

# Grace and the Law

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 25 November 2018

Preacher: Rev. Thomas Hinson

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, good morning, everybody. Happy Thanksgiving to you. Good morning. Good morning. Good to see you.

This is our first year ever staying and not traveling for Thanksgiving. And I think it's habit forming. I think that we're here. We will never travel again. So somebody call my parents and tell me, tell them the bad news. I hope everybody had a good Thanksgiving. To be totally honest, for me, Thanksgiving is the start of a season that's always kind of hard. I don't know why. I'm just one of these people that gets depressed around this time of year, even with friends and family. I think that it's a hard time of year. I think it's a mixed bag for a lot of people.

It's a time of relationship focus, hopefully, spending time with friends and family. But if I could be totally honest, I think that's part of the reason it's hard. You know, you're focusing on trying to be with and to love people in your family, people who are your friends, and that could be kind of a mixed bag. You know, in my family, I have people who are family members. I've known them my whole life, and yet politically, they're completely on the opposite end of the spectrum from me. And when they talk, I feel like there's no common ground. And it's hard to have a relationship with people like that, even family members. You know, and then I have friends who are making choices that I don't agree with, and it's frustrating. And it's hard when you see people doing things that you wish they wouldn't do, that you feel like are damaging. And so it's a mixed bag because I feel like I want to focus on loving people, and yet people are hard to love. And I find myself thinking, you know, I would be a lot more loving if you were just a better person.

You know? By which I mean more like me. If you were more like me, I would be a much more loving person toward you. And of course, that's not a realistic solution. But the Bible offers a better solution for how to think about relationships, how to build relationships, what it takes to have a good, loving relationship with people who are very different from us. We're looking at the book of Galatians. And Galatians, you may not realize it, but it's a book all about relationships.

It's about what it means to build a good, healthy relationship with God and with other people. And Galatia, as some of you may know, the region where this letter was originally intended to go, Galatia was a very diverse place. You had religious and political and racial and ethnic diversity in a major way. And so lots of division as a result. And so this letter is all about what it takes to build relationships with God and a very diverse array of people who are sharing the same community. So what we're going to do is we're going to look at Galatians chapter 3. And we're going to start in verse 15. And John a moment ago read all the way through verse 29. I wanted to get the overview for you so that you can see the whole passage because it's really beautiful. But we're not going to get through the whole passage today. We're going to get through verse 22 about. And then what we're going to do is beginning next week, we're going to take a break for the season of Advent and Christmas. And then we're going to come back, I promise, to pick up where we left off in the new year. So this is the last sermon on Galatians for a few weeks. But what we're going to do is look at verses 15 to 22. And we're going to look first at what it says. I got to do a little unpacking for you.

And once we're on the same page with what it says, then we'll talk about what it means for relationships with God and one another. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your word. And as we pray every week, we know that we are here not simply because we belong to this church or we like to attend this church or because we're a friend who was invited or a family member who's in town. Lord, we know that we're actually here by divine appointment, that somehow in your sovereignty, you decided that we would be here in this time, in this place, to look at these words. And so we pray that you would do your work through these words. I need it. We all need it. So Lord, we ask that in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, the living word. Amen. So let's look at what this says. And to get into what it says, I want to give you an image to think about as we get into this text together.

[ 4 : 34 ] Imagine that you're building a house. Some of you have built a house or you've renovated a house. But imagine that you're building a house. And imagine that you have to choose your building material. And imagine that you have a choice between two options. Building material number one for your house is material that's cheap. It is plentiful. It is abundant. You can find it everywhere.

And so it's the cost efficient way to go. And yet the problem is it's very brittle and it's a very low quality. And if you build a house out of this cheap, plentiful material, the house is going to be crooked. It's going to be unstable. And the slightest gust of wind is going to knock it down. Or you can choose to build your house out of a very rare and precious and costly material. The problem is that material is probably going to cost everything that you have. And yet it will last through anything. The house that comes out of that material will weather any storm. It will never let you down. This is kind of like what's going on in Galatians. Galatians says that it's the same when we're building relationships. Right? So we're not building a house. We're building relationships. But Galatians essentially says when you are building your relationship, your friendships, your marriage, your church community, you have essentially two materials you can build those relationships out of. Up until Paul came, the Galatians had only been using one of these materials, which we might call the way of the law. Relationships with God and other people were built on the law and all of the assumptions that come with the law. And as a result of that, the relationships, relationships were very brittle and fragile and society was deeply divided and these relationships easily crumbled. And people who had built their relationship with God on the law, on law keeping, never knew where they stood with God. The relationship was always in question. And so Paul comes to Galatia and he says the law was never meant to be a building material for relationships. You were never meant to base your relationship with God or anyone on the law. And he says you were always meant to build these relationships on grace, which is a very costly, very precious, and very rare material. And yet when you build a relationship on grace, it lasts forever. And Paul says God always intended this to be the way we build relationships with him and other people. And now Jesus Christ has made this possible in a way that it was never possible before. So the core disagreement when we get into this letter is this. What is the relationship between law and grace? Are law and grace fundamentally opposed?

