

# Be a Sheep and Not a Horse

by Duane Troyer

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's mercy, repentance, and following His will. It discusses the dangers of trying to cover up sins or imposing excessive rules, highlighting the need to mourn for sins, be led by God like sheep, and follow His principles. The message encourages a deep understanding of God's mercy, the significance of the blood of Christ, and the need to walk in the light, continually seeking to be like Christ.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:4, Psalm 32:1, 1 John 1:9, Hebrews 10:22, Proverbs 28:13, Isaiah 1:18, 1 Timothy 1:5, 1 Corinthians 3:23, Isaiah 1:17, Psalm 31:24

**Topics:** "God's Mercy", "Repentance and Following His Will"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Grace be with you and peace from God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. I just want to greet everybody in Jesus' name and express my thankfulness to be with you all again. It just kind of seems like a long time since I've been with you.

And it has been a few weeks is a long time. Let's pray. Oh God in heaven we thank you for your love and your mercies that are new every morning.

We thank you for your kindness and for the long suffering you have toward us. For salvation, help us to lay hold of this and follow your ways, guide us and direct us. We pray for your presence here today in this meeting.

Pray that you would give us understanding of your will. Help us as we look into your word that we be edified and learn more of your ways. Be with the brothers and sisters that aren't with us today and minister to their needs.

We pray for Harvey in Mexico. We pray that you would keep him safe and guide him. Be with Lloyd.

Keep him safe on the road. Pray that he could have a profitable conversation with Chris. We just pray again, be with us, help us.

Let your words and your spirit speak to us and convict us of all evil. In Jesus' name, Amen. I too just want to express my appreciation for the opening message this morning.

Not just a lot to think about, but a lot that we can pretty... I was ready to say pretty easily, but I mean like pretty frequently apply to our lives. Daily I would say, in real ways. One thought I had about having this attitude of, as Buddy said, this attitude of I'm done.

That's it. Over the years I've thought a lot about the seeming, not contradiction, but just I've puzzled over Jesus' words about judge not, that you be not judged. And other scriptures that we have about making righteous judgments and that the righteous will make judgments and so forth and so on.

And I'm still gathering thoughts and information about this. I think I told Buddy recently, I figure maybe once I'm an old man I'll have a good concept of this. But one of the things I've thought about is like, I think that attitude is one.

It kind of fits into like, judge not, that you be not judged. To have this, as you're working with a hard situation to finally get to this point, that's it. I'm done.

It would be as if you were one side of a door and you're dealing with something on the other side of the door. And there's conditions. It's not wrong to judge that something must happen before this other person or this other thing you're dealing with can come through the door.

Or however, yeah, something like that. But to get to the point where you're like, that's it. I'm slamming the door shut.

That's where I think Jesus would be saying, don't do that. That's for me to do. As Buddy said, He will come.

He will put the foot down finally. He will shut the door, but let's let Him shut the door. Meanwhile, we can rightly discern the situation.

We can know something needs to change. But shutting the door is God's business. I also thought of, as Buddy said, this thing gets heavy, this thing gets burdensome when you're just clinging to something that's hard and you've just suffered for so long.

It's like how those pressure cookers have those little release valves and they rattle and they're super annoying. And you'd finally just be like, just shut up. Turn it tight.

Get rid of that sound. But what will happen? You'll have a great big explosion. We need to be willing to endure.

I just want to read a psalm today and share some thoughts I had about that. This morning I had some thoughts that I earlier in the week or from last week that I thought I'd like to share and I just couldn't quite get a message together that linked everything together. Although some of those thoughts I might end up sharing today.

It's less of a message on a certain topic and more thoughts about psalm. It's Psalm 31 if you're using a Septuagint, Psalm 32 in the Masoretic text. Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not take into account and in whose mouth there is no deceit. Because I kept silent my bones grew old from my groanings all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me.

I became miserable when the thorn pierced me. I made known my sins and I did not hide my transgressions. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and you forgave the ungodliness of my sin.

For this cause everyone who is holy will pray to him in a well fitted time. Surely they will not draw near to him in the flood of many waters. You are my refuge from the oppression of those who surrounded me.

Oh my exceeding joy redeem me from those who encircle me. I will give you understanding and I will teach you in the way you should walk. I will fix my eyes on you.

Don't be like the horse and the mule which have no understanding. You squeeze their jaws with a bit and bridle lest they come near you. Many are the scourges of the sinner but he who hopes in the Lord mercy shall encircle him.

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice greatly oh righteous ones. And boast all you upright in heart. I'd just like to go back over that.

Verse 1 Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered. You know sin is one of those things that generally people recognize it needs to be covered. The first sins that were ever committed when Adam and Eve sinned like the first thing they recognized somehow they need to be covered.

They went and got a bunch of fig leaves and they covered themselves. And in a way sin is kind of like nakedness. It's a shame.

