

Sin in the Camp - Part 3

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the biblical approach to confronting sin within the church community with a focus on restoration and humility.

Duration: 41:08

Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:29, Psalm 139:23-24, Proverbs 18:17, Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 18:15-17, John 17:20-23, Galatians 6:1, James 1:19

Topics: "Church Discipline", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon delves into the topic of confronting sin within the church community, emphasizing the importance of addressing unrepentant hearts that embrace a consistent pattern of sin. Jesus' teachings in Matthew 18 are highlighted, focusing on the process of confrontation for restoration rather than condemnation. The sermon stresses the need for repentance, surrender, and rebuilding relationships as a response to confrontation, with a call to prioritize unity, compassion, and humility in dealing with sin in the camp.

Transcript

Sin in the camp. We're in Matthew 18. We've been in Matthew 18 a little bit the past few weeks, probably a month now.

And this is an important topic, so I didn't want to rush through it. What exactly is sin in the camp, or Matthew 18? You're dealing with a sinning brother, or you're dealing with a sinning sister. You're dealing with sin in the camp.

And let me read it again. Matthew 18, verse 15. Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear it to them, then you tell it to the church.

But if he refuses even to hear the church, then let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Wow. Now, do you remember who said this? Not Paul.

Not Peter. Jesus. This is what Jesus Christ Himself is saying.

And the reason, I think, is because sin in the camp is so destructive. And sin in personal lives is so destructive. And actually, confrontation, the purpose of confrontation is restoration.

Because we think of some kind of, at least sometimes in the past, I've thought of confrontation as, okay, let's get out the big sledgehammer. Okay, it's time to break this thing in pieces. And that's not really what confrontation is for.

It's for to restore. So when does this happen? When does the church get involved or other people get involved? Well, in a nutshell, it's an unrepentant heart that embraces a consistent pattern of sin. So that's what he's talking about here.

An unrepentant heart embraces a consistent pattern of sin. Does that make sense? Because if it's a repentant heart, well, the job's been done. There's repentance taking place, and he's turning from that sin.

But it's an unrepentant heart, basically a hard heart, who continues in a consistent pattern of sin that has to be dealt with. And we don't have a one-size-fits-all approach. There's too many variables, but we do have principles to follow.

In other words, the Bible doesn't say, in this situation, if the person's married with two kids and this happens, here's what you need to do. We don't have, there's so many variables. How quick do you move? And I talked to a pastor locally this week and asked them, Chris Johnson over at Grace Chapel, and I asked him on this whole dealing with the church and getting involved, and he said a lot of it depends on how quick the cancer's spreading.

Is it something that needs to be dealt with quickly? Like this has to happen quickly, there's a person here, they're continuing to come to church, they're acting like it's no big deal, and they're influencing others? Then you've got to move quickly. Or if it's something you can wait on and pray about, and okay, Lord, we've got to move cautiously and carefully, and you move a little slowly, you're seeking counsel, you're waiting on God. So that's why there's not really a one-size-fits-all approach.

Because everybody says, go get them, but well, hold on. Let's not go get them, we have to take this to the Lord, and really, to be honest with you, our heart shouldn't be, go get them. Our heart shouldn't be saying, let's go get them.

That's the wrong heart. The plank is still in your eye if you're saying that. We should never approach people with this go get them attitude.

Now, there's urgency from time to time, but there's also time to wait on God. So the first step, we talked about two weeks ago. Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

If he hears you, you have gained your brother. So if you weren't here, I'm going to have to direct you to the website that was Sin in the Camp Part 2, because we spent a whole sermon talking about how to go to somebody, how to approach them in love, and how to work something out. But then, we notch it up a bit to step two, what Jesus is talking about.

Now, the question often comes up, well, where is this done, and how is it done? First, let me say this. It's done when possible, privately and graciously. That's a very important thing to remember.

It's done privately and graciously, initially. You're going to the person, and you have this sense of grace with your words. It's private.

It's not made public yet. So the second step, verse 16, Jesus says, but if he will not hear, so if the person doesn't hear you, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. So here's what's happening.

The offender now realizes the seriousness of their sin. When you bring a couple people in, you up the ante, if you will. Or you bring in a little bit of extra power into that.

You bring, okay, two or three people, because you know it's okay if somebody talks to you. It's difficult, but if there's others coming now, this offended person, the person who did the offending, now realizes the seriousness of their sin. So it's important, Jesus says, to bring one or two others.

