

A Rarely Mentioned Need We Share

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[0 : 00] In January of 2007, there was a man in hopes of getting some donations for his musical ability.

! He went to a metro station outside Washington, D.! He took out a violin, and opened it up to receive donations and began to play.

And for the next hour, he regaled the people as they passed by with pieces by Johann Sebastian Bach.

And he played with great skill, incredible skill. And again, for an hour, people rushed by. They didn't, many of them didn't even notice, didn't pay attention.

There was a few people who stopped for a few moments to listen. And they figured that in that hour period of time, there were about a thousand people who went by where he was at, where he was playing.

[1 : 11] And only seven people stopped, even just stopped, to listen to what he was playing. There was one middle-aged man who stopped and maybe even seemed to recognize the violin player.

And he went over and dropped a \$20 bill in the violin case. When the event was over, they totaled up the amount of donations that he took in.

It totaled \$32.17. What everyone who passed by the violinist didn't know is that this same man had just sold out a concert in Boston three nights before.

It was a world-renowned violinist who debuted at 17 years old in Carnegie Hall. And no one knew it. No one paid attention to it. There he was standing on the sidewalk with his million dollar, worth several million dollars, his Gibson Stradivarius violin that he was playing.

[2 : 18] And there they were. There was a man who filmed this event. He filmed it as an experiment to see how many people might would notice, who would pay attention to what he was saying.

He was wanting to see the reactions. He ended up winning a Pulitzer Prize for this filming and the story that followed after it.

And it focused on how easily distracted we can be, how self-focused we can be, how unobservant, how ungrateful we can be at times when these kind of things, when these opportunities come up.

Now, a similar kind of thing, if you will, bear with me, happened in Luke chapter 17. As all these people are following Jesus and gathering around Jesus as he teaches and as he does his thing. And in a sense, Luke's gospel serves as a written form of a camera crew, at least for our benefit. We're able to go back and watch the recording, if you will, of this divine inspiration.

[3 : 29] And these statements that Jesus makes in John 17 are seemingly short little statements that don't really seem to have any connection with each other.

There's a brief encounter in this passage with some people who are outcasts in the village and seem unrelated.

And yet, there is a common thread that seems to bring all these stories together, these bits and pieces. And you have this on your notes. I hope you have your notes out and you can follow along here.

The theme that seems to tie these verses together is that we have this need for personal accountability. Because God never intended for us in Christianity to live, to be individualistic, to live in a solitary kind of way.

It's not a solitary belief system. He designed us, he created us to live in community with other believers. The Bible doesn't teach us that there is safety in following your own counsel.

[4 : 41] No, Proverbs tells us that there is safety in many counselors. So belonging to a local church is more than just having your name on a piece of paper.

We don't kind of subscribe to that kind of thinking anyway. Belonging to a local body of believers is meant that we are to integrate with each other. We are to fellowship with each other.

We are to come into contact with each other, to encourage each other, to support each other, to pray for each other, to love one another. All the different ways that we're called to do that, to hold each other up.

And yes, to hold each other accountable. That's a part of how God intended us to live this Christian life. We're intended to do that with each other and for each other.

We need each other to pull each other safely away from the undertow of our own pride, of our own way of thinking at times, of our own desire to think that I can do this by myself.

[5 : 47] We need each other in that way. We fight with it because our sinful nature desires us to be unaccountable. We don't want to be transparent.

We don't want to have other people, the way we would look at it, is be nosy. And that's not how we should view it. We should want to share our lives with others. It's a part of what helps us to grow into maturity as followers of Christ.

And there are some elements in these stories of honesty and of humility and of transparency here. But what I want to kind of do as we make our way through these little bits and pieces is to look at what accountability looks like.

Because how do you describe that? We've heard the words before, accountability. What does it mean? What does it look like? And there are a couple of elements that we're going to see here that kind of illustrate for us what accountability looks like.

So, number one, right off the bat, we're accountable to each other and particularly to new believers. Okay? So, yes, we need each other as mature believers, if you would count yourself as a mature believer.

[6 : 53] And that's not based on how many years you have in the game, if you will. It's about how discerning you are, how your Christianity affects the way that you live, the choices that you make.

That determines our maturity. And if you are mature in your walk with the Lord, then you understand this. If you're a new believer, then you probably have a tendency, and we all do this to some respect, we look at other people and we follow the lead.

We take our cues from how we observe other people. And mature believers understand that dynamic and have that as a consideration when it comes to the way that they live their life as well. So, that's all a part of it. So, we're accountable to each other and particularly to new believers to influence them in a beneficial way. We are called as believers to have an influence on other believers to build them up, to help them to grow and to mature in their own relationship with the Lord.

I use the word influence here on purpose because there is a new category of people today. I don't know if you have noticed this, if you follow social media at all.