Anybody with a conscious awareness of this shame does not want to be found like this. I don't know if this happens to everybody but I can think of multiple times in my life when I've had a dream at night that I found myself in public naked. And it was horrifying.

It was a nightmare. It was dreadful. You'd scamper around.

You'd look for clothes. You'd look to hide. And it's so dreadful.

We know this needs to be covered. And in a sense that's how sin is like. Even though what Adam and Eve did didn't help.

It's a good thing that it's right that they recognize that this thing has to be covered. It's too shameful. It's too bad.

And it's good if we treat sin with that same way that we would treat the shame of or that Adam and Eve treated the shame of their nakedness. We would frantically, desperately do something. This thing has got to be covered.

We can't bear to have it exposed. The human's way of dealing with this is often to hide it from other people. We'll cover it up.

Sometimes we lie about it and thinking we can cover it up. And all we've done is we've added sin upon sin. We see this.

Any of us, I'm sure any of us who, in fact Buddy touched on this. Any of us who have raised children have seen this thing happen where a child does something. Something may be mildly wrong.

Maybe just did something rude. And you ask them, did you do that? Then they lie about it. Now this thing that would have maybe needed a stern admonition now needs a spanking.

A lie is far worse than this other little thing they did. And maybe as you press it they'll lie again or whatever. And this is what humans can tend to do is try to cover a sin with a sin that's greater.

And you know how when you start a pile of something, if you have a pile of something and you try to cover it, you need something bigger than the pile to cover it. And if you want to cover that, you need a bigger thing yet to cover it. And you need a bigger thing yet to cover it.

And that's what happens when we try to cover sins that way. King David started himself a pile of sins when he sinned with Bathsheba. And I have wondered sometimes if David could have... Here David was the king.

And it was in the time of the wars. It was in the time when the nations went out to war. Why was King David at home anyway? Why was he not in the battlefield? Why was Uriah and Joab and all these people out fighting the battle and he was at home? Maybe that's where it all started.

The Bible doesn't really express why this was. But I tend to think maybe he already took a little bit of a... Like something that maybe couldn't be pointed as directly as this. It's sinful but just like a slacking off type of attitude.

And there he found himself up on the roof of his house. And then he lusted after a woman. And this obviously was a sin.

And then he found out this woman was his child. And he tried to figure out a big cover-up plan. He brought Uriah back out of the battle.

At the end of it he sends Uriah out with a note to Joab. Uriah doesn't even know what this note says. But it says that they should put Uriah at the front of the battle where the battle is the fiercest.

And David's whole plan was to get Uriah killed so that he could take Bathsheba for his wife. And everything would look nice and good. And that's what happened.

And once Uriah was dead and David fetched Bathsheba to be his wife... Who knew about this? Probably maybe just David. He might have thought he did a pretty clever cover-up job. But as he tried to cover up this pile of sins that he started... He added worse sin upon worse sin upon worse sin until he had this great big pile.

The only good thing with this... When people do this... Is that you can tell that there is still a conscience there. There is still an awareness there that this shameful thing has to be covered. There are people

whose conscience is so dull and so seared.

And they sin so boldly and so open. And they are so proud of it. It's a little bit of a different story.

We meet people like that. There is a sense in which that is not necessarily worse. Maybe not even as bad as somebody who just keeps their sins covered all their life.

Because this person ends up being a hypocrite. That person is at least not a hypocrite. But at the same time there is a conscience here that can still be worked with.

This person has this very much an awareness of something needing to be covered. He just has not come to the place yet where... Whether he knows it, he hasn't done anything about the fact that God sees right through that pile. God sees right through those fig leaves.

As the Hebrew writer says, everything is bare and naked before his eyes. There is nothing that we can do like that that will hide those things from God. God wants these sins covered as well.

But he wants to cover them. And like so many other things in God's realm, humans' way of thinking about how to achieve something is not the same way as God's. We die to live.

We are humbled to be exalted. We are broken to be whole. And in that same way we must expose our sin for it to be covered.

In Proverbs 28 he says, He that covers his sin shall not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy. In 1 John 1 is that passage I like real well where he says, If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of his son cleanses us from all sin. And then maybe two verses down it says, He that confesses his sins, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

It is only, you know, this verse here in Psalm says, Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered. It is only blessed when these sins are covered under the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. And you know, there is a significance, there is a great significance I dare say about blood, that I don't, I just don't really comprehend all that well.

It is something I have meant to like do a study on, but I don't feel like I have to understand it to believe it. Like you know how in the old covenant, there is all these things about the sprinkling of the blood, and as the Hebrew writer says, and according to the law, one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Like there is so much of that.

And then it talks about the blood of Christ as an atoning sacrifice. And I think probably even there, you know Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves, but God apparently killed, I don't know if it says a goat or a sheep or some kind of animal, and he took those skins and covered them. Again, there is a shedding of blood.