And then if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. And then if he refuses to hear the church, let him be to you a heathen and a tax collector. And again, we're going to probably talk about that next week with time constraints tonight.

But then Jesus says, assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. So he's talking about unity and witnesses and coming together. And there's power in unity.

When a couple people come together and lovingly confront, there's power in that. God says, Jesus says, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. And I could spend a whole sermon on that verse right there.

And hopefully we'll get to it in the weeks to come, or next week. But let's just leave it at that for now, that we're going to just work on step two. But if he will not hear, so when somebody doesn't hear you, or when you go to them, or there's an offense that's occurring, how do you bring two or three other witnesses? Well, let me tell you what's going to happen first.

It's called defense mode. Defense mode. Do you know what that is? It's the opposite of humility mode.

You're probably not going to hear, thank you for coming and talking with me. I'm so sorry. That's something I need to repent of.

What steps should I take? You're not going to hear that very often. What are you going to hear? Defense mode. Excuses.

Blame shifting. All those things. But this is important to remember.

God doesn't tell us to change the other person. He just tells us to lovingly confront. We plant the seeds.

He does the watering. He does the growing. I think He also does the pruning.

Right? The Father loves He prunes. He cuts back certain things. So always remember that.

You're probably not going to get a positive response. I think that's where we get frustrated. Well, this doesn't turn out like I thought.

Usually it doesn't. I'll tell you from experience. Not too many people say, I was wrong.

You're right. Let me work on that. Because of pride.

Because we get caught off guard. If somebody does do that, I'll tell you right now, that usually, unless they're fooling you, their heart's getting in a good spot. That repentance is taking place.

Change is taking place in their heart. But here's what we have to do in regards to the witnesses. Research the facts.

Research the facts. I cannot say that enough. What I mean by that is hear both sides.

Nine times out of ten, when I hear the other side of something, I'm like, oh, that makes a little more sense. You didn't tell me this part of it. Well, yeah, I forgot, but that doesn't matter.

Proverbs says to go and hear both sides. Actually, a fool makes a decision based on hearing one side. A couple Scriptures and Proverbs.

You can find them easily. It says go and hear both sides of the matter. And that way, you can judge more carefully.

You can discern. Because it's very interesting when you hear an angry husband, and boy, he's making his wife out to be the worst thing ever. And then you go and you talk to her, and you're like, oh, wait a minute here.

I think if I was treated that way, I might be acting this way too. And you hear both sides of what's going on. So once you hear both sides of that, then you're now able to make a better decision.

So you never want to hear just one. And now I'll tell you this as well. Sometimes it's not possible to hear both sides.

If the other person doesn't want to talk, or if they're not going to open up, or different things, sometimes you can only hear one side of it. But it's encouraging. If it's encouraging, I'm encouraging you to try to hear both sides.

So I can't tell you how many times in marriage counseling, or confrontation, or lovingly talking to somebody, that only hearing one side is really hurt. It's embarrassing sometimes. You go back and you go, why didn't I hear the other side of this? So that would be the first step I would encourage you to do.

Now this doesn't have to be right away. A person doesn't have to be confronted, and then the next day you go get witnesses. If you don't change in three hours, tomorrow morning I'm calling the pastor.

Because it's interesting, when Jesus said, but if he will not hear, that's a process sometimes. It's okay to give it a few days. Maybe even a few weeks, depending on the situation.

You've planted that seed. You're praying. Hopefully you're fasting.

You're seeking God, and that person is thinking. They're being convicted. Nine times out of ten, God is orchestrating some circumstances in their life to get them to bow their knee to the cross of repentance.

God will also orchestrate things. They're so arrogant. They're this and that, and then tomorrow they lose their job.

And they go to the bank, and they just found out that identity theft has been done on their bank account. God will wake them up somehow. So we don't have to go get a few witnesses the next day.

This is, I believe, a process. Now are there exceptions? Of course. This is not, again, a one-size-fits-all approach.

But I think there's wisdom in waiting. You've planted the seed. Now you sit back, because those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength.

But also when you wait, when you go and move forward, there's confidence in that because you didn't react. You responded. You waited on God.

And actually you get to a point of unsettling. As the days go by, I've got that before. As the days go by, a couple weeks go by, it's like, you know what? It's time.

