

Confronting Sin in the Church

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of confronting sin in the church with love and truth, and the need for the church to be a voice of truth in a culture that rejects God's standards.

Duration: 54:03

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 5:1

Topics: "Church Discipline", "Confronting Sin"

Description

Shane Idleman addresses the critical issue of confronting sin within the church, emphasizing the need for accountability and the importance of upholding biblical standards in a culture increasingly accepting of sexual immorality. He highlights the dangers of complacency and pride within the church, urging believers to mourn over sin rather than ignore it, and to offer hope through the redemptive power of Jesus Christ. Idleman warns against the consequences of allowing sin to go unaddressed, drawing from Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 5, and encourages a loving yet firm approach to church discipline aimed at restoration. He stresses that true love involves confronting sin and guiding individuals back to a right relationship with God, while also recognizing the struggle many face with sin in their lives. Ultimately, he calls for a return to repentance and reliance on God's grace to break the chains of bondage.

Transcript

The title of the message this morning is Confronting Sin in the Church. Confronting Sin in the Church, and I probably should have renamed it to This Sermon is Illegal in California Now. I don't know if you've been paying attention to the news, but they did pass legislation.

I don't know what's going to happen there. It's an assembly bill where you cannot say that certain sexual sin is a sin. You have to actually embrace it and encourage people in their sexual sin, or you'll be penalized.

Christian counselors, pastors, California has lost its mind, and so has the rest of the nation. What they're saying is it's because of the high suicide rate. The high suicide rate is because you're not giving people hope.

Hope in Jesus Christ. But I struggle with sin. Well, welcome to the club.

But you point them to the cross, to the redemption power of Jesus Christ. So this sermon is going to be illegal in California. So grab the CD on your way out.

It might be a keepsake someday. Confronting Sin in the Church. Let me just tell you what we've been doing.

We've been in the book of 1 Corinthians, and we're in chapter 5, and Paul had a lot of words for the church, a lot of the words for the church today. So here's the context of chapter 5. The church is allowing sexual sin. I'm going to give this the PG version, if there's kids in here.

They're allowing sexual sin into the church. And what he means by that is the leadership knows, the people know that people are living in sexual sin, and they're not doing anything about it. They're not confronting it.

It's almost like they're just, well, God's grace will change them, and they're not doing anything. And God has actually given the church the voice to let people know, hey, you're on the wrong course. Here's the right course.

So that's the context of chapter 5, verse 2. And I should clarify this. What is sexual sin? Any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of marriage. And now I have to say between a man and a woman.

Okay, that's what God's word says. And if you go on the bulletin, you can see I debated a liberal professor on Fox News this week, and she says that we are to just encourage people in their sexual sin. She said, she told me we don't need some angry pastor yelling at people, telling them it's a sin, and being mean to them.

And no, we need them to encourage them and tell them what sexual sin is. So any sin outside the bounds of marriage. And then young adults, of course, are going haywire and crazy with hormones, and what do we do? And that's why we offer hope through Jesus Christ, and we point them in the right direction, and we encourage them towards Jesus.

We don't encourage people in their sin. So that's what this whole, this whole controversy is about, is sexual sin, anything outside of the bounds of marriage between a man and a woman. That's how God created it.

And as many of you know, it's not fulfilling outside of marriage. Just like fire is wonderful in the fireplace, but if that gets on the living room floor, we've got a problem. So God has created the male and female relationship to come together as one flesh, and then to allow and bring in godly offspring, and the family is resembling, the marriage is resembling Christ, the bride, groom, and marriage supper with the lamb.

And marriage is a beautiful picture of Christ with the body of, of Jesus Christ with the body of the church. Now Paul says it's a mystery, so I'm not even going to attempt to explain it. But that's what sexual sin is, it's any type of sin outside of marriage, and that's why pornography is a great sin, destroying our nation, because people are sinning mentally, but they don't think they are physically, but still they're being pulled and united with pornography, and that's why marriages are crumbling.

And that's why people come home and say, I just don't love you anymore. My feelings have vanished, I don't feel for you anymore, I don't have a love for you. Well, you used to, what happened? Sexual sin took them away.

So it's very important to address this issue, I've taught on pornography before, you can find that on our website, and I know it's a delicate issue, some people don't like me talking about this, especially when kids are present, but I think our kids know a lot more than we think they know. If they have a phone, I guarantee they know a lot more than what you think they know. And the church needs to have an answer, and we need to explain what's happening in their bodies and why sex is God-given.

There's two views out there, sex is bad and evil, run from it, or cave in, do whatever you want. No, God says it's wonderful, God created it, did you forget that? God created it within the correct context. And then when something goes out of whack, it's referred to as perversion.

Perverting something means taking what is straight and then perverting it and twisting it. So that's why when you hear the word perversion, it comes from twisting the truth. So Paul said these things, and you are puffed up, so he's upset at the church, and you have not rather mourned.