Opposite ways to build relationships? Or are they part of the same thing? Is there some way in which law and grace work together? That's the question. So let's get into this. Are law and grace diametrically opposed or not? As I think Paul says in verse 21, is the law opposed to the promises of God?

[ 7 : 56 ] And here's what Paul says. Here's how he answers it. And this gets fairly technical. So what I want to do is just sort of summarize in my own words what Paul says here. But Paul uses the analogy of a will, like a legal will. So imagine that you and your spouse sit down and you make out a will. Last will and testament. And imagine you say, you know what? If the worst happens and we pass away, we're going to leave everything to our oldest son. That's going to be the way. That's the way it was in the ancient Near East, right? So everything, worst happens and we die, our oldest son gets everything.

You write that will, you sign it, it's done. And imagine a few years later the worst happens and God forbid, you pass away. And then imagine the lawyer sits down with your oldest son and gets out your will and says, well, according to this will, now that your parents have passed away, the full inheritance is yours. And then imagine the lawyer sets down the will and says, but only if you graduate with honors and you get a good job and you get a good spouse and you prove that you can be a respectable member of society, then you'll get the inheritance. Now Paul says, does the lawyer have the right to do that?

Absolutely not, right? Because once that will has been ratified, once that covenant has been ratified, you can't add to it. You can't edit it. You can't amend it. The lawyer does not have the right to do that. Your will says, my son gets everything. No ifs, ands, or buts, no contingencies.

And so Paul says something similar has happened with God and his people. That long ago, God essentially made his will known. He comes to Abraham and he says, I'm going to make you a promise and I'm going to bless you and I'm going to bless all of your family and I'm going to make you into a great nation and I'm going to give you land and I'm going to give you honor and then eventually an offspring is going to be born. A seed.

Not offspring, plural. Paul clarifies, one single individual is going to be born and God is going to pass his full inheritance to that individual. He's going to get everything.

[10:08] He's going to get all the power, all the blessing, all the authority, all the privilege. It's all going to go to him. And of course, Paul says, this is Jesus Christ. And then God says, and through him, everybody's going to be blessed.

In other words, anybody who comes to Jesus, Jesus is going to share the inheritance with those people. If you come to Jesus in faith and repentance, Jesus says, take your share of the inheritance.

It was promised to you long ago and now because you are in me, it belongs to you as well. So this is the promise. This is the last will and testament, so to speak, that God gives to Abraham.

And so Paul says, if this is the case, then why after another 430 years does God then give the law? And the question is, is this like the lawyer sitting down and adding things to the will?

Right? Is God changing and revising his will? Is he going back on his word? Is he second guessing his promise that he made to Abraham? And Paul says, absolutely not.

[11:11] Certainly not. So then this begs the question, what is the point of the law? If God said, I promise to bless you and your descendants, that's it. Then why was the law ever added?

What role does it serve? And this is the question that this passage answers. Because verse 19 says this, the law was added because of transgressions. In other words, the law was added to expose and reveal sin.

To expose and reveal sin. So imagine that somebody comes to your house. I don't know what your house looks like after Thanksgiving. Our house kind of looked like a bomb went off. But it always kind of looks like that. But especially it looked like that this time.

And so imagine that somebody comes to your house, it's post-Thanksgiving meal. And they say, we're going to clean your house and we're going to disinfect it for free. Right?

That would be amazing. Right? But imagine that it's not post-Thanksgiving. It's not like a bomb has gone off. And it's your house. Those of you who are clean people. And imagine it's your house in its normal state.

[12:13] Right? And you look around at your house and you say, well, yeah, there are a few dirty dishes. And they're, you know, but I don't really think we need a professional intervention here. I think we're going to be fine. Right? Well, then what happens if you hold up a UV light?