There is, and it is not because, it is not because now God can't see through skins any more than he can see through fig leaves. But God has a way, man has a way of his own in dealing with something, and God has a way of dealing with something, and God's way works. And it involves sacrifice, it involves the shedding of blood, the life is in the blood, I think that is a big part of it, the Bible says.

Anyway, some of that might be a subject for a later message. One thing that I do understand, and that is that the blood, this all important blood for our salvation, we cannot just claim it because we name it. We don't just have it, like there are conditions.

I think it would be safe to say that the blood of Jesus, that Jesus gave it, okay, the all famous verse that God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Like God, Jesus died for the whole world, but not the whole world will be saved. There are conditions, he that believes, or there are conditions like even that passage I like there in John, where it talks about the blood of Jesus Christ shall cover, the blood of his son shall cleanse us from all sin.

There is a condition, if we walk in the light. In the passage in Hebrews, where he talks about the suffering that Jesus went through, and how he bled, and how he died, and how he suffered, and then it says, therefore, he has become the author of eternal salvation to a certain group of people, to those who obey him. Like there's conditions for us for that blood to be applied, and understanding the significance of that blood is less important, I think it's pretty safe for me to say, is less important than understanding the condition, which I must meet for it to apply.

If without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins, which I believe the Hebrew writer says that, maybe I don't understand that all, but I think I understand what Peter says when he says, repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Like, and we can do that. One thing, as I was thinking about confessing, confessing our sins, exposing our sins, revealing our sins, there's a lot of, there's a lot of verses, that I would understand to be like confessing our sins to God, and we might wonder, what about confessing to one another? There's at least a passage in James, where he says, confess your sins to one another, so that you may be healed, and maybe, I used to think, I used to think that if the sin that you committed, involved anybody else, like it had hurtful or negative effects to anybody else, then definitely you have to confess it to that person, and if it's not, if it's a personal sin, if it's something just solely between you and God, then it only needs to be confessed to God, and okay, that might be true, but I would encourage us to realize that, the sins that we think are just between us and God, can harm, can much more easily have effects on other people, that we like indirectly have effects on other people, we don't think, if we're going through our, if we're carrying, let's think of an example, if we've done something, a personal sin, and it kind of, we carry this thing, or we carry the guilt of this around, for a whole week or a month or years or whatever, and we think this thing that we've done, hasn't really affected anybody else, just recognize that the effects of this sin on our lives, the guilt that we carried that made us, react in a certain way to our wives, to our children, to our brothers, to our sisters, it did affect them, and then I would also, aside from that other thing that I used to think, I've also recognized that, there's accountability involved in us, there's something we can do kind of lightly, and that is in our closet, go and confess something to the Lord, and save our reputation, and not really like, not really, let me put it this way, if it still bothers us, if we think we don't have the healing, that we would like to have, then I think for sure, we should consider that, James said, confess your faults to one another, and thereby be healed, there is a healing that comes with that, and there's a lot at stake, there's maybe, the adversary hates confession, and he's gonna try everything he can, to get us to not confess, because he knows that there's victory and healing in that, and so he'll convince you of all kinds of things, he'll convince you nobody's gonna understand this, nobody else has ever done such a bad thing, but I've been in church all my life, and I've, I mean I've heard, just some very, very, very bad sins being confessed among, among church going people, but I have yet, I have yet to hear, somebody voluntarily, repentfully, and remorsefully confess a sin, no matter how gross it is, that I, that I just like lost respect for that person, it's a different thing if, you know if, if the person tries to deny it,

