

# The Evidence Speaks: Sin in Action

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Preacher: BK Smith

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

I invite you to stand as we prepare our hearts to worship the Lord this morning. Psalm 105 says, O give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wondrous works, glory in his holy name.

Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek the Lord and his strength. Seek his presence continually. Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered.

O offspring of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones. Let's join together and sing this morning.

[ 2 : 02 ] All creatures of our God and King. Lift up your voice and with us sing.

Oh, praise him. Oh, praise him. Hallelujah. Thou burning sun with golden beam.

Thou silver moon with softer gleam. Oh, praise him. Praise him.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Let all things their Creator bless And worship Him in humbleness Oh, praise Him, Alleluia Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son And praise the Spirit three in one Oh, praise Him, Oh, praise Him Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia All the redeemed washed by His blood

[ 3 : 55 ] Come and rejoice in His great love Oh, praise Him, Alleluia Christ has defeated every sin Cast all your burdens now on Him Oh, praise Him, Oh, praise Him Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia He shall return in power to reign Heaven and earth will join to say Oh, praise Him, Alleluia

The land who shall fall on bended knee All creatures of our God and King Oh, praise Him, Oh, praise Him Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia Oh, praise Him, Oh, praise Him Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia Good morning. Have a seat.

We're glad to welcome you here to Squamish Baptist Church, where we exalt Jesus as King, equip His followers for ministry, and engage the world with the gospel. My name is Dave Nannery. I'm one of the pastors here at our church. We're grateful to have you here. And as you came in, you were handed a bulletin. And on the inside, just keep an eye on a couple of announcements, because two of them have to do with this coming Sunday.

One is Hilltop House service at 2 o'clock, where we have an opportunity to care for the residents of Hilltop House who are not able to make it to morning service. And then the other is for a potluck luncheon to be held next Sunday following the church service. And there's instructions on there, a QR code to sign up, or if you want to, just contact the church office, and they will help set you up with your instructions for the potluck luncheon.

Another announcement here is something that we want to give you some more opportunities about. Many of you are often looking for prayer, as well you should. We want to pray for and support one another. And there are many ways to do that. Talk with any of us elders after the service. There's the contact card here where you can fill out a prayer request. You can send an email to the email address in there.

[ 7 : 05 ] We want to also give you one additional way. And if you're allowed to take out your phone right now, if you wish, and just capture that QR code on there. And we'll have you a link to that same page code for that in coming weeks as well, moving forward.

That gives you an opportunity to share any prayer requests you have. They will be sent directly to the elders of our church. And if you wish, then it can also be passed on to the prayer chain.

So we want to make sure you have that available to you. And you can follow that link at any time you wish, not just now, but throughout the week, to pass along prayer requests so that we can pray for you.

And if you wish, follow up with you on the things that are troubling you or that you're wanting help with in your life. Let's continue our worship this morning with the reading of scripture. And I'm going to invite you to turn to Romans chapter 3. Romans chapter 3.

If you don't have a copy of the Bible with you this morning, we want to make sure you have one in your hands. That'll be on page 940 of the Bibles that our usher's handout. If you don't have a copy of the Bible, just raise your hands and our ushers will be happy to supply you with one.

[ 8 : 21 ] So there's one right there. One here in the center. Jerry, if you can get that. Thank you. Could you raise your hand again? Thanks. And if you're using one of those Bibles, page 940, you'll find Romans chapter 3.

And I'm going to read for us verses 9 through 20. And I would invite you to follow along with us as I read. Let's all stand together in honor of God's word.

Romans 3 verses 9 through 20. And these are the words the Apostle Paul writes. What then? Are we Jews any better off?

No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin. As it is written, none is righteous.

No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless. No one does good.

[ 9 : 30 ] Not even one. Their throat is an open grave. They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.

Their feet are swift to shed blood. In their paths are ruin and misery. And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Now, we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law. So that every mouth may be stopped. And the whole world may be held accountable to God.

For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight. Since through the law comes knowledge of sin. These are God's words to us this morning.

I want to invite forward our ushers as they prepare to collect the morning offering. For those of you who are visitors, first-time guests, we want you to feel no pressure or obligation to give.

[ 10 : 36 ] For those who call Squamish Baptist Church their home, this is our opportunity to give faithfully to the Lord out of what he has entrusted to us. Let me pray. I thank you, Father, that you have not left us in this plight that we just read about.

