

Breaking Free of Pornography

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman emphasizes the urgent need for Christians to confront the sin of pornography through accountability, pursuit of holiness, and reliance on the Holy Spirit for victory.

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Scripture: Matthew 5:29, John 8:36, Romans 13:14, 2 Corinthians 10:4, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 6:12, Philippians 4:13, James 4:7, 1 Peter 2:11, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Breaking Free from Sin", "Pursuing Holiness"

Description

Shane Idleman addresses the urgent need for the church to confront the issue of pornography and sin, emphasizing that casual Christianity is insufficient in the face of extreme spiritual attacks. He encourages believers to adopt an offensive stance against sin, utilizing the power of the Holy Spirit to achieve victory and pursue holiness. Shane stresses the importance of removing triggers for sin, making no provision for the flesh, and actively seeking accountability and support. He highlights that true freedom comes from a deep relationship with Christ, where believers are filled with the Spirit and equipped to resist temptation. Ultimately, Shane calls for a serious commitment to holiness and a rejection of compromise in the Christian walk.

Transcript

Last week I talked about the peril and the power of pornography. The peril and the power of pornography. And the feedback actually has been overwhelming.

From people mainly saying, thank God we're talking about this in the church. The place that really it should come from has been avoiding it many times, including myself. You know, it's a topic that's not easy to talk about but needs to be talked about.

I've got articles coming out as well on this topic. So last week and this week a lot of the sermon transcripts are being put into articles and I'll be able to share those as well. This one, this week, is breaking free.

Breaking free of the power of pornography. It could actually be breaking free of sin, could have been the title of the message. Because these principles don't just apply for pornography, it applies to sin in general.

And what we talked about, a few things I talked about last week, I didn't get to finish everything so I want to just recap a few things. The first thing is we have to remember that an extreme attack will take an extreme defense. We can all agree on that.

That there is an attack against our country, there's an attack against our families, there's an attack against us individually. Like anything we've ever dealt with before. I can guarantee you Laura Ingalls on Little House on the Prairie did not have to deal with this type of attack from the enemy.

You hope you get that right? Now something is just a click away, more perversion than the world has ever known is a click away. So an extreme attack is going to take an extreme defense. I'm just here to tell you the truth.

So you might want to rehash out your battle plans. The casual Christianity is not going to cut it today. Lukewarm Christianity is not going to be able to defeat the enemy in this type of onslaught.

And I believe the reason that most people are miserable is that they are not in defense mode. They are living in defeat mode. Constantly defeated, constantly, you know sin will wear you out.

And many people are in the church today are not excited about church, they're not excited about God, they're stuck in defeat mode. They've been defeated and discouraged. When really we're called to be on, people say the defense or the offense, really we're called to be on the offense against Satan's kingdom.

We're going against the gates of hell by the power and the blood of Jesus Christ. So we're not always supposed to be defending, we are to defend, but we're also to be on the offensive to push in. The kingdom suffers violence and the violent take it by force.

Love the King James on that, but he's saying, Jesus is saying from the time of John the Baptist until now, there's going to be a violent upheaval, a spiritual battle. The demons never had to listen to anyone until Jesus stepped on the scene. Think about that.

They've lost all control, all power when Jesus Christ stepped onto the earth and began to cast them out, began to rebuke Satan. And we've been given that same power and that same authority in Jesus name. I don't know how many of you realize that.

But the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to believers because of the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. So you can conquer sin. You can live a victorious Christian life.

Yes, there'll be mishaps. Yes, there'll be fallen steps. And you get back up and you fight that battle.

And the scripture we talked about last week, I want to bring it up again, is Matthew 5.29. Matthew 5.29. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish to not to have an eye than for your whole body to be cast into hell. So what he's saying here is obviously you don't chop off your fingers.

Obviously you don't do certain things and maim yourself. Because the battle's in here. The sin is up here.

The sin takes place first here before it's acted out. So he's saying if there's anything that provokes you, anything that triggers you, anything that induces you, anything that inspires you, anything that motivates you to sin, remove it. You know, we'd fix a lot of problems if we would just follow that verse.

Whatever's causing it, whatever's tripping us up needs to be removed. It's funny, we got a Facebook message this week on this message of pornography. And I know this guy.