until he finally can't deny it anymore, but it's, yeah I just, I just don't, just don't think that's ever happened that I remember, the Didache says in the church, you shall acknowledge your transgressions, and you shall not come near for your prayer, and your conscience, this is the way of life, later the Didache says, but every Lord's day gather yourself together, and break bread giving thanksgiving, after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure, but let no one who is at odds, with his fellow come together with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be profaned, so we can either, we can either, go through this life, and try to, try to save, our reputation, try to, try to keep from being ashamed of everybody, or ashamed to everybody, by, by using fig leaves, or whatever else, to cover our sins, to finally come, before the Lord on judgment day, and have him, peel it back, and expose it, or, we can be willing, to take whatever is at stake, and face the shame, and confess these things now, to have, to come before the Lord on judgment day, and have them all covered, before everybody, there's a huge difference, there's an eternity at stake, let's keep reading, verse, go to verse 2 here, blessed is the man whose sin, the Lord does not take into account, and whose mouth, and in whose mouth, there is no deceit, because I kept silent, my bones grew old, from my groanings all day long, for day and night, your hand was heavy upon me, I became miserable, when the thorn pierced me, I think some of the translations say, instead of, I became miserable, when the thorn pierced me, the Masoretic text makes it sound, more like my, my moisture evaporated, as a drought, or I think what it would be saying, is like my, my strength is all gone, I'm weary, I'm groaning with inside me, the Lord's hand is heavy upon me, if, if that is what unconfessed sins, are doing, if they're wearing you down, if they make your bones, seem like you're old, and, or a thorn piercing you, or your strength is evaporating, consider, consider seriously, that God is being long suffering, with you for now, for now God is like, at, at least you still have this conscience, and, and this, this heavy hand that God has on you is, is really his long suffering, um, uh, and, and as he says in the next verse, I think it's the next verse, well, it's verse six, but like, in this day, he can still be found, if this is what's going on, uh, healing can still be found, but, but that day will end someday, in verse five, then in verse five this is what he says, I made known my sin, and I did, I did not hide my transgression, I said I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and you forgave the ungodliness of my sin, and then he says in verse six, for this cause, everyone who is holy will pray to him in a, well fitted time, or while there is still opportunity, uh, and then he says, surely they will not draw near to him, in the, in a flood of many waters, today is the day things can be made right, once the floodwaters, of judgment come in, uh, this day is over, as, as the people in Noah's day found out, um, I remember hearing this, uh, this story that, when I was growing up, the preachers would preach, whether it, where it originates, I have no idea, but, uh, that like, that the, that the devil counseled with his servants, or with, yeah, with his servants and said, how, how will you go about to deceive the people, and, and the first, first guy says, I'm going to convince them that there's, uh, I'm going to convince them there's no heaven, I think, and the devil said, no, that won't work, and the second guy says, I'm going to convince them there's no hell, and the devil said, that doesn't work, and the third one says, I'm going to convince them there's plenty of time, and he said, you, you go, you will deceive them by the thousands, um, today is the day of salvation, um, today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, let's keep going here in Psalms, verse seven, you are my refuge, from the oppression of those who surround me, oh, my exceeding joy, redeem me from those who encircle me, I will give you understanding, and I will teach you in the way you should walk, I will fix my eyes on you, I will give you understanding, and I will teach you in the way you should walk, that is, surely, all our desire, that he would give us understanding, and teach us the way we should walk, um, but, but to whom does he give understanding, oh, the, the Proverbs say, an evil man does not understand judgment, but those who seek the Lord, will understand it in everything, those who seek, those who pursue, uh, um, it is not in the pursuit of great knowledge, that we get understanding, again, unlike what the world would think, uh, but, but in the

pursuit of the Lord himself, there is nothing that we should seek more, than the Lord himself, um, if, if, if I would ask you, uh, concerning your faith, what, what is it that you hope for, what's ultimately, like, at the very end of, of this faith that you're holding to, what's your hope, get to heaven, uh, is your hope, to enjoy, uh, eternity on streets of gold, trees that bear fruit, all year round, uh, just to be, no longer miserable, um, like, what, what would your answer be? It's a good question for you to ask yourself, like, what, ultimately, what am I hoping for? If, if those things that I mentioned, are your answers, I, I think you should reconsider, what, what is your faith about, and consider what, what, what the, uh, what the apostle John said, in first John, he says, we know, that when he appears, we will be like him, because we will see him, just as he is, and everyone who has this hope, fixed on himself, purifies himself, fixed on him, purifies himself, just as he is pure.

There should be no greater hope that we have, than, than that we can be like him, like Christ. If we have that hope, we're purifying ourselves, we're getting us ready for it, like, um, beyond, beyond everything else, that we could think, that we might enjoy, uh, there should be nothing, of greater hope to us, than that we can be, like him. Back to, like, who does he give understanding? In Psalms 111, he says, a good understanding, have those, who do his commandments.

Again, like, it's not, it's not a good understanding, have those, have those who know his commandments. Not a good understanding, have those who hear them, who believe them, who comprehend them. It's those who, do them.

That's why there is more, godly understanding, in a, there is more godly understanding, in a, in a poor, illiterate, peasant, who has, who, who has heard, and is doing, the commandments of God, than, than in some, highly educated guy, who's gone through seminary, and knows the ins and outs, of scripture, but is not doing it. There's more understanding, more, there's more reason, to, to, to walk with this poor guy, who, who, who maybe, you know, doesn't have much scholarly knowledge, but he, he's doing, he's doing it. He has more understanding.

He will have more insights, on how to act, when, when you don't know what to do. Uh, on how to, how to, how to, respond to a situation, that you've never thought about before. That you've been, a crisis you come into, that, um, you never, you never realize, that you get into.

There's more understanding there. Jesus said, that he has hidden these things, from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes. Verse nine, do not be like the horse, and the mule, which have no understanding, you squeeze their jaws with a bit, and a bridle, lest they come near you.

Horses, are big, strong, magnificent, animals. Uh, they are, uh, but, but don't be like that. They, you have to put a bit, in their mouth, to control them.

Rather be like a sheep. Uh, they're a pretty humble looking animal. Like horses, they are prized, for their speed, and their strength, and, they'll put them in races, and they'll put them in, they'll put these big draft horses, in horse pools, and, and their muscles ripple, all over their bodies, and, and, and it's a scene to behold, but behind every one of these horses, or in every one of these horses mouths, is a bit, and from that bit, go, go reins back to someone, who is turning that whole body, wherever this governor back here, wants them to go.

