

Augustine of Hippo

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[0 : 0 0] I'm not a historian, but I shall do my best.! The Roman Empire was beginning to fall. Rome fell during the time of his ministry, and this was like the end of the world. It was like if America had been taken over by Bolsheviks or something like that. And the effect on people, on people's consciousness, you know, what on earth is going to happen if Rome, which has been the head of the Roman Empire for hundreds and hundreds of years, it was sacked, and I wrote down, it was by the Visigoths, the Vandals, and the Germans, respectively, in 410, 455, and 472. Like the end of the world. Here's a map showing, well, it says Christian, the Christian area. So it says the Christian area is in around 300 AD, and that's in the dark blue. So all around the Mediterranean, and particular area, so this would be Turkey, where Christopher was on holiday, and Cyprus, which is mentioned in the New Testament. Egypt, North Africa, Spain, but not yet in these sort of pagan places up here. And then it says areas Christianized between 300 and 600, so that's the light blue, and that is extending much, much further, isn't it? And I think it's a little bit of a surprise. I think I knew this, but a bit of a surprise that North Africa, which is now largely Muslim, isn't it, was a center of Christianity. This is Carthage on that bit there, and the next map is going to say a little bit more about that. Augustine, I can't remember who wrote this. It says he was the pastor of a church in a seedy seaside town in North Africa.

And you sort of think, ah, you can sort of relate to that sort of thing. That's where he was the pastor, but his writings and his thoughts have had huge implications ever since. He's one of the great teachers that was given to the church of Jesus Christ. There's a handful of men who really have had influence on the whole culture. People who were, you could perhaps call them genius. Obviously, Jesus himself, if you look at it from that point of view, had a huge impact on culture. The Apostle Paul, huge impact down through the centuries. The Reformers, Luther and Calvin are the ones that I know.

Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the church door in 1517. So that's however many years after this, isn't it, more than a thousand years later. But it has been said that the Reformation was the final resolution of the sort of contradiction between Augustine's doctrine of grace and Augustine's doctrine of the church. And perhaps I can unpack that a little bit next time. But if you imagine thoughts that were put down on paper in 400 or so AD, bubbling away for another thousand years, and then resulting in a huge change in the church of Jesus Christ. The sort of topics that he talked about, he really thought through the idea of grace. Grace being how people are right with God. And he fought battles of ideas with people who said, we're right with God, we're right with God, we're right with God, sort of partly through our own efforts, and partly through God. And he would say, no, actually, it's 100% from God. We're saved by grace, rather than partly by our own efforts. And he fought intellectual battles with Pelagius, and the ideas of Pelagianism, which we'll look at another time. Another important book from him was his Confessions. And that's what we'll think about a bit more. His own story written down in a particular way. I think it's B.B. Warfield who says that he sort of invented, Augustine sort of invented the idea of a spiritual autobiography, and should be put on a par with John Bunyan's book, or Grace Abounding to the Cheapest Sinners. The other book, which I haven't actually brought, was City of God. And in City of God, he is reflecting on the idea that the city of Rome has fallen.

And that city represented stability, law, normality, all of those things, and that fell. But his thesis is actually that's not the source of stability, normality, hope. It's the city of God that is the foundation. And he works that out in this big book. I have to confess, when I started working for the church full time, I put City of God up on the shelf in our front room, and I thought, I'll have so much free time that I can just dip into this book, and I'll read it. And it's still on the shelf, and I still haven't read it. But that's the book. There it is.

[7 : 02] So let's continue with this map. So we're placing him in geography, or at least this bit of church development. And here he is, specifically some of the places. So he's in, I don't know how you pronounce that, Tagasti. Here, this is Hippo, the place where he ministered. Carthage was a big centre of learning, which gets mentioned. Rome is a big centre, obviously. Milan. And he sort of moves around these, as I shall try and point out. And here's a close-up. And this particular bit of North Africa, where he operated, there's points about the geography of this. There were other Christians, sort of ethnic Christians, living deeper in the desert. And he gets into conflict with these, which I will not go into, because I haven't done the homework on it.

So that's the geography. And this is the up-to-date. This is from the foreign... What am I trying to say? They give you advice about foreign travel. What do you have to look up for that? Department of... Foreign office. Yeah, the foreign office map. I just got this yesterday.

