

# How Can I Be Forgiven and Have Eternal Life

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[ 0 : 00 ] Again, my name is Jesse, one of the pastors here. It's a huge privilege to just be here and be able to finish off the series we've been in. We've been in this series called Foundations, which is exploring kind of the essential beliefs.

It's like, this is what Christians have believed through all the centuries for all time, and we're concluding this Sunday. And what we're gonna be looking at today is the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

And kind of what we're working off is the Apostles' Creed. We went really old school. And a creed is just this statement. It's a statement of beliefs. And so this Apostles' Creed is one of the oldest ones in our faith, and I think it's the first one.

And so it's been a lot of fun just to work through the different parts of that creed and see what people have believed in our faith for thousands of years. It's been amazing. And so we're looking at the last part of that, and it says this, I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

And that's gonna be the big focus today is the forgiveness of sins that leads to eternal life. I realize sin isn't a popular topic. People don't like to talk about sin or think about sin, and you may be new to this church and be thinking, oh man, sin?

[ 1 : 18 ] Just when I was starting to like these guys. You had to go and mention that. And there's some of us that, man, we're probably way into sin too much, and we're all like sniffing for the fire and brimstone and being like, sweet, finally.

He's gonna drop the hammer today. But really what I hope to do today in this sermon is convince us that we all sin, we're all sinners, no matter how good you think you are, and we all really want and need our sins to be forgiven.

And so before we get into that, before we get into the hard stuff, talking about sin, we get to the good stuff, and we get to talk about how, one, we're rising from the dead. One of the promises that we have in the Christian faith is that we will rise from the dead and live forever.

And maybe you're here and you're unfamiliar with Christianity and been wondering about that mystery. Man, what happens after you die? And one of the pillars of our faith is believing in God's promise that we are going to rise again and we're gonna live forever.

And as Christians, we have this hope, this steadfast anchor of the soul, this assurance, just as sure as the sun is gonna rise tomorrow, we know that one day, God is gonna raise our bodies and we're gonna live with him forever.

[ 2 : 33 ] Now the Bible says the resurrection is actually for everyone. It's not just for those who believe in Jesus or have put their faith in him. Resurrection is for everyone, whether or not you believed in Jesus.

The more important question is this, what are you gonna be raised up into? In Acts 24, 15, Paul, the apostle Paul says this, there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. Okay? Everyone's gonna be raised. John 5, 28 to 29, Jesus says this, for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tomb shall hear his voice and shall come forth and those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life and those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

God's written word says we're all gonna rise again. And those who believe in Jesus will be raised to life and those who don't believe will be raised to judgment.

Everyone is going to live forever, some to eternal life and others to eternal death. Again, my question to you is, what will you be raised up into? Life or death?

[ 3 : 51 ] What do I mean when I speak of being raised into life? Well, being raised up into life, what Jesus is getting at, what God's word is getting at, what his written word is getting at, it is that place, that condition of unending joy and happiness and perfect peace in God's presence.

It is getting to enjoy the fullness of who God is, of God's being, his essence, and to enjoy his love for us. The very opposite of that is the concept of eternal death or eternal judgment.

It is life outside of God's presence, away from his presence. It's the absence of joy and happiness and peace and his love. Now, eternal judgment may sound bleak and hopeless to a point where you may be sitting there thinking, gosh, this seems a little bit unfair.

It seems a little bit imbalanced. My few short years on this earth that I live, man, the bad things I did for a short period of time, why do they have to have eternal consequences?

I would say that's a very thoughtful observation because it does seem a bit imbalanced. How does a little bit of sin in this life deserve eternal punishment that's going to go on forever and ever and ever?

[ 5 : 11 ] And the best way that I can answer that is by having us look at what sin actually is. And this is what sin is. Sin is missing the mark. Let me explain it this way.

In 1999, NASA's Mars orbiter began to maneuver into a position to orbit Mars. And the idea was that it was going to become the first interplanetary weather satellite.

Fancy words. Basically, this thing was going to orbit around Mars and give us Mars' weather all the time. And unfortunately, what happened, it came too close to the planet and it didn't get into the proper orbital pattern.

Instead, it went into Mars and disintegrated into Mars' atmosphere as it entered into that planet. So, what went wrong? Well, an investigation happened and so they found out that the root cause of the problem of the error was a failed translation of English units into metric units.

