

# Have We Become Secular Saints?

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Preacher: Rich Chasse

[ 0 : 00 ] He was the pretty well-known NBA coach of the Lakers and the Knicks.

He was the coach who also won championships as a player for the Lakers, I believe. I don't know how that works, but apparently when someone uses the phrase three-peat, I'm not paying him any money right now, but apparently it might be.

Three-peat. It's the idea if you're a sports fan that your team who's won a championship has won two in a row. Now you have an opportunity for three in a row, three-peat, you three-time repeat champion of the world in your particular sport.

But he also came up with the phrase, the disease of more, the disease of more as to why it's so hard to repeat as a champion.

When your team is before being a champion, the thing that drives the players and the coaching staff and the whole team is the idea of we want to win a championship. And so that drive makes that unit, that team very cohesive in how it comes together to play the game and to strive for that championship.

[ 1 : 32 ] But once you've won one, a championship, then it becomes difficult to repeat because of what Pat Riley would say is the disease of more. Because once you've won the championship, you've already reached that goal and now you want something more, something beyond that.

You want more money as a player. You want more commercials. You want more endorsements.

You want more recognition, accolades. You want more opportunity to play, more playing time.

More, it's just the players on the team, maybe even some of the coaching staff start to get driven in different directions because they've reached the one pinnacle.

Now they want something beyond that. They want something more than that. And it makes it so that it's not much the other teams that make it hard for them to repeat.

It's within their own struggles within and their own disease of wanting more. When we catch up with the disciples, we're back in Luke, by the way, Luke chapter nine today.

[ 2 : 43 ] You can almost describe what the champ, the, the, the disciples are going through is having a championship season. They've, I mean, they're, they've kind of reached the pinnacle from their perspective, if you will, of what that team, that team of 12, I mean, they're in the top 12, right?

You could say they're the starting 12. These are, these are the disciples of what is now the most famous man in all the land. That is Jesus himself.

So they're part of the top 12 of, of this most famous leader. Their leader has performed miracle after miracle. The crowd sizes have grown enormously.

People are just following him wherever he can, you know, goes. And they're now starting to get in on the act. They're starting to perform miracles.

First part of chapter nine, Jesus sends them out two by two. And they actually, as they're preaching the gospel, they're actually performing miracles. People are being healed.

[ 3 : 51 ] Demons are being cast out. They're having success at doing it themselves. They have three of them anyway, been part of the transfiguration.

They able to witness the transfiguration, the glorification of Jesus with Moses and Elijah there. And it's, it is incredible. They have been, in a sense, promised a prominent position in the coming kingdom that Jesus is, from their perspective, ready to introduce.

But the problem is, they're starting to believe their own press. They're starting to look at themselves. They're starting to look at themselves and say, yeah, we're all that.

And we're pretty, we're pretty brilliant. We're, we're pretty wonderful. And, and so they're starting to, to think about themselves that we're the chosen ones.

We're the Lord's VIPs. We're, we're the superstars. I mean, Jesus is the one, but right behind him, here we are. And so pride and ego and the disease more is starting to impact them.

[ 5 : 05 ] And you have this on your notes. This, this story that we're looking at today, it's just continuation of what we looked at a few weeks back. This is a story of the disciples' pride and envy and selfishness is starting to come through.

And it's stuff that you and I struggle with as well. Now, even though this is what this story is about, there is encouragement for us here today as well, 2,000 years later.

There is encouragement for us in this story today. And the reason why is this, again, on your notes, because this story also tells us that the Lord is willing to teach, to mold, and to use flawed people, broken individuals.

And my guess is we've got a room full of those kind of people, flawed, broken people, right? That's who we are. And we can identify in ways that maybe you might not see up front, but we can certainly identify with some of the struggles and the problems that the disciples were facing even in this time.

And I would say that if you look throughout church history, you could see that churches and church groups and church ministry leaders struggle with the same things that the disciples are struggling with in our story today, many times in very big ways, and see if we can identify with this as we do this.

[ 6 : 37 ] So, again, the beginning of the chapter, the disciples have been sent out. They've healed. They've cast out demons. They're starting to do ministry in ways that are really quite incredible, participating in some of the miraculous things.

But they're starting to also hear some disturbing messages from their leader, from Jesus himself.

Things like, hey, the spiritual leaders in Jerusalem, they're going to reject me.