So see, sexual sin should make us mourn. We should see what's going on in our culture, and doesn't that break your heart and you should mourn over it? You see the transgenders reading to kindergartener kids, I see a transgender, it's on the media now, she's acting like a lion or something on all fours, and all these teenage girls and boys are clapping, oh this is so cool. No, that is a perversion of the truth, and almighty God, his heart breaks for that, and the church needs to be that voice of truth saying no, that's not right, there is a better path, there is a narrow path.

And so Paul's saying church, you're not mourning, and that is the danger in this area because what used to alarm us now amuses us. Do you know what pops on your screen at home sometimes on television? If you would have put that on the screen 50 years ago, people would have blushed. Jeremiah said, you've forgotten how to blush, and we become desensitized.

You know what that is, it's what used to affect us doesn't affect us, and I pray against that all the time. I see homeless people, God, give me that brokenness again, because sometimes I get a hard heart, and you've seen it so much, God, and you see sexual sin, and say, whatever, and you become hard to it. And we should be mourning.

We should be mourning, that's my heart for the church, I mean, the church should be crowded at prayer meetings, why? Because we're mourning over the condition of our people and over the church, and then we leave built up and encouraged, don't worry, I don't wanna leave you in a mourning state. It's very healthy to mourn and to labor, but you gotta give birth at some point, and once you give birth, you get back up and you say, God has created me and called me to fight again. And me and my wife have had discussions recently on this new law, what are we supposed to do if you go to jail? I'm like, well, I don't know, God's gonna provide, and I'm not worried about that, I think God has plans, I think our God is bigger than what people, because fear is going to take us down.

Fear and discouragement will silence the church. Fear would've had me change my message this morning, and discouragement, but God says, I'm just looking for people to be bold, but be loving, but be bold. And where does that boldness come from? And I appreciate so many prayers from me and people email me, and thank you for your boldness, thank you for your boldness, but I need to confess to you, it's not me.

Shane Eidelman is a very scared individual, a very weak individual, people pleaser. I struggle with that, wanting my dad's affirmation and people's affirmation, it's still a struggle. What you hear is the spirit of the

living God, who has set me on fire.

So please, give him credit, thank him, thank him for the boldness, I do, oh, thank you, God. If it wasn't for the grace of God, where would you be? And that's why I'm very loving on this topic, because you can tell people caught in sexual sin, look to the cross. God reached down and saved me and grabbed me, and he can do the same for you.

See, it's not a message of condemnation. Why are those caught in sexual sin, even the LGBT community and the gay community, why are they struggling with depression? See, 50 years ago, it was because nobody accepted them. You can't say that anymore.

Now everything, corporate America, the fire departments, the police departments are passing out rainbow flags to put on their uniforms. City officials, Hollywood, school districts, everyone's for it, why are they still convicted? Because conviction doesn't leave until you go to the grave. It's the Holy Spirit of God convicting people in all sexual sin.

Let me clarify right now, if a person's caught in pornography, or fornication, or adultery, there's not levels of sexual sin, it's all sexual sin in God's eyes, because it's a disordering of the truth. So Paul said, I better hurry up or I'm not gonna get through this, you are puffed up and have not rather mourned that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. So what happened in the church, there's somebody who's actually married to or sleeping with his stepmom, and the church is, oh, it's no big deal.

For I indeed, I'm absent in the body, but I am present in the spirit. I have already judged this matter as though if I were already present, and I've judged him who has done this deed. Well, wait a minute, aren't you to judge not, no, the church is to judge with righteous judgment.

See, that's how judgment works. Jesus even said, go to a brother, he doesn't listen, bring to, who doesn't listen, bring it to the church, if he still doesn't listen, then you treat him like a tax collector and like a heathen. Why? To be mean and condemning, no, for the hope of restoration.

See, so you judge with righteous judgment, it comes from a heart that's broken and loving. So are these people puffed up because of grace, puffed up because of knowledge? We don't know why, but they are puffed up, they are prideful is what puffed up means. They're prideful because of maybe what the church is, maybe it's growing, maybe they're just, well, let's let God change them, and we don't know, but we do know that pride is a problem.

So Romans 12:1 says this, here's the verses that's going to be illegal at some point, the whole chapter, because although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God. So is anyone wondering why sexual sin is, why is it just skyrocketing, especially in LGBT and bisexual and gay and pervert type of, why is it, what's going on? Well, here's what happens, because although they knew God, people know about God, obviously, look, his invisible attributes are clearly seen, they did not glorify him as God, in other words, they didn't say, you are God, we glorify you, we magnify you, we repent of our sin, but they were, nor were they thankful, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened, they suppressed the truth, therefore God gave them up to uncleanness in the lust of their hearts to dishonor their bodies. So sexual sin can be viewed as a judgment upon God to rebellious and prideful people, and the item of paraphrase is this, God says, you want it, you got it, you want to suppress my truth, you want to suppress the conviction, I'm going to give you up to your perversion, your sexual sin, even the man caught in adultery, the woman caught in fornication, it's the same sin, sexual sin, God's giving them up to a

debased and corrupted mind.

