

# Godly Grief

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[0:00] How's everyone doing today? Doing good? Doing good? Wow, thank you. That's awesome. Good morning. Like Angie said, I'm Jesse, one of the pastors here, and I really have the privilege of serving alongside just an amazing pastoral team and broader leadership team.

And I want to say to you that are new with us, man, so glad you are here. I think I've met one or two that are brand new today. Love that you're here. Hope you're having a good time.

And those who are listening online, man, thank you for checking in, even though you couldn't be here with us in person. And if you have a Bible, we're going to be working out of 2 Corinthians chapter 7 today.

So if you have your Bible, you can turn there. If not, there are going to be verses up on the screen behind me, so it's easy to follow along. Before we get into that, I just have to eat some humble pie and make a correction.

I made a big error last Sunday during my sermon. And the heart is we never want to lead people astray. And we care about accuracy. And so having said that, it is not Stephen Curry.

[1:10] Thank you. It is Stephen Curry. All right? Okay? All right. I humbly receive the rebuke of many of you. I appreciate that. I appreciate that.

I'm very excited for today's passage. And this passage goes to the center of God's heart. It really does. And it is also at the center of the gospel.

And these rock-solid truths, they are rock-solid truths upon which we should be building our lives. And so we're going to be reading from verse 2.

And it says this. Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one. We have corrupted no one. We have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you.

For I said, before that, you are in our hearts. To die together and to live together. And so we see at the beginning of this, Paul is writing to this Corinthian church that he really loves.

[2:07] And he has deep affection for. You can start to feel like, oh, man, we're wading into some, like, really personal moments here. I am acting with great boldness towards you.

I have great pride in you. I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy. For even when we came into Macedonia, it's an area in Greece, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn, fighting without and fear within.

But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus. He's one of Paul's close friends and sons in the faith. And not only by Titus' coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.

For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it. For I see that letter grieved you, though only for a while.

As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

[ 3 : 24 ] For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves.

What indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment. At every point, you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God.

Therefore, we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoice still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true.

And his affection for you is even greater. As he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling, I, Paul, rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.

[ 4 : 42 ] This is God's word. And again, this part of Paul's letter, we're kind of in the middle of it now. Now, it's to this Corinthian church, and you start to see, man, it is so personal to him.

This relationship with him and this church, man, it evokes emotives from Paul. And you feel this deep love that he has. And he begins this part of his letter with an appeal for them to make room in their hearts.

It's kind of like the old cheesy, like, let me in, let me love you kind of thing, you know? He's saying, hey, make room for us. Make room for me. Don't cut us off. We had such a beautiful, loving, connected relationship.

Let's not lose that. And so it was in danger. And they were in danger of closing their hearts to him. And the reason was is that in his previous letters, Paul hints at here, he had to confront and address sin in the Corinthian church.

If you go back and read the first letter to the Corinthians, man, Paul is rebuking them quite a lot. And he did it, and he had to do it because that church was letting sin go unchecked.

[ 5 : 51 ] And that's not loving. In fact, it's loving to confront sin in a godly way. In our modern age, the age we live in now, it views, it's a version of love that it puts out to us is that acceptance and affirmation of all beliefs and behaviors and choices is what is right.

And for Christians, the temptation is to, as we live in this age where that is the reality of love being pushed on us, it's tempting for us to embrace that. And even project that onto God, like, man, if God is love and this is what we understand of love, then God must be this way too.

But the problem is God isn't like that. He is a God of boundaries and rules and commands. And his boundaries and rules and commands are never shifting or changing.

He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And here's the thing, you know, one of the parallel words in the Bible for sin is transgression.

And when you break that word down and what it means, it is to cross a boundary marker. To transgress is to go beyond what you were meant to go beyond. And when we break God's boundaries within which we were meant to live for our flourishing and our good, we sin against him and we sin against each other.

[ 7 : 13 ] And there's painful consequences for that, right? We always say here, sin is not a bullet. Sin acts like a bomb. When it goes off, its shrapnel hits you and everybody around you.