Right? I mean, at least in our house. I don't know about your house. You're not going to want to come over after this sermon. But if you hold up a UV light, what? You're going to think, you think your problem is just you had a few dirty dishes in the sink.

But you hold up that UV light and you start to realize, oh my gosh, there are all kinds of stains. And all kinds of filth that are now glowing that I couldn't see with my eye. And now I see them.

Right? And Paul says that's the function of the law. The law is like the UV light that reveals things that we couldn't see before. Our house is a lot dirtier than we think. Right? Or imagine somebody comes to you and says, I'm going to give you all of the treatment, all of the surgery, everything you need to save your life.

And you say, well, thanks, but I feel fine. And then imagine that person holds up an MRI scan and you see the tumor. Right?

[13:18] And you realize, oh, I'm not fine. That's the law. The law is the MRI scan that shows you the reality of what's going on in here. Right? So Paul says the law was given for the sake of transgressions, because of transgressions.

And so his point is this. The law is not opposed to grace. It's not law or grace. The entire purpose of the law is to convince us of our desperate need for grace.

We need grace. So, you know, legalists will use the law as a way to prove themselves righteous. But Paul says, no, the law isn't a way to prove that you're righteous.

The law is here to prove that we're sinners. It's here to prove that we're unrighteous. It's here to prove that we need grace. There's a writer named John Shore.

You may be familiar with him. I don't agree with a lot of what he says. But he wrote a post a few years ago that I saved because I thought it was really interesting. Because it was about his Christian conversion. And I think it's noteworthy because it illustrates what we're talking about here today.

[ 14 : 25 ] It's an article, if you want to look it up, called, I, a rabid anti-Christian, very suddenly convert. He wrote it in the Huffington Post. But he's a guy, he describes himself, John Shore was not religious.

He was actually pretty anti-religious. He thought Christianity was immature and manipulative. And for people of low intelligence, he had kind of bought into the prevailing religion of the age. You know, he said, I believed in myself. I loved myself. And when necessary, I forgave myself. It's essentially like every Disney movie ever. And that was essentially his view. And then one day, one day he's just sitting at work.

And he says he's sitting there and he's kind of mulling over, as he says, a particularly immature, semi-destructive thing I'd done. And he's mulling this over and feeling some regret.

And all of a sudden, he begins to feel this strange feeling come over him. And he doesn't know what's going on. But he senses that there's something spiritual or psychological happening to him.

[ 15 : 25 ] And he immediately feels the need to stand up and to get somewhere private. But in his kind of, you know, open floor plan workspace, the only privacy he can find is the broom closet.

So he literally stands up, tells his co-workers he'll be right back, runs to the broom closet, opens the door, and just shuts the door, and just stands in the broom closet. And he says that he stood there kind of waiting, having this sense that something was going to happen.

So he's standing in the broom closet by himself. And here's what he says. All at once, the truth was before me that instead of being a good guy who's basically always trying to do the right thing, I was a selfish, emotional weakling who was always doing and saying whatever best served my own needs at the time.

And he goes on to say this. What suddenly became a fact to me was that I'd been fooling myself for so long I'd forgotten the act. I wasn't the great, honorable person I started out to be, that I'd meant to become, that I actually thought I was.

And here's the key. I was just another guy so busy thinking he's constructing the perfect home that he doesn't realize how long ago he stopped using a level. He essentially realizes that he's been deceiving himself.

[ 16 : 35 ] And the level, the level that shows you whether your house is straight or crooked, the level that is your gauge of whether or not you are in fact the great, amazing person you think you are, that level is the law.

That's the function of the law, right? It's the great level of life. It shows us just how crooked we have become. And so Shore sort of realizes that everything he thought was upright is actually crooked and falling apart in his life.

And he's been deceiving himself. And so he sees this crushing truth. And then beyond that he says, and that wasn't the worst part, he says the worst part is I realized I was never going to change.

That I was never going to have the force of will and the strength of character to ever be any different. And then he says, and then I saw my own death.

He says, I realized that the day was going to come and I was going to die and I was going to be the exact same person that I am right now and I was never going to be any different or any better than I am right now. And it says that this realization hits him and he starts to cry.

[ 17 : 40 ] So imagine this man, this kind of secular humanist, anti-religious person, standing in a broom closet by himself weeping. You know, right? That's an amazing moment for anybody, right?