And I'm going to suffer at their hands. And, as a matter of fact, they're going to kill me. And, oh, by the way, those who come after me must be willing to take up their cross.

And they understand better than any of us could today what take up your cross means. We've kind of spiritualized that. But in their day, when they were actively crucifying people on crosses, the idea of taking up your cross meant that you're going to your death.

You would carry your cross to the place of execution. And Jesus is using that terminology to describe what it would look like for a believer of Jesus to follow him.

[ 7 : 49 ] Take up your cross daily and follow me. And so they're hearing these disturbing messages. They don't know what to do with them. They're not understanding them.

Matter of fact, their agenda is different than that. So they don't understand it, so they're not dealing with it. Instead, they're arguing. They're arguing. They're trying to figure out who among them is the greatest.

It's all of this stuff is going on as they're doing this. So last time, a few weeks back, in Luke, we talked about the one particular story about Jesus healing the boy of the demon and the seizures.

And that's where we're going to kind of pick up from as we get back into this. But we're starting in Mark. Mark and Matthew also have stories of the same event as well.

And so we get some details from each of them. When they came together, when they came to the other disciples, this is the three after coming down from the mountain of seeing Jesus transfigured in front of them.

[ 8 : 57 ] When they came down from the mountain, they came to the other disciples, and they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. So there's arguing going on. Jesus didn't argue with the religious leaders and the Pharisees.

He answered their questions many times with other questions or in ways that dumbfounded them. But here, the disciples, they're just arguing with them.

Behold, a man from the crowd cried out, Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. We looked at this last time. And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out and convulses so that he foams at the mouth and shatters him and will hardly leave him.

And I beg your disciples to cast it out. Here's the point. But they could not. Now, they had had success previously with casting out demons, first part of chapter 9.

But now here, they're struggling. They're not able to. They're not able to do this. So they could not.

[ 10 : 00 ] Jesus' response to that was this, O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and put up with you? Right?

That's basically what Jesus is saying. How long am I going to be with you and bear with you through this? You're not getting it. And so, again, as the story progresses, Jesus heals the boy. And then as the story progresses, again, verse 46, an argument. Here they are arguing again. This time they're arguing among them as to which of them was the greatest.

Not whether or not they were great. But they want to know who's the greatest. I mean, really?

The chutzpah of them. And Mark makes this point here. Mark chapter 9, verse 33. They came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house, he asked them, what were you discussing?

[11:06] Now, Jesus is being kind here. What were you discussing along the way? I guess if you're having an argument, like if you're having an argument with your spouse and one of your kids come in, and instead of saying, what are you guys fighting about or what are you arguing about?

They say, what are you talking about? What are you discussing? You know, being kind. But you are having a discussion as well. Is that true when you argue? Do you have a discussion as part of it?

It's just kind of the way the discussion goes. But they kept silent for on the way they had argued.

They had argued with one another about who was, here we have it again, the greatest.

Matthew chapter 18 kind of characterizes it the same way. At the same time, the disciples came to Jesus and asked the question. Now they're getting bold here.

Which of us? Okay, we're not really thrilled about admitting what we're talking about. But now that since it's out in the open here, let's have it out.

[12:15] Let's actually ask the question of Jesus himself. Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

They want to know that when Jesus sets up his kingdom, of course, Jesus, you're going to be number one. But we want to know after you, which one of us is going to be the greatest in the kingdom?

There was a psychologist actually here in the state of Michigan who worked with patients and ended up writing a book. Patients who believed the delusion that they were the Messiah.

My name is Jesus Christ and I am the Messiah. Come to save the world. This is what they believed of themselves. And he had multiple patients who had this.

After his lengthy time working with them, he wrote a book about the experience and some of his conclusions. And he talks about how at one point he invited three of them to have a group session.

[13:24] So here's three individuals who each one of them believe I am. I am Jesus, the savior of the world to have a discussion.

And so after he gets them in the room and he begins to ask them a question and he goes to the first one and he says, now, can you please introduce us to yourself, you know, introduce yourself to us.

And the man responded by saying, well, my name is Jesus Christ and I am the savior of the world. And he says, well, how do you know that?

And he said, God told me. And as soon as he said that, one of the other guys piped up and said, I said no such thing. Now, I'm not saying the disciples had this delusion.

But it would be maybe one rung less than this. Because they're wanting to know who of us is the greatest. Next to Jesus, of course.

