

# Committed (Part 1)

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Date: 24 November 2024

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[ 0 : 00 ] My original intention was to preach this entire chapter this week.

! I have the outline of the entire chapter for you in the bulletin. And as I went along about Wednesday, I realized, okay, this is probably, I'm probably only going to get through two of these points.

And then by Thursday it was, well, I'm only going to get through one of these points. So this is part one of at least a two-part sermon. And even though I have one point, don't worry, it's going to be as long as a normal sermon that I would preach on Sunday.

Amen! Amen! So if you stand with me, let's honor the reading of God's Word together, reading Ezra chapter 10, verses 1 through 5. Ezra chapter 10, verses 1 through 5.

While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly.

[ 1 : 14 ] And Shekaniah, the son of Jehiel, of the sons of Elam, addressed Ezra. We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this.

Therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my Lord, and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the law.

Now, arise, for it is your task, and we are with you. Be strong, and do it. Then Ezra arose and made the leading priests and Levites and all Israel take an oath that they would do as had been said.

So they took the oath. May God add a blessing to the reading of his Word. Would you please be seated? Amen. About 200 years before the revival that we'll read about in Ezra chapter 10, the Bible records another revival in 2 Kings chapters 22 through 23 during the reign of King Josiah. Josiah was eight years old when he became the king of Israel. Not only was Josiah young, but Josiah didn't have the best role models growing up.

[ 2 : 44 ] His grandfather was Manasseh, who the Bible describes as being one of the wicked, most wicked men, most wicked kings Israel had ever had. Josiah's father, Amon, was just as evil, and he only reigned for two years before he was assassinated by his servants.

So here's Josiah, all of eight years old, the descendant of evil men, coping with the distress of his father's murder, now given the responsibility to rule the nation of Israel.

This, it appears, has all the makings for complete and total disaster. Imagine someone that young, that age, a second grader or a third grader becoming the president of our nation.

Imagine someone that young, a second or third grader, becoming your boss and telling you what to do. At the very least, if that was the case for us, we would think, I don't think this is going to go well. Yet through this little boy, God brought a great revival to the entire nation of Israel. Through this adolescent, prepubescent child, God ignited a spark that awakened the dormant hearts of rebellious adults, compelling them to reconsider their ways and to repent of their sins.

[ 4 : 25 ] So how did he do it? How did Josiah do it? We long for that kind of revival, don't we? In both our churches and in our nation. And we could be tempted to duplicate the revival that took place in 2 Kings chapters 22 and 23.

We could try and find an eight-year-old with an upbringing like Josiah and hand him complete and control over the church and say, okay, God, we've done our part.

Now send revival. Well, I hope that you know that wouldn't work. But things like that haven't stopped churches from trying to copy and trying to replicate what they perceive God is doing somewhere else in the hopes that God will do it where they're at too.

What we need to understand about revival is that it is not something we do. It is something that God does. However, there is a common denominator between the revival that took place in Josiah's time and the revival that took place in Ezra's time and all the other times in history where God has been gracious to spark revival amongst his people.

In 2 Kings 22 verses 11 through 13, we read about Josiah's response. And it's his response to the reading of God's word, which the people had ignored for a very long time.

[ 6 : 16 ] Let's read that response. When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest and Ahicham the son of Shaphon and Achbar the son of Micaiah and Shaphon the secretary and Isaiah the king's servant saying, go, inquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found.

For great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book to do according to all that is written concerning us.

If you remember in Ezra, King Artaxerxes sent him back to Jerusalem. And he sent him back and he commanded him, he ordered him to preach and to teach and to govern the people according to God's word.

Four months after arriving in Jerusalem and doing that, some Jews came to him with a report concerning leading men in the city who were violating God's command not to marry foreign women. Ezra responded like Josiah by tearing his clothes and mourning over their sin and praying to the Lord.

[ 7 : 43 ] His response like Josiah set the stage for the revival that takes place in chapter 10. Revival again is something that God does and he does it through the reading, the teaching, and the preaching of his word.

Opening the eyes and the hearts and the minds of his people to see their sin, understand his wrath against sin, which then leads to repentance over sin.

And that includes a commitment to change. A commitment to change your ways. And leads us to the main idea for this morning's sermon.

