

Eradicating the Root of Our Sins (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] there who wanted nothing to do with Halloween. Imagine that. And we were young and we had our kids, Zach and Abby, were little and we were just doing the Halloween thing because they get free candy and they get to dress up in their favorite dinosaur costume or whatever they're into at that time and we had never thought about Halloween having any negative effects.

And so we asked them why. I said, why don't you have anything to do with it? And we come to find out that the wife suffered from satanic ritual abuse as a child.

This was revealed to her. It kind of had been pushed down in her memory and revealed during a communion service we actually had. And found out the stuff that she went through was very, very horrific stuff.

And so just even the images of Halloween, the costumes and such, just brought these images back to her and revived these things and caused her to stumble because it just caused her to kind of go back into some of that stuff.

But she didn't want to, you know, she wanted her mind cleansed of those things. And so Halloween, in a sense, just participating in it, caused her to become entangled in these horrific images of her childhood.

[1 : 24] And so as their friends, we chose to forsake the celebration of Halloween and sending our kids out and opening the door and giving candy out. And we just chose together because they were our friends.

We just wanted to be with them. And so we just did a game night together on Halloween and turned the lights out, you know, and just kind of supported them. We didn't want to be a cause for stumble.

You know, we didn't want to be, for her sake, you know, just support her in that way. Well, we're talking about stumbling blocks today. Jesus mentions things that cause stumbling.

A stumbling block is any kind of obstacle, any hindrance, impediment, barrier, limitation that causes us to fall away from God.

Things that, you know, it's just a stumbling. You trip over and you fall. So it can be falling into sin. It can be falling away from God. It can be caused to be hindered in our growth.

[2 : 27] So these are causes. These are the root cause of our sin. So Jesus addresses these issues in verses 42 and following at the end of chapter 9 of Mark.

Stumbling blocks in our life. Some stumbling blocks, verse 42, are people. People can cause other people to sin. And other stumbling blocks Jesus talks about in verse 43 and following are things within our own life that cause us to sin.

And so he talks about dealing with these. And he talks about dealing with the cause, the root, not the symptom. Not just looking at the sin. The sin, how our sin is expressed are the symptoms.

He's talking about looking for the cause. What's the root? So if you've ever done weeding, if you just chop the weeds, what happens? They come right back, right?

So if you want to root out that weed, you have to dig and get to the root and pull it out. Well, Jesus is talking about dealing with the same things in our life that cause us to sin.

[3 : 41] What are those root causes? So we'll be looking at it that way. So in the previous verses in Mark 9, last week we saw Jesus teaching his followers to reverse our selfish biases.

He confronts two different issues. In verse 33, he discovers that the disciples are arguing about who's the greatest. He had just revealed to them that he's the Messiah who must die and suffer.

So he's talking about going down, and they're talking about being raised up. They're on two different tracks. Jesus is humbling himself and they want to be exalted.

And so he confronts that attitude of competitive spirit that they have. They're arguing about who's better than the other one, who's greater. And so he tells them, if you want to be great, if you want to be first, be last.

Be the servant of all. And so that's not even how our society talks. That's countercultural.

[4 : 52] Our society says, well, yeah, you want to advance yourself, but as you advance yourself, be nice, share, you know, the things we teach our kids, right? Share your toys, be nice to one another.

Why do we have to teach our kids that? Because they're naturally not nice. They're not naturally inclined to share their toys. So he teaches them that.

Jesus isn't just saying, be nice. He's saying, no, you be the servant of all. You be last. Countercultural.

Totally different kind of thinking. You see, they're on totally different thinking tracks. So he's teaching them to reverse their natural tendencies.

It's natural for us to compete. And then he deals with the second issue where, in verse 38, where John, one of the sons of thunder, says, hey, Jesus, we saw somebody casting out demons in your name and we tried to stop them.

[5 : 52] Because, why? Because they're not on our team. They don't follow us. So there's kind of this natural judgmental spirit that we have. You know, we're cliquish.

We want to kind of be safe in our circle. So Jesus confronts that as well. And he tells them, don't be so quickly judgmental of others.

