



Christian Love-Part 1
Loving God's Holy Standards
Pastor Mike Fabarez

Well, I think you would agree that love is a sloppy word these days.

It's just used in such sloppy ways, such a variety, diverse set of ways people use the word love. We say we love tacos, or at least I do, I say that. And then we turn around and we love our children and we say we love our favorite sports team and then we say we love Jesus Christ. We use this word in such a varied set of ways all the way from, you know, "I'm fond of that" to "I would do anything for them" or from "I think they're cool" to "I would die for him."

I mean to have a word with such a broad set of meanings, we've better be very clear when we run across this word in the Bible and Jesus says, for instance, that he loves us, when God claims in the text that he is a loving God, we better make sure that we understand what that means and certainly he spilled a lot of ink for us through the prophets and apostles explaining to us what that means. God of course is not sloppy in his use of the word. He goes to great lengths to define it for us. Then when he turns that around and says, hey you guys ought to love me with all your heart, soul, strength and mind.

Love me.

And he calls us to love his Son Jesus Christ.

We've better be very clear about what that means. We can't afford to be sloppy in that regard. Because I know this as I stand here before you this morning, Jesus loves his own perfectly.

Does he not? His love for his people is exactly what it ought to be. But I think you could nod at me that our love for him is far from perfect. Our love for him is not what it ought to be. And it's been my prayerful intent as I constructed this series through Luke Chapter 17, for us to leave this chapter a couple of months from now with a better love for Christ than we have right now.

My hope is that by the time we get the Chapter 18 of Luke that we would have a kind of love that is more of what God wants us to have for him and for his son.

And that would be a kind of love that is defined not by a series of verses that uses the word because you're not going to find the word one time spelled out in this chapter. But I trust that as you study this with me, verse by verse, line by line you'll say, OK, this is what love for Christ means. This is what love for Christ is. And I need to tune that, I need to fine-tune that so that I can love him the way I should. Because the worst thing that could happen is for you to live from now until the time you die thinking you love Jesus only to find out you were doing something else. It wasn't love, not Biblical love.

You had no idea perhaps how far short your love for him fell because we didn't take the time to really study and define it and shape that by biblical truth. So let's begin our study. Eight installments in this particular chapter.

Let's just start with two verses today.



Get the first two verses of Luke Chapter 17 and see if we can't understand something about what it means to love Jesus Christ.

And now, I'm about to read this and as you follow along when I read this you're going to see there is just one basic principle, one basic truth. There's one basic thing being said there and you're going to say, well, you've got three points in your outline so what's that about. Well we're going to make that one point after we cover two assumptions, two pre-suppositions that are found and hinted to by two words in the Greek text. The first one translating the singular word "disciples."

The second one, in verse 1, that translates the phrase "temptations to sin." It's the Greek word "mathetes" and the Greek word "skandalon" in the original language of the New Testament.

And I'm going to look at those two words and I want to unpack those words because those words we're going to have in the minds of those that heard this text who were there when Jesus was teaching. We would know what those things mean. And before we can get to the severity of what Jesus is about to say and process that we better understand what it means to be his disciple and what it means that there's something out there in this world that seems inevitable called temptations to sin. Skandalon. So let's read this. I'll read it from the English Standard Version, verses 1 and 2, as we start our study of Luke 17. The text reads, "And he", that's Jesus, "said to His disciples, 'temptations to sin are sure to come but woe to the one through whom they come. It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.'" And he said to his disciples, temptations to sin are sure to come but woe to the one through whom they come. It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than if he should cause one of these little ones to sin.

Those are some stern words, some jarring words from Christ. It's clear what he's saying. I mean in essence I could just summarize. We should not be the cause of anyone's sin. We should not be the avenue of temptation into anyone's life. We should not be causing anyone to sin. I mean that's clear what he's saying. But let's take the first two important words in verse 1 and see if we can't get some things in place in our minds to have this make sense and have the impact that it should have. First of all, he's saying this to his disciples. Now you remember in the last chapter we had a lot of his discussion heading to the critics of Jesus. He was talking to the Pharisees, he was talking to his opponents, he was talking to people that were hostile toward him. Now he's speaking to his disciples.

I said the word in Greek because I think it's somewhat important for us to make the connection where we transliterate that word into English. The Greek word mathetes, if you were to transliterate the first four letters of that, M-A-T-H, we get the word mathematics from that, "math", mathetes. It translates the word some 240 times in Matthew through John, the Gospels. It translates into the word disciple or disciples. That word, mathematics, is something that they named mathematics from the Greek language because to know math is to study math. To be able to get a grasp on math you better be a student of math. You better put your brain to work and you better sit down as a pupil and learn those principles so that you can know math. Mathematics requires study. And when he uses the word 200 plus times in the Gospels to represent his followers and if they're described as mathetes, as disciples, it's clear the implication is they were learning of him. They were studying him. They were pupils of his. So not only is he a rabbi, that means teacher, teaching the students, the pupils, the learners, the mathetes, but clearly they had a kind of informed knowledge of who he



