

Response to Our Sin

by Steve Gallagher

God's response to our sin is not just forgiveness, but also transformation, and it requires a vibrant devotional life and a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Duration: 46:39

Scripture: Psalm 103:12, Proverbs 28:13, Luke 15:7, Romans 3:23, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6-7, 1 John 1:8-9

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon entitled 'God's Response to Our Sin,' Steve Gallagher addresses the misconception of God's grace that has taken hold of the church. He highlights how this misunderstanding has led to a loss of love for God's holiness, fear of the Lord, and hatred of sin. Gallagher emphasizes the need for believers to recognize their own sinfulness and confess it before God. He also shares a personal testimony of experiencing God's grace and forgiveness after a life of debauchery. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and embracing God's grace while also maintaining a reverence for His holiness.

Transcript

The following sermon entitled, God's Response to Our Sin, was presented by Steve Gallagher at New Life Assembly in Janesville, Wisconsin. Please feel free to make and distribute complimentary copies of this message to your friends. Other resources are available by visiting our website at PureLifeMinistries.org or by calling 1-888-PURE-LIFE.

One of the issues that you're constantly faced with in dealing with people in sin of any kind is God's grace. And, you know, it's been my experience that there is a real misconception of God's grace has kind of taken hold of the church and has shifted things around to the point that we have lost our love for God's holiness. We have lost our sense of fear of the Lord.

We have lost our hatred of sin. We have lost the shame of sin. We have lost the reality of how terrible worldliness is.

And I believe that much of this loss that has come across the church in the last 50 years increasingly is because of a misunderstanding of God's grace. And it's one of those touchy subjects, you know. What I'm going to share with you, I will tell you right now, is politically incorrect in the church at large.

But I'm going to share with you as best as I can the way I understand grace to be as it comes not from the radio airwaves, but from God's Word. I got all serious on my pastor. Did I do something wrong? It was the Packers thing.

I knew I shouldn't have said it. God's grace, as revealed in the New Testament, can only be understood in light of God's justice system as it is laid out in the Old Testament. When God laid out the law, He didn't make a mistake, you know.

And then later on said, well, that didn't work out so good. You know, I knew I shouldn't have did that. I knew I should have went the grace route first, you know.

It wasn't like that. It has been an unfolding of the character of God and of what it means to have a relationship with this being. And it was God's law was laid out and established firmly in place for 1400 years or whatever it was before Christ for a reason.

Because we needed to have an understanding of the way he viewed sin. And, you know, when you sinned in Old Testament times, you had to face the penalty for your sin. There were some sins that required a sacrifice.

You had to go to your little flock of sheep and pick out the the most beautiful little lamb that was in there, the one you really had the high hopes for. And you had to take that thing to the priest and he had to slit the thing's throat. Because of what you did.

And you understood because of what I did, this little creature, this innocent little creature must die today. Other sins required recompense of one form or another. Most of the things that I did in my life.

The penalty would have been to take me outside behind the church and throw stones at me until I was deceased. And dear ones, we have lost sight of this, but it would be right. It would be right when Jesus died on the cross, it didn't mean that God quit hating sin.

And then he just threw out his judicial system. It meant that his death provided an atonement for our sin and all God asked for. He didn't expect you to go through all the rigmarole of the Old Testament sacrificial system and all that.

He didn't lay that on us. He didn't impose that on us. All he asked of us.

Listen, this is all I'm asking. It's not much. Although to hear it today, it seems like it's, you know, this overbearing demand from God, you know, but all he asked was just confess your sins, just acknowledge your guilt.

And repent of them. That's all I'm asking, just ignore. You don't have to go through all that.

I'm not going to stone you to death. I'm not going to, you know, require your life. I'm not going to stamp you out.

I'm not going to require that you sacrifice things that really all I'm asking, just listen, come to me with a sincere heart and confess your sins and do your utmost to turn away from them. That's all I'm asking. It is grace means that we live the rest of our lives in the grateful awareness that we are criminals in his sight who deserve hell.

