

The Old & New Wineskins

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[0 : 00] I'm Matt, one of the elders here, and I'm very excited to be hanging out with you guys today.

! Today is a super day. See where I'm going with this? Super Bowl Sunday. This year the NFL celebrates 50 Super Bowls.

It's a lot of nachos, pizza rolls, stuff like that. So one interesting thing about the Super Bowl, or about American football rather, is that you probably knew this, but may not have thought about it in a while. A long time ago, players didn't wear helmets when they played football.

Now, they're not quite the same players that they are these days, right? These players these days start when they're really young, and they have, you know, workout coaches, and strength and conditioning coaches, and they eat the right foods and diet, and things look a little different.

But if you were playing when the NFL first started, before the first Super Bowl, you may have had a helmet that looked a little bit like this.

[1 : 20] That's not the helmet. It's really exciting once you see it. The first mandatory helmet wasn't around until 1943.

The last player to play a game without a helmet was in the 1940s. Ironically, it was actually the last piece of football equipment to be deemed mandatory, which is really funny when you think about...

Yeah, so that's it. I mean... It looks like part of the electric chair or something. So, now, so if you were playing with that helmet, right?

And then you were to fast forward 80, 90 years, and players these days are playing with this helmet, tell me, which helmet do you want to be wearing?

You'd have to be really silly to not realize that, in this sense, the old ways, the old leather-strapped helmet, and the new ways, the new, sophisticated, technologically advanced piece of equipment, they don't blend. They don't go together.

[2 : 29] In fact, a player wearing a leather helmet these days, if he tried to get in this Super Bowl, would not even be allowed on the field, right? He'd say, no way, that's against the rules. So, what do I want you to learn from this? It's simple. The old and the new, they don't mix. They don't blend together.

Especially in this circumstance. So, we're going to be continuing the parable series today, Luke 5, 33-39, which contains two parables that reveal to us the same principle.

The principle that the old ways and the new ways don't mix. Write that down. The old and the new, they don't mix. They're the parables of the old and new garments and the old and new wineskins.

Pray with me real quick before we jump into our text. Heavenly Father, we delight in worshiping you through music as we've just done. And we delight in worshiping you through studying your scripture.

Lord, let our hearts be soft and open to the words that you have for us. Lord, speak through me as your servant, as your vessel. Lord, may your point come across.

[3 : 37] May your scripture come across as authority in this room today. We thank you so much. Amen. Read with me Luke 5, 33-39.

And they said to him, this is Jesus and the Pharisees. And they said to him, the disciples of John fast often and offer prayers.

And so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink. And Jesus said to them, can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away and then they'll fast in those days.

He also told them a parable. No one tears a piece of new garment and puts it on an old. If he does, he'll tear the new and the piece from the new won't match the old.

And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it'll be spilled and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.

[4 : 44] And no one after drinking old wine desires new. For he says, the new is good. So here's where we're coming from in these two parables.

Chapter 5 of Luke, Jesus has just chosen his 12 disciples, right? He said, drop your nets and follow me. He's ministering in local towns and cities. And the thing is, he's stirring up some serious excitement and some crazy controversy.

Namely with a group known as the Pharisees. So the Pharisees are a key group of people in these parables. But if you don't know who they are, if you haven't thought about in a while, who are the Pharisees?

I'm going to read an excerpt from an online article. The Pharisees were the most numerous and influential of the religious sects of Jesus' day. They were strict legalists. They stood for the rigid observations of the letter, forms of the law, and also for the traditions.

There were some good men among them, no doubt. But for most part, they were known for their covetousness, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy. Another section reads, the incredible influence of the Pharisees among the masses cannot be mistaken.

[5 : 51] They were the most honored in Judaism at the time of Christ, when Christ won the favor of the people. Another section, the Pharisees were deeply concerned with the following after the law, and had thus separated themselves from the great masses of the people of the land by their strict adherence to the minutiae of their legal tradition.

So let's take a look at the context surrounding our verses today. Read with me in Luke 5, 12 to 13. Just turn a page over, it might be on the same page in your Bible.

It reads this way. We don't really talk a lot about lepers in our times in these days.

