

# The Prodigal and His Religious Brother

by Steve Gallagher

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*This sermon delves into the parable of the Prodigal Son and his religious brother, highlighting the themes of repentance, the consequences of sin, the importance of true surrender to God, and the distinction between religious behavior and genuine spiritual transformation. It emphasizes the need for individuals to confront their sins, acknowledge their unworthiness, and seek true repentance to experience God's forgiveness and transformation in their lives.*

**Scripture:** Luke 15:1, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalms 19:7, Joel 2:12, Isaiah 59:2

**Topics:** "Repentance", "True Spiritual Transformation"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Morning, everyone. Now, the title of my message this morning is The Prodigal and His Religious Brother. I thought about naming it The Prodigal and the Penhead, but I figured that probably ain't right.

But we'll get into this. Before we do, though, I've got a question for you. I'm used to wearing glasses.

How many of you, when you got into pornography, that you walked away from church, from any semblance of Christianity, you just went the other way? Four or five of you? Okay, how many of you, when you got involved in pornography, you continued going to church? Yeah, I kind of figured it was like that. I'm just curious. So, let's look at this, these parables here, starting with verse one.

Some of this has already been covered by my cohorts. Now, all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near him to listen to him. Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them.

So, he told them this parable. All right, as we already heard, Jesus attracted the worst of the worst. You know, they were the ones that were most attracted to Jesus because he was offering them something that the religious hierarchy didn't have to offer.

And besides that, they despised them. And, you know, they just were not even welcome in church, so to speak. The religious leaders hated Jesus.

They hated him, first of all, because he had a way of just pulling their pants down in public and exposing them for what they really were. And they hated him for that. They hated him for a lot of reasons, really.

And so, what they did, which is typical of demonic people, is they found the worst thing they could possibly lay at his doorstep, which was that the miracles that he performed and the healings and all that was done in the power of Satan. And they would look at all these sinners and tax collectors and all this, and that would be further evidence. See, look at the people he's got around him.

It's the people of Satan, you know. It's obvious this man is from the devil, but that isn't the way it was, was it? Now, the first two parables, really, I could just sum them up to say that the point of those two parables is to show God's untiring efforts to seek and save the lost. And when he is able to woo them into his kingdom, the tremendous joy that he experiences when that happens, that is what thrills the Lord.

And I guess it's probably true that the worse the sin, the more joy the Lord feels to see someone like that recovered for his kingdom. All right, but we want to look at the prodigal son, because we can all relate to him here in this place, or at least most of us. So, let's look here, starting verse 11.

And he said, a man had two sons. Now, I'm going to stop right there for a minute, because there's something that's inferred here that isn't expressed, because Jesus, you know, when he tells these stories or these parables, he's doing it for a primary reason and something, a point that he wants to get across. And so, there's a lot of details that he doesn't go into, but it's there.

And that is this, that the Father's house represents the presence of God. The Father's house represents the presence of God. And the word presence in the Old Testament is panaim, and it's used over 2,000 times, not always as presence, often the face of God, like, let his face shine upon you, right? We all know that expression from Aaron's benediction, and that is the word panaim, let his panaim, let his presence shine upon you.

And you can say it that way, and there's nothing wrong with saying it that way. In fact, I'm not sure who came up with face, but they did, and so everyone kind of ran with that. But I think it makes more sense to me that his presence would shine.

But, you know, think about the presence of God, and let me just run through a few verses out of the Old Testament here real quick, where this word panaim is used. In Genesis 4, one of the first places we see it, Cain was driven out from the presence of God, driven out. Man, what a frightening thought.

Exodus 33, then Moses said to Yahweh, if your presence does not go with us, then do not lead us up from here, because he understood that without the presence of God, they had nothing. Psalm 16, David said, in your presence is fullness of joy, in your right hand there are pleasures forevermore. And in Psalm 27, where he's saying to the Lord, when you said, seek my face, that's the word panaim, seek my what? Presence.

My heart said to you, your what? Presence. Oh Lord, I shall seek. Psalm 51, which we also heard about, David's main concern was that God wouldn't cast him away from his presence.