[8 : 12] Even if you don't follow social media, you might realize that there is a new career path that people can take. And it's called to be an influencer.

I want to grow up. You'll hear this from young people. I want to grow up to be an influencer. And so, we have now today in our world a whole load of people, lots of people who would consider themselves influencers who make money by posting their opinions and their influence on social media.

On Facebook, on Instagram is probably the bigger one there. On YouTube, on TikTok, probably the two most influential, influencing places, if you will, TikTok and Instagram.

But that's a whole category of career choice now because I can influence people. I can make money posting my videos on TikTok and Instagram and so forth.

And on YouTube, I can make money. And maybe if you're really good and you have a bunch of people who follow you, who follow your opinions and your influence, you can make a very quite nice living doing that, being an influencer.

[9 : 33] But generally speaking, what they're influencing about would be things like makeup, makeup choices, how to do makeup, or how to pair certain clothes with each other and that kind of stuff.

You can do it in the area of sports. I like golf. So, in my feed, I get golf videos. And you have influencers on what equipment to buy. And I imagine if you're into fishing or hunting, and you're probably having your feed, fishing and hunting stuff that influences you to buy certain products or

whatever.

So, it's become a whole industry. Well, welcome to the club. Influencing each other is something that, in the church, we have been doing for 2,000 years.

But it's not something as, and forgive me if I say it this way, not so superficial as what kind of makeup to wear or what kind of golf clubs to buy. It's hopefully influencing somebody to mature and grow in their relationship with Christ.

So, in a sense, we all want to be influencers in that way. Let me demonstrate here for you from Luke chapter 17, verse 1.

[10:53] Jesus is, again, speaking here, and he's speaking to his disciples. So, this is larger than just the 12. This is all the group of people who are following Jesus. Not just the curious ones, but the ones who are actually saying, yes, I'm a follower of Christ.

And he says this, temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come. If you're influencing people to sin, if you're putting temptations in front of people and causing them to sin by your choices, woe, he says to you.

And that's not a good woe, by the way. This is a very bad woe, and I'll explain here in just a moment. Now, the phrase temptations to sin, literally, this is from the New American Standard version, means stumbling blocks, that you're putting a stumbling block in someone's path and causing them to be tripped up.

Literally, the idea is you're putting a bait out for them. So, if you're into hunting or fishing, you understand the idea of baiting. Well, in a sense, as believers, if you're influencing people to sin by your choices, you are, in a sense, baiting the believers who are looking up to you or looking at you and saying, well, if Rich can do it, well, I certainly can too.

And it's a dangerous game to play. So much so that in verse 2, he says, it would be better for him, for that influencer, if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea.

[12:31] Now, I don't know if you know what a millstone is, but it's a very large piece of rock that was flat, and they would use it to crush grain, to separate the wheat from the chaff, if you will.

This very large stone, imagine yourself chained around the neck with this, and then they toss you into the river. Not a pleasant experience, you think?

Probably not. But it would be better for that person, if they would have a millstone tied around their neck and thrown into the water, than to influence someone to sin, than to put temptation because of your own behavior, and people are watching.

So, parents, children are watching. Grandparents, grandchildren are watching. In the church setting, you have people all around you who observe you.

Your friends on social media see some of the choices that you make. Now, a lot of times we try to hide our life choices on social media. We only post the good stuff kind of a thing.

[13:42] But, again, people can see and look into our lives and determine, family, friends, whoever, particularly keep in mind here the idea of new believers.

Because in this sentence here, it would be better for them, if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones.

Now, that could be taken one of a couple of different ways. A little one here could be understood as a child, as a little one, but it's also used in reference to someone who is a new believer.

A new believer is considered, even if you're 60, 80 years old and you're new in Christ, it's been a new decision for you to trust Christ as your Savior, then you are considered, in a sense, a little one because you're new to the faith.

And if you're influencing someone who's new to the faith in a way that would cause them to sin, woe to you.

[14:44] It is not a good day for you to stand before the Lord and to face the consequence of that. Not a good thing. And we ought to question the way that we're living and the choices that we're making.

So here on your notes, don't allow your life choices then to set a trap or to lay down some bait for someone who's watching you. Be alert.

Be aware that that's happening. And again, in verse 3, he says it this way. Now, the beginning of verse 3, a lot of times you'll see that with the rest of verse 3, but I actually believe that these first few words of verse 3 belong with the previous warning, pay attention to yourselves or literally be on your guard.

Be watchful that when you're making these life choices and life decisions that you recognize that there are little ones, there are others who are looking at your life, following your decisions. And then based on how you choose, based on the decisions that you make, they're making a determination, well, if it's okay for him, if it's okay for her, it's okay for me too.

[16:04] Be aware. Actually, beware of that scenario. God designed life to be lived this way that we should influence each other.