[14:32] But which one of us, you know, we want to know how is this going to pan out when you set up your kingdom? How is this going to work? Now, watch how Jesus deals with this.

And back again in Luke chapter 9. Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts. And Jesus always knows what's inside. It's kind of foolish for us to try to think that God thinks something differently than what's really happening.

Jesus took a child, put him by his side, and said to them, Whoever receives this child in my name receives me.

And whoever receives me receives him who sent me. Talking about God the Father. Now, what's interesting is what this little incident teaches us and what it doesn't teach us.

First of all, the word for child here is the word pideon. It just means a little child. Like maybe think preschool or kindergarten age. Little child.

[15:43] Not quite toddler or baby, but not elementary school yet. So kind of maybe in that time period. And he puts the child there.

We don't know where the child comes from, but apparently kids were around at the time. And he pulls one of them next to him. And he says that whoever receives this child in my name receives me.

Now, let's talk about what he's not saying here. He's not saying here that if you're nice or accommodating or if you're trying to bless children in some way that you'll get to heaven if you do that.

That's not what Jesus is saying here. He's not saying that if you act like a child that that's going to get you in good with God. He's not telling us to imitate children.

But what he is communicating to us is that how you treat children is an indication of your understanding of greatness.

[16:51] What it means to be great. Now, in their culture, hanging around with children was not something you wanted to do. You didn't want to be identified with hanging around with children.

Children were, in a sense, kind of an inconvenience or a nuisance or even to be ignored. They didn't name their babies when they were first born.

They just, you know, other people can take, the servants can take care of, the mother can take. But I want to hang out with important people. And if I had the reputation of someone who hung out with kids, that would ruin my reputation.

That was the kind of the culture that they had. They, they, their self-worth was based on who they kept as company. And so the, the bigger the names that they got to hang out with, the, the, the more important the people that they got to include in their circle of friends, they felt better about themselves.

They felt themselves that much more important, valuable, all of those kinds of things. So the idea of hanging out with kids. And Jesus says, no, no, no, no, no, no. It's flipped.

[18:03] It's, it's not what you think. Greatness. Greatness. Particularly is expressed. And hanging out with kids.

Let me ask you a question. How does that perspective change our viewpoint of children's ministry in the local church?

Right? Should that impact our view of children's ministry in the local church? Is children's ministry, is working in the nursery, would you say that those are important ministries?

Because I think from our text, we can conclude that Jesus would agree. He would say, the children's ministry is, that's where the great people are.

And, and we have a tendency to, to take someone like the preacher or the worship leader and put them up on a pedestal and say, oh, no. In Christ's economy, in heaven's economy, the, the great ones are the ones who are working with the kids.

[19:13] Spending time with the children. Serving in, in that ministry. He's trying to help them to reorient themselves in terms of what's important.

What is the idea of greatness here? For he who is least among you, and that's what they would say of children. Children are the least important. They don't have a say.

They, they don't, they can't contribute in, in their culture and their mindset. Jesus would say, he who is least among you all is the one who is great.

And so that's the perspective that we should have as well. The story continues. John answered, this is like the ultimate, hey, let's change the direction of the conversation.

You hear? This is like, let's segue from talking about children and what's great to something else.

And it was not a smooth transition here. John answered, master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name.

[20:17] And we tried to stop them. I want you to notice a couple things about this. Number one, this other person, and we don't know anything about this other person, which I think is kind of the point of the story here.

This other person who is apparently successfully casting out demons in the name of Christ. And we tried to stop him.

Apparently, again, unsuccessfully. We just tried. Because he does not follow with us. He's not one of us. Right?

Do you see the mindset coming through that they have? It's like, we're the ones who call the shots. We're the ones hanging out with the leader, with Jesus.

Jesus said to him, do not stop him. For the one who is not against you is for you. And again, I think this has something to speak about other ministries, other churches.

[21:19] Churches, we're not in competition with each other. Although it seems at times the mindset is that there's a competition between churches for congregants, for the sheep.

And it's, no, we're serving the same God. Right? That's true, isn't it? Aren't we? Aren't we? Some churches are better.

There are some churches that maybe shouldn't be labeled as churches because their doctrine is so out of whack that they don't really fit the definition of what church is. But there are many churches in our area who serve the Lord, preach the gospel.

And we ought to encourage that, not be in competition with that. Verse 51. When the days drew near for him, for Jesus, to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

Now, I want to stop here just for a moment because we're going to actually study this verse next week. But it's right here in the middle of our text, so we have to kind of, well, here it is.