And so there's Carthage. And I'm not sure if they've got the Gasti, but we have got there, Tatoonine. Anybody know why Tatoonine might be of interest? Thank you. Yeah. It is where Star Wars was filmed. And there's a planet called Tatoonine in Star Wars, named after this settlement here. But this is Tunisia. So this is the place where he was operating. I don't think there's Tagasti. Tagasti is there. I can't see it anyway. But that's the modern day map. Let's put him back there. That might be helpful. Okay. Okay. So he was born in 354 in, how do we pronounce it, Tagasti, in Algeria, Tunisia. His mother was Monica.

[9 : 36] She was a devout Christian. His father was Patricious, who was a pagan. He converted to Christ on his deathbed, apparently. Monica is the one who prayed for her son. And she is remembered as Saint Monica, I believe. So Santa Monica is named after Augustine's mum. She prayed for him. And I wish I could find the quote, but somebody said to him somewhere, somebody said to her somewhere, how can God overlook such prayers and tears for your son? And I think there's a little point here of prayers for children.

And she prayed for her son. And I think she probably went through agony seeing him grow up and how he, his early life. When he was 16, he lived idly at home. And he says, love and lust boiled within me and swept my youthful immaturity over the precipice of evil desire to leave me half drowned in a whirlpool of abominable sins.

That's him at 16. So I just note that sex, drugs and rock and roll is not actually a new invention. He was getting into trouble all those years ago. He says, the madness of lust took complete control of me.

And there's not a lot of detail about what that involved. But anyway, he gets moved around. He goes to study in Carthage. In his upbringing, his mum had taught him the Bible. So he's not in a complete vacuum. He's got Bible things in his head. But at this stage of his life, he's not impressed by the Bible. He begins to learn from the Latin philosopher Cicero, and he's much more impressed with that sort of philosophy. And, you know, I think you get the picture of him thinking the Bible's a bit staid and old-fashioned and, you know.

At the age of 18, he comes across a religious group called the Manichaeans or the Manichaeans. They're followers of somebody called Mani. And they have some very, I think, to our mind, weird beliefs. They believed in two eternal principles, eternally opposed to one another.

[12 : 05] And they thought the Old Testament was primitive and the New Testament was hopelessly corrupt. And they had all sorts of fantastic beliefs, of which I read a bit that I'm not an expert on.

And of this, Augustine said, I let myself be taken in by fools. And for the next nine years, he says, I lay tossing around in the mud of that deep pit.

And, you know, it's a philosophical system that claims to explain everything in fantastical ways. Sometime in that period, he stopped his sexual promiscuity and had a partner.

I don't think we ever know her name. And he was faithful to her. And they had a child. I think I'm right in saying... No, that's right.

They had a child called Adeodatus, which means given by God. So he wasn't married to this woman, but he was faithful to her. I think we think of Augustine as sort of a passionate man, actually.

[13 : 14] And at this point, he's passionately faithful to this woman. As the story goes on, he doesn't marry her. He, in his sense of discipleship, he feels that he must stop that relationship.

I don't know whether that was the best advice, but that's what he did. He grew in knowledge of philosophy. And he moved around.

I've got him moving to Carthage. And he's writing books. So he's like a professor. He's a really clever man. He's imbibed the Latin philosophies and the Manichaeian philosophies.

And eventually, he goes to Milan. So I guess he's pursuing his academic career, trying to earn a crust teaching.

And he says, I came to Milan to the bishop, a devout servant of God, Ambrose, famed among the best men of the whole world.

[14:21] And Ambrose had a good influence on Augustine. I think his mother tried to introduce the two to each other. But if I read it correctly, Ambrose had the habit of reading.

And he was so engrossed in his reading that Augustine would pop in to have a chat. But he just wouldn't notice him. And in the end, Augustine would go away again. But Ambrose was a good man and a friendly man.

And Augustine says, And I began to love him, not at the first as a teacher of the truth, for I had entirely despaired of finding that in thy church, but as a friendly man.

And I think there's another lesson there, isn't there, of being friendly to people. Augustine, though clever and grown up, was tortured by his lack of moral power and the general mess that he was in spiritually.