And Isaiah 2, I ran across this one this morning, I spent, yeah, I don't know, a couple hours this morning, I just kind of got off track from my sermon, and was just lost in this whole subject of the presence of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament. And in Isaiah 2, it says, men will go into caves of the rocks and into holes of the ground before, that is actually the word panaim, and let me get to it here in a minute, before the terror of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he arises to make the earth tremble. And that is exactly quoted in Revelation 6, at the breaking of the sixth seal.

That is going to happen, and probably you and I will be here to witness this. It's a tremendous thing, but let me read it changing the English a little bit, which I believe would be more reflecting the way it should be written than the way the NAS wrote it. Men will go into the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground when the terror-invoking presence of Yahweh is there.

The terror-provoking presence of Yahweh. Yeah, that's a side of the Lord's presence we don't think about, because we've kind of made it into a flippant, superficial party in America, and we don't think about coming into the presence of God with fear and trembling like we should. Well anyway, I wanted to bring that out because you have two sons in the Father's house accustomed to the presence of God, and yet even though they were accustomed, because the Father represents God of course, and even though they were accustomed to being in the presence of the Lord, that presence had never made its way inside of them.

It never got into their hearts, because they kept Him at a distance. And this is something that's, yeah, it's a real, I don't want to say a sore spot to me, that's not exactly a source of grief, is mostly what it is to me, personally, because over these many, many years in this place, we have fought as a staff through much prayer, through much worship, through sacrificial consecrating of our lives to God, we have fought to maintain the presence of God in this place, so that sinners could come into this house, into the presence of God, and be so affected that they would want to leave behind the sin that has controlled their lives, that they would want to walk away from it, that they would want that presence inside them. But many over the years, they liked the presence, and deceived themselves into thinking because they felt the presence, that it was in them when it wasn't.

And when they left this place, and they walked out of this place where the presence of God was, they should have been taking the presence with them, and they got out there and fell apart. And we've had men leave this place and be dead within months. It's serious business, I'm telling you guys, it's serious.

Well, anyway, these two sons, they both were raised in this environment, this atmosphere, but it never got in to either of them, as we heard. All right, let's continue on here. The younger of them said to his father, father, give me the share, give me, I also did a study on that this morning, that's in scripture, give me.

And that pretty much describes the way we have lived, right? Give me, give me, give me. Give me the share of the estate that falls to me. It's my right.

It's my right to have as much pleasure, as much of this world as I can get my hands on. It's my right. And that is correct.

You have the right. It's not always the wisest thing to do. In fact, it never is.

So he divided his wealth between them. All right, leaving the presence of God usually begins in the thought life, doesn't it? You know, it's our minds and our desires. That's where it all begins.

And that's where we start drifting away, you know, inwardly before we do physically. And you know, once someone has decided they are going to go after sin, there is no talking to them. There's no talking to them.

When they've got their minds set, I want such and such, whatever it is, for us it's been sexual sin, but it can be all kinds of different things. I want to marry that man. I want to marry that girl.

I want that job. I want this. I want that, whatever it may be.

And once a person makes up their mind, you can't talk to them. And to try to reason with a person like that typically only gets them mad. Solomon said, better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly.

And it's just nearly impossible to talk to someone until they end up in the pig pen. You can't reason with them. And once he made this decision that he was leaving, he couldn't get away from there fast enough.

And every step he took, he didn't understand. And this is what a lot of guys don't understand. Every time, every step you take away from the Father's house has taken you further and further and further from his influences, from his thinking, his ways.

And pretty soon, you're way out here somewhere thinking like the world, but to you, it all seems right. It's logical. It's natural.

Everyone thinks this way. These are the ones who are out of whack. You know, you don't take it that far usually, but you think your thinking is right.

And you know, the further out there you get, yeah, just the harder it is for the Lord to reach you with his thinking. And once a person forsakes the Lord, you know, we have this thing called the free will. He's given you the right.

As I said, he's given you the right. You can have the world if that's what you want. You can have all the sin you want.

It's your right. And you'll notice in the story that the Father didn't go chasing after him. He didn't try to negotiate with him.

