no they're not striped anymore, orange jumpsuits. Is that they're wearing now? We got our orange jumpsuits on, we're in a cell together. We got our little 13-inch TV in a corner and, you know, got our exercise regimen and weights in the weight room, with three squares a day. Don't mean to make it sound so nice, but, you know, we're in prison. We've lost our freedoms. Here we are, you and me, cellmates. OK? Got that part?

Next part, Dan, Pastor Dan becomes the governor of the state of California. I know this is a stretch, but Pastor Dan is now the governor and you and I are both friends with Pastor Dan. You know Dan, I know Dan, and we're watching the news and we say, "Hey, that's Dan Anderson. Dan is now the governor of the state of California. Can you believe it? I can't believe it." Next thing we find out, a week later, the warden walks in and says, "Hey, there's a pardon here signed by the governor of the state of California. It's from Dan Anderson. And it's for..." and he reaches out his hand and gives it to you and not me, for whatever reason, he remembers his days at PCC, whatever. "Yeah, I'm not giving one to Pastor Mike," but he gives one to you.

So now you have your pardon. It's in hand. You got it. You are pardoned. You're free. Free to go. You start thinking at 3:00, "I feel bad for Pastor Mike," I hope you would, "I feel bad for Pastor Mike. He didn't get a pardon. I got a pardon. I've kind of enjoyed my time here getting to know Pastor Mike and watching TV and commenting on the news together. You know what? That exercise regimen there in the courtyard, that was kind of helpful. I'm in the best shape I've been in for a long time. Three squares a day. That was kind of nice too, somebody cooking for us. I've actually kind of gotten used to this. It's kind of a nice existence here in prison. Ahh..., I'm going to stick around for a while." OK.

Here it is. You are judicially and legally free to go. You're free, OK? Now somebody else walks by, one of our friends, maybe it's Pastor Tony, walks in and says, "Hey, stupid. What are you doing? You're free to go. You're free." See, what's he really saying? Go act free.



Why? Because you are free. And most of us look at a pastor like that and that's our first solution for it. Right? You need to be practically acting free because you are judicially free. Or in this case, you need to act practically holy, in other words, holy in all your behavior, First Peter 1, because you are before God in heaven judicially or positionally holy. Is that the complete solution to this text? No, but it's helpful and it's the first step.

Because here's the second part of it that we can't possibly illustrate with our analogy, but let's try. OK? Pastor Dan somehow has the ability not only to write you a pardon and get you completely pardoned, but he reaches his long arm down from Sacramento, and he comes into our prison and he takes his hand and he reaches into your chest and he yanks out your heart. Okay? Ouch. And then he has another one that's far better and is full of all kinds of wonderful desires and passions and it just wants to do right. See, you and I are scheming about our next bank heist in prison. But now all of a sudden he yanks out your heart and he gives you a brand-new heart. See? And he puts a brand-new heart inside of you. This is Jeremiah 31, by the way. And he puts a brand-new heart in you. We don't need to turn there, and 34, it goes on throughout the rest of the book of Jeremiah.

You get brand-new guts. OK? Not a good illustration, but there it is. You now want to do good. You can't think about stealing anymore. Matter of fact, that kind of is an abhorrent thought to you, because now all of the sudden you're not just not a prisoner. You're not just pardoned. Now you have a whole new set of desires to live properly. See? Here's the text it's saying stop acting like a prisoner. You're not a prisoner anymore. You're free. You're not only free judicially. You're not only free positionally. You're free redemptively. That's the New Testament term. You are redeemed, and an Old Testament term too in the Hebrew. You are redeemed. You have been purchased and you've been bought. Not just purchased out of the prison that you were in. You've also been given a new spirit.

God has now put his Spirit in you and transformed your spirit. It was the verse that we learned on week two of, you know, Boys Brigade, or whatever you were part of, Chappy Chipmunks. Well Pioneer Girls, that's what you're part of it, right? Was it just me who grew up in a church? (audience laughing)

What was the second verse we learn in those classes? What did they tell us? Second Corinthians 5:17, "If any person's in Christ he is a new..." Now, think about that. That's what we're saying happens when you become a Christian. Five years after you get saved? No. 12 years? You kind of work into that? When does that happen? We learn this as kids. When you become a Christian, bang, you are, here's what John 3, he talks about being born again. We call it in the New Testament, regeneration, "Genesia," made new. You were born into it. You have a new birth. You are a new creation. Old things pass away. New things come. But what happens is something in you now is changed. Paul likes to talk about the old man is gone and you are now a new man in Christ. Something has gone different inside of you.