They're casting out demons. Yeah, well, what do you know about those people casting out the demon? Well, they used your name. Okay. Is there a problem with that? I guess not, because they're giving you the credit.

Okay. Are they teaching anything negative? No, we don't know what they're teaching. We just know they're casting out. So all you know is positive. So leave them alone. If you know more, then there's something.

But as far as you know, all they're doing is doing something that's positive for the Lord. So leave it alone. In other words, don't be oriented toward intolerance.

[7 : 01] Be oriented toward tolerance. Or to put it in Christian terms, be gracious. Give them a break until you know something different.

Don't be so suspicious. Now, we know there's wolves out there. We know there are times where we have to draw lines. Yes. But, hey, this church is doing this over here.

So? Is it exalting the name of Christ? Yeah. Leave them alone. Stop picking on them. You with me?

I mean, we have these natural tendencies to either compete or to judge. And Jesus is teaching us, reverse that. You're following me.

Don't think that way. That's what's natural. You need to now think wholly different to follow me. So he does that. And now we see in verses 42 and on, he's still continuing.

[8 : 00] He's still teaching them in private. He's still talking about discipleship. He has reminded them for the second time that he, as the Christ, will suffer, must be killed, and then will rise on the third day.

And then in response to that, he begins to teach the implications of discipleship. So what does it mean to follow Jesus? Well, if Jesus is suffering and dying, what do you think his followers should be doing?

Well, he pays all the price so you get to do all the... No, no, no, no. Yeah, exaltation comes later. Glory comes later. Suffering now.

Glory later. So if he walks the path of suffering, so do you. So remember in chapter 8, he had told them, after he first told them, I will suffer, he says to them, if you desire to follow me, you must what?

Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me. That's as simple as it is. And that was, remember, in response to Peter. When Peter said, you are the Christ, Jesus says, well, here's what the Christ is going to do.

[9 : 12] He's going to suffer, he's going to be killed, and he's going to rise again. And Peter said, what? No! No, my Messiah doesn't suffer. My Messiah doesn't die.

My Messiah is like David. And Jesus said, what? Get behind me who? Satan. All of a sudden, Peter's Satan. He is way on the wrong side, right?

Wake up, Peter, now. I know you love me. But your agenda for how it goes is not what my agenda is. It's not about glory now. It's not about your life now.

It's not about your best life now. Sorry to the popular author that wrote that book. But he's tragically wrong. So, now Jesus continues to urge his disciples.

So, he's talked about those two natural attitudes of competitive spirit and judgmental spirit. Now, in verses 42 and 43 and following, he's going to talk about stumbling blocks.

[10 : 17] This is still lessons on discipleship. So, whereas before he talked about reversing our selfish biases, now he's talking about removing our hellish sins.

Because these are sins, he says, make you liable to hell. I mean, if you've never read these verses before, would they not shock you as coming out of the mouth of Jesus?

He talks about going to hell. Jesus is talking about hell. We're not supposed to talk about hell anymore. Right? Our culture doesn't want to hear about that. We don't believe in that.

Well, Jesus did. In fact, Jesus is the one that defined it. Jesus is the one that taught it the most. And yet, he is the loving son of God.

Why would he teach on hell? We're going to get more to that next week. That's just a primer for next week. Preview. Preview. So, how do we, and if you're a Christian, if you are a follower of Jesus, and you genuinely want to follow him, you genuinely want to serve him and please him, this will be an important question for you.

[11 : 36] How do I eradicate the source of my sins? Not just my sins, but the root. How do I do that?

This is what he's teaching. Two different kinds of stumbling blocks. First, people who cause other people to sin. Little ones. And then secondly, the evil within us that we want to eradicate.

So, let's look at the first warning. Two warnings Jesus gives, and they're kind of shocking in terms of the language he uses. Verse 42. Now that's some threatening words.

What does he mean by that? Well, let's ask some questions. Okay? And I would summarize this warning in verse 42 this way. Anyone who causes God's child to fall is in danger of hell.

Anyone causing one of God's little children to fall is in danger of hell. So, let's ask three questions. First of all, whose little ones he's talking about?

[12 : 57] Is he talking about children? Could be. We typically understand this verse and the one in Matthew 18 as being about children. Remember, in the context he had put a child in their midst.