Revival happens when God's people commit to separate themselves from sin. Revival happens when God's people commit to separate themselves from sin.

And again, there's four commitments today. We will just get through one of those, but it's a very important one. And before covering that first component, I think it's essential that we understand a couple of principles from Scripture.

[ 9 : 00 ] First, we need to understand that God takes sin very, very, very seriously. In his letter to the Roman church, to the Roman Christians, Paul makes three important points about sin.

In Romans 1.8, he says, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

The Bible says, God says that he is the standard of right and wrong. He is holy. And in being holy, he will not tolerate sin.

He will judge those who live in rebellion against him. In Romans 3.23, Paul says, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Every person has sinned, and every person has fallen short of God's perfect standard. One sin is one sin to many.

[ 10 : 09 ] In Romans 6.23, Paul says, for the wages of sin is death. Sin brings death. Eternal separation from God in hell.

That is bad news. It's news that we would rather deny than deal with. And that's what a lot of people do. Either denying the existence of God completely or recreating God in their own images as being someone who accepts their sin.

In fact, a God who doesn't call sin, sin. He doesn't use that word at all. As Christians, we are tempted to lower God's standard and permit sin's presence in our own lives and in our churches. We are like the proverbial frog in a pot of lukewarm water that is gradually heated to the point of boiling. The rising temperature of the water is so gradual that the frog gets used to it to the point where it doesn't even realize that it's being boiled alive.

There will be no revival if there is no repentance. And there will be no repentance if we don't understand how seriously God takes sin.

[11:34] But in understanding that, we could draw a conclusion that is just as fatal. We could look at these four components of what it means to separate ourselves from sin and think that this kind of reviving is completely up to us.

Christian, I'm sure that there have been many times in your life where you resolved to put sin to death. Maybe you went to a conference and you came back and you were on fire for the Lord. You made a commitment. You determined to go to war with your sin. Things were going to be different this time. And for a while, that worked, or at least it seemed to work.

But after a time, the fire gradually went out and you failed to keep your commitment. There is danger here that we must avoid this morning so that we don't repeat a cycle like that.

Yes, we must commit ourselves to separate from sin. John Owen famously said, be killing sin or sin will be killing you.

[12:55] Amen to that. I could throw a lot of Bible verses on the screen that declare that truth. But please understand this. You will only succeed in your commitment to separate yourself from sin if your first and your greatest commitment is pursuing the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1 through 3, Paul says this very thing. If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. It's when our first commitment is to Jesus.

It's when our minds are on Him. When our hearts are oriented towards Him, knowing and trusting that in Him, we have been delivered from God's wrath.

We have received new life. We do have peace with God. It's this knowledge, this commitment that fuels the desire then to separate ourselves from sin.

[14:04] And so having said that in Colossians 3, 1 through 3, having established that first priority, then Paul says in verse 5, put to death therefore what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

The people in Ezra's time who committed to separate themselves from sin lived before Jesus' life on earth. But they had the promise from God that the Messiah would come, that the holy seed of the woman, the ultimate deliverer of God's people would come through them, the Jewish people, and they were committed to make a separation from their sin that was interfering with their God-given purpose.

It was their fear of God. It was their love of God and their pursuit of God and his promise that fueled their commitment to separate themselves from their sin, which brought revival.

So as a believer, as we look at these components of committed separation from sin, you must understand that it is a separation motivated by the reality of the cross and the empty tomb of Jesus Christ, the completed work of Jesus Christ.

Because the nearer you are to Jesus, the further away from sin you want to be. If you are not a believer, I pray that today will be a day where you experience the revival of salvation.

[15:58] I hope that God will show you through his word, his desire to separate you from your sin and to give you new and eternal, everlasting life.

in Jesus Christ, his son. I pray that he will be gracious to do that for you today, having shown you the seriousness of your sin and that you will turn to Christ in repentance and in faith and be saved. So now let's look at the first component, first of these four, excuse me, components of what it looks like, what's required, what are these commitments to separate ourselves from sin that bring revival. The first one is confronting sin. Confronting sin. And that comes from verses one through five. Look again at verse one with me.

