

Passions of the Heart - Part 6

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0:00] All right. Good morning. We don't have the full group, and actually a number of our teens are gone! because of the spring retreat.

So we'll have a smaller crowd anyway,! What the cover says, this is not week five, it's week six. And it's not hope for the heart, it's purity in the heart. So you can ignore that, and the rest of the content is in place. All right? Let me pray for us, and we will get started.

All right? Father, thank you for the word that you've given to us, that living and powerful word of God that is active, it is effective, it is working, it accomplishes its purposes.

Lord, I pray that you would help us, as we seek to kind of wrap up this study this morning, that you will allow all the pieces to really begin to come together as we look at this subject one more time, and we see how to apply your word to the truths and to the difficulties that we experience in this life.

[1:34] God, I pray in all things, not only that you would be glorified, but that your people would be transformed. Transformed from one degree of glory to the other because we are moving in the direction of Jesus Christ.

You are imprinting your pattern into our life. You are making us look more and more like Jesus. And you are strengthening our testimony so that we can be the light, the city that's set on a hill that cannot be hidden.

Help our light to shine brightly for you. In Jesus' name, amen. All right. So this is the last week that we're together, and I'm grateful for your perseverance and kind of working through this with me as we have been kind of making our way through the last, well, these pathways, the roadmap that I showed you last week and these stops that we've taken to address this significant issue.

It's an issue that all of us struggle with. We all struggle with sin. And my guess is that all of us, at one point or the other, not have just struggled with sin, but there have been times where we've felt like sin has had the upper hand in our life.

And maybe you felt like, I want to do what God wants me to do, but I just can't seem to find a way. And God wants to not only inform us to know that he has a solution, but he wants us to enjoy the reality of that new identity that we saw in Colossians 1, verse 13.

[3:11] You have been delivered from the domain of darkness. You have been transferred into the kingdom of his beloved son. That's the reality for everyone who has trusted in Jesus as their savior.

And so to live in that reality, that's really what this has been about. That's the goal. That's what we all want to enjoy. We want to enjoy the benefits of what he has purchased for us by his son, Jesus on the cross.

Okay? Now, this last lesson is full. I mean, it is packed full. You may or may not be able to tell just by looking at the notes there.

But what I've tried to do is I've tried to have given you as much of the information in summary form as I can because we're not going to be able to cover it all, at least not thoroughly in our time today. But I want you to have it so you can see it for yourself. And you have some verses there. You have some quotes there. And in each of the main landing points that we've come to, there are going to be five strategies this morning that we're going to cover, five strategies for helping you be able to experience and enjoy the reality of what Christ has purchased for you in the freedom over the bondage of sin, over the control of sin.

[4:36] So there's five strategies that we're going to cover. And each strategy has little sub points that you're going to see. And so I've included at least four, or excuse me, at least two, but most of the time

four truth-centering points for each strategy to kind of anchor your mind into what does this point mean and what am I supposed to make of this?

But I want to begin with this question. What can change a heart? What can change a heart? What does it take to change a heart?

And maybe the companion question is, do I need to change my heart? Fundamentally, we need to believe that something has to change in our heart in order for anything to change in our life.

And we said, going back several weeks now, that the heart is the control center. The heart is kind of the operating bank. It is the place where your desires give flame and direction to your actions.

Because we said, what we desire, what we want, inevitably leads to what we do. And so, we care about our heart.

[6:02] We need to change our heart. So what do we do to fix our heart? You see over on the left-hand panel, kind of a cloud of words there. Okay?

And my guess is that all of us, at one point or the other, have tried to address or counsel or encourage others in their struggle with sin.

Or we have tried to get help for the struggles that we have with sin. And so, what we encounter in that process are these kinds of words.

Psychology, understanding identity, having the right kind of treatment, the right kind of techniques, this behavior management, this coping skills.

We often hear that what we're struggling with is a disease. This is behavior modification. We need some training. We need to understand ethics. All of these kinds of words that help in the culture that we're in, in the places where you are, not only to identify what they think the problem is, but also to try to help provide solutions to those problems.