Culturally, the lepers were outcasts, right? They had leper communities. No one touched these people. They were scary. They looked terrible. They were society's outcasts.

And in fact, if you did happen to touch a leper, and you were clean without leprosy, you became unclean. And so, so Jesus touches this leper, something that just didn't happen.

[7 : 21] A clean person touching this unclean man. Let's continue on in the context. Luke 5, 17 through 24. It's a big chunk. Here we go. On one of those days, as he was teaching, this is Jesus again, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee, Judea, and from Jerusalem.

And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him and lay him before Jesus. But finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.

And when he saw their faith, he said, Man, your sins are forgiven. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, Who is this who speaks and blasphemes?

Who can forgive sins but God? When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier to say? Your sins are forgiven you or rise up and walk, but that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins.

He said to the man who was paralyzed, I say to you, Rise, pick up your bed, and go home. So Jesus cleansed a leper. A clean man cleanses a dirty man.

[8 : 38] And now, he heals this paralyzed person, but he doesn't just heal him physically. How else does he heal him? He heals him spiritually, right? Something big was going on. This Jesus.

And people knew it. Look at verse 17, right? They came from every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem, right? The place was packed. It wasn't the size of a Super Bowl stadium, but it was as packed and as excitable as a crowd, right?

They had a low room from the roof. And guess what? The Pharisees were there. Continue on. After the leper and after the paralytic, Luke 5, 27 through 29. One of the last chunks of our context here. 27 says this. After this, he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, follow me. And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

And Levi made him a great feast in his house. And there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at the table with them. What happens here?

[9 : 40] Jesus isn't healing anyone physically. He's doing something much greater, much bigger. He forgives Levi's sins.

And then he goes and Levi invites him into his house, right? So he eats dinner, which especially in biblical times was seen as a relationship, right?

He's relating to tax collectors who, if you didn't know, were culture's scum. Christ is in the company of the least righteous in society.

And this made the Pharisees so angry. So how are the tax collectors viewed in biblical times? A quick side note. Tax collectors in the Bible were Jews working as traitors against their fellow Jews, taking taxes from their countrymen and giving them to the oppressive Roman Empire.

All while skimming a little bit off the top for themselves. So it's not like the IRS is trying to, you think, steal money from you, right?

[10:41] This is someone who lives down the street, who you see walking their dog, who is a fellow Jew, taking your money. Tax collectors weren't seeing very good in society.

Let's continue on in the last part, verses 30 to 32. And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at the disciples saying, Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?

And Jesus answered them, Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I haven't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Wow.

Right? So these pious religious peoples, the Pharisees, who don't even really interact with unrighteous people. Christ comes and says, Hey, I'm not here for the righteous.

I'm here for the sick. I'm here for the sinners. And Christ is stirring the pot. Right? He's got every answer for these Pharisees. The Pharisees are righteous and they're ticked. Christ is creating an earthquake through the heart of the Pharisees' very belief system.

[11:53] What's always been for them. What's always been their identity in pursuing righteousness and gaining support from the people. The funny thing is that Christ was the promised Messiah, but the Pharisees couldn't even see him.

He was right in front of them. But why not? Good question. We're going to get back to that. So it's today's main text. Look with me, if you will, at Luke 5, 33 through 35.

We're going to break this up into a few chunks. And friends, we see Christ and the Pharisees right back at it. Continuing with where they left off. Let's read 33 through 35 again.

And they said to him, The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers. And so did the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink. Jesus said to them, Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?

The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away. And they'll fast in those days. In Jewish law, Christ is questioned about fasting by the Pharisees.

[13:00] In Jewish law, fasting was only commanded one day a year on the Day of Atonement. Leviticus 23, we're not going to turn there. Leviticus 23, 26 through 30, talks a little bit about that.

There were rules and regulations. The chief priests of Israel atoned for the sins of the people, of all Israel, with the sacrifice, the blood of an animal.

And so if you were an Israelite in those times, you wouldn't necessarily be offering your own sacrifice in the Day of Atonement, but you would have certain actions and job. It was humility, right? You were praying. You were mourning over your sin. You were fasting, not eating. Wearing a sackcloth, which happens to be a coarse cloth made from goat's hair.