[ 22 : 27 ] This verse, from my perspective, is the pivotal verse of the whole gospel of Luke. That the first half of Luke kind of teeters before verse 51.

The second half of Luke teeters to the other way from verse 51. Verse 51 is not the climax of Luke, but is the middle point and becomes very important.

And we'll talk about this next week. For understanding many of the commands that Jesus gives from this point forward. That if you don't grasp this understanding what happens here in this verse. And you would look at it and you'd say, there's not much here. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Why is that significant? We're going to talk about that next week. I hate to kind of tease you in that way, but it's huge for us to understand this moment in time.

In the ministry of Jesus, when he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And how that impacts the rest of the story. So stay tuned next week.

[ 23 : 42 ] You've got to come back. That's all I've got to say. Okay. So verse 52, he sent messengers ahead of him who went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make preparations for him.

Where to sleep, where to eat, that kind of thing. But the people did not receive him. The people in the Samaritan town, remember Samaritans were like half breeds in their mind.

It was very offensive. Half Jewish, half Gentile. They considered them lesser than, almost subhuman. And the Samaritans felt the same way about the Jews.

Not so much that they were Jewish, but just the fact that they were headed to Jerusalem. They hated Jerusalem. They just thought that, okay, well, your viewpoint that Jerusalem is the only place that you can worship God.

We don't like that. Because we're not going to Jerusalem. So the people didn't receive him because he set his face toward Jerusalem. He let it be known. I'm headed to Jerusalem.

[ 24 : 48 ] And when his disciples, in particular James and John, these were two of the three who were part of the transfiguration. Who had seen Jesus glorified.

Kind of a preview of the kingdom. And they have this amazing mindset. Look at this. James and John, when they saw it, they said, Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?

Kind of like recalling Elijah, prophet Elijah in the Old Testament, right? You know, calling down heaven, fire from heaven and destroy the altar. And, hey, Jesus, come on.

They're not for you here. They don't like the fact that you've set your face toward Jerusalem. Come on. Should we call down fire? We can do it, by the way. James and John are thinking. We can do this.

Just give us the word, Jesus. We'll call down fire from heaven and torch their town. They deserve it. Kind of a mindset is that. But Jesus turned and rebuked them.

[ 25 : 50 ] They went on to another village. Now, this is an instance here in verses 55 and 56 where, once again, you see a difference between the two text bases that the translations use.

So in the New King James, you have it read this way. And everything that I've highlighted in yellow is not included in the NIV, the ESV, the New American Standard.

He turned and rebuked them and said, You do not know what manner of spirit you are. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And then they went on to another village.

And, again, it just highlights that even when there are discrepancies between the Greek manuscripts, that they're not matters of doctrinal difference or they're not introducing anything that is not known before.

These statements you can find in other places in the text. John 3.17 in particular, the reason why the Son of Man came.

[ 26 : 51 ] So it's not something that should bring, that should be disturbing to us about why there's a difference in the text. If, for instance, you're reading from the King James or the New King James versus the NIV or the ESV or that sort of thing.

And you'll see them in the margins in the notes as well. So that's why it's there. Now, what we're going to be talking about for the rest of our time here is this.

How the things that the disciples struggled with are things that are common for us to struggle with as well. And the plague of faithless attempts at ministry.

Why is it that ministry often fails? Why is it that churches die? Why is it that churches sometimes appear to be dead? What's going on there?

And what I would say, what is indicated by what's happening with the disciples in this text, when you look at church history, when you look even at churches and ministries today, and you would say, why is there failure?

[ 28 : 00 ] And I would say it comes back to the idea of faithlessness. We've lost our faith. And we struggle with this.

And I would say that you and I, we struggle with this as well. And you might think, well, Rich, you need to explain that a little bit. And that's what we're going to do. Why we're talking about faithless attempts at ministry.

The three common problems the disciples were experiencing in each of these three instances, the idea where they were powerless, right, to cast out the demon and why that's going on.

So first thing on your notes there, the disciples suffered from a lack of power. That can happen certainly today as well, right?

The second thing, they're arguing with each other, right? Who's the greatest, you know? Pride, it's this lack of unity among them.

[ 29 : 03 ] What's going on with that? And then thirdly, this, hey, let's call down fire from heaven on this city. Let's just roast them all.