Okay? Now, I know that this is early on Sunday morning. Okay? And maybe you haven't had time for your juices to warm up yet.

[7:31] But, when you think about these kinds of approaches, what is fundamentally wrong with these kinds of approaches?

And maybe before we get to that root problem, what are some of the things that you hear or even have said to one another, here's how you can find victory over that issue?

What are some of the solutions that we give? With your phone? With your TV? With your, right?

What are some solutions that we give? Okay?

Sometimes we hear the importance of therapy. You need to go to somebody who can really help you with this. Somebody who really understands your problem. Somebody who can really address the issues. Okay, good.

What else? Hey, yeah, set time limits on your phone. Right? This is, obviously, your phone is the problem and what you're looking on your phone is the issue so just eliminate the problem and you'll be okay.

[8:38] Right? Now, is there wisdom in that? Of course there is some wisdom in that. Of course there is. I don't want to dismiss that there are certain helps that we can use to help ourselves create patterns of obedience.

Anything else you might have heard? Yeah. Let's find the right filters. Let's find the right blockers. Let's find the right app that can help you address this problem and, you know, all of you who have an Apple iPhone, you're getting that weekly report, you know, your screen time and now even if you have an Android, you're getting what is the screen time?

What are the, where do you find yourself? What apps are you on? How long you've been on YouTube? What's the social media usage? All of these things that we do so that we can find a solution and so that we can build discipline and so that we can fix this problem of sin.

Now we've recognized, one good thing, we've recognized that sin is a problem, okay? And we're trying to find reasonable, practical ways, solutions to address the problem.

Those are, that's good. But what is the fundamental issue with that? You know, I couldn't, I couldn't have put it any better.

[10:04] John, you hit the nail on the head. We address the symptoms instead of the root causes. We're trying to fix the things we do instead of addressing the heart from which those things spring, right?

So if we can just, we can just solve my, my action problem, if I can solve the sin problem by the things I do, my doing issue, then we think we've arrived.

The problem is that our heart will find a workaround. Our heart will always find a way to express itself to find satisfaction that is more presentable.

That maybe you don't do those sins that people will say, that's really bad. What are you thinking about? And we even know in our heart how guilty those things make us feel.

But fundamentally, what we end up doing is we then replace those offensive sins with those respectable sins. We find another path.

[11:18] And, you know, I was thinking about giving an example. I think I probably will. So, I won't tell you who.

Sorry, I'm trying to think on the fly here. For example, somebody who has an issue with alcoholism. Somebody who is a drunkard and knows that that's a problem.

And it's been identified as a problem. And even confronted as an issue. Well, so, then I'll go to a 12-step program. I'll fix my alcoholism.

And that's what everyone knows is an issue. But then it produces itself then in different addictions. Addiction for video games.

Addiction for movies. Addiction as it relates to leisure and spending time. But, see, those are so much more presentable. And so, those are okay, at least from a worldly standpoint.

[12:19] But it never addresses the heart issue, as John said. It doesn't address the heart issue. So, we then give ourselves a pass because we're like, well, that's not the bad thing.

I'm just doing the better thing. It's the okay thing. It's the thing that everyone struggles with. So, you know, if I'm just doing the things that everyone struggles with, then I'm not so bad as so-and-so. You understand? Now, remember, just for review, what are those presentable sins that we talked about, those gateway sins, those things that start you on the path that everyone excuses, but then it leads down the road to these things that everyone understands now is bondage.

Remember? What were some of those? Anger. Perfect example. You know, of course I fly off the handle. Everyone flies off the handle. Everyone loses control once in a while.

It's okay. That's what people do. Just give me a break already. What else? Comfort. I deserve a little bit of satisfaction.

[13:35] My life is hard. Do you understand how hard my life is? I deserve a break. I need some comfort. And so we pacify ourselves.

We give ourselves a pass. And so we run to comfort instead of running to God when things are hard. We want to create escapes. We want to pacify ourselves instead of anchoring ourselves in the, God, this is really hard and I know you can help me.

I know that you're bigger than this. What else? Remember? Anything else? Fear. Fear is one and I think we actually talked about that as kind of a heart motivation and a lot of these things are kind of blurred together and we want control.