Which doesn't sound very comfortable. But also you had ashes on yourself. And so there was a sense of sorrow and a sense of mourning while you were fasting on the Day of Atonement.

[13:59] And that was, again, the only day that fasting was commanded. Ironically, the Pharisees added days that they fasted. Actually, they typically fasted on Mondays and Thursdays as well.

They pushed their fasting onto others as laws, right? As part of, this is the regulation. This is what we have to do. They added to the law for the sake of their own righteousness. Public fasting, as we read in Matthew 6, 16 through 18, was a means of worship.

And this is what it says in Matthew 6. And when you fast, don't look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they've received their reward.

But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others, but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Fasting was an act of worship, not a command in the New Testament. So we've talked about fasting. Let's talk about what Jewish weddings looked like in Bible times.

[15:08] This was the other part of Christ's answer to their question about fasting. A Jewish wedding looks a little bit different than our weddings do. At least than mine did. They typically lasted seven days, right?

There was joy and excitement. The guests hung out with the bridegroom for seven days, celebrating, encouraging joy for the bridegroom and the bride.

And the last thing in this section is that Christ kind of subtly reveals his deity here. And like he did in the context in chapter five with the leper and the paralytic and Levi, he's showing a little bit of his authority.

But once again, I guess he doesn't pick up on it, right? The Pharisees. The funny thing is that Christ could have stopped the discussion right here, right?

The Pharisees' question was, why are your disciples fasting and praying like ours and John? And Christ answered their question. He says, the wedding, the wedding guests, they don't need to fast.

[16:14] I'm the bridegroom. So he answered there. The discussion could have been done. But what does he do in a very Christ-like way, right? He continues on. And he continues on with parables.

We're going to read Luke 5, 36 to 38 again. Also, he also told them a parable. No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old.

If he does, he'll tear the new. The piece from the new will not match the old. No one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it'll be spilled.

And the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine desires new. For he says the new is good.

What is he talking about? That disciples weren't exactly known as, you know, the geniuses of biblical times.

[17:14] The Pharisees were, right? They were scholars and the scribes were. What's Christ talking about? Old and new garments. If you've done your research, you'll realize that Express and Old Navy weren't around in the Bible times.

And so you couldn't just go down, right, and get that, like, Christmas, buy one, get one, half off sweater deal. A lot of people made their own garments. And most garments were made out of wool. The thing about wool, some of you people may have ruined a sweater or two in your time and you realize that once wool gets wet, right, and it dries, it shrinks.

And so if you have an old shirt that you really like that has a hole in it and you have a new shirt that looks great and has no hole, you for some reason might think, why don't I take a patch from this new beautiful shirt for the same color?

And I'll sew it into the old one and then my old shirt that I love will be great. The problem is that when that old shirt is washed, your patchwork will shrink and it will tear your old shirt even worse.

[18:20] And so you're left with an old torn shirt which you already had, but you're also left with a new shirt with a giant hole. So now you have two ruined shirts. So you've gained nothing. So clearly we don't want to take patches from new shirts and put them in old garments.

How about the wine? Okay, that makes sense. How about the wineskins? What's a wineskin?

Wineskins, if you don't know, which I didn't, were clean goat skins or bladders that were used to hold wine and you could travel with it around as you're traveling.

And you could hold your wine in it. But what were they used for it? Well, when you crush grapes, grapes have yeast on their skin. And as you crush the grapes, this process of oxidation begins rapidly.

And over time, the yeast oxidizes the sugars from the grapes. And voila, we have wine, right? We have alcohol. We have fermented grapes.

Carbon dioxide, sounds like chemistry class, is a byproduct of fermentation. So that means when you put your new wine into your wineskin, your wineskin has to be stretched, be able to be stretched and flexible.

[19:40] And if not, what's going to happen? If you put it into an old wineskin and the wine's not done fermenting and it expands, it blows up. Because old wineskins are brittle. They've already done their stretching.

They've already done their expanding. You're not supposed to put new wine into an old wineskin. Because then you have ruined your old wineskin, which you may use as a, you know, something to hang around your house to look nice.

And your new wine is ruined. Anyone has an old wineskin? Can you see me after? So now you've ruined your wine and you'd be very unhappy. Now, at this point, you might be thinking, gee, this is a really boring parable.