So it's more than just saying, you know what, you're judicially holy, so you ought to be practically holy. What he's really saying to us is beyond that, you are a new batch, you are



new, and the new man that you are doesn't have that sin anymore. See? You don't have the impulse to sin. See. Then it should be really easy for us, right? No, not necessarily.

Let's sort this out from Ephesians Chapter 2. Maybe that'll help and a little chart wouldn't hurt either. Right? Let's put this chart together here in our brains as we turn to Ephesians Chapter 2. OK? There are two components to you. I know you think there are more than that but just let's boil it down, there are two basic components. There is you. Right? We like to call that in the Bible your spirit, that's who you really are. Right? And there is the body that you're in. You're encased, cocooned in a human body, which is really more than hair follicles and the biological stuff. It is actually the humanity. You're encased in a human, fallen body, sin infested. Right? That's how the Bible seems to portray it. There are two parts to you.

Now, let's look at Ephesians Chapter 2 and see how it's described here. Look at it with me, verse 1. "As for you," it says, Ephesians 2:1, "you were..." What's the word? Now, here's the problem. I'm talking to Orange County, 21st-century people. What do we know about death? Right? I mean, think about it really. I don't mean to be too lighthearted about this, but when your grandma dies, we call, get on the phone, call the dudes up. They come down in their suits, thin ties, black ties. They walk in. They're really polite. They put the sheet over her head. They wheel her out on the gurney. They put her in their nice little van. They drive off somewhere. You don't know where. You don't know what. You don't deal with that. But a few days later, you show up at the mortuary there. You walk in, there's grandma. "Looks a little different. It looks pretty good. She liked those earrings. That's a nice dress." Then we shut the thing. It's all done there. Take her out to the cemetery. They put her in the ground and, you know, you leave and the guys, they close it up. Later you come back, see the headstone. That's it. That's death. See.

Not to them. See, we're not surrounded by death. Matter of fact, one of the bad things about modern churches is you don't have to walk through the cemetery anymore to get to the church. You walk by a playground. Right? There's not a cemetery within, what, 15, 20 miles of here, El Toro cemetery. We're just completely insulated from death. In their day they weren't. Matter of fact, when grandma died you didn't call the guy down the street to come pick her up. You as a family dealt with that. You took grandma's body and if you're rich enough and had the means, you would embalm her, you'd wrap her, you'd put spices in there. You, from the time you were a kid living in these little tight villages, you would deal with death firsthand.

I know that a lot of us don't have that connection. So one time when I had the opportunity, a great guy here in the church who works at Rose Hills, the biggest, you know, business of death in the country, biggest whatever... They're doing a lot of stuff up there. He said, "Do you want to tour the place?" I said, "Yes, and I want to see the inner workings of this place." I said, "We need to see it." So I said, you know what? "This would be a good thing for our pastoral staff to do." Another reason for you not to work here. Right? "I said they need to come with me." So we took the pastors. We took the leadership of the church. And I said, "You know, we need to go see this. We're so inoculated. We're so distant, insulated. We need to go see this. We're counseling families. We need to go in the backroom and check it out."



So we go into the backroom of this gigantic factory. I mean, they are pushing out. They do more dead bodies than anybody anywhere. Right? It's huge. Not anywhere in the world, but anywhere in our country. And I walk into this room, and I don't mean to be overly morbid here, but here they are, stacks of bodies from the floor in these really narrow little racks all the way to the ceiling in a big room that must have been as big as this auditorium. There they were. And now I know what you might picture, you know, like dark, you know, lights real low, and, you know, the Polish mortician walks out with this spooky voice and says, "Welcome, would you like to come back...? And you picture that and maybe some organ music. Gramma's on the organ, in the background. You know, that's not what it was like at all. Full-blown fluorescent lights. People in there, they're dressing people, there in embalming people.