A lot of people get hurt. And so some of the unconforted sin in the Corinthian church, you had a son sleeping with his dad's wife openly.

And the church knew about it and they were doing nothing about it. You had people within the church taking each other to court and suing each other. And then you had this sense of I am better than you, this self-righteousness within the Corinthian church.

That was a church that was operating in these spiritual gifts. And so there was this jockeying for, oh, my spiritual gift is better than your spiritual gift. And there was also this sense of, well, I am a disciple of Paul.

Who are you a disciple of? Well, I'm a disciple of Peter. Peter's better than Paul. Therefore, I am better than you. And so there's this like weird jockeying and one upmanship that is going on within this family of faith, which is unhealthy and it isn't good and it doesn't put God's glory on display, nor does it communicate what his heart is really like at all.

[ 8 : 30 ] Well, the people in this church, they were letting all these things go. The leaders in this church were letting all these things go and they weren't speaking up.

They weren't confronting and they weren't saying a word. Why? Why? Why? Because like us, they hate confrontation. Let's be honest. Most of us, when we see sin happen or even if we're sinned against, we would rather take the quiet road of not saying anything and just be like, you know, and I'm just going to go pray for their hearts to be healed.

Maybe God will change them. But here's the thing. As you pray that, I want you to realize you are probably the answer to that prayer. If you are wanting to see God move in their hearts and affect change, you are probably necessarily going to be a part of that process.

Why? Because God most often confronts our sins through those around us. That's what he does. Think of Nathan, the prophet. Man, good buddies with David.

When David sinned, God didn't come and said, David, I know exactly what you did. He actually, he sent Nathan, the prophet, and said, David did something wrong, something very evil. You're going to have to confront him.

[ 9 : 45 ] Now, I want to say there are times when God does convict us and does confront our sin without the use of people. I've experienced that.

I'm sure some of you in the room have as well. But quite often when I am sinning and the blinders are on and my heart is hard and I don't see the sin that is going on and that I am perpetrating and flowing out of my life and onto others, he comes and he uses someone else to say, hey, Jess, the way you're talking to Haley, that is not kind, buddy.

That is not nice. And we need that because we have blind spots in our life. We are self-righteous to the core, right? Our natural bent is that everything I do is good, right?

I guess just some of us. All the rest of you are super humble. Praise God. I'm so glad we have so many mature brothers and sisters in Christ in this room. Awesome. But here's the other thing.

I've been on the other side of that. I have seen my friends, my close brothers and sisters in Christ doing things where I had to confront them and say, hey, man, that behavior, that's not good.

[ 10 : 58 ] You were sinning against someone there. What is going on? And I'll be honest. I do not like those conversations. They are not comfortable conversations, which is why I think often we balk at having them because we know how awkward it is going to be because showing someone their sin and calling it out isn't usually received well, right?

Like nobody after you confront them is going to the Hallmark store and finding the card that says, thank you so much for confronting my sin. I really needed that. And they send it to you. That is not a thing, right?

That is not a thank you card option in Hallmark. So it's tempting to think that, you know what? Because it's awkward, because it's hard, you know what we're going to do? We're just going to leave it to the experts.

We're going to leave it to those people like Paul who are good at it and they like to confront, which is patently untrue. Nobody likes to confront. And I would say that if you do, you might have a sin problem we're going to have to confront you on.

Look, here's the thing. Even Paul, the great apostle, brave, courageous, like brought the gospel, preached the gospel in dangerous situations, right?

[ 12 : 10 ] When he confronted the Corinthians, he wasn't taking joy in doing it. Look at verse eight. For even if I, Paul, made you grieve with my letter, with my confrontation about your sin, I do not regret it, though I did regret it.

For I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. Paul sees how his confrontation grieved them and he feels their grief.

And in one sense, he says, I regretted that I grieved you in this way. But in the same sentence, he says, I do not regret it. And you're just like, hey, Paul, you can't have it both ways.