We are afraid and so we want to, again, as it relates to control, we want to remove the potential fear issues away from us and so we'll do what we need to do to ease our hearts.

And our hearts drive us to sin that we then excuse because it's not so bad as this other sin over here. And so we're building patterns, aren't we?

[14:52] We're building pathways, aren't we? We're teaching ourselves that sin is okay. That certain sins might be really bad but other sins, eh, you know what? God understands.

God will forgive and of course he does. God's grace will forgive. But as soon as we come to a place of saying, you know what? I'm okay. Then we remove the opportunity for real change to actually happen.

And so there's no wonder why we continue to struggle with sin because we have all these other sins that we're just okay with. We've just learned to say, well, it's fine.

You know, I'll work on this eventually but, eh, you know, everyone is struggling with this so I will too. And that's the problem.

The problem is we give ourselves a pass. So what are the strategies that we need to put in place? And I've already taken up too much time so I want to try to knock these out a little bit faster.

[15:54] First is you need to become a disciple of the gospel of grace. Become a disciple of the gospel of grace. Now, I know that's kind of ambiguous a little bit.

In real practical terms is learn that Jesus has answers for your sin. And learn that his solutions are found in his word.

word. And it's found in the gospel. Okay? That as we come to know who Jesus is, we come to know what Jesus did, we come to understand our identity because of what Christ accomplished for us, then we can begin to enjoy the benefits of that as we say, no, wait a second.

God has done this for me. God has called me to this. God has delivered me from this sin. This is the new, should be the new posture of my heart.

So, Lord, help this to now be the expression, the consistent expression of my life. Well, we talked about the importance of confession and repentance.

[17:06] And again, each of these are going to have some truth statements. I'm not going to be able to cover them all. But this first true statement here is confession brings sin into the light where grace can work.

Hidden sin thrives in secrecy. I want us to pause for a moment. I think we all would acknowledge this is true. We would all say, yeah, confession is really important.

So why is confession hard? If you're honest, why is confession hard? We don't want to see the truth because it's stinking bright.

Okay. I'll get to that in a second. What did you say? Often we don't want to see the truth, but we don't want to. Okay. So we don't want to face the reality of what we're confessing.

We get this impression that if we push this down, if we bury it, that maybe no one will really know who we are. No one will really come to appreciate or see what we know to be true of ourselves.

[18:10] And somehow we feel like if we don't push it out in the open, then maybe we can also bury that truth. And it's not really going to be very real for us too. Okay. So we don't confess because we really don't want to admit how bad things are.

Okay. Pastor, you said it was an issue of pride. Okay. What about pride is in the way? It's good.

Okay. So we don't want to confess sin because we want to give everybody the impression that we have it together. Every time I sin, I thought it was a good idea. Every time we sin, we think it's a good idea.

And maybe even the times we know it's not a good idea, we believe that somehow this is going to get me what I want because God is holding out on me in some way.

Right? And that's a real problem. Good. What else? Okay. I don't want to bring it out and now I have accountability.

[19:15] It's good. I don't want people to know because I don't want the accountability. And let's be honest, confession makes things really public. There's no wonder why we don't confess.

Because oftentimes there are real consequences to confession. confession. And we think that if we just live with it a little longer, people will not just not know.

God will give us a pass on that. And then somehow those consequences aren't going to come to bear on my heart. One of the things that my dad said to me constantly, he says, son, make sure your sin will find you out.

Make sure your sin will find you out. That's a verse, by the way. And that's a good path because it cuts short this process of sin working in our life and creating bondage and idolatry and all of that brokenness that happens in relationships, brokenness that happens with not being able to serve in the way that we want to, the testimony that gets sullied.

And then the longer we walk down the path, the more we feel comfortable with that sin. And it calluses our hearts. And all of that is what we can relinquish if we just say, you know what, I'm going to cut this short.

[20:40] It's going to be really hard, but it's going to be so much better for me to just get it out in the open. And it doesn't always have to be out in the open with everybody, okay? But getting it out in the open with somebody who you have a relationship with who can really help in a significant way, helping overcome that sin, right?