They're doing all kinds of stuff in there. And they got 50s music playing through the speakers. Big guys are dancing as he's dressing this lady and he's got his big 32 ounce, you know, Diet Coke from Del Taco. And they're talking about, "Hey, did you see that movie?" "Oh, hey, how was your day out?" "Oh, it was great." There are dead bodies laying everywhere. I'm like, "This is weird. This is weird. I've never been around this much death. And you guys, you're just there alive. And it's like they're dead and you're alive." I know this a bigger illustration than it needs to be. But life and death were in my face that day. Here it is, man. These guys are alive and working and their hands are going and they're talking with their mouths. And then I'm looking at mouths and hands and bodies and noses and they're there in their little places and tags on their toes. And they're just like doing nothing. They're dead. And I'm thinking, how weird. There's a hand and it can't do anything. And then there are hands and they're snapping and laughing. "Hey, how are you doing? Got some visitors, come on back." And I'm like, this is weird.

We would have a little bit more of that kind of reality and that in Ephesians Chapter 2, he says, "Do you know what you were like? You weren't like the guy dancing around his Diet Coke, you were like that guy on level three with the tag on his toe. You were dead. When it comes to holiness and God and life to God, you, your spirit was dead. Dead in what? "In your transgressions and sins." That's what sin does. It absolutely alienates you from God. You're dead in your sins. "In which you used to live." I know that seems like a contradiction as an illustration and you were dead when you lived in a dead state. I realized the obvious irony there. But you lived in that dead state and you "followed the ways of the world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air," the enemy, and "the spirit that's now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us lived among them," in that death state, "at one time gratifying," notice this, "the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires." Sinful nature, by the way, is the word flesh "Sarx." You follow the cravings of your body, of your flesh, of your humanity. "You followed its desires and thoughts. And like the rest, you were by nature just objects of wrath."

Let's put this all together, OK? You live in a particular way because you are wired in a particular way and your body is wired in a particular way. Let's talk about pre-Christian days, verses 1 through 3. Let's talk about it. The Bible says here you were dead to God. You are certainly alive. But according to Scripture, passages like this might be helpful, Second Corinthians 5:15, you were alive to nothing but you. See. You're alive to your own interests,



your own desires, your own stuff. And guess what your body's alive too, it's really dead to God and his standards of holiness. But it's just designed and wired to please itself. It's got cravings, it's got desires, it's got thoughts and stuff that it's trying to do. And your spirit and your body, they're working totally in sync to do what? To do nothing but please yourself. That's how it works. That's not rocket science, but there it is. Your spirit is dead to God and his holiness and then your body is dead to God and his holiness. It's got its own desires. It looks out for number one. It is selfish, it is self-centered. It does what it wants to do.

Now, it doesn't mean you didn't help an old lady across the street. Doesn't mean you didn't give your old clothes to goodwill. Doesn't mean you weren't a philanthropist. It just means it to God and his holiness and the standards of heaven living for the creator, it's just dead, not holy. And your body is dead to God too. Dead. Look at verse 4. "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us," underline it, "alive with Christ." You imagine if I was there at that place at Rose Hills and I just walked up, slapped my hand on the forehead of this old guy, Charlie Chuck. I read the tag on his toe and I put my hand on his forehead while they're dancing around to the 50s music and say, "Hey, guys, look at this. Charlie -- arise." He wakes up, takes, you know, they put this little plastic over their face, a little cellophane, he peels the cellophane off, gets up, "Where are my clothes?" There's something on my toe. Wakes up sniffing, "I need some of that Diet Coke, man. I'm thirsty." Takes a big breath. Can you imagine that? Picture this. Dan, the governor of the state was hard, but "Mike Raises Man From Dead," Rose Hills News. Film at 11. If I did that, the living would be freaked out. Right? "Whoa, did you see that? He put his hand on that guy and he's alive now." Right? Hands that didn't work, now work. Eyes that didn't see, now see. A mouth that wouldn't move, wouldn't talk, dead, now it's working.