He said I can, you know, share it. He said, when I was younger, I sometimes thought that your approach was too harsh, he told me. I thought, well, some of his points are good, but he's going overboard.

But let me say that time and time again, God's Word has proven to be right. Never once have I personally or anyone I've ever talked to looked back and thought, I wish I had been less vigilant, less careful. Never once have I thought, I wish I had not been so committed to holiness.

Never once. It always is the reverse. It's always looking back and thinking, wow, I didn't see that coming.

Or wow, I didn't realize the danger. And you've heard me mention before, I actually recommended it on Facebook. There's a book website, it's called Rare Christian Books, rarechristianbook.com. It's where I get a lot of the rare Christian books that aren't really published anymore.

And the more I order, the more I read, the more this theme of holiness stands out. There's one book I'm reading now about certain people that started the Salvation Army. If you read this book, you'd think I was just going easy.

These guys, I mean, and I put the book down, they are absolutely correct. And you see this theme of holiness. You have this theme of fighting sin.

You have this theme of coming out from among them, being separate, and walking and living the Christian life. But nowadays, we've kind of sugarcoated that. We've kind of tailored things to build an audience but not break a heart.

And I quoted J.C. Ryle before, but it fits perfectly with this sermon. He lived in the 1800s. In his book on holiness, he said, we must stand guard as a soldier on enemy ground.

The problem is that many love the world and have a hard time separating. They believe in heaven, but they don't truly long for it. They say that they fear God, but they don't live like it.

They indulge temptation rather than fight it. They enjoy sin rather than confront it. And they compromise rather than conquer.

And the lukewarm church disdains the heat of conviction. If you ever meet a lukewarm Christian, they will not like conviction unless they're ready to change. Don't turn up the heat.

I like it on the easy setting. I like just a little comfort. Don't turn up the heat.

Well, let's just ask Peter. Do you think he might have something to say? 1 Peter 2.11, he said, beloved, beloved, I beg you. And I can see Peter doing this.

I beg you, and I don't think he's joking around. I think we sometimes tell too many jokes in the church. The church can be serious sometimes.

He said, I beg you, I beseech you, I urge you. What does he say? To abstain, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. That's pretty clear.

I beg you, whatever is warring against your soul, whatever you are feeding that monster within, abstain from it. Do the hard things. Do the hard things.

And I want to give you a few examples of this, I thought of this week, that I've seen people experience freedom through. Now, a disclaimer, of course, we trust in Christ, we run to Christ. He's the answer.

He's the truth, the life. Nobody comes to the Father except through him. He's our anchor.

He's our foundation. He's our sure footing. He's our Sabbath rest.

We got it. But there are also practical things we can do. You can have open phones, passwords that are common to your spouse.

There's even apps that you can put on a phone where your kid's text can go to you. And when the kids say, mom, dad, I don't want to do that, why? There's also apps where a person can put on their phone that will tell you the location they're at. Maybe somebody has a problem with, I remember this was recommended, well, I don't want to give too much to the kids here.

So, he would just not go places that were good, let's say that. But he didn't want to put on this location app on his phone, just so, see, it's accountability. These things in themselves won't help you, because you can find the little, you know, you can go around the corner, or you can go around these things if you truly want to, if the heart's not right.

But these are wonderful safeguards. I remember when crack cocaine was big. I don't know if it's still around, and all, that's good, I guess.

But I had three employees that were addicted to it, and I told them, I'm never paying you on Friday. I'll pay you on Monday, and I'll give it to your mom or your wife, get your paycheck. And believe it or not, it was the one or so that would do that, that would find freedom, that would find healing.

How bad do they want it? People are like, oh, these are extreme. Well, how bad do you want it? You remove those things that cause you to stumble. We talked last year, or last week, last week about software transparency.

You can put software on your phones, on your computers that will block things. How bad do you want it? We offer a pure desires class for men. How bad do you want it? Because see, somebody who truly wants to change will take the necessary steps.

Here's why, because I don't trust what's in here. That's what, as worried as I'm about the devil, I'm worried about the old chain. Because he'll take me down a lot quicker than the devil will.

So you restrain the flesh, the Bible says. You crucify the flesh. You don't play with it.