This is the honest truth about us that we have tried very, very desperately not to see. And we come to you confessing that deep down this is true.

This is our pathway. And we have lived as though you were not present. We have lived as though you were not the judge. We thank you that our judge is also our Savior.

And we run to you. Asking that you may deliver us from not only the penalty of sin that we have earned, but deliver us from its power and deliver us from its very presence in our lives.

Lord, I pray this morning that we may remember not just what is true about ourselves, but even more importantly, what is true about you.

[ 11 : 42 ] We have nothing to boast in in and of ourselves, no merits to claim in ourselves. But we don't need to. We have all that we need in Jesus Christ.

Fill us with confidence as we lift our eyes and look to him. May we be attentive to what he says. May we not only remember together, but remind one another of who he is, the confidence and glory we have in our Savior.

Amen. Amen. Fall now, O sinner, on your coming judge to be here, even now as your Savior.

Fall now, O sinner, on the mercy and grace of Jesus, our judge and our Savior.

Who is he?

[ 13 : 11 ] We shall meet at the end of life's road, the one who will judge every heart, every soul.

Who is he? Who will one day sift the tears from the wheat? Jesus, our judge and our Savior.

Call now, O sinner, on your coming judge to be here, even now as your Savior.

Fall now, O sinner, on the mercy and grace of Jesus, our judge and our Savior.

Who is he?

[ 14 : 12 ] Who will end all the sin and the pain? The one who was dead, yet who rose up again.

Who is he? Who is he? Heaven praises as the lamb who was slain, Jesus, our judge and our Savior.

Call now, O sinner, on your coming judge to be here, even now as your Savior.

Fall now, O sinner, on the mercy and grace of Jesus, our judge and our Savior.

For the Lord will come down and the trumpet will sound at the mighty command of the Lord.

[ 15 : 16 ] And the saints will rise, meet the Lord in the skies, to be joyful in Jesus forever.

Call now, O sinner, on your coming judge to be here, even now as your Savior.

Fall now, O sinner, on the mercy and grace of Jesus, our judge and our Savior.

Of Jesus, our judge and our Savior. Well, as we continue to think of Jesus being our judge and our Savior, the Lamb of God who takes away our sin, we remember that salvation is a gift from God, and there's nothing that we can do to add to it or to earn it.

Our next song says, The labor of our hands can't fulfill the law's demands. And we already read that this morning in Romans chapter 3. And as we think about the text that we find ourselves in during the sermon series, we realize that the only rescue for our sin is to find ourselves hidden in Christ.

[ 16 : 37 ] The Apostle Peter in the book of Acts, when they were being questioned about the healing of a crippled man, knew that the one who raised Jesus from the grave was able to also heal this man.

And the only hope of salvation was to trust in this Christ who was rejected and broken so that we might be saved. So Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, says, If we're being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you all.

And then he says, This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

And so as we think of this next song of Christ being the rock of ages, being cleft for us, being broken for us, let's sing this together. Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee, let the water and the blood from thy wounded side which flowed before sin the double cure, save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labors of my hands can't fulfill thy lost demands.

[ 18 : 33 ] Could my zeal no respite know? Could my tears forever flow? All for sin could not atone.

Thou must save and thou alone. Nothing in my hand I bring Simply to the cross I cling Naked come to thee for dress Helpless look to thee for grace Foul I to the fountain fly Wash me, Savior, or I die While I draw this fleeting breath When my eyes shall close in death When I soar to worlds unknown See thee on thy judgment throne Rock of ages, cleft for me Let me hide myself in thee Rock of ages, cleft for me Let me hide myself in thee guitar solo When I look at your heavens The moon and stars You set in motion, O God I sing all glory and honor What is man that you are mindful The son of man that you would care for him

We sing all glory and honor O Lord, our Lord Oh, how awesome are your ways How majestic is your name In all the earth O Lord, our Lord May we see your kingdom come Father, may your will be done In all the earth In all the earth You gave dominion to your children And you crown them, O God With glory and honor So we'll sing of your name Live our lives for your greatness, O God And your glory and honor And your glory and honor

O Lord, our Lord Oh, how awesome are your ways How majestic is your name In all the earth O Lord, our Lord May we see your kingdom come Father, may your will be done In all the earth The earth is full of The glory of God Come, make much of The name above all names Creation cries out And every knee bows Jesus, we crown you Oh, Lord, our Lord The earth is full of The glory of God

[ 22 : 54 ] Come, make much of The name above all names Creation cries out And every knee bows Jesus, we crown you Oh, Lord, our Lord Oh, Lord, our Lord Oh, Lord, our Lord Oh, Lord, our Lord Oh, how awesome are your ways How majestic is your name In all the earth Oh, Lord, our Lord Oh, Lord, our Lord May we see your kingdom come Father, may your will be done In all the earth In all the earth

All right, please be seated if you are in grade six or younger.