So from this context then, being an influencer is a good thing. God created us to influence each other in this way. And there's a different Bible word for it.

Bible doesn't use the word influencer. It uses the word discipleship. That we would influence other people or disciple others in a way that would help them to grow in their walk with the Lord, as opposed to that we would disciple them in a way that would cause them to stumble, to walk into temptation, fall into sin, because of the example that I'm setting, the influence that I am putting out there.

So that's one way that we're accountable to each other. Here's another one. We're accountable to each other in the area of forgiveness. And this is perhaps one of the hardest things to do as followers of Christ, is in this area of forgiveness, because the ask, or literally the command, is rather big.

It's rather large from our perspective. But again, when we consider our Savior and what he has forgiven, our view becomes very much smaller in terms of our understanding of this.

[17:39] So this is what he says in verses 3 and 4. If your brother sins, rebuke him. How do you like that? Now, this does not mean that we're supposed to be, we're supposed to have like a rebuke radar.

And like, oh, my spiritual gift is rebuke, so I'm just looking for people that I can get in front of and rebuke. That's not what's in view here. So you don't have, by the way, you don't have the spiritual gift of rebuking.

It's not one. Okay? There is no spiritual gift of rebuking. But it is a necessity if someone that you're sharing life with, that you're walking with in terms of in a church together, you have friends, you have family, those kinds of relationships.

If your brother sins, rebuke him. And if he repents, forgive him. I mean, that's awesome. Hey, what you said hurt me.

You know, this is the idea of your brother sins against you. They've done something to harm you. Okay? Not if they've sinned in some way out here, but in the sense of they're harming you, rebuke that person.

[18:53] If he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day and turns to you seven times saying, I repent, in my head, I'm thinking, are you kidding me?

If he hurts me or harms me seven times in a day, I'm thinking, and seven times he says, I repent. I'm thinking by the time the fifth time rolls around, I don't believe you, buddy.

I just don't, I don't believe you anymore. But Jesus says, and this is what makes it very difficult, right? Now this isn't the 70 times seven passage. That's a different instruction here.

This is, if he harms you seven times, if he sins against you seven times in a day and says, I repent, you must forgive him. You must forgive him.

That's not a might or a maybe or a think about it. It's a do this thing. And that's hard. That's hard to do. Are we, are we willing to show that kind of forgiveness, the kind of forgiveness that Jesus demonstrated over and over again, uh, before they took him to the cross on the way to the cross at the cross, all of it, Jesus demonstrated all of this for us.

[20:10] And, and first Peter tells us that we need to model our life in this area and how Jesus demonstrated this. when he went to the cross.

So the reality is it's easier for us to talk behind someone's back. We talk about people behind their back all the time. Right?

Um, it's just, it's just how we roll, man. Not, it's not supposed to be that way, but it is easier to talk about people behind their back than it is to talk to them face to face.

But to this, we are called. We, we are called to actually do that. And that's a better conversation face to face than it is via text or email or even phone call.

Face to face is how you ought to have those kinds of conversations. They're difficult conversations. And forgiveness should not be a one and done experience, but an ongoing practice.

[21 : 13] It should be the tone of our life, right? That's the idea here that forgiveness ought to mark the way that we live day by day. People ought to be able to say of us, well, he's a forgiving person or she is a forgiving person.

We may not think in those terms because we don't know how often people are harmed by others, but this ought to be something that marks out the way that we live.

Now, um, the apostles, and, and this is now different. So this is before it was disciples. So it's a larger group. Now it's the 12. Guys. Okay. The apostles, that's a reference to the 12 chosen around Jesus who are closest to Jesus.

And it's interesting. Their response to this command. Okay. If, if you get harmed seven times, if someone sins against you seven times in a day and they come in the, and they tell you they've repented seven times, you must forgive them.

And their response is, I need more faith. I know I can't do that. I need more faith. And so they said to Jesus, increase our faith.

[22 : 27] Now there's a sense where, um, we get that, but the issue here is not. Faith. Let, let me demonstrate why the issue is not faith.

Even though that's the question that they asked about the request that they made. We're accountable to each other in the area of obedience to hold each other accountable, to make sure that we're following through with this.

So if I have someone in my orbit who is being harmed by someone and I show, and I see them with an unforgiving spirit, then I need to come alongside of them, put my arm around them and say, Hey, maybe you ought to consider what Jesus has done for you and forgive that person.

Again, again, that's hard to do. And they're thinking, okay, for me to be able to forgive, I'm going to need more faith. And that's not the issue.

So here's why I, I say that, why I believe that the Lord said in response to this, this request, Lord, increase our faith. So Jesus says, uh, if you had the faith, like a grain of a mustard seed, which is tiny, right?