Oh, listen, you know, maybe I've been a little too strict. And some of those rules and laws and stuff, you know, maybe I've been a little overboard. And maybe we can kind of, you know, negotiate something in between.

And, you know, you can just kind of live a compromised version of my lifestyle. None of that. None of that.

No, it's, if you're going to be in the Father's house, you're going to live the way the Father lives. All right. So, verse 13, and not many days later, doesn't take long, that's for sure.

Once he got the money, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, a far country. And there he squandered his estate with loose living. And that's where that word prodigal comes from.

You know, distance here is not measured by miles. It's measured by affection. Because the further you go, the more your affection for the Lord and the things of God dissipate.

They just lose their luster. They lose their value. You know, and all the glittering glamour out here in the world just looks beautiful.

And because you're becoming a different person, you're becoming something different. And you don't understand because it's such a subtle change. As you go away from the Father's house, you are becoming something altogether different.

And you lose the resemblance of your Father. Well, he gets there to the far country, and just as he hoped, all restraints are removed there. You can do whatever you want.

You can have whatever you want. Go for it. And his pockets are bulging with cash.

And man, he gets into the party life, and he's having a great time, not realizing that every tryst with a prostitute, every party he goes to is taking him deeper and deeper and deeper into darkness. You experience this. Isaiah 59 says, Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save, nor is his ears so dull that it cannot hear.

But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. Your sins have hidden his presence from you. You get so spiritually dead that you could be in a revival and be untouched.

That's what sin does to you. What is hell if it isn't separation from the presence of God? But that's what the trade we made. That was the exchange, right? That's the exchange we gladly made.

Once we clicked on that first image, we were gone. The far country is a spiritual wasteland. Nothing lives there.

Now, when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. That is, God, I didn't think to look it up, but I assume that's probably close to poverty of spirit, maybe. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine, the worst imaginable thing for a Jewish boy.

And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. All right. Thank God that the way the Lord created this earth life, he has attached misery to the life of sin.

Thank God, because you would not be sitting here if he hadn't. You would still be out there enjoying or whatever, you know, whatever it is. But sin has written into its DNA misery, dissatisfaction, and frustration.

Right, guys? Come on, you're the world's experts here. Me too. I get paid to be, you know, and you don't.

Maybe one day. But when he came to his senses, oh, when he came to his senses, when he came to his senses, or literally it means when he came to himself. It's literally what it says.

But that's what it means. When he came to his senses, when he came into his right mind, you know, somehow the thought of becoming a servant in his father's house, somehow that thought got through all the confusion and all the delusion that was going on in his mind, you know, just a spaghetti factory of confusion. And somehow the Holy Spirit was able to take that thought and get it into his mind.

And he had this thought, hey, you know, having lost everything and eating the pig slop, finally he's willing to listen to reason. Finally, I could be a servant. Yeah, that's got to be better than this.

It can only be better. You know, he had become an unreasoning animal, is really what he had become. And he's just now starting to emerge from the sin-induced stupor that he's been in for a long time.

So he had this thought, and it was a good thought. It was an inspired thought. It was a convicting thought.

And we need all those things. I mean, we won't get to the first base without that, right? But that's not enough. You've got to act on them.

Having good thoughts is just the beginning. So verse 18, I will get up and go to my father and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

Make me as one of your hired men. So this is what he determined. As he sat there contemplating, how can I get back in the good graces of my father? This was kind of the scheme he gave.

And he didn't realize that the Holy Spirit made this, gave him this thought, but two things he got right. And these two things are always in place with anyone who comes to the Lord in a real way. I have sinned, and I am unworthy.

If those thoughts haven't been in your mind yet and haven't become a conviction, you haven't yet crossed the line. And I'll tell you what, it always amazes me how unwilling people are to acknowledge being wrong about anything. I mean, fistfights break out over stupid little misunderstandings or whatever, and no one will back down.

Gang fights, you know, just so much goes on in this world because of pride. Just the unwillingness to say I'm wrong. And I'll tell you what, if you're going to live this Christian life, those words had better be in your normal vocabulary, because you won't live the Christian life while you'll just be a miserable person, that's all.

