

How to Get Back on Track

by Shane Idleman

This sermon teaches us how to get back on track with God and stay on track, using the story of Jonah as a model, and emphasizes the importance of obedience, disclosure, sacrifice, and repentance.

Duration: 44:47

Scripture: Jonah 1:1

Topics: "Repentance", "Spiritual Direction"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of getting back on track spiritually, using the story of Jonah to illustrate how disobedience can lead us away from God's will. He discusses how God often uses storms, both literal and metaphorical, to redirect us when we stray, and highlights the necessity of owning our mistakes and making sacrifices to restore our relationship with Him. The sermon encourages listeners to recognize that even great prophets like Jonah can fall off track, but through humility and repentance, they can find their way back. Ultimately, Shane reminds us that desperation can lead to a deeper relationship with God, and that peace often follows obedience.

Transcript

If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Jonah chapter 1. In the Bible in front of you, it's page 591. Page 591. Last week I talked about how does God direct us? How does God direct us? And I'm sure you're wanting to know how God directs you, right? Is anyone going through any difficulties? Any challenges? Any questions? Lord, I don't know what to do.

I don't know where I should proceed. Go and get that CD on your way out. That was last week.

This week, the title is, How to Get Back on Track. Anybody ever fall off track? Or is it just me? Right? Everything's going good, and then, especially dieting, right? Everything's going good, and then you just fall off track. And it's not a dieting message, don't worry.

But it's a spiritual message. You're going good with God, and you're in His will, and things are going along and making sense, and then you fall off, and you're off track. And that can get pretty depressing, can't it? And disheartening and discouraging.

And then when we're off track, the irony is, it's hard to get back on. Because we stay in that, what I call, funk. You get in that funk, and you just can't seem to break loose, and you just get deeper and deeper.

So we're going to talk about that a little bit tonight from the story of Jonah. But I want to just get this point across, that this really, people say it's a Bible story. And I try not to use that word sometimes.

It's a Bible fact. Because when you say story, what do we think of? Right? It's not really true. A fish swallowed a man.

Shame. Come on. Well, I actually have a video clip for you.

To show you this might be possible. Okay? You can find this on YouTube. Jason, you can go ahead and hit play if it comes up.

I want you to watch the right hand corner. Those are divers in the water. On the right hand, they're down, I think, fixing some net or something.

Or a rope there. And just keep watching. The picture says it all.

I guess that's what they're looking for, is the fish. And they're fixing the net. We don't have volume for it.

And the whales are obviously chasing those little fish, right? So, I guess, he's swimming back there pretty quick. Can you believe that? And that's not, I mean, that's, yeah, we can stop it now. I think we got the point.

We can send it, but a man can be swallowed, as you can see there. That was a close call. And so, this is not fact, or no, it's fiction, I'm sorry.

This is fact, that we take the Bible literally. And the reason I'm saying that is there's a big push that sometimes people get embarrassed about the Bible, or they want to, you know, well, there really wasn't an Adam and Eve, you know, Shane? That was kind of analogy and evolution, you know, millions and millions of years. And, you know, we don't really believe in creation, do you? And, well, if you take the Bible literally, and you see that a lot of these things did happen.

And Jesus said, here's the problem you have with Jonah, if you don't think it's real. Jesus said, for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. So, he compared it to, Jesus compared Jonah in the belly of the fish to him being in that state before the resurrection.

Now, we don't know if Jonah was three full days. If you study the Hebrew time frame for days, it could be as little as 38 hours. If they take the ending of a day, the whole day, the next day, and the beginning of the following day, they would still consider that three days.

So, we read last week, I'll pick up in chapter 1.1. Now, the word of the Lord came to Jonah. So, Jonah is, I guess it looks here by a port down by the ocean, and the word of the Lord comes to Jonah, and God tells him, Arise, get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before me. But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. Now, it's really clear on that, isn't it? That he's running from the presence of the Lord. It's really he's running from the conviction.