Come to the front, please, as we pray for our young ones, as we send them off to junior church.

Cam never finished Sunday school, so he's up here getting in on it.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we just give you thanks for our young ones and how they bless our lives.

Oh, Father, we just thank you for trusting us with the stewardship of your young souls, both as parents, grandparents, and as a church, as we come together to lift up your name, to have them be a part of our worship, and as we continue to fulfill our desire to teach them in your ways, oh, Lord, just through our junior church program, I pray that you would be with our teachers today as they continue to build these relationships with these young ones.

[ 25 : 52 ] And I pray that these relationships would run deep and run for many years as they just get this glimpse into these young ones' lives. So, Father, we ask you for all these things and your blessings upon them in your most holy and precious name.

Amen. Amen. So, please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 3.

Romans chapter 3. If you are new or just visiting this area of Squamish, this area of Canada, beautiful Squamish, welcome.

We're glad to have you with us on this Lord's Day as we seek to lift up his name both through the preaching of God's word, the singing prayers, and the fellowship.

So, please hang out later. Get to know a few of the folks that reside here. They're okay. They don't bite, and they don't always ask you to join them on mountain biking or any other kind of arduous activity.

[ 26 : 57 ] So, this morning, we continue our study in the book of Romans. And as I stated last week, and I just want to bring you to where we are. If you missed last week, this is where we are located today.

Not only are we located in Romans chapter 3, but this Romans chapter 3 is a pivotal verse which explains to us why we need Jesus, why we need to be saved.

If John 3.16 is the verse that teaches us, explains us how to be saved, this is the section of Scripture that explains why we need to be saved.

We've been unfolding this drama from 1 to 3 as if it was almost this courtroom where Paul is bringing these charges and people are objecting that Paul begins his courtroom proceedings in verse 18 where he declared that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man.

First, he called the irreligious, the pagans, those who are on the outside, the idol worshipers, the Gentiles. He exposed their sin as being loud, public, and unashamed.

[ 28 : 26 ] That they denied the truth, they distorted the Creator, and they dishonored their bodies. Paul stated quite clearly, they are without excuse.

They know who God is. Guilty. In chapter 2, Paul moved the spotlight to the religious elite, the Jews, the ones with the law, the covenants, the heritage, the sign of circumcision, the insiders, as it were.

And he found them that no one escapes the charges either, that they are found guilty as well. So this next section that we're looking at, and I want you to really understand from verse 9 to verse 12, is kind of a legal analysis.

Paul had all declared everyone guilty, and now he's explaining to them why they are guilty. It's like you've been in court, you've been found guilty, and you don't know what's going on, and your judge is now taking, or your lawyer, is now explaining why.

Why have you been found guilty? And if you notice, in verse 9, it says, what then? Are we Jews any better off?

[ 29 : 45 ] No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin. Now that word, that term, under sin, is a very important term for us to understand.

We're used to thinking that sin just simply means bad things, or things that we would do wrong, that God doesn't want us to do, but Paul is not just simply stating our actions, but he's teaching us that we are under the dominion of sin.

It's we are positionally, as think of it as a country, a passport. We're in the country of sin. There's only two countries.

There's sin, and there's the country of grace. And mankind, both Jew and Gentile, find themselves in the citizenship of sin.

They are under the power. They are slaves. They are under the grips of sin. And the reality is, it affects everyone. I quoted Martin Lloyd-Jones last week, who states very simply, this is what is

called natural man.

[ 31 : 04 ] This is who men and women are naturally, that we are naturally under sin. And we looked at it last week. It said that no one is righteous. No one understands.

No one seeks God. Everyone has turned aside, and no one does good. And if you remember, he repeats the term, not even one.

It's universal. We are guilty. We are fallen. We are depraved. We are dead in sin. Now, perhaps you're from a non-church background, and I want to read you this quote to help you understand this term a little bit better.

It simply says, sin is what's wrong with the world and with us. It's the pull inside every person to do what's selfish, harmful, or unjust, even when we know better.