If you don't know how to humble yourself to others and say I'm wrong, you're not going to get anywhere. You know, it's just a very childish, immature attitude that can't say I'm wrong. And the place grew very quiet.

You don't like it when I talk like that, do you? And, you know, let me just plug the counselors here for a minute. A little advertisement break, right? Your counselor is like a travel guide. You know what a travel guide is? Any of you ever gone on a travel website? One guy, two, or two.

We have three, three, three, four. Wow, what a rough crowd. Travel guides, you know, they're the people who, they go out and visit countries and stuff like that, and they write down everything they learn, and they learn all about it, and find the nice spots to go.

And then they, you know, have a website, and they become a travel guide. Or maybe they live there, and they take you around and show you the sites. Your counselor is a travel guide, because he's been to the far country.

You know how to get to the far country, you didn't need a travel guide for that. But how to get back, he knows how to get you back. You know, there was a black lady named Harriet Tubman who was a slave, and she somehow made it up into the north and had freedom.

And instead of just staying there and enjoying herself, she spent the rest of her life making trips, forays, back into the south, finding these poor slaves that are wandering around, trying to find their way north, hated by everyone around them, at least that's the way they felt. And she would go down there and get these bands of black people, and she knew the Underground Railroad to get them up to Ohio. They have an underground museum right up there in Cincinnati.

And that's what she did, and that is what your counselor is. I hope you love and respect him, and that you are very, very, very grateful that he is spending his life in this place instead of wasting it on living for self. He's spending it here for you.

I hope you appreciate him. So after the service, come up to him and give him a big wet kiss right on the face. He'll really appreciate that.

Especially Gabe, he's already getting excited now. Okay, I'm getting a little too graphic here. Moving on, the biggest challenge these counselors have is when they get someone who won't acknowledge being wrong, won't listen to any advice, they know everything, they don't need to be taught how to get back to the father because they already know it all.

What a challenge that is. I just heard some of these testimonies Thursday night, you know, some of you guys, one of you guys, if I could find the guy, yeah, I'm not sure who it is. Maybe it's you, I'm not sure.

Who got, no, I can't ask you that. A bunch of you got baptized. Anyway, whoever it was was saying how, what a knucklehead he was, and wouldn't listen and stuff.

But Ken was his counselor, patiently worked with him, confronted him on occasion. Is this ringing a bell to someone? Who is it? Okay, you are one. Maybe I'm getting stories mixed up.

All right, I better get on. I'm really getting all out of whack. You know, the best way to come into a counseling session, if you want to have it go really smoothly, just walk in and say this to your counselor, I have sinned and I'm not worthy.

And man, things will go so smoothly, right? Won't they go smoothly? Oh yeah. It would just be so much better if you learned how to say that. But not only I have sinned, but Lord, every day I see the sinful tendencies in my heart.

Please keep purging the love of sin out of my heart. And not just say I am unworthy, but say, I am unworthy, Lord. When I look at the selfishness of my life, my lack of true concern over others, my constant focus on myself and what I want, lack of willingness to sacrifice for your sake.

Yeah, what can you say? But I am unworthy of your love and your goodness to me. You know, and never disparage the pig pen, because the pig pen is the secret entrance into true Christianity. It's where you first see what God is really like.

And it's where you first see what you are really like. It's also where you learn to deny self and pick up your cross and follow Jesus. That happens in the pig pen.

So there's a word in the Old Testament that describes this life, this experience. The word is sub, and it's usually translated as turn or return. It's used like over a thousand times in the Old Testament.

For instance, 2 Chronicles 7.14, you all know this verse. If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face, right? Seek my presence and turn from their wicked ways. Then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Psalms 19.7, the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul, returning the soul back to the Lord. Rebuilding the soul into what it should be. That's what the word of God does.

Psalms 78, when he killed them, then they sought him and returned and searched diligently for God. And Lord, I pray that that is happening in Israel right now. Isaiah 55, let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have compassion on him, and he will abundantly pardon.