Good. Yeah, Elliot. I think sometimes we struggle with confession because we don't understand the events of others. Okay. Think about David.

Yeah, that's good. And then it wasn't only for you to not confess it when Nathan came to him. That's good. That's good.

That's right. That's good. And so the blindness of David's heart didn't start with a sin with Bathsheba. Okay? And that's how it always is.

The blindness of our heart starts much, much earlier in the things that we give a pass to before we ever arrive at the big sins. Okay? That's the gateway that we're talking about.

[21:50] We give ourselves a pass when it comes to comfort. We give ourselves a pass when it comes to anger. We give ourselves a pass when it comes to needing to be in control and not trusting God for his provision.

All of those things. And so we're like, no, that one's okay, but this one over here, well, I've got to stay away from that one. But all along, the way we are cutting these grooves moves in our life. There's no wonder why we end up where we end up. It doesn't happen overnight. And so it requires us to have a very clear perspective, a very true perspective of the nature of our hearts early on so that we can put sin to death before it ever becomes a tree in our life.

Okay? And we're pulling it out by the roots. John, just going back to what you said, we don't understand the root of the problem. We don't understand the significance of the issue. We're dealing with symptoms instead of root issues.

And so we never pull it up by the root. We're just kind of, hey, people can see that. I'm chopping it down. People can see it. I'm chopping it down. But it never fixes the root problems. You know what I'm saying? Okay. I love what David says.

[23:05] He says in Psalm 32, 5, I acknowledge my sin to you. I did not cover my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and you forgave the iniquity of my sins.

That's the prize. The prize of confession. The prize of repentance. And we talked about how we need to keep calibrating our heart, keep tuning our heart to the standard that God has given to us. And that's what repentance does. It continues to compare our life with the standard of God's word. And there's a turning. There's a direction to repentance. There's a direction to our life that happens. So confession repentance is the beginning of that process. Saying out loud what is really the problem. Coming to a place of admitting that there's an issue.

Not trying to conceal it. The next is weakness and humility. humility. Here's a quote from the book. It says, victory is not found in saying, I can do it.

[24:13] I can make it happen. I can try harder. Or I can be stronger. Victory is found in acknowledging weakness and abandoning self-effort.

What do you think? Do you agree or disagree with that statement? What do you think? Okay. Do you agree with that?

Okay. So it's there in your guide. Victory is not found in saying, I can do it. I can make it happen. I can try harder. I can be stronger.

Victory is found in acknowledging weakness and abandoning self-effort. What do you think? Is that true? That's good.

That's good. Sure. And probably not just hard for us to do in trusting God in that way.

[25:14] I think it's probably hard for us to really understand. Okay. Because this doesn't, this isn't the let go and let God. That's not what we're talking about here. Okay. And I think that's the, that's the opposite pendulum swing.

We're like, well, I'll just let go and let God and I guess if I sin, then it's God's fault because he hasn't kept me from it. No, that's, that's not right either. No, it's not, well, I can do it all on my own.

That's the one side of the pendulum. Or the God will do it all for me. That's the other side of the pendulum. It's, no, God has given me very clear instructions in his word. And by his grace, he has given me the spirit with all the power I could ever need to obey the instructions that he's given to me.

So I will apply my heart to know what God says. And I will apply my heart to finding strength from the Lord to do what he's called me to do. It's not about self-help.

It's about understanding, identifying God's strategy and following the strategy that he gives to us. It says here, self-confidence fuels failure.

[26:30] Humility invites help. pride isolates. Humility draws strength from God. And then drop down to number three.

Humility keeps believers teachable and accountable. Pride resists correction. Humility welcomes it. I love what we find in James chapter 4 verse 6.

And here's where the gospel of grace comes to play. Understanding what God has done for us. Understanding the grace that's available for us and how we get it. How do we get grace?

What does grace accomplish? Well, notice, he, speaking of God, he gives more grace. Therefore, it says, God opposes the proud. He gives grace to the humble.

So there's got to be a spot in our life where we say, you know what? I cannot do this on my own. I am not capable. This is not something I can work out on my own strength.