But because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross, we are free from it and we spend the rest of our lives in that grateful awareness. And I want to tell you, dear ones, you will never have a revelation of God's grace until you come to grips with the fact that you are a criminal in your heart and that you deserve hell. Grace will always be a cheap thing that you abuse and use for some carnal or selfish purpose.

That's all it will ever mean to you until you come to grips with what you really deserve in God's economy. And I want to just touch on three things for a few minutes. About God's grace, number one is the primary purpose for our salvation is not to save us from hell, but it's to save us from sin.

It was said of Jesus before he was born that he will save his people from their sins. Paul said Jesus gave himself for us that he might redeem us from every lawless deed. But you know, many of us have so corrupted things and twisted things, our perspectives and our understanding of things because we want what we want.

And so we've we've changed things around and we come to God with this demand. That he give us salvation, we deserve to go to heaven. Or whatever, but you know, this attitude that that is kind of taught, it is taught and this.

Presumptuous attitude, it's a lot like the guy who stands before the judge and he's been caught for the 10th time, you know, breaking into houses. And he's standing before the judge and of course, he's looking for what? Mercy, grace, right? That's all he's thinking about is please just stand grace to me. And he's he is standing before the judge and he's not.

He wants to get out of prison. And he's looking for grace from the judge, but he's not willing to give up his thievery. And that's the attitude many people have about God's grace is that, oh, God's grace means that I can continue doing what I want to do.

God's grace means that everything's covered and and I can do whatever I want to do and I'm home free. But it's not that. Jude spoke of people.

Who would twist God's grace into licentiousness, in other words, into this attitude that there's a free license to sin, there's a free license to do your own will, you can have life on your terms because God's grace covers it all. Dear ones, that is not God's grace. That is presumption.

And it's extremely dangerous. Extremely dangerous attitude to take before this holy God. Number two is that when a person repents, the only thing he's going to find.

Is an atmosphere of acceptance. With God. God is for us.

There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. We don't have to earn our way. That's what God's grace does for us.

It covers us in that way. If we repent of our sins, all we're going to find is acceptance from the Lord. It's like the father of the prodigal son.

He went away, just threw us selfishly, threw his life away. And then he came back looking for what? Grace, right? Came back looking for grace, not expecting to find it. But the father was there and openly embraced him and loved him and never brought up his crimes to him again.

Never just accepted him and forgave him. And, you know, no matter what you have done, no matter how horrendous your crimes against God have been, how despicable the the things that you may have done at some point or another, how abominable your deeds have been, none of it matters if you truly repent of your sins before God. The slate is wiped clean.

Hallelujah. It's wiped completely clean. And even people like.

Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer, who did horrendous things, the most extremely selfish things imaginable. To use people's bodies in such a demonic way just for the sake of a little gratification. I mean, it just doesn't get any worse than that.

But if I understand correctly, both of those men repented before they died. I don't know that for certain, but that's what I've been told. If that's true, then when they stepped across that line and stepped into the kingdom of God, all they received was mercy and grace.

From this heavenly father, this wonderful, wonderful God. But, you know, people there are some people who just can't stand the thought of that. They can't stand the thought of people like that being in heaven.

I wrote a commentary magazine commentary sometime back, and I'm going to read a little I'm going to read a little portion of it to you. And. Well, let me just read it to you.

I will tell you this, I was giving this message years ago in North Carolina, and the title of this this. Commentaries, I'm pretty sure that aunt B ended up in the other place. And I made the mistake of sharing this with that North Carolina congregation.

It was close to what I faced yesterday when I cracked a few jokes about the Packers. You know, you get that sense like you're right on the verge of a riot about to break out. I like that.

You know, I like to live on the edge. I love preaching in prisons and stuff and pushing the guys right to the edge, you know, right where we're ready to just break out into a riot or something. So I'm going to read this to you.

You'll forgive me. And if you don't, it doesn't matter because I'm going to leave in a couple hours and pastor will clean it up next week. I'm pretty sure aunt B ended up in the other place.

Aunt B is only a television character, of course, but what she represents is a dangerously deceptive mindset that 40 years later remains firmly entrenched in our culture. I can remember at least one episode of the Andy Griffith Show where aunt B was in church. But I cannot think of one instance of her interceding for people or earnestly talking to others about Jesus.