Have you ran from conviction before? Again, or is it just me? You know, transparency sermon. Knowing that God is everywhere, but somehow you think, if I can just redirect or go elsewhere, that conviction will leave, the presence of God will leave, and it doesn't. It's there with you, wanting to pull you back.

But as a word of encouragement, even this great prophet was knocked off track. We think sometimes that we look at the Bible figures, or we look at pastors or leaders in America and different things, great men and women of God that we look up to, maybe Billy Grahams and the M. Graham lots, and Beth Moores and all of you, you know, we know, but they're all human like we are. And even this prophet of God fell off track.

God gave him something to do, and he said, no, I'm not going to do it, and he was knocked off track. So we talked about direction last week. This week, one of the points is disobedience.

God will get us back on track when we disobey. Verse 4, But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. Then the mariners were afraid, and every man cried out to his God, and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten the load.

But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, trying to hide from God, I guess, and he laid down and was fast asleep. So the captain came to him and said, what are you doing, sleeper? Arise, call on your God. Perhaps your God will consider us so that we may not perish.

So whatever happened here, we know that the sea went from maybe calm or normal to now a tempest. And it was getting their attention. God knows what will get us back on track.

God knows what will get us back on track. And I found, and even biblically you can look at this, usually it's what we cherish. With idolatry, the things we cherish the most, God will often use that to get us back on track.

Somebody who puts all their emphasis into health and appearance and their looks, God might take that from them. Or somebody who puts all this emphasis in money, in making it, climbing the corporate ladder, He will judge us by that same idol we worship. Or power, success, He will judge us by that.

Humiliation. Because what happens is, I believe, to get us to our weakest point, God often breaks the strongest link of idolatry, what's holding us back. So in this case, Jonah disobeyed, and God's going to use this storm to get him back on track.

But it did bring up an interesting question this week that I thought of. Some storms are sent to redirect us, like God sent this to redirect Jonah, but some storms you're supposed to go through. How do you know the difference? How do we know the difference? How do you know when to jump ship like Jonah or to see it through? Have you thought about that? Because, oh, it's a storm, I've got to get out of this, I've got to redirect, or are you just supposed to see it through? Well, let me just offer a few bits of advice on this.

As you're in the storm, is there peace and is there assurance? You know, hey, Lord, I'm in Your will, I'm doing Your will, I'm confessing anything, I don't know of anything, but I have peace, I have assurance that You're going to see me through. Or is there conviction and remorse? Because I believe that we know, sometimes it's not easy to indicate, but we know if we're in a storm that's self-created, right? The Holy Spirit's, hey, you caused this one, your big mouth caused this one, your spending habits, your loose lips sink ships, your email, you know, we know I'm in this storm and I created this storm. But, if there's peace

and assurance, because you can go through a storm and just hold on to Christ, hold on to God, because you know, God, I don't know what else to do.

I don't know of anything where I'm rebelling against You in any certain area, and you hold on to that peace and assurance. I mean, after all, Daniel rested with the lions, Peter slept in prison, and Jesus was asleep on a boat during a storm. Well, Jesus had assurance in Himself, right? He knew.

But, we can sleep, you can sleep in the midst of the storm knowing that God is guiding and God is directing. And I wanted to really emphasize that this evening because so many people, they look at every storm as disobedience. Sometimes.

Anything a problem comes up, oh God, what sin is in my life? I don't know. And everything that happens, they think it's because God is judging them, or God is mad at them, or God is going to let them have it in every situation. And I've learned that actually, there's not the absence of a storm in the middle of God's will.

You actually increase the storm sometimes in the middle of God's will. You can be walking with God and still difficulties, challenges, family members, friends come against you, challenges at work, all these things. So just keep that in mind.

If you don't know how to detect it, ask God. Ask for direction in this area. He will show you.