[27:35] This isn't something I can figure out on my own. I need not only to invite the help of the word of God and the spirit of God. I need to be in the company with godly men, godly women, who can help me as I am.

I go in this journey. But because as soon as the enemy has isolated you, and you think you can do it alone, you've lost. At least that's the first step of losing the battle.

This really important passage, 2 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 9, where Paul is talking about his thorn in the flesh. And he says, he prayed. Remember, he prays that God would take that thorn away, and God says, I got a better answer for you.

And I think it's important to understand that God did not say no. But God had a better yes. This was his yes. He said, my grace is sufficient for you, Paul.

You want power? You want strength? Well, there's better strength. Because my power is made perfect in your weakness. So therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness, so the power of Christ may rest upon me.

[28:54] You know, I don't need you, God, now. I understand. I don't need power that's resident within myself. I need power that comes from you. And so, I'm praying that you would remove this thorn in the flesh so I can have strength to do the ministry you've called me to.

But I'm realizing now, because you've come and corrected my perspective, that I get actually more power when I'm weak, physically weak. I get more power when I come to the place of my own limitations.

And I begin to depend on your sufficiency. That's what I'm going to now begin to rejoice in. Coming to a place of recognizing our weakness.

Coming to a place of humility. Next, we get freedom. We can't have freedom from sin's dominion.

You see, Christ has broken sin's authority, not merely its consequences.

Sin may tempt, but it no longer rules. That's the reality of our life now. Colossians 1, 13 and 14. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son.

[30:05] Now, wait a second, Paul. I'm still here. How has he transferred me? What is your problem? What's going on? Well, the reality of your life is that you are in Christ.

And if Christ is there, then you are there. It's kind of the already not yet that we find throughout so much of the scripture. That the reality has been accomplished.

And to the extent that in Ephesians chapter 5, we're already seated with him in the heavenly places, actually Ephesians chapter 2, we're seated with him in the heavenly places. That's where we are.

In God's mind, that's the reality that's been accomplished for us. We have to not be okay with sin because we need to understand that if we're going to live consistently with the identity that God has accomplished for us, that we've been delivered.

So don't be a walking contradiction. Don't be okay by being a walking contradiction. All right, moving on.

[31:16] Living in grace. Well, what does this mean? What does it mean to live in grace? I like this statement from the book. Grace does more than impart knowledge.

It serves to train the believer in godly living. Grace does more than fix my present sinful condition.

Grace is what fuels obedience. As I come to understand what Christ has accomplished for me, it drives me, it compels me to want to obey him more.

That's how it should work. Living in grace produces perseverance, not panic. failures become occasions for growth rather than surrender.

As I'm learning that God does forgive sins, then it helps me not to give up. It helps me not to feel like a failure that I'm stuck.

[32:18] It helps me understand that God's grace fixes that issue in my life, that brokenness in my life, so that I can move beyond it and enjoy the benefits of that continuing grace that he has invited me to experience.

I don't have to be stuck in my sin. I don't have to be a captive to it anymore. I don't have to feel defeated because of what Christ's grace has accomplished for me. Does that make sense? What a beautiful thing.

And because of that, grace sustains long-term obedience. independence. See, change is not, change is progressive. It's not instant. We want, we live in an instant world.

We want the instant product. But it is a measure of God's grace to lead us one step at a time in the process of sanctification, learning more and more about his faithfulness.

Strategy number two. Strategy number two is to clean up your life. Not just be a disciple of grace, but now take sin sin seriously. To clean up your life through thoroughly and biblically.

[33:28] And the standard that God has given to us is a standard of himself. It's a standard of holiness. And we're familiar with what Peter says in 1 Peter chapter 1.

He says, be holy as I am holy. That's the standard. And we're like, come on. That's a little unrealistic, don't you think? No, it's not unrealistic.

It's what God has called us to. And it's so significant that God actually says, well, this is my will. This is my will for you. 1 Thessalonians 4, 3 to 8 says, this is the will of God, your sanctification, to be like me.

You belong to me. You represent me. And so I want you to look like me. So God is intent on working out this sanctification process in us.