And that happened in a piece of software on ground zero at the ground level, ground control. That's what was happening. So, before the satellite was launched on its mission, it was doomed from the start.

[ 6 : 20 ] Nobody just knew about it. It was hidden deep in some computer code somewhere, a couple of lines of code that caused this whole disaster. And guys, this is what sin is like in us. See, deep in our souls, there's this miscalculation that hijacks our proper aim and trajectory of who we're supposed to be, our trajectory for life, our purpose for life.

And see, God is meant to be the center of our existence around which we worship and around which we're to find ultimate purpose and meaning. It's to be derived from Him.

God is meant to be the center around which we orbit, around which our lives and existence orbit.

And of course, we change that. We change that so that we're the center around which we want everything to orbit, including God.

And that's what happens. Deep in our hearts, sin has affected us. It keeps us off the proper orbit and onto a path headed towards destruction. And that's what I mean, the meaning of sin, when we talk about missing the mark.

It means that we have the wrong aim. Somewhere deep inside our soul, we have the wrong aim and eternal destruction is where that aim would take us. So a really good question that we should ask, okay, cool, if that's what's going on, how do we fix this aim, right?

[ 7 : 38 ] We don't want that to be our situation. We want to get out of it. Are we as helpless as NASA was? That they weren't able to change this and realize this before disaster struck.

Well, imagine this. What if someone in NASA had become aware of the faulty calculations in the software? Man, they could have went in, right? They could have went in, they could have fixed it, they could have changed that fundamental flaw.

Ground control would have been able to adjust the trajectory and save the day and avoid the disaster. And this is exactly what God has offered us with the forgiveness of our sins. See, when our sins are forgiven and taken away, we're able to hit the mark or the aim for which we're created. See, forgiveness, the whole idea of forgiveness, that word means to remove or to take away. And that's what God does when he comes and forgives our sins. He kind of takes away that default, that bad code that causes us to have this wrong aim.

And here's what our aim is meant to be, to be in a relationship with God where we worship and love him above all things. See, we all kind of think of sin as breaking God's rules, right?

[ 8 : 43 ] We think of like, oh yeah, we kind of know the Ten Commandments. A lot of us do. We grew up in church. If those of you who don't know the Ten Commandments of these Ten Rules that God says this is what you should do and this is what you shouldn't do.

And you know, for those of us who know, it's like, man, those things, they kind of ruin all the fun of life, we think. But actually, they're not meant to be that way. They're actually meant for a flourishing and for what true joy and life in him can be.

And so we think of sin as breaking God's rules, but man, sin is so much more than that because what sin does, sin rejects God long before it rejects his rules.

See, sin, on the surface or the fruit of sin is disobeying God's commands. It's not doing what we know is right. And that's true to a degree, but there's something more sinister lying beneath sin.

There's something more sinister at the heart of sin. See, the root of sin is rejecting God. It's rejecting God for who he is. See, think of it this way. It's, I have kids.

[ 9 : 47 ] It's one thing for a kid to disobey me and reject a rule. And it would be another thing for one of my kids to reject me as their father. That they didn't want me as their father.

They didn't want the relationship that existed. And this is what we see from the very beginning. This is what we see in the garden when Adam and Eve sinned. It didn't start with them eating the fruit. It actually started way before them. They believed a lie about who God is and who they were. See, prior to this, they knew God and they enjoyed God and they loved God.

He was good and he was trustworthy. He was creator. He was sustainer. He was blessing. He was the one who, in speaking truth, very existence came into being.

Right? Life happened. And we also see him as this benevolent God who spoke blessing over them. He blessed them and gave them purpose in this life. And that's what they believed until they heard some whispers, some lies being spoken.

[ 10 : 54 ] And that happened because the serpent in the garden came and began to whisper these doubts and these lies about God and it soiled their trust and faith in who God was and who God is.

and these seeds of doubt began to grow that God, maybe God wasn't loving. Man, maybe he wasn't benevolent and as good as we thought he was. Maybe he wasn't trustworthy.

And perhaps he's keeping us from our full potential. Man, maybe there's a possibility that we could actually be on par with God but God doesn't want us to know about that and so he's keeping us down.

He's keeping us under his thumb. And this is the essence of sin. This is the lie. We no longer want God to be who he is and in that void we want to become who he is.