I could sit here and quote a lot of scriptures on denying the flesh, making no provision for the flesh, fleeing from what the flesh desires, removing the things that bring you down. See, if we get back to this beautiful word of holiness, it's a wonderful concept and a truth. You know why this is so important? Because the more you're filled with the spirit, the more you're doing things that honor God, the less you're filled with the flesh.

So I'm gonna give you an example of that. You wanna see an example? All right, hopefully Brad won't need this. Henry said he'd help me fix it for the next service.

All right, I wish I could find different colored ping pong balls, but I didn't. So the white will represent the sin, the ping pong balls. That's a sin, full of sin, right? And many people even in this room listening later or listening now, they can't comprehend what I'm talking about because they're full of sin.

They've quenched and grieved the spirit of God. So once you do these things, once you start to put in more of the spirit of God, what starts to happen? Get back into the word of God, get into worship. We have a worship morning, all right? I'm starting to honor God, I'm starting to, holiness, I'm focusing on holiness.

I'm getting accountability, I'm getting this software, I'm getting transparency going in my life. I'm removing the things of the world and I'm pouring more of God into my life. What starts to happen? See, the more of God you begin to pour into your life, the more that you desire holiness, the more you hunger and thirst for righteousness, you will be filled, filled with the right things.

There's a few stragglers. There's a few stragglers. You're not perfect.

There's a few little, these little stinkers on this side of the cross. But I'd rather have this, wouldn't you? Or deal with the, and here's what starts to happen. When sin starts to go down, they just pop back up.

You can't put these back in. There's no way in the world these are going back in until what? The water comes out. That's what quenching and grieving the Holy Spirit is.

You begin to remove his influence. You begin to remove the work of the spirit. And you begin to be filled back in with the sin and the depravity.

That's the only way you'll become victorious over sin, is you begin to submit your life to the Holy Spirit and allow him to fill your heart, because that lust that you can never control, now it's one of these. It's a little harasser. Just remember, I'm going to leave these down here, the whole service, so you don't get your mind off of that.

But that's how you defeat sin. So all these things I'm talking about are one pour of the cup. Because you can just read the Bible and still be in pornography.

You can come to worship morning. You can be at church right now and you'll click on something tonight. But if you're into worship, you're into the word, you're into praising him, you're into repenting and being transparent.

You're into, hey, I might struggle tonight. Can you text me? Are you available? You put all these safeguards. You start being filled with the Spirit of God and you will drive that out.

That's just how it works. There's no other way around this. I've tried, I've looked.

We're either full of the things of God, or we've quenched the Spirit of God, and we're full of the things of the world. But that is a balancing act, correct? Because as the week goes by, you can be so filled with God on Sunday, come Thursday, what came back in? The sin and the depravity begin to come back in if we don't push them out. So last week, I also talked about going back to the old paths.

That's what we have to do, go back to the old paths, Jeremiah 6.16. Again, I'm talking to those who want victory. I'm not playing church anymore. We decided that eight years ago when we planted the church.

Oh, just wait. God says, for whatever a man sows, he will reap. And when you reap, it's the whirlwind.

And I've seen so many people where they don't stand where God's shelter is covering and they're outside of that and they're thinking, this isn't hurting anything. Little do they know, because God has withdrawn much of that anointing, that blessing from their family because they've rejected him. They're too busy for church.

And the husband's caught in this. The enemy's whispering to the wife to go have an affair. He doesn't see it coming until it's too late.

But everything was good. Everything was good. What happened? Oh, see, whatever a man sows, he will reap.

The enemy's working in that. So don't ever think for a minute that will not end in death. Some type of death, death of a relationship, death of a family, death in a relationship with God.

Death just means separation in the Bible. Sometimes physically, often spiritually, there's a separation. For God does not tempt man, right? Man is tempted.

He is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. And when that temptation is conceived, it brings forth death. Gosh, if we just loved the Scriptures more, we'd get a lot of direction.

Sorrow doesn't work, but repentance does. See, many people, the guy I called actually has cried over this. He's shed tears.

I can't believe this is happening. That's not repentance. That's your worried about your image.

So it has to start there. Number two, pursue holiness. Pursue holiness.

Yes, it's what I've been talking about, but I wanted to give you really what holiness is. I'm going to sum it up in the word holy. And I got this from Brian Long, thanks to Phil.

The message is called to be holy on YouTube. I would encourage you to watch it. I emailed Brian.