And how does it look? In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, it says that you abstain from sexual immorality. That each one of you knows how to control his own body in holiness and honor.

[34:36] Not in the passions of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God. and that no one transgress in wrong his brother in this matter because the Lord is an avenger in all these things.

As we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us to impurity but in holiness. Therefore, whoever disregards this disregards not man but God who gave his Holy Spirit. Wow. Someone summarize this for me. What is... Who's interested in your sanctification? Obvious answer?

God is. How interested is God in your sanctification? Like what will God do if you don't care about sanctification? Is he personally vested in this?

You better believe it. What does he promise to do for those who are like, eh, you know, it's not that important. What's the word there? An avenger.

[35:43] God is personally going to take matters into his hands. If you are not willing to do it yourself. Boy, God help me not to be in the crosshairs of your vengeance.

Help me to take this seriously. Help me to understand the significance of holiness. holiness. And again, holiness, this is, I think, fundamentally our problem.

Holiness doesn't start with sexual immorality. That's where you're beginning to cross the finish line of that James 1 process. It starts way back here with a complaining heart.

with a critical heart. With an ungrateful heart. With a, I deserve this kind of heart.

And this is okay kind of heart. An excusing kind of heart. It starts there, not here. You understand?

That's our problem. Our problem is we're addressing issues after we've walked down the road so far that we're kind of already at the place of that final process in James where sin has finally had its way and it's leading to death.

[37:03] You're on death's door. And so you need to back up and come to the place of recognizing, no, wait a second. It started much earlier than that and there are a lot of things I need to begin to work on in my life so I can be holy and then, by God's grace, this will never be an issue for me.

Understanding the significance of holiness. Next, kill sin. Kill sin.

Every time we succumb to sin, we are performing acts of worship. Let me read that one more time. Every time we succumb to sin, we are performing acts of worship.

You are saying, I worship this, not God. That's, we understand how serious that is. It's idolatry. It's so easy to excuse though, isn't it?

And thus we become a devoted idolater. Nearly refusing yourself these pleasures will never purify your lust because self has not died.

[38:10] But when you truly die to self and to the elemental spirits of the world, Paul affirms that this is the right kind of death. For you have died, he says, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Mere behavioral modification and strict self-discipline without a death experience will never bring complete purification. Kill your sin.

Do not let even the roots survive. Pull it out. Sin must be confronted aggressively, not managed cautiously.

Well, I'm not gonna, I'm gonna avoid this kind of sin because I know this is wrong. But this kind of sin, you know, it's okay. Don't manage sin. Partial obedience leaves sin alive.

Next, enliven righteousness. And here's the beauty of God's strategy. There's a both and, not an either or.

[39:21] Because the Lord knows that when we just remove certain things, it leaves a vacuum in its place. When we just remove certain things, then we're left to, okay, so what happens next?

And that's what Jesus kind of describes when that man with the demons, was healed, right? And then the demons come back and he brings more because the place has been swept and it's clean and you know what I'm talking about?

And this is the same kind of issue, right? So we clean our lives up for a little while and we just can't do it anymore because what we've been counting on and relying on are the self-help behavioral modifications of kind of just not doing this over here but it's never replaced by new good habits.

And that's the strategy that God invites us to enjoy. Colossians 3, 5, put to death what is earthly in you but it doesn't stop there. Put on, verse 12, then as God's chosen ones, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other.

There's this beautiful strategy of replacing those sinful tendencies with godly ones. Building new grooves, new patterns, new impulses.

[40:47] Now the impulse is to do what is good and the more you are involved in doing the things that please God, the more it invites your heart to experience the benefits of that and to want that more instead of wanting the sin.

Strategy number three, do not trust the weather vane of your feelings. And that's what we talked about the first week, remember?

See, feelings are meant to be tools for you. They're meant to be tools to address or help to awaken or to see this awareness of who you are and to then drive you to dependence on the Lord.

That's what our feelings are meant to do. And we all know this, that feelings change quickly and cannot serve as reliable guides. Some of you are more steady than others, okay?