And he had talked about such like these. Right? Receiving such like these. But remember that language was like these. Whoever receives someone like this child.

Child like. Someone who's dependent. Vulnerable. Immature. Right? Least. Not the popular. Now remember, this is a first century view of children.

Not a 21st century view of children. We have a different view in our culture. We have a different view of children. We are rightly more focused on protecting them. Those kind of things. That's good.

Okay? But this is a first century. It's not that they didn't care about children. Of course they did. But they weren't high on the social ladder. Okay?

[14 : 01] They're dependent. They're needy. So he's talking about anyone like that. If you receive somebody like a child. So who would that be? That would be people coming to Christ who are what?

Weak. Dependent. Vulnerable. Okay. The kind of people Jesus reached out to like Matthew, James and John who are these, you know.

Okay, they're needy. They don't act it but they are very needy. People like Peter who doesn't act needy but is really needy. Isn't he? He has a lot to learn. Bless his heart.

I learned what that meant. Anyway. So these. So who are these little ones in the context?

And remember, notice he says in verse 42, one who causes one of these little ones. These meaning somebody present with Jesus at that moment. Who is Jesus with at that moment in the house?

[15 : 14] Something going on? Somebody playing over there? It's all right. The disciples. The disciples. They're new. They still aren't understanding things.

Right? They're still slow to believe. They're still naive. They're still weak and vulnerable. Peter's going to find out how vulnerable he is in just a little while when he denies Jesus, though he never intended to deny Jesus.

He's going to find out he's just not as faithful as he thought he was. He's going to find out how inadequate and weak he really is. Which he needs to find out. Which he needs to find out.

So we're talking about those. So whoever hurts one of these people. Whoever hurts a young believer. A new believer. A struggling believer.

An immature believer. An immature believer. An immature believer. How about one of these believers who comes with baggage? Are there ever believers like that?

[16 : 23] They come with their worldly baggage. Jesus is going to start a church that's not just these Jewish people that know the Scriptures and have all their things down.

He's going to start joining who with the Jews? All these Gentiles who have all kinds of baggage. You are doing what?

How do we help these Gentiles? And now we have a church full of Gentiles. Don't we? Lots of baggage. How do we care for those people coming in?

They look different than us. They act different than us. Will we love them? Will we accept them? Where they're at? Or are we going to expect them to be where we're at?

They're going to start changing how they look. That's what happens in churches, isn't it? This is what Jesus is warning about.

[17 : 23] He is so concerned for the little ones. That he says, whoever causes one of these to sin, to fall. It would be better for a great millstone.

Wow, okay. He's pretty serious about this. That's not an idle threat. He's serious about this. So, second question.

Not just who are these. So these are the new believers. These are the weak, vulnerable believers. What does it mean to cause them to sin? To cause them to fall? The word Jesus uses is scandalidza.

Can you hear the English word in there? Scandalidza? Scandal. Scandal. Scandals alert us, right? Scandals are like, oh. Especially if we hear scandals in the church.

What happens to people when scandals in the church happen? Terrible thing. People fall. People fall away. Oh, I trusted this church. And what do we do as other churches?

[18 : 30] We often go, ah, see. Instead of go, oh, Lord. Help these dear folks. Help these dear folks. Causing to sin.

Causing to fall. Causing to stumble. Causing them to fall into sin. Hindering them. Limiting them. Some kind of barrier to them is a scandal. So how do we cause stumbling to a weaker believer?

Well, there's lots of ways we could probably talk about. I have met so many people that used to go to church. You know, who were hurt. And. It's tragic.

God is. And what God is saying. Jesus is saying he cares about those people. That have been hurt. Hurt bad. Spiritual abuse. Well, one of the ways we know from scripture that we can cause other believers to sin.

Is by judging them. Because in Romans 14, Paul links those two things together. Stop judging. Thereby causing them to stumble.

[19 : 48] We're prejudging. Now we make judgments. It's not talking about making judgments. It's talking about condemning. Making a condemnation of people. Looking down upon them.

Lording it over them. Giving severely. Kind of, you know, kind of like what the Pharisees did to the people. You know, doing that. Being, you know, you should do this.