The Bible goes on to say that women burning for lust for other women, men burning for lust for other men, where is this coming from, it's coming, the farther you get from God, the more sexual sin will begin to grow, and the closer you get to God, the more you begin to repent and cleanse your heart of sexual sin. And then verse four, he says, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul's getting serious, when you're gathered together along with my spirit with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Now if anyone wants to tackle that one, good luck, because commentaries are divided, what the word, the Greek word means this, and this person thinks this, and this church father said this, and delivering up to Satan, it appears, again the item in paraphrase, it again, it appears that once a church takes a position and says this is wrong, we're not allowing it, you can no longer attend this church, we're going to be open and loving about it, but we're going to rebuke you in the presence of people if you continue to do this, we're allowing you to come in and act as if nothing is going on, we're approving of the sin, we're no longer going to do that.

And it appears that when a person is in church, they're in fellowship, there's a covering, a covering of prayer, of accountability, of God's blessing is there, and I believe this parallels a little bit to what Paul said in Corinthians that we'll see that when an unbelieving spouse stays with an unbelieving spouse, she sanctifies that home, or isn't that interesting? There's a blessing of God on a home where a person's a believer, there's a blessings that flow into the lives of even those who are unbelievers, sometimes from a believer, when a believer's blessed, others within that sphere of influence are blessed, so the only thing I can really gather from this is deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh is when the church says, we love you, but you're no longer welcome here because we cannot allow that lifestyle, you're no longer under our covering, under our protection, under our accountability, we're delivering you over to the deeds of your flesh, over to Satan, and then Satan, after Satan gets done with you, you run to the cross sometimes, you say, oh, this is the wrong taskmaster, this is an evil little minion, he wants to destroy me, and you run back to the cross, and you repent, and let almighty God save you, and then you're saved, it says, Paul says, saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that's a good encouragement for us, if you know someone who is going through hell, trust that God is often doing the work there, often when you see your prodigal as far away from God as they can get, oh, get encouraged, because what I've noticed is you've got to eat with the pigs before you come to yourself. I had to lay in my own vomit a few different times. I had to lose everything and be so depressed, and you get to the end of your rope, that's where the saying comes from, and you say, God, I can't do this on my own.

So I'm not discouraged when people are so far from God, because I know it's hell, it's misery, and they're close to fully repenting, I'm worried about the one kind of going to church, riding mom and dad's coattails, nothing bad's really happening, they'll kind of sing some worship songs, but then they'll look at pornography, they'll go to youth group, but then they don't really want to go to church, and what's going on? Be encouraged. When you deliver that person over to Satan, meaning Satan will buffet them, and fight against them, and try to destroy their soul, but that person hopefully will cry out to God. See, that needs to be the message, that's my message to people who struggle with all types of sin, cry out to God.

Yes, you're in bondage, cry out to the chain breaker. Yes, you're in bondage, cry out to the waymaker. Yes, you're in bondage, but cry out to the one who can speak a word, and the demon has to leave.

Cry out to the one who has more power, more authority, than all the demons put together, that person is Jesus Christ. That's why when you exalt that name, when you praise that name, people will either get excited, or they'll say, I need to run to the restroom, and not come back into this building, because it's Jesus Christ. So let's fast forward in 1 Corinthians, verse 9, I'm gonna come back.

Paul said, I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Well that's pretty mean, Paul. Yet, I certainly did not mean the sexually immoral people of this world.

And you can read the rest there. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is sexually immoral. And he goes on to list covetousness, idolatry, reveling, drunkenness, extortion, all these different things.

What's Paul talking about? Here's what happens, and I've had to do this a few times. Because we hate to be the confronter, right? You might say, Shane, I bet you love confronting. No, it's way, way down here on my list of things I enjoy.

But it's when a church says, you know what, we've talked to you, you know this is wrong, and you still come in high, your head high and lifted up, arrogant. We're living in your sin, and you're just going to still sit at the pew, still go to lunch and buddies, act like nothing happened. Paul says, no, you have to say that's wrong, I don't agree with that lifestyle.

Because approval is agreeing with the lifestyle. So if nothing changes, if you know a person, let's say you know a person, they've left their spouse. I know a person who did this recently, many people actually, that don't go here.

And I've tried to talk to them. They left their spouse, and they meet someone else. They're still married, they have kids, and they want to go to lunch or play golf.

Or just, hey, can we act like nothing is happening? Don't give me a guilt trip, Shane. Like, can we just be friends and not go there? No, we can't. Because not going there means I approve of that lifestyle.

So I've got to go there, and I've got to dig deep, and I've got to lovingly confront you. And then I've got to say, I love you so much to tell you I cannot fellowship with you. This breaks the heart of God.