And according to the Bible, it's not just what we do. It's something we're stuck under, something that rules us until God sets us free.

[ 32 : 18 ] So are you with me on that one? We have to need to understand that we're under this dominion of sin. And being in this dominion, it creates this foolishness in us.

And this cost of foolishness is high. It makes us wrong about God. It makes us wrong about us. It makes us wrong about my relationship with God.

It also makes us wrong about our eternal destiny. What's interesting is this sin, as we're going to see today, it's not just internal.

This sin is expressive. Dare I say, loud. It is violent. It is destructive. Because up to verse 12, Paul was explaining who we naturally are.

Today's verses from 13 to 17, we're going to move from the diagnosis to the damage. Paul gives us a catalog of behaviors that prove the charge.

[ 33 : 30 ] And I want you to see this morning that these behaviors are relational behaviors. They're communal behaviors. They're horizontal, as it were.

Because our vertical relationship with God is broken, it breaks our horizontal relationships. And what we're going to learn is that this sin, this position we're under, and the actions we do, that naturally flow from the natural man, are never content to stay hidden.

Sin leaks. Sin. Sin spills over. It flows. And it corrupts all that it touches.

So this morning, for those of you who take notes, I want to give you three pieces of evidence from Romans to claim what Paul is saying is true, that first, we're going to look at sin speaks.

Sin speaks. Secondly, we're going to look at how sin moves. How sin moves. And three, how sin leaves a trail.

[ 34 : 42 ] So this is what happened, what flows naturally from the natural man. Or another way, this is how we act when we are apart from God.

Before I go any further, it's intense. It lays us out bare because I believe each and every one of us are going to be able to identify with these natural actions that flow from the natural man.

Let me pray. Dear holy, heavenly God, I just pray that this analysis is rough, God. It exposes not just me, it exposes everyone.

It's a reason you remind us there's no, not one. It exposes our mouths and what comes out of them in the fruits of our lips.

Father, I pray that when we hear these words that we don't stand in condemnation, but we would understand where we are and that there's hope in Jesus Christ.

[ 36 : 06 ] Because eventually, in two sermons, we're going to get to verse 21. And 21, verse 21, begins with a marvelous word, but.

But. It lays out our hope. It lays out our Savior. It lays out that we do not need to live in a natural condition for our lives.

So, Father, but I pray that we come to a proper understanding of who we are when we are apart from you, O Lord.

Father, I pray that my words would be your words and that people would hear them as such. We ask these things in your most holy and precious name. Amen.

Amen. So, the first point is sin speaks. And I want to demonstrate how it speaks with venom and bitterness. Please read along in verse, Romans 3, beginning in verse 13.

[ 37 : 10 ] It says, their throat is an open grave. And just in case you don't understand, these verses that we're reading have already been stated in the Old Testament.

This is Paul reminding them of the previous teachings they had. So, it says, their throat is an open grave. They use their tongues to deceive.

The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. The fact of the matter, whether you regard or understand this or not, that sin has a soundtrack.

Sin has a soundtrack. If you want to know what a person's heart is, listen to their mouth. Jesus said it plainly in Matthew 12, 34.

Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. In this verse, this section, Paul describes a mouth that is filled with death, deceit, and destruction.

[ 38 : 16 ] And as I said, Paul is quoting from the Old Testament, specifically Psalm 5, Psalm 10, and Psalm 40. And he's stringing together a chain of verses that expose just how violent and vile human speech becomes when sin rules the heart.

Now, I want you first to note there's a progression here. The throat, which is the starting point of our speech. The tongue forms the instruments, which turns the sound into words.

The lips are the exit, and the mouth is the container of all of this. It is a full mouth indictment.

Layer by layer, sin corrupts the entire faculty of speech. And now, this just isn't a rant against cussing. This is a full exposure of the toxic, weaponized language that falls from a fallen soul.

Notice verse 13, the first part. Their throat is an open grave. What an image. Death, decay, and rot is what exists in a grave.

[ 39 : 35 ] Now, notice it is an open grave. There is a reason why we bury or burn dead bodies. They stink.

The stench is horrifying. With no covering, no filter, there's just the stench of what's buried inside. One of my friends is an LAPD policeman, and he always keeps cigars in his car because he never knows when he might go to a scene where there is a dead body and they can't stand the stench that they light these cigars just to cover up that smell of death, decay, and rot that could be coming out of a car or a home.