We want to take God down a peg and raise ourselves up a peg or two or three. See, sin, what it does, it shatters the truth about God and that he alone is to be worshipped and obeyed.

[ 11 : 57 ] See, before Adam and Eve disobeyed God's rule to not eat the fruit, they had rejected the truth of who God is. They didn't want him to be who he was anymore. And once they walked through that door, once they embraced that lie, man, there was no going back.

So, in their rejecting of God, God gave Adam and Eve the fruits of their desire. Life outside his presence. this is why they were sent out of the garden.

The garden represented the place of God's presence in that moment. And outside the garden represented what life could be like without God's presence. Where the garden represented all that life could be and God's perfect presence and flourishing.

Outside the garden represented all that life shouldn't be. See, God's punishment was in part giving them the desires of their heart. Guys, we aren't any different to Adam and Eve today.

We do the same thing. I do the same thing. Man, there's moments when I sin, what I'm doing is I'm rejecting God for who he is. I'm saying, God, I don't want you to be who you are. I don't want you to be the authority of my life.

[ 13 : 04 ] I don't want you to tell me what I can and can't do. I want to do this and by golly, I'm going to do this. And we reject God and we reject the truth of God for a lie. And God, in turn, gives us the desires of our heart.

And Paul, this is what Paul gets at when he's in Romans 1, 24 to 25, when he says, therefore God gave them up in the lust of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie.

They exchanged us, us in this room. We exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator who was blessed forever.

Amen. This is why we need our sins to be forgiven because without the forgiveness of sins, we will suffer eternally away from God's presence.

2 Thessalonians 1 to 9. Paul has been talking about those who refuse to embrace the gospel and believe the gospel and follow the gospel and have put their faith in Jesus Christ, which is the gospel is the good news of Jesus and what he's done for us.

[14:11] In verse 9 it says, they, those who refuse to repent and put their faith in Jesus, they will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction. Where?

Away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his mind. It's real, guys. Some people, you know, sue themselves by arguing, hey, you know what?

Okay, cool. I'm going to be away from the presence of God for eternity. You know, I really don't care because I don't want to follow God right now anyways, right? And it's just going to be me and my buddies forever and ever and it's just going to be one huge big party.

That's going to be awesome. I'm just going to keep on living life just like I am right now and it's going to be great. In fact, it's going to be better because I'm not going to have guys like you around telling me what I'm doing is wrong.

It's going to be awesome. Okay, so we probably have heard that argument. We've probably heard that sentiment over and over again through the years.

[15:10] But man, have we ever thought to ask this question? You know, would we really want to live forever and ever in the current reality that we know now, in this life now?

I mean, let's think about it. If our ideal, your or my ideal for eternity is just more of the same of what we're experiencing now, is that really a blessing? Or is that a curse?

I mean, let's think about this because, guys, many philosophers and thinkers over the centuries have thought about that. And you know what? A lot of them came to the conclusion, you know what?

Man, death can actually be a blessing because it releases us from this life of toil and suffering and hardship. I mean, there's a lot to be considered from this perspective.

I mean, consider the emotional and psychological toll that we pick up in a lifetime. It's more than enough misery. Imagine having to carry that on forever and ever and ever and as you're living, actually more gets added to you.

[16:14] And it would, wouldn't that become unbearable? It would, we would get to a point where we would be like, oh my goodness, I want this to end right now and imagine there was no way to make it end. And so an eternity like that sounds more like an unending descent into madness and misery than a good time.

Right? Now add this factor in. When you think about this life wanting to continue on, this life really isn't as bad as it could be and that's because of God's work in this world.

God is at work in some great kindness toward us and this is called common grace which is God's undeserved favor that he gives to every single person. And this is the idea, kind of the statement that really captures this in the Bible.

it says, man, it rains on the righteous and the unrighteous. This idea of like, rain's a good thing, right? It waters our crops, it brings growth, it nourishes the ground that's thirsty, it's a water supply. And so, God's blessing of rain, it rains on both the righteous and the unrighteous. But one of the bigger blessings and probably the greatest thing of God's grace in this world is how he actually constrains evil.

[17:24] See, we've kind of unleashed the dragon of sin, so to speak. Man, but God has put that dragon on a short leash. See, without us realizing it, God keeps us from the depths of our potential to like, really, really, really be evil.