In other words, I never saw any indications that she had truly been converted. As far as I can tell, aunt B wasn't really a Christian. She was simply a nice lady living in a Christianized nation who went to a Christian church.

Without question, she personifies the erroneous notion that good people go to heaven and bad people go to hell. How strikingly this contrasts with the Apostle Paul's perspective on salvation. In Ephesians 2, he makes it abundantly clear the desperate condition of every unconverted person dead in their sins, following Satan, living in the lust of their flesh and having the wrath of God upon them.

Nice little old aunt B. Andy's aunt B? Yes. Truth be told, there is no middle ground. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

There is none righteous. No, not one. This includes the aunt B's of the world.

Well, says the respectable church going woman in a huff. I've lived an upright life since childhood. I've never been worldly.

I've certainly have not followed Satan. Oh, in other words, you're alleging that the Bible is not telling the truth. You are saying that you are a good person and see no need of a savior.

Therefore, you will not have one. You know, dear ones, there is this attitude that's out there in this culture, and I think it has even gotten into the church to some degree. You know that if you're a pretty good guy.

You know, if you're a nice person, that means that you're living in the love of God or if you don't really cause problems to other people, that means that you're going to heaven. You know, even if you go to church. I'm convinced that many, many people in our churches are unconverted.

They've somehow they're nice people and they somehow become immersed in or enmeshed in the evangelical culture, but they've never come to the cross where they really had to face the fact of their sinful condition before God. They think in terms of, well, I'm a nice person, you know, and I'm I'm a Christian. But dear ones, we don't get altered into Christianity.

We get converted into Christianity. Now, it's easy for me. I was such a wretch.

You know, there's just no question about someone like me. You know, you go from the complete extreme. And, you know, there's been a transformation in my life over the years.

For me, it's easy in that in that respect, because I know what I am inside. But for others who haven't given themselves over to sin and so on, it's a little more difficult. It doesn't mean you can't come into a great love and appreciation for God's grace.

It doesn't mean that you can't. I remember meeting a guy one time. He was like 86 years old.

And he told me, he said. He knew of my testimony. This was 20 years ago.

He knew of my testimony and he said, I was saved from a terrible life of sin at the age of seven. That was a guy who understood grace. You know, even though he wasn't given over to sin, he understood that he did not deserve anything.

Number three, grace provides the power to break free from the power of sin. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. Hallelujah.

Praise the Lord. You know, that's one thing I love going about going. One reason I love going into prisons, because sin is abounding in those prisons.

Sin is abounding in those prisons. That's one thing I love about pure life ministries. We bring the worst of the worst.

Give me the worst. Give me the worst ones. Bring them in here, because I'm going to tell you that God has the power to transform these men.

He has the power to set them free. He has the power to change their perspectives and instill the love of God in their souls. He has the power to change a devil into an angel.

I've seen him do it hundreds of times. I know what he's done in my life, dear ones. Grace has the power to set us free from the hold of sin.

Praise the Lord. Paul told Titus, for the grace of God appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age. Grace is a teacher.

It's not just some kind of a blanket pardon for anything wrong you ever do. There is an element to that, but it's more than that. There's an expectation.

God's grace is there for you all the time. The same atmosphere that provides acceptance when you repent of your sin, that same atmosphere is there to help you when temptation comes your way. And it's an overwhelming temptation.

You don't know how to handle that same atmosphere is there for you. I can tell you, it's been 22 years since I came out of that life of sin. And many times it was really mostly in the early days and I was still such a mess inside.

I'm saying many times, I don't know how many times, but some amount of times. I would get into situations where I'm telling you, I was ready to go for it, you know, I just was I was ready to go, I would have went for it. I would have thrown away the marriage that God restored.

I would have thrown away the ministry he had given me. I would have thrown away my freedom. I would have thrown away all that God had done.

Because it's just a knucklehead, you know, I was a fool and there was a lot of fool in me that had to be worked out of me over the years. So, you know, my freedom, my 22 years of freedom that I can stand here and proclaim to you today. This is what I want you to understand, dear ones, is it's not because Steve Gallagher has some tremendous amount of determination to do right.