This is a horrifying metaphor. It means that when we speak apart from grace, our words are like the breath of death. death. These death words are words that bury, they don't build, they corrupt, they do not cleanse, they infect, they don't heal.

And the reality is you don't have to be a criminal to have a graveyard mouth, gossip, complaining, slander, sarcasm that's meant to cut, flattery that manipulates, cold, calculated silence that is meant to punish is of the same graveyard.

[ 41 : 20 ] If your throat is an open grave, then every word has the stench of death on it. Now notice the second part of this says they use their tongues to deceive.

Now, I want you to see there's a contrast between the stench of death and the intent to deceive, gossip, slander, complaining. They can be just kind of general sins that flow from our heart, but almost out of habit, but the tongue is a calculated strategic instrument.

The Greek word here meant to deceive is a reference point to fishing, hooking the bait. You're throwing the bait in the line, you're expecting someone, good fish to come in, thinks he's got a dinner, when he ends up being the dinner.

It's you essentially hide the danger under something sweet. It's intentional. And that's what sinners do with the tongues.

They spin stories, they distort motives, they bend the truth. Often, they withhold just enough to manipulate the outcome.

[ 42 : 46 ] Sadly, this world calls it spin, savvy, or strategic. But the Lord Jesus Christ calls it deception.

This isn't just bad communication, it's a weaponized tongue used to control, to coerce, and to cover sin.

The fact is, it is utterly shameful. I have ran into too many people in ministry who only tell half truths, and never tell you the full truth, and they will say, well, I didn't lie, but you clearly were not being truthful and honest.

Then we get to the third part of verse 13. The venom of asps is under their lips. Paul is shifting the image from decomposition opposition, to deception, and now to danger.

Paul says that our lips conceal poison like the fangs of the deadly viper. The asp, although small, is a lethal snake.

[ 44 : 08 ] Its venom was quick and often fatal, and the sacks were located right under the lips. So when it bit you, it would inject the poison in.

What this means is it's hidden, it's ready, and it's just a split moment away from injection. This is how deadly our words can be.

The fact is you don't have to scream to be sinful with your speech. Oftentimes it's just one whisper, a subtle jab, or even a loaded question, and boom, the poison hits.

James 3.8 says, no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil full of deadly poison. This is spiritual venom, words that inject fear, anger, pride, anger, shame, and leave the listener bleeding.

[ 45 : 27 ] Verse 14, their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Now this is where we see the overflow. The sinner's mouth isn't occasionally harsh, it's full.

it overflows. Curses that are words meant to harm, insult, or call down judgment. Bitterness, language laced with resentment, spite, and venom.

Why do you deserve that? The speech does not bless, it does not build up, they curse, because this is what their souls do.

Let me be clear, cursing just simply isn't swearing, it's purposely using words to demean, to displace, and to hurt.

In fact, we curse our leaders, curse our spouse, curse our parents, curse our enemies, enemies, and it's not just an anger issue. A few examples would be that guy's an idiot, she's hopeless, they'll never change.

[ 46 : 49 ] Hurtful words. We curse others by using words to reduce their worth, to reduce their identity, to reduce their dignity, treating image bearers of God as disposable, despicable, or beneath us.

This is verbal condemnation. And when we do this, or when those that do this, they've crowned themselves God, and by speaking so, their mouths declare their judgment accordingly.

Now, you know I have to ask this question, right? What's coming out of your mouth? What's leaking from your lips when no one's looking?

When you spend time with people, do they feel built up, built up, or buried around you? Some of you know exactly what I'm talking about.

You've said words that poisoned a friendship, fractured a marriage, discouraged a child, or in some cases divided a church. church. And here's the truth of it.

[ 48 : 08 ] You just didn't slip up. You didn't say things that were uncharacteristic of you. You spoke from your nature. teacher. The problem isn't your filter, the problem is your heart.

You may even be critical of a sermon, not because I did not parse a word properly, but you didn't agree with the main point. so often we demean the preacher, we demean the counselor, we demean the discipler.

But I need you to hear this. Jesus Christ didn't come here to forgive your speech. Jesus Christ came to redeem your speech.

Instead of having the voice of death, he wants to give us the voice of life. What we notice about Jesus, he was silent before his accusers so that our mouths could be cleansed.

Jesus never cursed, but was cursed in our place. What Jesus wants to do is he wants our mouth to be a mirror.

[ 49 : 29 ] Whether we like it or not, it shows the condition of your heart. And I hope to drive you not to denial, but to the cross with our lips.