And you should do this. And you should do this. And you should. And we should all over them. And eventually they say, this burden's too heavy.

I'm out of here. This isn't what I thought Jesus was about. I got to do this. And I got to do that. And I got to. And if the Holy Spirit leads them to do that, that's fine. But we're not their personal Holy Spirit.

Just news for you. We're brothers and sisters that come alongside. Remember Jesus talks about taking the log out of your eye before you go help somebody with their little speck.

[20 : 50] He talks about going gently, going tenderly. Looking for that brother who's stuck in that sin. Help him get out of that mud. Not. Right.

So again, reversing our natural tendencies. Naturally, that's the kind of stuff we do. Because that's how we are. But we have a spirit that is training us to be wholly different than that.

So Christians come to be known as those who shoot their wounded. Have you ever heard that? Shoot their wounded. Yeah. That's sad. So we fight against this.

So then he makes the shocking statement of it would be better for them to drown. What's he getting at there? Better for him to have a millstone, a heavy millstone.

Literally, the text reads, the millstone for a donkey. Millstone for a donkey? Well, there's different kind of millstones. When they grind the grain. You can do that in a little cup with a, you know, I forget what you call it, but you grind it yourself, you know.

[22 : 07] Mortal and pestle. Pester? Pestle? Pest? Okay. Thank you. Or if you're doing big stuff, then you get a big millstone, which is big and heavy, one that only a donkey can pull around.

So that's the kind he's talking about. Talk about a gigantic millstone. Ridiculous picture of hung around his neck. And what it's saying is, when he's thrown into the sea, there's no escape.

It'd be better for him to have that kind of millstone that he can't escape from, that will immediately sink him and drown him. That would be better. Better than what?

Better than what? Yeah, he doesn't say that, but he says it in the next verse, doesn't he? And then he says it two verses after that, and then he says it two verses after that. So probably that's the implication. Because when he gets into the other things that cause the stumble, he uses the same language.

It would be better than hell. That's why I say anyone causing God's child to fall is in danger of hell.

[23 : 23] It would be better. So, what's the image here? Is he threatening that anyone who has ever caused a little one to sin, that they're going to hell?

That's why I said in danger of. Because remember, there's only one unpardonable sin. This isn't it. The unpardonable sin is what?

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Right? To speak falsely of the Holy Spirit. To really deny the work of the Holy Spirit to convert me. Everything is forgivable.

Improcious. So, if you've caused a little one to sin, you go, oh man, I've been a Pharisee. And God convicts you of that and you repent.

You're not going to hell. Repent. What he's saying is, it's better than if you don't repent. It would be better for you to be drowned.

[24 : 39] Because if you don't repent, what will God do to you in this life? There's another saying that Matthew adds in Matthew 18 to this little section.

He says this obscure little saying. He says, where Jesus says about these little ones, that their angels behold the face of God.

What's that mean? It's like their angels are standing before going, can I get them now? Can I go get them now? Send me now.

I'm ready. I'll take care of this, punk. I don't know. It doesn't say what it means, but it sounds intimidating to me.

Angels aren't really, you know. Remember when angels appear to people, what's usually the first thing that the angel has to say? Fear not. They're a little bit scary.

[25 : 51] Okay? Especially if they're sent for a purpose of judgment. So, I say, this is a warning.

Anyone who causes one of God's little children to sin or to fall is in danger of hell. So, let's look at example.

Let me just give you, make it practical. Give you an example of causing a weaker brother to sin. Paul deals with this a couple of times with the Gentile churches. Because once the Gentiles came into the church, there were problems.

Okay? How do you assimilate these people? We've got totally different cultures, totally different backgrounds. You've got these Gentiles coming in with all their baggage. They've worshipped idols.

They've done all this worldly stuff, right? So, both to the Romans in chapter 14 and to the Corinthians. Two different kinds of Gentiles.

[26 : 51] To Greek and Hellenist kind of Gentiles. Paul gives this example. Here's the example. 1 Corinthians 8. As to the eating of food offered to idols.

Okay? Paul says, We know. We know that an idol has no real existence. An idol is just an idol. There's no power in it. And that there is no God but one.

