

# Beware Temptation

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, may you hear this cry of our hearts. The understanding and the humility that we need to believe that, Lord, I need you.
- Some of us were really easy to convince of this truth. Others, it took a time. For some, they still don't see this.
- Father, my prayer is that you would open blind eyes. That you would heal broken hearts. And that you would bring focus to scattered minds. To this simple truth that we need you.
- I ask these things in your most holy, precious, and wonderful name. Amen. One pastor tells this story.
- [ 1 : 18 ] About a young woman who came to Christ. In a marvelous way. Her conversion was, from a human perspective, partly due to the fact that she had come to a very low place in her marriage.
- Making her intensely aware of her spiritual need. But having met Christ in her extremity, her life took on in immediate buoyancy.
- She was truly a new person. And it was beautiful to behold. Sadly, her troubled husband did not follow suit as she had dearly hoped.
- After a year of continuing marital disappointment, she sought help from a counselor. Sadly, instead of receiving help, she became the victim of a professional seduction.
- It began with extravagant sympathy. Compliments about her attractiveness to shore up her fractured ego. Then subtly suggestive comments.
- [ 2 : 29 ] The next appointment, she dressed and centered herself with the palpitating self-attention of a first date. She was seduced. And there followed the inevitable history of liaisons and further damage to her fragile self-esteem.
- When she came to my wife and I for counseling, she was a ruined person, seething with bitterness and rage. To be sure, she was a victim of an unprincipled man in professional sheep's clothing.
- But she was also a victim of self. But amazingly, it was neither to him nor herself that she placed ultimate blame.
- Rather, she said through clenched teeth, I asked God to lead me to the right person. And he led me to this man. It is God's fault.
- He is to blame for what happened. How prone we are to blame others, aren't we? Truly, it's been the story from the very beginning.
- [ 3 : 44 ] When Adam and Eve first shared in that apple, Adam so eloquently blamed his wife. Lord, it was the woman you put here with me.
- She gave me the fruit which I ate. And Eve herself simply stated, It was the serpent who deceived me.
- And I ate it. It seems that has been our cry from the very beginning of time. When confronted with sin, our sin, it is to blame others.

If you've been with us for these past couple of weeks, we've been doing this short series called A New Year, A New You, dealing with trials.

And I decided we'd deal with one more on the subject of temptation because we've been studying the book of James. And James, after speaking about trials, so naturally comes into dealing with temptation.

[ 4 : 56 ] For James knows that when we don't respond rightly to trials, it can open up doors of temptation, which in this case, this young Christian was quick to blame on God.

Please turn with me to James chapter 1. We'll be reading from verse 13 to 18. James chapter 1.

James writes, Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God.

For God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Then desire, when it is conceived, gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.

[ 6 : 07 ] Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Let's be honest with one another.

Trials are tough. And on top of that, we only know too well that tough trials can often lead to wrong responses, which leads to sin.

So this morning, I want to answer some tough questions surrounding the issue as, Is God really to blame? Is there a place for blaming God?

Does God tempt us? Is God responsible for my sin? Is he responsible for me and my issues? Speaking from a pastor who loves you, I'm not here just to dispense information to you.

[ 7 : 22 ] I want to provide you this biblical teaching that my prayer is will transform your life. I pray that this will lead to a renewed way of thinking and ultimately a new way of living.

So the first question, what does James tell us about God? Take a look at verse 13. It says, Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

Boom, bang, drop the mic, it's over, right? He doesn't do it. James gets right down to the point. God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

The fact of the reality is, sometimes we go through trials that are so great, and they are so heavy, we are tempted to blame God.

I hear this often enough. I hear that when people have placed trust in God to deliver something for them, I hear this when people are going through tough times, I hear this when people are facing incredibly painful situations, they say, I am mad with God.

[ 8 : 49 ] I am frustrated with God. How could God allow this to happen to me? I am sure we all at one point have thought those things.

Others do it a little bit more subtly, right? Well, this was ordained for me. Some think that since God ordains everything, he must have ordained the situation in which I sinned.

Others will blame the circumstances. Others fault God for placing them in difficult circumstances that are simply too much for them.

An example would be, I was so poor I had to steal. My professor is so tough I have to cheat. I have to drink to get drunk because I need to dull the pain.