Now I'm trying to avoid this on purpose. And you can sense that God is now wanting us to take, or you to take that next step. This is also not the season to be what I call a tattletale.

We like to, you know, as we confront the person, now we're trying to tattletale. We're trying to bring out the worst in them every day. Look, they're doing this.

They're doing this. They're doing this. This is not the time to do that.

You've confronted. You've said everything. Now you step back and you see what God is gonna do.

Also during this time, you season your words with grace. Or when the witnesses go, they season their words with grace. It's very important to say things like, I'm not perfect either.

Or the other person, I may have contributed to this. Or I've made mistakes in the past. Or let me tell you about something I went through in my own marriage.

Or let me tell you how pride brought me down the wrong path. Or let me tell you about this addiction back when I was younger. Let me tell you how God has helped me.

And I can relate to you. So you see how you're coming as somebody, you're seasoning your words with grace to try to help. How many people did the Pharisees actually help? Have you ever thought of that? Most people say none.

I mean, we really don't know. But they didn't help very many people. Why didn't they help them? Because they went with the Pharisee attitude.

They went with that judgmental attitude. And many times when I talk to people, usually men sometimes, and I'll say, listen, I've been there before. You think my wife has always just loved me and we've had no problems at home? Really? No, it's actually difficult.

Marriage is difficult. Planning a church is difficult. Having friendships is difficult.

Iron sharpens iron, right? And you can relate to them. So you build them up. It's called the sandwich approach in business, right? You build them up, and then you bring in the spanking, and then you build them back up again.

That's what we used to do when I had a lot of employees. Julie, you remember probably the sandwich approach. You build them up and build them up, but you're fired.

And then you build them back up, but God's gonna, you know, and you sandwich everything in there. It's a biblical principle. You season your words with grace, and you let the person know that, hey, I could be in your same shoes too.

Most people are one choice away from wrecking their life. Most people are one choice away or one decision away from getting back into a pattern that will lead them down the wrong path. So all of us should approach a subject like this with grace and mercy, because Paul said, take heed lest you fall.

And I've seen that many times, many times. People come after somebody, and then within a year, they're falling down as well. So that's the next point.

Who are the witnesses? Well, you might say, okay, I'm gonna bring two or three people, right? Or I'm gonna bring one person in. And really, you've gotta use discernment here too, because you don't bring somebody every single problem. This is a serious issue that needs to be confronted, needs to be dealt with.

And usually, it's probably not a good idea to bring family members that aren't maybe gonna season their words with grace, or it's gonna turn into a big fight. Now, there's exceptions, intervention, things like that, if you've got mature family members that can get involved. So I'm not saying that's never the case, but I'm saying, be careful in this area of who you bring.

Well, does the Bible have any insight? I believe it does. Galatians 6.1. Brothers, if anyone is caught in a transgression, that's what we're dealing with. Caught in a transgression means they are caught in sin.

They're caught in it, like a fish in a net. And they don't see it. They think they're swimming freely in the ocean.

Oh, you're caught in that net. If he's caught in that, then you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Now, interesting, those who are spiritual would mean those who live by the Spirit.

Those who have the fruit of the Spirit in their life. Not perfect fruit, right? All of our fruit's a little damaged right now on this side of heaven. But those who have that love and joy and peace and gentleness and kindness and goodness and self-control, those who season their words with grace, those probably who've been in church a while, they're mature in their faith, you take them along with you because they are able to restore.

Usually those who are immature or weak in the faith aren't able to restore the person. And here's why. It turns into an arguing match.

It turns into, it will. The majority of the time when you bring somebody, the other person is not happy. That's what we call it.

Not a happy camper. They don't want to hear. Who wants to be confronted? Not really.

Nobody does. So if you have somebody immature and not walking in the fruit of the Spirit, the flesh is gonna, and I've heard of elder meetings and I've heard of other meetings where people, they're just yelling. In the church, Christians in board meetings, been Christians 30 years, and they're upset and

they're just slamming the door and they're leaving.

That's why. We're supposed to address this gently. And actually, an argument doesn't really need to develop because we're just lovingly challenging the person.

If he doesn't receive it, that relieves me of responsibility. I don't have to win an arguing match. It's not who's the loudest.

It's who's spiritually discerning things. Now here's the kicker at the end of Galatians 6.1. Keep watch on yourself lest you too be tempted. So he just said go bring spiritual people, but keep watch on yourself lest you too be tempted.