was and the whole relationship was based on learning about Jesus Christ. So when we talk about loving Christ and some things that we do and should never do if we love Christ, it should start with that simple word, and let's just make this our first point this morning, that we, like the disciples in the first century, we ought to cultivate, let's call it this, an informed love for Christ. Let us cultivate an informed love for Christ because they knew him. So well in their earthly ministry after three years Jesus could say to them, now you go make disciples of me, I'm going to go away, you make disciples of me and teach them to observe everything that I commanded you. So you learn all the things that I'm about, all the things that I stand for, all the things that I think are right and true and righteous. I want you to go teach those things to other people. And they were able to do that. They were good students of Christ, now they became teachers of Christ and they made more students of Christ. They were informed about who Christ was. Now I say that in a day when a lot of people on your Facebook page or your Twitter or whatever are going to say they love Jesus. A lot of people that you may meet at work, I love Christ, I'm a follower of God or whatever. But really when they say they love Christ it's not an informed love for Christ.

It's really a love for Christ that's not based on much in terms of information. Not the information that we would go to if we're going to find out what Jesus really stood for, what he believed, what he was all about, what he opposed, what he promoted.

My daughter had her last open house for junior high this week. She's usually not excited about those things but I guess because she can't wait to get out of junior high, just like I couldn't wait to get out of junior high, just like you couldn't wait to get out of junior high. She said Dad, why don't you come to open house? I said sure, honey, I'll come to open house. And so I just happened to not be busy that night, no meetings, no teaching and so I went off to the junior high campus with a chill up my spine, I was back on junior high class. And she said I want you to meet all my teachers. Now I feel like I kind of know her teachers because, you know, I try to be an informed parent, sit down at dinner, talk about how is your day, sweetheart, tell me about your classes and your teachers. Well from the very beginning I remember taking her out, Daddy date night, just talking about her teachers at the beginning of the semester. Well this is my teacher here and here's her name and here's what she's like and here's what she teaches and here's things she doesn't like. And here's this guy, here's what he's about and he teaches this way, here are his hobbies, he always does this in class. So I had this picture of who they were but I'd never met them.

So I go to open house at the end of the semester here and I start meeting them and in my mind I'm starting to recall things that my daughter said, "oh yeah, that's right, she said that." To the extent that I listened well to my daughter's faithful report of these teachers, I went from one teacher to the next teacher and I thought that's it, I understand that. To the extent that I didn't listen or asked at the dinner table, tell me more about that third period teacher and, you know, I zoned out and didn't think about it, well, then I was kind of ignorant and there was a distance between what I imagined the teacher to be and then what I discovered. But to the extent that I have those faithful reports from my daughter I then can go into the classroom at least with an informed mind, a familiarity with that teacher before I meet them. See, the problem with a lot of people that say they love Christ is they've had none of that kind of information. It doesn't come through a person because Jesus is not here, you can't walk around and follow him in South Orange County. You can only go to the historical account, you can open up your Bible and you can read about him.

And the problem is a lot of people are saying, I know all about that teacher in third period but they never have had any reliable information except what they feel in their gut and what they feel in their own minds and imaginations about who this Jesus should be. Psalm 50 is a passage I'll have you



turned to as you meet for your small groups this week. It's on the back of your worksheet there when you have your discussion question dialogue in your small group. Psalm 50 is going to describe a classic problem that is still so prevalent today and that is people assuming they're in with God and they have a vision, an idea of God. And because they do things and they don't immediately have any kind of repercussions for them, God doesn't zap them immediately, there's no judgment immediately, they do things they think, well surely God likes this. They avoid things, they don't do things they should. God doesn't zap them, well surely then God doesn't mind if I neglect that. Then they come to this conclusion that I, God says, you think am altogether like you. You start to assume I am like you. You think the things that you like, I like. That you think the things that you don't really mind, I don't really mind. You start to cast me in your image all because you didn't read what I said. That's a very stinging passage if you do get to the context of Psalm 50. He says I'm going to judge you guys even though I told you who I was and what I favored, what I proposed, what I promote and what I despise. You did your own thing and because I kept silent, I had already given you information, you ended up worshipping a god of your own imagination. The fear that I have is that you'll spend from now until the time you meet Christ, you will spend all of that time worshipping, following, loving, being devoted to a Christ that doesn't even exist, a Christ of your own imagination. That's a problem. That is problematic and we should care greatly about that, honing our view of who Christ is. There was a cheese ball romance song that Dolly Parton sang called To Know Him Is To Love Him. Old timers remember that? No? You young people, you think, oh, those old folk. No, Amy Winehouse also recorded that song, To Know Him... It is a cheese ball, romantic song. To Known Him Is To Love Him. And when I thought about those lyrics this week and I said, you know, with Christ some people think it's that way but in reality it's not that way at all in the Bible. As a matter of fact, in our depravity and in our fallen world to know more of Christ often produces the exact opposite response. When Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3, here's the problem with people, the more light they get, the more information about me they get, when it comes down to it, they don't like it. They are repelled by it because men love darkness rather than light and so to know Christ more of the real Christ means you're going to have to adjust. Because my expectations, my presumptions about Christ are probably wrong because I tend to do what most people do and that is to cast my vision of God in my own image. I want to imagine him to be what I am. Maybe a better version of me but if I don't like it, he doesn't like it. If I think it's OK, he thinks it's OK. If I don't think it's a big deal, he doesn't think it's a big deal. See, to know him though is not to love him necessarily until I adjust my view of him and say I'm willing to choose to love that kind of Christ. But I can tell you, to take those cheese balls lyrics and turn them on their head, you certainly can't love them if you don't know him. You won't be loving him.