And that's the reality. Now, imagine a place, imagine a life where God takes that constraint away and lets us just have at it. Man, things would really start to look like that movie *The Purge*, right? I mean, it would start to look really, really crazy out there. I mean, think about the evil desires that plague our souls. Bitterness, anger, envy, hatred.

Now, imagine a place where that's all there was. That was it. There was no love. There was no goodness. There was no kindness to learn from and to look at to experience or to aim for.

All that was there was bitterness and anger and envy and hatred. And it was just growing and growing exponentially all the time. And guys, that is what eternal life outside of God's presence is gonna be like, unchecked by His grace.

[ 18 : 38 ] Now, again, if you're being raised to eternal judgment, man, here's the thing. Things are gonna be really, really bad and you can't get out. But, that doesn't mean there isn't a way out today.

See, the most important thing you can leave with today is this. Eternal judgment exists because of sin, yes, but there is a forgiveness of sins that leads to eternal life.

So, the question is, how does this forgiveness happen, right? What do we need to do? Do I just need to forgive myself, right? Maybe that's it. Kind of a popular sentiment today. Pop psychology, man, all we need to do is really forgive ourselves and forget ourselves and move on from the past. But, you know what, that kind of quickly falls apart in the real world when the rubber hits the road in life. I've been kind of binge watching that series Breaking Bad.

I know it's like a bit extreme at some times, but, you know, there's this interesting episode, really interesting episode where they pick up on this thing. And this guy, this character in this series, Jesse, he's a young guy and a little too close to home, right?

[ 19 : 49 ] I have a friend. His name is Jesse. And so, he gets into selling drugs and this life takes him into deeper and deeper sin and he starts to do stuff that he would never have thought he would ever do.

And then one day he ends up killing an innocent man because he had to. It was him or that guy. The guy hadn't done anything and so, after that, the series picks up how his soul is just being tormented and he's spiraling downward.

And so, out of this last grasp of hope he gets into some group therapy. And he's sitting in this group and he just starts confessing his soul but he hides it behind this thing.

He's like, he had to take out a problem dog that he had. He had to put it down. So, they're asking him, oh really, it's a problem dog. Did you put him down because he was like really sick?

Were you just being nice? He's like, no, no, he wasn't sick. Oh, was he dangerous? He was like a biter that you put him down? He's like, no. And they started like, wait, well, wait a second. Why did you put him down?

[ 20 : 54 ] He's like, well, just because I wanted to. And so, the people started and the group started getting upset about this. And the therapist's advice to him was to, hey man, okay, cool, we all make mistakes.

You just got to forgive yourself. And you can't change the past. You can't dwell on the past. Man, you can't punish yourself for the past because it's not going to change your present.

It's not going to fix anything. The group members, man, they're upset. And they're telling him, man, what you're doing is not okay. And they begin to judge him and the group therapist jumps in and says, whoa, guys, you shouldn't judge.

This is no good. It's not going to be helpful. Which at that point, Jesse explodes. He explodes. Why not? Why not? Why shouldn't they judge me?

Why should I just accept what I've done? Am I supposed to do that the rest of my life? Just accept myself no matter how many dogs I put down. And he storms out of there.

[ 21 : 54 ] What this episode so brilliantly exposes is how flimsy that notion is is that we simply just need to forgive ourselves and then everything's going to be okay. See, the reason is, guys, that it doesn't work is our souls don't allow us to do that.

Because even after we've forgiven ourselves, we don't feel forgiven, we don't feel okay, and we don't feel healed. That's the problem. And the reason we don't feel forgiven or healed is because we aren't.

That's the reality. See, in that episode of Breaking Bad, the group therapist actually had a partial truth. He was right. Punishing ourselves for sins we've committed accomplishes nothing.

It won't take them away. It won't take the guilt away. It won't take the shame away. And that's true. Trying to pay for our sins is a pointless exercise, but guess what?

So is trying to forgive our own sins. Because who forgives us is the most important part of being forgiven. See, we need God to forgive our sins.

[ 22 : 59 ] Now, why is that? Let's think about that. Let's say I cheated on my wife. And then it was found out, and I was brought before a panel of three people, and each one came up and pronounced forgiveness over me.

Okay? And the first guy comes up. He's a perfect stranger. He doesn't know us, and we don't know him from Adam. And he comes to me and says, Jesse, you are forgiven. I'd be like, um, okay.

