

Be Encouraged ('If You Sin')

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman encourages believers to find hope and strength in Christ when facing sin, emphasizing the importance of grace and relationship over performance and condemnation.

Duration: 48:31

Scripture: Psalm 139:23-24, Matthew 11:28, John 8:34-36, Romans 5:18-20, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 5:1, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 3:12, 1 John 1:7, 1 John 2:1

Topics: "Grace", "Encouragement in Sin"

Description

Shane Idleman encourages believers to find hope and strength in Christ even when they sin, emphasizing that while sin is a reality, it does not have to define us. He highlights the importance of assessing our spiritual health and maintaining a balance between grace and obedience, warning against the dangers of legalism and performance-oriented faith. Shane reminds us that we have an advocate in Jesus who forgives our sins and encourages us to strengthen ourselves in the Lord rather than succumb to self-condemnation. He stresses that true freedom comes from recognizing our identity in Christ and the power of His grace, which abounds even in the face of sin. Ultimately, Shane calls the church to embrace the transformative love of God and to encourage one another in their spiritual journeys.

Transcript

The title is, Be Encouraged. Be Encouraged If You Sin. And we've been in a series where Jesus said, when you give, when you pray, and when you fast, and when you are offended.

And Jesus didn't say when or if you sin, per se. It's from John's writings. But there is encouragement in this.

Be encouraged if you sin. Because the Bible tells us, remember we talked about last week, when you fast, and if you sin. But we like to change it to, if you decide to ever fast, and when you sin.

Right, that will play in words there. But actually the Bible says, if you sin. So it doesn't encourage us to do it, but it gives us a way to, a path to take, once that does happen.

And the reason I think God changed this, is because from time to time, it's very important to assess spiritual health. Isn't it? We have to, do you ever assess your physical health? I mean, it's like, okay, something's not working here. Right, I'm getting sick, I'm not feeling good, I'm eating junk, I just, I'm getting, what's going on? I'm assessing how I'm taking care of this.

How much more ought we assess how we're taking care of our spiritual side. And what happens sometimes, is we can become unbalanced, if it's all about grace and license. Right, you know, there's churches, the big struggle, I'll tell you right now, for any church, is finding the middle ground.

Right, because they're going to, we're going to err on the side of grace, and mercy, and love, and license. Hey brother, just, you know, we don't want to beat you up, just kind of let God work on you, hopefully you'll stumble across the word repentance in the Bible. But, you know, we're going to just lean over here, and just grace and mercy.

But then of course, you have what they, that's where the word Bible-thumping comes from. Right, or throwing Scriptures at you, or hitting you over the head with the Word of God. All those things, judgmental, legalistic, hell, fire, and brimstone.

Right? It's just this hard side. It's good, they have the truth, but they miss the love. So you come back, and churches are going, it's going to, even this church, I mean, it's hard to find that balance.

Because you gravitate sometimes to one side or the other. So we can become unbalanced, if it's all about grace and license. But also, this is my concern, maybe you've got put on the heart for many here, that go here, many listen online, Facebook or whatever it is, there's so many different people all over listening.

And I get this sense sometimes, is if we're always doing, always stopping, always fasting, always fighting, always performing, always maintaining. You know, if you've ever got caught, following Christ isn't fun anymore. You know, where do these rules slip in? And you know me, I'm all for rules.

Right? But when it becomes to be about the rules, and not the relationship, you get burdened. When it becomes, I've got to maintain this walk, I've got to maintain my walk. I mean, it's hard living the Christian life.

I mean, living in a fishbowl, right? Everybody's watching you. And we joke sometimes, but true, me and my wife joke, it's like, you think you live in a fishbowl? Where I do my taxes, they come here. Where I go shopping, they come here.

Where I mail my mail, they come here. They see I have the mail, they come. Everywhere, everywhere.

It's a fishbowl. And sometimes it gets hard carrying that weight. And you have to maintain a certain thing, or you have to follow the Bible says this, and we can kind of get beat up on fasting.

Oh, Lord. I mean, I just need help right now. I need to be encouraged.

So that's the danger sometimes, we can be too much on this side, or too much on this performance-oriented task, agenda, rules, and regulations, and maintaining. Now, a big disclaimer, if you know anything about this church, we know that the Word of God talks about obeying His voice, and obeying the Word of God. And so I'm not discarding that.