And then he says this, he starts crying and then he says he hears a voice and the voice says, isn't this what Jesus is for? Isn't this what Jesus is for?

And here's what he says, and just like that I stopped crying. And do you know what I knew at that moment? What instantly imprinted itself upon me? That the story of Jesus is historically true.

That it happened. That God desiring above all else to show the people he'd created that he loved them, became a human and came to earth and sacrificed himself and in every way did everything he possibly could to show people exactly how deeply and terribly he loves them.

So it wasn't that he was historically convinced of the truth of Jesus and then tried to figure out how that was relevant to him. What happened to him is that he saw the truth about his own heart.

[ 18 : 43 ] He saw the truth about his own condition. And at that point, the only thing that made sense, the only way he could possibly make sense of that was to look to Jesus. And everything began to fall into place.

And what we see in this story is the very purpose of the law at work. It's this level that comes in, this plumb line that comes in, this MRI scan, this UV light that comes in that brings us to that place where we realize, isn't this what Jesus is for?

That's the entire purpose. So this is what Paul is saying. That's the relationship between the law and the grace of Jesus Christ. That's right. The law is meant to show us that we need the grace. So now I want to bring this back to our original question. How does it look different when we build relationships with God and one another based on the law, my ability to do the right thing, to be a morally upright person, versus on grace?

This idea that from the start, we are the undeserving recipients of tremendous blessing. What does that look like when it plays out in our relationships? So first, let's just talk about our relationship with God.

[ 19 : 50 ] What does it look like to build your relationship with God on your own excellence? Which I think is human nature, right? We assume that most people are pretty good people, and when you ask me about me, I assume that I'm probably on at least the top 50% of most people.

Maybe top 20%. Maybe on a good day, you know, when I'm like volunteering in the holidays, maybe like top 10%, you know? And relative to most people, I'm a pretty good person, right?

And so if God is gonna decide between good people and bad people, I'm probably gonna be one of the good guys. I'm not a murderer, right? I'm not a serial killer. So I'm probably one of the good guys.

And yet we realize that if we try to build our relationship with God on law keeping, and that's the foundation, you know what's gonna happen to your faith? Your faith, your sense of your relationship with God is either going to be associated with guilt and discouragement because you're never gonna feel like you're doing enough, or it's gonna be associated with a kind of mild sense of superiority.

You know, and there are people like this in the church with kind of a vague sense of superiority, you know? Your prayer life is gonna be primarily about getting God to do his part. You know, I've done my part for you, God.

[ 21 : 10 ] I've been involved at church. I've volunteered. I've done these things. And now I expect you to uphold your end of the bargain. That's a law-based relationship with God. You're gonna assume most of the time you're gonna assume that God is kind of disappointed in you.

We talk about this a lot in the church because it's very common for people to feel that God is disappointed in them. I have this vague sense that I should probably be doing more than I am. You know, in church when a preacher brings up praying, your first thought is, oh, I should be praying more.

You know? And there's this vague sense that I'm never quite doing enough. This nagging sense of spiritual inadequacy. That's a good diagnostic indicator that your relationship with God is connected to your own moral excellence.

There's a very different kind of relationship that happens when we base our relationship with God on grace. And this is what Christians do. Christians build their relationship on the grace of God. God. Which means, going back to what we said, you see the blessing and the presence of God in your life as your inheritance. I mean, that's an amazing idea, right?

[ 22 : 19 ] That before you were ever born, way back in ancient history, God came to a man that we can only imagine, this guy named Abraham, and said, I'm going to leave an inheritance with you.

I'm going to pass this inheritance down through your family line. And eventually this inheritance is going to be given to Jesus. And eventually everyone who comes to Jesus is going to share in that inheritance. And when God said that, he had you in mind.

That when you came to Jesus, you had an inheritance waiting for you. And you didn't do anything to earn it. You weren't even alive. But God said, it's yours. And when you come, you can have it.

That's it. That's the promise. And when you realize my relationship with God is based on that, on God's promise to me through all of these people I don't know. Through all of this history that I'm only learning about.

When you realize that, it sort of fills you with this sense of gratitude and surprise and joy. Your faith becomes this place of freedom and joy.

[ 23 : 18 ] When you realize that it's a gift, you begin to pray to God, not because you want to get something from God, but just to spend time with God, to be closer to God. You're going to assume that God's love and delight is yours.

And that's going to motivate you to want to become more the person that God is turning you into. Because you're going to know. His love and approval is not up for debate. So this is the difference that grace can make, right?