I think we can sort of sense in his writings this real sense of lostness and being messed up spiritually. He began to realize that Manichaeism was wrong.

[15:29] He met, I missed a line out here. At one point, he met a Manichaeian bishop called Faustus. And when he asked him more questions, he realized that Manichaeism didn't have the answers.

And he became disillusioned with Manichaeism. He also found that some of the teachers of Manichaeism actually lived no better lives than anybody else.

And he got disillusioned with it. So he knew that Manichaeism was wrong. He has an awareness of Christ and of Christian faith. But he's still stuck and struggling and like in a pit, really.

And at some point in this struggle, please find your Bible and look up Romans chapter 13. Romans 13 and 14. He's stuck spiritually in a deep mess.

[16:50] And he's sitting in the garden, weeping, crying, knowing that he's lost.

And he hears the little girl in the next door neighbor's garden who is saying some sort of children's rhyme. Toile legge, toile legge, toile legge, which means take up and read, take up and read.

And he has his Bible there and he just flips it open at the first page that he comes to. And the first page that he comes to is Romans 13, 13 and 14.

And it says, let us behave decently as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. That's what he took up and read. And he says, So there we have the conversion of Augustine.

[18:36] And when I was reading, I was very moved really to think, you know, that here's this guy absolutely stuck in his sin and just trying, can't get anything straight.

And suddenly the Lord breaks in and everything changes. And I thought that was a marvelous thing. Perhaps we can sing something like that in a moment.

But it just struck me that as we come along here, we've got some lessons. I think the lesson of his mum's prayer is an encouragement to keep praying for people.

So she prayed for him all through until however old he was, late 20s, early 30s, when he became a Christian. And then I think also the value of friendship.

So this guy, Ambrose, the bishop, I mean, he was a godly man and he was able to give Augustine good advice. But the thing that Augustine first noted was he was just a good friend.

[19:36] And I think the value of being a good friend is a good thing. And then the other thing that strikes me, and I don't know what your view of this is, he's converted through completely the wrong text, isn't he?

I mean, that's not a gospel text, is it? I mean, you'd expect him to be converted through repent and believe on the Lord Jesus and, you know, acts or something like that.

But in God's sovereignty, the text that he reads is Romans 13, 13 and 14. And somehow the Lord sort of brings that to bear on his soul that he says, yeah, this is it.

But I guess, I'm guessing on this, the bit about clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. Maybe that's the bit that got him, you know, that I don't have to be struggling myself.

Christ can clothe me and there is a deliverance through his power. You know, I don't know, I'm just guessing. But I think there's a lesson there about God's sovereignty, that he can use things that we don't think are appropriate.

[20 : 48] And bring people to himself. So that was my first bit of presentation. Does anybody want to ask any questions or make any comments?

Thank you. Of Augustine.

Later on when he's been converted. That's a good question, isn't it? I think he's, I mean, he's not a pioneer missionary.

He's, he's, he's pastor of an, he becomes pastor of an existing church. So there's already a web of, of, of Christian connections. And I suppose what I should say is this is the Catholic Church.

It's not the Roman Catholic Church, the Catholic Church. Catholic meaning the whole, the whole world. What, what, what ordinary Christians are. Oh, sorry.

[22 : 12] Did you miss that? Okay. Well, this is, um, about 300 AD. These are the bits that are Christian.

And then 300 to 600, it's the light blue bits. Does that, does that answer your question? So, so.

I guess it was just a question, like, more broadly of, if, in present, obviously, like, August, August, like you said, it's a very familiar name, I demand in, in Europe even now.

But would that be the case in, in North Africa? Like, would they go, that's our August, or that's not the case? Obviously, it's, it's Islamic now. Yeah, I don't think I know enough to answer that.

I mean, he wasn't a, an archbishop. He wasn't a big, he was just a pastor of a CD, in a CD seaside town. But it was his writings, I think, that, um, yeah.

[23 : 12] That's the best answer I can give, yeah. We talk about Augustine of Hippo, of course, because there was another Augustine who preached the yellow bit.

Okay, yes, this is, um, this is, what's his, um, does he have a name as well, Augustine of something? I'm not sure. Canterbury. Something like that, yeah.

Yeah, okay, he went to the pagan lot to live up here. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That was me.