Then there's the other one. The third way we do this is called by disposition. God has just given me passions and appetites. I have to yield to them.

[ 10 : 06 ] If you're familiar with the writer Ernest Hemingway, that was his excuse for living the life that he did. I have passions. I must fulfill them.

And if I don't, I'm somehow less than authentic. But man's heart is clearly seen in Proverbs 19.3.

Man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord.

This will forever be our temptation to do, my friends. This word cannot be tempted. This phrase carries with it the idea of being unttemptable without the capacity for temptation.

It's the same thing as being invincible to the assaults of evil. This is God. God and evil exist in two mutually exclusive worlds.

[ 11 : 09 ] There is no cross-pollinization. They never meet. One of the greatest pictures that someone said, it's like God's ray of sunshine shining over a dump.

Those ray of sunshines are untainted by the dump. They're completely apart. Leviticus 19.2 simply says, you shall be holy for I the Lord, your God, am holy.

His holy is eternally unmixed with anything less than pure and perfect righteousness. Fully understanding that God absolutely has no vulnerability to evil or even temptation to evil.

The prophet Habakkuk simply said, you who are pure eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong. 1 Corinthians 10.13 says, So the concluding thought to this first question is, for God to be the one tempting us would be contrary to God's very nature in every word that scripture tells us about him.

It is who he is. God abhors evil. God is untouched by evil. He is holy.

[ 12 : 52 ] Amen? That is who God is. Now what does James tell us about us? Take a look at verse 14.

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by what? By his own desire.

The reality is James gets right to the heart of the problem with this issue. The problem is us. James calls our attention that we are the problem.

The temptation is universal. There are no exceptions. And because this verse is in the present tense, it actually states that temptation is a continuing, repeated, and inescapable reality of life.

Big words, right? Let me read this again. Temptation is a continuing, repeated, and inescapable reality of life.

[ 13 : 58 ] We learned that the last couple of weeks. We are going to be set by trials. That depresses me. To not be free of temptation.

If you're struggling with a specific sin issue, this is even more depressing.

Now notice where it says where temptation is coming from. It's coming from his or her own desire. It's not from God.

It's not from Satan. It's not from circumstances. It's from us. A lot of times, a lot of Christians, when dealing with issues, they will argue that the sin or the temptation must be from Satan and his minions, right?

One author simply states, man carries the combustible material right within himself. 1 John 2.16, clear verse, sums up everything perfectly about every sin.

[ 15 : 14 ] For all that is in the world, for all, everything, everyone that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, and the desires of the heart, and the pride of life is not from the Father, but is from the world.

This world produces things that we see and we desire. Our heart wants to make these idols issues for us.

Satan doesn't need to be a part of it. Demons don't need to be a part of it. This world simply, on its own, offers so many things that tempt us.

Romans 5.12 says, None of us are free from it.

This word, desire. This isn't just a word used with sexual things, but it's also greed for gain, greed for popularity, desire for power, desire for prominence.

[ 16 : 37 ] Now when I say those desires, we sometimes think it's greater. We tend to think, maybe this is a Donald Trump type of situation who desires power.

Well, think about those moments when you up-talk your spouse, right? You're in a social gathering. They're saying something, and you're kind of cutting them off.

You want the attention to you. It's the same root sin that is at work there. Disparaging comments about our co-workers, our friends.

Small issues. Small in our world, but big to God. But we somehow think that those aren't power, pride issues.

But they're all a matter of taking the focus off someone else, or placing a bad focus on them, so we look good. Perverted desires that gratify the flesh and do not bring glory to God.

[ 17 : 52 ] Where are those desires found? They are found in us. So this whole thing of temptation, what does temptation do?

Notice it when it says, when he is lured, when he is enticed by his own desire. There's a graphic meaning to these words. To be lured actually means to be drawn away, dragged off, compelled by inner desire.

Enticed means to be seduced. Temptation gets our attention, right? Any fisherman knows this, right?

They put that little worm in the lake, or a fake fly with a very nasty hook, hoping to trick the fish, who's sitting there in his nice little nest, right?

Enjoying his time. Then Cam Cairns comes along. Right? Throws that rod in there. And for that moment, that temptation is so great for the fish, you know, it kind of looks like the bug I ate yesterday, but kind of not.