He said, I can use this analogy because it's so true. Holy, always remember this, H-O-L-Y, right? Here's what it is. H, hunger for righteousness.

There has to be a hunger. Because if you're not hungry and you're bored, then you will not see victory in this area. That's why I often ask, are you bored in church or hungry? God, I'm hungry for righteousness.

Those who hunger and thirst for the power of the Spirit, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled. You have, see, I hunger for this. I don't know about you, but I hunger for the purity of the gospel.

I hunger for the purity and the power of the Holy Spirit. God, I hunger for that. The Spirit within me cries, Abba, Father, God, I want more of you.

I want more of that. I'm hungering and I'm thirsting for God. God, I'm going to lay hold of you until you answer that prayer.

You don't think he hears that cry? You don't think he hears that desperation? That's where holiness starts. Shane, calm down. You get more excited about the stealers.

Why do I have to calm down? We should be excited about the holiness of God and the power of God and the purity of the gospel. Man, I'll take a group of 12 people that are hungry and holy and bold, then 1,200 that are bored. And then O means obey.

Oh, Lord. Obey. Obey what the Holy Spirit is telling you.

And most of us, right now, we know there's maybe something in our life. I know. Oh, I know God wants me to do this.

Oh, but I'm not obeying. To be holy, you have to obey those promptings, the leadings, and I love the, thank God God doesn't just spank us. Well, I gave you one chance.

It's a continual, what it is, it's an invitation. It's a drawing. It's a drawing.

Come closer to me. Obey me in these areas. And then L, L is obviously what we talked about.

Look to Christ. Look to Christ. Again, not about rules.

Because if you're like, well, I'm gonna put this app on my phone. I'm gonna, you know, have an accountability partner. I'm gonna try not to go on the computer at night.

I'm gonna do all these things, do and do, and that's just your willpower. That's strictly willpower. And I believe willpower and self-discipline are good.

I'm not one who puts that down because the fruit of the Spirit is self-discipline. To discipline self. To tell the flesh no.

To put the flesh in submission. To crucify the flesh. That's all part of self-discipline.

So you look to Christ, and then the letter Y. This is so true. You yield. You yield.

And David talked about, I guess he's a rancher, and he can tell a difference, obviously all of us can, from a, how many of you have horses here? Balcony up there, a couple. Anyone down here? Horses, horses, horses, okay, horses. Do you wanna ride a broken horse? Or a wild stallion? Of course, right? Nobody can ride the wild horse.

Why? It has to be broken. And it's not until it's broken and submitting and yielding under the direction of the Master that it's correctly led. Same thing with holiness.

There has to be a yielding. With the right heart. And then number three.

I think we talked about this in one of the services, but not the second. Extinguish the fuel source. Extinguish the fuel source.

Now, a lot of these are overlapping, of course, but to avoid, we have to avoid looking intentionally at things that stimulate less. David said, I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set nothing wicked before my eyes.

See, this is where many people get in trouble. They play patty cake with the devil. And they have things that they shouldn't have.

And they're fueling, they're fueling the sin, not extinguishing it. Now, of course, at this point in the message, don't raise your hand, but I'm sure many people are saying, because I've thought it, but Shane, who could measure up? My Lord, do you have a longer list than that? How am I supposed to conquer that? Who in the world could ever measure up? No one. No one.

Here's the problem, though. Most people use that as an excuse to sin, not motivation to fight. Well, who can ever measure up? Forget it, I'll just cave in.

Instead of motivation to fight and say, Lord, I can't do this without you. There's an interesting teaching. Many years ago, it was part of the holiest movement.

Methodists, some Methodists picked it up. I don't think John Wesley went this far, but it's called something, there's different terms, but it's perfectionism. Perfectionism, that a Christian can get to a state where they're not sinning, ever.

Now, if you've arrived, talk to me afterwards. Love to pick your brain for a while. You know? The interesting thing, though, is the concept in and of itself is not, well, let me say this carefully.

I can see where they come up with it, because the Bible encourages us to not sin. It doesn't say when you sin, it says if you sin. You have an advocate to go to.

I write this to you, John would say, so that you do not sin, and with the power of the Holy Spirit operating in our lives, the ability is there is not to sin through the work of the Holy Spirit, but the flesh is so strong, and that pull is so hard, and it's a lifelong struggle, that we succumb to that work of the flesh. So here's what we need to do. We need to become men and women of prayer.