What I'm trying to do is show you that we need to sometimes refocus on the relationship and not so much on the aspect of performance and beating ourselves up when we don't perform well. Has anyone ever beat themselves up spiritually? Or is it just me up here? Right, like, man. Now there's something good to that, and I don't know God in all His sovereignty, because if you think you've mastered it, and you don't need any help, I don't need to go to church this week.

I'm good. I've arrived. That's a very dangerous spot to be.

So I think there's always... People say, I wish I could pray more, and they pray a lot. But see, that gets them back into the prayer closet. I wish I could be in God's Word more.

That gets them back into the Word more. So you have to have that driving element to get you back into spiritual disciplines. But what happens is we either become carnal on this side, or we can be condemned on this side.

We either give in, or we give up. There's no church that perfectly balances this area of grace and repentance. If spiritual disciplines become rigid and mechanical, a system of works, then we will become very discouraged.

Or, if it becomes all about measuring up and doing good and all these things, then we also start to have a form of arrogance. It's called spiritual pride, and it is ugly. It's this thing.

I used it Wednesday. It's still here. You know what this is? What do I have on my shoulder? That's right, I have a chip on my shoulder.

Not anymore, right? Let's get rid of that thing. But we walk around sometimes. I'm pretty spiritual.

How many hours did you read the Bible this week? You got me? Fasting? Six hours? I got six days. And we walk around. Because the rules kind of look at how we're performing.

So it's very healthy to look and reassess where we're at. 1 John 2.1 from the English Standard Version says this, My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. See, it's interesting.

The Bible says and encourages us not to sin. Many churches, though, they act like, well, that just comes with it. Sin more, grace more.

Sin more, grace more. But the Bible says, no, we have an advocate that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, if you do sin, that word comes from the Hebrew.

If you look it up, it means missing the mark. It's like an archer shooting an arrow right to the target and he misses the mark. Sin is missing the mark of God's will.

And I don't want to minimize that term either because there's a seriousness about sin that we have to have. If you're not serious about sin, you will minimize it. And when you minimize it, you give it a foothold to work in your life.

Any time we minimize something, it will begin to grow because we're giving it more power, more authority in our life. Well, it's not a big deal. Right? Well, if it's not a big deal there, it's not going to be a big deal there.

And see how it grows and grows and grows and grows and you end up going, how did I get here? What happened? What began with the small compromise? Months ago, months ago, that was no big deal. He says, but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And I know there's so much in this room, I tried to write down everything, but it would take a while.

When we're dealing with this issue of sin and beating each other up, or ourselves up, sometimes we beat each other up, but many people are dealing with lots of things. Let's list, for example, anger. Do you ever just have an angry outburst? Do you just maybe say some words that have four letters in them? And you just go and you're like, Lord, what is wrong with me? I can't fix it.

Why am I so angry? Why am I so this? Why am I having temper tantrums and this anger issue? And then somebody else is dealing with a critical attitude. Have you ever been around anyone with a critical attitude? I just want to go the other direction. I mean, it's just always criticizing, always critical, always negative, and they get home sometimes, I know these people, and they'll confide in me and say, I prayed, and Lord, take this away.

I can't deal with this anymore. What is in here? And then somebody else, of course, addiction. That is just rampant in our society today.

People, have you ever been addicted to something you just can't stop? You just can't stop. No matter how hard you try, you just can't stop. And do you get encouraged in that? Or do you feel, this side again, remember, defeated, and condemned, and convicted is a good thing, but condemnation, there's a difference there.

And so we're struggling with these things, and if we're not careful, we can, like a hammer that just keeps beating down a nail, and beating down a nail, eventually the nail hits the wood, and the hammer just keeps hitting on it. Sometimes we can do that in our Christian walk, we keep beating ourselves down. That's why I wanted to encourage you this morning.

Be encouraged if you sin. What about jealousy? Anybody struggle with that? There's people that you would not believe how jealous. There's medication for that.

Because it's so strong. And they cry. What is this? What's wrong with me? I'm a monster.

I'm a monster. And then the other person deals with gossip. They just can't close that thing.

Right? They repent. They're up here at the altar, and they won't even get out the front door until they get in their car, and they're like, why? God, what's wrong with me? And if we're not careful, instead of encouraging ourselves in the Lord, we beat ourselves up in the Lord. And we walk around defeated, and it's an ongoing cycle of defeat.