Joel 2, yet even now declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping, and mourning, and rend your heart and not your garments. Now return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in loving kindness and relenting of evil. You know, but you don't do that.

You don't rend your heart if you're in a delusion thinking that you're right with God. Verse 20. So he got up and came.

I'm going to stop right there because, you know, Jesus, again, like I said before, he can't fill in all the details, but right there between those words, got up and came to his father, right there is a long journey. A long journey. The prodigal had plunged deeply into the far country, and now he must retrace his steps all the way back.

I know for myself, I lived in that for 10 years or 12 years. I can't remember. 10 years, whatever.

It was a long time. You know, every time you look at some image on the internet or do some, give yourself over to some sin, every time you do something like that, you're going further and further and further away from God. And, you know, the wonderful thing, as we've already heard, that when we repent, God graciously instantly forgives us.

Right there, he forgives us. But you still have to face the consequences of a lifetime of rebellion and iniquity and the stain of iniquity. And it takes God years to undo what you have done to yourself, to your soul, the way you've marred your soul with sin.

And you've done it to yourself, just like I did. And I'm 69 years old, and I still pay the price for the things I did 40 years ago and further. I still pay the price in some ways.

I know things I wish, I wish, I wish, I wish I didn't know. The pulpit commentator said, oh, you who are forsaking Christ, if you really be his, you will have to come back. But no joyous journey will that be for you.

No, indeed, it never has been, never can be. Still, blessed be the Lord who forces you to make it difficult and hard though it be. It is the hand which was nailed to the cross and the heart which there was pierced for you that now wields the scourge which compels you in sorrow and in shame to come back to him whom you left.

You know, guys, you're not going to get cheap promises in this place, if you haven't noticed that. We're not here like some cheap sidewalk huckster selling salvation to you, making all kinds of grandiose promises

and stuff. No, we're not going to do that.

We tell you the truth. We tell you the truth in this place. It's hard.

It's a hard journey. It's going to be a battle for you. Learning to fight for a life of purity is not for the faint of heart, but the alternative is unthinkable.

And you better get that drilled deeply into your heart. The alternative is unthinkable. You will never have another opportunity like you have right now.

And if any of you are thinking about, you know, I've just about had it with this place. I understand it's difficult, but you know what? You guys, just like myself, you've been going the easy route in life for a long time. It's time to man up and do the hard thing you got to do, or you will be going around the same mountain 10 years from now.

I know, I have talked to men who I ministered to 30 years ago, and they're the same person. They sat in these chairs and I meet them now, same person, same struggles, same delusion, same habits, only now they're just far worse. Don't squander what God is giving you in this place.

All right, let's talk about the older brother and all the guys in the program say, these two couldn't be more unlike each other. The younger brother was impulsive and impetuous while the older brother was cautious and reserved. The younger brother was outwardly rebellious while the older brother kept his willfulness under wraps.

The younger brother was willing to flagrantly pursue sin while the older brother kept himself under control. The younger brother's life was defined by the sin he pursued while the older brother's life was defined by his religion. The older brother's life, you know, he was morally upright and he was proper.

The problem is he was religious-minded instead of being spiritually-minded. Let me just take a minute to describe what I'm talking about being religious. A religious person is more concerned about presenting an image of godliness to other people around him than in truly living in the presence of God.

A religious person has never been to the pig pen where they come face to face with their sinfulness and unworthiness. A religious person mistakes moral uprightness for godliness. A religious person is self-righteous and I define self-righteousness as embracing a form of righteousness to please self rather than to please God.

A religious person can easily become, not always, but can become stiff and stodgy rather than pliable. They can be sanctimonious and petty-minded rather than big-hearted and compassionate. It's possible that they are stuck in traditions rather than being open to the Lord, working in ways they haven't experienced.

Maybe above all else, a religious person tends to build his Christian life around rule-keeping. Now, this is difficult waters to navigate because the Bible is full of commandments and we're supposed to obey them, right? To disregard his commandments would make us just lawless like the culture out there, just like the world. So, we know that's not right, but commandments are a means to an end, not the end in themselves.