There's a man that once he saw the cross, he never looked back. He just went and did the right thing. 22 years of victory.

And what I want to say to you is that God's grace is the only reason I can stand here before you today. Only because of God's grace, because like I said, there were many times that I was fool enough to give over to the sin. But right when the temptation would be there and I remember just.

Situations, I just I know what I was in back then, what I was like, I would have gave over, but right when the temptation was there, God provided a way of escape. It was easier to take the way of escape than to give over to the sin. That's God's grace for you, it's there when you need it.

You know, so why is it that so many Christians still remain in sin? If God's grace is there for them, why are they still in sin? Because a lot of times they don't know how to appropriate God's grace. And that was something I just kind of stumbled into. Well, at least look, that's the way it seems.

But I know that God had his hand in my life way back then. And, you know, he was guiding me and I was just such a I was so out of it, you know, just completely out of it. But God helped me in one of the things he

helped me with early on back, probably in, I don't know, early 85.

I think Kathy and I developed a devotional life, a good devotional life. It was short. It was only a half an hour every morning, but it was a start.

You know, we would spend some time in prayer and spend some time in the Bible. And something started happening in my life. I started noticing that temptations weren't so strong and they weren't so over.

So they didn't come so often. And pretty soon I actually found myself being able to say no sometimes to temptations. I didn't know anything.

I didn't know what I was doing. There was no one, you know, who told the way out of sexual addiction back in those days. I was just blundering along.

I didn't know what I was doing, but I just started seeing there was just kind of a power there to say no. And pretty soon the times that I fell were less and less, bigger apart and so on. Something was happening, you know, dear ones, if you don't have a vibrant devotional life intact.

And I'm not talking about just, you know, shooting up a few prayers on your way to work. I'm talking about a time when set aside before God, when you're before the Lord and you are really connecting with him. You know that the Christian religion, the Christian faith is not some religious formula.

It doesn't mean going to the best church in town. The Christian faith revolves around a person and his name is Jesus Christ. And it's your connection.

It's a relationship. It's not a religious dogma. It's not just some kind of mental acceptance of a certain kind of facts or certain historical things that you adhere to or believe.

It means it's a relationship that you have with someone. And if there isn't a connection there, I question whether you really have a faith in Christ. I question it.

I'm not trying to put you down or something. I'm trying to stir you to examine your heart. But something was there.

And so anyway, I started finding this power to over to say no to sin. And yet it wasn't for me. There's this dynamic, this tension, you know, that we we have our part and God has his part in ourselves and working out our salvations with fear and trembling.

There's just it's both. You can't have you can't do God's part. You'll just end up being a Pharisee on your way to hell.

You know, but likewise, if you just sit around waiting or, you know, depending on God's grace or something, you'll end up going to hell that way because somehow there is an involvement with you and your will and and the decisions you make. Somehow you have to make the right decisions. But by making those decisions, God comes along beside you and empowers you to live this Christian life.

Let me illustrate it this way at Heathrow Airport outside London, there's this long terminal, very long. And on either side is all these shops and stuff, all kinds of stuff, cigar shops and bookstores and bars and whatever, you know, just all kinds of stuff. And I remember when I was there one time noticing just the kinds of allurements to sin that were in that in those different places.

And there's this long, moving sidewalk going right down the center of this terminal. And, you know. God's grace is much like that, you step on that moving sidewalk that represents your connection to God.

You're devotional, I'm going to I'm saying devotional life, but it's something deeper than that, it's your connection with God and it's not because of anything you do, you just step on that moving sidewalk and God's grace is carrying you through. Your journey of life, you've got all these allurements around you and you're just you're just standing there, you're not doing anything. But he's taking you through.

There's, you know, the handrail that's on either side of that walkway, I would I would. Relate that to the fear of the Lord, you know, if you're one of those cheap grace guys that just wants to have your sin and say that God's going to just wink at it all and you can do whatever you want. Now, you don't understand the fear of the Lord.

But I want to tell you, I thank God for the fear of the Lord that was instilled in my heart, because that has kept me out of more trouble than I can tell you. It's like a boundary there, you know, and and I see the sin over there. God's grace is carrying me through.