I will say this is what it was like for you spiritually, you were dead, you, your spirit, it was dead to God. Now because of God's great love, his great mercy he made us alive with Christ. Anybody ever been dead come back to life? Yeah, well, you know, Christ is a good example of this. Christ was dead and now he comes to life. It's that same kind of thing. "Made alive together with Christ, even when we were dead in our transgressions -- it's by grace we are saved." No one says, "Oh, I'm going to be alive, I'm going to work to be alive." Can't do that. But "God raises us up with Christ, seats us in the heavenly realms." How alive are you? It's like you're in heaven. It's like you're seated with God up in heaven. You're so alive. "In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ. For by grace, you've been saved." It's through faith. It's says not from yourself, you can't work up to life, "it's the gift of God." He put his hand on your forehead and made you come to life, "not by works, can't boast about it. For we are now," that we're alive, "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus," made alive. To do what? To lay on the rack there at Rose Hill. No. To do what? "To do good works, prepared by God in advance for us to do." He's got a job for us to do. So you were dead now you're alive.

Let's build the chart here now. Let's put it this way. As a Christian, put this together, we now are made new. Our spirit, Second Corinthians 5:17, "any person in Christ he's a new creation." Note, you don't get something. You become something. You were dead and now you are alive. See? So I am now alive to God. Which, by the way, is one reason that when



you were taught like I was as a kid, that when you become a Christian, you get a new nature. See? It's an aberrant thought. I don't get a new nature. I become a new person. See, I was taught from the time I was a kid, I get a new nature and I got an old nature and now I've got a black dog and a white dog. And so feed the white dog, starve the black dog. They're going to fight it out every day. And who am I? I don't know. I'm schizophrenic. I'm on the outside somewhere. I'm just trying to manage me and I got, you know, I'm civil, right? That's how I viewed it. Was that that movie? I never saw it.

Is that how it works? No. If any person's in Christ he is a new creation. They are created. They were dead. Now they are alive. See. I am now wired, according to Scripture, to please him. I now have a heart. If you want to read the old covenant promises about the new covenant, I have a heart now that is made new. A heart of stone is replaced with a heart of flesh. My heart now wants to serve and please a holy God. See. I am a new man in Christ.

The problem is, I still am stuck in, you know where I'm going here, with an old body. I'm still wrapped in a cocoon of humanity. I still am wrapped in a cocoon of humanity and it is fallen. therefore it makes pleasing God difficult and it is difficult. Some people who don't understand this, they try to simplify this too much. They're constantly trying to tell us we shouldn't be exhorting anybody or telling anybody to work or telling anybody they should just strive. And you use those words. And it's not about grace. You don't understand. It's all over the Scripture, "Agon," to work, the sweat of our brow, to be godly. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." "Agonizomai." There's the word. Agony. It's like a marathon race. It's hard. Why is it hard? Because there is a problem of a conflict between me, who I really am and this flesh that I'm still encased in.

Let me give you a good picture of this from Galatians Chapter 5. Let's turn there real quick as long as there's no service after this one. So much to say. Galatians 5. Look at verse 16. Here's a good example. "So I say," Galatians 5:16, "so I say, live by the Spirit." Right? Live by the spirit. And it's funny, it's capitalized in your text, but the idea of I have, of course, the Spirit in my life, but I am a new person, "live by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the," literally in Greek, sarx, the flesh, this thing you're encased in, "for the flesh," verse 17, "desires what is," oh, here's the bad news, "contrary to the Spirit, the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in," underline it, "conflict with one another." See, that's the problem with the Christian life. They're in conflict with each other, "so that you do not do what you want." It's not a cakewalk. Why? Because I'm still encased in my sinful humanity.

But, a very important clarification, I am new in Christ. That's why the guy who's been reading the Puritan prayers sitting in the back of your Bible study who prays at your Wednesday night Bible study in a deep and dreary voice, "Dear God, I'm such a filthy, rotten sinner, a helpless sinner, a bad person. I'm a rotten sinner, God. I just come before you as a rotten, terrible, helpless, good-for-nothing, rotten sinner." And you're there going, "Wow, what a godly guy. Did you hear that? Did you hear how sinfully he realizes he is." And you think, well, that's a picture of godliness, right? It's not a picture of godliness because a godly person understands that that is the wrong platform and perspective to view ourselves. We are new in Christ. Our



new man beats in resonance, our heart of the new man beats and resonates with the heart of God.