I'm not giving permission to sin. When I said earlier that there's a pull there, because I think we can live in that victorious Christian life. To me, victorious Christian living is when you're living with the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Yes, you might have said something you shouldn't have. You ever send up the wrong email, or, oh, I shouldn't have slipped with that word. You know, it's funny, people have come up to me and said, if a person cusses, they're not a Christian.

Well, do you ever slip on something here, and do you ever actually make any mistakes? I mean, you know, and that's victorious, is you getting back on track. Any angry outbursts in this room? Oh, I totally, oh, I'm so sorry. But see, you get back on track.

God, thank you for working in my heart. I wanna change, and you're changing. You're being conformed in the image of Christ.

You're living victoriously, because that sin is not getting you. You're getting it, and you're putting it in its place. Again, not permission to sin, but how to deal with it.

It's to crucify it. Men would live better if they prayed better. Sin cannot gain a stronghold in a broken praying heart.

We must spend much time on our knees before God if we are to overcome sin. Again, do hard things. Number four, avoid compromise.

Avoid compromise. Now, compromise is a little bit different than these things. Compromise is, do you know areas where you begin to compromise? And at first, it's not a big deal.

And then, you do some more, this isn't too big of a deal. And you begin to compromise. See, you used to stand for things.

You used to be strong. Nope, nope, but then you begin to compromise. Well, and you begin to open that door for Satan.

And you begin to do things you wouldn't have normally did. You begin to go places you normally wouldn't have went. You begin to entertain things you normally wouldn't have entertained.

And you begin to compromise. And the enemy, that's why I've said before, he doesn't push us off that building. He walks us down one sin at a time.

One compromise at a time. One wrong choice at a time. For example, this happens a lot.

Young couples wanting to get married, they want to focus on sexual purity. And they are, man, they've got some good things in place. But then, well, let's just, parents are gone, let's watch a movie together.

Which I'm not saying is bad, you know. You know where I'm going with this. People are like, this guy's out there.

No, you know, oh, I'm going somewhere. And then, okay, that wasn't too bad. You know, keep your hands to yourself kind of thing.

And then, well, let's do that again. Can I pick up some Chardonnay? Two bottles or one? See, normally you wouldn't, and then, I know we weren't doing anything, but can we, now, can we get a little intimate? You know, and you start to make those compromises. Same thing with the word of God.

Going to church on fire for God. You know what? We've got things to do. We can't make it like we used to.

We can't be involved like we used to. I've got this new job. I've got, you know, full days ahead of me.

I can't read the word like I used to. That'll come later. I'll come later.

Maybe when I retire, I'll have more time. And then you begin to, see how that compromise works? That's how we, he works in all of our lives, compromise. Or a man at work, strong ethics.

I'm not, you know, not gonna cheat on his spouse. But then begins to compromise. Well, I'll go to lunch with someone I shouldn't.

Isn't it funny how the world just chew Vice President Pence up? Oh, you don't go to lunch with someone other than your wife? Yeah, you idiot world. That's how you, hello? Don't get me started, I'm sorry. But you start to take those compromises.

That's how he gets you to the bottom. He doesn't show you, oh my Lord, look where that's going. He entices one step at a time, one wrong choice at a time.

Romans 13, 14 tells us to make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. You know what provision means? Don't plan ahead to sin. Don't plan ahead.

Don't make a provision for the flesh. You guys think I joke about this, but I don't. I try not to have junk food in my house because that chocolate cake, those brownies.

Man, if I had brownies on my pantry and Twinkies and Captain Crunch, I'd be a mess. Make it, oh, the flesh is pulling and pulling and pulling. Shane, you just need self-discipline.

No, I don't need that kind of stuff in my house. Now, I'm making a little example of what's a bigger problem because we're allowing things into our lives that are much bigger than Captain Crunch, much more destructive than brownies. Out of sight, out of mind, you begin to remove those things.

I'm gonna read an email I received this week. I titled it Chasing the Lie of Pornography. When computers became a household product, I was really in trouble.

It became a quick and easy access point. The addiction became such a problem for my husband that he would view it with the children present. I would become upset and tell him the kids were here.

He would say, if they don't like it, don't look. I was never my husband's only one. There were affairs and a constant barrage of pressure to engage in unthinkable acts.