[23 : 37] It's a tiny little thing. You could say to this mulberry tree, frankly, I, I don't know what a mulberry tree is and I didn't look it up. Anybody know? Okay.

We're going to move on. So you could say to this mulberry, it's a tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea. You get the idea. The tree uproots, floats over to the sea and is tossed in and it would obey you.

Jesus is saying, you don't need an increased faith. You can tell that by the way he answered their request. They said, increase our faith.

And Jesus says, you don't need an increased faith because, if you had the faith, the size of a mustard seed, you could move this tree in a miraculous way.

And so while the disciples request appears sincere, I don't have any reason to doubt that when they heard this, when they heard, you got to forgive them seven times after they've hurt you seven times and they've claimed forgiveness or repentance seven times.

[24 : 39] And you got to forgive them all these times, every time. I get it. They could respond to that. They could respond to that by saying, increase our faith. So I think their request is sincere, but what they seem to be lacking here is not so much about faith because if they had just a tiny bit of faith, they could do some incredible things.

It wasn't the faith. What their issue was, is about simple obedience. That's what they weren't getting. So when Jesus says, forgive them, just do it.

You just do it. You don't base it on your feelings. You just do it because that's the command that's been given. Be willing to forgive that person.

And so we're accountable in that way. He goes on in verse seven now to describe, to describe what that kind of obedience would look like.

Okay. He says, forgive them seven times. What does that kind of obedience look like? And I almost guarantee you we're all going to struggle with these next few verses.

[25 : 49] Okay. So just follow along with me. See, see if you like this. Will any of you, will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, come at once and recline at table.

Now, what does recline at table mean? It means prepare yourself for a meal. A meal is common in the sense that, Hey, I'm going to serve you a meal. Hey, great job out in the field today. Great job

tending the sheep today.

Come on in, relax at the table here. I'm going to get the food. No. Would any of you who has a servant, how many of you have a servant and can relate to this? Okay. Anyone?

No, none of us have any servants. I don't have any servants either. I just, I don't. I'm going to, I'm going to get to that in a little bit here. Will he not rather say to him, isn't this more realistic than prepare supper for me?

When he comes in from the field, plowing in the field or tending to the sheep, when they come in from the field, the master's going to say to the servant, prepare supper for me and dress properly.

[26 : 58] Gird your loins properly. Put on the proper attire. Serve me while I eat and drink. And afterward, you then can eat and drink. How you guys like that?

You guys, you guys comfortable with that? In our American sensibilities, we struggle with this, don't we? We struggle a bit with this, but this is, this, this was the role in, in their context.

Okay. So verse nine, he says, does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? Does he thank the servant?

Does the master thank the servant because he did what was commanded? What's the implied answer there? The implied answer is no, he doesn't. Again, do we like that?

Cause we're, we're kind of taught, you know, I would, you know, I would teach my kids, you know, if someone does a good job for you, say, thank you. That's a, it's an expected thing to do.

[27 : 59] I would do that. If someone is doing a good job for me, I would add a boy, you know, good job. Glad you're here. All these kinds of things. But Jesus is saying, is that what normally would happen?

Or would we expect that even to happen? So also, he says in verse 10, when you have done all that you were commanded. So he's saying now to his, his apostles, the 12, he's saying to them, so when you have done all that the Lord has commanded you to do, the appropriate way to view it then is to say, we are unworthy servants.

We are unworthy servants. We have only done what was our duty. And there's no expectation. Expectations become a big part of this.

Discussion too. Because if you have the expectation of one thing and that's not met, then we become disgruntled. But if we never had the expectation in the first place, because of our mindset, because of how we view our relationship with the Lord, then our expectations are totally different. And so what, what is it that Jesus is saying here is that we're accountable to the Lord and to each other and the attitudes and motives that we exhibit in our service to Christ.

[29 : 36] What are our expectations going in? Are we expecting a bunch of thank yous and, and attaboys and, and great job and, and, and that kind of thing?

How do we, how do we handle that? What are your expectations? What are your expectations? That becomes the key. What are you thinking that you are worthy of receiving?

If you frame it from that perspective, what are you worthy of receiving? Answer to that question then begins to lower our expectations, doesn't it?

What am I worthy of? I'm, I'm worthy. I am deserving of hell. Right? Is that, that true for you guys too?

Okay. This is, this is what I'm worthy of. Okay. I got nothing. So even just the opportunity to serve him becomes for me a blessing.

[30 : 43] The fact that he has said, rich, I've got this for you to do, whatever that might be.

Lord, I don't deserve that. And because of you and what you've done for me that I don't deserve, I'm going to give it my best. I'm going to serve you with all that I have.

I'm not going to do it half-heartedly. I'm not going to do it with a handout. I'm not going to do it in a way that says you owe me in any way.