You lost me at the part about the wineskin and the wool sweaters. Which is actually kind of funny because the Pharisees were probably thinking the same thing. Jesus, what are you talking about? What are you doing? Right? Jesus was telling them these parables. For some reason though, we have to think that what Jesus was saying actually mattered.

[20 : 45] And that it's in the scripture for some point. What was he talking about? Why did he reference these things? Why did he use these parables? And what in the world does it have to do with the question about fasting?

The answer is simple. As we talked about earlier with the football helmets. Christ shows that when it comes to some things, the old and the new don't mix.

The new wine and the old wineskins. The new patch from the new garment and the old garment. But why is this relevant? Remember the Pharisees? A law-abiding, self-righteous, pious group. They had thousands of years of Jewish culture, traditions, laws, and rituals.

Right? Strict adherence to God's law was what he demanded from his people. There were rules for the worship at the tabernacle, for sacrifices, for what animals you could use, for how you had to dress, what you could eat.

You couldn't shave your face. You had to wear head coverings. Your hygiene. Human interactions. Tons and tons of laws. With the old covenant, which the covenant's in agreement between two parties.

[21 : 53] The old covenant, the Mosaic covenant, the agreement between God and man. People's sins were paid for with the blood of an animal. We talked about this. The Day of Atonement. But then you have Christ coming in saying, No.

You got it all wrong. Something's different now. And Christ didn't seem to care about Jewish law. He didn't seem to have any regard for what the Pharisees, and especially, but what the Jewish people had been knowing for their whole lives.

You see, Christ knew that the law wasn't meant to complete or endure just to sustain for a time. Think of it this way.

Like a ship's crew lost at sea. In a yellow floating raft. In the pockets in the side of the raft they're left with a few rations, a little bit of food, maybe some shelter, a tent or something like that.

A handful of patches in case the raft starts to leak. And a hand pump in case they feel really ambitious. The thing is that, that crew actually needs extremely strict adherence to the rules of survival to survive.

[23 : 18] But that's not where their hope is. They're not ending there. They're not trying to be lost at sea forever. They're longing for a greater end. A stable vessel to rescue them and bring them to safety.

The old way of the law which the Pharisees clung to and the new way of Christ didn't mix. We get this now. Well, what was the new way of Christ?

Christ's earthly ministry was unveiling God's gospel. God's good news. It was Jesus Christ himself. Christ's earthly ministry was revealing his deity, was revealing his authority, was revealing that he came to save.

That's the gospel. Christ has come to save. Living apart from the law, the Pharisees couldn't do it. It rocked their world. It made them so angry.

They were the esteemed law followers. They were soaked in strict following of the rules and the law. And then Christ comes in and he's revealing something new, right? Actually, he's saying the law, there's something greater.

[24 : 27] There's something greater than the law. There's something greater than what's always been. Righteous living, according to Christ, wasn't going to be enough anymore. He was so clear in how he lived this out.

What was the something greater? What's greater than the law? We know this, friends, it's repentance. Christ lived out his gospel of repentance, his new way in ministering, in how he worked on earth.

And we see it in chapter 5 leading up to our two parables in our main text. Let's read again Luke 5, 33-39.

Sorry, let's not read that yet. That's our main text. Leading up to our main text, the context, right? The leper, the paralytic, and Levi, the one who was saved.

Well, Christ showed the need to repent. In verse 32 he said, I have not come to call the righteous but sinners. All men have sinned. Number two, Christ showed his authority to heal and forgive sins. [25 : 34] There's grace. The leper healed physically. The paralytic healed physically and spiritually. So Christ revealed that all have sinned and need to repent.

And Christ revealed that he could heal and forgive. That there was grace. And the third thing is that he showed anyone who could accept this forgiveness. His gift. His free gift of grace. And this was our example of Levi, verses 27-32.

Levi had a complete change in lifestyle. He went from fraudulent, scum, tax collector, right? The least righteous in the Pharisees' eyes. To a follower of Christ like that.

That's the gospel shoreline. That's how our lives have been changed. And that was Christ's ministry. To show the need to repent.