Lying. Anybody struggle with lying? Oh my Lord. In the church? That doesn't happen in the church.

Yes. Lying happens in the church. In this church.

But it's... And people will weep over it. What's wrong with me? I just lie. I can't get... It just comes out.

What is wrong with me? Now, there are demonic strongholds, I believe. There are certain areas where a person is predisposed. What you struggle with, I don't struggle with.

And the enemy works in different areas. But a person lying beats themselves up. And what's scary about the lying person is that they know it's wrong, but if they're not fully repenting and encouraging themselves up in the Lord, they'll continue in it as an endless cycle.

They just continue because that's the whole life they built. Can you imagine confessing and repentance taking place? Their castle is coming to the ground. The life they've built is coming to the ground.

But I want to encourage you, if that's something you struggle with, bring it to the ground. You crumble that thing before God does. And we can live in self-deception.

And also part of this lying is not just outright lying, it's twisting. You ever done that? Somebody tells you something, you just take it and you run to dodge with it. Run to the bank with it, right? You just twist it, contort it, and you make it something.

But I'm not lying. Oh, yes, you are. Oh, you better believe you are.

You're lying and probably gossiping all in one. Oh, sorry, I was supposed to be encouraging. There is encouragement.

Strengthen yourself in the Lord. And that's my heart for this church and most churches is when we have these attitudes, we need to bring them to God. Instead of beating ourselves up, strengthen ourselves in the Lord.

We can get into the whole thing from infidelity in marriage to same-sex attraction to all these different things going on. Do you know people feel so condemned in this area? Especially in this area. I mean, it's a rut you cannot get out of.

Some of you heard I played the video, we shared it when I was on Fox News with the pastor who supports gay marriage and different things. We haven't corresponded much, but their whole point is, Shane, this whole group is feeling condemned and suicidal. I'm like, yeah, but point them to the answer.

Don't continue to encourage them in the very thing that is harming them. Encourage them in the Lord. So where do we come up with this notion if somebody's convicted or condemned in their lifestyle that it's God's fault? It's never God's fault.

It's the person needs to look within and get their heart right with God. So there is going to be self-condemning. Even if the church would silence their voice and you edit all Bibles from here on out, you don't talk about this issue ever again, the Holy Spirit will never let loose.

Because it used to be the church is the problem 30 years ago. The church is convicting. The church is judgmental.

That's why people feel this way. Oh, now it's the opposite. Hollywood, the government, everything is embracing sexual morality.

Except some in the church. So what's the problem now then? Why are people still convicted? If everybody in the world supports you except the church, why are you still convicted? Because it's not going to leave. My encouragement though in that is don't beat yourself up.

Take it to the cross. Encourage yourself in the Lord. Manipulating, controlling, aggressive, all these behaviors I wrote down.

I'm not going to go through the whole list, but these are areas that we struggle with. And I don't know about you, but I've seen people just beat themselves up. And they don't want to come to the worship

morning.

We have it at 6.30 in the morning in case you're wondering. We put on worship. They don't want to come to the worship morning.

They don't want to come to church on time. Because the shorter I can get to church, the less I have to hear from that guy who's bald. And then I can get out of here.

And then we walk around. The joy of the Lord isn't in our heart. We don't want to put on worship music.

We want to see who Howard Stern is interviewing. Is he still around? Nobody shake their head. But we're gravitating towards the things of the world.

And we're drifting from God. But we're a Christian. I'm a Christian.

Right. But if you're condemning yourself, you're beating yourself up, you're never strengthening yourself in the Lord, you will get off balance. I will get off balance.

1 John 1.7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from some sin. Oh good.

All sin. So if we walk in the light, He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. Now I'm in no way offering permission to indulge.

You understand that, right? I'm just illustrating the importance of getting back on track and being encouraged. And maybe God put this on my heart for a few people, I'm not sure. But I've been writing to people, I know there's people at church that are feeling discouraged.

If I feel discouraged, at times I know everybody feels discouraged. And if all we keep doing is beating ourselves up, it's going to be difficult. Just like children.

Just like children, we are growing in our walk with the Lord. Are we not? So when your little child was learning how to walk, and they fell down the first time, did they stay down? Same with us. They got back up and they said, I'm going to do this thing right.