And when he says things like watch yourself, really what that means is a humble heart. Removing the plank from our eye so we can see the speck in our, so when you watch yourself, you're watching your attitude, aren't you? I better walk in humility. I better not use that tone.

I better measure my words carefully. I'm watching myself. I'm being a good steward on this thing.

James says that little tiny tongue will set a forest ablaze with our words. We can murder with our mouth. We can destroy children or spouses with our mouth.

Life and death is in the power of the tongue. So it's very careful in this area that we have to keep watch of our own selves. We have to be a credible witness.

Now I'd recommend if you're interested in commentaries, the pulpit commentary is a good commentary. It's only 22 volumes. So you can get through that in a week or so.

But it was back in the 1800s, back when truth was solid and they still fought against many things. But a lot of the commentaries, I like to look back on Matthew Henry, probably in the 16th, 1700s. George Whitefield used to read his commentary.

And a lot of those old guys, they had some solid words of wisdom because they weren't distracted by the television and Facebook. They spent a lot of time in prayer and meditating on God's words. So I love to see what their thoughts were.

And the pulpit commentary, it was written 1800s by about 100 different contributors. And they're commenting on this. If anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in the spirit of gentleness.

Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. The pulpit commentary says this. The Christian is to be on his guard against his own weak and corrupt nature.

And we don't like to hear that. Some people do, but most high-minded Christians who've been to church all their life don't want to hear that they too have a weak and corrupt nature. If they're not careful, it'll take control.

They must be on guard against their own weak and corrupt nature, lest he withhold help or adequate help. See, we sometimes think the opposite, like falling into sin. But we have to watch our own self because sometimes we don't want to provide adequate help.

Let me just put this down to our terms, application. We don't want to say anything. Do you want to confront? No? I don't.

There's probably two or three people I need to confront, and I still haven't confronted. Maybe this sermon will convict me. But it's hard.

It's painful. It's like, Lord, just change it. You do it.

You do it, God. You do it. Family members are different things.

So that's what he's saying here too. And I didn't think about this part of it. My own weak nature is to not confront and to not help.

So I have to be on guard against that too. But then he goes on to say, the commentary goes on to say, or in helping these people, we get betrayed into the sin of Pharisaic self-righteousness and the sin of harshness. That's the opposite of humility is being coming into, because if we come into these things, here's what happens.

We come in and we confront somebody and we bring the sledgehammer of God. We bring harshness. We come in as a Pharisee.

The devil says, oh, I love this fertile ground. I can work in that. Because it's interesting.

Many times when a person is mean and confronting and reminds you of a Pharisee, they're actually caught in sin themselves. I can't tell you how many times a person who's caught in their own sin but doesn't repent, because of that, now they have a hard prideful judgmental heart. So when they're coming at a person strongly, it's often because they have their own and confess sin in their own life.

That's why they can't be gentle and understanding and compassionate. So go get them, God, is not the right approach. Go get them, God.

It's not the right approach. Anytime we're confronting, and often don't we say that though? When the flesh comes up, go get them, God. Let's just go.

Man, let's tell them off. Let's put them in their place. That's not going to help this process.

Here's what I love about God. He's a good God. He's a good God.

I know we talk about righteousness and holiness and judgment and hell. Those are true things, but He's also a good God. This is a loving Father, a good God, who brings conviction and conviction and conviction.

Every time you confront somebody, I'll bet years worth of wages. Oh, don't get in trouble, right? Betting. I'm trying to make this strong point here.

Let me reframe that. I will... Well, there's no way to say it better than that. That people who are confronted have been convicted many, many, many, many weeks if not months, if not years before the confrontation.

You never confront somebody and they say, I had no clue. I was never convicted about that. I didn't know that was wrong.

So that's a loving God saying, listen, I'm convicting you. I'm convicting you. You know that's not right.

You need to turn back. I'm convicting. I'm convicting now.

I'm exposing some things. I'm convicting and exposing. I'm convicting and exposing.

Now I'm going to take some things away from you. I'm going to make your life... I've got to get this out of you and now I'm bringing confrontation. That's a loving God who convicts and convicts and convicts.

So the next time we want to get mad at God or other people, we have to remember that we had plenty of warnings beforehand. It's what we call the umpire of the soul with the whistle, right? Whistle. Stop.