And you disconnect fellowship. Did you know Jesus said that as well? Matthew 18, 17. And if he refuses to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

See, they're not being mean spirited. It's tough love. And you know that sometimes with parents with older kids.

All right. Come on back in the house again. Here's \$100.

Don't go buy heroin this time. Enabling, enabling, enabling, enabling. Sometimes parents have to pull out that tough love card and say, I don't agree with this lifestyle.

I can't allow this to happen in my home. I'm going to have to pull a hard one here until you know. But sometimes parents, I've counseled them the other way as well.

Sometimes it's okay to leave that home open and say, we love you. We love you. There's always a bed here for you.

We're not going to give you money. We're not going to enable you. But we love you.

And I don't know. That's a hard balance. That's why each parent has to take that to the Lord and say, what is God putting us, what is God putting on our heart? Because often, if you keep enabling, and they know there's a warm bed, they know there's a warm meal, they don't feel the pain of the damage they're doing.

So that's what tough love is all about. And I wrote an article, Sin in the Camp, How to Handle Church Discipline. And I want to just clarify a few things on this.

Number one, examine your heart first. Amen? Let's highlight that. Examine your heart first.

And I've been in ministry long enough to see both sides. The first side is, and I love this group of people, but they're like, well, let's just not say anything. Let's hope God convicts him.

Okay, what do we do after a few weeks or months? Or, well, let's just pray God convicts. And there's churches like that. They won't say anything.

Let's just hope they open the Bible to a certain passage and get convicted on their own. We're just called to love them. No, actually, you're called to convict them, too, if you want to be honest.

So you have these people they don't want to convict. But then you have this group, the Sin Sniffers. Sorry, you guys keep being the Sin Sniffing side.

But that's, they just find it. I mean, if they find something that day, oh, did you hear that? We've got to handle it right now. Right now.

Handle it. Well, the best thing you can do with these kind of issues is examine your heart first. Lord, why am I rushing to this? Is there a plank in my own eye? You know, you've got to love the person that wants to confront someone, but they're still struggling in their own sin.

You know, they're still giving in to besetting sin, yet they want to go lash out on someone. So it's a process of examining your heart first. And then number two, never forget this one, Proverbs 18, 13.

What's it say? Research the facts. Proverbs says actually hear both sides. Do you ever hear one side and get so mad? Just me.

Man, I've had somebody tell me, oh, you should, I'm like, whoa, wait till I talk to them. And then you talk to them, you're like, oh, hold on, partner, you didn't tell me about half of this stuff. And you hear both sides.

And you don't make a foolish, reactionary decision, you hear both sides of something. I'll give you an idea, just a couple things have happened in the past, nothing really recent, but we've talked to people about living together because a person wants to condemn them. Hey, they're living together, they're in your church, you need to meet with them later today and kick them out.

Oh, well, who are they, number one. By the way, we get letters like that sometimes. Weekly, sometimes, recently.

And I would say, unless you tell me your name and phone number and I can contact you, I'm throwing this in the trash because you're a coward. Or you're trying to cause problems and conflicts. They don't put their name, they don't put a contact information.

If they email the church, you try to email them back, it says server down, oh. See, we don't take any of that seriously. So if you have an issue, come to us directly and let us know.

But we've talked to a couple before in the past, and you find out that if two people are living together, actually they're living, let's say, at a parent's home, and they help their girlfriend out because they're on the street, they're homeless, they're in separate rooms, they're not doing anything, they know they want to make things right soon, and okay, you can work with that. But if it's somebody saying, I don't care what the Bible says, yeah, we're going to live together and we're going to serve as children's ministry helpers. No, I don't think you are.

We've got to lovingly confront. So see, it all depends on the facts. And you don't want to win the battle and lose the war.

What I mean by that is you can go so strong at someone, you blow them out of the water, and then there's no hope at all. You lovingly come alongside and you say, hey, how can I help you in this? Here's what God's Word says. I want to encourage you.

I'm not trying to discourage you, but this is wrong, so we've got to fix it. I've known people who would marry people that week. Just have a quick ceremony.

Tony Evans, I heard him on the radio. He does this often. You just go, well, you want to get married, do it right? Yeah, okay.

I pronounce you by the power vested in me in the state of Texas, I pronounce you man and woman, say your vows, boom, boom, boom, and you fix it. But they say, oh no, we don't want to do that. Maybe someday we're trying it out first.

We're doing a test drive. That's a long test drive. Very long test drive.

And then number three, don't move too quickly when confronting. Now, of course, there are exceptions. There's an exception to every rule.

But for the most part, you don't move too quickly. You pray about it, you weigh it, and you seek God's heart on it. And then also lovingly confront the person.

There's a loving confrontation that takes place. Most of the time, they're not going to be open to it. They're going to be upset.