Lord, is there anything in me that's causing this? Now with family dynamics, have you ever had family challenges? Okay, I won't go there. But we know that we can tell, did I cause this problem? Did I contribute to this? Or is there just family dynamics taking place that you didn't cause? And in those cases, you just ride it through. But if you know you caused it, the best thing you can do is get right with God and let Him redirect.

See, I don't know, it could just be me, but I don't think Jonah had to be swallowed by a fish. Could he have just said, hey, I was wrong, let's turn this boat around. Drop me off.

I need to go back. But he continued to fight God. And I've noticed too, if God doesn't break up our plans, we often wouldn't change direction.

Jonah would have kept going to Tarshish. Nineveh was this way. I think if I had a map, I could show you.

But Nineveh is this way. Tarshish is the other way. And he's fleeing as far as he can go away from this place.

And had God not broken up those plans, he wouldn't have changed direction. So be encouraged in that. Sometimes God will wreck your world in order to redirect your world.

Right? He'll change things. There's so many stories of people that lost a job and they're so depressed, and then God opens this wonderful opportunity two weeks later. Like, oh, I would have never even applied for that.

I would have never even thought of that until He did this. I mean, there's so many different examples. So don't get frustrated when things are difficult.

Then God uses disclosure to get us back on track. What do I mean by disclosure? Disclosure is revealing something. So here's what happened in verse 7. And they said to one another, come, let us cast lots that we may know who caused this trouble and has come upon us.

I kind of changed that in my version here. But they're saying let us cast lots that we may know who the troublemaker is. Basically.

Now, in the Bible times, I don't suggest it now, right? They would... 50 on red. Or dice. There was a way of... They actually cast lots to determine what disciple was next.

And if they didn't have the Word of God, they didn't have the Holy Spirit, it was just a way of, okay, Lord, we don't know what to do. We don't have the Holy Spirit within us. We don't have Your Word.

We're trusting that You cast, we're casting these lots for You to show. It's kind of like heads and tails. Have you ever done that? Okay, if it's heads, you sit in the back seat.

If it's tails, you sit... Now, don't do that making a decision with God, though. Because that could... I mean, okay, Lord, I'm going to take this job. If it's heads, there's a 50% chance it could be heads.

So, that's a form of testing God. So, He will use disclosure. But this is what they did.

They cast lots. And guess who the lots fell on? Jonah, yes. Then they said to him, please tell us for whose cause is this trouble upon us? Now, this is interesting.

They said, what is your occupation? What's your job? So, they thought maybe his job caused this. And where do you come from? What's your origin? What's your nationality? What country are you from? And what people are you with? So, He said to them, I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. He stood up for the Word of God.

I am a Hebrew. I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. But we see here that even though Jonah didn't do it, these people could have easily done it and persuaded him, blaming his occupation, blaming his heritage, blaming his skin color, blaming his upbringing.

Whatever it is, we can blame shift sometimes. When we're caught in a storm, and God uses disclosure, uh-oh, it's out in the open. What do most of us do? Oh, Lord, I've been wrong.

I fully repent. I humble myself. No.

The woman You gave me. Or you don't know what I'm going through. Or my job, or my nationality.

And we have these excuses, but fortunately, we don't see that in Jonah yet. But I want to throw that in there because it does apply. And people say this.

I hear this. The system is holding me back. It's my parents' fault.

The leadership has it out for me. Whatever it is. Now, all of that might be true.

But God. All of that could be true, but God is more concerned about our attitude than what's happening to us by others. And disclosure is an awesome opportunity to do what is right.

So when something is revealed, people are watching. Jonah was found out. He was running from the Lord.

And this was a wonderful opportunity to show people who he was. Because people are watching, aren't they? They're watching. They watch what I buy at the grocery store.

They go, oh, you practice what you preach? I don't think so. Those are chips ahoy. I haven't bought those in a while.

But people are watching, right? And let me just tell you this. When disclosure, when something is found out about you, or something comes to the surface, or something comes to the light, one of the most wisest things you can do, men and women of integrity, will own it. They'll say, I did.