Which is it? You know, do you regret sending them the letter that grieved it or do you not? And he says, yes. This is a paradox. How do we make sense of this?

But it makes sense when you genuinely love people and you understand what real God-like love is. See, when you love people, you don't want to see them grieve, right?

[ 13 : 15 ] I don't take joy in seeing Haley cry at all. Man, what I want to do is I want to take her from her tears and bring her out of that as fast as I can. And the same with my friends.

But at the same time, you and I can't stand by while they're sinning and hurting themselves and others by their sinful actions. You can't do that.

That is not real love. And that is the motivation that leads to loving confrontation in a godly way, right? You're both, man, I don't want to grieve you.

But, man, I'm seeing what you're doing and, like, I know I'm going to grieve you, but I got to. It's for your good. I got to do this. And so Paul says this in verse 9. As it is, I rejoice not because you were grieved.

Here's the motivation. But because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief so that you suffered no loss through us.

[ 14 : 15 ] Why do we confront sin? Why do we say, man, I don't want to see my friend. I don't want to see my close ally. I don't want to see my wife. I don't want to see my brother and sister. I don't want to see them grieving. But you know what?

I'm going to do it because that could lead to repentance. And why do we risk that? Because repentance is restorative. See, sin robs.

It steals. It destroys. It takes away. Repentance does the opposite. Repentance restores. It adds back. And then some, as we're going to see, which should make it worth us just pushing through the awkwardness of confrontation.

Because on the other side of repentance is this redemptive potential beyond our imagination. But first, we have to look at what leads to repentance in the first place.

Because that's where Paul goes. Right? I'm going to pick up verse 9 again. As it is, I rejoice not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief so that you suffered no loss through us.

[ 15 : 22 ] For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. Whereas worldly grief produces death. And I think a lot of our failure to confront sin is that we put the results on ourselves.

Right? We think, man, if I can just say the right words. If I can use the right language. Just the right tone. Just the right amount of emotions.

If I deliver this confrontation package so perfectly. Then they will definitely respond. And I can convince them to repent.

But here's the thing. That's assuming a power and a responsibility you and I don't possess. Repentance is a work that God starts and completes in our hearts. See, look at what Paul is saying here in verse 9.

When we look at it closely, it says that you were grieved into repenting. So, their repentance was preceded by something. And he's saying your repentance was preceded by these intense emotions of grief over your sin.

[ 16 : 29 ] And I love the NIV translation here because I think it renders it more clearly. And it says this. You were made sorrowful as God intended.

Paul uses the phrase godly grief multiple times in the next few verses. And here's the thing. This is how God brings us to repentance. What is happening here?

What's this godly grief? What Paul is saying and what we need to listen up to here is God is taking his grief over our sin that he feels in his heart.

Right? It says we can grieve the Holy Spirit. God has feelings. When we sin, he grieves. And he takes his grief over that. And you know what he does with godly grief?

He takes it and he puts it into our hearts. And that is an amazing thing. And that's the thing only he has the power to do. We can't do that. Right? I have no way to force my grief onto you at all.

[ 17 : 27 ] One of my kids grieves when she has to eat Greek yogurt for breakfast. Sad face. Slow eating. Lots of complaining. Her grief is legit.

Now, here's the thing. I see it. But I don't understand her grief. And I definitely don't share in her grief. Right? I'm like, it's vanilla yogurt.

Like, I used to have to grow up eating porridge. That was tasteless. Yeah. Oh. Some of you are like, hey, bud, you got to have a meal. So, like, big deal.

But here's the thing. She has no power to change my heart. She has no power to put her grief and her sorrow over Greek yogurt into me.

Where I can fully understand and fully share in that grief. But here's the beautiful thing that God can do that. He puts his grief into our hearts because, you know what? He wants us to understand how he sees our sin.

[ 18 : 30 ] And he wants us to share in his grief over it. And that is the textbook definition of empathy. Understanding and sharing in somebody else's experience and emotions.