[ 19 : 03 ] But what is it going to matter, right? I know my friend Bill and George aren't here anymore, but I'm not going to be like them. So what do we do?

That bait looks good. It smells good. Man, that is too attractive to resist. We throw caution to the wind.

We forget about safety. And our guard is down. We leave that nest. We chomp on that hook. And now we're being invited, people are being invited over to a barbecue to enjoy me, right?

What are the chances that there is another person looking to hurt me? Sin looks attractive. It's pleasurable for a time, doesn't it?

See, this is the greatest hook, my friends. Temptation is supposed to look good. It's supposed to be desirable. If I were to tell you that you would choose evil over righteousness, what would you tell me?

[ 20 : 13 ] You're crazy. If I told you that there will be a time where you will choose falsehood over truth, what are you going to tell me? I'm crazy, right?

If I told you you will choose immorality over purity, you'll tell me I'm crazy. If I tell you that you will choose the world's way over God's way, you will tell me I'm crazy.

But who hasn't done these things? Something must have affected our minds, our thinking, and our will so great that we chose evil, we chose falsehood, we chose immorality, we chose the world over everything we know is wrong.

that is temptation. The reality is Satan is not to blame.

The world is not to blame. Demons are not to blame. Your evil stepmother is not to blame. The problem is not the tempter from without, but the traitor that exists within.

[ 21 : 39 ] Fact is, we all have our special lusts, our special desires. We are all not the same. sin. So we know what God says about God.

We know what James says about us. What does he say about sin? Take a look at verse 15-16. Tells us about sin. It says, then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin.

And sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. Do not be deceived my beloved brothers. James is actually switching to a childbirth imagery.

Desire in and of itself is neutral. But it can lead to lust. And notice what it says, and when it is conceived gives birth to sin. So let's talk about sin.

If you grew up like I did, we were taught that sin is kind of like an archer. You guys remember that analogy? You know, an archer shoots at the target. He's trying to get the middle and he misses it.

[ 22 : 57 ] And they'll even tell you, you know, it's called a sin. They miss the bullseye, right? So it's like we're trying to hit that bullseye. That is a wrong definition of sin. If there's a target over there, this is what sin is.

It's shooting completely the other way, where you want to shoot, wherever and when you want to shoot, right? It's you wanting you. It is also being knowingly disobedient to the perfect will of God.

God. Now, James breaks down, there's a specific process and one of my pastors is very gracious in helping me understand this. That there's actually four separate yet distinct steps to sin.

We're going to break it down. The first one is desire. Desire. Something catches the interest of our heart, our minds, our eyes.

desire in itself is not a bad thing. It is both morally and spiritually neutral. But desire begins kind of as an emotion, right?

[ 24 : 05 ] A feeling or a longing. Sometimes it happens because we didn't have it. We want it expresses itself in a want to acquire or achieve or possess something.

It can be a watch in a jewelry store. It can be a model home. It can be a car. It can be a person or relationship.

But this desire is an intense desire to have it. And it gets to a point where it has our full attention.

This is the bait, right? Right? I remember when I shared a little bit about you. When I first started off, I was in my late 20s.

I started government work. I'm in a class of 15 other people that I live in intense six months of training. We're living in downtown Ottawa.

[ 25 : 10 ] And it was really interesting to see how the 15 of us were brought in to be specifically trained to work for the government and how we spent our leisure time. Some people wanted to rub shoulders with the political elite.

So when the weekends come, anybody familiar with the city of Ottawa? Been down there? Summertime, great city, right? There's a little part down below where Parliament Hill is and a lot of bars and things going on.

It's kind of this fun nightlife. There's usually carnivals and things, stuff like that going on. And different people would be attracted to different things. Some was the high-end rich stuff.

Some was the bands, all these different things. But there was one thing there that got my attention more than anything else. It was called Motorcycle Alley.

And it was all the guys would bring out their shiny new bullet bikes, racer bikes. I know, I'm 50. I'm over the hill. But I used to have a pretty nice bullet bike.

[ 26 : 13 ] It was a nice little Kawasaki ZX6R. I put a nice racing pipe and racing tires on it. You could hear me 20 minutes before you could see me.

All right? People would say when I'd come to their neighborhood, oh, we know BK's coming to visit, right? You could just hear the wind of the bike. And people would line up these bikes and you'd walk and you'd check out these bikes.