We know there's no God to those idols. We know that. For although there may be so-called gods, yes, there are demons behind those idols.

Yes, there are powers behind that. But not God. No kind of not equal playing field here. Yet for us there's but one God.

However, not all possess this knowledge. Not everybody knows this, understands this. But some, watch this, some through former association with idols, in other words, their baggage, some because formerly they were worshipping idols, eat food as really offered to an idol.

[27 : 57] And their conscience being weak is defiled. Paul makes a statement about food. Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do eat and if we don't eat.

Food's neutral. It doesn't matter. But take care. Watch what Paul says. But take care that this right of yours, you have a right to eat whatever you want.

But take care lest this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged if his conscience is weak to eat food offered to idols?

And so by your knowledge, this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died, thus sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak.

You sin against Christ. Oh. So you're not just treating that weaker brother like you don't care. You're treating Jesus like you don't care.

[29 : 04] Remember Jesus said, whoever receives one of these little ones receives me. Me? They're mine. They're mine. So you treat them that way, you're treating me that way.

Okay, that's another level. Well, these are my kids. These are my little ones. Therefore, Paul says, if food, if it's just a matter of food, makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat again.

Paul's the first vegetarian. I don't know if he's the first. He's a voluntary vegetarian. He doesn't want to be a vegetarian, but he's voluntarily vegetarian. Why? Because if that's going to cause my brother to sin, I can give up food.

I can give up steak. Ooh. Okay, I can. My brother's more important than that. Juicy hamburger. Okay.

Are you with me? See, under Christ, we're not under the old covenant, so we don't have diet laws. Christ has set us free from all that.

[30 : 18] He's fulfilled all of that. So it doesn't matter. Now you can eat ham. Okay? Crab.

Seafood. Yes. Seafood. You have a Christian freedom. You have a right to eat whatever you want.

Because the prayer sanctifies whatever you eat. Even if you bought it from a place that worshiped idols. You can buy that meat from that idol place, bring it home, pray for it.

Paul says in 1 Timothy 4, pray for it, it's sanctified. There's no curse on it or anything. Good. Prayer redeems it.

But, if my brother sees me doing that and for him, that makes him think, oh, I can go back over to that idol market and he gets over there and he's still, and he gets drawn in, back drawn in to that stuff and it's, modern example, simple one, alcoholic.

[31 : 41] Right? Somebody has come out of alcohol, you know, going to AA, trying to fight that battle, trying to fight that addiction, trying to overcome that. Okay? Bless them. I don't know that.

I invite them over and I offer them alcohol. I don't intend anything other than just to be gracious and hospitable. But, if I don't know that person well enough and I don't know that by offering that I can be causing them to stumble, I don't know how strong that peel is for them, I don't know that.

Boy, one drink leads them, that's not just one. I think they say it's not just one. Get it? Get it? So, it requires us to know each other for one, to know what causes my brothers, my sisters, my new folks to sin and so I can be sensitive to them.

It doesn't mean I have to say, okay, I'm never drinking any alcohol at all. Now, if you want to say that, that's fine. God leads you to that. That's a personal decision between you and the Lord. and I think it's kind of a, well, I won't go there.

But we don't require our members to make that commitment because you have our freedom in Christ. But we do require our members to love each other and that means get to know them, to be aware of weaknesses so that I don't cause them to stumble.

[33 : 25] All right. So that's one warning. Anyone causing God's children, God's little one, to stumble is in danger of hell. Here's the second warning and this gets more personal if the other one didn't.

Verse 43, talking about our hand or our foot or our eye causing us to stumble, cast it out or tear it out for it's better to enter into life or enter into the kingdom mutilated or with just lame than to enter into hell with all that I have.

So what's that about? Well, let's put it this way. Second warning is anyone not fighting sin's source, not fighting the source of sin is in danger of hell.

Anyone who is not fighting, not battling with the source of their sin is in danger of hell. That's what Jesus is saying. Let's look at it in three ways.

We'll look at the source, we'll look at the surgery that he talks about and we'll look at the seriousness of it. First of all, the source. Notice the three kinds. Verse 43, if your hand causes you to sin.