I never felt special or respected him, or nor did I feel respected. Intimacy was not sacred. It was sick.

I felt repulsed. I felt filthy. I felt like I was doing something wrong.

Everything was twisted and confusing. Porn killed, it smashed and destroyed the beautiful gift God intended for us to keep and cherish. If any man thinks this won't affect his marriage in a negative way, think again.

If you think it won't affect your daughters in a negative way, think again. If you think your sons are not watching and it will not affect them, think again. You are lying to yourself.

Once you test the waters of sexual sin, your wife cannot satisfy. If you don't stop, you'll lose your family. You'll have to rely upon stimuli that is not God-given.

Porn rewires you. Anger, violence, guilt, shame, and sexual sin are born because there is no way out of the lie until the day you choose to become completely delivered. And she said, can't they see there is no finish line, there is no trophy, there is no ribbon, there is no medal.

It's the lie, the lie of pornography. You know, and she made a good point that I actually wrote up here this morning. You should view it this way.

You know, many people avoid drugs because they alter. Pornography is a drug that alters your mind. It's not a physical something you take and you get in this altered state, but it begins to rewire your mind, it begins to rewire your thinking.

Perversion begins to grow and grow, and darkness begins to change your concept of sexuality and different things. It's a powerful drug that no one's talking about. Now, I also want to touch a little bit about demons, the demonic realm.

There's a whole study in theology called demonology because I do believe that the demonic realm is working overtime in this area. My struggle with this is with, say, demons and demonic, is I personally don't

believe that a believer can be possessed or overwhelmed by demons to such a degree that where they are out of control. And I've had people email me, sincere people, and said, Shane, it wasn't until I was delivered.

That's wonderful, everything you said. That's wonderful, but it didn't help me at all. I had to be delivered.

And I don't want to minimize your experience. Many of you have listened to Derek Prince who passed away a long time ago. He believed in this, and there may be something to it.

People do need deliverance. I'm big on that. I'm big on deliverance.

But I do not believe that a demon can oppress someone to such a degree that they are no longer in control and they cannot obey the scriptures. I just, I don't see that. As a believer, and there's a demon on that person, they can't obey the scriptures.

I don't see any scriptural relevance for that at all because no temptation has overtaken you but what is common to man. But God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear. But with the temptation, he will make a way of escape.

You just, you don't see verses, 1 Corinthians 12. Try all this, but if it doesn't work, there's a demon. And you need to be delivered.

Now, please understand, because I know it's going to upset some people. I believe that people need to be delivered, Christians, from a demonic type of oppression. From there's a demonic element there, whether they've opened it up through astrology and new age and Ouija boards and darkness and the occult or sexual sin where they are molested.

And there's a demonic element that has latched onto them and it's harassing them, it's oppressing them, and it will not let them go. And sometimes that needs to be dealt with. So I'm not minimizing that.

But I've seen a lot of people think they can't keep, they can never get freedom because this demonic realm is too strong. But I read that greater is he that's in you than he that's in the world. So that's why I don't tie too much into demonology in this.

I believe the demonic realm is heavily involved in drug addiction, heavily involved in pornography. But I believe as a scripture, as the scriptures teach this, as you're filled with the spirit of God. Now, if there's a besetting sin and something you just can't quit, then have someone pray with you.

Pray for that demonic oppression to stop. Because I don't know if you've ever experienced that. When you experience that, it takes it up to a whole new level.

When you're with the believer who's been set free for months, they're just driving and something is taking them to that liquor store. What is that that's coming upon me? That could be a demonic oppression. That demonic oppression that has gripped in you, it's taken a weak area of your life, and it's beginning to manipulate.

But I believe, I believe that a believer can say, because of the blood of Jesus Christ, no temptation is going to overtake me. I can say no, I can resist this devil, and he will have to flee. Because if you weigh it, you have all these scriptures supporting, resisting the devil, making no provision, fighting, fleeing, bearing the temptation, and you don't have any saying, well, you're out of luck if that's you, because this demon is

not letting go.

I just don't see that. So hopefully I've clarified that. I'm not minimizing the demonic realm in any way, shape, or form.

I'm just saying I think we give them too much credit. I read this poem a year ago, and some of you requested, I'm just gonna read the last two paragraphs. In regard to addiction, you knew this would happen many times, you were told, but you challenged my power and chose to be bold.