And that's the Christian walk to encourage ourselves to get back up. Eventually you'll be walking where you used to be falling. Where you used to be falling.

The same areas that you're falling in. If you strengthen yourself in the Lord, repent of those things, bring those things to the cross, get into the Word, worship, all these things we've been talking about, you'll actually be walking where you used to be falling. And you'll be helping others in the area you used to be stumbling.

That's the wonderful thing about the grace of God. Is that He will use what the enemy was trying to pervert and destroy in you, and you get that under control with God's help, you overcome it, and now you become an overcomer, and now you're helping others in that very same thing. The sad fact is though, many stay in this condemning area and always falling for the rest of their life.

And they know there's a God-given potential. Shane, I know I should be doing more for God. I know, but this keeps tripping me up.

This keeps stumbling me. So I'm going to talk about three or four areas on sin to help with this area. Be encouraged if you sin.

And always just keep your eyes on that. That's why I wanted that up there. Here's a few things you need to know.

The more we pursue sin, the more entrenched we become. We often think the opposite, right? Well, if I just keep in this, then eventually I'll get out of it. Or if I just continue in this, eventually it'll go away.

Actually, the more you walk into it, the deeper you get, the more entrenched you become. Many of you know of Lake Isabella up there, right? In Kernville, I think it is. One year, my friend decided to have me, I think it was 30 years ago now, 25 years ago, take my four-wheel drive down by the lake.

Kind of in the mud, it wasn't too bad, right? And then it started raining. And the farther I got down, the farther that truck kept sinking. We had like four trucks tied onto each other.

I had to pull that thing out. But the farther I got, I'm like, what's going on here? I should be getting out of this. He's like, oh no, that's a flood area.

That's where it's deeper mud over there. It's too late by then. But sin works that same way.

If it's not dealt with, the more we pursue it, the more entrenched we become. Hebrews 3.12 talks about this. Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

But exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Back to this, right? If sin is coming and hardening you, so where's the hope in that? Well, I'm glad you asked. If you're hardened, then turn to Him.

If there's hardness taking place, there's hardness in your heart, maybe you're here this morning because of that. I don't know why I'm here, but I'm hard toward God. There's an unbelief that's set in.

There's an attitude that's set in. And the hope is, in that, be encouraged to turn to God. Turn to Him today.

Number two, sin doesn't have to be your master. This is exciting news. Sin does not have to be your master.

And what are we saying? Oh, well, yeah, I've heard that before, but it sure is mastering me. What's the problem, Shane? Well, let's read John 8. 34-36, Jesus answered and said, Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave to sin. Now, I need to clarify this because if we commit a sin, are you instantly a slave? Not yet.

This word is he who commits a sin when that sin becomes a lifestyle for you. When you begin to sin and keep sinning in that area, keep sinning in that area, repentance doesn't take place, and you're sinning in that area, you keep sinning, you're now a slave of that sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.

Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. So here's the hope. You are free.

You are free. You're not under restraint. You're free as a believer in Jesus Christ if you're a believer in Jesus Christ.

But many think here's where it gets difficult. I shouldn't be sinning then. If I'm free, right? I hear it, I believe it, but boy, I haven't applied it to my life.

Why aren't I free from this? Well, this is actually very simple. Biblically speaking, you are set free from bondage. The bondage of sin, but not the influence of it.

So it's almost like if I were to walk out of a jail cell right at Twin Towers. Walk out of the jail cell. I'm free.

But boy, it sure is calling me back. Three meals a day. TV.

Lots of rest. No angry family members in the house. Right? Boy, it sure looks good.

That sure looks good. And see, you're free. You're free.

I remember that cot. But the influence, right? And you walk back into it, and the gates close. Of course, this is imagery and different things.

It's not exactly like that, but we're free from sin, but not the influence. You are free from the death sentence. You are free from the death sentence, but not the impact.

See, you're not under the condemnation of God. You're free from that death sentence as a believer. But the impact of the fall still remains.

And then number three, sin blinds and deceives. Sin blinds and deceives. Some of you need to hear this this morning.

Humble yourself this morning and ask God to remove the deception. If sin is in your life, and you allow it, and you don't repent, and you just make excuses, because that's why sin usually stays, right? Let's just be honest. It's because we make excuses for it.