So churches can be built on the law or on grace as well. I don't know if you've ever been to a church that was built squarely on the law, but there are plenty of them around. And you can tell, and often churches are not one or the other.

You know, I've had conversations in our church, and I've had encounters where I think, wow, there's a lot of law going on here. And I'll tell you what I mean. In church cultures that are defined by law rather than grace, everybody seems to have it together.

That's how you tell. You walk into the room, everybody looks good, everybody's manicured, you know, they're as put together as their online profile would indicate. You know, everything is great.

[ 24 : 26 ] And you ask them how life is, and how is it having young kids, and how's your first year of marriage? Oh, it's great. Everything's great. It's fine. It's perfect, right? And that's how you begin to sense, ah, this might be a law culture, right?

Because people are really good at hiding sin in a law culture. Because there's nothing to do with, you can't deal with your sin in a law culture. There's nothing to do with it. And so the best thing that you can do is hide it.

Right? And along with that, there tends to be an over-focus on certain visible sins. Right? So you'll over-focus on sexual sin because that's a visible sin.

You know if people walk in together, they have their arms around each other. If they're living together, they're sleeping together. Right? And so there's an over-focus on those sins, but an under-focus or altogether omission of other kinds of sin, like gossip, or greed.

Right? Things that actually can be just as destructive to a church community. Right? But there's a selective focus because there are certain sins that it's just easier to hide. And certain ways that we can be more demonstrative of our righteousness.

[ 25 : 33 ] This is what you see in a law-based church culture. Right? Also in a law-based church culture, people tend to compartmentalize their spiritual life. Because man, I just can't, I can't uphold this facade all the time.

It's exhausting. And so you sort of have your church persona and then you go to work and you sort of like let down the church persona and you can just be the other person. Right? You're compartmentalized.

In a law-based church culture, there are clear insiders and outsiders. So a great indicator of a law-based church culture is cliques. Lots of cliques. Because there's a high focus on external factors, on appearance, on markers of belonging, on status.

And so there are insiders and outsiders. This is a great way to tell. And churches that are built around a culture of gospel and grace are completely the opposite from this.

In a church like this, people are free and willing to share their brokenness. You know, people, you know, if you've ever been to an AA meeting or any kind of recovery meeting, most times, the first time you go into a meeting like that, it'll blow your mind because of how candid and honest people are.

[ 26 : 45 ] I mean, it'll absolutely blow your mind if you've never experienced it. You should just go sometime, find an open meeting. Some of them are not open. Some of them are open. Go and just sit in the back row and just listen to people. You will be amazed at the candid culture that exists there.

It's because people have no illusions about their righteousness. They have no illusions about the power that they have over sin in their lives. They are fully willing to admit their powerlessness over sin.

And so they're candid. Right? And the same thing, to some degree, exists in a grace-based church culture. People are not sharing gratuitously, sharing to get attention, but they are open because they realize that they're one sinner in a community of sinners and nobody has it together.

You know, so you walk in and you see all the pretty faces and all the nice clothes and you're not fooled by that. You realize that these people are a raging mess. You know, they just look good.

Right? So, so, beyond that, there's a deep desire to deal with all sin, not just certain visible sins.

And so, paradoxically, or maybe counterintuitively, in a grace-based church culture, people actually take sin more seriously. And they're more willing to confront sin.

[ 27 : 54 ] And it is not the person who says, I think that this is an area of sin in your life. I think that you need to seek the Lord on that. That's not a legalistic response to sin. I'll tell you what a legalistic response is.

Legalism is the other person who says, I thought this was a grace-based church. Why are you focusing on my sin? I thought you guys were all about grace. You're being so judgmental. Right? You know why that's legalism? Because what that person is really saying is, please leave me alone to hide my sin. That's the only thing I know to do with it, so just leave me alone so I can hide it and minimize it because that's what I want to do.

That's a legalist. Right? A grace-based person says, we take sin seriously and we take repentance seriously because we realize that every time I'm confronted with sin, that's another opportunity to go to the throne of grace and to drink deeply from the well of mercy.

That's why I want to know about my sin. That's why I want to be confronted in my sin so that I can draw more deeply from that well of mercy. Right?

[ 28 : 56 ] So grace-based churches take sin very seriously because we know that repentance leads to deeper life and love in God. In a grace-based church culture, people decompartmentalize their lives because their new identity in Christ supersedes everything else.