And there was a lot of like Italian brands that people get all hoo-ha. Those were usually the rich guys who didn't know how to ride would drive those, right? But there was one day, one guy brought in a bike that I wanted more than mine.

It was a special bike. I still have the picture of it. It was a Kawasaki ZX7RR. And I know most of you guys know what that means, right?

But what was amazing about this bike is this was the closest street legal bike that you could have at the time that was as close as to the street, the motor track version.

[ 27 : 19 ] It was horribly uncomfortable, but it was wickedly fast. And it was beautifully painted in lime green, right? Who likes anything in lime green, right? I do.

And I love this bike and I'd always come over and I'd look at this guy and I'd think my bike's kind of nice. You know, and I even had the customized helmet that matched my bike, right? And I'd look at this guy's bike and it was like there was this longing, this desire.

So he said to me, I'll sell it to you. I said, I'll buy it. Give me a week to sell mine and I'll come back and I'll buy it. So sure enough, I sold mine.

I got a great price for mine. I went over to his house, cash in hand, and he said, I don't have it anymore. Now, this is where sin's deception comes in.

I was devastated, not just by his deception of me, but I couldn't have this bike anymore. I could have turned around and bought another just as great bike as I used to have.

[ 28 : 29 ] But this was such a rare bike. I had convinced myself that I would never be happy unless I'm on the ZX7RR.

If it doesn't have the double R, it's nothing. Right? But this is where something I discovered in my heart that I was convinced that wasn't this bike, no other bike would bring me any sort of happiness.

happiness. See, this is where the mind kicks in. The desires bring about our emotions, then the mind tells you that nothing else will satisfy like this bike, this house, this person.

That's the deceptiveness of sin. temptation. When we think our desired object and we begin to rationalize it, justify for wanting it.

It's almost an automatic part of the temptation process. We don't tell our minds to rationalize our lusts because we're already predisposed to them.

[ 29 : 50 ] you know what I'm talking about. It's that extra glance at the woman you know you shouldn't be looking at. It's driving by that house that is out of your way when you go home.

It's that extra mouthful of food that you know you don't need. It's that extra daydream during the day when you start thinking about what life could be.

Or perhaps it's just stopping by the right stores and looking in the windows. What harm can it do? You see my friends, our desire is so strong that the rationalization starts and we begin to discount the dangers.

simply wanting it justifies our efforts to have it. And at this point lust has been conceived.

The third part of sin is the design. This is where the plans begin to form. I simply said, I love your bike.

[ 31 : 06 ] I said, do you want it? Do I ever. ever. Turns out he called me a month later, told me the bike was still available. I told him to take a hike.

Because within that month's time I had recognized there was something I had never faced about myself. Like for that whole month I'd lived, I could never be happy.

And I remember talking about my pastor with it, about it. You see, but when we start to make plans, we make plans to fulfill our emotional desire that we have rationalized and justified in our minds.

See, this stage involves our will, our conscious decision. It's to pursue the lust until it is satisfied.

And because our will is involved, this is the stage where most guilt resides. What has been longed for and rationalized is now consciously pursued as a matter of choice.

[ 32 : 15 ] we see this in ourselves, right? We want to be near something or we want to be near someone.

We go it over our way, we make excuses. For some reason we know it's best that we not create a certain relationship.

Let me give you a warning right now as husbands and wives. If there is someone that you desire speaking with or spending time with more than your spouse, you need to stop.

And it's easy. Some people are really pleasurable. And that's how our mind works. Well, they're so nice. They're so encouraging. They're so loving, right? They're really great. I remember being young, working at the bank, and I was having a hard time with my girlfriend.

at the time. And I remember just going to the bank and some woman saying, man, that tie is really good. And I remember automatic instant affections. How crazy is that? She just liked my goofy tie.

[ 33 : 27 ] But at home or in my relationship when I was all of 23 years old, things weren't really connecting very well. people. But that's how quick it can switch for us, can't it, right?

Just takes a kind word, a positive affirmation, something that we don't have, we start to desire more. Next thing you know, you're at the bank trying to work in the cubicle next to them, right?

Take your time with them at lunch. See, this is when the design, and then the next, the fourth stage is the disobedient stage. If we allow the process to continue, the design produces disobedience to God's law, by which it gives birth to sin.