That did happen. I apologize. I ask for your forgiveness.

And that speaks volumes about Christian character. See, sometimes we often think that making excuses will shift the blame and get the focus off of us. But people still know.

Right? People still know. But when you own it, you just increased the view of you in their eyes because you own it. You apologize.

You repent. It's what Christians do. So actually, it's easy to get back on track this way when you own it.

And then God uses discord. So we see disclosure. It's found out.

And then discord. Then the men were exceedingly afraid. I bet they were.

And they said to Him, why have You done this? For the men knew that He fled from the presence of the Lord, because He had told them. Then they said to Him, what shall we do to You? What shall we do to You that the sea may be calm for us? For the sea was growing even more and more ferocious. In other words, they were trying to calm down.

Okay, let's just see if this will pass. And guess what? It didn't. The waves were getting bigger and bigger and bigger and it's getting more violent.

And Jonah said, this one I don't quite understand, but pick me up and throw me into the sea, then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me. It's interesting.

I mean, was Jonah, hey, kill me? Because that's what's going to happen when they throw him off the ship. There's no getting back on that ship. Not little life preservers and those little boats that you can throw them.

He was gone. So is he a man of integrity? Or does he have a suicidal wish? He doesn't want to fulfill God's will? There's a lot of different things that are going on. But getting back on track, that's the message.

Getting back on track involves sacrifice. So if you want to get back on track, spiritually I'm assuming, or back on track with your family or your spouse or the storm, get rid of the storm. Getting back on track involves sacrifice.

Jonas had to sacrifice something. A change in course has to happen. So if you're going to have peace in the home, you have to make a sacrifice.

Right? I have to make a sacrifice. If you want peace in family relationships, if you want peace with God, that sacrifice might mean repenting and reestablishing a broken relationship and sacrificing your pride. That hurts, doesn't it? I don't have to say I'm sorry.

They need to come to me. Or different issues. I'm just throwing things out there.

Nothing specifically comes to my mind. But there's this point of sacrifice has to take place or repentant heart. And of course, we all know in this point, the greatest sacrifice was Christ.

The greatest sacrifice ever given was the cross. As Jonah was three days in the belly of the fish, so the Son of Man was three days in the heart of the earth, dying for His people, coming to life again in redemption. That was the greatest sacrifice to get us back on track.

And I don't want to just get through the message without offering that. If there's someone here that you don't know Christ, you've never embraced that sacrifice, you've never embraced that gift from God, do that tonight. Just pray.

Changing course. Getting back on track comes with a sacrifice. We have to sacrifice our pride, humble ourselves before God and say, God, I need You.

There's a sacrifice that takes place. You lay pride on the altar. Have you ever laid pride on the altar and set it afire? It doesn't smell good.

There's a burn to that. There's a smell that's disgusting because pride is one of the greatest sins, I believe. It leads to all others.

And it does beg the question, why didn't Jonah say, why not turn the ship around? Why not turn the ship around? Wouldn't you think that would be the right course? And of course, we can only speculate, but I don't know if Jonah was ready. We're going to actually read in chapter 4, I think it is. This is pretty unbelievable.

Jonah preaches to Nineveh. I'm just giving you a fast forward here. Nineveh, 120,000 people, I believe we're in that city, and he repents.

It spares God's judgment. And guess who's not happy? Jonah. I knew you were graceful, merciful, God.

I knew it. And he goes into depression. And he goes and sits up on a mountain.

He's sitting up there waiting for God to bring down fire and brimstone and God doesn't judge, He saves, and he gets upset. What kind of heart is going on there, right? I mean, there's a lot of things we could talk about later, but obviously, maybe he thought that God's Word was on the line. Maybe he had a sense of justice.

Because Nineveh, remember, it's the capital of Assyria, and they would put skulls of men that they conquered in battle, they would build them in pyramids. They were a wicked, vicious fighting machine. They would spare no one.