See, it does, as the old covenant promised it would do, it delights in the law of God. See, that's what it does. Where's the rub come then? Well, between me and my flesh, which is not schizoid, see. So I realize it's not godly to sit there in the back and just have this perspective, "We're all rotten, awful sinners, God. That's what we are." Well, you know what? You're still encased in a pretty, you know, cruddy body. I realize that. And not just the form of it all, but I'm talking about the actual impulses and gratifying the desires that you're still going to battle that, you see. It even shows up in our songs. Right? We sang a song this morning, "Oh, prone to wander, leave the God I love," you know. Which, by the way, was written by an apostate, a guy that ended up being a Unitarian. Robert Robertson, sorry to ruin that hymn for you, but he denied the faith and went outdid his own thing. It's interesting, though, that he writes a song like that. If that really resonated with his heart, if his heart was singing, "I prone to wander and I'm going to leave God." If that was really your heart, it shows something and it certainly matches your life. Because in life you end up living a debauched life, cashing in the doctrines of God and just living however you wanted to. And he was known as an immoral guy. See?

The bottom line is here, if that's true, that shows that the reality that the new birth hadn't take place in your life. See, because in my mind and in your mind as regenerate Christians, I say with God, "I desire your law. I desire your truth. I desire to be holy." I do. Oh, I'm encased in a sinful body. That's why Romans 6 is so important. I have to call the members of my body in subjection now to the new man. See, that's what I need to do. And that is a battle. It doesn't make the Christian life easy. It doesn't mean we're sinless. We still battle with that, certainly because the world is poised with my body to try and have me cash in my spirit. I realize that. But it's not this issue of, you know, if I had my way, I'd just walk away from God today. No, you wouldn't. Not if you're a regenerate person.

That's why on the back of the worksheet, by the way, I've given you some resources this week to help explore this. If immediately you're thinking, "Well, I know Romans Chapter 7 and that says that nothing good dwells in me." You need to get that in context. That's why I've assigned for you Martyn Lloyd-Jones's commentary on that section of Romans, Romans Chapter 6 verses 14 through 21, the whole illustration in that text of how the law and Paul talks about this illustration being under the law that will all fall into place there. Star that one, if you're thinking of Romans 7.

If you're thinking I didn't even know Romans talked about any of this, then star these two books by David Needham. Do you see those? The first one he wrote was the second one alphabetically there, but *Birtright: Christian, Do You Know Who You Are?* He hits all this stuff head-on trying to figure out who are we? How do we view this? Am I just a guy between a white dog and a black dog? Understanding who you are is so important. Paul predicates the command to be holy on the assumption, the indicative, we are holy. That is an important and powerful motivation to do holy things. His next book, and the appendices, by the way, on that book are very helpful. But the next book, not that I agree with everything he writes in that



because you'll find a couple of things. But in the book above that *Alive for the First Time*, that's very helpful.

No one nailed the title better than Dr. Saucy's article that I did list for you there. He's a professor up at Talbot and it's a *Bibliotheca Sacra*, which probably isn't sitting on your coffee table, but you can find it and go on the Internet. And if I'm totally wasting time here, I'm sorry. But look at the title of that. *Are we Sinners Who Are Forgiven or Saints Who Sin?* I think just that's a poignant way to title this question. That will change a lot about your perspective on sanctification.

I don't think we can go very far in discussing our holy progress until we understand a little bit about sanctification, how it works, and as David Needham puts it, the new birth miracle. You've got to understand that. And this is something very important for us as Christians to tackle. OK? Great.

Now, I know this isn't part of the sermon, but I thought I'd throw it in as long as we were here. Let's talk about the final stage. And here's the good news. When you get your new address and it's in the New Jerusalem one day, here's the great thing. You get the same spirit, the spirit that you have, which has been made in the likeness of Christ that happens right now. You will also, here's the great news, as Romans 8:23 says you will get a brand-new body. As Paul says, "I can't wait. I groan within myself, along with all creation, waiting for the redemption of the body." I need a brand-new body.