That which is desired, that which is rationalized, that which is willed, is actually done, committed, and accomplished.

This, my friends, is called sin. The earlier in the process we determine to resist, the greater the likelihood we will avoid the sin.

[ 34 : 39 ] The longer we delay resisting, I won't go that far. I would never meet that person without my wife. The more likelihood the actual sin becomes.

Once you go into the road of disobedience, it's hard to come back. You see, my friends, the Bible tells us the battle must be fought in the mind with truth.

truth is our friend. You know that? God's word is our friend. Romans 12, 2 simply states, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of God.

Temptation comes in, good, bad, God, not God, let's go with God, right? Simple, it's done, right there. We need to take every thought that is, we need to take every thought captive.

The truth of God actually starts the conscience, right? The conscience starts to kick in. You shouldn't be looking at that object. You should not be driving down that street.

[ 35 : 54 ] You should not be talking to that man. All those things start to play in. Your conscience, the red light, there's a siren going off in your head. The fact is, if we lose the battle in the mind, we will lose the battle in the flesh.

See, our minds need to go on the offensive. We need to avoid temptation. We need to avoid places of temptation, situations where we know where we be tempted. For some of us, that might mean avoiding magazines, books, movies, TV programs, friends, the internet, stores, places where our emotions arouse.

I've never gone by motorcycle alley after the bike. Did you know that? I didn't go back. I was bitter and angry. You see, we then need to expose our emotions to godly things.

I'm going to tell you what Satan's best weapon to use against us is to separate us from one another. Do you know that? It's to separate us from one another.

My whole life before being a pastor was to recruit double agents. My whole role was taking a negative nation towards us and trying to get the ambassador to change his affections for his country and come to work for Canada, right?

[ 37 : 27 ] The number one way I did this is I isolated them. They didn't know it, but I would actually be isolating communication functions, people away from them to a person was alone, lost, and guess who walks in?

Hi, I'm BK, your best friend. That's how it works. Or I have someone like them lead them to me. somewhere along the way they will betray what they love to follow, what we believed was for the greater good.

This was terrorists I was dealing with, okay? But still, the same principle is what Satan uses. He isolates us. Any guy who works or any woman who works away from home knows how hard it is to be away from home.

I hated leaving home home when I was in the government. I hated being distanced from my friends. I hated the distance from my church. I hated being distanced from those who held me accountable.

People say, just read your Bible. I used to do studies in these hotel rooms where I travel around the world. My saving grace was Christian worship music at the time.

[ 38 : 47 ] There was always a place. They used to have these things called CDs. You guys remember them? Right? Before iPhone, iPods, all that. I used to bring my favorite CDs no matter where I went, no matter wherever I would be.

I'd always have a car, an office, or a hotel room with a CD player. That's how I would fill my mind with God's truth. It helped me to stay pure in my heart on him rather than the world because the world is tempting.

Just as Jesus did in the wilderness when Satan tempted him, Jesus responded with the word of truth. And this leads us to the final reason why God doesn't tempt us.

And this is because it's absolutely contrary to his character. Let's take a look at verse 17 and 18. This is a powerful couple of verses.

every good gift and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.