God is saying, don't be like that. Um, be, be like a sheep. There, there's no reins in the sheep.

There's no bridle. There's no harness. They, they can be turned this way, with their head down, eating grass, but they have an ear, that knows the shepherd's voice, and as soon as they hear the shepherd's voice, it turns their whole body around, and they go another direction.

That's what we need to be like. That's, that's these, these, these sheep, of their own will. Though, though they could do whatever they want to do, uh, there's nothing to keep them from, checking out the next mountain, like, they're there, with an ear, ready to hear, and of their own accord.

They'll, they'll go wherever the shepherd says. A, a really big difference between a, a horse and a sheep. The sheep knows, and he has learned, that his, his whole existence depends on following the shepherd.

So, instead of being driven like a horse, we need to be led. When I was down in Mexico several weeks ago, I, I marveled how, sometimes, just, along the shoulders of pretty busy roads, you would just see a shepherd out there with a flock of sheep, uh, just, just grazing them along the road. There, there was no fence, uh, and, cars zooming by, and, and, but, but I have no doubt, and I watched, you know, I watched a shepherd take a whole flock of sheep right down through the, right down through the streets, between the markets, where there was, he was, must've been taking them out to pasture.

but these, these sheep just followed him. Um, that's what we ought to be like. You know, our, our will, is what God wants.

If, if he doesn't have that, he doesn't have us. He, may, if, if there is such a thing, if he gets our alms, if he gets our sacrifices, if he gets our service, without our will, again, if, if, if such a thing is possible, like, I tend to think it could be, he still doesn't have us, and us is what he wants. Uh, I think we do well to ask ourselves like, what, what does govern our lives? All, all things that we do in our life, is because of some, some governing power, uh, makes us do it.

I, I, I think that's safe to say, and, and, and we should ask like, what is that? Because, uh, because we, we can choose, uh, we can choose to take this will, which, which is, is like the governor of our lives, with, with our will, we do, we end up doing what we want, but, but with that, like we, we, we can choose to like, uh, turn it like these sheep, to turn it to wherever the shepherd and whatever the shepherd wants, or, or we can turn it to the whole host of other places we can turn it to. Um, I think there's many people in churches who are, who are governed by those around them. Uh, more than they are governed by the Lord himself.

And don't get me wrong. Like it's, it's beneficial to be around godly people. In fact, we should, we should seek that.

Um, it's, it's good for us. There, there's even something about Christianity that is not complete without it. Um, uh, but, but unless we, unless we purpose in our hearts, that we will follow the Lord.

Like we may very easily get deceived on who God's people are. Like there could be a lot said, a lot good said, and God will judge all this at the end, but there can be a lot said about someone who just, who just identifies God's people. And he, he, he decides this is where I want to be.

And maybe you wonder about a lot of things in his life. and yet he can identify that. And, and, uh, again, like, like some God, God will sort all these things out at the end.

But, but, uh, but unless, unless we hear the shepherd's voice, no, the shepherd's voice, I should say, and hear it and purpose in our hearts to follow it. Even when nobody else follows it. Uh, God still does not have

us.

He, he still does not have us at least doesn't have us where he wants us. Uh, you know, there's, there's kind of two sides to this thing. Like there's, there's this, I recently came across the, there's this, there's in the song of Solomon, there's, there's the, the lover speaking and then the beloved speaking.

And there, they have this conversation with each other. Uh, they, they, they long for each other. And it's a, it's a type of Christ in the church.

Um, and, and in one place, the beloved says, tell me, uh, tell me, Oh, you who my love, where you feed your flock. And, and then, and then the lover says, if you do not know, Oh, fairest among women, follow in the footsteps of the flock. Um, and that, that is where we'll find where Christ feeds the flock.

Is if we follow in the footsteps of the flock. So, so that's one side of it. Like, um, uh, God is found the fair, the, the, the one that we long, he is found with his people.

That's where we'll find him. Um, the other side of the story is, is that if, see, see, in this scenario, there's, there's already this relationship. There's already this, this, this woman, this fairest of woman who's, who's, who's wanting this, uh, this lover and they're, they're wanting each other.

um, but, but if, if all we want is the flock and we want the benefits of the flock, um, without, without the shepherd or knowing the shepherd or knowing his voice, I think, you know, I think we'll very likely, we'll very likely be deceived about who the flock even is. Um, there's this, uh, uh, there was a French naturalist, um, whose name was Jean Henry Fabry. And he did this experiment with, with caterpillars.

Um, I, I didn't even know this, but, but caterpillars get their names because they follow each other. I, I, I guess the word caterpillar is like, means, means like following each other. Um, and, and somehow, like when a caterpillar crawls, he leaves a little bit of silk behind him, which, which another one follows.

And that one leaves a little silk behind him and they follow each other. And so, this, this, this naturalist did this experiment. He took a, he took a flower pot.