To offer grace. And to allow people to accept. By verse 33, it's clear to us, the Pharisees should have understood. Why are they still questioning?

[26 : 37] Why are they still doubting? How can they not see this? Why are they still clinging to the law? Right? They've seen the lives changed before their eyes. They were there in the beginning of chapter 5. They saw these miracles.

Why is it so hard to understand for them? Doesn't it seem so easy to us? Read with me Matthew 23, 25-26. This is a tremendously sobering verse.

Essentially, Christ gives a dissertation. The seven woes to the scribes and Pharisees. Matthew 23, 25, and 26 reads this way.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they're full of greed and self-indulgence.

You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside may also be clean. The heart of the Pharisee shoreline, unfortunately, is so often the heart of you and me.

[27 : 45] Right? We want to look more Christian. We want to feel more righteous. We want to follow the law, the Christian rule book, the Bible. In our heart of hearts, we want to feel good about ourselves.

We want to be satisfied by our own means, our accomplishments, by abiding to the law's standards and the rules of Scripture. Sometimes we see the need to change, but we just tweak it.

We adjust a little bit. We adjust our habits and our lifestyles. And after all, it feels good to follow the rules, right? Because we can easily just kind of fix what's wrong on the outside.

We do something, but it's not the right thing. And we don't want to let go of our past. Of the things that have deemed us righteous. The selfish things.

Stricted here and so the law means, as a means of righteousness, binds us. It traps us. Right? It teaches us that you just need a little more.

[28 : 53] That eventually you'll be good enough, right? If you do enough good things, if you do enough righteous things, if you live this way, just a little more and we'll be sad. And so what we do as Christians is, over here we stack up all of our good things, right?

And over here we stack up all of our bad things. And we compare the piles. Which one's bigger? Which one's less? Okay, if I do this a little bit different, if I pull that up and add it to here, then I'll be... Or if I do this and throw...

And our source of life and our source of our ability and our existence is from ourselves, right? And guess what? Who's the savior then? Us.

We're our own savior, right? Because we're deeming ourselves righteous based on what we see ourselves doing outwardly. Our desire for acting and living right gets in the way.

It clouds our vision of the reality of our true need. I remember so many times driving over the Gold Star Bridge right here in Groton. And you look over and you expect to see the EV shipyard and the lighthouse and boats in the harbor, right?

[30 : 05] But it's cloudy that day. It's foggy. And you look over the bridge and if you were just driving through, you'd have no idea there was a river there. You would have no idea of what goes on apart from what you see in the rails of the bridge.

But does that mean it's not there? No. But that's what happens. We fog our vision. We don't see our true need. We need to repent.

We need life change. The good news, friends. Christ has come offering something new. A new way. An escape from the law from the old way.

Repentance means two things. It means freedom. And it means new life. How do we see the gospel?

And how do we see these truths lived out in verses 33 to 39? Well, first we need to realize that Christ was speaking to the Pharisees. But he's also speaking to his apostles.

[31 : 09] Other Jews who were observing and watching. Other non-Jews, perhaps. Anyone who's in attendance, Christ was speaking to them in these parables. He was speaking to all people, which means he's speaking to us.

And if the scripture transcends time, right? If the scripture just doesn't apply to certain people, truths of scripture, then there's something in this for us. Even if we're not Jewish.

Even if we're not Pharisees. So where was the gospel of Christ? Where was the new way of repentance with freedom and new life in verses 33 through 39?

We're going to unravel this. This is the last part. In regards to the fasting and the wedding guests. Christ's new way of repentance means freedom and new life in two ways in these parables.

The first way, it means freedom and new life in how I worship. Looking at my worship as a means of valuing Christ, not weighing how valuable I am or I feel.

[32 : 19] A feasting instead of fasting. The joy of a wedding. Not the mourning and gloom of atoning for our sins. In an act of Protestant penance. Freedom and new life in how we worship.

Not restrictions and laws. Not getting ourselves down because we haven't lived up to a certain religious standard. Christ's blood's taken our sin and atoned for them.

So that we can be free from following the law. Galatians 5 says, It's for freedom that Christ sets you free. It's not for bondage that Christ has set you free. It's for freedom.

That means we can be set free from following the law as a means to our own righteousness.