And the next guy is Hitler, and he comes up and says, Jesse, you are forgiven. Something. That was my best Hitler impression. That's all I had. That's all I got. That's all I got.  
Guess I could have worked in like a German accent, but I was like, you know, that might have been beyond the pale. That's like, if Hitler forgives, you actually end up being more condemned.  
You're just like, oh my goodness. If I need to be forgiven by Hitler, like, oh my. And then the third person is my wife, Haley, and she comes up and says, you know what, Jesse? I forgive you.  
[ 24 : 00 ] You're forgiven. Whose forgiveness would have mattered the most? My wife's, right? Of course. Because we need forgiveness from the ones we've sinned against, which rules out forgiving ourselves.

And here's the thing, guys, sin is always an offense against God. Always. Now, you might be sitting there thinking, okay, why would your hypothetical sin against your wife, because you sinned against her, how does that really offend God?

Well, here's the thing, what do we know of God? We know God is love, right? And you know what, God loves my wife, Haley, way more than I love her.

I can never equal his love, which means, you know what, he cares about her deeply, and he cares what happens to her, he cares when she gets hurt, and he doesn't want her to be hurt. Man, and here's the thing, God is love, he loves you and me, he loves everybody more than we can possibly imagine.

And so, yes, he gets offended. When my oldest son, Asher, was in first grade, he got lice from our kids' ministry, so.

[ 25 : 19 ] This was a long time ago, guys, long time ago. And so, you know, he's a guy, and so, it's like, sweet, you know what's cool about, you know, getting lice as a kid and you're a guy, you just shave your head and it's taken care of, you know, it's a sip of shampoo and all that junk.

So, we shaved his head, you know, he did, he looked like a cancer patient that was going through chemo, and so, that week, I walked him to class, I put him in class, and he, yeah, he looked a little weird.

And, I kind of watched from a distance, and he comes in, and a couple of kids came up to him, and they started just pointing at him and laughing and making fun of him. Man, in that moment, I, he was being sinned against, but as his father who loves him, I felt so offended.

I felt sinned against in that moment. I was praying to God, Lord, please, make me a first grader right now so I could go in and dish out some divine justice, right?

He didn't answer that prayer, fortunately. just like my love for my son is God's love for us, for you and I, right? So, yes, it would be weird if God wasn't offended when we sinned against one another.

[ 26 : 34 ] Well, God couldn't be a God of love if that was true. And so, yes, every sin is against God, and think of this way, there's a story in the Bible, King David, he gets another man's wife pregnant, and then has that man killed, so he can cover his sin, so he commits this heinous sin against this dude and this guy's wife.

But he also sinned against God because when his sin came out into the light, this is what he said, this is how he responded, I have sinned against the Lord. See, David understood that.

David understood he needed God to forgive him of that sin. And God is ultimately the who we all need forgiveness from. So, so far, I've used some really extreme examples, right, of sin, adultery, murder.

You might be thinking, hey, you know what, Jess, that's cool, but I'm really not that bad. Haven't done any of those things. Awesome. So glad, right? Maybe you can even point to all the rules you are keeping, right?

I don't cuss, don't you, don't run with girls who do, that famous saying. But sin isn't just breaking the rules, right? Sin is also failing to do what we're supposed to do.

[ 27 : 49 ] See, you know, sin can be breaking the rules, that's called sins of commission. But sin is also failing to do what we are meant to do, which is the sin of omission, the things that we don't do.

And the story of the rich young ruler that comes to Jesus, right? He says, Jesus, I want to follow you. Jesus says, sweet, have you kept the commandments? He rattles them off.

Yes, I got them all. Kept them all checklist perfect, I'm good to go. Jesus says, hold on, go and sell all that you have and give it to the poor. And he couldn't do it.

See, he couldn't love his neighbor as himself. See, he was just stuck on the sins of commission. He was stuck on, Lord, I've done all the things I was meant to do. And Jesus was pointing out, hey, you

know what?

You think you're righteous? I'm going to point out some other stuff over here. There's a lot of stuff that you should have been doing that you haven't been doing. The sins of omission. You know what the two greatest commandments are?

[ 28 : 51 ] Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength. I look at that and I'm like, ooh, fail. I failed.

Then love other people as much as you love yourself. Failed. those are the most common sins of omission.