I'm very surprised when a person is, here's, I'm very surprised when I hear, I know, it's, I'm living in sin. I need to repent and get right with God. I'm like, oh, praise the Lord.

Rarely will you hear that. Because usually sin is blind to them. And they don't want to confess.

They don't want to admit to sexual sin. They want to hide it. And they think God doesn't notice.

And then also, you can see up there, offer a solution. So you don't just kick someone to the curb, right? You offer a solution. Okay, here's how you get through this.

Here's what we want to recommend. It's interesting that the church will sometimes say, okay, if you're repairing something, I want to see you in the men's accountability group. And I want you to contact this

person and meet with them weekly.

And I want you to read this book. And the first couple of chapters. And if they don't want to do any of that, guess what? The heart's not right.

Because the person who's truly repentant wants to fix what they have hurt or broken. And then also remember, healing takes time. Healing requires time.

Now back to verse six. Paul is saying to this group, your glorying is not good. In other words, you're boasting in this sin.

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens a whole lump? Pay attention. Young adults, adults, pay attention to this portion. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens a whole lump? And I wish if I could change sermon titles right here and for a brief sermonette, it would be this.

It would be this. The seriousness of sin. What also happens in a culture like ours is we dumb down sin.

We forget that it actually put Jesus Christ on the cross to be beaten, to be whipped, to be mangled. His body was mangled. All for the sin that we enjoy and we play with.

The seriousness of sin. So Paul says, any bakers out there that put a little bit of leaven? How much leaven do you need? In bread or yeast would be a good example. Just a little bit to make it expand.

So Paul is saying a little bit of sin in your life that goes unconfessed and unrepentant of, of besetting sin is going to affect your whole life. It's going to affect the life of the church. If we said, yeah, I know that person's in sin.

I know that person's in sin. I know that's, you know, but you know, I'm just going to preach and God can deal with them. It'll begin to affect the services.

God's anointing. His power won't be as strong. Deliverance won't be taking place because we start to compromise.

So I don't know. I know it's a little bit heavy, but think about this. A little leaven leavens a whole lump.

If there's a little bit of sin in our life, sexual sin, other sin that we're allowing and we're not confessing, it will begin and if it hasn't already, it will begin to affect your life. I believe that's why many people are not worshippers. Sold out to God, filled with God's Spirit because that sin has taken hold.

And they're doing just enough to maintain their relationship with God. Church now and then, I'll put on a little worship on my radio. I'll try to read a Bible, the Bible if I can for five minutes now and then.

Because that sin has taken control and it pulls them away from God. So Paul says this, therefore, purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump since you are truly unleavened. In other words, you're truly followers of Christ.

You've been bought at a price. You've been set free. So Paul says, purge out the old leaven.

So this is very simple advice. Small compromises. Open the door to bigger compromises.

Have you ever seen, if you're a nurse, maybe this isn't a good analogy, but an open sore that goes unclean, that's what sin is. Unconfessed. It's like an open sore.

It starts out little maybe and it begins to rot, begins to work up your body, your arm, and begins to take over. So Paul says, what? Purge. Here's what is beautiful.

This is the beautiful thing. The seriousness of sin. There's people dealing with sin, besetting sin in their life that you need to confess and repent of this morning.

But God says when you do, when you purge it, that's the purging. David said, purge me with hyssop and I will be made white as snow. Cleanse me.

Create in me a clean heart. See, all cleansing is repentance. Turning from the sin and giving it to God.

And like Hezekiah, I love his story of Hezekiah. You know what he did? He cleaned out the garbage in the church. People are starting to put their garbage in the church.

His dad was a wicked king. They would put their trash in the church. Can you believe that? Worship is halted.

They're worshiping false gods. It's like sin has polluted and King Hezekiah comes in there. He says, clean out the sin, the trash from my father's house.

Just like cleaning sin out of our lives. And what did, then what did he do? He restored worship. The Bible says those two words.

Restored worship. So that's what happens when you cleanse out the sin, when you purge the sin. You restore worship.

If some of you, if you've got your, if you've got shackles on your hands, if you've got handcuffs on your hands this morning, if you can't worship and you're bored to death, is it because that sin might need to be purged from your life? And then when that purging takes place and that cleansing and you remove that leaven, then you begin to restore worship in your heart again. And worship is sweet. And the songs, the lyrics begin to make sense.

Here's what happens in the heart of someone who has embraced sin. I can tell you as a personal testimony when I would sit at church, I would look at those songs, I would not be singing those lyrics. I would be moving my lips, but I'm thinking about the Dodger game.

I'm thinking about that cold 40-ounce beer when I get home. I'm thinking about that lunch that's later. I'm thinking about all these problems.

How can I make more money? And I'm just blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, going through the motions. But when you restore true worship to the heart, when you purge yourself of that sin, God begins to work in your heart in an incredible way. That's why I'm so passionate about this, because that's how you restore worship.