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, God, I thank you that I am not like other people, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

[24 : 38] I tell you that this man, says Jesus, I tell you that this man, says Jesus, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

So I'm just thinking of this statement, God have mercy on me, a sinner. I'm not sure that modern day Christianity is always very good at encouraging people to say that.

We have a sort of therapeutic gospel which says God loves you, which is true in a sense, isn't it?

But there's more to it than that. And if the gospel becomes God loves you, and all you have to do is realize that God thinks you're great, and that's being a Christian.

I mean, that isn't, is it? That's not being a Christian, because it bypasses this God have mercy on me, a sinner. And this matter of realizing that one is a sinner, I think is absolutely crucial.

You know, I don't think you can become a Christian without some sense that you're a sinner. You know, it may be very intense, or maybe just accepting the principle of it without a huge emotional accompaniment.

[26 : 01] But I don't think you can become a Christian without saying something like this, God be merciful to sin. I am wrong. You know, there's something deeply wrong in me morally, which needs forgiving, and it also needs putting right.

And I'd like us to spend a little while, I'm just going to read this. This is Augustine's confession about one of his deep sins, which was stealing some pears.

And he and a gang of presumably youngsters went over a fence.

There was an orchard with some pears in it. They shook the tree, got the pears, thought it was a great joke, and ran off. And, you know, when he says, oh, and I was lost in the miles of sin, you think, oh, it's probably, you know, sexual sin.

But the one that he actually talks about is stealing the pears. And I, if you can bear with me, I'll read it too, because he goes through it and he says, you know, stealing pears, well, that's a thing, isn't it? [27 : 17] Why did I do it? What does that say about what's going on inside me? It is certain, oh, Lord, and he sort of, this is one of the things about his book, The Confessions.

He talks to the Lord about all this. It's a sort of conversation. It is certain, oh, Lord, that theft is punished by your law, the law that is written in men's hearts, and cannot be erased, however sinful they are.

For no thief can bear that another thief should steal from him, even if he is rich, and the other is driven to it by necessity.

Yet I was willing to steal, and steal I did, although I was not compelled by any lack, unless it were a lack of sense of justice, or a distaste for what was right, or a greedy love of doing wrong.

For of what I stole, I already had plenty, and much better at that. And I had no wish to enjoy the things I coveted by stealing, but only to enjoy the theft itself and the sin.

[28 : 23] There was a pear tree near our vineyard, loaded with fruit, that was attracted neither to look at nor to taste. And late one night a band of ruffians, myself included, went off to shake down the fruit and carry it away.

For we had continued our games out of doors until well after dark, as was our pernicious habit. We took away an enormous quantity of pears, not to eat them ourselves, but simply to throw them to the pigs.

Perhaps we ate some of them, but our real pleasure consisted in doing something that was forbidden. Look into my heart, O Lord, the same heart on which you took pity when it was in the depths of the abyss.

Let my heart now tell you what prompted me to do wrong, for no purpose, and why it was only my own love of mischief that made me do it. The evil in me was foul, but I loved it.

I loved my own perdition and my own faults. Not the things for which I committed wrong. Am I raising this right? Not the things for which I committed wrong.

[29 : 30] But the wrong soul was vicious and broke away from itself. May your... I think I've copied it wrong.

Nope. Another one. Another one. The evil in me was foul, but I loved it.

I loved my own perdition and my own faults, not the things for which I committed wrong, but the wrong itself. My soul was vicious and broke away from your safekeeping to seek its own destruction, looking for no profit in disgrace, but only for disgrace itself.

I think it's really interesting. He's analyzing, you know, stealing pears. I mean, we sort of laugh and say that's a bit trivial. But he's saying, why did I do it? And the sin that prompted that is a foul sin. You know, sin is foul. And if you sort of trace down, there's stealing pears on the surface. As it goes down into the soul, what lies underneath?

[31 : 05] And he says, you know, it was a love of just doing wrong. I mean, that's a foul thing. Let me...

He goes into... When there is an inquiry to discover why a crime has been committed, normally no one is satisfied until it has been shown that the motive might either have been the desire of gaining or the fear of losing, some good thing, but not the best thing.

Such things are attractive and have beauty, although they are paltry trifles in comparison with the worth of God's blessed treasures. A man commits murder, and we ask the reason.

He did it because he wanted his victim's wife or estates for himself or so that he might live on the proceeds of robbery or because he was afraid that the other might defraud him of something or because he had been wronged and was burning for revenge.

Surely no one would believe that he would commit murder for no reason but the sheer delight of killing. Some... There's a guy in history who is a man of insane ferocity who chose to be cruel and vicious without apparent reason.

[32 : 19] But we are told that his purpose was not to allow his soldiers to lose heart or waste their skill through lack of practice. If we ask the reason for this, it is obvious that he meant that once he had made himself master of the government by means of this contingency, continual violence, he

would obtain honour, power, wealth, and would no longer go in the fear of the law because of his crimes.

We'll have to face difficulties through lack of funds. Even this man did not love crime for crime's sake. He loved something different for the sake of which he committed crimes.

The crime of theft which I committed that night as a boy of 16. If it were a living thing, I would speak to it and ask it what it was to my shame that I loved in it.

I had no beauty because it was a robbery. It is true that the pears we stole had a certain beauty because they were created by you, the good God, who are the most beautiful of all beings and the creator of all things, the supreme good and my own true good.

It was not the pears that my unhappy soul desired. I had plenty of them, better than those. I only picked them so that I might steal. For no sooner had I picked them than I threw them away and tasted nothing in them but my own sin, which I relished and enjoyed.

[33 : 37] If any part of one of those pears passed my lips, it was the sin that gave it flavour. And now, O Lord my God, now that I ask what pleasure I had in that theft, I find it had no beauty to attract me.

I do not mean beauty of the sort that justice and prudence possess, nor the beauty that is in man's mind and in his memory and in the life that animates him, nor the beauty of the stars in their allotted places, or of the earth and sea teeming with new life to replace the old as it passes away.

They did not even have the shadowy, deceptive beauty which makes vice attractive. Pride, for example, which is a pretense of superiority, imitating yours, for you alone are God, supreme over all.

Or ambition, which is only a craving for honour and glory, when you alone are to be honoured before all and you alone are glorious. Cruelty is the weapon of the powerful, used to make others fear them.

Yet no one is to be feared but God alone, from whose power nothing can be snatched away or stolen by any man at any time or place or by any means.

[34 : 59] The lustful use caresses to win the love they crave for. Yet no caress is sweeter than your charity, and no love is more rewarding than the love of your truth, which shines in beauty above all else.

Inquisitiveness has all the appearance of a thirst for knowledge, yet you have the supreme knowledge of all things. Ignorance, too, and stupidity, choose to go under the mask of simplicity and innocence, because you are simplicity itself, and no innocence is greater than yours.

You, he's talking to the Lord, you understand, you are innocent even of the harm which overtakes the wicked, for it is the result of their own actions. It seems to be what he's doing, he's going through this list of sins and saying that all of them, in some sense, try to stop God being God.

They try to do something that either God alone can do or have something that God alone can have or be something that God alone can be. And he's sort of tracing it back and analysing it, saying this is how bad sin is.

It's actually trying to un-God God. It's at root an attack on him. Sloth poses as the love of peace, yet what certain peace is there besides the Lord?

[36 : 21] Extravagance masquerades as fullness and abundance, but you are the full, unfailing store of never-dying sweetness.

The spendthrift, you know, the mean-spirited person, makes a pretense of liberality, but no, I'm sorry, spendthrift, somebody spends a lot of money, is that right?

Makes a pretense of liberality, but you are the most generous dispenser of all good. The covetous want many possessions for themselves, but you possess all. The envious struggle for preferment, but what is to be preferred before you?

Anger demands revenge, but what vengeance is as just as yours? Fear shrinks from any sudden unwanted danger, which threatens the thing that it loves, for its only care is safety.

But for you, nothing is strange, nothing is unforeseen. No one can part you from the things that you love, and safety is assured nowhere but in you.

[37 : 27] Grief eats away its heart for the loss of things which it took pleasure in desiring, because it wants to be like you, from whom nothing can be taken away.

That's worth thinking about. Let me do that one again. Grief eats away its heart for the loss of things which it took pleasure in desiring, because it wants to be like you, from whom nothing can be taken

away.

So the soul defiles itself with unchaste love when it turns away from you and looks elsewhere for things which it cannot find pure and unsullied, except by returning to you.

All who desert you and set themselves up against you merely copy you in a perverse way. But by this very act of imitation, they only show that you are the creator of all nature, and consequently, there is no place whatever where man may hide away from you.

What was it then that pleased me in that act of theft? Which of my lord's powers did I imitate in a perverse and wicked way? Since I had no real power to break his law, what was it that I enjoyed at least the pretense of doing so?

[38 : 45] Like a prisoner who creates for himself the illusion of liberty by doing something wrong when he has no fear of punishment under a feeble hallucination of power.

Here was the slave who ran away from his master and chased a shadow instead. What an abomination. What a parody of life.

What abysmal death. Could I enjoy doing wrong for no other reason than that it was wrong? There's another couple of sections on that, but I think you get the point.

He's actually looking at sin and saying it's a foul thing. It's a foul thing. I think we can learn from this. It's my...

Maybe I'm duly introspective, but I think one of the ways we grow is growing downwards and just seeing, why do I say that?

[39 : 48] Why do I react that way? And rather than saying, oh, this is just... No. I think if we look in the way that Augustine did, we find actually we're motivated by fear, unbelief, covetousness, all sorts of wrong things.

And the way to grow as a Christian is to see those things, to confess them, to specifically ask the Lord to turn me away from those things and to deal with them in our souls.

And I think if we avoid doing that, then we can't really grow as Christians. We're just sort of skating on the surface all the time. And the thing that enables us to look within that way is the gospel.

Because the vile stuff that we see inside us would, I think, it would just knock us over and flatten us were it not for the gospel. But the gospel says the vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

And like Paul said, you know, I was a blasphemer, a violent man. And here's something you can be sure of. Christ came into the world to save sinners.

[41 : 10] And I think that that understanding that it's an unpleasant understanding, that's what we are. And all the time we're still in this world, that will still be in us, that horrible, sinful stuff.

And how precious is the Lord Jesus who forgives our sin and heals all our diseases that we can say, that was what I thought there, how I acted, was just unacceptable.

But what we really mean is that was a foul sin. And the Lord says, yes it was, but it's all forgiven by the blood of Jesus.

And this is a life of repentance, turning from our sin to the Lord. I have another reference here, which is, oh, is it Luke 7, 47?

Let's just try that. This is Jesus being anointed by a sinful woman.

[42 : 33] And if we come in at Luke 7, verse 41, Jesus tells this little story.

Two men owed money to a certain money lender. One owed him 500 denarii and the other 50. Neither of them had the money to pay him back. So he forgave the debts of both.

Now, which one will love him more? And Simon replied, I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven. You have judged correctly, said Jesus. And then referring to the woman who's been pouring out a jar of perfume on him, hugely expensive.

Do you see this woman, says Jesus? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she's wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.

[43 : 36] Therefore, I tell you, her sins have been forgiven as her great love has shown. Whoever has been forgiven little loves little. And Jesus says to her, your sins are forgiven.

The other guests began to say among themselves, who is this who even forgives sins? Jesus said to the woman, your faith has saved you. Go in peace. And I'm just thinking of that verse, whoever has been forgiven little loves little.

If we don't think we're all that bad, then we won't be very, particularly grateful for Jesus for what he's done. But I'm not going to go around the room and ask how many people have stolen pears. But even if that, you know, as it were, the worst thing you'd ever done, in that act is a sort of attack on God himself.

It's a foul thing to love sin, which is what it is, just for the sake of hating God, really. And I'm just trying to commend that sort of reflection and a life of noticing our sin, confessing our sin, and wonderfully knowing the amazing grace that our sins, though they are red as crimson, shall be white as snow.

[45 : 05] That there are sins as far as the east is from the west, so far does he take our sins from us. Gone, gone, gone, gone. Yes, my sins are gone. There are people in the book of Revelation who were victorious through, I think if I'm getting this right, the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb.

And we need both of those, don't we? We need to hold on to our testimony and we need daily, moment by moment, the precious blood of Jesus.

That's the way to live and I think Augustine helps to teach us that. Shall we stop there?