No, holding. Turn around. Defense.

You know, your penalty there. There's a conviction. No, no, no, no, no.

So when the confrontation finally comes, it's because we have been ignoring conviction. And that's a good God. That's a God who lovingly, lovingly pursues.

Oswald Chambers said, never disregard a conviction that the Holy Spirit brings to you. If it's important enough for the Spirit of God to bring it to your mind, it is the very thing that He is detecting in you that you need to change. That's pretty interesting.

If the Spirit of God is convicting us of something, if the Spirit of God is convicting us of something, if it's important enough for the Spirit of God to do it, to bring it to our mind, it better be something we do. And I thought, boy, this can fall into everything from eating. Who's convicted about the way they eat or what they eat or they don't eat or taking care of our body.

I mean, there's so many things that God is convicting us in or our attitude or to treat people, spending habits. I mean, you name it, it's in there. So anytime God's convicting, that's not something we want to ignore.

That's usually something we want to embrace. And so what happens though is that area of your life begins to be repaired. Because as He's convicting us, once we begin to respond to that conviction, it leads to something being repaired or renewed or rebuilt.

Anytime you listen to the conviction of God, it does not lead you in a worse direction. Never. Never.

Never when you respond to the conviction of God to do something, will it harm you. Now, it might not feel good. There might be consequences.

Right? There might be mistakes or things that happen later on that will affect us in a deep level. And I've talked to, you know, probably once a year now, people come to me and men, they don't necessarily go here. They've had an affair and they don't want to tell their wife.

Even if it was a year or two or three ago. And there's a conviction there. They've had this conviction there.

But I don't want to deal with the consequences. But I have a feeling that whatever's going on is probably not good. It's probably not what we consider a healthy marriage foundation until it's brought to the light.

And that's what I mean. There's consequences to those actions. But it's better to follow the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

And it's interesting in this area. God also uses circumstances. He will use circumstances probably more than anything else.

Here's why. When life is going great, we rarely will make some significant changes. Do you know why Judah and Israel fell? The southern and northern kingdoms.

Let's just say the children of Israel in general. The nation of Israel. Because they experienced times of abundance.

Times of abundance. And that led to apathy. And apathy leads to eventually walking away from God.

So God will use a circumstance. Here comes a king from the east or the west to judge you. Here comes Babylonian kings.

Uh-oh, here we go. So the circumstances. So God will use circumstances.

He'll withhold the rain. There goes the crop. All these crops you're counting on.

The rain is withheld. So He uses circumstances to get us back to where He wants us to be. And in the Bible I was reading this week in my study Bible, it said this.

If we try to skip over certain steps along the way because they seem too painful or too difficult, we can be assured that God will always bring us back to face and deal with that same area of growth. How many times have I said this? A 40-year journey in the wilderness could have took 11 days. So we want to escape the pain, but God brings us back to deal with that area.

We want to rush forward and do this. And God says, no, I'm going to bring you back until you deal with it. I've got eternity.

How long do you have? And He keeps bringing us back to that. But just as we cannot skip steps along the way in order to avoid pain, we cannot skip them because we are in a hurry. And many people are in a hurry to see God move, and they skip steps as well.

They push God or they don't listen to the conviction. They don't get back on track. So God will orchestrate circumstances to get us back to Him.

One way God brings us back and to deal with an area of growth is through confrontation and circumstances. That's the point of this sermon, really, right? He'll use confrontation and our circumstances. Think about this.

The alcoholic often doesn't quit until he loses his job. The person addicted to pain meds often doesn't quit until they lose their kids. The person who's angry and prideful often doesn't change until the spouse leaves.

The judgmental person often doesn't change until they lose most of their friends. And the liar often doesn't change until life becomes unbearable. Have you noticed that before? Change often doesn't take place until there's confrontation and circumstances push us toward the conviction that God wants us to change.

And then he goes into the part here, this is interesting, Jesus said, bringing two or three witnesses and the power of unity, the power of unity. We saw two or three witnesses, they used to do the death penalty by this, I don't know now if they do it with DNA or different things, but in the beginning of our nation, if you look at Williams, Blackstones, commentaries on the laws of England that America borrowed and different things, there had to be a witness to the murder. There had to be a witness and even they brought that from Leviticus and different areas of the Bible where there had to be a witness, witnessing, seeing these different things.