So to really love Christ you better know Christ and to know Christ you're going to have to get down to the information about Christ. Now I know what people are saying.

Hey, that would be great if I had the advantage that Peter, James, John, Nicodemus, Thomas, all those guys had because they had Jesus living their lives right in front of them. Talk about knowing the historical Christ, wouldn't it be great to be someone in history sitting there hearing him say these things, being a disciple?

Well then I'd know the real Christ.

And all this Bible study stuff, because that's what it's going to get down to, I can already feel it coming to, Pastor is going to say more time in the Bible, more Bible study, more memorizing. I wish I could just see him face to face. I wish I could have lived when he lived, I wished I could have been a front-row disciple, then I wouldn't need all his Bible study stuff. I'm setting you up. If



that's what you're thinking. That's a dumb thought. Let me show you. Turn to Matthew Chapter 16.

Here is an encounter Peter has with Jesus. Do you think Peter, number one, knows Jesus? Well of course he does. He's been living with him. Do you think he knows his teaching? Of course he knows his teaching. Do you think he would say he loves him? Well, of course he says he does. As a matter of fact he says he loves him more than all the other disciples. So you've got Peter walking with Jesus, living with Jesus, listening to Jesus, studying with Jesus, loving Jesus.

I'm glad he doesn't need to study the Bible. Let me show you how desperately he needs to study his Bible. Drop down to verse 21. Matthew Chapter 16 verse 21. "From that time Jesus began to show his disciples," this is Matthew 16:21, "that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. Now Peter was raised in Galilee, northern Israel. He certainly knew enough scripture. He wasn't a Scribe or a Pharisee or anything but clearly he had been to Sabbath school, he had been to the synagogue. There are plenty of them there in Galilee. I'm sure he had been taught the stories of the Old Testament. I'm sure he memorized chunks of the Torah. I'm sure he was well familiar with the prophets, the writing of the prophets. And if you see something like this coming from the mouth of the one that you are claiming is the Christ, that's what he says, "You're the Christ of God" and he says the Christ of God has got to go to Jerusalem, suffer many things at the hands of the chief priests and elders and be killed, then on the third day be raised from the dead.

I just want to ask a question: would that be a surprise to you?

Not if you know the Bible it wouldn't be a surprise to you. Because in the Bible is the constant refrain of this prophet who was the ultimate prophet, the anointed prophet, the anointed king, the anointed high priest, the one who would take this role of mediator between man and God and he would be one, before he got the crown of gold would have a crown of thorns and become despised and rejected of men, be chastised for our forgiveness. To have his life be crushed by the Father and be made a guilt offering and then be counted as dead but then raised from the dead. We learn these things from the prophets.

We learn this from the Bible.

Now notice this, here's someone who lived with Christ, sat at the front row listening to him teach, came away from the partial information about Jesus because he lacked this information from the Bible over here in the Old Testament and he said, "Well, killed? Rejected? Strung out by the chief priest? Never! Not going to happen to you." Here is a guy who knew the historical Jesus but he didn't know enough of the biblical Jesus because he's going to get in Jesus' face and say no. Verse 22. "He began to rebuke him, saying, 'Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.'" You know what he's just said? Something that you said the Messiah is going to experience, that the Bible says that the Messiah is going to experience, I reject it because in my mind that doesn't make sense. You're healing people, people are cheering you when you're coming to town, they're lining up to hear you teach. Nah! You've just taken a whole swath of biblical truth and thrown it in the trash because it doesn't fit what you have just been learning, because you don't have the whole counsel of God in view. You don't have a good grasp on the Bible that says we all should have as workmen who rightly handle the word of truth. You've just got a partial view, although it's a very firsthand historical, true view, but it's just part of the view of Christ and the Christ says this, verse 23, Jesus turns and says to Peter, get behind me. Now this isn't the nickname you want to gain from Christ. Satan. Get behind me Satan.



Satan by the way, obviously, is the word, the title that is used as the adversary of Christ but what does it mean, Sunday School Grads? Adversary. Opponent. You're my opponent right now. You're opposing me.

You are a, now underline this, hindrance. Remember the next word we're about to look at in verse number one of Luke 17? I said the word "skandalon" is very important, it's translated "temptation to sin." It's the same exact word right here. Translated this time, hindrance. You are a skandalon to me. You are a hindrance to me.

I'm trying to do the right thing and you are a hindrance to me. You are a temptation to sin. Why? Because I'm about to go to the garden and struggle over the most important decisions of my life, to drink the cup of God's wrath. I'm thinking about doing that and obedience to the Father, and yet I'm tempted not to do it. I'd much rather drink the cup of blessing because I've earned it and not give that to you and just say, to hell with the sinners, they've earned it, I'm going to drink the cup of God's blessing, forget the cup of God's cursing. And I'm going to be there struggling and sweating like crazy in that garden over this and you just said, "no, you don't need to go the cross. No, don't go." Get behind me adversary.