Lack of compassion, right? They suffered from a lack of compassion. Now, as you're filling out these blanks, those of you who are like copious note takers are like, hey, there's a problem here because he's skipping some sections of the notes.

Listen, he's not telling us what – and it's going to get worse because we're going to move on before we fill in these blanks. So we're going to actually go to the other side of the notes now, and we're going to talk about some principles behind what's happening here and some application points for us.

And then, rest assured, we're going to come back and fill in these other blanks. But in order to get there first, we've got to understand some basic things before we can do that.

Okay? Are you with me? Apparently not. Are you with me? All right. Okay. Some of you are. Okay. So here we are. Some underlying principles and application.

[ 30 : 22 ] Just as there is no temptation that is not common to man. This comes from 1 Corinthians 10.13. The idea that every temptation that we face, my situation is not unique.

You know, it's like, oh, no one else suffers with this temptation like I do. No, no, no, no. We all have different things that we suffer temptation from.

And the same thing is true with sin. Just as there's no temptation that is not common to man, neither is there any sin that is also not common to man. The sin that we struggle with, and you can go all the way back to Adam and Eve, all the way down through Old Testament history, all the way down through church history to today.

The sin that you and I struggle with is not any different than the sin that people in different ages through the past have struggled with. Okay.

So what the disciples are going through are things that you and I struggle with as well. Second thing that we need to understand about this. Sin can often have a pious veneer.

[ 31 : 29 ] I don't know if you've figured this out yet. A religious sugarcoating. That we can, in sinful ways, make ourselves feel better about ourselves.

The I'm better than you kind of mindset that can come from, at the core of this is sin.

Okay. This mindset, which makes the sin appear even virtuous. That when I express a condemning or judgmental attitude towards someone else's sin, it makes me look holy.

Makes me feel holy. Makes me feel religious. Makes me feel like I'm better than. But rest assured, that is sin in and of itself.

We'll talk about that as well. So be careful about that. Sometimes we can come across what I would consider very religious people that are not in right relationship with God at all.

[ 32 : 50 ] Don't assume that just because somebody is religious, whatever that might mean. It might mean church attendance. It might mean I pray every day. It might mean I read my Bible every day.

It might mean that, you know, I serve on committees or, you know, I have a position of leadership in the church. You cannot assume that just because you're active and involved in your religion that you are right with God.

You cannot do that. Because that feeling that you have might just be a feeling of something that is sinful.

We'll talk about that. We'll clarify that. Some sin is also symptomatic. Or in the case that we're talking about today, sin that is rooted in other sin.

In other words, when I commit one particular kind of sin, it's a symptom of another sin that's at a deeper level that needs to be identified and dealt with.

[ 34 : 07 ] If I'm ever going to deal with that symptomatic sin, the sin that people see on the outside, I've got to go on the inside and deal with something that's deeper within me that's causing this outward sin to show its ugly head in my life.

And so we have all of these things active in these stories with the disciples, okay? Sin that is common to them is common to us. We struggle with the same sin in the same ways.

Sin that can appear religious. Sin that's religious sugar coating. That maybe even as other people would look at it, would appear virtuous. Again, when Jesus was confronted with this, he called those very religious people some pretty bad names.

Do you remember in the Gospels, Jesus would call them like whitewashed tombs and snakes? And Paul in the same way, because he comes from this. He comes from identifying with this outward religiosity that he was so proud of.

And then when he was confronted with Christ, he recognized that all of that was worthless. And so he's able to see it in other people as well.

[ 35 : 28 ] Maybe you have some of that. I have some of that in my own past as well. And so again, and then the idea that some of our sin is rooted in something deeper.

And it's that at the core that we have to deal with if we're going to make progress in our relationship with the Lord. So with that in mind, now we're going to go back on your notes and look at the three problems that the disciples were having and then talk about what the symptom was and then what the root sin was behind it.

So they had a lack of power, right? The father came with the boy who was possessed by the demon and was throwing him into seizures. And they couldn't do anything about it.

Why? Even though they had had success before. What was happening in the transition here? And so again, do we struggle with that?

Paul would later on write talking about, talking to Timothy, the pastor of the church at Ephesus, having the appearance of godliness but denying its power.

[ 36 : 44 ] Can we struggle with this too? You should be nodding, yes, absolutely, right? Our church struggles with this. A form of godliness, but is the power of God at work in our midst?