[34 : 35] Verse 45, if your foot causes you to sin. Verse 47, if your eye causes you to sin.

So notice, he's talking about the cause. What pushes us? What is the root of our sin? He's not talking about the sin itself.

He's talking about the cause of it. The source, not the symptom. Our sins are just the symptoms. That's why all sins, it doesn't matter what your sin is.

It makes you a sinner. Right? My sins are one way, other people's sins are other ways. All of us have sinned.

There's no sin that's greater than other sins. Except for blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Right? So let's not pick on people that have particular sins.

[35 : 33] That's my hobby horse. Let's not pick on people because they have a certain kind of sin. Okay? That's their handicap. I got a different handicap.

Even if I don't understand, I hate their sin. I'm like, grrr. Just a sin. Just a symptom. The source is deeper. So look at the sources.

So he talks about three kinds. A hand, a foot, and an eye. If your hand causes you to sin. So how does my hand cause me to sin? Now we have to be careful.

We have to remember this is a first century saying, said to people of the first century, so let's not take our views of the 21st century of how I use my hand and import it into this because I may get a misinterpretation.

Okay? So how is hand used in Scripture? What are hands, what do hands do? Huh? They work. We work with our hands. Paul says that a lot.

[36 : 33] We work with our hands. Okay? So it's our work. We can make idols with our hands too. Jesus used his hand to heal, to touch, to raise people up.

Okay? So a hand can be good, can be doing good works, and it can be doing evil works. So, so then we have to ask, okay, the hand is the source of my sin.

Is there something that I do that leads me into sin? Is it even my job? See, if I work with my hands, that's my job.

Is there something about my job that might actually lead me into sin? I don't know. Maybe if you worked at a bar. I don't know.

So, something of our hand. Then he talks about foot. What do feet do? They travel. They go somewhere.

[37 : 36] I think he's talking about where we go. Our feet are swift to evil, to run to evil, or your feet can be beautiful that bring good news.

So again, you have the foot that could do beautiful things, good things, and it could do bad things. Bad things. Sorry. I'll learn English one of these days.

Okay? So, in other words, so now we're asking the question, okay, the source of my sin, it could be where I go. It could be a place that I go that encourages me to sin.

Is there a place that I go that encourages me to sin? Or the eye. The eye could be the source of our sin, could be a root of our sin.

What's the eye do? This is a little easier, isn't it? It looks. So, Jesus talks about looking to lust. Right? Remember, Jesus said, you've heard it was said, the old covenant told you that if you commit adultery, you're guilty.

[38 : 43] But I say to you, if you even look to lust, well, that's a whole, that's way before adultery happens. That's way back here.

So, he's getting to the source of it. If you're looking to lust, you're just as guilty of hell. So, we look to lust.

The eye is the lamp of the body, Jesus says. If light comes in, then we're full of light. If darkness comes in, then woe to that person who's full of darkness. So, the same eye, right, can be good or bad if I let darkness in.

So, if I look at, I covet, I envy, I lust, I whatever. Something that I'm looking at. So, here, let me get practical with this.

What's the trigger? So, if you have a sin that you're struggling with, you struggle with it, and you're, you keep getting angry, you keep dealing with lust, you keep dealing with coveting, you keep dealing with pride, I don't know what the sin is.

[39 : 46] Whatever it is. However, whatever symptom it comes out as. what's the root of it? So, for guys, I can relate to this one.

Lust. What's the trigger of it? The eye, yes.

But what triggers that? When I get into real temptation with lust, I mean, the battle's almost over. Guys, right?

I'm deeply enticed. Yeah, there's a battle there, but it started before that. Something happened before that.

Something I saw, some image stuck in my mind that led me to there. It doesn't just happen. Peter's denial of Christ did not just happen.

[40 : 52] Right? There was something that happened before he got to that campfire where he let down his defenses.

No Roman guard standing in front of him. there's a, what I'm saying is if you desire to eradicate the root of your sin, you must examine the pattern of your life.

Learn from your sin. When you sin, think, oh, I've got to beat myself up, I'm horrible, I'm horrible. Okay, yeah, just be easy on that.