Don't raise your hand, but how many of you are dead this morning? Dead to the things of God. Dead to church. A prayer meeting, Shane, I'd rather go have a root canal.

What's wrong? What's going on? I'll tell you why. There's probably sin that has to be purged. Because that little leaven, that little thing that you said, oh, that's just my one little vice, has taken over.

And it begins to control. It begins to consume. Anybody ever got hooked on a television program they shouldn't be watching? Mm-hmm.

I have. And it begins to zap your energy, zap your strength. I'll never forget.

Somebody, I've told you this story before. It was a while ago. When 24 came out, Keeler Sutherland, I didn't know anything about it.

A friend from church gave me the DVD series. Ooh, we were hooked. But I'm having nightmares about terrorists breaking in my house.

And I'm like, I don't want to pray in the morning anymore. I don't want to listen to worship. I just want to go push play on that DVD player.

And just want to, the next series, the next series, the next series, you get hooked. And these things begin to come in and drain you of spiritual power, of spiritual fire. I think even Chip and Joanne Gaines can drain my spiritual power sometimes.

Fixer-upper number two, number two, number two. Now, I'm all for good entertainment, but when it begins to be an all-consuming passion, an all-consuming desire, it begins to begin to take you away from God. We have to be careful.

So 1 Timothy offers great advice. Paul writing again, he said, take heed to yourself and to your doctrine. That's a good word for some of you this morning.

Take heed to yourself. What does that mean? It means this. Listen, listen.

What a great analogy would be this. If I could go down and shake each one of you on the shoulder. Listen, listen.

Are you listening? Look me in the face. Listen. Take heed to your doctrine and yourself closely.

Why? Because there's an enemy. Why? Because he wants to go about seeking whom he may devour. There's an enemy that's after your children, after your heart, after your relationship with God, after your testimony.

Shane, I don't want to hear that. Well, you need to hear it. You have to know these things.

Take heed to yourself and to your doctrine, meaning what do you believe? Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. Wow, where's he going with this? Well, let's talk about this for a minute. Take heed, because I know many of you need help in this area of sexual sin or maybe sin in general.

But he's saying pay attention, listen. So that's the first thing we have to do with God's Word, including myself. I have to sit up, put on my big boy pants, and look in the mirror and say, God, what does your Word say? Am I missing the mark? I'm willing to repent.

God, show me. I want to take heed to your Word, to my doctrine, to what I've believed for many years. God, show me.

Reveal yourself to me. I don't want to think that I'm so prideful that I don't need to hear that I've got this master. I don't need to do that.

That's exactly who needs to be doing this. Pastors, leaders in our nation, examining ourselves, examining our hearts. Isn't doctrine so important? If you listen to the lady I debated on Fox News this week, she actually said that Jesus would be okay with abortion.

Well, the Bible's not real clear. Oh, yes, it is. Read it.

That's the key. Read it from Genesis to Revelation. Read the Bible.

See the heart of God. God actually says about sacrificing children that that has not even entered my mind. You give child sacrifice to Molech and all these false gods.

It has not even entered my mind, actually because of the sins of Manasseh. Because of these sins, God says, I'm going to judge that nation, that wickedness. So he said here, and you have to continue in them.

Oh, Christian, take heed. Listen. How important is continuing? Perseverance.

That is everything. You know what I'm coming to realize as I get older? It's wonderful I started well, but if I don't finish well, I'm going to make a mockery of the gospel. My family is going to be disappointed.

My wife will not be able to look people in the face if I finish poorly. Everything I've been preaching will be mocked. Families.

How many families would be hurt if you don't persevere? Men, you've got to persevere. I don't care how old you are, how young you are. It's not how you finish.

I mean, it's not how you start. It's how you finish. Persevering.

Continuing. Getting back up and fighting that fight again. Repenting of sin.

And until the day you give your last breath, it's a fight. It's a perseverance, a finishing strong. If you don't know what to do, get with some people, some strong prayer warriors, some strong believers.

Have them pray with you, pray for you, invest into your life. Hold you accountable in your areas. Be vulnerable.

Be transparent. Because sin will grow in that darkness. If we sit here going, hmm, okay, what makes sense? But God, just take it away.

I don't need to tell anybody. I don't need to confess it. Bring it to the light.

Now you have to be careful you tell. I know. I understand.

Trust me, I understand. But I don't think there's anything wrong with a spouse saying, listen, I haven't felt loved or appreciated in a long time. We haven't connected.

That intimacy is vanishing and my thoughts are not going in a good direction. We need to talk. We need to reconnect.

So you just brought that to the light. And the enemy can't work in that. But he'll try to work in that silence.

I got this. Do you know that's how most affairs start? Is because men and women are not honest with what's going on. And they just, well, we got this.

We'll just hold it in. And they grow apart. And then the devil says, there's my opportunity.

There's my opportunity. And he brings someone in who begins to build them up and strengthen them. Oh, you're so, if I was married to you, if I was your spouse, I won't go there, you know.