Because I am not worthy. I'm not deserving. So, think a bit, think of this in the context of your work experience, not in your context of relationship to the Lord.

and it's a little different. Are you expecting it to be easy for you? Are you expecting it to be convenient? Or that Jesus will go out of his way to praise you?

[31 : 51] What's the expectation there? Should we be expecting any of these things? Or will you serve him? Simply because it is your privilege.

Now, Jesus will go on and describe in Matthew 25, a phrase that we've come to be familiar with. The standing before the Lord. He will look at us and say, well done.

Good and faithful servant. But should we have that as an expectation? I must, I must say, I want to hear those words.

I do want to be faithful. That, that's, that's what he's, in a sense, giving us an attaboy for, giving us a, you know, well done.

Good job. Because you were faithful. Not, not the excellence that you put into it, but that, that you showed up, that you were faithful in, in the calling that, that you received from the Lord.

[33 : 04] What it was that, that he wanted for you to do. The way that you lived your life. Now, before we go on, I have a rabbit trail.

But I want to, this, I want this to, this is a, this is a, a planned rabbit trail. So that, does that make it a rabbit trail? I don't know if that qualifies. Or if it has to be something that hits you in all of a sudden. I'm, I'm not going to do that. This is planned. And it, it goes to the highlighted phrase here. Will any of you who has a servant? And it goes to this question that I want to kind of step aside out now and, and address because there are so many people in our world today who would reject Christianity, who would reject the scriptures based on this particular issue.

Does the Bible endorse slavery? Does the Bible endorse slavery? And the answer to that question is no.

Particularly, and it's usually when people ask this question or actually most often what you hear is they make this accusation. And they take it from passages like this one.

[34 : 25] And they then claim that, well, because he's talking about these servants in this way, he is endorsing the concept of slavery. Because he's not condemning it.

He's actually saying this is how to properly do it. This is how it's, it's done. And so the question then becomes is someone who is making that claim or that accusation against the scripture, are they being honest with the text?

And when you ask that question, the obvious answer is absolutely not. They're not being honest with the text. They have an agenda. And that agenda is to discredit the Bible, to discredit God, to discredit Christianity so that they can justify their lifestyle.

The fact that they don't want to serve God in any way. So in order to do that, they take a verse like this and turn it into an accusation against and say, see, you Christians are crazy because your God believes in slavery.

Let's go back and have a little history lesson, shall we? There are all kinds of different forms of slavery that happened throughout history. There's debt bondage.

[35 : 37] If I get in debt to someone, I can't pay them. Then I would become their, their servant in that way. There was surf, surfdom, which was common in medieval Europe, which a person didn't belong to a person, but they belonged to a property, a manner.

And they had to stay with whoever owned the manner. The surfs in that area stayed there and served generation after generation. They were tied to that property.

There's exploitative surgery or surgery, slavery, exploitative slavery that we see today. We see it then. We see it today. These kinds of slaves, often women or children, both boys and girls forced into sexual slavery, acting as concubines in history.

Uh, and in some parts of the world today, employed as child labor and factories or in fields or in household to perform different tasks there. That's, that's wrong.

Conquered people's slavery was common in ancient times. We see it in Greek culture. We see it in Roman culture. We see it every culture that basically conquered other nations.

[36 : 52] They would take the people that they captured in those cities that surrendered and make them their slaves. That was, that was a common thing. Military slavery was another one where they would conquer a particular people group and then turn the young men into soldiers for their purposes.

And train up the boys in that culture to become soldiers in that purpose. Uh, there's slave wage slavery, which we have. Uh, I asked Rebecca about this earlier.

Where's Rebecca at over here. Yeah. I asked Rebecca about this earlier. She confirmed this for me. Uh, often marked by low skill, low, low wage workers who were conscripted to work primarily in mining or in logging.

We have a logging history in our area here. Uh, other remote industries work. Workers were often paid in what was called script. Script was not legal tender.

It was a private non-cash currency like tokens or coupons, uh, that were only redeemable in the company store. So they would get their, their room and board paid for, and then they would be paid in company script.

[37 : 59] The company store was the only place they could shop. They would charge exorbitant prices in the company store and their money was worthless outside of that system. So they became trapped in that system, basically a form of slavery.

And then indentured servant servitude. This is going on still today. Uh, much of these are, are, are things that are going on today. Indentured servanthood is the idea that I'm going to go to another country.

We saw this in Europe quite often. People coming over to the United States. We still see it in other countries coming across the Southern border. The idea that, uh, you're going to give me passage and I'm going to be your servant in the new land for an agreed to amount of time.

Um, that part of it. And then there was also what was known as chattel slavery, which when we consider American history, that's almost exclusively what we saw in terms of the slavery, slavery of, of what happened with, uh, the black population that were people who were stolen from their lands, brought over here and sold that type of slavery, which obviously is, is wrong and is evil.