So the first point that Paul's making in these first couple of verses is that sin speaks. It spreads venom and poison. Now the second point in verse 15 is that I want you to see that sin moves.

And sin always moves towards violence. The text Romans 3 15, their feet are swift to shed blood.

This is always the direction of depravity. If the mouth reveals the heart, the feet reveal the will.

Where you run tells the world what you love. And Paul says that apart from grace, mankind is not running toward God. Mankind is not running toward reconciliation.

[ 50 : 38 ] Mankind is not running toward righteousness. Mankind runs to destruction. Their feet are swift to shed blood.

This quote is from Isaiah 59 7 and it isn't an exaggeration. It is an accurate description of what happens when sin dominates the soul.

Words become weapons. Anger becomes actions. Thoughts become threats and self-preservation becomes elimination. And when sin is allowed to rule, violence is inevitable.

The reality is you don't need a theology degree to understand this. You just need to open up your Bibles. The first murder, Cain killed Abel over jealousy.

Pharaoh drowned babies in the Nile. Herod slaughtered infants in Bethlehem all so that they could keep their positions.

[ 51 : 55 ] I don't need to remind you of the genocide that has even happened in the most advanced civilization or advanced time in history where we're supposed to be all altruistic.

We've got a raging war going on, wars all over the world. Africa is full of them. The major one that gets the news is Russia and Ukraine.

genocide happens on every continent. What Paul is doing here is he's showing us that there are no exceptions.

This is about human nature. It's not about some people are violent and others are good. Paul is claiming right here that all people are infected and given enough power, pain, or pride they will move toward harm.

Now notice that word swift. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Notice it doesn't say they are reluctant to shed blood.

[ 53 : 12 ] They are hesitant to show blood. They do so slowly. No, they do so swiftly. And here's what's frightening about this, my friends, is we just don't sin.

We rush into it like a moth to a flame. We seek out that sin. And it's not just that we have the capacity for violence.

violence. Paul is telling us we have the instinct for violence. You may say, I've never killed anyone. But Jesus refutes this in Matthew 5. He says, you have heard it said, you shall not murder. But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother is liable to judgment.

What about character assassination? The root is always anger. The root of murder is anger.

[ 54 : 19 ] And the heart that harbors hatred is on the same path even if they do not reach that destination. Let's be honest.

We may not use our hands, but if you've stabbed someone with your words, your silence, your bitterness, you're on the road to murder.

And where does this start? James reminds us in James 4, 1 and 2, he says, what causes quarrels and fights among you?

Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? In other words, we kill because we crave, we want power, we want revenge, we want control, we want validation, and when someone stands in the way, we lash out.

This is the pattern of every war, every fight, every abusive relationship, every gang conflict, every political assassination. nation, it's always the same thing.

[ 55 : 36 ] Sin moves the feet and the feet moves them toward blood. So how about you?

Do you live in the world of bitterness? Do you keep lists of people that have hurt you? or lists of someone that you know that has hurt you to give you reasons to exist in that bitterness?

Or are your feet swift to bring peace? Do you run toward reconciliation or do you run from it?

Meaning there's a relationship that's broken. Do you run from it or run to it to fix it? Do you harbor low-grade rage?

That's one offense away from explosion. The fact of the matter is some of you are walking around on the edge of violence.

[ 56 : 43 ] Not with your fists but with your fury. Not with your guns but grudges. Not with knives but cold calculated vengeance in your heart. And how do you lash out?

Let remind you this is not just how you were raised. It didn't happen because you had a bad week. It happened because it's sin. It's the same sin that drove Cain, that drove Herod, that drove Pharaoh.

And it's the same poison Jesus died to defeat. you see Jesus was not swift to shed blood. He was swift to shed his own blood.

Jesus didn't run toward vengeance. He ran towards the cross. The only way for your feet to change direction is for your heart to be changed by the grace of God.

[ 57 : 51 ] God. And here's the thing about the gospel. The gospel doesn't change simply your destination. It changes your direction. So here's my invitation.

Let Jesus interrupt your feet. Let the Spirit redirect your path. Let the cross make you into someone who runs, not walks towards reconciliation, peace.

Let that be the character of who you are. So we've heard point one, sin speaks with venom and bitterness.

Point two, sin moves toward violence. My third point, sin leaves a trail of ruin, misery, and no peace. Romans 3, 16, and 17, in their paths are ruin and misery. In the way of peace they have not known.