Of course you sin. Since you've already sinned, learn from it. Oops. Examine it. Go back and go, how did I get to there? How come I blew up at that person?

How come I got so rigid about that? Look at your life, go back. And if you see a pattern of it, you know what? Mondays are a bad day for me.

[41 : 57] I really, I blow up on Monday. Maybe there's something about the weekend that happens or the Monday. In other words, learn. Jesus is saying, look back at the source.

Look back at the root. What's causing that? So is it something about your job? Is there something about my job that somehow I thought, I never thought of it before, but now that I look at it, the job causes me to sin.

Or I never thought going to that place was a problem. That place is neutral. That place is fine. But now that I look at the pattern of my life, I see that place is a problem. Or watching that show, I didn't think there was anything about it.

Now that I trace back to when lust or whatever, coveting or whatever it is starts to grab a hold of my heart, I trace it back and say, oh yeah, I watched that show and then the next day or so those images came back and are you with me?

Does that make sense? So learn to trace the pattern. We beat ourselves up for our sins, don't we?

[43 : 10] Because as believers, we hate that we sin. We hate it. How can I do that? I love it. Yet I fall. And what I haven't done is I'm dealing with the symptom and I'm dealing with the root.

So it keeps coming back. Surprise, it keeps coming back. It keeps coming back because I haven't dealt with the root. So what do I do with the root? There's the surgery. Jesus says, cut it off. Cut off the hand, cut off the foot.

Amputate to save the life. Right? When does a doctor amputate? When your life is in danger. You got gangrene in your foot? We don't want it to spread to the rest of you, so we cut it off.

So you do radical surgery. You tear out the eye, cast it away from you. So is Jesus saying literally to do that?

No. I got an impressive phrase for you. I've been waiting for this. It's metaphoric hyperbole. Isn't that good? I wrote down.

[44 : 21] I saw it in one of the books. It's like, ew, that's cool. So if you want to impress somebody, say you learned about metaphoric hyperbole. And Jesus does it this way.

So metaphor means symbolic, hyperbole means exaggeration. So those who are like me had to look up what it meant. So he's exaggerating.

He's using a violent image. What he is communicating is you must do something. Cut it off. Eradicate that.

Remove it. Tear it out. Do something radical. As radical as cutting off your hand, that means you will sacrifice.

That means you will be impaired. That means you're cutting something out of your life that you will miss. Okay?

[45 : 21] Something you value. It's that serious. It's that ruthless.

It's that severe. And that leads us to the last point here. It's seriousness. So notice what he says each time. Verse 43. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. Why? Because it's better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell to the unquenchable fire.

Verse 45. If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. Why? It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out.

Why? It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell. Why is hell so bad? Verse 48. Because there the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

You are in danger of hell if you do not deal with it. That's how serious it is. That's why he uses radical language to awaken us and make us aware that we are so vulnerable that if we don't take this seriously we live like an unbeliever.

[46 : 44] We act like a rebel against God. See, because if you never fight sin, if you choose to stay enslaved to your sin, if you never do what you must to kill that sin, you are a rebel against God.

This is not about losing your salvation. This is not about a Christian who just keeps sinning and never overcomes their sin. That's not a biblical teaching. A believer will struggle and deal with their sin.

They won't be apathetic and they won't just let it go. So, evidence one, here's what Jesus says. I'm going to take Jesus' opinion over some prophet at seminary.

It is so vital. This is not about losing your salvation. This is about a test of your salvation. If you're a true believer, what will you do?

I will start fighting it. I will start praying to figure out what the root of it is. I will be so disturbed by this, I will say, Lord, please, show me.

[48 : 03] I don't know what's causing me. I keep struggling with this over and over and over again. And I hate it. Show me the source. Show me how to look at my life and see the pattern in my life so that I can go back.

And there it is. Cut out that show. Cut out that group of people that I hang out with. I mean, it could be, I don't know, it could mean cutting people out of my life.

That I, it's that serious. And you can only determine that. I can't tell you what that is. Only you before the Lord with the Holy Spirit can figure that out.

The Lord will tell you. He will tell you. He cares about that. But if you will not fight this, if you will stay enslaved, if you will never do what you must do, then you're not a believer.