And also what about prayer where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them. And God said, go seek godly counsel, bring in unity. And Jesus said, I wish, Father, I pray that they all be one.

That was Jesus' prayer. I pray that they would all be one. But we're often not one.

We are two separate people with separate goals, separate agendas, and separate attitudes. It's not about King Jesus, but King me. And often it takes confrontation sometimes to get us back on that path of unity.

So God's wanting unity in this area. We just got back, many of you know who Ravi Zacharias is, right? That was kind of my birthday present. My birthday was yesterday and Morgan took me down to hear him speak in Pasadena.

And the afters opened up for them. I didn't even know who they were until they sang and then I recognized their songs. And then he came out and the message was profoundly moving to say the least.

He talked about from Nehemiah and talked actually on unity. God unites us by giving us each a burden. I'm not going to do it justice.

I'm going to try to find the sermon so I can send it out. But he talked about Nehemiah, how he saw the burden of his people. Somebody came and gave him a report of Jerusalem.

He said the walls are torn down. The city's in disarray. And Nehemiah was very sad.

He said, why should I not be sad when the place of my father's tombs lies in waste? So God gives us each a burden and then from that burden, from that burden, we go and help other people. And we often don't help because we don't feel the pain of others. That's why we often don't help.

We don't feel the pain of others. But when God gives us that burden, you can feel, and he talked about in India where there's people who'll burn themselves to death. They want to die.

They'll throw kerosene and gasoline and light themselves up on fire. And they go and they visit these hospitals and they've got skin hanging down of different things. They don't know Christ.

They don't know God. And that burden to reach out to the lost people. And you have to have that, folks.

Without that burden, without that brokenness, you can't minister effectively. You'll just be a Pharisee going around telling people what to do or follow the Bible without any change. You've got to have a burden.

Pray, God, give me eyes that see and hands that hold and feet that go to where You want me to go. I need that burden for the lost. And it doesn't come naturally.

You've got to ask God for it and you've got to pursue it. One thing I did before this service, I went to one of the hospital homes that we minister in. Some of those people are not getting out.

And I went and prayed with them before the first service and talked with them. And you see them there. Some of them, you know, are not doing good.

And they know they might never leave there. And two of the ladies, I just gave them gas cards so their husbands can come visit them more. And the tears just started flowing down their face.

And then they start flowing down mine. And I'm like, God, over a gas card. Over \$100 gas card.

And they're holding saying, can you come back? Don't leave now. Don't leave. When are you coming? I've got to go to the church.

I've got to go preach. But folks, without that burden, you won't do any ministry. You won't help anybody.

Where's that brokenness? Where's that humility that we talk about? That's a Christian. A Christian isn't just full of theology. Pharisees were.

And I love theology. I love truth. I'll read some more tonight, God willing.

But unless that truth becomes living and active in our heart, and we feel the burden for others, we will not minister effectively. We will not be united. You won't feel the joy and passion of Christ unless you do those things.

There has to be a burden there. Because to fit into this message, this is why. Compassion and confrontation must go together.

Compassion and confrontation must go together. So here's the two choices. A person either changes, or somebody you'll be hearing this later in the week or in the months to come on the radio or the internet, they have two choices.

You have two choices. When confrontation takes place, maybe a couple days go by or a week, it doesn't have to happen immediately, but repentance needs to happen. You repent and you turn from what you're doing.

You surrender your life to God, everything. And then you go and rebuild what you broke down. See, many people don't want to rebuild.

To know when somebody's truly repentant, they stop the silliness, and they go and rebuild the damage that they've done. But many people get to that part, okay, I've repented, but I'm not doing any of those other things. Well, then they haven't really repented.

They're trying to save face and protect their image. So somebody's confronted. You want to see repentance, turning, surrender, and then rebuilding.

Whatever they broke down, the relationship with their kids, with their spouse, with other believers in the church. I know for a fact there's a dozen relationships in this church that need to be rebuilt. But guess what everybody's doing? No, no, no, no, not me.

Don't worry, they're mostly in the Second Service. I won't say that there. There are relationships in this church, and it breaks my heart that they're not mending.

They're not being rebuilt. Guys, this is the blood-bought church of Jesus Christ. If not here, where? If not us, who? Yeah, it hurts.

Yeah, it's time to tell the flesh, be quiet. I don't care if it hurts. I'm not listening to you anymore.