But, you know, I thought I was a pretty steady guy. I thought, you know, I'm not very emotional. I don't cry. Well, that's not the only kind of emotion that God talks about. There's emotional, emotion of anger and even as a kid, anger, that emotion was so impulsive and it was like trigger ready, okay?

[42:17] That's also an emotion by the way. And so I was a pretty emotional guy but didn't think I was. Our emotions serve as very poor guides to life.

Feelings are indicators, they're not authorities. You don't have to believe that your feelings must be obeyed.

And here's how David does this. What is his strategy? I love this. Psalm 56, 3 and 4. When I am afraid, I will what?

I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust. I will not be afraid.

What can man do to me? I love that. Psalm 112, 7. He is not afraid of bad news. His heart is firm, trusting the Lord. I will not let my feelings have the best of me, have their way.

[43:21] Feelings of hopelessness. Believing feelings over God always results in trouble. I love that. Despair often follows repeated failures, but it does not define reality.

And in this process of growing in Christ, we're going to continue to discover how broken we are.

That's okay. Because where sin abounds, grace abounds even more.

What a blessing that is to us. But it's not now a license for us to continue to sin. Or to feel the sense of hopelessness when I'm like, I just can't seem to find victory.

Well, God has answers and I'm going to trust Him for those answers. So past sin does not negate present grace. God's grace is there. It's present.

It's available. It's ready to meet you. Again, Psalm 27, verse 13. These are a couple of my favorite verses in the Bible.

[44:22] I would have lost heart unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. So then what do we do? You wait on the Lord. You be of good courage.

Wait, I say, on the Lord. He settled his heart on the truth of who God was. And regardless of what was taking place around him, he was steady.

Man, I want that. I want that steadiness. I don't want to be tossed about my feelings becoming now the thing that I have to obey, the authorities in my life.

Number four, strategy four, be vigilant about occasions of temptation. Temptation is strongest when opportunity meets vulnerability. wisdom recognizes patterns, environments, and situations that consistently weaken resolve.

Come to a place of knowing and seeing. Become aware of the patterns where you are most vulnerable. Those relationships that often lead you into sin, those places that lead you into sin, those private occurrences where you are and knowing I often fall here, I need to find a solution.

[45:43] I need to run. And I love how Paul puts it. He doesn't say stand up against sinful lust. He says flee sinful lust. We often have to, that's the best strategy.

That's the strategy we need to employ most often, I think. Fleeing youthful lust. Finally, sorry we've gone so quickly. There's so much here.

Man, there's so much I wanted to cover, but I'm already taking you too long. Finally, learn to trust the Bible, the Bible teaching church.

God has graciously given us one another. You are a gift to me. You are a gift to one another.

I am a gift to you. And God has put us together. And as we try to conquer sin, we're going to find most often that when we isolate ourselves, then we become vulnerable.

[46:45] We open ourselves up to danger. That is when times are most perilous. And that's what Satan wants to do the most. He wants to separate you, to isolate you, to make you feel one way or the other either you're strong enough or that you're too weak and it's not worth the effort.

One of those two extremes. He wants to get you on your own. But God, by his grace, has given us the church. The church is part of the gracious provision of God for every Christian who is struggling with debilitating sin.

It provides positive examples to follow as well as authoritative, loving, accountability. God's gracious gift to you is his people, the church.

And the more we understand that, the more we'll enjoy the benefits of freedom from sin and the grace that God has given to us. It is a gracious thing that God has given us, his people.

Isolation weakens spiritual resistance, but fellowship strengthens it. Sin thrives in secrecy. Don't forget that.

[48:00] Sin thrives in secrecy. Holiness flourishes in the light. Let's be those who walk in the light as he is in the light.

And what does it do? Well, John says in 1 John 1, then we have fellowship with one another. That's what it does. Walking in the light brings us together that we can continue to enjoy the benefits of light and fellowship and freedom and victory over sin.

That's the strategy. But it's one of several. And so I want to dismiss you to be able to talk about this again. We have some smaller groups today.

Men will be back in the education wing first floor. Women over in kind of the NPR area. And I think the questions are neutral enough so that teens can be a part of this too.

But if you have a teen in your group just be sensitive to the conversations that you have. Alright?

Thanks. God bless you.