And on the rim of that flower pot, he, he lined up caterpillars, uh, all the way around this thing. And here in the middle of the flower pot was food. Um, and, and he got these caterpillars started.

And they walked around the rim of this pot. And they walked, and walked, and walked for seven days and seven nights until they exhausted and starved, while food was six inches away from them. Just because of their stupid instinct of doing nothing except following one another.

Um, and that, that's what can happen. If, if we don't, if we don't hear the shepherd's voice, if all we're doing is just blindly following other people, um, that's what can end up happening. And so, and so for us, like, um, like it's, it's good to be, it's good for us to get adjusted to each other, to learn how to work with each other, to learn from each other.

And, and, and I just think in, in some way, inevitably, we'll, we'll somewhat conform to each other. Um, and, and that's good. But, but all of us, all of us need to be able to hear the shepherd's voice and follow him.

Who knows? We're in a foreign land. Who knows what will happen to us? We may all get scattered someday. Persecution could come and we could end up in however many people are here in so many

different parts of the earth.

Um, then, then what will we depend on? Uh, then what will we do when we don't know what to do? Um, we're, we're pilgrims and strangers here. We're ambassadors here. This is recently.

I have, we were reading at home through the book of Daniel and, and Daniel, Daniel and, and his three friends there. Okay. So, so, so, uh, Israel gets captured by Babylon and whoever wasn't killed is taken captive.

And they go to this foreign land. They're exiles in a foreign land. Um, everything that identified the Jews as Jews was now stripped from them.

Daniel didn't have his parents. They are either dead or who knows where, um, um, the temple's gone. Like all the things, the priests are gone.

All the things that make, like that, that make, that made God's people, God's people is at least all the tangible, the physical things are gone. And here Daniel is an exile in a foreign land in under, under a different King. And this King, this King wants to feed them a certain diet for three years and, and have his, his people teach them certain things.

And, and then he wants to examine them. And I mean, Daniel, Daniel's a captive, right? I mean, how much say does he have in what he can do? But here's what it says. It says, Daniel purposed in his heart.

He will not defile himself with the King's food and wine. This was like, in spite of all the Jewish things that were stripped away from him, in spite of, in spite of there not being any rules that he could say that he could go to and say, well, this is what you do in this situation. This is what you do when you get here.

This like, in spite of all that there was something in Daniel, in which he, in which he purposed in his heart, he, there was something in him that, that could, that could guide him through this, this, this place and this time when he had no one to go to. And that was a purpose in his heart that he will not defile himself with the King's foods. And I think that is like, okay.

And so back to like, what governs us, that is what we need that we need. We need a will. We need something here within us that can govern ourselves.

According to the principles that we know about God, something that, something that a whole list of rules will never do for us because they're limited. In the way you can apply them. Like all, all the, all the rules that you could write about what not to touch, what not to taste, what not to handle, what not to wear, where not to go, what not to play, what not to buy.

All these things are limited in, in how you can apply them. Cause cause you don't know, but you'll end up in a situation where there's no rule about this thing. So here's how it goes.

And this was one of the things that I, that I was keenly reminded of last week, again, when, when I visited family there in Ohio and it sometimes just helps to be reminded of like what, what we, what we thought we could see in the way like that the Amish church would govern. What we thought we could see that doesn't work. It, it's amazing how, how these things work.

Like by the time, if, if somebody is so used to being governed by by a governing authority, that, that is not, that is not us having heard the shepherd's voice and purposing our heart to, to be in his will. Like you just

ended up really doing, doing stupid things. Like, you know, maybe, maybe, maybe some people start playing a competitive baseball and some people are like, should we do that? Should.

And so we get together and we figure out if we should do that or not. But by the time you've got a rule on that, well, they're, they're playing competitive volleyball. And, and by the time you've got a rule on that there, they've just taken their, their, their wicked heart for competitive entertainment and sports.

And they've turned it to hunting and fishing. and now you can't quite figure out, well, you can't quite rule that completely out. And, and, and, and these things just don't work.

Like it doesn't, it doesn't help. It doesn't work to keep people from, from pursuing the worldliness that, that is in them. It, it, and it applies in all kinds of areas like vacations.

Like, I just think years ago, like the vacations that people do would have just been, they would have been forbidden because we would have known that this is not right. But, but not all vacation is that bad. And so where, where do we put the rule? Like, is it certain places, certain distances, certain amounts of money? Is it when you go to this certain place that you stay out of this place and this place and this place, but you can enjoy this place and this.

And, and there's no end. Like you have, there's no end to trying to rein these things in. It's, it's, it works that way in technology.

And you try to, you know, electronic devices and stuff. And, and you know there's a danger there. And you try to, you try to strap things in.

But, but to an, to a, to a unregenerated person who has not purposed in his heart that he will not defile himself with these things. You can't contain it. And, or, or, oh, okay.