Get behind me Satan. Why? "For you are not setting your mind on the things of God." Where would you get the things of God in your mind? How would you get the things of God in your brain?

Well, not from sitting there and listening to everything you've heard Jesus just say, at least up until this point, having the crowds cheer him saying, listen, he raised my kid from the dead, he opened the eyes of the blind, he does all things well. They were saying those things of Christ. No, you get it from opening Isaiah 53 and learning about the fact that he would be rejected by men and they wouldn't even want to look at him like one from whom men hide their faces. They would consider him despised and stricken by God.

You'd get that picture, which is in the mind of God, from the scripture. You're ignoring parts of Scripture. Therefore your view of Christ is an imaginary view of Christ.

One who gets the crown without the cross and your mind is on the things of man.

That little phrase there in verse 23. Your mind on the things of God...

If you've not thought about scripture when you read that verse, the only way to get your mind on the things of God is scripture. Sitting on a beach, watching a sunset and trying to viscerally come up with your theology is not the way you're going to get accurate information about God. You're going to have to crack open a Bible. It's going to be filled with things that are going to tempt you to say, I don't think God should think that, I don't think Christ should do that, I don't think God should prohibit that.

But you're going to have to open the word because that is the God who is, who self-disclose his nature on the pages of Scripture. He says to know me is to love me? Oh well, wait a minute. Sometimes the things I know about you immediately I have a hard time loving but I'm committed and devoted to the God who is the true God, the God who has revealed Himself. I choose to love that God and to choose the love that God is to take my cues from who he actually is in space and time in the person of Christ in the revelatory record that's in the pages of Scripture. That's an



informed love. The disciples had an informed love for Christ but not always as informed as it should be because they neglected the Scriptures at times. We need to be in a Bible study. Please study your Bibles. It sounds arcane, archaic, it sounds old school. I say that all the time but it's what we need. If your Bible's neglected, if you don't spend time personally studying the Bible then you are a heresy waiting to happen.

You are compromised. It's just a matter of time until it happens because your view of Christ is going to be informed somehow. And if it's not informed from the pages of scripture it's going to be informed by your own imagination, which a lot of churches are doing, culture does. People who still want to embrace Christ and they haven't rejected him altogether, only embraced Christ in their love for darkness because they have made that Christ a Christ of darkness, not the Christ of scripture.

Sinful people need to realize we have a lot of information we need to get a full-on picture of who this Christ is. So please work at cultivating an informed love for Christ. I always try to give you some resources in the back. Maybe I can just star the Logos Bible software, there's lots of software out there you can have. Invest some money in good Bible study tools. You live in a technological age that has some great advantages. I can't believe the way my libraries have been pared down into the ease of carrying around an iPad or a laptop and having hundreds of commentaries or Bible study aids or lexicons at my touch. I mean that's the kind of thing, you know, pastors from 200 years ago would long to have and you can have it all, right? If you just invest a little bit of your resource in becoming a student of the Bible with the tools that are available to you.

Also some books there on studying the Bible that might be helpful. Mathetes, learners, informed view of Christ.

It then brings up the word that should, if you know what Christ was teaching, send a chill up your spine. He's always talking about righteousness and then he says the opposite of that are sure to come. Temptations to sin are sure to come. The stumbling and the skandalon is sure to come. Now this is a point that I worded that I know many of you aren't going to like. It's too, I don't know, incongruent with what I think Christianity ought to be.

But understand this even before I say it, if you love someone you understand that that love adapts your own proclivities, your interests, your preferences to that person because you love them.

As a matter of fact, it starts to define what you love because they love it. Think of the blended family. You love this person, they have children, you better love those children, you can't love that person without loving their children.

We see that image in the Bible as you come into the adopted family of God. You know what that's like. You better love what they love if you're going to love them. But also if you invert that the things that they hate, man you better not like those things. Matter of fact, you better learn to disdain and think less and even despise the things they despise, particularly if they have good reasons for despising them.

You understand there are things in your life that I trust right now in your human relationships and your relations with your kids, you don't like them simply because they're injurious to the people that you love. When he says temptations to sin are sure to come, that was based on the learning they already had that sin is bad. From the very beginning, here's John saying he comes to die as a lamb to take away the sin of the world. He's been teaching that I'm going to come and give my life as a



ransom. That's a picture of payment for sin for many people.

If you don't see the word skandalon and think, "oh, that's the thing Jesus hates," then you don't understand what's come before in the last 16 chapters of Luke. God hates sin. Jesus hates sin. Number two on your outline, then it would follow that we ought to learn to truly hate sin. Not just avoid it, truly hate it. If you don't hate sin then I'm not sure you love Christ.

If you don't hate what is evil then you can't sit here then and say well I really love Jesus. If you think Jesus-loving is all about butterflies and balloons and cool posts on Twitter and things that have whiskers and all the fluffiness and happiness that never involves a belligerent feeling in your heart, then you don't know the God of the Bible. There are things I hope that you hate because you love people who are being injured by things in their life. I hope if you have someone who's being attacked by people you don't have in your heart a tolerance for the things that are attacking them. If your spouse is suffering from cancer, I hope you don't have a tolerance for cancer cells. I hope you hate those things because they're injurious to the one you love. God hates sin.