Why else would it stay? I mean, you're repenting. It's not staying. So if it's staying, if that sin is staying, then it's because we're excusing it.

Yeah, but... Right, but... I mean, you know how many, in the last year, how many alcoholics I've talked to that excuse their addiction because, yeah, but I've had a hard day, I need to get to sleep. Well, so have I. But they're crying to break out of it. But they can't because why? I need to get to sleep.

Or I need this, or I need that, and we excuse, yeah, but I know I gossip, Shane, but you don't know what they did to me. You don't know what the church used to... You don't know excuses. Yeah, I've got a sexual morality problem, but I'm not going to... I mean, my spouse doesn't need to know.

I've got this. I can quit whenever I want. I can stop.

I don't have a problem. If you have to find yourself saying that, if somebody can confront you on something, and you say, I don't have a problem, that excuse is hindering. So that's what happens.

Sin blinds and deceives, according to John 9.39. Read it this evening. Humble yourself this morning. Ask God to remove the deception.

When I was preparing this point, there's a story I heard a couple years ago. It is unbelievable. Dan Delzell wrote in a blog article many years ago.

I read it, I think, two years ago, three years ago. The title of the article is Google's Executive. You know who Google is, right? Google's Executive.

Tragic death sends sober warning. He said, how do you go from being a devoted father of five, a successful Silicon Valley executive, into a 50-year-old man convulsing from a fatal dose of heroin on a 50-foot yacht with a prostitute walking over your dying body to take a final sip of wine before leaving you to die? He then presented the question, how do tragedies like this take place? See, that's another hard thing as a pastor. You've got to be encouraging, right? In grace and mercy.

But you better be convicting. You better be challenging. You better be exhorting.

Because we're not playing patty cake. We're not playing battleship with the kids. This is not a game.

This is life. And it's not just points. It's not points.

There's an enemy. I mean, maybe it's me, but when I read that passage, the enemy is sent, sent to mess with you a little bit. Kind of give you a bad day.

He might kick you a little bit. No. The enemy is sent to kill, to steal, and to destroy.

You have an adversary that is satanic, and he is sent to kill, steal, and to destroy. What kind of pastor wouldn't equip or warn? To me, it doesn't make any sense. Now granted, the flesh in me doesn't want to do it.

Right? Oh, I don't want everybody to be upset. Right? And it's ironic. It's either God has a sense of humor, or the enemy loves to throw things in there.

But I'll run into people all the time. Oh, I went to your church. Oh gosh, I just had to get out of there.

It's too convicting. Or my favorite, there's too much singing. Yeah, it's probably not the church for you then.

Right? Or I just, that guy is so mean. So this, fire, hellfire, and brimstone. It's convicting.

Conviction. That's why I wish the motto would say, if you don't like what I'm saying, it's because you need to hear what I'm saying. Actually, if you don't like what the Bible is saying, it's because you need to hear what the Bible is saying.

So people want to come to church and have me tell them what they want to hear, or if not what they don't want to hear, tell me pleasant things. Right? This isn't a surprise. Paul told Timothy, the time will come.

Come on, Bible scholars, you know this. The time will come when they will not endure, they will not put up with sound doctrine. But they'll look for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear.

So throughout our nation, if you see a big church, but the gospel is not being preached, don't necessarily blame the pastor. Blame the listeners. Because they're going to find, they're going to find someone to tell me what I want to hear.

The majority of church hopping involves that. Hop. Oh, I don't like what he said.

Hop. Oh, I like what they said, but the worship's not that great. Oh, I like the worship, but I don't like that guy.

Hop. Oh, I like, well, I don't know. I don't like anything there.

And then hop. Oh, I'm never going back there. That's convicting.

That's convicting. And it becomes, well, it's really consumerism. It's what it's become.

And when the pulpit, the Word of God actually, the Word of God is the beacon of light pointing people to the truth. You can't avoid some aspects of that. It just doesn't make any sense.

Many of you, you used to go to Lancaster. I didn't even have this down. I just thought of this story.

You'll remember this. You'll like this story. I like telling this story, so sorry if you've heard it.

But it's a, there's a battleship out in, I think it's above Alaska. And it's deep waters. They're doing deep water exercise for the U.S. Navy.