And then, and then within these rules, like if you, if you try this within these rules, you figure out an example is like, okay, we don't want to forbid tractors altogether because they're needful for certain things, but we don't want to use tractors for transportation on the road. So, tractors are okay on the road. If, you know, you're pulling a trailer or something like that.

And so you can well be within the rule by going to town for a loaf of bread. What's wrong with you pulling a tractor behind your trailer, behind your tractor, you know, things like this. Okay.

Now my, my goal here is not to be, to be bashing a certain group of people. But this, this is what happens when this is just what happens when, when, when, when, when you take that approach to governing, they end up making you do things that you shouldn't. And they end up making you not do things that you should, just like, just like it worked in, in, in, in the days when Jesus was here and the religious leaders, they did not do good on the Sabbath because they did not understand the principle of the Sabbath, but they did do wicked things with alms money because they did not understand the principle of alms.

They did not have a, they did not have an ear that could hear God that, that could, and a, and a heart that was purposed within himself. That, that one thing is sure. He will not defile himself with the things of this world, and he will pursue God.

He will listen to the shepherd. That has to be in place. Not all the Amish people do that, do all these foolish things that I'm talking about, but these things happen.

And these are just the things that can happen. And again, like I, uh, okay. And here, here's, here's what I want us to think about.

It can be too easy for us. And we think, we think we're free of this. Okay.

It can be too easy for us to, uh, to think that we've got the boundaries figured out. Sure. We don't have a written standard for this, but we, we understand non-resistance and loving our enemies.

And it means we shouldn't go to war and we shouldn't file lawsuits. We understand divorce and remarriage. We understand, don't take an oath.

We understand Jesus commandments. We know what they entail and we'll stay within that. Okay.

And though we, though we don't do it in this highly structured way, we can do this. We can do this too easily in our minds. And then, and then right within those boundaries, we can just kind of fall asleep and, and we can, uh, we can, uh, forget that our, our, our big hope, our big goal is to be like Christ.

And there's no end to that. There's no end to walking in light. The brighter it shines upon us, the more it reveals what needs to change.

And the more we need to change that or the blood of blood of his son will not cleanse us. And we keep this process. It doesn't say stand in the light.

It says walk in the light. And, and you cannot, if, if you're out here in the dark, uh, and there's a great big light ahead and you start walking toward that light there, it is inevitable the closer and the closer you get to it, the more it illuminates what's around you. And the more you recognize what's going on and the more there is to, to take heat of and to work on.

And, and so it is in our lives. There is no end to this. And so, so we just need to be careful that we don't in our own way, like fall into the same problems of, of, uh, think, thinking we know the boundaries, having figured them out in our minds.

And then, and then there, right there, we can just be real comfortable and, uh, and go to sleep. Just a few closing things. Let's expose our sins and let him cover them.

Let's be sheep and not horses. Let's be led and not driven. Let's follow God's principles and not men's rules.

Let me read the final verses here again. Verse 10 and 11. Many are the scourges of the sinner, but he who hopes in the Lord, mercy shall encircle him.

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice greatly. Oh, righteous ones and boast all you upright in heart. I think some of the translations would say, sing or shout all you upright in heart.

And the Lord had his blessing. Go ahead and add any ideas or comments or corrections. Thank you.

Brother Dwayne, you had so many points that like buddies that just, uh, they're deep and edifying. And, um, I liked the one about the sins where you try to cover up a sin and it gets bigger. And I think that's the same with rules to me and made rules.

I remember someone said that, uh, in Lancaster, am I saying it right? Lancaster, Lancaster County. They had a thing once a man and I, um, that there were girls couldn't, uh, wear earrings, but they, most of them did get the ears pierced. So they said, well, okay, now we're going to make a rule that you're going to have to, uh, put tape or to get the ears pierced.

So they had to put tape on the ear lobes or something like that. And they said, no, that, that, that looks kind of ridiculous. Okay.

You can wear earrings, but you got to have the metal part inwards in the, the, the, you can't have the shiny part showing. You have to do the other side showing out. And I said, that looks ridiculous.

And so they, and a boy started wanting to wear t-shirts and they said, you can do that, but no message in a t-shirt. And they had all these rules. And then the book, the rule book for, for the rules was, was so big.

They just finally, they just dropped it. And if you look at Lancaster today, Lancaster Mennonites, I mean, it's, it's, it's the world. It's just, but they started to make rules upon rules.

And it's like festering up, I think is, it covers a sin and it just gets so, so, uh, comes from a, a pebble. It becomes a mountain. It just like that.

But, um, the, uh, the one about, um, morning, it is a, it is such a, you know, it's probably more mournful than Psalm 51. They, the commentators like to say, well, Psalm 51, when David, um, had relations with Bathsheba, but said, but Psalm 32, I think would be more appropriate for all the things. And, and only God knows the heart of David when he wrote that Psalm.

And, um, at Walter likes to go through the beatitudes. Blessed are those who mourn. David mourned for his sin.