But there's this handrail there, you know, it's the fear of the Lord. Now, if I'm determined to get into sin, I can climb over that thing. People start talking, you know, but I could climb over that thing and walk over and go into one of those bookstores and look at pornography or whatever, you know, I could do that.

But it's somehow it's by being connected to God, he's taking me right through. And that's why one day when I stand before him. And I look at my life, I won't be standing there like, boy, Lord, were you ever lucky when you landed me? You did, you had no idea what you were getting, did you, big guy, you know, I mean, some of the attitudes that I get, especially, you know, I'm from California and I'm telling you the the flippancy we treat this holy God with is shameful.

Jesus is my bud, man. No, he's not your bud. He's the ruler of this universe.

He is the judge of mankind and you will stand before him and one day your flippant attitude will will be exposed for everyone to see all heaven to see saints who have laid their lives down in the most terrible kinds of persecutions and martyrdoms and and people who have lived and died for Jesus Christ and given their lives away to others. They'll all be gathered around watching your life laid out on the big screen of heaven. Let's see what this brother or sister did for the Lord.

And then there's nothing there but a long history of selfishness and pride and so on. All right, I'm going to I'm going to wrap it up with one more little story. Sometimes the worst Pharisees are former sinners.

And when I. I came to the Lord and I started getting my act together and I overcame the sin. Nineteen eighty five was the last time I fell into sin and stuff into the you know, all that stuff I've been in and, you know, there were some things I did right. I did actually in nineteen eighty six.

The Lord spoke to Kathy and I and we develop established a two hour daily time with the Lord. And we were pretty faithful with that over the years. And and God laid it on our hearts that we had to get rid of our television set because it was so corrupting.

We did some right things, but being immature in the faith and so on and being so full of pride anyway, I started attributing, you know, taking credit for my great advance and I started becoming rather kind of like a Pharisee. You know, I thank the Lord that I'm not like other people, you know, and just that kind of an

attitude inside me. Well, anyway, in nineteen ninety two, this was six years after we began the ministry.

I was scheduled to. Appear on the folks on the family show, and. I knew that the time the day was coming, I was headed towards that.

And in the meantime, I was out preaching just about every weekend in different churches and this particular weekend, the week before I was going to go on the folks on the family show, I had to preach up in Michigan and Kathy developed the backache. So I had to drive up to Michigan by myself. And on my trip up there, driving along by myself, this temptation to go into one of these cities and look at pornography started emerging, you know, and I made it all the way up into Michigan and I had to pull in for some gas.

I filled up my car and and I went into the little store and paid for the gas and need to go to the bathroom. So on my way to the bathroom, I noticed there was a magazine rack right over there and there was some guy standing there looking at a magazine, a girly magazine. And so this is what I did.

Now, it'd probably be better to imagine this with all my pharisaical garb on, you know, my tassels and blackberry and all that stuff. So I'm walking along and this guy's right here looking at the magazine and I look over his shoulder hoping to get a sight of some flesh. And I did.

I got a good sight of some centerfold or whatever. And it shot into me, you know, I haven't seen that stuff in years and it shot into me and really ruffled me like, what did I do? And I went to the bathroom. I got my car.

I took off. I went to the church. I preached that Sunday.

I don't know how I got through that weekend after doing that. And after when I left Monday, I knew that I was going to be having to drive by where that gas station was. That thing had gotten a hold in my heart.

And but I was, you know. Going on with God and I started driving down the freeway and I knew that that off-ramp was coming, praise God, I'm going on with you, Lord, I am not giving in to this sin. And the off-ramp was coming two miles, one mile.

Hallelujah, God, we're going on, you know, and and all of this and the off-ramp was coming through that off-ramp showed up. I got off the off-ramp, drove right into that gas station, walked in there, opened that magazine and filled my mind with the filth in that magazine. And then, of course, because I was a Pharisee, the first reaction was to beat myself.

So all the way home, I was just saying, you stupid idiot, you're going on. Focus on the family next week to share your testimony. What is wrong with you? How could you be so stupid? You know, and I just all the way home.

And I confessed it to Kathy when I got home the next morning, I'm out of my prayer walk and I'm walking around the property there and I can still I could take you to this day. This is however many years ago, 15 years ago, I could take you to the very spot. This happened.