And the battleship sees a light coming. And the battleship says, hey, turn 15 degrees starboard. And the light comes back.

No, you turn 15 degrees. And the battleship says, no, this is, whoever, I'm one of the highest ranking generals, you know. Navy is, come on, guys.

There we go. Admiral, okay. So I'm the highest ranking admiral.

This story would be better second service if I remember. So he said, I'm the highest ranking admiral. Move 15 degrees now.

And the light said, no, you move 15 degrees. And so he got this, right? If you don't move 15 degrees, I have orders to blow you out of the water. You are approaching United States Navy.

You are approaching the United States Navy Air Force equipped to destroy you, right? Or if you don't move, I'm going to blow you out of the water. And the message came back. I guess it was Morse code or something.

The message came back. Captain, with all due respect, or Admiral, with all due respect, you need to change your course 15 degrees. I'm a lighthouse.

But see, isn't that what is happening here with the truth? Come on, you know. You move this out of the way. You move this over 20%.

You give me this. No, he says, I can't. I can't move.

I'm going to stand right here. I can't move. I am the truth.

I am the way, the truth, the life. Nobody comes to the Father except through Christ. Try to move that even one degree, you're off.

It's impossible. It is absolutely impossible. You think you're hiding the sin, but it's growing.

You think it's contained, but it's not. We can't negotiate with the truth. Trust me, I've tried.

Many years, I've tried. God, can't You bend in this area? Can't You bend in this area? And it goes back to be encouraged if you sin. Here's why I'm going to get to in a minute.

Number four, the echoing voice of conviction becomes harder to hear when sin abounds. Hebrews 3.12 Wake up! Did I get everybody's attention? This is important. The echoing voice of conviction, God convicting you, becomes harder to hear when sin abounds.

When we don't deal with sin, and God is telling you to deal with sin, that voice becomes quieter. That conviction becomes softer. Three times in the book of Hebrews.

Three times in the book of Hebrews, God said this. If He says something three times in one book, a fairly short book, compared to the Old Testament different things, He said, today, not tomorrow, not next week, not later in the evening after church, not next month, not after you blow it and go back. He said, today, today, when you hear My voice, harden not your hearts.

So it's almost this plea of God in Hebrews. The first time He's saying, today, today, if you hear My voice, harden not your heart. Wake up! Today, if you hear My voice, harden not your heart.

Today is the day of salvation. Harden not your heart. And the more God keeps saying that and saying that, sometimes it gets quieter.

It's so interesting. I'll read of stories in different countries. And the first time people hear about the Gospel, I mean, they're on their knees, they're weeping, they're filled with the Spirit.

Oh my, I've never heard that. And then you come to America and say, I've heard that so much. The famous saying is, I was raised in the church.

Oh, well, good for you. My parents are Christians. I was raised in a Christian home.

I went to a Christian school. It doesn't matter. None of that matters.

Do you truly know Christ? That's what matters. So we can come to church. See, here's the group that concerns me.

They can come to church and hear, but the heart is hardened. They hear, I mean, good people come to church. I'll come to church.

It's why it's a very hard group to reach sometimes in America. Because they've been hardened to the message of the Gospel. And they think because they know something, they've experienced it.

I mean, it's funny when I talk to people about worship or experiencing God, they go, oh yeah, I've read about that. Oh, I've heard about that. Man, well, it's not like experiencing it, let me tell you.

It's the same thing with the Gospel. It has to drive the truth into your heart. And then number five, only the truth will set us free.

Only the truth will set us free. An interesting passage. It's going to be the last one I read.

From Romans 5, 18. Therefore, as through one man's offense, judgment came to all men. Think about that.

As through one man's offense, through Adam, if I could see that guy, I would hit him for sure. Oh, I guess I can as a pastor, right? What would I do to him? Just hug him? Yeah, it would be a passionate sermon to him. So as through one man's offense, oh, but let's not, where'd the chip on the shoulder go? As if we wouldn't do the same thing he did, right? I mean, that's all it was.

He went out and God said, don't touch this. And you have everything else. Have you ever done that? Everything else, don't touch but the tree.

It looks so good. It's desirable to make one wise. I'll know how God is and it looks really good for food and pleasant to my eye.

See, it's disobedience. People say, oh, the fruit. What was it? It's the disobedience that caused the downfall.