But that's how it happens. Subtleties. But you bring it to the light.

If you're married, if you're drifting, it's okay to tell your spouse, you're drifting. Me and Morgan have had a few hard conversations over the 17 or 18 years. It's very, I remember Palm Springs, we went to Palm Springs.

I thought it was going to be a great time. She said, we need to sit down and talk. What? We're not connecting.

You're so busy. We're going two different lives. I feel my thoughts.

We're just friends. We can't, I'm like, oh Lord, I didn't know that. Guys normally don't know.

Okay. I'm just telling you. They're just like oblivious.

So you have those hard talks and then Satan doesn't have any more. Or you start to hold it in and get bitter. How many spouses are bitter at their spouse? It's everywhere because they don't talk about these issues.

Don't be hitting each other on the shoulder. But see, what you do is you bring it to the light. You bring it to the light.

There are people that will tell their spouse, listen, I'm really struggling this week with lust. It was at the workplace. There was pornography at the workplace.

There was this. I'm just really struggling. Let's pray.

I'm just bringing this to you, the sin loses that power. The temptation loses its power and motivation because it's been exposed. See, that's a lot.

We forget. We think pride is something other than it is. It's a lot of things.

But at the core, it's thinking, I got this. I don't need that. I can handle this.

I don't need you to tell me what to do. Lord, I got this. Thank you, though.

And pride comes in. Take heed, lest you fall. That's what tells a prideful person.

The prideful person says, I have this. I got this. So watch yourself, your conduct and doctrine closely.

I'm sure Morgan's watching this right now, so we're going to have a talk later, I promise you. I've got to follow up, make sure everything's okay. But it's healthy to do that because the enemy will use any type of discord in the home that he can produce.

What about discord in your kids? Do you have teenagers or maybe older or whatever in your home and they don't talk, they just go to their room? What's happening? What's going on? How was your day? Fine. Okay. See you tomorrow.

No, you take them out and you ask them. Say, if you're struggling with something, let me know. I've struggled with things before.

I've had to apologize to my kids. And you let them know. And then they begin to open up and you see they begin to bring that to the surface.

Do you know how many times the enemy will plant suicidal thoughts in your children? Especially in the culture we're living in, where they look at magazines and they get their definition of what they should look like and who they should be from YouTube. Do you know there's people making millions of dollars on YouTube that do the stupidest videos I have ever seen? They flip bottles all day and 14 million views. Let me fill my pool with slime or jello.

14 million views and YouTube pays them. And we have to talk about these issues and what's going on in our kids' lives. So it's interesting there, he said, when you take heed, continue, persevere, you watch yourself, watch your conduct, watch your doctrine, then you're going to be saved, both yourself and those who hear you.

Now the problem we have in the English language is we think of the word saved, I know what you're probably thinking is salvation. Well that word, I think it was sozo, I forgot to write down. It has a lot of different meanings depending on the context.

But here's what Paul's saying, or at least defined in the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. It's a temporal deliverance from danger or suffering. Isn't that interesting? When you take heed, when you listen up, when you continue down the right path, when you watch yourself, your conduct, your doctrine, you expose sin, you're going to deliver yourself and others, your family, from suffering and danger.

It's amazing. God has given us the path to choose. Choose life that you may live.

And here's a couple things we learned from this as well. Remove and flee. So if you're wondering, Shane, what am I supposed to do? Remove the influence.

What is influencing you? What is pulling you away from God? Remove it. Get it out of your home. Turn in your phone for a flip phone.

You know how many people I've told, Shane, I'm hooked to my phone, I'm hooked to my pornography, whatever. Get a flip phone. Oh man, I can't do that.

Well how bad do you want it? Don't come up here and cry about it. Make a decision. Well this person's in my life and they keep, well get rid of that relationship for now.

Oh that's kind of mean. Well you're going down. It's either him going down or you.

Make a choice. So Paul, the Bible talks continue about removing the temptation, removing the bait. I've known people who've quit their job because it was going to take them down.

Remove that thing. And then Paul said also to flee. Flee sexual immorality.

Flee it. Isn't it interesting? He said don't contemplate it. Don't fight it.

Flee. Get out of there. You just got to know to just flee.

Remember Joseph, the story of Joseph? Potiphar's wife, who knows how she was dressed, grabbed him. He's not sitting there going, she's not really married. I mean, kind of.

And I'm single. And she's approaching me. Don't look in her eyes, Joseph.

Joseph, remember Proverbs? That flattery speech, those deceitful eyes, those seductive eyes that seduce and draw in. And he's entertaining it. See, flee.

That's the course. You flee. You don't ponder.

You don't kind of, okay, Lord, strengthen me right now. I know she's beautiful. Strengthen me right now.

I'm just going to stay. I'm going to stay here and witness to her. But that's what fleeing is.