Now, think about this. I've got a spirit that wants to please God and now God lays on me the brand-new 2004 resurrected model of body that now all of a sudden doesn't desire anything but righteousness. Are we doing all right now? I think we're pleasing God. No sweat. Now it's no problem. That's why the New Jerusalem is going to be so great, because a spirit that desires to live a holy life is now going to be encased in a body that desires to live a holy life. And its impulses and desires won't be for self-aggrandizement and pride and lust and materialism and greed. Do you know what it'll be for? For loving people, loving God, serving God, being obedient. All those things will be built into the impulses of our body. Well, that'll be great. That's why heaven is a pretty good thing. And we all ought to figure on going there. All right. Is that too much? Probably. But there we said it.

Back to our text. I know you're done, but I got a little bit left here. So let's finish it. Verse 8. Verse 8. Very important, verse 8. Verse 8 starts with this word, "therefore." Now you take our hermeneutics class tonight or certainly you have graduated from Sunday school, you know, you see a "therefore," it's very important because it points back to the things in front of it. Therefore. It's not the common Greek word for therefore, but it's still a therefore and it is still a strong word that points us backwards. What's he going to say after the therefore? Well, he's going to say, still it's entrenched in the analogy. "Let us keep the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness." If you had any doubt as to what that was, it's talking about sin. But do keep the new festival with the bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth." What's he saying? Translation. Be holy. We get another imperative to be holy.



But this time it starts with the word therefore and it points back to what comes in front of it. Well, let's go back to what's in front of it. It's the sentence in the bottom of verse 7. What does it say? "For Christ, our Passover lamb..." Why is that coming up? Because yeast and getting rid of yeast was what you did in the Passover. Passover celebration in the Jewish home would take all the leaven that they kept over because every time they made bread, they'd keep a little piece out and it would be the thing that sparked the next deal. You know how it works better than I do, probably. The fungi in the bread rises and all that. They did that, see, every time, but there comes a point every year, Nisan the 14th, they would totally break the chain in the Jewish calendar and everybody would get rid of all their yeast, which is really a nice medical idea, not to mention it had carried symbolic significance, but the idea is get rid of it all.

When did that happen? At the Passover. How did it apex? It apexed when you took the lamb that was taken from the flock year-old without blemish and he ran around your house with your kids and at the end of the week, you'd take that lamb and you would kill it. That's great, right? PETA loves that. You take a lamb in front of your kids, pull out your Spyderco knife and kill it. Now he says, listen, we're talking about getting rid of the yeast. Be holy people. Right? Symbolic of being holy people. I'm telling you what. You need to be holy. Why? Because our Passover lamb has been, and the Greek word is slaughtered, it has been killed, it has been slain. The Passover lamb has been slain. Huh?

Do remember a good Friday, anybody here on Good Friday when I took the lamb up on stage, took my knife out and killed it here on the stage. Remember that? I'm just seeing if you're awake. No, I didn't do that. Arrest me. Right? I'd be gone! Yeah. But I pretended kind of that I did. And then I had this bowl that was supposed to be blood. It wasn't blood. It was paint or whatever. And then I took the rag in that... Was anyway here for this? And I took the rag and then I went over here and Scott had built me this frame around that door, a wood frame. It looked like the old-style frames. And then I took the blood and I wiped it all over the doorposts. Remember that? Two of you were here for that? Great.

After I did that, I walked over here to the cross that Scott had put up for us and I took the blood on the rag or the paint, the crimson paint, and I smeared it on those posts. I tried to make the connection, as the Bible does, between the Passover of Exodus 20 and what happened in the New Testament. Right? John's preaching there in his church service, down the aisle comes Jesus and he says, "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." See. Now this is a bloody mess. And I know most of us, like death, I mean, we go through McDonald's and we don't think about this ordering a "quarter pounder with cheese, please" and we're not thinking what's going on here because most of us haven't seen the slaughterhouses and all that. If you did, you'd become a vegetarian and join PETA and then, you know, hate the Bible altogether, whatever.