Does the Bible address any of, of this? Yes, it does. Exodus goes back to the, to the law in Exodus chapter 21, verse six, whoever steals a man and sells him, anyone found in possession of him shall be put to death.

[39 : 34] How the American church in the South during slavery ever justified slavery? I don't know because it says it about as plainly as can be said in the scriptures.

There's no way to justify the type of slavery that we had. Um, in our country in those, in those early days, it just isn't. And then that's also true in the new Testament.

First Timothy one, nine and 10. Uh, there's a list of sins that are given there. We also, we also know that the law is made not for the righteous. The righteous people don't need a law.

They just obey the law of love. And that handles all the rest, if you will. But for the law breakers and rebels, that's what's, what the law is made for, for the ungodly and the sinful, for the unholy and the irreligious, for those who kill their mothers and fathers, for murderers, he goes on for the sexually immoral, for those who practice homosexuality, for slave traders.

That's what the practice of American slavery was. The, the, the, the literal translation of this word is man stealers.

[40 : 42] They would steal men and, and, and women and children, bring them to another place. And it just was, it wasn't just happening here, by the way, there were actually more Europeans who were sold into slavery in Africa.

than there were African slaves sold, African people sold into slavery here in the United States. But we don't often hear that in our political climate.

So the issue becomes politicized instead of one of history. But either way, that practice is something that God outright just condemns and, and, and says that it's wrong.

So anyone, if you heard a preacher or anyone, for instance, in the South, in those days who tried to justify that form of slavery, there was no justification.

They were just doing what a lot of folks do today, which is to use the Bible, the Bible. They would use the Bible to serve their own end. And we need to be careful that we're not guilty of doing that as well.

[41 : 46] That we don't use the Bible to serve our own purpose, to, to gain money, to gain wealth, to gain position, to gain power, whatever it might be. The Bible through the centuries has been used for that purpose.

And we need to be careful that we're not the ones guilty of doing that. The Bible makes very clear that that particular type of slavery is something that is very wrong.

Now, what often gets confused between our day and the days of Scripture, when the Scriptures were written, is we talk about someone who is an employee, who works for an employer.

They didn't have that terminology. So any of us today, if we would, let me pick an industry, let me pick a job.

If any of you, let's, let's pick a fast food restaurant, right? I was 16. I got a job at McDonald's. I became a servant to McDonald's Corporation.

[42 : 52] It was a corporation store. I became a servant. McDonald's, the manager and the owners of the store, they were my masters. Because they told me when I had to be there, and clock in, and what I had to do when I was there.

And at the end of the day, I received some sort of payment, some sort of, I received what I was due for the work that I provided. Now in this culture, in Bible times, they would, they would do similar things.

They would work, oftentimes for room and board, and for payment as well. And they were called servants, and the ones who employed them were called masters. But it's certainly not describing the kind of chattel slavery that was so abhorrent in our nation's history.

The kind of slavery that included kidnapping and stealing people, putting them on a ship and sending them to another country, and then selling them like they were a possession.

That is evil. It's never intended to be something that was justified, and the Bible doesn't justify that.

Okay. Can I be done with the rabbit trail?

[44 : 05] And back on course now with accountability. We're accountable to each other also now in the area of gratitude, and this will be quick.

And this story is kind of neat in that way. On the way to Jerusalem, because again, Jesus is, I'm beating my drums, they're over there, but I'm beating my drums, and he's on his way to Jerusalem. Okay. So this is all toward the end of his earthly ministry. And he's passing along between Samaria and Galilee, so he's still, he's like, he's not taking a direct route to Jerusalem. He's zigzagging back and forth among the towns, announcing what he's doing, and he's going back and forth.

And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers. Now, leper is not the big cat with the spots.

Okay. A leper was a person who had a skin disease.

I forget what they call it today. They don't call it leprosy. What is it? Hansen's disease. Thank you, Jeff. And it was, for them, very, very devastating, because if you contracted this very contagious kind of disease, your skin would begin to deteriorate, earlobes would fall off, fingers and toes would fall off, your eyes would get shut, and it was just very devastating.

[45 : 26] It was basically a death sentence, and until you died, you became a complete outcast. You could not go anywhere near your city or your village. You had to stay a certain amount away.

Basically, it's about 50 feet away from any person. So if a person was coming down the street and you were walking and you had leprosy, you had to shout, leper, leper, so that would give the clue to the person who's coming.

You got to, they're going to put a wide berth around you, at least 50 feet. And so it was, it was a horrible disease. Many lepers would gather together and they would just set up camp outside of the city and live out the rest of their days.

And only, they might have family members who would come, who wouldn't come close, but they might bring food or clothing and they would leave and then walk away.

And then later you could come, after they're a safe amount of distance away, you could come and get the food or the clothing or whatever generosity they were providing. So there were 10 of them.