Which, that thing of empathy, they talk about a lot today. But, man, if you have a full, robust, healthy, deep relationship, it's because you are able to empathize with that person.

Empathy creates and it promotes relational health and intimate bonds. It does. And isn't that just like God who loves us so much and he wants us to be as close to him as possible.

That he makes us empathetic to him. By having us share his grief with us. See, sin ruins relationships.

Primarily our relationship with God. So, God doesn't wait for us to come and say, oh, we're sorry. We slipped up. No, he pushes empathy on us. I'm going to give you two examples from my own life to explain how this works.

[ 19 : 36 ] The first is in my early 20s. I had a girlfriend at the time. It was a physical relationship. We were sinning against God with the way we were behaving.

We were having sex before marriage. Church. And I knew I wasn't supposed to be doing that. I knew I wasn't honoring God. And I knew I was breaking his boundaries. And so, one day, afterwards, God put his godly grief in my heart.

At the most awkward time. And I started bawling and crying. My heart was broken. And I was like, oh, my gosh, what is going on with me? I felt the grief of God like I'd never felt before.

And that sin that I enjoyed with such great pleasure became such ugly and terrible. And it was disgusting to me.

I didn't want to do it anymore. And, in fact, I ran out of the room. And I changed my life. We broke up. I broke it off with her. And I had to move forward because, man, God's grief hit me so hard.

[ 20 : 46 ] That was a sin I could not engage or enjoy anymore. And that was beautiful for me. I needed that. Man, God's grief is a gift over sin.

There was another time in my life, later on, after me and Hales were married. And Riley was born. And there was a lot going on in our lives.

And I actually started dabbling in pornography for six months and then pulled out of it but never confessed it to her, never told her anything about it, never told anyone anything about it.

And then four years later, I was reading a book, a book on redemption in Panera Bread right here in Moorhead City. And suddenly, the conviction and grief of God hit me again.

And it was like, buddy, you're going to have to go and tell your wife and repent to her. That was hard to do. But I had no choice.

[ 21 : 43 ] I am crying in Panera Bread. And I knew I had to go do that. And that's what I did. I showed up. I remember exactly where Haley was, in our house. And she was gracious.

And she forgave me. And I just want to say the sorrow for sin was real in those moments. It did not feel good. But it produced a desire to repent.

It produced a motive to turn from my sin and run the other way. Which is the difference between godly grief and worldly grief. Both look like sorrow on the outside.

But tears and snot aren't proof of godly grief. Tears and snot aren't repentance. 2 Corinthians 10. Look at what it says is.

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. Whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you.

[ 22 : 44 ] But also what eagerness to clear yourselves. What indignation. What fear. What longing. What zeal. What punishment. And actually that word punishment is what desire to do justice.

At every point. Paul goes on to say to them. You have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. And I love this because it's saying.

And giving us insight into proof of what true repentance fueled by godly grief looks like. True repentance means running, running from sin without regret.

No looking back. Right? He starts verse 10 off with repentance that leads to salvation without regret. That's what the Corinthian church had. And true repentance is living for god and with god and loving it.

And love is at the root of those things. Okay? If you are, you know, if I'm a married guy, you know, with Haley, but I'm looking at all my single friends and being like, man, that's looking good over there.

[ 23 : 50 ] I wish I wasn't married. You would say like, Jesse, you got a serious love problem, man. You are missing out. You don't love your wife. A Christian who lives with regret, who looks back and wishes like, man, I wish I could go back there, who would rather live like the world or live in their old sinful ways, they have a love problem.

Because you love your sin more than you love God. But as we see in these verses, the Corinthians, they reacted when their sin was confronted by Paul. And they had this godly grief and what it produced in them toward their sin was this hate and indignation.

See, here's the other thing. When God puts his grief towards sin in your heart, it comes with his full range of emotion for your sin. It's not just grieving and sorrow over it. Here's another thing.