But bottom line is, in the old covenant, they didn't hide it. As a matter of fact, they put it on a stage and accentuated it. And the idea is for you to live, animals die. See? And not only that, let's symbolize our sin, because the wages of sin is death. And so what we'll do, jot this



reference down, Leviticus 1:4, we will have an animal represent you and instead of killing you, here's what we'll do in our worship services, we'll kill an animal and that animal then, and as is so dramatic in Chapter 1 of Leviticus, you as a family head, will put your hand on the head of that animal. And then the priest will take his knife, cut that neck. That animal will fall limp to the floor. Blood will splatter on your sandals. Your six-year-old daughter will cry and people will stand there, and go, "Wow, that was dramatic." And what will happen? The Bible says this will be symbolic. That animal will be accepted as an atonement for your sin. Then what do we do? We put him on a barbecue. That's what happens. He goes on the altar and we light it up and it smells, matter of fact, Leviticus 1, it says it's a "pleasing aroma to God." And it would be to you too. You walk by and it smells like a barbecue. And you're saying, "What's that? What's that all about?"

What it's about is for you to live. See. Animals die. But that's not really the point. Really, the point is the wages of sin is death. But instead of you dying, I'll tell you what we'll do, one day, we'll bring the Son of God, the perfect sacrifice, the "lamb of God," as John put it, and we'll pin him to the doorpost. No, let's pin him to the post of the Roman execution rack and let's kill him. God will then say that man will be accepted as an atonement for your sin. Therefore, you get to live, not another year like in the old covenant, you'll get to live for eternity because the Passover lamb has been slain, sacrificed, slaughtered. OK? Now that's ugly and that's not fun, but that's the reality of Scripture, that we have to recognize that our sin to pay for it, to atone for it, required the death of the Son of God.

Number three on your outline, why should we be holy? Because of this thought and its implications. Ready? "Be Holy Because Our Sin Caused His Death." That's why we need to be holy. "What? Our sin caused his..." Now think this through. From a New Testament perspective, we look back 2,000 years ago that Christ died on a cross. Why did he do that? Died for sin. Right? Sin. Here's the thing, I recognize it because of coveting, because of lust, because of greed, because of outbursts of anger, because of all the things that I know are wrong. They had to be appeased and paid for and atoned for by God. He can only do it by providing it himself, in Christ. And now the Father pours out the wrath on the Son and because of my sin, he suffers. Therefore, I can say I get forgiveness because the atonement has been made for my life.

That transaction in my mind, now all of the sudden, I'm hit with temptations this week to do more lust, more greed, more sin, more pride. And now what? I think to myself, wait, wait a minute. This is the stuff that pinned him to the cross. Wait a minute. Whoa, just wait a second. Be holy. Why? Because our sacrificial lamb, the Passover lamb, has been slain. What does that mean? My sin caused that. I don't want to add to that. See, sin not only messes up your future and puts it in peril, makes you liable to God's favor being withdrawn in your church or in your life. You reap from the flesh corruption. And it not only is in conflict with your true identity as a regenerate person in Christ, but it really in a bizarre way affects the past. Because your sin this week, if you choose to give in to temptation, becomes now an affront to the cross because someone has to pay for that sin for you to walk in the gates of the New Jerusalem. Who's going to do it? Christ. Therefore, the punishment for sin had to be nailed to the cross.



Boy, I don't want to sin another day. Do you? Think about it? Why? Because I sense the responsibility for his death. What? When I sin.

I told you the story before but when my wife and I, Carlyn and I were dating in high school, we walked out of church one Wednesday night after going to the Bible study and hand-in-hand, we walked out of church. We're typical high schoolers, everybody's doing their thing and slapping each other. And here's my buddy in his 4x4 blue pickup truck, and he's there trying to press all the teeny-bopper girls in the youth group. And he's revving up his engine. And then he pops the clutch in and screeches away. Easy to do in a pickup truck. But anyway, he starts peeling out in front of those girls kind of smiling at the girls and off he's going. I'm watching him holding Carlyn hand and watching him come down the street as he peels out and just starts ripping down the street in front of the church.