They had no rules. They would kill children in the womb. So maybe Jonah had a righteous indignation.

But either way, he was not happy that God spared this city. As just a footnote, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, I think it's Nahum, don't quote me on it. But 150 years later, God sends one of these minor prophets again to Nineveh, and they don't repent, and they are judged.

And God judges that nation. Isn't it interesting? The first group hears, repents. Oh, fasted, by the way.

And that's what we're going to talk about getting up to the 21st. They called a fast. And the reason they did that is because of the magnitude of what was happening.

And sometimes God calls us to be intercessors. And maybe we should start looking at what's going on in our country, and like Nehemiah say, God, forgive us for the sins of our people. Or like Daniel, forgive us for the sins of our people.

And call a sacred assembly. That's what they did in the book of Joel. They would call a sacred assembly.

Gather your elders, gather your leaders, gather those who are spiritual. Come in. Call a sacred assembly.

Fast and seek God. And He will answer. And that's what we want to do on the 21st.

So I'm not going to get to that just yet. So why overboard? Was He looking out for others? Because this is interesting. I read one commentary.

This is difficult for me in thinking, why not turn the ship around? Like, okay, Lord, I'm sorry, but He just jumped ship. Now, was He truly concerned for these people? This is interesting. Did Jonah repent on the vessel? Possibly.

Maybe he probably repented in the fish's belly. We'll get into that in a little bit. But was a repentance taking place? And he said, I caused this.

I caused this. Just throw me off and you'll be safe. And it's interesting.

That is actually one sign of many, one sign of genuine repentance. When somebody genuinely repents, they say, I'm sorry, I want to make things right. They will make things right.

They will take the responsibility. They will fix what they broke. They will clean up the mess they made.

And they will restore what they took away. Somebody who's genuinely... Now, watch somebody closely for a little while, right? We're not gullible. But the person who says, okay, I'm sorry.

I'm sorry, yeah, you're right, I'm sorry, but you know what? They're not repentant. But on this condition, I'll do it on this condition, right? They're not repentant. A truly repentant person will restore and rebuild.

That's okay, my ringer sounds like that too. Now, finally, God uses desperation. God uses desperation in verse 13.

So you can see where I'm going in this. How does God get us back on track? First, there's disobedience, and then He brings discord often to get us back on track. Because if things are going great, family life is going great, marriage is going great, work is going great, and you're in disobedience, you'll stay in disobedience.

But when there's discord in the family life and things at work, and there's disclosure, things are brought to the surface about you, about your character, about different things, God will use these things to get you back on track. Because often we don't get back on track on our own. So that's the final point.

God uses desperation. Have you ever been desperate? Desperation? There's power in desperation. I've noticed the more desperate you are, the harder you cling on to Christ.

The more desperate you are, the harder you cling on, the longer, the more you seek Him, the more you find Him, and the more you find Him, the more you want to seek Him. I praise God sometimes for desperation. I praise God for my past.

Because I see some people, I know pastors that they lived in a Christian home, like Leavitt to Beaver. Right? No issues really. Wonderful, graduated, 4.0. Went to the seminary.

Six years, Masters in Divinity. But they've never been desperate. They've never felt the pain.

They've never been forgiven much, like the lady who loved much because she's been forgiven much. And of course, we don't want a testimony. We want to live for Christ.

But God will use that desperation often. And I've noticed those who just have a passionate relationship with God are often those who have been hurt the deepest. Have been desperate.

God, I won't make it financially. How can I raise these children? How can I make it? How can I raise these kids too? Or this situation? Or these challenges? In that desperation, if you go to God, He can begin to form a relationship that is stronger than any relationship you've ever had. That's why you'll see people often in persecuted areas that will never give up Christ.

They're killed for their faith. They're beaten. They're beheaded.

Why? Because in their desperation. In their desperation, they've cried out to Him and He's saved them. And that's one concern I do have for our church in America.