Hallelujah. This is a reason to celebrate Shoreline. Let's feast on what the Lord has done.

Let our tradition and worship be filled with joy and excitement. Let's stop worshiping for our salvation and start worshiping because of our salvation.

[33 : 28] We have a new life. We're the bride and we know the bridegroom friends. His name is Jesus. He's left his body on the earth.

But take hope because his spirit remains and dwells us in our hearts. And if you're a believer in Jesus, there's a glorious day coming when we will reign with the bridegroom as his bride in heaven.

Enjoying the riches of his grace for all time. So that's how Christ's new way of repentance means freedom and new life and how we worship. But how does it mean?

How else does it mean? In regards to the old and new garments and wineskins. Well, Christ's new way of repentance means freedom and new worship in who I am. I'm going to read Ephesians 4, 22 through 24.

It reads this way. Paul speaking here. And put off your old self which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.

[34 : 33] And to be renewed in the spirit of your minds. Put on the new man. Created after the likeness of God and true righteousness and holiness. So as the new garment of the new man can't patch the old one.

And as the new wine of the Holy Spirit led life of the believer cannot be placed in an old wineskin. So also, friends, our righteousness being found through our repentance in Christ's blood where we've been declared pure.

Cannot fit into a lifestyle that says, My righteousness is found in my living up to the standards of Christian living. How would we fall into that trap? It's a disease of self-analysis.

Do I measure up today? Am I good enough today? How well do I feel like I'm doing? Right? We check these boxes of spiritual disciplines. I've done that.

I've done this. I read my Bible. Where do we do these kind of things? We do it in all facets of our life. Maybe it's at work, right? Maybe it's with our attitude. We don't feel like we have the right attitude.

[35 : 42] And we just, something's got to be different. We got to change something. Because I'm not good enough at work. Or maybe I'm too good at work, right? And I'm seeing myself as hyper-righteous because, all my friends know I'm a Christian.

Maybe it's with evangelism at work, right? You're obsessing over preaching the gospel and failing to do your job. Or maybe it's the opposite, right? You're so conservative and relaxed.

People will know. They'll just know. I don't need to spread the gospel. I'm okay. Maybe it's at home with your marriage, where you don't feel like you're living up to standards as a husband or a wife. Where you feel like you need to do better or be more. Maybe it's with your children, with discipline or how you feel like you're raising them.

Is it with your church ministries or outreach ministries? Do you always feel like you're not doing enough? Or do you feel like you're getting your righteousness from all the things you're doing? [36 : 46] Maybe it's material possessions. Do you get your worth from those? Is that where you find your righteousness? Is that where you find your worth and value? Or maybe it's personally, with your battle with anger or pride or lust or selfishness.

Where you're obsessing over whether you're winning or losing. Whether you're in the right or in the wrong. It's a downward spiral of self-condemnation, right? We're always trying to work harder. We're trying to do more. And we're so saturated in ourselves. The box checking. We get caught in the fact that we've either been doing poorly for so long that who cares?

Just cruise on through. Or we've been doing so well for so long that, man, I can just really relax, right? I can enjoy some other things. And our excitement and our pursuit of God becomes dulled. Because we're seeing ourselves as doing well. We're doing okay. I'm okay. For now. And so we gain our worth and our condition. And we have continual self-progress reports that we're putting out for ourselves, right?

[37 : 59] This isn't the way. That's slavery to the law. That's not living redeemed. Christ has broken these chains, friends.

He stood on the cross and he said, I've paid for that. I paid for you. He set us free from this. There's a new way. You want to check a box? Check the box that says, I've been redeemed. That box brings freedom. That box brings new life.

When it comes to how you're doing as a Christian, here's how you're doing.

Because of Christ, you can say two things. I'm not deemed unrighteous or unworthy because of my sin. I'm not deemed unrighteous or unworthy because of my sin.

[38 : 58] And I'm not declared righteous because my adherence to Christian standards of living. Friends, we're robbing our savior of his blood.

We're becoming our own saviors. Stop looking at what you're doing. Stop obsessing over your righteousness. Live through the new man.

Live through freedom. So what does all this mean? I was talking to my wife, Jules, a few nights ago and just feeling anxious and feeling like, what do we take home from this?