[ 59 : 02 ] Many of you, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I love war movies. I love all those kind of advanced strategies that go on in war movies. But some of the more realistic war movies that we see are some of the older ones that depict battles that happened hundreds of years ago.

Think gladiator or even Braveheart I think depicts this idea. After the battle was done, the smoke had settled, families would come to the battlefields looking for their husbands and sons, picking them up, lifting bodies over their loved ones, just hoping, hoping that they could find someone that is alive.

This is a perfect picture of the aftermath of sin. The imagery that Paul uses here in their paths are ruined in ministry and misery.

And here's what it tells us, sin wrecks. It leaves behind a trail. And here's the thing, it's not random. It's predictable, traceable, reproducible.

This is the greatest weapon parents have when we talk to our kids, right? Hey, I know how this is going to go because when I was 16, I did that and there was destruction, wrath, and misery for my life.

[ 60 : 39 ] It's not going to change because it's 30 years later. But her kids will say, well, I'm special. I've got it, dad. I know better.

And then you just sit silently back and you watch them do the same thing and experience the same result. world. You see, every time sin is unleashed in a life, in a family, in a society, that is what you find in its wake.

The word ruin is structural collapse, both relationally, morally, spiritually. The word misery is the emotional weight of despair, depression, and hopelessness.

I don't know if you know, but there was a study that was released quite recently. And it found, and this is not a news flash, it found that children of divorced parents, which I am, face significant negative outcomes compared to those whose parents stayed married.

And it said that 60% of people from divorced backgrounds have a higher risk of teen pregnancy, 40% higher risk of jail time, 45% higher risk of early death, 9-13% of lower adult wages, and a lower likelihood of attending college or university.

[ 62 : 06 ] You didn't need to do a 50-year survey to figure that out, right? You could just look at your own life, know the challenges that are going in, or talk to a few friends that have been through divorce.

It's there. And here's the thing, it doesn't change. And as much as this world wants to add that we can change these consequences, in some countries they're catching on.

In fact, Britain was offering free counseling to keep marriages together because they've recognized that when marriages stay together, there's less societal harm.

They're thinking of it from a dollar-cents perspective. If we keep those families together, there's less people in jail. That's kind of how they're doing it. they've recognized this.

This has been the teaching for thousands of years. That word ruin that I said, that means devastation and wreckage, it's used to describe the crumbling of a city or a nation.

[ 63 : 10 ] It is the objective damage caused by sin. A marriage that is ripped apart by adultery. A church that is destroyed by pride and gossip.

A nation that is crippled by greed and corruption. And a family tree bent under generational sin. See, this is what sin does.

It tears down what was meant to flourish. You with me? It tears down what is meant to flourish. That's why Proverbs 13, 15 says, the way of the transgressor is hard.

It's hard. Maybe not immediately, not always obviously, but eventually it will happen. The structure cracks, the foundation crumbles, till all of a sudden you're left with ruin.

Ruin. So if the ruin is the external, the misery is the internal torment.

[ 64 : 23 ] In their past are misery. This is the emotional and spiritual weight of a life lived in rebellion. It's emptiness after success, shame after compromise, bitterness after betrayal, a level of

anxiety that never leaves, and a gnawing sense that something is broken that you can't fix.

See, here's the thing, sin just doesn't ruin. Sin torments. And listen to this, the world has no answer for this.

What the world offers is distractions, medications, something to numb the pain. But here's the thing, it never removes the misery, it just tries to stifle it.

Romans 1 told us that when people suppress the truth, they become futile in their thinking and their hearts are darkened.

Romans 3 now shows us where that darkness leads. It leads to misery. And verse 17 brings the punchline, the way of peace they have not known.

[66:01] That word peace or shalom is the wholeness that you and I are created for. It means not just the absence of conflict but the presence of harmony, presence of unity, the presence of flourishing.

And Paul says they haven't known it. not because it doesn't exist but because they've rejected the only source of peace.

Isaiah 57 21 says there is no peace says my God for the wicked. See to pursue sin is to produce the opposite of peace with God.

This is why this world can't solve the problems it creates. It recognizes there's problems. Just look at any election that's running.

They all want to solve these problems but they don't know how because the problem isn't political or educational or even environmental.

[67:14] It's spiritual. you can't have peace with others until you have peace with God. You can't walk in peace when your path is set against the prince of peace.