You can put the heater on 72. Just the other day I told my wife, maybe I told you guys, I don't know. But I was just so convicted.

I'm pulling out a trash can. And a big truck's going to come and pick up my trash. I've got little sprinklers that pop on a water grass.

We've got insulation. Look at where we... We should be the most thankful people on the planet. Desperation? Put it on MasterCard.

Desperation? I've got retirement saved. I don't, but I'm working to that. But there's not a desperate... I'm going to show a missionary video.

It's a movie that's incredible in March. I think it will be a Wednesday night then as well. More information will be coming out.

But I've watched it three times now. Two hours long and I can't... The tears just... We are so blessed. These people are so desperate that God moves.

And He's their provider. He sustains them. He's their healer.

He directs them. He's everything to them. And I want people to get back to that spot of desperation.

Verse 13, Nevertheless, the men rowed. Rowed the boat. It's a big vessel, but you can row.

I don't know if you saw a movie, I don't remember what it was, but they're sitting down in this boat and they're rowing. It could have been something like that. And these men had integrity.

They said, we're not going to throw you over. Let's get back to the land. Jonah said, throw me over.

And you'd think, right? Pirates. Pirates are pretty brutal. You'd think they would just throw him over.

But they didn't. They said, no, no, no, let's just row back to the land. And guess what? When you try to run from God, what's going to happen? They couldn't.

The waves got bigger and bigger and bigger and they couldn't go anywhere. So when they tried to row to the land, they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. Hope I pronounced that right.

Tempestuous, yes, you know. Let's just say more violent. Right? More violent against them.

So here's the point. When we keep going against God, the problem grows. Somebody needs to hear that tonight maybe.

You're fighting God. You're trying to run. You're trying to get to the land.

But things are just not improving. And it's not because God is angry and doesn't love you. It's actually because He wants you back on track.

Those He loves, He disciplines. Like if you have children, you know, right? You're disciplined. If you don't discipline your kids, that's why I love the foster care system.

Don't get me wrong. We need more godly people watching kids. But if the person doesn't have the right motives with the children, you'll see they don't discipline the children.

Do whatever you want. I don't care. Do whatever you want.

Unless you make them mad, right? But there's a lack of love if they don't truly love the children. I think people should get involved in foster and adoption for the right motives and loving. But if the wrong motive is there, it's a lack of discipline.

And what happens with a lack of discipline? The kids turn out like, well, let's just go a different direction, but it's not good. So God loves us. He disciplines us.

So when we start to run from that calling, when God wants us to come back, maybe we're drifted in any area. You fill in the blank. Your struggle isn't my struggle.

It isn't your struggle. We all have different things. But if we're trying to run from God and life gets more difficult and more difficult, He's using that to our advantage to get us to turn back to Him.

Because if they could have reached the land, think about that. If they would have reached the land, Jonah would have got off the boat and said, ooh, that was a close one. Where's Tarshish? I'm not going to

Nineveh.

So God continues to shake and shake and shake. And the more pride a person has, usually the longer the storm from personal observation. The more pride a person has, yours truly too, right? The longer that storm.

And the longer God will try to woo us back to Him. Verse 14, Therefore they cried out to the Lord and said, We pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for this man's life and do not charge us with innocent blood. So they knew He was innocent.

They were going to throw Him off the ship. For You, O Lord, have done as it pleased. So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea and the sea ceased from its raging.

As soon as they obeyed God, as soon as Jonah was now put on the right direction, instead of a ship going to Tarshish, now he was put in a position to go back to Nineveh, the storm ceased. So they picked him up, threw him into the ocean. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows.

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. So the takeaway from this is obedience will restore peace.

That I assure you. Now you might have done everything you are capable of doing. You might have situations where, like Paul said, as much as it depends upon you, live at peace with everyone.

You can't force issues sometimes, especially when family dynamics or friendships. We can't force and force and force. We're called to do what we can do.