And one of our guys in the church, one of the deacons at church walking across the parking lot and has to cross this little street, walking to his car, his little five-year-old's trailing behind him. He comes out between two cars. My buddy does not see him and his face meets the grille of that truck and takes his little body, this little five-year-old in the church, and sends him, I don't know, 40, 50, 60, 70 feet. And I hate to be so graphic, but grinds his body and his head into the asphalt of that street. And pandemonium breaks out. Here we are and the place goes nuts. The dad, I'll never forget screaming at the top of his lungs. He goes over, he sees his son just clearly just ripped into pieces, you know, and he starts screaming at my buddy on the truck, "You killed my son. You killed my son." And women are screaming and people are screaming. And the dad is going nuts and pandemonium. I don't know what to do.

I walked toward the kid that I knew and I was like, wow, like nothing I can do there. And then I walk over to my buddy who's in the pickup truck, and he's opened the door, he's got one foot on the ground, he's got the other foot in the cab of his truck. He's grabbing onto the steering wheel. He turns his truck off and he sat there with the doors open, headlights beaming down the street on this Wednesday night in front of church. And he just sits there looking, dad still screaming, "You killed my son," from 50 feet away. What do you say? I came up, the door was open and came up behind him. I put my hand on his shoulder and I just felt him physically shaking. What can I say?

Right at that moment, the full weight of the responsibility for the death of that man's son was weighing just crushing down on him. "Look what I did in my foolishness, in my arrogance, in my stupidity. I just drove that man's kid right into the ground," and his blood streamed down into the gutters. And as people were running around and things were going nuts and people screaming to call the ambulance, I stood there with this guy. Nothing to say. Wow. I'll tell you some about my friend. It forever changed his driving habits. He never drove the same way again. Would you? Never drove that way again. That guy, and soon he got rid of his truck. You know, I never, ever heard of him or saw him ever again peeling out of a parking lot. I never saw him racing around. The guy became a very conscientious driver.

When we really stare at the cross and we recognize on the cross, there is the responsibility I have because my sin pinned him there, it will forever, if we really understand that, change our



spiritual driving habits. Because this week, you and me both will be hit with temptations, the enemy, our flesh will all beckon us down a pathway that is not right, a pathway of compromise. And I'm telling you what, don't go there. You and me both need to fight it. Why? Why? Because sin is dangerous. We put ourselves and our future in peril and the future of our church and our Bible study groups. Why? Because it conflicts with the very nature of the new heart that God has put inside of us. Why? Because my sin pinned him to the cross. Do I want to add to that? Do I want to do another thing this week that Christ had to suffer and die for? Feel the responsibility of that and then choose this week as God laid before the Israelites, choose life, man. Choose righteousness. Choose holiness. Is it hard? Yeah. Am I going to have a conflict? Remember the chart? Yeah, you're going have a conflict. It will do this. But let's choose righteousness anyway. Be holy. It's a big deal. It's no small deal.

Let's pray. God, help us. Oh God, how often we sometimes like people just hide behind our theology. We like to read part of Romans and say, "Hey, where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. Hey, God forgive us, man. No sin is beyond his reach." And sometimes we'll walk down the path of unrighteousness in our lives and we'll do it thinking it's no big deal. God, help us to remember today this passage that reminds us that just a little sin is bad because it's going to corrupt the whole thing. There will be future and profound effects. God, it is in conflict with the very nature of who we are. We are a new loaf. We are clean. We are righteous. In our hearts God has made us so. And we are going to engage and give in to our flesh? Why would we want to do that? And God, perhaps most importantly, let it ring in our minds this week that our sin put Christ the Son of God on a cross. We want to drive differently. We know our stupidity, our selfishness, our wickedness, our sin has put him there, and God, we don't want to engage in that anymore because our Passover lamb has been slaughtered, therefore, let us be holy people. Get rid of all that yeast. Get rid of all that compromise.

God help us to desire a holy life that ardently. Let us recognize the importance of it. God, let us be people who say with you that we want to be holy as you are holy because there's so much at stake. God, we know that our future, our present, our past is even, the past, is impacted by the choices we make this week. So help us, Lord, because they'll be there. Those paths will go in different directions. And those compromises will be baited and they'll be out there and they'll be ready for us to take it. No biting to go with that. And God, we just need to reject it. So help us this week, God, live holy lives with a renewed passion. Sin is dangerous. It conflicts with our nature. Pinned Christ to the cross. Make us holy people.

I pray in Jesus name. Amen.