And we rebuild those relationships. We rebuild the trust. We're united.

So that's God's plan. Confront, repent, turn, surrender, and rebuild everything. But sad to say, here's what mainly happens.

Confrontation takes place, then excuses, then the person continues to fight God, and they continue down a destructive path. Now here's what I find very interesting. Ironically, this person often does repent and turn back to God, but it's years down the road, and the damage has been done.

Go visit the prisons. Go visit these hospital homes. That's what you, they come back at 65 when they should have at 45, or 35, or 25.

So that's a loving father. And then we live with the consequences of our actions. We live with those choices.

And here's also, this is interesting. We know that a spouse often pleads for us, or a child pleads for those who need to repent, or friends and family plead. But have you ever thought about God pleading? Because how often will a father or mother plead with their children? Son, daughter, don't do that.

You know that's the, and they plead. And even children. I've had children.

I've seen children say, Mommy, Daddy, don't do that. Don't keep fighting. Daddy, why are you hitting Mommy? Why are you yelling? And the children pleading.

And they still, but there's God pleads. God pleads with us. It's that conviction.

It's God pleading from Deuteronomy 5.29. Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me, and always keep My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children. That oh there is not just something the translator added. You're seeing a picture of God's heart there.

Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me. God's pleading. God's pleading.

What about Jesus? He sees the whole city of Jerusalem. And He says, Oh Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem, you killed the prophets and you stoned those who were sent to you. But I wish I could just gather your children like a hen gathers her little chicks and hold you and protect you.

But you were not willing. That's God pleading. That's a pleading God.

God pleads. Oh, that they had such a heart. And we have this view of God and it's either this mean, angry God or it's His doting grandfather.

And He's right in the middle. He's a loving God that calls us back. That's what grace and mercy is.

That's why most of the songs we sing, He created me from my mother's womb. It was love that called me into His kingdom. It was love and mercy and grace.

That would change the way we worship. That would change everything. So it's God's pleading.

And then we see the arrogance of the human heart that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments. That's a very, very good principle to follow. If you want to get back on track with God, here you go.

Fear Him and follow all of His commandments. Not perfectly, but with the heart set on Him. And then we see the final thing.

How many problems, I'm wondering, are self-created? Have you ever thought about that? That it might be well with them and with their children forever. So God's saying, listen, fear Me, follow My commandments that it might be well with you and your children forever. So when we go against divine order, many times, the problems that we're encountering are self-created.

Not all the time, I'm well aware of that. But many times, what we're going through, the problems we're facing, you can look, how many of you have kids probably above, well you don't have to raise your hand, but above 12? How many of their problems are self-created? All of them, right? Because we don't fear God. We don't walk in His commandments.

And let me just make this closing point. Our choices affect those closest to us. Our choices affect those closest to us.

Those we love the most, we often hurt the deepest. So when confrontation comes, I would encourage you to embrace it. We must deal with the sin in our own heart before dealing with sin in the camp.

We must deal with the sin in our own heart before dealing with sin in the camp. You know what? I didn't know if I should say this or not. I wrote it down this morning.

But I'll go ahead and do it. Experience has taught me that most people, maybe in this room, or who will listen to this later, they have somebody else in mind. Like, yeah, there's a message about sin in the camp.

I know who this is for. And they'll send it to the person. They'll listen.

I mean, just putting sin in the camp, church discipline, your ratings will go way up, your Facebook posts, your shares, all this. Why? Because we have somebody else in mind, and often God wants to speak to our own heart first. He wants to speak to our own heart first.

See, once you get your heart right, then we can confront others. And I'll tell you right now as a living witness, once I get my heart right, a lot of the stuff that bothered me about the other person, it's not that big a deal. And I can go in love and grace and mercy and understanding and relate to them and talk to them with a heart of love and compassion because I looked at my own heart first.

And that's what he says here, take heed. Earlier when we talked about the witnesses, they must keep watchful care of their own heart. And that's what I just encourage us to do tonight during worship, during closing worship, is look at our own heart.

Before we go confront somebody, let's get our own heart right and our relationships right. There's fractured relationships. God's gonna say, back to the beginning where you wanna start over again.

Back to the beginning, let's start over. And he'll just keep bringing us back until we get that heart issue dealt with. And I would just encourage you to do that tonight.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/XyWcQQWRDWI.mp4>
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