God doesn't like sin. He actually hates it. His wrath was poured out on Jesus because of sin. And for those at the end of the age when Jesus returns, if they are not found repentant and faith in Jesus Christ, his wrath will be poured out on them because of sin.

Sin kindles God's anger. And so what happens is when God puts his heart into our hearts and we begin to empathize with him, we begin to hate sin too. We begin to hate our sin because we see it for what it really is.

[ 25 : 16 ] We no longer try to justify it or defend it. And repentance means that we acknowledge our sin. We call it for what it is.

We name it. We don't excuse it. And we own it. We don't blame it on somebody else. Well, if they just weren't pushing me so hard, I wouldn't have acted this way. We own it.

My sin, my bad action, my bad thoughts, my bad attitude, my hatred toward others, my bitterness. And we look at that and God comes in and we own it and we begin to hate it.

We don't want to do it anymore and we hate it because we love God. And because of that, we also don't take our sweet time untangling from sin.

We don't procrastinate turning from it. We don't be like, well, you know what? Yeah, I'll get to that next week. No, no, no. That love for God, that hate for sin fuels an eagerness and an earnestness.

[ 26 : 19 ] I love Paul uses those two words. You are eager and you are earnest. And when that God hits us with that godly grief, we are eager and earnest to run from sin as fast as we can.

Which means we take the necessary steps to stop it immediately and to fight the temptation to do it again. If you struggle with porn, and I get that, I did for so much of my life.

I indulged in porn from 12 years old to 23. I would say I was a legitimate addict to that. But for me, when I had that godly sorrow that hit my heart and God began to change my heart, it led me to hate that sin, to want to fight that sin.

By bringing it into the light, by sharing that sin with Christian brothers and sisters and asking them to fight alongside me and pray for me, it meant I put accountability software on my digital devices so that when the temptation hit me, I knew that, okay, if I indulged in that, people were going to know about it.

I couldn't keep it hidden in the dark. It meant that I took seriously fighting that sin involved fasting and praying. I had to separate myself. I had to go over my proclivity to indulge in my sense of needing instant gratification and giving into it all the time.

[ 27 : 36 ] And a great way to fight against that is fasting and praying because you're withholding good things from yourself. And I had to do that. And I had good friends coming around me and wise counsel to disciple me.

And I had to replace the free time and the downtime in my life with better habits, time with friends, Bible reading, prayer, good community, good healthy community to support me and promote me fighting that temptation of sin because I wanted to and because I loved God.

And you know what? It took me months, maybe even a year. And gradually, I got victory over that sin. Was I tempted? Have I been tempted, sister? Absolutely.

Have I participated in it? No. Sin, guys, is addictive. It always is. It may not be porn for you. It could be anger.

It could be gossip. It could be a substance. It could be harboring bitterness. It could be self-righteousness. It could be seeking man's praise. There is a hundred ways you could be addicted to a sin.

[ 28 : 40 ] But the point is, is that we all have a sin that has us. And we need that godly grief that leads to repentance because those sins destroy life because they destroy relationships.

And sometimes the hardest thing to do is take that first step, which is bringing sin into the light through confession. And the reason we have a hard time with that is because we think anybody who knows the real us, anybody who knows that sin I am going to expose, man, they're not going to love me anymore.

They're going to abandon me. They're going to walk away from me. They're going to reject me. How can anybody, when I showed the ugliness of this, how could anybody stay around? But actually, the gospel tells us that through repentance, there is such redemptive potential beyond our imagination.

Repentance restores what sin has lost and even more. Look what happened between Paul and the Corinthian church because they repented.

Verse 13, it says, Therefore, we, Paul, me and my crew, me and my team, we are comforted. And beside our own comfort, we rejoice still more at the joy of Titus because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

[ 30 : 01 ] For whatever boasts I had made about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true and his affection for you is even greater.

As he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. I rejoice. I, Paul, rejoice because I have complete confidence in you.

Some beautiful restorative things happening here. First, see what their repentance brought. It brought comfort. And that's what repentance does. It brings comfort, right?