They should be comforted. That's our key. Just the, the heart of hearts of the gospel is a sermon amount.

And the heart of the sermon amount is to be attitude. Someone has said, and, uh, blessed are those who mourn. And we mourn, uh, for those, uh, sins.

Um, and we should weep with those who do weep and rejoice with those. And that question brother Dwayne about, well, what is the purpose of, of our Christian walk? And, uh, you know, we just want to go to heaven, have eternal life, uh, no more crying and sorrow. I looked in one of the verses spinning around in my mind was the one in first Timothy.

It says love out of a pure conscience and sincere faith because he loved us first. He made us in our own image and he wants us to know him and serve him. Just how kind of the garden of Eden restored, so to speak, right? God wants us to, uh, he wants us to be his people.

In fact, Corinthian says, it says first Corinthians, what six, seven, you belong to Christ. And the next verse is what in Christ belongs to you. Son of Solomon.

There you go. Something like that. And, um, anyway, the Lord be magnified.

Bless you, Dwayne. It was so good. One other point from both buddy and Dwayne is Jesus said, if anyone is willing to do my doctrine, you will know if it's for man or for God.

And as we stretch forward, as we get closer to that light, the Dwayne is talking about, we will see that this, this is really, this is God's will. it, we chose the unregenerative will be in a sin in us and how we should treat others as more important than ourself and have a non-resistant love and do all things for the glory of God. Yeah.

I just wanted to say amen to both messages and really appreciated the, the thoughts and the way buddy brought out the, the different, by clinging to both truth and, and mercy. That's the word you use, um, being merciful and kind and on one side and not giving up on truth on the other side and, and how we just really appreciated that. It's not anything really new to me, but it is, so difficult for me to, to be able to do that in its fullness.

Uh, interestingly to make things even more complicated in some ways about timber, like in metal, there's a, a wide range of timber we need and one for certain purposes. And, uh, for knives is one for bearings is another for, uh, for spring steel, it's another, and it goes on and on and on. And, and in that, I guess the timber would be the right temper for a spring, the right timber for, for bearing the right timber for something that got to be soft or cheap.

Um, I think in our lives we, maybe we often might think that somebody is not quite tempered properly, but maybe that person is supposed to be a bearing and another person is supposed to be a spring. Uh, and we judge one another in that way. That's also not good.

there's, there's different timbers, not a looser timber and getting angry. That is, I think, I agree with that. I don't, I don't think that ever does what is good in the sight of God.

I just see so many faults in my life in that area that it's, um, difficult. And, uh, I appreciate both messages. Thank you.

Yeah, I don't really have much to say. Just want to add my appreciation to the messages. Both you brothers that shared, um, just, uh, just real good, real good, good encouragement, good things.

You know, we make our prayers like, Lord, show us this, show us that. Um, I think some of these things get shown to us through messages. So I, I want to accept that from God as an answer prayer and just want to express appreciation for, for being able to be here and again, worship with you.

And I look forward for the continuation of the day. Praise God. Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh, We cannot contain it, for open the windows of Heaven today.

There are so many living in darkness and sin. They know not a Savior and no peace within. But we know you're not willing that any should die.

But all come repenting, for this we do cry. Open the windows and pour out a blessing. Shower your power upon us, we pray.

Send such a blessing, we cannot contain it. Lord, open the windows of Heaven today. Sometimes I am weary and heavy and worn.

I'm crushed by the center and bleeding and torn. Then I go back to Jesus with tears on my face. And cry out for mercy, His love and His grace.

Open the windows and pour out a blessing. Shower your power upon us, we pray. Send such a blessing, we cannot contain it.

Lord, open the windows of Heaven today. So often we witness your power so strong. But yesterday's blessings are all past and gone.

Once again we stand meeting as humbly we pray. And that's why we lift up our voices to say. Open the windows and pour out a blessing.

Shower your power upon us, we pray. Send such a blessing, we cannot contain it. Lord, open the windows of Heaven today.

Be not afraid of them. For the Lord thy God is with thee. When thou goest out in battle against thy enemies.

And see his forces in the air, and the people mourn him now. Be not afraid of them. Be not afraid of them.

For the Lord thy God is with thee. Which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. Day by day and with each passing moment.

Strength I find to meet my trials near. Trusting in my Father's mighty sound. I know not for worry or for fear.

He whose heart is kind beyond all measure. Gives unto each day what he means best. Lovingly is part of pain and pleasure.

Meaningful with peace and rest. Every day the Lord himself is near me. With a special mercy for each hour.

All my mercy, faith, love and cheer be. He whose name is our sovereign power. The protection of his children.

Is a charge that on himself he lay. As our kings and our kings are we in measure. This our pledge to be made.

Help me then in every tribulation. So to trust thy promises O Lord. That I use my faith's sweet consolation.

Offer me within thy holy word. Help me Lord when thought and trouble meet. Every day as from our Father's hand.

One by one the days of love and speaking. Till I reach the promised land.

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