It bugs me when I come to church and I just feel like, oh, that was really encouraging and cool. But I don't know what to do. I need something to hold.

I need three points to write down on a piece of paper. Because then I can actually do something with this, right? I don't just want to be encouraged. I just want to meditate on something or think about something.

[40 : 04] Someone, two days ago, sent me an email early in the morning and said, I'm praying for you. And I said, that's really good. And I didn't really realize why I needed that.

Because I was so fixed on figuring out, what do we do with this text? Friends, God told me later that day, what's the point, you idiot?

He didn't say idiot, but... That's the point! We can't just sit in our identity. We can't just be content with who we are.

We can't just glory in our freedom and in our new life because we're being pulled with rope from every extremity. Telling us that we need to make sure we're living up to standard and make sure we're doing it the right way.

And make sure your boxes are checked. Because then you'll feel righteous. Why can't we feel righteous because we've been redeemed? We have to start with our identity shoreline.

[41 : 11] That's the point. I don't think Christ was trying to give us three tips to use as you go home.

And the ways to apply this text. I don't think that's what he's doing. Now there's other places in scripture that do that, right? Especially Paul's epistles. I mean, they're filled with practical ways to live the Christian life.

And those are fine. Those are good. But like me, maybe you always sit on those points. You're always looking for the what can I do.

We need to start with our identity. We have freedom and new life in Christ Jesus. And I think until that really soaks in, and I think until we can find joy and contentment in knowing who we are, we'll always go back to ourselves.

We'll always keep looking in the mirror and seeing our sin instead of seeing the blood of Christ. And so, how do you apply this?

[42 : 21] You apply this by letting your foundation be your redemption. Your freedom and new life in Christ. The rest comes after that.

See, if we don't know our freedom and new life, we'll never know that our righteous deeds don't count. It's like getting your car and knowing you need to go somewhere, but not knowing where you're going, right?

Well, you know the roads, you know your vehicle, you know how to drive. But none of that really matters. See, we can know how Christians ought to live from the scripture, and we do.

But none of it, none of it matters, because when you fail and when your righteous deeds don't match up to what you think they should be and what scripture says, you'll cave in and you'll collapse.

That's not why we've been saved. We've been saved so we can live free and new life. Here's a couple things we can do in terms of things to consider and pray about.

[43 : 23] First of all, if you're in this room today and you don't know Jesus as your savior, and if you don't know him, you probably know you don't know him. I have these questions for you.

Do you see your need to repent? Do you see his authority and his ability to offer forgiveness that leads to freedom and new life? As we saw today, he offers salvation to all.

This is a choice that you can make today. There's no greater choice to make in our lifetimes than to trust Jesus as our righteousness.

His blood covers all sin. If you're a believer in this room, if you know Jesus, I would ask you to consider these things. Number one, one thing to consider is ask God to soften your heart so that you can regularly be reminded of his glory, that is his repentance.

Maybe you feel trapped and far from God because you're not measuring up. And so do you acknowledge Christ's authority and ability to forgive? You see you can freely return.

[44 : 37] There's no time period too long. There's no sin too great. Scripture says nothing can separate us from the love that's in Christ Jesus. Remember what we said?

You're not deemed unrighteous or unworthy because of your sin. Do you know that he can set us free from the entangling sins and our habits, especially self-righteous that binds us?

And then finally, is your identity the foundation for your living? And that's something that we can never consider and meditate on enough.

When we feel like we've met, we've come to the end of who we are, we've deceived ourselves. And so friends, I leave you with this. The old and the new do not mix.

But Christ's way offers repentance, leading to freedom and new life. Play with me, please. Heavenly Father, you are so good to us.

[45 : 41] Lord, we've been given new life and freedom through your repentance, God.

I pray the hearts of all of us here, myself included, would glory in our righteousness as your child, in our new life and freedom, not in our righteous deeds.

God, the message that Christ had for the Pharisees is the message he has for us. Reveal your gospel to us, Lord. Speak to us each day.

God, you're so good and so faithful. And it's in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, the great Messiah, that we confidently pray these things.
in my life.

[47 : 11] What does that even mean? Right? For hundreds of years.