I was walking along and just I wasn't even praying. I wasn't even making any pretense of praying. All I was doing was beating myself.

And I came to this one spot and something happened. All right, now hang with me, just I'm almost done. Eleven years before that, I need to take you back 11 years.

I was in the L.A. County Sheriff's Academy and I had gone through 16 weeks of the academy and we're down to the final two weeks, you know, and you're just on pins and needles because I have watched out of 150 people who began the academy, 50 of them had been washed out one way or another. And so you're on pins and needles the whole time. You know, am I going to get fired? Am I going to get asked to leave or whatever? And so we're down to the final couple of weeks.

And they took us out to the Pomona State Fairgrounds and just this parking lot of hundreds of acres of blacktop. And this was going to be for our driver school. You know, we had to learn how to be in high pursuit and all that kind of stuff.

So one of the courses we had that day was these orange cones were laid out and probably, you know, two or three mile track of curves and straightaways and all that kind of stuff. And so one of the things we had to do was drive that course. And so my time came and I walked up to the squad car and I noticed a roll bar roll cage or the helmet sitting on the driver's seat.

And so I walk up there and the instructor sitting in the passenger seat, he's got a helmet on. He says, get in, buckle up and take off. And so, OK, you know, so I get in, I put the helmet on, I do all that and I take off.

Now, I've been known to drive a little on the fast side at times in my life. So, you know, I took off and I'm going along pretty good. And he says, faster.

OK, you know, I guess I could speed up a little bit, you know, I mean, I'm terrified of doing something wrong. And so I speed up and I'm whipping around these curves, he goes faster. You know, now I'm beginning to wonder if there's something wrong with this guy, you know, and.

And so I'm just flying around these curves and the back end spinning or sliding and and I'm gunning it down the straightaway and I come up to this one curve and it's a left curve and it kind of curves back around to the right. And and I'm just flying down this thing, you know, and, you know, and I get up to that curve and I realize there is no way I'm going to make this curve. I'll end up rolling this thing and then they'll take me out and shoot me or something.

So, you know, I get up to this curve and instead of trying to make the curve, which I knew I couldn't do, I just blew right over the cones and then just jumped right back on the track. I don't know what else to do, you know. And so then I finished out the course and came to a stop and I am just sick inside.

And. I found out later they call this guy Crazy Jack, you know, they took him off the streets for good reason, I'm sure. But anyway, so I come up to a stop and I'm just like, I'm just devastated because I have killed myself in this academy for 16 weeks.

We're I mean, the end is just in sight and now I've blown it. I, you know, I ruined this this test. I've failed it.

And I said, so I kind of moan, you know, well, I guess I failed. And he goes. Failed.

Why do you say that? And I said, because I missed the curve, I drove right off the road and he says. You didn't fail, you did great. And I'm like, OK, whatever, mister, you know, but anyway, I mean, I was surprised because I really thought that I failed the course.

Well, anyway. Go ahead, 11 years, whatever it was, 10 years later, I'm out there walking on that side of that hill in Kentucky. And beating myself because I had blown it, you know, I'd done something so stupid

and everything and I'm walking along and who does the Lord choose to use to speak to me? Old Crazy Jack.

And I heard it, I mean, just as clear as day. Steve, you haven't failed. You got off the course momentarily, but you've been doing great, just get back on the course.

Dear ones, I don't know how to say this to you, to hear that from the Lord after such a life of debauchery, to hear this wonderful Lord. Be so gracious to me, a Pharisee, a sinner, filthy, disgusting person. And to hear him say something so sweet.

And so affirming. It was the first time I came to understand a little bit. God's grace and what it means, and I've never been the same since then, my whole perspective of God and and Christianity and people and my expectancy of of others and everything.

Yes, he is a he's a holy God. He hates sin because of what it does to ruin. People's lives and to corrupt them and to destroy families and all the terrible effects of sin, he hates sin.

And. But he really does. Love the sinner.

He really does, and it's his desire for each one of us. He's not going to wink at sin, he expects us to fight the good fight, he does, that's an expectancy of Christianity to be striving towards holiness, he expects that it's part of real Christianity. But he is a God of grace.