Does he? Do you need verses on that? Proverbs 6. First passage I think of when I think about God hating sin. Proverbs 6 verse 16.

There are six things that the Lord hates. Now that's not an exhaustive list. Matter of fact he says in the next phrase seven that are an abomination. He's just making a complete list and I say complete not in the sense of exhaustive but complete in terms of the number seven, giving you a sense that God has a perfect hatred for some things and here's his list, right off the top. Haughty eyes, he hates pride. He hates a lying tongue, he hates deception. Is there any of that in your neighborhood this week, in your office? Have you seen any of that on television, people lying? Hands that shed innocent blood. Have you read the news and seen any that this week? He hates that. A heart that devises wicked plans. There are people that you hear on the news who have done this. I mean, have you seen that happening maybe in your work, in your office, in your extended family? You've seen people devising evil and hurt to others. He hates that. Feet that are running in haste to do evil. He hates people that are quick to do the wrong thing. A false witness who breathes out lies. Someone who goes in a matter that really has significance and then deceives and twists the truth. He hates that. One who sows discord among brothers. People that should be together, someone comes in and wedges between them, causes that break.

He hates that.

Well, he didn't want me to hate because it's about being a loving Christian. You're supposed to be a loving Christian. I understand you're supposed to love people, love God. Absolutely. But you can't love the God of the Bible and then love people the way you ought to unless you hate what is evil. Let me prove it to you. Ready? Psalm 97:10. I'll give you a few verses here if you're note takers. Psalm 97:10. Listen now. "Oh, you who love the Lord." Two-word command. "Hate evil." Oh, you that love the Lord. You love the Lord, your heart is filled with love for God, hate evil. Psalm 97:10. I think, you know, talking about things that aren't ever in the bookstore on the plaques, you know? We should put that one on a plaque. That's a good one. You love God? Better hate evil.

Well that's the Old Testament, that's when God was grumpy, you know. Took a nap for 400 years, came back, really, OK great. New Testament Romans Chapter 12 verse 9.

"Let love be genuine." There you go, see there. Thanks for getting back to the New Testament. Let



love be genuine but we're not done with the verse. "Abhor what is evil." That's even stronger than the word hate. Abhor it. Hate it to the core of your being. Proverbs 8:13. "The fear of the Lord."

If you really have a respect and a rightful authority in your mind for God and you think of him the way you ought, that is the hatred of evil. "The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil." Pride and arrogance in the way of evil and perverted speech. Solomon says, I hate it.

Amos Chapter 5:15. Here it is, two-word command. "Hate evil and love good." Hate evil, love good. It's that simple. If you love God you're going to hate the things that are injurious to him. If my wife, if I said to you, and you need know what an offense sin is to God. If I said, this is stupid, I know that, maybe just for the sake of illustration, if I said she hates orange, the color orange. Hates it so much that she has a visceral reaction. She gets sick, she vomits when she sees orange. Picture my wife vomiting, I'm sorry. Sorry honey. Orange, she hates it. If you came to my house do you think you'd see any orange in my house?

But it's my house too, half the house will be orange. No. Even if I liked orange, I'm not going to have orange in my house. Well, just the garage. A lot of orange in the garage. No, no. Not even in the garage. Why? Because I love my wife. If my wife has a negative reaction to orange and I love her, I'm going to learn to live without it.

And by the way, as these verses depict, I'm not just going to shrug my shoulders. That's how most Christians view it today. Don't be filled with any hatred! Listen, you better hate evil if you love the Lord. Does that mean we sin in our anger. No, of course not.

Ephesians 4. Be angry, don't sin. I understand that. But when it comes to me looking at sin it ought to make me angry.

There are a lot of stores in the mall for instance I would never go in. I have no interest in going to the stores like those with thousands of dollars like soaps and goopy things they sell that smell like... There's no reason for a man to walk into one of those stores.

I don't understand why anyone would do that.

So when I walk through the mall and I see that store and I can smell it like three stores away. Right? And if my wife and my daughter want to duck into that store, whatever. I'm just kind of, "not for me." "Oh come on in." "No, I'll wait out here. There's a bench." That's how I'll be. Or if I got a store down the way I might say, "I'm just going to go here, just let me know when you're done." That's how a lot of people think we ought to be about sin in the world. Oh, it's not for you, that's fine. It's not for you. But, you know, don't get all hot and bothered about the problem with this.

I mean, some people are in to that. It doesn't matter. Matter of fact, you should be chilled. You should be tolerant.

You understand that you should be walking by places when it comes to this world and the things that they do in celebrating sin and it ought to make you mad. That's going to make my life a little... I mean, all the tranquility and peace is going to go away. There is a sense in which the Christian life is going to be one of torment in this world.

The Bible says that. Even a guy there in Sodom, Lot was not known as, you know, he didn't win the



godly man of the century award.

And it says his soul was tormented because of the sin in his culture.