That's the question. And we have to answer that for ourselves first and then among us. Is God at work? Is God active? Is God's power evident in the life of our church?

So the symptom sin is prayerlessness. Jesus even said this, right?

In Mark 9, verse 29, the incident with the young boy who had been possessed, they came and they asked Jesus, hey, what gives Jesus? Why couldn't we exercise the demon?

Why couldn't we cast out the demon when we did before? What made this so difficult? And Jesus basically said, well, this kind can only come out by prayer. And when Jesus is saying this, what's he saying about the disciples?

[ 37 : 50 ] They just didn't pray. And what is that an indication of? When we don't pray, the root sin basically is the idea of self-sufficiency.

I got it. I can do this myself. Right? And as a Christian, as we live out our faith over time, we have to be reminded of this over and over and over again.

Because it's often so very easy for us to fall into the trap. I've made that decision. I've conquered that sin. I've moved on.

I've got this. God, thank you for what you've done in my life. I can take it from here. We don't use words like that. We don't say that out loud.

We might not even think that. But our actions betray what's really happening on the inside. We get to the point where we don't pray. We're not trusting God to say, Lord, I need you.

[ 39 : 11 ] That's what our own prayerlessness is an indication of. I can do it.

I can do it. I can do it. Again, Jesus, in Matthew's account, says to them, he replied, because you have so little faith.

It's interesting. The word for little faith here is one word in the Greek, but it's two words put together. It's little and the word for faith.

And the little, the word for little here, we get our word oligarchy, olig, from it. An oligarchy, right, that's a term that you hear in the news, right?

Oligarchy is little kingdom, right? So you have a country, like we talk about Russia having oligarchs. They have their own little kingdoms within the country of Russia. And it's a reference to, in many instances, time.

[ 40 : 19 ] You're trusting for just a little bit of time. And then it goes away. Do we not struggle with that? Are there not times where we have incredible faith, like the moment that we trust Christ as Savior?

It's like we have this maybe boundless faith. It's, Lord, I trust you. I can't do it myself. That moment of recognition. And it's like this expression of great faith, but it doesn't take long for us to forget that and to think that we can do it ourselves.

ourselves. So it's this, this, we ongoing struggle with little faith because we forget.

We take for granted. I said, again, when it comes to amounts, faith as small as a mustard seed is all it takes. So it's not amounts.

And oftentimes what we struggle with in this is, is the idea that our faith, it's not our faith that gets it done.

[ 41 : 20 ] It is our God that gets it done. Okay? When, when we start talking about, well, you just didn't have enough faith.

It's putting the onus of the question onto who? Onto me. And if, if, if God comes through, my faith, my, no.

It's not about you. How often do we, do we have to be reminded that it's not about me? It's God who does the work and it's not me.

It's not about how much faith I, well, God answered my prayer and man, God moved in an incredible way and, and, and, you know, I just believe that God, it has nothing to do with you.

Stop that. It's God who does the work. But we, we just have this tendency to want to put ourselves back into the equation and say, oh, yeah, it's, it's my faith that, that does it.

[ 42 : 29 ] And then, and then, the disciples struggled with a lack of unity, right? They're arguing, they're bickering, not just with themselves, but with the teachers of the law.

They're just, they're just, they're just not getting along. They're like, I'm greater than you. No, you're not greater than me. I'm greater. I'm one of the greatest. I'm the greatest. I mean, this is the stuff that they're doing.

It's, it's, it's, it's like they're little kids arguing, you know, king of the hill kind of stuff, you know, it's, who's going to be the greatest among you?

And again, this kind of poison infects churches then and it impacts churches today. I, Paul says to the church at Corinth, I appeal to you brothers by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree that there be no divisions among you, that you be united in the same mind and, and of the same spirit for it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling.

Arguing, fighting among you. And again, this is a poison that affects churches today, right?

Churches split, churches dissolve, churches fight, people leave.

[ 43 : 42 ] These kind of things happen. Why is it still happening today? Because the sin that they experienced back then is the same kind of sin that we're going to struggle with today.

So the symptom sin is the spirit of competition. We see this active in Galatians chapter 5.

And this is, Galatians chapter 5 is an incredible passage. It has impact on the founding of our country.

It has an impact on how we understand freedom, what freedom is and isn't. He says, you were called to freedom, brothers, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. Don't you know that in our world today, a lot of people interpret freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. I can do what I want, which is an expression of the flesh. I can do what I want.