Now let me contrast different paths for you for a moment. Here's the path of sin ruin misery violence restlessness.

Now let me tell you about the path of Christ restoration joy reconciliation peace and wisdom.

You know the question I'm going to ask what path are you on? Jesus said in John 14 27 peace I leave with you my peace I give to you not as the world gives do I give it to you.

The fact is you can chase the world's path and never find peace or you can surrender to Christ and find a peace that surpasses all understanding.

[68:35] So if you're wondering here what path are you on? my question is look behind you what's in your week in your wake what do you see is there restoration or is there ruin do you do your words heal or do your words bring harm does your presence bring peace or does it provoke tension?

If you're married with children does your presence bring joy to your children or does it bring fear and anxiety to them?

you may not be swift to shed blood but are you swift to judge swift to blame swift to divide do you leave peace in your wake or more pain see the answer is not try harder to be peaceful the answer is to be transformed by the one who actually walked through pain and misery and ruin for you and rose to offer you peace with God we've just walked through Romans 3 13 to 17 and what have we seen we've seen the evidence we've seen the trail we've seen the fruit of the fall the mouth it's full of death deceit and venom the feet swift to violence the path marked by ruin misery and the absence of peace the courtroom just hasn't heard the verdict now it's seen the proof my friends this isn't hypothetical sin this is your sin this is my sin this is our sin and it's documented it's replayed it's exhibited and it's reeking with guilt last week we said that the law shuts every mouth this week we've seen why because sin just doesn't stay in the heart sin moves sin speaks sin destroys what Paul is doing here is he's laying the human conditioning the human condition bare before all it's not pretty but it's true and this is exactly where the gospel starts with truth the fact is until you see the wreckage until you trace your steps until you smell the stench coming out of your own mouth you'll never long to be rescued you'll never long for a savior see the world says you just need better communication you need to be more tolerant you need to fix the environment you need to release your inner potential no God simply says you are under sin and the evidence proves it you don't need a therapist to tweak you you need a savior to recreate you you don't need a new path you need a new heart you don't need better words you need a cleansed soul see here's the gospel that

Jesus took the trail of misery hard to believe isn't it Jesus walked our path of ruin Jesus drank the cup of bitterness Jesus bore our curses Jesus took the venom of sin so that we may walk in peace

that's why Isaiah 53:5 says he was pierced for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and by his wounds we are healed that's the gospel you can walk your own path or leave behind ruin you can follow his path and find restoration you can continue in misery or you can find mercy you can rage on without peace or you can bow down to the prince of peace so

[ 73 : 58 ] I'm leaving you with an invitation I'm leaving you this morning with an invitation to switch paths some of you I'm quite sure are here this morning and you've never truly seen yourself in these verses now you do you've seen the trail you've heard the indictment and now you're faced with the decision will you continue down your own path or will you repent and follow Jesus we know that his path leads to peace we know that the curse the cross removes the curse we know that his blood is the antidote for the venom and we know that his spirit gives us a new mouth new motives new direction but here's what you need to understand if

Romans 3 ended here we'd be crushed and hopeless but it doesn't next week we're going to look at verse 18 to 20 we're going to look at what is the cause what's the underlying reason for this the underlying that simply there is no fear of God before their eyes that's the root and that's where the healing must begin but if you have a takeaway for today it is that the evidence speak and it speaks against you but the blood of Christ speaks a better word the only question I need to ask you is will you listen let's pray dear holy heavenly father we thank you I can think of no other words to say but your gracious truth it's hard to think of it as being gracious but it's truth we can't get better we can't go to a doctor without a an understanding of what ails us if we don't think we're sick we'll never go to a doctor here

Paul as a master physician is demonstrating to us why we are so sick why are we so sinful why is it that everything I touch my relationships my work why do I fight everywhere I go why do I harbor such anger and bitterness why am I so sarcastic against people this is the part of the scriptures that reveals why but it also leads into why I need Jesus so father if there's any soul here who has not surrendered and repented of their sins and come to you I pray that today would be that day that you would show them mercy show them that they can fall down at this judge who is merciful!

Father we work so hard to hide ourselves from everyone because we think if anybody knew who we really were would we be loved God but God says I know you and I see you and I can change you if you would just come to me and believe and repent you shall have eternal life so father I pray that this gospel message would be intended as it means to be it's not meant to condemn it's meant to be truthful so that we would grab hold to what is real we ask these things your most holy and precious name amen