You could have said no and just walked away. If you could live that day over now, what would you say? I'll be your master, you be my slave. I'll even go with you when you go to your grave.

Now that you have met me, what will you do? Will you try me or not? It's all up to you. I can bring you more misery than words can tell. Come take my hand, let me lead you to hell.

See, and that's been the challenge for me this week, is wanting to share and letting you know that in the midst of deep darkness, there is a great light. There is great hope. I want to offer that, and I will, but we cannot, at least I cannot, minimize the seriousness of sin.

You'll never see it painted in a good light in all of Scripture. You will never see it painted in such a way where you don't need to worry about it. You will never see it painted in picture as something that's, well, you know, just kind of keep an eye out for it.

You always see it painted in Scripture as something destructive and something that needs to be dealt with swiftly, and you see that the roaring lion goes about to devour, to steal, to kill, to destroy. You see that giving in to temptation and the sin brings forth death. You see this picture of, because I believe that if we see the death in it, we see the destruction in it, we see sin like God sees it, that it put Christ on the cross, it might change our view.

But there's a big movement, especially in the church. I hear it all the time on TV sometimes. People say, well, it's just a bad choice.

It's just a bad choice, and it is. It's just a little mishap, and we begin to dumb it down. Adultery is called a fling.

I mean, a fling sounds fun, kind of. You know, flinging something as a kid, and we dumb down these words. Now, thank God.

I was gonna get to this at the end, but thank God, the greater the darkness, the greater the light. The greater the darkness, the greater of life. Not for a moment, we sing that song, not for a moment has God forsaken me.

Not for one second has God forsaken you. The light is always greater than the darkness, so you turn to the light, turn to Christ, look for redemption and salvation. Don't fight this on your own.

There's a song also that says, I've been told to be ashamed. I've been told I don't measure up. I've been told I'm not good enough.

And you know what, many people tell me, and you're probably thinking this right now, but Shane, who could ever measure up to everything you're saying? That's super Christian. Who could measure up? And

you know what, you're right. No one, no one can measure up on this side of eternity, except Christ, our example, obviously.

But I've noticed for most people, this becomes an excuse to sin, not motivation to fight. Most people say, who could ever measure up? Forget it, just let me cave in to the desires of the flesh. Who could ever measure up? That should be actually motivation to fight the good fight.

Paul says, come out like a soldier, welding the weapons of our warfare, the sword of the spirit, the word of God. And you come out and you say, devil, I'm fighting for my marriage. I'm fighting for my children.

How many of you are praying for your children on a daily basis? God, would you guard them? Would you shelter them? Keep the evil one away from them, Lord. But even if they stumble, even if they fall, will you uphold them with your righteous right hand because the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. And you see, God, see, that's the hardest part of this job this morning for me.

I will tell you, this is balancing God's love and mercy and grace and running to the fountain of life and drinking of living water. But don't forget about the seriousness of sin. The Bible never paints sin in a good light.

It never says, eh, don't worry about it. Just that little, that little, you know, that little gnat. It actually says it doesn't use stronger language.

What do you do when you read that, that your adversary goes about, just think about this. The adversary goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may play catch with, seeking who he might wrestle a little bit with, see who he might make somebody's day bad. He goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

The thief cometh not except to kill, to steal, and to destroy. Every man is led away by his own temptation. And when that temptation is conceived, it brings forth sin.

And sin, fully grown, brings forth death. So looking at Scripture, I love to encourage. I love to motivate, but you gotta wake up.

You gotta wake up. That's why, you know, I'm, that's why I say Joel Osteen sermons aren't gonna cut it in these dire times. I'm not putting down, I'm just saying that is not gonna cut it.

That's not gonna equip believers to fight the good fight of faith. There's warfare. You wrestle not against, what do you, principalities? We wrestle not against principalities or against powers.

Oh no, actually we do. We wrestle against principalities and powers and darkness. So the Bible is very clear, so finding that balance is hard, but it's possible.

So again, back to the lyrics. I've been told to be ashamed. I've been told I don't measure up.

I've been told I'm not good enough. But think about this. This thinking is in direct opposition to the word of God.

Who the Son sets free is free indeed. I'm gonna share a difficult scripture with you. I'm gonna close with this.