And at this point, I hope we're all accepting the fact that we're sinners and that we realize, you know what, man, it's impossible not to sin. But then it's also impossible to forgive ourselves.

God alone forgives sins. So how do we get that forgiveness from God? How do we get God to forgive us? Is it simply just going to Him and saying, I'm sorry? I mean, kind of, but not quite.

See, here's the thing. In order for God to forgive your sins, you first have to accept what He did to pay for them. See, there's a big difference in excusing sin and forgiving sin.

[ 29 : 58 ] God doesn't excuse sin or ignore them or overlook them. Now, He forgives them and before He could forgive us our sins, they first had to be punished.

They had to be paid for. See, Jesus had to die in our place so God could forgive our sins. See, the penalty paid for sin shows us how serious an evil sin is.

Sin is so infinitely evil, it's so immeasurably evil, that only an infinite God with infinite power could properly punish sin by taking it upon His infinite self, His infinite and eternal self.

That's what Jesus did. Jesus, who is eternal and infinite, became our sin. He took our sin upon Himself and He took the curse of our sin, the punishment and the judgment of our sin upon Himself. The infinite wrath of God, He sat under it. This is what He endured on the cross. He shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins. He cried out on the cross, My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?

[ 31 : 08 ] The cross shows us in HD clarity the physical, emotional, and spiritual torment that waits us in eternal death.

But because of Jesus' death on the cross, you and I can be forgiven. And apart from Jesus, our sins can't be forgiven.

Ephesians 1, 7 says, In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. This is the mystery of the faith.

This is the mystery of God's grace towards us. We are forgiven our sins and saved from eternal punishment because Jesus died for us. You and I, we don't need to punish ourselves.

You and I, we can't repay for our sins by punishing ourselves and we also can't just pretend they never happened. Jesus took all our punishment. He took it for us.

[ 32 : 10 ] And all we're told to do is repent and believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Romans 10, 9 says this, If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

So we confess and we repent. That's what God calls us to do. And repentance means setting our aim back to God. Setting our aim away from ourselves, getting back on the right trajectory.

That's what repenting does. It's stopping going this way and turning and going back to where we're supposed to be going in the right direction. Repentance is more than remorse.

It's more than feeling sorrowful that we got caught. It's a godly sorrow. It's a godly sorrow. You know what confession means? Confession really means agreeing with God about what your sin really is.

It's stating it for what it is. It's not like a vague kind of like, oh yeah, it's kind of bad, but it's not really bad. No, it's agreeing with God with what He says about our sin. But it's also, repenting is also believing that Jesus died for that sin.

[ 33 : 25 ] It died for your sin. And it's receiving the promise that you're forgiven in Jesus' name through His death on the cross that He shed His blood for the forgiveness of your sins.

And it's wanting to love God and live for God again. It's delighting in God being God. It's a return back to the garden, so to speak, to that abundant life in God's presence.

the way things used to be and the way things were supposed to be. You might ask yourselves, cool, man, I just have to repent. Is that forgiveness kind of one and done?

Do I just one time in my life say, Lord Jesus, forgive me of my sins and all my sins are forgiven, I never have to worry about that again, I never have to repent again? Well, I mean, yes and no.

Our sins are all forgiven in Jesus Christ. Jesus died for our sins once for all, but as Christians, that doesn't mean we never repent again. We still repent even when we sin.

[ 34 : 30 ] Remember, repentance isn't just about asking forgiveness, it's returning to our highest aim, loving God above all things. Martin Luther said this classic line, birds fly, fish, swim, Christians repent.

repent. That's what we do, right? 1 John 1 9 says this, if we confess our sins, he, God, he, Jesus, is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The Christian life starts with repentance and the Christian life continues in repentance. And we do this with confidence. We do this with confidence. We don't do this groveling.

We don't have to like really work ourselves up into an emotional frenzy when we repent to show God how sorry we are. Man, we confidently come to him repenting knowing that he's going to forgive our sins in Jesus.

Ephesians 1 says in him, Jesus, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace. So guys, until we die or Jesus returns, we hold on to these promises of our faith.

[ 35 : 46 ] We hold on to this. When we sin, we don't run from God. Actually, we run to him. Sometimes, we can feel like we don't deserve God's forgiveness, right?

Sometimes when we sin, it's hard to run to God and it's hard to ask for forgiveness. We just feel like a miserable creature. And so we refuse that.