It starts with uncomfortable confrontation. And it starts with uncomfortable confession. But you know what? It ends with all souls being comforted. And here's the fact word in Greek for comfort there.

It means it's a unique part of the comfort family. But that word in Greek means to comfort, to receive comfort, or to be refreshed because of a happy experience.

[ 31 : 09 ] So Paul sends Titus to see how this church that he confronted is doing. And Titus is there and he experiences their repentance.

It's more than talk. He experiences it. They've acknowledged their sin. They've repented and ran from it. You know, when someone says they're sorry, it brings this kind of hope.

You're just like, man, is that sincere? I hope it's sincere. And that brings, that can bring with it a small bit of refreshing in our hearts.

But then when we see them making immediate, radical change in their lives so that they are running from their sin as fast as possible and living for Christ and living in a gospel-aligned way, what it does, it brings refreshing and joy.



Right? The adulterer who confesses and repents and turns from hiding and deceit and loving other women, and then he turns around and starts to cherish and dote on his wife and begins prioritizing her and his relationship with her and his family and begins to serve her sacrificially.

[ 32 : 22 ] And that is comfort experienced. And true repentance refreshes the heart. Both the sinners who are caught up in it, but also those who are sinned against.

See, sin, what it does, sin in a relationship, it disintegrates trust. It disintegrates joy. It disintegrates affection.

And it disintegrates confidence. That's what it does to relationships. But repentance, it restores and it revives all those things. And that's what we're seeing in that part of the passage.

You know, while we are still in sin and wondering, man, should I bring this into the light? Is this worth confessing and repenting?

The shame that we wrestle in those moments says like, no, do not do it. Because once the truth is out there, that relationship will never be what it is.

[ 33 : 24 ] It is totally lost. It is going to be totally ruined. But we see different proof here. Paul says, we've been comforted by you.

Paul says, we've been refreshed by you. Not only that, our affection for you was not only restored to what it was, it is even greater.

See, repentance is not just for the sinner. It's true. It's for those who have been sinned against.

Paul is saying like, man, this is what you've done to us. This is the gift your repentance has given to us. Our affection has grown for you.

The bonds of their relationship seem even stronger now, right? He says, I've got greater trust. I've got more affection. I've got confidence, total confidence.

[ 34 : 21 ] What Paul and his cohort of ministry buddies have done in response to the Corinthians' repentance is a necessary thing that the gospel calls us to do, which is to forgive those who repent and to pardon their sin, which means we don't hold it against them.

Paul is not holding the Corinthian sin against them anymore. There is nothing left for him to confront because they have repented of it. And here's the thing. Repentance is when I step into God's grace for me as a sinner.

Forgiveness is when I step into God's grace for you as a sinner. See the difference there? Repentance fueled by godly grief places the sinner in the center of God's heart for them.

Forgiveness fueled by God's grace places the sin, those who have been sinned against, it also places them right in the center of God's heart, right next to the sinner.

And what that does is if the sinner is in the center of God's heart by his grace and his mercy because of repentance, and forgiveness brings me into the center of God's heart over their sin and agreeing with it, what happens?

[ 35 : 40 ] We're restored. Where are we restored? In God's heart. In the center of God's heart. And that can only be done because of the gospel.

And so here's my encouragement. Don't be stingy with forgiveness. Paul wasn't. He sees the fruit of their repentance. He fully forgives. He doesn't withhold it.

And withholding forgiveness is just a power play. It is saying, you wronged me. You owe me. You're in my debt. And even though I should cancel it because God has, I'm going to hold on to it.

Or I am going to keep account of it so that I can bring it back up whenever I want to at an opportune time. And that is not how God works.

That is not how Jesus works. That is how the devil works. He is called our accuser. Not our advocate. But we do have an advocate. His name is Jesus.

[ 36 : 40 ] 1 John 2, it says, My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

He is the propitiation or the atonement for our sins. The sacrifice for our sins. And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the world.