[ 44 : 52 ] And that's not God's definition of freedom. God's definition of freedom is only don't use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but to serve one another in love. That's what we're called to do, to serve one another in love.

That's what freedom does for the believer. It gives me the freedom to set myself aside and to serve someone else. Okay?

That's what freedom is. That's what freedom does. And he's describing that here. For the whole law is fulfilled in the one word here. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. It's putting the other person ahead of yourself.

And then he says, but if you bite and devour one another, which is what happens when you're devolving into quarreling, and I want to do what I want to do, and freedom for me means I get to do what I want to do, watch out that you're not consumed by one another.

Because that's what happens. The arguments, the bickering, the biting and devouring, that's what it gets at. So the root sin here is self-seeking.

[ 46 : 00 ] Selfishness. It's seeking my own interest. It's seeking for me what I want. I don't care what you want. I'll step over you if I have to.

Because it's about me. Self, me, for mine. That's what the disciples were doing. Right? They're just seeking for themselves.

They're not doing as Jesus did, putting others ahead of themselves. They're in it for who's the greatest among them.

And again, it gets to the core. This is James chapter 4. What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

The selfishness, this yuck that rises up within? It's me, it's mine, it's what, that's what it's about. You desire and you do not have, so you murder, you covet, you cannot obtain, so you fight and you quarrel.

[ 47 : 02 ] You do not have because you do not ask. And even when you do ask, you do not receive because you ask wrongly, wrong motives. This informs our prayer life, right?

We're asking for the wrong reasons to fulfill my own self, my own passions. So you have the two. Here's the third, suffering from a lack of compassion here.

And they did that. Jesus would go on in Luke, we're going to get to this in a few chapters. Luke chapter 18, the Pharisee and the tax collector going to the temple to pray.

And the Pharisee is over there saying, God, I thank you that I'm not like other men. Here's the religious veneer, the religious sugar coating, right?

I thank you that I'm not like other men. I'm religious, I'm better than, I can look down at you because I'm not like you, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this guy pointing the finger, this tax collector.

[ 48 : 20 ] Do we ever struggle with that? Do we look at other people groups and make assumptions about ourselves, about how we're better than? even some people who are struggling in lifestyles of sin, and we start thinking about ourselves being better than?

How dare we? Because if not for God's grace, it's not my own goodness, it's not about that. It's not that I'm righteous, I'm so righteous that that makes me better.

No, the only reason I may not be struggling with the same sin is because of God's grace in my life. And we better be awfully careful about going down that road.

So the symptom sin here is being uncaring, being judgmental. This goes back famously into the book of Jonah. God had called Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach the gospel to a bunch of people who were really off the rails in terms of their sinfulness and wickedness.

And Jonah was like, no, I don't want to do that. So he runs away. Of course, God finds a unique way to bring him back, the vomit system. And so Jonah went through the town and was preaching basically the good news.

[ 49 : 47 ] It's actually bad news. God's going to judge you, but it's good news in the sense that because of their repentance, God relented. When God saw what they did, they turned from their evil way.

God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do on them, and he did not do it. To which Jonah rejoiced. Right? You don't know the story. That's not how Jonah responded.

It displeased Jonah exceedingly. He's upset because they repented and God didn't bring fire down and destroy him. Right? And he was angry.

Oh, Lord, is this not what I said when I was yet in my country? For I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, relenting from disaster.

God, I knew you were going to do this. That's why I didn't want to come. Isn't that like an ultimate expression of being uncaring and judgmental and I'm better than and they don't deserve and all of that kind of mindset?

[ 50 : 52 ] So what's at the core of it? The root sin? Self-righteousness. Oh. Thinking that my own righteousness has earned me some sort of favor with God.

maybe as a Christian you've recognized I can't earn it. I don't deserve it. It's only by God's grace. But now that I've been a Christian for a few years I've spent some time earning some of the righteousness I have.

Thank you very much. And so I can stand above and I can look down at other people. But we need to be reminded over and over again Isaiah does.

All of us have become like one who is unclean. All our righteous acts are like filthy rags. So now on the bottom of your notes let's talk about the solution to this because there's a solution a simple reminder that ought to bring us for all three of these that ought to bring us back to where we need to be.

So the solution to the sin that plagued the disciples the solution that is the same sin the plague the same sin that continues to plague us the solution to that is found in daily renewing our faith.