The point of obedience is to draw near to God and to dwell in his presence. That's the point of obedience. It's to please someone who you love.

Let me say it this way. People who are rule-keepers by nature, and by nature, that's not necessarily a bad thing, but they want the boundaries. They don't feel safe unless they have clear-cut boundaries to live in.

Again, some godly people are rule-keepers by nature. That's not bad in itself, but the problem is when that becomes everything and God becomes small inside of the rule system. As we heard earlier, from God's perspective, the older brother really wasn't much better off than the younger brother.

All right, so here's what I want to get at. Here's what I've been aiming for, and we heard about this already also. There is someone that I want to talk about who's worse than either of these two brothers.

I'm talking about the religious sinner. He's religious in appearance, but inwardly he's given over to sin. In other words, physically, he's in the father's house, but his heart is in the country.

He's worse than the older brother because he's polluted his mind with sin or pornography, and he's worse than the prodigal because he's got this outward penchant for keeping the rules, and that has deceived him into thinking and really believing that he's in good standing with God, and that false assurance has kept him out of the pigpen. The very place he needs to be in. Not only is he deluded by the deceitfulness of sin, but he's deluded by his religiosity.

He's got just enough religion to keep him from seeing his need and from really turning to the Lord. All right, so I asked at the beginning for a show of hands. Of course, I knew how it would go.

How many of you were in church, going to church week in, week out, singing hymns, singing hymns of worship to God, hearing sermons, maybe powerful sermons, hearing the Word of God week in and week out, maintaining an image of godliness to those around you, while at the same time going into websites and looking at the most wicked things, most polluted things imaginable, doing both at the same time? Did I ask for a show of hands again? Did it sound like that, or are you just being voluntary? Well, it's good that you are, because I want you to see what that's like. And what has that done? Not to lay this on you guys individually, but just, what has happened to the body of Christ? Man, the church has veered so far from what it once was, and I believe a big part of that is that millions of professing Christian men are regularly filling their minds with filth. You know, I don't know if you knew this, but PLM has pigpens all over this place.

There's pigpens out on the prayer trail, pigpens in your counseling session. In fact, Gabe has a special place for his pigpen. You're welcome to go there.

Pigpens when you're studying your Bible. There's even pigpens at Leslie's, believe it or not. But my years of experience in this ministry, I can tell you this, there's no pigpen, no place better to meet with God than at the altar right here, because this is where God is speaking.

His presence is felt most strongly in this place, and I believe he's speaking this morning. I know that you guys had a wonderful service Sunday night. I wish I would have been here, and the Lord has spoken.

But you know, guys, I'm just telling you, you're going to have to keep having these moments with God. This is going to be the rest of your life if you're going to live in victory. You are going to repent, and repent, and repent, and repent.

You know why? Because what you've given your flesh over to is in your mind, you know, and you're going to have to keep coming back to God and saying, Lord, forgive me. I don't know why I allow my mind to just

sit and let that filth fester inside me. Forgive me, Lord.

You're going to find yourself coming back to the Lord over and over and over again. You might as well get used to it, and you're going to have to know what it means to repent to people. I had to repent to someone this morning.

I actually have to repent to my wife pretty regularly. It's just going to become a lifestyle, guys, of saying, I'm wrong. I'm wrong.

Lord, forgive me. So I am going to open the altar up for you guys this morning. I'm not looking to, you know, yeah, I'm not looking to try to get you guys all up here or something, but I do want to make it conducive for you.

Come on up, Josh. Let's all stand up. Maybe you guys on the front row should head to the back, just in case.

I know that the Lord met with you guys Sunday night, and something happened for many of you, but I want to give you another opportunity. If you feel like the Lord has put His finger on something this morning, then I want you to come up and just have it out with the Lord. Just come up right now.

Just slip out. The Lord's speaking to you about the way you've lived your life, the things still going on in your heart, the way you're interacting with your counselor, the attitudes you've had towards staff or this program or whatever, the attitudes you've had towards the Lord, the attitudes you've had towards family members. This is the place to make things right.

Get before God. You guys can, yeah, you can kneel down right there, right in the aisle way. Lord, I just lift these men up to you.