The disobedience is what happened. So through Adam, the judgment came to all men resulting in condemnation. That's what's wrong with society.

So when you look at the news, what is going on in the world right here? The world is actually under the wrath and condemnation of God. The whole world is under God's wrath and condemnation. Shane, I thought this was encouraging.

Hold on. Here's the encouraging part. Even so, through one man's righteous act, Jesus Christ, the free gift came to all men.

So there's a gift that's been given out to all men. That's why I don't embrace the teaching that it's only for some people. It came to all men, the gift of God, resulting in what? Justification of life.

To be justified. See, if you're under condemnation and God's conviction, that's the reason why most people don't like God. That's the reason why they don't want to hear this.

They don't want the condemnation. They don't want the conviction because you're under that. But when you're set free from that through Christ's obedience, it's exciting.

There's a change that takes place in your life. So Jesus, one man's obedience, many will be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered.

So the law came. You know the law, the Ten Commandments. The law came, entered, that the offenses might abound.

So now we have the Ten Commandments. Now you know what God requires. Now you know that what He says is good, what's not good, and that is the law of God.

But then it goes on to say, but where sin abounds, where sin abounds, right? It's abounding. Where sin is present, grace abounds less. Grace abounds equally too.

Where sin abounds, grace abounds much more. So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. The love of God will always supersede and go beyond our sin.

This is what's encouraging. The love of God, the grace of God, the mercy of God always goes far and above the weight of sin. See, it crushes the weight of sin.

When you turn to Christ, it annihilates it. We sing that song sometimes, my resurrected King has resurrected me. God is the grave robber.

He robbed the grave and out of that you come in victory. Yes, there's sin, but grace abounds. It covers everything.

It's greater. It's stronger. They're not even equal.

So if you focus on the goodness of God and the grace of God, you encourage yourself in the Lord and people say, Shane, no, no, no, they're going to sin more. Oh no! When you truly love God and the grace of God, you live under a higher standard. Why would I go and want to hurt my father in my relationship? The people that have a perverted view of grace have a perverted view because they want one.

They want to continue in sin, so they use that excuse. And when I speak sometimes, people say, oh, you're just giving permission to sin. How? When you sin, you look to the grace giver.

And because of grace, I live under a higher standard. Don't you? Because of God's grace. He did that so I didn't.

He rescued me, so I'm saved. And now I want to go and flaunt that? And smash that? And ha, ha, ha, sin, sin, sin. Come on, grace, more, more, more.

It doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make any sense to a person who truly knows the Lord. Those people who are using grace to sin, many of them don't truly know the Lord.

They have religion, but not a relationship. And that's why I think it's James who said they use their liberty as a cloak for vice. Right? A cloak.

It's a covering. So I have liberty in Christ. Look at my sin.

See, I can do all this stuff you can't. Ha, ha. I'm going to post all this beer on Facebook and look what I can do and you can't.

Ha, ha. Right? It's covering. It's covering.

It's a cloak for vice. That was just an example. Don't get convicted if you had a beer.

Grace abounds. Grace wins. Grace pursues.

Grace covers. See, that's the big deal about grace. That might have been a better title.

Grace abounds. Grace wins. Grace pursues.

Grace covers. Did the Father, did the Father, when the prodigal son was coming home, did the Father see the sinful, disgusting son and was just going to wait there? I can't believe he's finally coming home. Look at that.

He looks like a pig. Has he been sleeping with the pigs? No, the Father actually has been waiting. Can you get this? The Father is waiting.

Would you come back? Would you come home? I see Him. I'm running to my Son. I'm going to meet my Son.

I'm going to hold Him. I'm going to build Him a house by my house. I'm going to have a feast for my Son who came home.

That's how God views it. God's faithfulness. God's faithfulness, His steadfastness, His unwavering love.

He's constant. He's dependable. He's enduring.

He's unfaltering. He's relentless. You name one person in your life who's even close to that.

One thing in this world. I want one thing who's consistent in one of those areas. One area.

Just tell me after the service. Always, always faithful. Are there people in your life? Oh, they're always faithful.

Oh, my Lord. We're not even faithful. Steadfast.

That means strong. Unmovable. Unwavering.

Constant. Constant. Aren't you so glad you don't read this and go, well, that's not... You were that 2,000 years ago.