We can mend the bridge. We try to. We can throw out the olive branch.

We can make attempts. But at some point, God's going to have to direct that other person. So you obey on your end.

You do what God calls you to do on your end. And peace will return to your heart because you have assurance that you're doing what God wants you to do. But peace does not mean complete restoration.

The sea was calm. Right? The sea was calm. But he's in a fish's belly.

I think I'd rather take the boat being in the ocean, wouldn't you? Versus in a... Have you ever watched those shark movies? You know, and just people getting... I don't know why they go in cages with sharks and just ridiculous things. I have no desire to do that. Or climb Mount Everest.

Those kind of things. I watch those shows, and those people are ridiculous. Just, I don't know.

If you want to do that, don't take it wrong. I don't want to do that. But I also don't like roller coasters.

So, maybe that'll tell you something. But peace doesn't mean complete restoration. The sea was calm, but he was in the belly of a fish.

And often, we move from one storm to sometimes another storm or from one setback to another setback. But the key is you keep going in the right direction. Because I see people get frustrated.

They come out of a storm or difficulty. What's this difficulty? Well, forget it now. I'm giving up now.

But sometimes we go from storm to storm to storm. And trusting God in that entire process. So here's how to get back on track to recap a few things.

Own it. Own it. And God will rebuild.

Don't be defensive. Be determined. Determined to do what is right.

What I mean by that is when exposure takes place, when people maybe give you constructive criticism, don't be defensive. Because that's not a humble heart. Don't blame shift or make excuses.

Accept responsibility. Excuses lead us further down the wrong road. And pride is so deadly because it doesn't listen.

Did you know pride doesn't listen? What does it do? It doesn't listen. And I can list Christian leaders from the 1980s, from the 1990s. Men, women, I've known that you've known.

And God has tried to warn them. God has tried to warn them. Shut this down before I shut you down.

Come back to humility. And I remember there's some big... I can name their names right now on TV. You all saw them on TV.

1980s and 90s. By the name of Jimmy and different things like that. And I know people that know people that went and actually warned some of these guys.

They went and warned them personally. Wrote them letters. Warned them and said, listen.

You've got to come back to God. Your pride has elevated you. God says shut this down.

And they don't. They just keep pursuing and pursuing. And then eventually we see the exposure takes place.

Remember there's one gentleman. I don't want to say his name wrong. William Bramwell or something like William.

I can send it to you if you need it. But somebody actually spoke a few years beforehand and had a dream or vision or something that this person was going to die in a car accident if they didn't repent and believe. And this guy was in the faith healing movement.

He was up at the top. He actually began to think he was like John the Baptist and Elisha or whatever. And he got really, you have to be very careful because the more God promotes sometimes.

I don't know if this guy was legitimate. I haven't studied anything. I'm just saying that he was warned and he was warned and he ended up getting killed in a car accident that same year.

It's on video from way back then. And it just kind of parallels with us today. That God will warn.

He'll expose. He'll use people. He'll use sermons.

He'll use the Word of God. He'll use worship. He's a loving Father in saying come back to Me.

I'm warning you. But don't let pride get in the way. I was reminded this week too that no flesh will glory in God's presence.

He says that. Let no flesh glory in My presence. Let no flesh exalt itself in My presence.

And the final thing I wanted to encourage you. I really want to just encourage you. I know I'm using the word encourage a lot tonight.

But to come to the Sunday service. I'm going to talk about this a lot more on Sunday. But this last point.

To use embarrassment and shame to your advantage. Use embarrassment and shame to your advantage. When Jonah was disclosed or disclosure took place.

When things come out. Use those as stepping stones. Not stumbling blocks.

Use that shame or that embarrassment. And I remember I was going to share it Sunday. But I'll share it now.

There's a movie I just watched. It's called Greater. It's about one of the best walk-on players in college history who died in a car accident.

But at 12 years old he was called all these names by his coach. He said you loser get off here. You know I can't say what he said.