- [ 40 : 02 ] You know how sometimes the sun behind shadows skiers know it, right? It kind of plays on the snow with God. Nothing. It's clear. You know what you're getting. It's perfect.
- It's good. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. Let me tell you about God.
- This is James letting us know exactly who God is. These gifts coming down from above. This is a good and continual process. This isn't something that God just gave you good at 23 and now you're doing without.
- No, no. There's a continual process of God dispensing good things towards us. They are an ending. These gifts he gives us are perfect because why? He is the giver of the gifts.
- Amen? So even in those times of trials and discipline, there's good to be had. And that God is unchanging, not even like a shadow that sometimes moves to reveal something different.
- [ 41 : 07 ] It's not like this with God. God. Why is this important? So what happens if we don't catch sin in the desire phase?
- What then? You see, God knows something. God knows that you and I cannot fix ourselves.
- ourselves. Our problem is not external. Our problem is internal.
- And because it's internal, it means there's no ritual, no ceremony, no rite, no profession that we can do to change our nature.
- There's not anything we can do to take that combustible material, that leads to sin out of us. We cannot become righteous by trying to act righteously or talk righteously.
- [ 42 : 15 ] Our reality is we need new hearts. We need a new nature. It's like we need to be recreated. We need our old nature to be changed.
- We need to move from death unto life. We don't start by blaming others. We don't blame circumstances or even Satan or our temptations.
- We can't blame God. In order to get right with God, it begins with blaming, taking the full blame on ourselves. ourselves. We need to realize that our fallenness, our lusts, our weaknesses, our sins are all within us and they need to be dealt within us.
- And we need a Savior who can come in and change our hearts. We need someone greater than life and death, greater than ourselves, who can rebirth us.
- If you are here and you do not know Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior, perhaps this is the time. Perhaps this is the time that you understand that you have given birth to much sin in your life.
- [ 43 : 40 ] You are guilt-ridden. Everything you've tried to do to make it right has absolutely failed. You've tried being good.
- You've tried to be better than someone else. You know how that is, right? We don't try to be the best of ourselves. We just try to be better than that person next to us, right?
- You've tried being good. You try to act righteously, talk righteously, but sadly, there's still loss and defeat with those temptations every single time.
- Hey, man, you've got great control over your temper until your kids enter the room again, right? Perhaps you know yourself more for your sins than who you are.
- You see, when sin is fully grown, it becomes a habit. It actually determines your character. it becomes who you are.
- [ 44 : 53 ] Well, perhaps you are here and are a Christian, but you did not heed the warnings of your conscience. Maybe you stepped in a sin, walked into it, or ran into it.

Now you are neck deep in despair. every morning you feel shame. Your prayer to our God is, Lord, I want to make it right.

I want to make it right. I'm really sorry. Heck, you might even tell yourself you don't believe in God anymore, just so you don't have to deal with that shame and despair.

Or then you try to mask the guilt and shame by doing spiritual disciplines. You try covering it with prayers, with works. Perhaps you step up at the church more, but you do so out of guilt rather than joy.

You give your money to the church for guilt rather than joy. You tempt to cover up your shortcomings with moral formation. by golly, you may have been saved by grace, but you now live by works.

[ 46 : 17 ] I have good news. Things can change right here, right now. For those who do not know Christ and for those that are trapped in shame and despair and their life chosen, you want to be free of that sin.

You want to be free of that snare. You know that you are a slave to sin. It simply begins with confessing the sin.

Blame stops here. You're going to own your sin. You're going to ask God right here, right now, Lord, forgive me.

The whole action of repentance is not just simply saying, Lord, I'm sorry. It's now turning away and turning to Jesus Christ, who is the only soul satisfaction that you can have.

It's understanding that all that stuff, Paul actually says, is scuba on it. It's crap. It's garbage. Yet we all want to play there, but we come to a point with God where we don't want it anymore.

[ 47 : 37 ] God has opened our eyes to our reality. And now we're just simply turning to Jesus who died on this cross to save me from me.

of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruit of his creatures.

what James is doing is reminding us that God sent his only son, his perfect son, his son Jesus, to die on the cross.

He was holy, we are not. God knew that, knew a price needed to be paid, our sins needed to be washed away, and that happened on the cross.

even if you've been to the cross before, you can come back, you know that? If you're caught enslaved, trapped, in despair, misery, shame, the best place to be is at the foot of the cross.

[ 48 : 52 ] Jesus died so that you and I could be saved from this penalty of death, to be freed of this deception. It says the first fruits of his creatures, that is what God has designed for us to continually pour out his good gifts to us.

Maybe for some of you it's been a long time that you've tasted God's goodness. It's a long time that you felt his love.

It's a long time since you've been without shame. Well, you can be free of that right here, right now.

Begins with confession, begins with believing that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, not just my sins, not for good people's sins, but everyone's sins. No one here is righteous.

And it's why we get to come to the cross, to be saved from our garbage. My prayer for you is that you'd pray this prayer with me today.

[ 50 : 18 ] Let's go to him. Let's go to the King of Kings, Lord of Lords. Dear Holy Heavenly Father, Lord, I ask for your forgiveness for blaming you for my sin. Father, it is so easy to shift the blame.

But Father, we know here that freedom comes from blaming ourselves, owning our sins, and confessing that sin. Father, you promise that if we confess you with our lips that you are Lord, you will save us. You will make us righteous. Father, our predisposition is to come to you and clean ourselves up. But you're the one that...