Think about that. If you think you can somehow put your feet up on the dashboard of life and go through life and pass by storefronts, if you will, proverbially speaking, and they're filled with all kinds of rebellion against the Holy God that pinned his son to a cross and think, "oh well, whatever, that's just not for me, I'm heading down to the righteous store," then you don't understand what it is to love God.

If your spouse is attacked by cancer cells, again, how do you feel about that? Do you feel neutral about cancer? I mean, if your daughter is going in for surgery like mine has several times and there's germs floating around.

And I know her body's going to be laid open, how do I feel about germs, even if they're not attacking my body? I'm worried about the infection in her body.

I love her. I don't want infection there. I don't want the doctor sneezing on his gloves and then getting back to work on my daughter. I hate that. I would hate you being careless about those things because it's hurting the one that I love.

Jot this reference down if you would, Hebrews Chapter 10 verse 29. These are two rational reasons. There are these two simple straightforward logical reasons that we should hate sin. Number one, it is a massive insult to God. Hebrews Chapter 10 verse 29. God is massively insulted by it. The word that is used in the ESV to translate the word that sometimes translated insult is translated this way. It is an outrage to the spirit of grace. Outrage. Outrage. If something happened on the patio today and someone came up and did something insulting that it was an outrage to your loved one, how would you feel about that? If you could shrug your shoulders and say, "Not for me, that soap store." No, you would respond in an intolerant... This is what hate is in the dictionary: "A strong aversion, a passionate dislike, a sense of being repelled by something, intolerant of." That's how you'd feel about someone who came up, cussed your wife out and slapped her in the face.

I hope you would be intolerant of that.

That's Hebrews 10:29b, Hebrews 10:29a starts this way. It's like "trampling under foot the son of God." The picture of him being crucified. It's like you taking his body, laying it on the ground and trampling on it. If someone killed your child, abused your child's dead body, desecrated it, how would you feel? Passive? Like, "Well, you know, to each his own." You'd be like, Whoa! Talk about the insult to trample the son of God under foot is not something you can be passive about. You want tranquil feelings in your life? Get to the kingdom, we'll have that. Put your feet up on the dashboard? Once we get to the New Jerusalem. For now be ready to hate the things that Christ hates, the things that the Father says pinned his son to a cross. "Yeah, but Jesus paid it all." You know the damage that happens even when sin is forgiven? You got sin that you can look back on in your life that you know is appended to Jesus' cross, it has been paid for in full, there's no condemnation for you, can you look passively at those things? There's a gal in the church I know her son has a problem with anaphylactic shock.

If he gets stung by bees he's super allergic to a bee sting. And you know if you've had that or anybody in your family or any acquaintance you know, the answer is to get that epinephrine pen.



You can get the epi pen and as long as you carry that around, you know, your kid gets stung by a bee, then you use it and hopefully he won't die. OK, well I got the answer. So are you going to really be kind of shrugging your shoulders at your kid going up and playing catch with some neighbor friend with a beehive? No. I don't want my kid to be stung by the bee even though we have the antidote, even though we have the answer. We can plug them with the epi pen of the cross and the sins are forgiven. That does not mean that you're passive about people's sin.

"Ah... age of Grace. Jesus pays it all." Sin should be something that is grievous to us. And when Jesus says the disciples who had an informed love for him, not as informed as it always should be and he says, you know what, there's sin in this world and it's sure to come and it's going to cause a lot of tears in this life. They understood what that meant because they were learning to truly hate sin. I just wonder if we are. I hope you can see the damage to God's kids, I hope you can see the damage to God's honor, I hope you can see the insult that it is to the Spirit, I hope you can see what pain it caused Christ on a cross and I hope you can say, if I'm loving Christ I'm going to hate sin.

Now briefly, this simple message of the passage: don't you be the reason that someone does it. Number three, put it down that way, don't be the reason someone sins. Don't be the reason.

And I say that nice and calmly and with a measured voice. But Jesus says, it would be better for you to die a horrific, suffocating, drowning death of that panicked feeling of not being able to get a breath into your lungs. It would be better for you to die that way in a drowning accident than for you to be the source or the cause or the reason or the temptation that leads someone to do something that pinned Christ to a cross. You ought to be vigilant that your life does not cause someone to sin. Skandalon. How can we do that, Pastor Mike? Well, let's go back to our example. Peter's there with an uninformed love for Christ, or at least partially, he said to Jesus, "you're never gonna go to the cross and die." What was that? Bad advice. What was it to be more specific? Unbiblical advice.

What was that? He was telling someone, God would not have that happened. May it never be. Not going to happen to you. He gave Jesus advice that Jesus says is a hindrance to me, a skandalon to me. And he says don't be a skandalon to anyone. How was Peter a skandalon to Christ? He gave him unbiblical advice.