[46 : 31] So it was not unusual for 10 of them to be together. Okay? Because your only friend was someone who was suffering with you, who stood at a distance like they were supposed to and lifted up their voices saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

Certainly they had heard about what Jesus had done earlier on in the Gospels. He was in Galilee and he had healed a leprosy man and Jesus went up and touched him and everyone's shocked because Jesus would do that and when he touches him he becomes healed and whole in an instant.

But Jesus doesn't do it this way again. And that's on purpose because it's not the steps you take to get there. It's the person who's performing the miracle that makes the difference.

It's not how each individual miracle or healing takes place. So when he saw them he said to them, I'm not going to touch you. I'm still from a distance.

I'm raising my voice. Go! And show yourselves to the priest. Because what a leper would do is if they somehow had a miraculous healing of their leprosy and it was a common thing in that day to believe that the only way a leper would ever be healed is if God did something to intervene.

[47 : 49] God had to do it in order for a leper to be healed. Otherwise he would just slowly disintegrate and die. And so to verify this Old Testament law required if you're healed of leprosy then you need to go find your local priest and report to him and he's going to have you do several

things over a week's period of time basically to verify that yeah this guy is healed and he can go back into society.

You couldn't just go back into society if you were miraculously healed you had to wait a certain amount of time and have the priest perform these things in order for you to do that. So go and show yourselves to the priest and as they went they weren't healed continuously or immediately they were healed when they obeyed the command.

So Jesus said go and show yourselves to the priest. So they turn around they're heading back into the city village to find the priest and as they go boom then it's instantly miraculously healed.

All ten of them they were cleansed. And then one of them when he saw that he was healed turned back praising God with a loud voice I think it's because the word loud that's why I went there.

Loud voice it's an interesting phrase here the two Greek words for loud voice are megaphone. So with a megaphone he cried out it's pretty cool didn't have a physical megaphone he probably did one of these right?

[49 : 36] He cried out with a loud voice and he's praising God and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet giving him thanks.

And then Luke tosses this little nugget in there for us and for the Pharisees who are following along. He was a Samaritan.

The half-breed they were considered. Not clean. Not good people. That's how the Jews viewed the Samaritans.

And Jesus answered we're not ten cleansed healed weren't there ten of you? I don't know if he's if he's asking the guy weren't there ten of you or if he's like weren't there ten of them?

I think it's more like this because he's not he's not requiring the guy who's there at his feet to provide the answer to this. Where are the nine?

[50 : 50] Where are the other nine? They don't come back. They're scot-free. They're healed and ready to go back to their life.

They don't come back. They don't say thank you. They don't nothing. Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?

Which if you know of anything of the Gospels was a common scene. It's the Roman centurion. It's the woman at the well. It's the woman who comes who has the issue of blood.

It is these different people who are expressing more faith outside of Israel. These people who don't have the benefit of having the history of God in their midst.

Of worshipping God at the temple and all of that history and instruction. They're without that and yet these are the ones who are displaying the most amount of faith and that irks the Jewish people that are the Pharisees.

[52 : 10] It's like what? What in the world is going on? So with this the guy you wouldn't have expected talking about expectations the guy you wouldn't have expected is the one who comes back and thanks Jesus.

The Samaritan not the other. Now we don't know if all the other nine were all Jews or if only a few of them were. We don't know the number of them that were Jews but we know that this one man was a Samaritan foreigner.

Was the only one who would come back and worship him. You might say well Rich does the text say that? That he came back and worship him? Worshipped him? It seems like he came back and thanked him.

Well I'm going to say yeah the text actually says that he came back and worshipped Jesus.

Because remember only God could heal him. So who does he recognize that Jesus is?

It's God. Look again at the text. He fell on his face at the feet of Jesus giving him thanks.

[53 : 23] the phrase fell at his feet is the definition of worship. It's often used a form of this word is often used and translated as just worshipped.

It's proskuneo it's to fall down in front of. That's what it means to worship. And that's what this man actually did.

He fell down at the feet of Jesus meaning he worshipped Jesus giving him thanks which is just one word in Greek and the word is we get our English word Eucharist.

The verb form is Eucharisto. It's like do you guys ever pray before your meal? You guys do that? Pray before your meal? Sometimes it's referred to as giving what?

Grace. It's giving grace. The root word Eucharist is the Greek word for grace. You put the U in front of it the E U in front of it Eucharist and you get the idea that the meal you've heard that word to describe what happens at communion at times.

[54 : 43] The Eucharist is a giving of thanks, of an accepting of grace, of what God has done in your life.

That's what he's doing. He's worshipping. He's worshipping at the feet of Jesus. He recognizes he receives something here that he doesn't deserve and he's coming and he's giving thanks and he's giving praise.

to God because of that. Last verse. And he said to him, rise and go your way. Your faith has made you well.