And grace-filled communities are radically inclusive because every single person in a grace-based community knows that they used to be an outsider.

And, but for the grace of God, they would still be an outsider. But because Jesus became an outsider, because he was cast out, we were welcomed in.

And so in a grace-based church community, there are very few, if any, strangers. Because the minute you see somebody walk in the door that you don't know, and the minute you realize that they may feel left out or excluded, you will immediately beeline over to that person and say, hey, how are you doing?

Welcome. My name's Tommy. I'm so glad that you're here. Can I help you find a place to sit? Why? Because you don't want that person to feel like an outsider because you know what it's like. And you know that unless somebody showed you grace, you would still be in that state.

[ 29 : 58 ] So that's how a grace-based community operates. Now, I know we're almost out of time and if we had time, we could apply this and I encourage you to apply this in your own life to think about your friendships, to think about your roommates, to think about your family, to think about what this looks like in parenting, to continue to ask these questions.

Am I parenting with a framework of the law or am I parenting with a framework of grace? Am I loving my friends? Am I loving my spouse? Right? I'll just say this last thing. When it comes to my marriage, the only reason that Laura and I have a healthy, thriving marriage is because of grace. That's the only way it's possible. Grace is the only reason we can have healthy marriages because most people, I think, you know, after, I don't know, 12 years of counseling couples, I mean, I can tell you, most people default unconsciously into an approach to marriage that's defined by law.

In other words, you think of marriage like a contract. You know, I'm going to agree to meet your needs in all these ways and you agree to meet my needs and as long as we're both happy and fulfilled, then we'll stay married but if all of a sudden you stop upholding your end of the bargain or I just no longer feel happy or fulfilled, the marriage is nullified.

We go and find happiness and fulfillment elsewhere. Right? And that's a very contractual view of marriage that's a very legal view of marriage. It's marriage defined by the law. But what we see in Scripture is that true marriage, true marriage is not a contract but a covenant.

[ 31 : 30 ] Right? So that means committing yourself wholly to another person no matter what. And I'll tell you right now, have you ever committed yourself wholly no matter what to another person?

I mean, even those of you who are married, do you actually think about your marriage in that way? Because if you have, you realize that immediately what you're going to need is grace. It's grace! Because immediately you're going to realize that that person is going to hurt you and let you down and say and do mean things and they're going to act out toward you in ways that you didn't anticipate and that's why you need grace.

That's why you continually need to forgive. You continually need to repent. You continually need to restore the relationship. This is grace. And you know, I constantly experience the tension between law and grace in my own heart.

You know, when Laura, as this has happened once or twice in our marriage, where Laura will come to me, I think there was one time a few years ago where Laura came to me and I had hurt her. I had said something hurtful, right? And it was like back in the early 2000s that I had hurt her and she confronted me about this and you know the first thing I do in a situation like that?

[ 32 : 41 ] The first thing that happens to me is there's a law response and by that I literally mean it's like a lawyer, a little lawyer pops out on my shoulder and this little lawyer starts saying all this crazy stuff.

You know, the lawyer takes all the, you know, the lawyer starts to justify me and the lawyer starts to, you know, bring up all the evidence of why it wasn't in fact wrong for me to say or do that. In fact, I was actually right and the lawyer starts to discredit the witness, right? It's a great lawyer tactic is to discredit the witness, right? And the lawyer starts to minimize it and the lawyer starts to say, well, what about all the things that you did?

What about all the ways that you actually, the reason that I said that hurtful thing was actually because of you. I mean, if you hadn't done this then I wouldn't have done that, right? And the lawyer is brilliant. The lawyer is brilliant and I'm sort of hiding behind the lawyer like, get her, you know? And then I hear this little voice and the voice says, isn't this what Jesus is for? And the lawyer goes away and the defense has come down and this little trickle of empathy starts to flow in my heart, you know, like a melting glacier and this little stream starts to flow and I stop justifying myself and I start to become more open to the fact that I might have sinned and maybe I need to ask for forgiveness.

[ 34 : 04 ] And this happens again and again and again and I think maybe this is the greatest litmus test to know whether or not we are people of grace, whether or not we're Christians.

When somebody confronts you, when somebody holds your sin up into your face, does the lawyer come out and say, hey, I'll take it from here?

Or at some point, do you hear a voice in your heart that asks you, isn't this what Jesus is for? Let's pray. Let's pray.