We don't run to him at all. Sometimes we feel the shame and we feel the guilt. We feel the condemnation and we feel like we're the only ones that are sitting in this. We're the only ones that committed that sin.

And how could anyone else understand, especially Jesus? How could he understand, right? He won't. He wouldn't understand. He wouldn't forgive me. Hebrews 4, 14 to 16.

Let me just speak some truth into that if that's you. since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens. Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

[ 36 : 44 ] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. It's an amazing promise because God is faithful to forgive us in this life, we can be confident that he will not hold our sins against us, now or for all eternity.

We will be raised up to live with him forever, to be with God in his presence, to enjoy the fullness of him, the fullness of life, because we've been forgiven and set free from sin.

If I can have the band come up, just thinking as we respond, I just want to speak to you, if you're here and you would call yourself a Christian, you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you would say you follow him.

Maybe you're here and you're thinking, man, I hear what you're saying, Jesse, but I struggle with feeling forgiven. I really do. I still feel the shame and the guilt, even though I've repented.

[ 37 : 57 ] or maybe you're here and you have sinned and you're sitting in that and you haven't repented of that sin. Man, you don't need to take another moment.

You can go to God right now and repent of that sin. You can run to his throne of grace and find mercy and your help in your time of need right now. He's a high priest who sympathizes with our weakness.

He understands what we're going through. He was tempted in every way. And for those of us who might be struggling with not feeling forgiven, man, just remember the truth of God's word.

Truth trumps our feelings. And we need to hear it. We need to hear God's written word, correct our feelings at times, and have that truth wash over us.

Man, that Hebrews passage, we can draw near to God in confidence, not because anything we've done, but because of what Jesus has done. He's paid it all. Every single one of our sins has been forgiven in him.

[ 39 : 00 ] All we can do is run to him, this loving father. He's waiting for us to come to him and step into his throne of grace. Not a throne of judgment, it's a throne of grace. And man, for some of us, he's beckoning you and me, come.

Come, my son, come, my daughter. Repent. You will find forgiveness. You will know that I still love you, and you will know that I think of you just as much as ever.

You're my son and your daughter who I love. And as we come and we take communion today, and communion is something we do as Christians, it's a time that we celebrate and remember and dwell on the death of Jesus Christ and what he did for us.

For the forgiveness of our sins, sins, and we come and we break bread, break a piece of the bread off, and it represents his body that was broken for us on the cross. We come and we take a cup of juice and we drink it, and that cup represents his blood that was shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

We could be reminded today as we come to communion, man, Jesus, thank you. You've taken the punishment for me. And through your death, I have the forgiveness of sins. I'm set free from sin, and they're not counted against me anymore.

[ 40 : 22 ] Now, if you're here and you're not a Christian, maybe you're thinking, man, what if I'm not forgiven? And for the first time, you realize that you need to be forgiven.

You realize for the first time how crazy sin is and how bad it is, but yet at the same time, you hear this call that God is holding out to you.

Man, there is forgiveness in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone and what he did on the cross.

Man, this is what you do. You just go to him. You can quietly speak this to yourself.

You can quietly pray this out loud, whatever you want to do, and you just simply believe. You say, you know what, Jesus, I do believe. I do believe that you are Lord and Savior. I do believe that you died on the cross for my sins, and I believe that I'm going to confess my sin to you.

I'm going to confess that I am a sinner, and I have rejected you as God. I have not wanted you to be who you are, and I'm repenting, and I want to come back. I want to come back into your presence.

[ 41 : 23 ] I want to return to that highest aim of my life. Forgive me, and you know what? He will forgive you because he's promised to do that. And I want to urge you to do that if you're here today and that's you, man.

I urge you to do that. Today is the day of salvation. Don't put it off for another time. Man, ask God for repentance. Ask God for forgiveness. Jesus, repent to him. Amen.

Let me pray for us. So, Lord, we thank you. We thank you that the glory of the gospel, one shines a light on the truth about us.

We are all sinners who needed a savior. And you were the savior who came and stood in our place and took the punishment of our sin. Your blood was shed for us so that our sins could be forgiven.

Lord God, we thank you for that. We thank you because of the forgiveness of our sins. The promise is eternal life in your presence forever and ever and ever enjoying you where there will be no more sin or sorrow anymore.

[ 42 : 28 ] Amen.