I wonder if you give any unbiblical advice? You're giving advice all week long, are you not? I mean not formally, maybe not in some counseling session with a desk between you and another person. But you're at lunch, someone says, "I just wonder if... Is this the right thing to do? I wonder if I should do this or should do this? Should we avoid...?" You're giving advice, you're weighing in on those things. All I'm saying is be very, very careful speaking for God or righteousness. The Bible says let not many of you become teachers because you're going to encourage stricter judgment. So don't say anything? No, be slow to speak, quick to hear, that's true, but just be super careful. Peter wasn't careful. That's why sometimes we make fun of him or we say he stuck his foot in his mouth all the time. He was trying to be helpful. But I just want you to be very careful about the advice that you give people. I think this is the best thing, I think this is what you should do. Easy to become a skandalon, a stumbling block, a cause to sin, a temptation to sin, even unaware because you're just popping off what you think is the best thing when in reality it's not. We read about in our Daily Bible Reading this morning, if you do the DBR with us, Nathan says to David after David says, "Well, I'm going to build a house." "Well, that makes perfect sense, go do it. Everything that's in your heart, go do it." Did you read that this morning? If not, you'll read it tonight.

What was he giving him? Bad advice. That's not what God wanted him to do.



But he didn't look, he didn't inquire, he didn't go to the scripture, he didn't figure out what exactly God would want. He gave bad advice.

Another time we see this is in this word in Revelation Chapter 2 verse 14. It talks about a stumbling block and gives you an example from the Old Testament you'd have to have some Old Testament history on, but it says some in your church hold that the teaching of Balaam who taught Balak to put a skandalon, a stumbling block, before the sons of Israel. Now you got to be a Sunday school graduate to know the story. But if I say Balaam all you think of is Mr. Ed, right? You think of a talking donkey. But there's more to that story than that. As a matter fact the only reason that donkey started talking by the miracle act of God was that you had Balaam, a hired gun, you know, a prophet for hire, who was hired as some kind of, you know, warlock, if you will, to go out and curse Israel by King Balak. Balak wanted Israel, as they were traveling through his land, I want them cursed. They're getting too big, they're out of control, my kingdom is in peril, you go curse them. So he goes out there and he tries to curse them. Sunday school grads, smile at me, you remember the story, right? And as he does he's like Fonzie trying to say he's sorry. Old timers, remember that? He can't spit it out. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=11&v=uwkU8-d1gIk)

He wants to say you're curs... curs... curs...

And instead of that it comes out, "You're blessed" and he starts getting all these wonderful prophecies about the great things that God's going to do through Israel, even Balaam becomes a prophet speaking of the coming Messiah. It's a great passage in the Book of Numbers. And God makes him bless instead of curse. And if you think well, there you go, God won. The people of Israel were blessed by the rent-a-prophet.

Well, at the end of the story he succeeds, but he succeeds by, as Christ is saying to the church there in Revelation Chapter 2, by a skandalon, an enticement to sin. How did he do it? He found the best looking girls he could find in his, and I'm adding a little Mike Fabarez paraphrase here, but he finds the gals in the foreign kingdom who are all in with the foreign idols and he then goes and has them intermingle with the Israelites as they make camp there and he starts through this kind of compromised sexual relationships that they start to have, they fall to immorality, fornication, they get dragged to the temples, they start sacrificing to the idols and then God does exactly what Balak wants.

Balaam successfully enticed Israel to sin through immorality and sacrificing to the idols.

And that was all done in kind of a very subtle way. It was done through the flirtatious work of the women of his kingdom to try and get them to do what they do. Come do this with us. Your god, to strict. Your god, wrong one. Come do it this way. You can become a stumbling block to someone, perhaps not through the nefarious strategic work of Balak and Balaam, but you can do it this way. I think a lot of us are enticing Christians to sin when we're doing something that's violating our conscience and compromise loves company, you need to know that, compromise always loves company. I want you to do what I do because if you do what I do I'll feel like I'm not doing anything wrong. And so we get people to do what I do, go where I go, wear what I wear, entertain yourself the way I entertain myself, tell the jokes that I tell. And we start having people compromise like us and we really lure them and entice them to do something that they wouldn't otherwise do. And we become someone, and I'm just doing a word study, some 40 times in the Bible, skandalon comes up, skandalizo, the verb scandal on the noun and it shows us how this happens and it reminds



us that Balaam was doing that very thing, trying to get people to do what they did through subtle means of enticement. Lastly, and I put this whole series on the back of the worksheet from Romans 14, the Grey Areas series, which might be a good one to listen to if you've never heard that four or five part series, is how sometimes, as constantly it is used both in First Corinthians 8 and in Romans 14, the word skandalon in those passages, skandalizo and skandalon, that sometimes just by living our lives the way we live them in freedom, we're not trying to influence anybody, we're not trying to say, hey, compromise loves company and, as a matter of fact, we don't think we're compromising.

We're just living our lives but our lives become an example to people that does become a skandalizo, skandalon rather. And we are causing people to stumble and to fall and to lead them into sin. How do we do that? Because in our freedoms, not thinking about how our freedoms might in some way impact someone else, it gets their conscience emboldened to do what you're doing and they start doing it and they become entrapped in it. Both First Corinthians 8, Romans 14, you just study the series if you want to get the fuller picture of this in the Bible. In their day it was meat sacrificed to idols, it wasn't actually worshipping in the temples, but it was this conscience issue, it was about the kosher laws and they were struggling with that, and so I'm just flaunting my freedom having my ham sandwich in front of this guy. All of these things that were going on, they were doing and it was causing their brother to sin and violate their own conscience. You've got to think about what you wear, where you go, what you say, how you entertain yourself, what you unwind with, all those things that we do that you may have the right to do but become the source of sin for other people, the Bible says who are weaker and it could be in conscience, it could be just in disposition. I mean think about just even, you know, the vices of our day, how often gambling and alcohol and drugs and all these things become massive problems for people but, for you, oh, it's all in moderation.