Why did you change on me? Now you're changing. Now you're back to this, God? Well, do I obey this or not? Next week. Okay, so now I don't have... He's just constant.

I don't know about you, but I like consistency. I like constant. I like something you can count on, you can take to the bank.

You can rely upon it. You can build your life on the solid foundation. Because see, the storm comes to everybody, doesn't it? No, nobody's had a storm? I hope the 11 o'clock's more participating here.

We're going to get them a whole bunch of coffee and donuts out there or something. But the storm comes to everybody, right? Jesus said the storm will come. The storm will come.

But whose house did not fall? He said the man who hears what I say, but does not do it, he builds his house on the sinking sand of man's philosophy, on secularism, on the world, on what he thinks is right. That's what the normal man builds his house on. But Jesus said that man, that man who hears what I'm saying and does it, he built his life on the rock, on the rock, on the solid foundation that is consistent, dependable, enduring, unfaltering, relentless.

Name one person who even mimics one of those qualities. I mean, I got so excited yesterday. I couldn't believe the God we serve, the God we can come and worship.

If you got that in your heart, you wouldn't be bored during worship. Listen, you can scream at the eagles, but when you come in here, you're silent and bored. What's wrong? I'll tell you what's wrong.

If you don't like what I'm saying, it's because you need to hear what I'm saying. You need God to wreck your heart and to wreck your life. If you sin, you have an advocate.

If you sin, you have an advocate. Don't keep beating yourself up. Yes, be convicted.

Improve. Repent. But what's that for? Is that so we can just walk around in misery? Listen, I'm not looking for the whole church.

I'm looking for a group of people who understand who they are in Christ. They are victorious. They are soldiers.

They are armed for battle. They walk into the enemy's camp and they slaughter the enemy. They don't allow the enemy to come in and harass them.

Jesus, He's on the cross. He says, done. From Adam.

It depends on what your view of it, on the generations and different things, but you've got from Adam possibly 4,000 years of sin. 4,000. Can you imagine all the sin that occurred in 4,000 years? The earth is actually groaning.

The mountains shake at the tremble in the presence of Christ. All earth is waiting for this time in history. This man comes that was a man of no notoriety.

He was a man of obscurity. He comes on the cross. The Son of God goes on that cross and He uses a very interesting word, tetelestai, in the Greek.

Tetelestai. It's finished. It's done.

Every sin in the past, every sin in the present, can you imagine the enemy in one fatal blow? It's finished. It's done. The price has been paid.

The price has been paid. He said, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. So the same people that were mocking their Creator, killing their Creator, condemning their Creator, He simply said, Father, forgive them.

They know not what they do. It's finished. I paid it all.

Maybe it's just me, but that would change the way you live your life. 6 a.m. might not be that early for worship. If we realized what He did, I'd be here at 2 a.m. I'd be here tonight.

I mean, I'm not trying to be overly exaggerating things, but we would make time. Because we make time to other things. Come on.

When people say, when people tell me I don't really have time, what they're saying is it's not important to me. Right? We'll make time. I will stop this service right now.

I will leave this church and I will not have the second service. If I get a call, it says your daughter's in the hospital. Oh, I thought you were busy.

Too bad, Brant. Come up and do worship. I'm gone.

Well, I thought you didn't have the time. You're too busy. You don't have time for that.

I will make time. You will make time for what's important to you. And you have to go back to this area of grace.

He's consistent. He's dependable. He's enduring.

He's unfaltering. He's relentless. Actually, do you know what one of God's name is? One of His names is victory.

In that song we sing, my resurrected King is resurrecting me. That's what the Christian life is. It's falling and getting back up.

It's like a fighter. The devil, okay, that was a good one. I'm not turning that direction again.

Now you just upset me. Right? Now I'm a little, I'll just leave it there. But now I'm gonna, you know what? Now I'm gonna pray and fast all day.

You son of the devil. Right? And there's warfare. You get back up.

You say because of the grace of God. So be encouraged this morning. Be encouraged on who you are in Christ.

The reason many, though, aren't encouraged is because they're not filled with God's Spirit. You can't just whip it up through the flesh. The flesh is in opposition to God.

You have to get into worship. You have to get into His Word. You have to get into prayer.

You get to church as often as you can. You get built up with the Spirit. That's how you go to war.

That's how you get encouraged.

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