Now, your faith has made you well. Bad translation. If you look in your notes and your Bible, depending on which Bible you use, some Bible translations will actually say your faith has saved you or the note will say your faith has saved you.

Was it his faith that healed him physically? no, it wasn't. How do you know that? It's what happened to the other nine.

[56 : 01] Did they express faith? No, I think when they cried out to Jesus, that was a cry out of desperation, not of faith. They had heard that this guy Jesus does this stuff.

So when they see Jesus coming their way, they cry out, maybe we can get in on some of this. Jesus, master, can you heal? Master just means like rabbi, teacher, same context.

They're not recognizing him as God yet. The other nine never do, this man does recognize Jesus as Lord. So it's not their faith that made them physically well, but it was this man's faith that sojo, the Greek words, soterion, salvation.

The study of salvation, the theology of that, soteriology, it's the study of how salvation works. He was saved. You can also use, it means rescued.

Sometimes the context determines that it's a physical rescue in mind, but this context here teaches us that it's his faith that saved him spiritually.

[57 : 22] They've already been physically healed, but now it's his faith that saves them. So don't equate physical healing with spiritual salvation. Can unsaved people receive a miraculous gift of healing from God?

the other nine did. They weren't saved. They're lost. And it's expressed in the way that they don't even recognize the one who rescued them, who healed them.

No. Only one leper that day gets saved. Only one of them comes to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ on that day.

The other nine lepers did receive physical healing. Now, if it were me playing the role of Jesus at that point, I'd have called out and said, no, the other nine, I take it back and have the leprosy even worse.

But that's not Jesus. Praise the Lord, that's not Jesus. So they get to keep their healing. but you know what?

[58 : 42] They're going to die at some point and they're going to be lost and they're going to be in hell because they didn't recognize that the one who healed them was the one who could save them.

The one leper got it. Praise the Lord. My prayer for you is that you would get that today as well. That you would understand that Jesus is not here to meet all of your physical needs.

Yes, he provides and he takes care of us. And he can heal you if you have that need. But your greatest need, and it's not even close.

There's no close second to this. Your greatest need is salvation. Your greatest need is to know that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. Do you know that?

Do you have that settled in your life? My prayer is today that you would make that declaration today that you would receive Christ, trust him as Lord and Savior.

[59 : 54] Because as a sinner, you are in great need. And the only hope that you have is found in Jesus Christ. Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much for how good you are to us.

We recognize that every good and perfect gift that we receive in this life, it comes from you, from your goodness. And you do. take care of us. And part of your taking care of us means that there are times where we will go through difficulties and trials for our betterment and for your glory.

But Lord, let us never mistake that the things that we go through, the difficult times mean somehow that you don't love us.

No. you care for us better than we could ever recognize or give you the credit for. You are so good to us. And most of all, Lord, because Jesus came and he willingly went to the cross to shed his blood, to take our place, to take what we deserved and to die, pay the penalty for our sin.

[61 : 27] And we believe that Jesus rose again from the dead. There's so much evidence to that effect, that what we believe is not a blind faith, it is an informed faith.

And it is true. You have risen from the dead. God. And so many here have made that decision to trust you as Lord and Savior.

I pray for those, whether here in this room or watching online, I pray for those who have not yet made that decision, that even this day, today, would be the day of salvation for them.

They would recognize their need and that they would confess, Lord, I am a sinner. I have sinned against the righteous and holy God. And that they would express their faith in you.

Yes, Lord, I trust you. I trust you with my life. It's yours. The rest of my earthly existence, Lord, it's yours. I live it to your glory and honor.

[62 : 36] And my heavenly, eternal destination, Lord, it's yours. I trust you with it. There is no other way. There is no plan B. There is nothing else that I could live for or trust in that can save me but you.

It is in you alone that I place my trust. And I pray that there would be people today that would make that decision, make that declaration their own, and that they would indeed trust you with their life. Lord, thank you for all that you're doing in our midst, in our church family. Thank you for how you do provide for us, and thank you, Lord, for the people that gather here today, and people who come and participate and are a part of the fabric of this church family.

Lord, we need each other. We've seen that demonstrated today because you ask these great things of us that seem so difficult, being the right kind of an example, the right kind of an influence on other people, the forgiveness that you command of us, the obedience, the simple obedience that you expect of us, the gratitude that you want for us to express to you.

Because, Lord, while we are unworthy and we don't deserve it, the same is not true of you. You are so worthy and so deserving of our praise.

[64 : 29] How could we help but to stop and give you praise and to give you thanks and to love you with our whole lives? May we love you, may we love each other, may that be demonstrated as we move forward.

Lord, we ask all of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. We pray it in his name and all God's people said, Amen.