Sometimes your freedoms become a stumbling block for people to sin. And all I'm saying is I'd much rather err as Paul ended up saying in both passages, First Corinthians 8 and Romans 14, I'd rather not ever touch a BLT again. Right? Never have one, even though I like them, never have one again, if I can avoid causing my brother to sin.

Because God here says I'll become your adversary. I'll put that millstone around..., and again, millstone, I'm assuming we know what that is. If you are here for Good Friday I showed you one they used in the garden to press the olives but they were like a big truck tire or a big cement donut, like Randy's Donut in Inglewood, you know, we had one of those signs.

It's not quite that big, but put that around your neck and jump off the pier. Jesus said better you do that than cause one of these little ones, and "little ones," by the way, is not children.

He uses that phrase continually as a diminutive and affectionate term for his people, his disciples. Mark 10:24, Luke 10:21 are examples of that use of the word "children" or "little ones."

He said to his disciples temptations to sin are sure to come. But the one through whom they come to be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and cast in the sea than he should cause one of these little ones to sin.

I was on that campus this week, Thursday night, with my daughter so happy for her that she was getting out of junior high. Having those moments of flashbacks to my junior high days. When I had one I didn't mention to my wife and my daughter but we're walking down one of the hallways there



and I saw the entrance to the bathroom, the restroom. "Hello, junior high bathrooms!" No kidding, I know it was a different experience for guys and girls but a lot of drama, a lot of stuff going on in there.

And I just remembered those days and I had a tick at that moment as I walked by the bathroom. I thought I'm so glad I'm not in junior high. And I started thinking of some of the stories that I heard and I'm sure, I don't know, I'm not sure about this apocryphal story, maybe apocryphal, maybe it's true, back in the day when the girls were coming to junior high and they were all getting into wearing their really dark red lipstick back in the day. And they would crowd into the bathrooms there and the thing that they did apparently was, of course I wasn't in those bathrooms, they would put their lipstick on and before they left they would kiss the mirror and leave their, you know, cute little lipstick marks on the mirror. And it became epidemic in the junior high to where it really frustrated and angered the administration.

And apparently the principal had had enough.

And so he started taking big groups of gals into those bathrooms and having a little lesson with them and he got as many of these junior high girls in the bathroom as possible. And he said, now face that mirror and he showed them all of mirrors and he said, listen, you see all those kiss marks on the mirror? This is a terrible thing you're doing. It's awful. It's so much trouble to take this off the mirrors. Every single night we have to wipe your lipstick marks off the mirror. You need to stop it. As a matter of fact I want to show you how much work it is, I got Ralph the custodian here. He's going to show you.

He takes his long handled brush, goes over to the toilet, swirls his brush around the toilet, the principle said Ralph has to do that every single night.

The girls were horrified. Problem was solved.

If only you and I could see what the world thinks is so cool but actually from God's eyes is so disgusting. God is grieved by sin. God is offended by sin.

If you have an informed love for Jesus Christ you're going to learn to hate sin. And when it comes down to it you don't want to live a Christian life at all that in any way, by example, by encouragement or just by being thoughtless, in some way is a reason that someone puts their lips against that mirror. You don't want to be the cause of that.

And I hope you get that kind of vigilance in your Christian life because you are looking at an informed view of Christ from the pages of Scripture and you know God hates it.

That's an insult. It's disgusting. Jesus had to die for the filth of sin. And I hope this week we can love him better, we can hate sin more and you and I can never be guilty of causing in any way, another Christian to sin.

Let us pray. Please stand with me while I dismiss us with a word of prayer.

God, help us as we start this series and think about love, the kind of love that we ought to have for you, an informed love that understands that there are things that you've said so clearly, so consistently, so repetitively in Scripture about what you approve and about what you disdain. The



things that enhance the honor of God and things that detract from it.

And God I pray that you would help us, as we start the series, to start to calibrate our sense of what it means to love you, knowing that we need to get into the word, we need to understand it. And while the critics look at us and say, "You gotta go with the flow and you too into the Bible and you're a Bible idolater" and all the things they say, I pray we'd understand that we're never truly going to love Christ until we know Christ and we're not going to know Christ by sitting on a rock staring at a sunset. We'll know very little about the God of the Bible by doing that. We got to open the word and see what he's revealed about himself. So God please give us the diligence to be good students of the word, give us the discipline, the consistency and the faithfulness to do what we ought to do when it comes to studying your word. Help us to have such an aversion to sin in our lives and even in this world that it disgusts us so much that we would never be the cause, by way of example or encouragement or enticement, to see anybody else fall into sin. May that start this week, as none of us in this room are a reason that someone would fall into sin. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen