

James 5:13-20

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[0:00] We are finishing up James. Like I said, I'm taking the last section of James, which is James chapter 5, verses 13-20. Before I read that, though, I want to read a verse from Hebrews.

It's going to frame at least some of the things that are in this passage. I think the things that probably stuck out to me the most. I'm probably going to give the most time to, Lord willing. This is Hebrews chapter 12, starting in verse 5. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it.

How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live? For our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best. But God disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness.

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. So the thing that I think is on my heart with that is I know my dad loves me.

[1:46] And there's a lot of reasons I know my dad loves me. But one of the reasons I know he loves me is that he disciplined me. He wouldn't let me get away with it. He didn't like doing it. But he loved me, and so he denied himself.

And he did what was good for me by taking the time and the care to discipline me. And he did it imperfectly because he's human. He's got sin, and he's a man of weakness.

He's saved by the grace of God, but he's a man of weakness, so he did it imperfectly. But I know my dad loves me, and if he had not disciplined me, I think I would not know. Even if he did, I don't think I would know.

Because it's a mark of a father's love that he disciplines his sons. It says it right here. If you're without discipline, you're an illegitimate child. And other translations render it bastard.

Okay? You're illegitimate. An illegitimate child doesn't get disciplined. How do you know you're a legitimate child? You get disciplined.

[2:49] That's what it's saying here. And if our earthly fathers showed us that, and we have, I'm sure, a lot of range of experience here with broken homes, that might land on you in an off-putting way.

If your father was an abusive father and didn't discipline you in love. But it says here, you know, if our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, well, there's a whole range of behavior there.

Maybe it's just total absenteeism. Maybe they tried to be faithful, but they messed up. Our earthly father does it for our heavenly father. I mean, sorry. Our heavenly father, God the Father, will discipline all those he receives as his child through Christ for their good.

And it's perfect. And it produces its intended effect. Holiness. Okay? We want to have that in our minds as we finish up James.

It does connect. But it'll connect a little bit towards the end of this passage. Okay, so let's turn to James. If you have your Bibles, please open up to James chapter 5, starting in verse 13.

[4:02] I am reading out of the old NIV. This is the 1984 NIV. Samir Reed did this for me. I just keep reading in it because it's so good. So my apologies to everyone who has other translations.

Usually we preach out of the ESV, but I don't know. I was reading it. I was meditating on it, doing my devotions in it, and it just hit so good. So I'm going to continue. Thank you, Samir, for doing that. He binds Bibles, by the way.

Little plug. All right. I'm going to read the whole passage, and then I'll break it down here. James chapter 5, starting in verse 13. Is anyone of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other that you may be healed.

[5:02] The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.

Again, he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this.

Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins. Okay, so moving through this, starting in verse 13 in here, opens and says, Is anyone of you in trouble?

He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. The thing I took from this is that there's different seasons in the Christian life. Different seasons call for different responses.

There's not an expectation of sameness. There is sameness. Through Christ, we aren't less a child of God when we're going through a hard time, or more a child of God when we're going through a good time, we're encouraged. Through Christ, we have an unshakable sonship.

[6:06] Okay? But what we ought to do in our responses do vary based on what season we're in. So he's saying here, if you're suffering, pray. If you're happy, if things are going good and you're encouraged, praise God.

Sing songs of praise. And I think this is important because there is, you know, we know how we ought to be. Okay? We've read the Bible. Usually, we've read the Bible.

If we come to know Jesus, we should be reading the Bible. We've heard things like rejoice always, pray without ceasing. And so you start to internalize this as a sad Christian is a bad Christian.

Okay? If you're having a hard time, well, I can't show it.

I can't be honest. Like, I had a horrible week. Because you know that Christians, like, technically shouldn't have horrible weeks because you should be rejoicing always. Right? And so you put your fake smile on.

You're just like, yeah, just good, brother. You know? That's bad. That's faking it. Okay? That's hypocrisy. That's a bad way of internalizing, yes, a goal. We should all be rejoicing always.

[7:10] Give thanks in everything. But that can look, that goes along with being real. The grace of God connects them up. And I think you see this, you see this in Jesus.

Jesus was honest. Matthew 26, verse 38 through 39. He's in the Garden of Gethsemane. He's about to go to the cross. And he says to them, his disciples, his imperfect disciples, who he's obviously head and shoulder more mature than.

I mean, that's an understatement. Okay. But that's important. Okay? And I'll explain why a little bit. Then he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful, even to death.

Remain here and watch with me. I need you. Okay? The Son of God, as a man, wants his disciples to stay and pray with him. And going a little further, he fell on his face and prayed, saying, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. He's honest. He's overwhelmed with sorrow. The Son of God, no sin, overwhelmed with sorrow, has need.

[8:19] Okay? And he expresses it to his imperfect disciples. Will you please stay with me and stay with me for a while? He goes to God, I know what you want me to do. And I don't want to do it.

Like, if there's another way to do this, will you please have mercy and show me a different way? Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done. These are my good Bible.

Oh, my precious wife. That's maturity.

Do you think he was not obeying the commandment to rejoice always, without ceasing? No. A fake person projects what they should be.

A real person projects who they actually are. Because another person stands in our place before God, I can now be who I am.

[9:20] Bad and good. Doesn't matter. I can be real. I can be honest. If I'm having a hard time, I can talk to people and be like, I need some help.

I need some encouragement. I need you to pray for me. If I'm cheerful, that's great. I can praise God and I can tell people how awesome it is and I don't have to feel bad that I'm having an awesome day. You know, it's just, but there's a whole roller coaster throughout the Christian life. You read the Psalms, it's just full of it. You know? So, anyway, I meant that to be basically an aside, but that was a little bit long. Grace liberates us to be real. Well, and we should not be fake. Going on, verse 14. Is any of you sick? You should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well.

The Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. So, here's another season.

Sickness. What do you do if you're in a season of sickness? We've been sick for like two weeks.

[10:21] Julie's mom is sick. Julie's mom, we just found out, has a very bad brain cancer. You know? Sickness. Like, what do Christians do when you're sick? He says right here.

All the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will raise him up. And if he sinned, he will be forgiven. So, you know, this is the basic response.

I mean, there's other things in the Bible written about, you know, what we ought to do in seasons of trial and tribulation and sickness. Pray for each other. Bear one of those burdens.

You know, Galatians 6 is so fulfilled the law of Christ. That's what we're supposed to do. We're supposed to open up that. Don't just try to rough it all by yourself. That's just denying the reality of the interdependency of the body of Christ.

And people don't know if you're having a hard time. They can't help you unless you're honest with them. All right? I can't do it by myself. I need some help. Praise God. God made it that way.

[11:20] Okay? You're sick. You need to get people to pray for you. Okay? And there's some promises in here. The first promise is that the prayer of faith will heal. The other promise here is forgiveness of sins.

We're going to talk about this more later. James' thought evolves and kind of unpacks itself in the later verses about this forgiveness of sins part of the promise. But right here, you just have a simple promise.

The prayer of faith will heal. Okay? So, we are a charismatic church. We believe in the continuation of the gifts, the spiritual gifts. We probably are not as charismatic as some other churches.

Who, like, probably some of the churches who you might immediately think of when you think of charismatic. We believe in the sober, biblical definition of the spiritual gifts.

But it's easy to just kind of say, well, I don't know. I don't know if healing is a thing anymore. But there's nothing in the Bible to say that it's not. So, we believe it.

[12:22] I don't see, and in my personal experience, I've not seen that many miraculous healings in my life. But they happen. And I can think of one time, one really clear example of this in my life where this happened.

It was actually with a Hindu guy I was on mission to. And his son had a really bad stomach problem. He was born with a congenital disease that was very serious.

And they were about to go into surgery, and it was a very high-risk surgery. And he knew that I was a believer. It was at my old job. And we would talk about the Lord and stuff. And he liked his Hinduism. And he would talk about that.

And I liked, you know, the gospel of Jesus Christ. And I would talk about that. I prayed for him. And he came to me and said, I would like you to pray for us. When I pray, I don't get answers.

But I've seen that when you pray, you get answers. I would like you to pray for my son. And the Lord just filled me with faith that God was going to heal this kid. And I said, I'm going to pray for you, Nitin. And you need to understand something.

[13:26] Jesus Christ is the Lord of the universe. He made your child. I was just filled with faith. I just believed it. I was just like, I believe that God is going to use this as a witness. This unbeliever.

And I said, I'm going to pray for him. If God heals him, you need to understand something. He's doing it because he's trying to get your attention. And you need to repent and believe in the gospel. They went to the appointment. Doctor said, it's the craziest thing.

It's all healed. And so a minute, his wife, Nitti, started walking down through the hospital. And they're walking out. And they see a little hospital chapel. And she says, we need to go in and thank Seth Scott.

So they go in there. They go in front of the cross. They get down on their knees. And they pray. And they thank the God who Seth worships, who healed their son. I can't think of many other circumstances.

This is like the only one. And it was interesting because it had to do with a testimony to a total unbeliever. Prayed for a lot of Christians. And they haven't gotten healed. Prayed for something they did. But my brother's here.

[14:30] And his daughter had brain cancer. And the Lord healed her. My mom had cancer. And she died. Okay. So how do we take some of this stuff? How do we take this promise that it's going to heal them?

Well, I think the key here is it says the prayer of faith. The prayer offered in faith. I mean, sick person well. And you could spend a sermon series on that. And I can't do that.

But one passage did stand out to me to help put a little definition in our minds of what this looks like. Acts 14, verse 8 through 10. There's in Lystra.

This is one of Paul's missionary journeys here. At Lystra, a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. This man was listening to Paul as he spoke. Paul the apostle.

Okay. This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well, said with a loud voice, stand upright on your feet.

[15:31] And he leaped up and began to walk. Paul saw something through the spirit. He saw this dude was looking at him and that this guy had faith to be saved. And so, to be healed.

Okay. And when Paul spoke, it was on the basis of faith. Like, he knew this guy had faith to be healed. So, you know, according to your faith, be done to you. Jesus says that. So, whatever it is, when there are miraculous healings and we pray for it, the prayer of faith is part of it.

It's not just a hope. Okay. You're praying based on something that is, you know, either a plain promise of God and the investment or something that's supernaturally revealed. Okay. So, anyway, that's important.

Otherwise, I think we might be a little broken in our theology when we think about faith healing. It's just like, okay, if anyone, you know, we got to bring you up here and anyone who has any diseases, if you have enough faith, you can get healed. Well, faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God.

You know, we all pray and hope that God will heal. But not every prayer is in faith, and we need God to actually give that. Okay. And, I mean, that's basically as much as I can speak, but all the rest is about my pay grade.

[16:38] I just not dug into this enough. Not all prayers for healing are answered in the New Testament. Paul had a thorn in his side. Seems like it could have very well been some kind of disease, like with his eyes or something.

He prayed three times that God would take it away. God said no. Timothy had recurring stomach problems. Paul says you need to drink a little bit of wine for your stomach's sake and you're off in infirmities. Other people are getting healed left and right.

What's the deal with these guys? Well, Lord knows. But we should pray for him. Okay. Okay. Verse 16. First part of this verse.

Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. I'm going to pause there before we finish that verse. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

Confession is tied to healing. I think there's two kinds of healing it's talking about here. One is the context of the verse before. You have a disease. You're sick. Spiritual healing. But you remember he said, and if he sinned, you'll be forgiven.

[17:43] What? I thought we were talking about like sickness. But then like sin and getting forgiven for sin is in there. Well, I think there's something connected here.

And one of the categories we need to keep in mind is not all sickness is totally natural. Yes. Sickness is in the world. Ever since the fall, there's sickness, viruses. We get viruses, you know, germs, cancer, all that stuff. But there's a category of sin. And this is I'm not going to read this. We actually read this at communion last Sunday. In 1 Corinthians 11, verse 27 through 32, Paul gives a warning about taking communion. And he says, if there's a way to take communion in an unworthy manner that results in judgment.

And the specific judgment that he refers to is sickness. And some people actually dying. And he said, this happens as a discipline.

[18:46] That it actually happens to God's people who are believers. Which that might break some of our theological categories a little bit. But this is we got to take the whole counsel of God here. Okay. And it has to do with discipline.

Unrepentant hidden sin. God takes very seriously. And there are sicknesses that can happen in our life that are because of that.

Now, no one else knows that. Only God knows. Okay. But if we're sick, we need to at least ask the question, Lord. Okay. I'm a sinner.

If there's anything that I've been holding back from you, I want to get it right. Okay. I want to get it right. And there's right here in exhortation, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other. So you might be healed. And the context is coming out of, if you're sick, go get the elders to pray for you. Anoint you with oil. And if you have sinned, your sins will be forgiven. And I'm reading into this. This is my opinion. I think when the elders are praying and they're doing this service here of anointing with oil, administrating their pastoral duty and praying for the sick, they're keying into this.

[19:58] They know what's going on. They know how this works. And they're asking questions. Hey, let's just, you know, we're going to assume love hopes all things, believes all things.

What's the best? You just got a stomach bug, you know. But is there anything that you need to get right with the Lord? Let's get that in the light. Let's confess that.

Okay. And that's part of it. Okay. It's not the only thing. A lot of sicknesses, again, that are not due to this at all. And so we shouldn't get weird about this.

But it's a thing. It's a category. Okay. So confession is tied to healing. Confess your sins to each other. Pray for each other so you may be healed. So the second here is we need to be healed from the bondage of sin.

And this is where the one anothering work of the body is essential. We all know that, you know, we have been saved. We're being saved. We will be saved.

[21:00] We've been justified by the work, the finished work of Christ once and for all. We're also being sanctified by that. Okay. Jesus, like through his spirit, is applying the finished work of Christ through the Holy Spirit progressively conforming us to the image of Christ.

We're being saved. And we'll be saved perfectly. When he comes back, we're going to get a glorified body. Sin's gone. Okay. So anyway, but how does that work? How does the sanctification work?

Well, there's a one anothering aspect of sanctification in the church where we confess sin and we pray for each other that God would heal you. You don't get to get sanctified all by yourself.

Okay. Has God done that? Sure. But he doesn't only do that. That's why he's put us together in the body of Christ. It says this in Ephesians 4, that speaking the truth and love, we would grow up into him in all things.

It's essential. So there's no way that you will be sanctified from your besetting sins without getting it into the light and asking for help and praying for each other.

[22:10] We won't do it. Okay. We'll talk about that more later. I want to do, I do want to clarify here. We're talking about confessing sin. We don't confess to people for forgiveness. We confess to God for forgiveness.

1 John 1, 9 says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This isn't Catholicism. We don't go to a priest for confession.

We have a high priest, one mediator between God and man, who perfectly administers the affected blood of Jesus on our behalf.

Washes us clean. We confess. He forgives. But we confess horizontally for freedom and for fellowship. This is how we grow closer to each other.

This is how the Lord frees us from things that we've been held in bondage for years in. So look about that more a little bit here. He continues.

[23:10] Verse 16, continuing verse 16, the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.

Again, he prayed and the heavens gave rain and the earth produced its crops. So there's a lot of confidence in here on the effective nature of prayer. Okay. There's the prayer of a righteous man. Well, that might actually rob our confidence because we feel, well, I'm not totally righteous. You know, I know the righteousness of Jesus, but like, man, how righteous do you got to get before this works?

Well, he says, he clarifies, Elijah was a man just like us. Some translations say a man of like passion, like nature.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There is no one good, not even one. So whatever the righteousness is, it's not some sort of earthly Christian perfection that you can attain a certain level of obedience.

[24:07] And now you feel good about asking God for things and that he'll actually answer you. No. John 14, verse 13 through 14. And Jesus says to his disciples, imperfect, fallen, you know, sinners.

Whatever you ask in my name, that will I do so that the father may be glorified in the son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. We ask God for answers in the name of Jesus.

In his name. I like to think of Jesus going and asking God something. I think of myself asking God something. It's kind of like, I don't know. Maybe he'll answer.

Maybe not. But then you think about Jesus asking God something. That's the same question. Will God answer Jesus prayers? Yes. Why? Because he's Jesus.

That's what he's saying here. If we ask in his name, we're asking on the basis of his track record, his relationship. So we can ask confidently. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

[25:09] Why? Because we're asking through a man who has a perfect relationship with God and gets what he asked for. And it's also effective. James 5, 16 says, it renders this passage, the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

So there's another layer to this where we need to not just pray whatever. Okay. We need to pray for the things that God has put in his word and called us to pray for.

First John 5, 14 through 15 says, this is the confidence we have toward him that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. Wow. If we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the request that we asked of him.

So here we have these two foundations for confident praying. One, I'm righteous through Jesus. So I have access to God. He'll hear me. And two, I know what to pray because I know what God's will is.

I can pray the things that are in his word that he's told me I ought to pray for and be confident he's going to answer that prayer. There are a lot of things I pray and hope.

[26:13] I don't know if he's going to answer it. I'm going to still pray it anyway because I have a loving father and I have hopes, you know. But there are certain things I'm going to pray and I'm going to hold God to task in a humble way because he's promised.

He said it in his word. Here's one. This applies. First Thessalonians 4, 3. The beginning of the verse. For this is the will of God, your sanctification.

You know, a prayer that God is going to 100% answer, make me like Jesus Christ. Make my brother and sister in the Lord like Jesus Christ.

Okay. I can ask in faith. I can have an effectual prayer. I can trust for miracles like famine. It's good to pray that God disciplines each other.

It's good to pray that stuff. The Lord's disciplined me. Terrible, terrible time. I wouldn't pray for the world because he worked righteousness. He helped me hunger and thirst for righteousness.

[27:17] We can pray for each other these things like and God will answer. I'm not saying we should be praying that God sends spiritual famine into each other's lives so we see sin. It's just we need to be praying for sanctification in each other's lives, in our own life.

We can be very confident God's going to answer that. Spiritual healing. Continuing. Verse 19. My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this.

Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins. So he's closing up and he's really doubling down now on this second theme here. Freedom from bondage to sin. Okay. Unrepentant hidden sin has more serious consequences than physical sickness. It's very serious.

Think about healing. Think about God blessing me. And it says about Jesus, he sent him to bless you by turning each one of you from your sins.

[28:20] This is the healing we need. We need this healing. And it's serious. It's not something to joke around with. And it says it right here. Like we have a responsibility to each other. It says, my brothers, if one of you, one of you believers in this room here, one of you professing believers, like obviously the Lord knows our hearts.

The Lord knows those are his. There are true professors and false professors, but we're people. Okay. So we don't get to know. But if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this, whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death.

He's talking about health. Okay. He's not talking about your life's a little bit shorter than it ought to be. No. This is eternal death. This is serious. Look at the promise there.

I want to read a couple verses here. Hebrews 10, 26. If we deliberately keep on sinning after we've received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

[29:57] For we know him who said, It is mine to avenge. I will repay. And again, the Lord will judge his people. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

It's apostasy. It is a dreadful thing. Okay? Now, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is a precious thing. Jesus will keep you.

Okay? But we've got to take it with the whole counsel of God. He didn't give any qualifications here. He doesn't give qualifications when he's talking about this dynamic of someone wandering from the truth and someone needing to bring them back in order to save them from death and cover up our multitude of sins.

And essentially, it's this. Okay? God uses church discipline. Each other. For fulfillment of the promise that he's going to keep you.

It's means. Okay? There's a promise. I'm going to keep you. How does he do it? There's a lot of ways he does it, but there's a big one right here that he's talking about, which is brothers and sisters taking responsibility for each other.

[31:11] Confronting sin. Not just saying, not my problem. Oh, so-and-so's not coming here anymore. Okay. No. Whatever. Brother, oh, yeah, he's always like that.

He's just always dealing with that. You know, it's okay. It's okay. No. It's not like that. If Jesus treated you like that, you'd be gone.

Like, you'd be done. He's not like that. I'm going to read a couple verses here from Matthew chapter 18 to underscore this point. Starting in verse 10.

Matthew 18, verse 10. See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go look for the one that's wandered off?

And if he finds that I tell the truth, he's happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way, your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.

[32:19] Wow. That's awesome. Take that to the bank. That's how Lord Jesus thinks about me. If I get off, what's he going to do? He's going to chase me down. That's reassuring. That goes back to those whom I love, I rebuke.

The Father disciplines every son he receives. How do you know you're a real son? He doesn't let you get away with it. He gets you. He catches you.

It's awesome. I know my Heavenly Father loves me because he's had me on such a tight leash.

And my flesh has wanted to get away with it, and he won't let up.

It's awesome. What's this look like in practice? Keep going. Verse 15. If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault.

Just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. That's how. That is Jesus Christ, through the church, keeping you.

[33:21] If your brother sins against you, go and talk to him about it. Church discipline. When you think of church discipline as like the last step of church discipline where you excommunicate somebody. Well, I mean, that's like going to a doctor and they refuse to treat you for anything until you're about to die.

And then I guess they pull the plug on the life support. I didn't think that analogy through. But just like zero care for you whatsoever until it's time to cut you off. That's not church discipline.

You know what church discipline is? I see my brother sin, or they sin against me. And I say, it is my problem. Not because of me.

I don't want them to change to make my life easier. Although, of course, life's easier when people don't sin against you. But because of their soul. Because I actually love them.

But if you will not listen, take one or two others along so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Guess what?

[34:23] Sometimes you're wrong. Sometimes you're a little too wound around the spokes. That's it! No, you're just kind of a jerk. Okay? And that's an okay response. Someone comes and confronts you on something that's just...

Maybe you're right. I don't know. I think you're getting a little wound around the spokes. I've been that person. Time to get a few other people involved. Okay? Don't just leave it there in a passive-aggressive way.

Just being like, well, you didn't hear me? I don't like that guy anymore. You know? They wouldn't listen to what I said. Well, you know what? They feel the same way about, you know, I think you're a judgmental jerk. You know? And so no one's helped at this point.

Praise God! Very practical mitigation plan. Take two or three other witnesses. Let every matter be established in the presence of two or three witnesses. Okay? Maybe you weren't out to lunch.

Maybe it was actually pretty... It was a serious thing. Get a couple more people involved. You know what? Wow. I thought you were just being a jerk at first. But now I realize that other people agree.

[35:26] And there's actually some more verses that they brought up that I hadn't really thought about. I need to repent. I need to repent. It's restoring. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.

And if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. So, that's what the church does.

Okay? See, at the end of the day, if you have persistent, unrepentant sin, if you refuse to repent, you're out of fellowship with God. And if the church keeps up the show of being in fellowship with you, it's a lie.

They're lying to you. They're saying, I'm nicer than God. Okay? You're not nicer than God. Okay? The nicest thing you can do is to treat them like God's treating them.

And if they're deluding themselves, that they can go on in known, unrepentant sin and make it in the end. And the most loving thing to do is to have on earth the same reality experienced and expressed as it is in the heavenly places.

[36:36] They're not walking in the light. If you walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. If he says he does and walks in darkness, he lies. He's lying. He's lying to himself even.

They might even think, they might have some theological categories about, you know, justification that break when you compare it with the other verses about sanctification. And they're deluding themselves.

They're taking the grace of God and they're using it as a license for perpetual disobedience.

Crossing your fingers and hoping someday God's going to do, he's going to break in, he'll do his work. But until then, what are you going to do?

Definitely not getting anybody else involved. That's fatal. That's apostasy. That's the road to experienced apostasy. Bible says, We've got to hold these things together, all right?

And they do fit together. Perseverance of the saints is a glorious thing. How does he do it? Well, one of the ways he does it is through church discipline. And we need to take up our responsibility that we have to each other to participate in the keeping work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[37:44] For all those who call on his name. And especially those who are in our midst. Okay? The ones who are actually in our families. In our church. We have a responsibility to each other. 1 Peter 2, verse 24 through 25.

Let's share this and I'll wrap it up with a few points here. It says about Jesus, He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. Healing.

spiritual healing. Praise God for healing from sickness. But healing from spiritual sickness, it's way more important.

And we have way more promises that God will answer that prayer to stand on when we're praying for it. It's guaranteed. By his wounds you've been healed.

[38:49] Okay. I have a few points in the form of exhortations. First one is fakery kills fellowship. Be real.

We all know what we ought to be. Don't fake it until you make it. It just totally destroys fellowship. You're not tricking anybody. It just feels artificial.

And we've all done it. But we don't need to do it. We have a better high priest and he was not fake. Okay. First exhortations.

The second one is don't go it alone. Get help from the body for ongoing sickness and besetting sin. So have you confessed your sins to each other? Have you made it easy for people to confront you? That's one thing to exhort you to, you know, people to go confront and stuff. But hey, have you just lovingly opened up about, hey, this is the stuff that I've been defeated by. I'm convicted to get it in the light.

[39:46] This is not for forgiveness. You don't need to confess to another human being on the planet to be forgiven for your sin. We already talked about that. This is for healing. Let me ask you this. Do you want to get free?

Do you even want to? Or do you prefer not getting free and just getting forgiven on an endless, endless cycle?

Do you prefer that? I want to question something. If that's your preference, you need to put your faith to the test.

Okay? Whoever is born of God does not go on sinning. 1 John in the sense of a habitual lifestyle pattern of, it's fine.

God will love Jesus and wash me clean. You go to your confessor every week. That's just, that's just Catholicism. It's death. It'll damn your soul to hell. So, anyway, free forgiveness through Jesus and for a true believer, you want to get free.

[40:51] Okay? And I trust if you're a true believer, the Lord's convicting you about that because it convicts me. And, anyway, but don't go it alone. You can't go it alone. There's no way you're going to get free from your sin unless you get in the light about it with other brothers and sisters.

Third, take responsibility for each other in two ways. One, prayer. Okay? God's will is your sanctification, so pray in faith. We can pray for freedom from sickness for people, but we can pray confidently in faith for freedom for spiritual sickness.

And we have a responsibility we owe to each other to partner together in the work of the Holy Spirit to get free from sin. Okay? From besetting sin. And the second is church discipline.

Restoration to a right relationship with God and people. That's the work of leaving the 99 and going and getting the 1. It's the work of having that uncomfortable conversation that you keep putting off with your brother or sister.

Because that's how he does it. You realize that's Jesus through you reconciling someone to God. So, we need to do that.

[42:05] Don't think of church discipline as something just like the elders do and you get, you know, just excommunication. No, no, no. We all have a responsibility to each other to bear each other's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. That's what he's talking about.

So, we need to pray and we need to practice church discipline that's loving. We just need to tell each other if their brother sins, tell them. There we go. Church discipline, one-on-one. We should all be doing it. It's not weird.

It might be weird for a little bit if you haven't been practicing it, but it's a whole lot better than gossiping behind somebody's back. That doesn't seem weird. Do that all the time. Why doesn't it feel weird like you know about someone's sin?

Why doesn't it feel weird when you go on to start talking about that person and their sins to other people? I'm just seeking counsel. That's, maybe, but if you haven't talked to them or you have no plans to talk to them and you're on the calendar and you're praying towards that end, you're getting counsel in order to have a conversation real soon, BS.

You don't actually care about that person. You care about yourself. Okay? And you need to repent and go have those conversations. Last one. Don't hide.

[43:15] This is first exhortation. The exhortation right before this is the people who know they're supposed to talk to other people. Okay? This is the person who needs to be talked to.

Don't hide. Church discipline is God's means of preserving you from apostasy. You believe in perseverance of the saints? Well, do you believe in God's means for keeping you?

Do you really? How is he going to keep you? I think about this. Who makes children? Anybody know who makes children? Who makes children?

Kids know? God. God makes children, right? Okay. How does God make children? Through a mom and a dad the sperm and the egg words and the bees.

So, you are putting your confidence that God's going to preserve you all the way to the end because you trusted Jesus. But you are hiding.

[44:21] You're living a double life. You don't want people to get up in your business and see what's going on in the kitchen. do you really believe?

You're basically saying, God make a baby and you're refusing to do the divinely ordained means that he put in place to have babies.

Does God make babies? Yes. Do people make babies? Yes. Both are true. Okay? So, we need to connect these truths up. If you have confidence that Jesus is going to continue and keep you to the end, better start walking in light.

Okay? Because currently, you should be losing confidence. The longer you walk in darkness, the more you start to sound like the people who are in John chapter 3. It says men hate, this is the

condemnation, men hated the light because they loved the darkness because the light revealed their deeds.

Oof. First, first, first, first, first, don't tell me what to do. Like, that's broken.

[45:32] Okay? That's broken. John chapter 3 continues and says those who are of the truth come to the light so that their deeds would be seen as having been wrought in God. You know what?

There's two categories of deeds. One is things that God's actually done positively in my life to help me obey God. That's awesome. Okay? Praise God. Bring it to light. You know what another deed is? Conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit.

And you bring it into the light. That's one of the first ministries of the Holy Spirit Jesus prophesied is he will convict the world of sin. Show the work God's doing in your life by convicting you of hidden sin that no one else knows about.

Get it out there. And then receive this awesome assurance that God is keeping you. Whom the Father loves, he disciplines. Yeah, it sucks.

No discipline is pleasant for the time. But afterwards, it produces the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who've been trained by it. Praise the Lord. So, anyway, that's it.

[46 : 31]