They wasted years pursuing sin and running from you, running from the lifestyle that you had graciously offered to them, and they rejected it, and they rejected you because they wanted their own way. They said, give me, give me what's mine. I want the world.

That's what they said in their hearts, and yet at the same time, at the same time, while their hearts were far from you, at the same time, they would sit in your churches and sing hymns that meant nothing to them and hear psalms that meant nothing to them because they had such a hold on that sin, that idol. Help these men, Lord. I pray that you would dig deep with your scalpel and cut that filth out of their hearts.

Cut the love of sin out of their hearts, Lord. Dig deep, I pray. Purge it out just as if they were vomiting up a nice worth of alcohol.

Purge it out of them, God. Sweat it out of them, Lord. All the poison that's in their soul, that's in their system, sweat it out, God.

Just push it out so they can become clean, clean and live the rest of their lives pure before you, Lord. Do the mighty work that only you can do, God. I thank you, Lord, that you're so humble and gracious and willing to forgive.

Just like Pastor Ed said, I could just see, got the picture in my mind of you standing right on the edge of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness, looking out there, hoping for some to return to you. Always hoping, hoping. But the day is going to come that that door is shut.

Make that real, Lord. I know for myself, I always had this, just this cocky, arrogant attitude. Yeah, I can return to God whenever I want.

Forgive me, Lord, for ever thinking that way. I know there is a certain type of truth to it. But the other side that we don't usually think about is that our hearts can become so cold and so hard that you can't even reach them.

Don't let that be true of anyone in this place, Lord. Break up the foul ground, I pray, God. Break up the foul ground, Lord.

Tear it up, Lord. Plow it up. Plow it up so that they would be sensitive to the voice of the Lord.

Plow it up, Lord, so that they would be quick to recognize sin in their hearts, sin in their attitudes, sin in their thinking, sin in their actions. Plow it up, Lord. Make them sensitive to the things of God.

Do your mighty work here this day, I pray, God. May this be a week that these men will always remember. From last Sunday to this Sunday, Lord, I pray that this week would be a week they would always remember.

That was the week I met God at Pure Life Ministries, and I have never been the same since then. Make that to be true, Lord. And if there's any more lurking sinful attitudes or prideful attitudes or whatever that's still in their hearts, I pray that you'll bring it out in the days ahead.

Give their counselors discernment to see these things and help these men to humble themselves, to listen. I pray, Lord, that every one of these men, one day I will meet them in that wonderful land of glory. We will all go through many battles in the years ahead, but I pray, Lord, that I will see them there.

That not one of them will turn back to the pig pen, to wallowing with the pigs and the vomit of dogs. Keep them, Lord, in the power of the Holy Spirit, I pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

You can consider yourself dismissed, but feel free to stay as long as you wish. Let's keep this room quiet for those who are seeking the Lord. The issue isn't what you do on Sunday morning.

The issue is the way you live your life from Monday to Saturday. The issue is who has your heart. What you cherish in your heart is what you are becoming like.

My friends and I are walking down the street, bam, Playboy magazine totally rocked my world. This lifestyle that I was living just got out of control. In a very short time, my life spiraled completely out of control.

The whole time I've been looking at pornography, the longer I looked at it, it began to get progressively worse. I couldn't really explain what it was, but I was instantly addicted. You cannot take steps down a path and avoid arriving at the destination.

God wants your heart. Satan wants your heart. Whoever has your heart will control you.

Every time you sin, your desire for the things of God dies a little bit. Your faith dies a little bit. Your desire to be free dies a little bit, and with it, the hope to get free.

So how do we win this war and emerge with the victory that Christ has earned for us? What's missing is God's power to transform a person. For God to come in and do a work to set us free up of something that has taken hold in our lives, that we have allowed in there, requires surrender. The Lord was able to show me that, yes, I can set you free from this, and hope for me was actually within reach.

That was something I never felt before. I don't care what kind of sexual sin you're involved in. I don't care how bound up you are.

If you will sincerely apply the principles that are in that book, God will absolutely set you free.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Is2c89TKnvl.mp4>

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