If we'll just show him some effort, if we'll just put our heart out to him, if we'll just try to make that connection with him and stay connected with him and show that he really means something to us, his grace will cover us and carry us and take us through. Hallelujah. Pastor, bow your heads, please.

You've had a very clear presentation this morning on God's grace. So often people that talk about grace. Color themselves so beautifully.

They like to show how perfect, how good, right they were or are. You've heard just the opposite today, a man has used, I try to keep track, I lost track of how many names he used to describe himself. None of them were positive, from Pharisee to knucklehead, self-righteous to fool.

But in doing so, he presented to you a God who receives sinful people, men, women. No doubt some of you can identify with him today as you've sinned and you've missed God's best. You know it, no one needs to come and wag a finger in your face.

You know you. Well, I'm going to give you an opportunity this morning to ask what Steve talked about in the first point, just to confess the fact that you're a sinner. You were just instructed over the last number of minutes on how to do that, just acknowledge a sinner.

I've done it, I've blown it. Haven't you? Come on, let's be honest, haven't you? Well, we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But it's a full confession.

Maybe some of you have gotten off the track, you missed a curve. You blew it. Like Steve, it's time to get back on the track.

You had your little vacation, took your side trip, but it's time to get back on the track. Heads are bowed, eyes are closed. I know doing the due to the nature of this morning's service, you would feel a little prepared to come and stand up front.

I understand that. But if you'd like to just raise your hand and say you'd like to confess your sins to Jesus privately between you and him, and you'd like this preacher to pray with you to see you come to Christ, you be forgiven. If that's you, would you slip your hand out? Yes, you may put your hand down.

Anyone else? Yes, you may put your hand down. Anyone else, let's just wait another moment. Yes, sir.

You may put your hand. Yes, sir. Let's wait another moment.

You would acknowledge your sinfulness. Yes, you'd acknowledge your sinfulness and you just say, preacher, I want you to pray for me when Christ to forgive me today. Yes, ma'am.

Anyone else? Yes, ma'am. We put your hand down. I don't know of a time or place that's any more uncomfortable than in a church service during an invitation when, you know, you're the one that God's speaking to.

God's certainly speaking right now. Let me just take another moment. Would you like to join these whose hands are raised and you'd say, preacher, I want to ask Christ to be my savior today and forgive me of my sins.

I want to acknowledge to him I'm a sinner. Anyone else? Just slip your hand up. Let me ask one more thing before we go to prayer.

You're a Christian, but you've missed a curve. You know, you're right with God, but you blew right through one of God's stop signs and you missed it. You got off track.

But you want prayer today that you might get back on track. If that's you, slip your hand up. I want to pray for you.

Yeah, number of hands. Hands all over the place and put them back down, please. Anyone else? The saints, our speaker told you how to do this.

You acknowledge this. You acknowledge your sinfulness. You did that in part by raising your hand.

That's to me. You're just saying to me, preacher, OK, I'm guilty. But you need to tell God that and tell him that you're sorry and that you want him to forgive you.

So I'm going to pray for you. And while I'm praying, I want you to pray and put it in your own words. But tell him, Jesus, forgive me, Father.

I have no idea how many hands went up this morning. Just people all over this building indicating they have sinned and that they have just missed your best for their lives. I don't know what stuff they've been involved in.

You do. And Lord, today they want to acknowledge their sinfulness and ask you to forgive them. Lord, in your economy, every day is a new day, a new beginning.

If we will take advantage of it, Lord, and you're giving these people today a new chance, a second chance, a new beginning right here, right now. Come to them and forgive them, oh, Lord. Receive them into your family and Lord, if they're already a Christian, a Christ follower, but they've missed it, Lord.

May they do the things they've heard this morning that will make them stronger. That will help them not to do these kinds of things, to make these kinds of decisions in the future. Lord, help them, forgive them and strengthen them, Lord, as they obey you and your word.

Thank you, Lord, for grace. That you have covered us with such amazing grace, Lord, that you receive sinful men and that you receive sinful women in Jesus name. Amen.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17261.mp3>

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