We all have spam accounts, correct? Most of us. I just go to the top, click the button, all of them, delete. I don't care if somebody accidentally went to spam.

Oh, well. Delete. Delete.

Delete. Delete. Delete.

Hit the delete button. That's fleeing. That's getting rid of it.

Those people like to go through spam. Hmm, I wonder who this person is. They sent me pictures.

Huh. Did I request pictures? Maybe it's the pictures of our new home we want to remodel. And then, see, you start, flee.

If something is in spam, you probably don't need to see it. If you need to see it at some point, God will get it to you. That's what fleeing is.

Fleeing is you meet someone, and you know there's an ungodly attraction there. And you keep, well, let me just keep discoursing. Let me build this relationship.

And he's like, flee. No. Flee from what is going to take you down.

Now, of course, you have to use discernment in all those areas. Paul also said, every other sin that a man commits is outside the body. But an immoral man sins against his own body.

Isn't that interesting? I mean, this would take a whole sermon, actually, to talk about this. But sexual sin is a sin against your own body. And I believe it's because God said, I will make them male and female.

The two shall become one flesh. And sexual sin opens the door to just about every other sin. It's a sin against the own body.

You're polluting the temple of God. I love what John MacArthur said. Sinful practices that deny entrance into heaven have always included sexual sin.

And that's why God's judicial wrath shows up in the form of sexual sin. Back to Romans. Remember, we read earlier, back to Romans 1. God says, okay, I'm giving you over to a debased and corrupted mind, and you're going to start to defile your bodies.

And then when that judgment fails to bring repentance, God's hand, I'm sorry, God hands the people over to their degrading passions. So see, that's the heart of God. This is degrading.

This is wrong. This is the little leaven. This type of sin is going to pull you down.

It's not your one little vice. Get rid of it. And as you continue to entertain it, it will pull you down.

Before I close, I want to tell you, I mentioned last week on Facebook and I think on the bulletin that I had the privilege of visiting a friend of mine in a correctional institute. He spent already 17 years there before he was out, and we had built a friendship, and he actually preached for me. If you can believe that.

On fire for God. I just met with him Saturday and wanted to share some of what he's talked about. All these things started to happen.

He's in church just about every time it was open, the worship nights, worshiping, seeking God, and then what happens? The little leaven gets in, begins to meet someone, there's a relationship there, and then you're not at church as much. That little sin begins to grow, and then small compromises and staying together for the night. And I talked to him about these things, and he knew it, he didn't want to hear it.

But then eventually compromise comes in and justification. He started to say, well, in the Old Testament, once they consummated, you know, they're married. Oh, that's not how it works.

So that sin is against the body, it begins to open the door to other sins. Goes back now to alcohol, and then to crystal meth, and then heroin, and then doesn't have the money for heroin, so breaks into a house, and gets arrested. It should be his third strike, so he should be in for life.

But God's mercy fell on his repentance, and the judge gave him a minimum sentence, still a couple more years to serve. But he said, tell the people how allowing that sin, and I left there just an eye-opening thing for my own life, because we forget that little sin, it doesn't grow. I mean, it doesn't stay static, meaning neutral.

It grows, or it withers, depending on whether you feed it or starve it to death. Whether you repent and confess it. And maybe a Christian's life is, until the day we die, God, I confess this, I repent, I'm struggling, please take it away.

And you're doing good, you're doing good for months, possibly years, and then you fall again, and then you get caught in that cycle of defeat again. God says, just bring it to the cross, bring it to the cross. So are you puffed up in the morning and not mourning? Are you puffed up, are you prideful and not mourning? Hey, I've been there, done that, I've got the t-shirt.

Puffed up, not mourning over our sin. Embrace God's grace, embrace his mercy, embrace his forgiveness this morning. I want to leave you with those thoughts.

I don't want to leave you with a thought of this vengeful, judgeful God, even though that's all true. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I'm coming to judge the nations with a rod of iron, that's all true. But isn't the louder voice of God? It's turn, turn.

Even in Revelation, when the wrath of God is being poured out, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall, not might, not he, God might think about it, not there's a good chance, not your name will be poured, thrown into a lottery. God says, if you call upon the name of the Lord, you will be saved. God's call is always to return and repent.

To his people, come out from among them, repent to that sin. And no matter what lifestyle you're caught in, Paul said, as such were some of you. Some were, if there's homosexuality or adultery or pornography or drunkenness or lasciviousness or no matter what the sin is, God says, come out and repent and be saved and set free.

There's nothing more glorious than having that bondage broken over your life. And then you can sing that song. Have you heard that song? God break every chain, break every chain.

Then you might get a little emotional. You might cry when you realize the chains of bondage and slavery have been broken at the foot of the cross. And yes, that devil might try again, but Jesus has promised me, if you fix your eyes upon me, if you persevere, if you hold on, I will guide you.

I will hold you with my right arm. It's in my strength, just trust in me and look to me and me alone.

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