That word advocate is a beautiful word. It means this. A legal advocate who makes the right judgment call because they are close to the situation.

See what we have in Jesus. We have this advocate who is near and as close as possible to be to any situation we face, any sin we go through, any offense we take.

And Paul knows this about Jesus. Which is why he has the courage to call sinners to repent and also why he so generously forgives them.

[ 37 : 43 ] He knows Jesus is this kind of advocate. Jesus always makes the right judgment call. He forgives knowing all the facts because he is closest to the situation.

Even closer than the sinner is to knowing his own sinful heart. And Jesus is also closest to the solution for the sinner. The solution for the sinner is to be forgiven.

But sin can't just be forgiven. It has to be atoned for. For it to be forgiven. And Jesus is that atonement. He is that propitiation, that sacrifice by which we can be, our sins can be pardoned and forgiven and cleansed and removed.

So sinner, that's all of us. Listen to Jesus, your advocate. Listen to him who is your atonement.

He is closest to your heart. He is closest to your sin than anyone else. Jesus, call out to him today. 1 John, verses 1, or chapter 1, verse 9 says, If we confess our sins, if we acknowledge them and speak them truthfully, he, Jesus, our advocate, he is faithful and he is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[ 39 : 07 ] If the band can come up, I want to give us some ways to respond today. If you're here or you're listening, you're not yet a Christian.

Man, Jesus is saying, call out to me today. Call out to me. If you are feeling godly grief and you now know that you are a sinner.

If you are feeling God's indignation for your sin, you don't have to wallow in that. What you get to do is you get to run to Jesus, your atoning sacrifice, your propitiation.

And you get to run to him and you get to find grace and you get to see your sins cleansed and forgiven and taken away. And you are made righteous in his righteousness.

And you know what? He becomes your advocate who speaks a better word. You're no longer guilty. And all you have to do is confess your sin and repent to him and believe that he is Lord and Savior.

[ 40 : 08 ] And we're going to take a moment to respond in a second. But there's going to be a prayer up on the screen for you to pray during that time. Now, if you're here or you're listening and you're already a Christian, we're going to take communion in a moment.

Before we do that, I want us to examine our hearts. So brothers and sisters in Christ, is Jesus calling out sin in your heart that you need to confess to him or maybe to someone else and to repent of?

Does that sin involve another person? Maybe it's another person in this room. And Jesus said, man, before we go and bring something to the altar, we need to go make right with our brother first.

Before, maybe your response today is before you take communion, you go up to somebody in this room and you say, you know what? I've sinned against you. And I'm sorry.

And I repent. Please forgive me. And if somebody does that to you, your job is to say, I forgive you. Just as Jesus forgives you.

[ 41 : 16 ] Your sins are pardoned. Go in peace. Remember, Jesus is the advocate of every sinner who always gives forgiveness.

He never withholds. And his judgment call for the repentance is always right. And it's always you are forgiven and you are cleansed.

So let's take a moment right now quietly to examine our hearts and respond to how the Holy Spirit is leading us. Let's see. Thank you.

Thank you.

I pray that would be a reality in our hearts. I pray for healing. I pray for restoration.

[ 43 : 04 ] I pray for us to be closer, more unified, held within the bonds of love and peace because of your grace and your goodness to us.

Amen. If you would stand with me. Amen. We get to take communion together as a church.

We are the body of Christ who partakes of the body of Christ. And this is an invitation from our Savior, our advocate, to together come near to him.

And we do that together. And what he's doing, he's saying, man, I am drawing you into my heart. And in that place in his heart, we are close.

We are near him and we are near one another. Eating is an act of intimacy and acceptance. And in this meal, we are eating our Savior's body and blood.

[ 44 : 22 ] And it's by faith when we do this, we are taking our Savior in. We are allowing him to nourish our souls and our body. By faith, we are taking in his righteousness and his forgiveness.

And we do this together because we agree with his forgiveness over us personally, but also for one another as well. And so, his body broken for us.

His blood shed for us. Let's take and eat together.