[ 52 : 39 ] it's daily coming back to the cross every day being reminded of the cross the cross and the way that I've said it here on your notes is the simple message of the gospel because that's the message of the gospel it's the message of the cross you know how sufficient you are you're so sufficient that the only way that you're going to be forgiven of your sin and gain heaven gain eternity is because of what Jesus did at the cross has nothing to do with you you're not sufficient in any way to do anything none stop thinking that way our sufficiency is only in the cross the power of the cross the message of the cross you start thinking that

I deserve it and I have to look out for myself and my own interests and I might not say that out loud but I start living that way what does the cross remind us no we need to die daily and pick up that cross and allow the Lord to live through us to serve others that's what it's about so again the daily reminder that's why Jesus said daily pick up your cross daily follow me do you think you have any kind of righteousness in and of yourself boy we've we've got to get rid of that kind of thinking and be grateful and again it's the cross that reminds us we have no righteousness because if we did do we need the cross but we do because there is no righteousness righteousness in any of us the only righteousness that we have and as believers you and

I we do have a righteousness but it's not our own it's something that's given to us the theological term is imputed it's given to us why can't they just use the word given I don't know given to us it's it's Christ's righteousness given to us it's not our own and so it brings me back to another passage and we'll close with this Paul said it this way Romans chapter 1 verse 16 for I'm not ashamed of the gospel it's another way of saying I'm not ashamed of the cross even though the cross for anybody's life would have been incredible shame because it means that's how you're dying and part of crucifying someone was to bring shame to them and shame to their family Paul says no no no I'm not ashamed of that

I'm not ashamed of that why why because it is the power of God it's not in my effort it's not in my oh I put together a really good sermon here and and and so because I put all this effort into it and I would and I preached my heart out and that's why people are going to get saved no how foolish to think that it is the power of the gospel that changes lives that rescues people bring salvation to everyone who believes first to the Jew and then to the Gentile it's this idea that people different people groups and he says in Galatians it's not about slave or free or male or female listen we all have worth because of our humanity we have worth he sent his son to die for us and so we are all free to come to

Christ to accept this message of the gospel for in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed brought forth you can't you can't get it yourself a righteousness that is by faith from first to last now I put up here the NIV this phrase faith from faith to faith is basically the best word for word Greek to

English translation from faith to faith what does that mean it's meaning that that this righteousness of God comes by faith it begins with faith and it ends with faith from first to last from beginning to end from faith to faith it's all of faith it has nothing to do with my goodness or my good works or my deeds it's only because of what Jesus accomplished at the cross when he died to pay the penalty for our sin he gave us he imputed to us his righteousness and he took upon himself my sin and my judgment and my punishment for sin he paid for that in my place on the cross from first to last from beginning to end just as it is written the righteous quote from quote from the

[ 58 : 34 ] Old Testament righteous will live by faith the Old Testament saints they were saved in the same way that you and I are saved by faith from first to last the righteous those who have been imputed with who've been given the righteousness of Christ through faith will also live by faith every day reminding ourselves the cross the cross pick it up carry it serve one another don't look down on put the interests of others ahead of yourself that's what this Christian life is all about let's pray Lord thank you for this message the disciples and their failures and their struggles with sin it helps us to understand

Lord that you do use broken people and we are blessed with the truth of their lives how much of a failure each of them were in so many ways the story wasn't glossed over the story didn't blot out their struggles with sin and so Lord it helps us to understand that even broken people like us like me flawed still struggling with sin that we are the kind of people that you choose to use today and Lord we become usable for your kingdom for your glory and for your honor when we remember the cross when we remember what it took to bring us into your family when we are reminded again and again of that sacrifice that paid the penalty for us and reminds us it's not about us it's not about me it's not about what

I have to give it's not about me and my wants and my needs and my and it's certainly not about my own righteousness because I don't have any of that everything that I have is because of you because of what you have already done past tense when you died on the cross suffered rejection beaten and bruised nailed to a cross shed your blood and died may we be reminded of that and just as we are reminded of that to remember again the victory your resurrection from the dead you've conquered it and you've conquered death for us as well this earthly grave that we are all headed for is not the end and we are so thankful for it we can rejoice in faith knowing this life is not the end so then may we live for you every day remembering afresh the gospel the simple message of the gospel that brings us back to a place where you can use us where you can be glorified and you can be honored lord we love you and we praise you and we ask all of this now in Jesus name amen that Thank you.