Get off the bench. You'll never play football again. You're just fat.

You're worthless. You don't even know. It just attacked him.

But instead of going home and crying. He used that to be the hardest worker there. Get there first.

Leave later. And he made it terrible. He made a bad play.

It's in the movie and different things. But that parallels with us too. Using embarrassment and shame to your advantage.

Don't let them beat you up. Use that to strengthen yourself and get you back on track. Because the Christian life is often a life of embarrassment.

And we feel shame for things we do. And we get beat up by people and teased and mocked. Just go post sermons on Facebook and watch.

Right? Or just walk through I'm going to do this I think. I don't know. The Los Angeles Zoo.

And just say evolution is false. Right? And see how much criticism you get. Because we were sitting there at the zoo and this lady is telling us about the chimpanzees.

I'm with my kids. And me and my wife, she goes, did she just say that we're all related and we're chimpanzees too? Did she say that? So I went up and talked to her afterwards. She's like, yeah, we're all part of the same family and they're our relatives.

I'm like, where do you get that from? Well, it's a proven thing. I said, well, it's proven that we're not from them. You should, you know, so ever since then, I want to get that shirt that says, but then you're inviting

problems, right? You're inviting, you don't want to invite problems.

Right? I could start, I could invite a lot of problems right now. I could say, we're going to talk. Here's what I'm talking about Sunday too.

This is, I'm giving you a heads up. I'm not going to talk about these things, but I'm going to use this as a, as a, as a one liner. Tonight, we're going to talk about politics, vaccines, homeschooling, charter schools, public schools, and women in the workforce.

Where's the back door? Right? Cause you, you can spark, you can spark a little, some arguments if you want to. I have opinions and all those things, but you know, the bottom line is we, the truth offends, but our attitude shouldn't. And I got way off track, but let me get back to this, this, this point on, on a, should we vaccinate our children or not? Just kidding.

That's not the point. Story. Uh, I'm going to give you a quick story, um, about embarrassment and shame to your advantage.

And it was a young man who, uh, he cost his company that he worked for \$100,000. It was \$100,000 mistake. And he was, it was a great employee too.

Uh, but shame, he filled with shame and guilt and depressed. I mean, could you imagine that's, that's quite a bit of money. So he's packing out, he's packing up his desk.

He's pulling everything out. He's getting ready to quit or be fired. And the boss comes in.

He goes, what are you doing? He goes, I'm, I'm quitting. I'm leaving. And the boss said, you're not going anywhere.

I just made \$100,000 investment into your education. You're staying here and you're, but you see how that can be used. You know, what he thought was shame and guilt and embarrassment was actually an investment into his, in his education.

Because what God also does too, is when the shame and the guilt come sometimes, when we feel that pain, we change course. We, we, we educate ourselves. Ask, ask any person who's went through marriage challenges, uh, that, that if they go in the right direction, that will strengthen them.

Because they don't want to go the other direction. Or somebody who's had financial disaster, they've learned from it, and they've rebuilt their life. Now, because of the pain and the bad choices, now they've educated themselves, and now God uses that to propel them in the right direction.

So the encouragement tonight is to not beat yourself up. If you're off track, uh, whether it's sin in your life, uh, repent. Use this time of prayer and worship to repent.

Say, Lord, I need to get back on track. I've been failing, I've been falling, and I need to get back on track. If there's shame and guilt, shame maybe of what's going on, guilt, remorse, because we can beat ourselves up, can't we? We, we're the, we, the worst enemy that we have is within.

And we can sit and beat our, I knew it, I knew it, I knew it. Use that as a stepping stone. The enemy wants you to keep stumbling on it, not a stepping stone.

He wants you to stumbling block, so you keep falling back into things. But use that shame and guilt, use that, all the discord, everything we talked about, to get back on track with God. And it starts with just confession.

Humbling ourselves and confessing, allow God to get us back on track.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31982.mp3>

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