And I don't mean difficult as if I don't believe it, you know, because I believe the word of God. We teach it. We believe in the inerrancy of scripture.

We believe in the power, the authority of God's word. But do you ever read a difficult passage? And it's just, oh man, Lord, help me understand this. But every time in Isaiah 53, I go through it probably once a year, and then also when I'm studying, it basically says that it pleased the Father to bruise the Son.

It was the Lord's will to crush His Son and cause Him to suffer. And that word crush means overwhelming pressure or weight. It's a violent collision.

And sometimes we think of please, like God is pleased, He's happy, and oh, I'm so pleased, good cartwheel, you know, to your children. Good job at gymnastics, good job in baseball. God pleased, it's not, it's satisfied.

The wrath of God was satisfied on the cross, on Calvary. So if Jesus bore all the shame, all the guilt, why do you walk around carrying it? That was one of the points of the cross was for salvation, obviously. But He bore, He took on our shame, our guilt.

Yes, there's consequences for wrong choices. Yes, we feel a certain way. Yes, it's hard, life is hard.

But you don't have to walk around with shame and guilt because that's in direct opposition to God's word. What happened is our sin collided with the grace of God. So please the Father, satisfy God that Christ would absorb the wrath of God.

That's that big word I've used before, propitiation. That just means the wrath of God was satisfied. People want me to explain it.

I can't understand it more than you do. Why didn't God just do this? Why didn't God just do this? I don't know, but I know that sin has a penalty. Sin has to pay the price.

So He sends the perfect, spotless sacrifice to go on the cross, die for the sins of the world, and on that one point of history, you remember, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? What happened? It was that point in history when the wrath of God was appeased on the cross of Calvary, when that collision of sin and humanity hit the holiness and purity of Christ, and it pleased the Father. It satisfied the Father, but Christ felt the pain. Eli, Eli, Lama Zabatchini, my God, my God, where are you? Father, where are you? And it satisfied the Father to crush the son.

God, what a wonderful grace. So two things. If you've come in with a lot of shame and guilt, leave it here, or if you're not sure where you're at, you don't believe in Christ, you don't believe in God, you don't know, leave here knowing.

Leave here knowing. The brevity of life is like that. In the last month, I've seen three people, and they're all gone.

I'm doing memorial for one of them tomorrow. Gone, gone, today is the day of salvation. When you hear his voice, harden not your heart.

I don't know where you're at, but I do know this, God runs to the weary. God runs to the weary. He runs to the weak.

Did you know that about God? Parents, you know this. Have you ever seen your child somewhere, and they're just crying, Mommy, Daddy, you're gonna say, oh, leave me alone. No, what are you gonna do? Come on, let's be honest.

You're gonna run to them, pick them up. Who made you cry? Come on, who made you cry? So God hears the cries of his children. I hear the weary, I hear the tired, I hear the crying, I hear the broken.

I will run to them, and I will restore them. My eyes go, and I look for those. I will build up those who have been driven away.

I will bind up the broken. I will strengthen the sick. But he says the proud, the fat, the arrogant, I will feed in judgment, says the Lord.

He looks for the cries of his people. The cry of the broken, he hears. He hears, so run to the cross.

So funny, people say, oh, you get so excited. Well, you get so excited over the Pittsburgh Steelers for the love of God. Why can't we get excited over God and redeeming humanity and setting people free? I mean, think about that.

Who the son sets free is free indeed. No chain too great, no bondage too deep that God can't reach in and grab and pull them out of the pit of despair. I was once lost, but now I'm found.

I was blind, but now I see. Why is that not exciting? Because the majority of the church doesn't have a powerful relationship with God. To them, it's only words in a book and not words on their heart.

So I don't know, I didn't talk about this at the first service, but let me encourage you to fully surrender your life. Fully surrender your life. Say, Lord, everything's yours.

Doesn't mean you're gonna wake up tomorrow morning perfect, but it means you're gonna make a step in the right direction. And say, Lord, help me. I wanna fully surrender my life and I need you.

I desire this. I desire this. He who hungers and thirsts for righteousness will be satisfied.

Satisfied, satisfaction. It comes from that word, your needs have been met. There's no, I'm satisfied in the Lord.

It's a wonderful word. It's a wonderful thing.

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