I can tell you that. You're not a believer. You're a rebel. You need saving. You can still be saved. You can still, Jesus still, he saves rebels.

[49 : 14] He actually is good at that. Right? Good at that. Look at Paul. Paul's going that way. Has no intention of following Jesus.

What happens to him? Hello. What do you want, Jesus? No fight. Pray that God does that to you if you're a rebel.

If you're awakened today, if you're convicted today, pray that God will do that to you. Jesus will come to you with light, save you from your misery. glory. Here's what Paul says.

Paul uses similar language in Colossians 3. He says, set your minds on the things above, not on the things of the earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. You're really with Christ in heaven.

When Christ who is your life appears, then you will also appear with him in glory, the real you. Therefore, put to death, here's that language, that violent language, put to death what is earthly in you.

[50 : 18] Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these things, the wrath of God is coming. If in these two you once walked, you Gentiles, when you were living in them, but now, now that you're born again, now that you've come to Christ, now you must put them all away.

Anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth, do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on.

Remember Ephesians? We talked about that. Put off, put on. That's our regular daily action. Don't just put off a symptom, but you're replacing it with a good one. Put on the new self, which is being renewed.

That's done to you, by the way. It's passive. Remember James? Passive. We like passive verbs because it means God's working on us. It's being renewed in the knowledge after the image of the creator.

This is the call of Jesus Christ. Paul is saying what Jesus has already told us. Deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow me. Fight the sin. Fight yourself.

[51 : 28] Deny yourself. Take up the cross and follow me. Sacrifice and cost. Kill what is earthly in you. Deal with the source of that.

It's a daily process of putting away and putting off the old and putting on the new and it's done by faith and it's done by the work of the Holy Spirit.

It's not something I have the natural ability to do. In fact, it's often not something I have the natural desire to do. So Paul says, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you to do the what?

The willing and the working. So when I don't have the willingness, God can give me the willingness. Okay? I often pray that, please give me, renew my will.

Renew my will. Especially when I'm depressed. I've got no will. Renew the will. Revive that will. So to neglect this is to choose to live like you're not a believer.

[52 : 41] To rebel against the Holy Spirit. To love your soul in this world, which is to lose your soul. So how can we fight the strong pull of our natural desires?

How do we overcome our slavery to sin? Paul says it simply in Romans 8. He says, if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

So this killing of the earthly in me is done by the work of the Spirit. So I say, Holy Spirit, come, help me kill this. Help me find that root, help me eradicate it.

Help me, Holy Spirit, to do that. Because I don't know how to do that. And I don't have the strength. And even, there's still a tinge of me that still wants to keep it. Are you there?

I still, there's still part of me, oh, I don't want to give that up. Because sometimes I find relief in that, even though it's not satisfying. It's relieving to blow up at somebody once in a while.

[53 : 42] Isn't it? I mean, I feel horrible afterwards, but. There's one remedy.

One remedy, seek a power that is greater than yourself. His name is Jesus Christ. Ask him and keep asking him. Seek him, keep seeking him.

Knock at his door and keep knocking until he opens the door and says to you, enter. I will show you. I will help you. Which is better, to live without earthly pleasure but enter the kingdom of heaven?

or to live with your earthly pleasures and enter into hell? Today is the day.

If God is speaking to you, today is the day. Don't linger. Don't put this off. Don't say, I've got other things to deal with. That's important. Yeah, I should deal with that. Don't. You hear his language?

[54 : 44] His language is urgent. This is too serious. If you are offender of others and causing others to sin, repent of it.

If you are struggling with sin and you cannot root it out, repent of it. Seek the Holy Spirit to help you root it out. Do that, beloved. Do that. Your soul is at stake.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you for Jesus' strong words. There are times that we need his strong words. There are times, oh Lord, we long for Jesus to be gentle with us, to be soft with us, to be comforting to us.

And he often, often is. But Lord, there is a reason for him to be strong with us too. Because you know who we are and you know how we are.

And so cause the words of Jesus today to pierce us, to awaken us, to convict us, to challenge us, to conform us. To bring us to his feet.

[55 : 52] This is what we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.