While Ezra prayed, remember he received this news, he tore his clothes, he responded in the right way that eventually brings revival, he goes to the temple, he prays.

[17:12] And while Ezra prayed, in verse one it says, and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him out of Israel for the people wept bitterly.

This was the right response. The people recognized from God's word that many of their men, many of their leading men in fact, took foreign wives in violation of God's word.

The people mourned over this rebellion and they feared its consequences. Ezra confesses the unfaithfulness of the people, making no excuses for them.

This is the initial response again that leads to revival. And then in verses two through four, Shekariah directs the people's internal response to an external action.

In verse two, the beginning of verse two, he says, it says in Shekariah, the son of Jehiel, the sons of Elam, addressed Ezra. And he said, we have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land.

[18:27] Now Shekariah is identified as the son of Jehiel. And this is important to note because if you look down at verse 21, Jehiel's name is recorded as one of the men who sinned in taking a pagan wife.

So here we have an instance in Shekariah of someone who embodied a principle that Jesus later taught. And that principle is in Matthew 10, 34 through 37.

Jesus said, do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword. for I have come to set a man against his father and a daughter-in-law against her mother and a daughter against her mother excuse me and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

The ultimate end of the gospel is peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ. However, as we've read and what Jesus said that peace produces conflict.

[19:53] A commitment to follow the Lord will create separations with other people even Jesus says members of your own family who have made peace with sin.

Now look with me at Matthew 5-9. Jesus preaching the Sermon on the Mount he said blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.

So on the one hand Jesus says follow me and if you follow me that will create conflict in your relationships even with those that you love most there will not be peace.

And in the one sense he says also I did not come to bring peace but a sword. Now here on the other hand he says my followers should be peacemakers.

Is Jesus contradicting himself here? Did he know what he said there and said something different over here? Well we need to understand the conflict and the kind of peace that Jesus is talking about in the right context.

[21:05] Too often we define peace as maintaining the status quo. Many of you are going to spend Thanksgiving with your extended families this week and in some of those cases maybe as a result of past experiences there will be an understanding that you know there are just some things that we don't talk about to keep the peace and to ensure that the dining experience is is a good one.

And you know telling your unbelieving relatives at the dinner table as you sit down and before the turkey is carved or whatever you do telling them right off the bat you people I know that you're sinners and I know that you're unsaved and I just have to say it if you don't believe in Jesus Christ you're going to die and you're going to burn in hell.

That would not be the most tactful way to present the gospel. I don't encourage you to do that but what I do encourage you to do is to share in some way at some point in time the right time and pray for that the gospel of Jesus Christ because look that's what we've been commanded to do.

In 2 Corinthians 5 18 through 19 Paul says all this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation of peacemaking that is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation so understand Jesus says being a peacemaker means confronting sin because there is no real peace apart from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ God said in Isaiah 48 22 there is no peace for the wicked you can't make peace with sin and have peace with God the Bible calls Jesus the prince of peace and he made peace by confronting sin

Mark 1 15 says that when Jesus began his public ministry he would go and he would say the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand repent and believe in the gospel repent of what repent from sin confronting sin and calling people to repent is being a peacemaker it's being like Jesus we tend to overlook our own sins we tend to overlook the sins of our loved ones both both in our families and in our church families Shekinah though sets an example for us to follow here his dad and his uncles were guilty but his primary allegiance was to God Shekinah doesn't come to Ezra and he doesn't offer some kind of excuse for the sins of his father and his relatives or for his community we don't hear

[ 24 : 44 ] Shekinah saying something like this well look Ezra you have to understand these men suffer from what I've diagnosed as the attraction to Canaanite idolaters disorder and if you just look at them they seem happy love is love so let's just leave it be it isn't our business to tell people who to love and who they cannot love sound familiar Shekinah avoided another trap that we often fall into in addressing people's sin notice he begins by addressing the people by including himself he doesn't say they he says we like Jesus and like

Ezra he was willing to identify himself with the sins of his people though he was not guilty of doing what they did like Jesus Shekinah wasn't afraid to confront sin and like Jesus he offered sinners hope you're not confronting sin like Christ if you're not offering hope in the rest of verse two he says but even now even now there is hope for Israel in spite of all of this sin I thank God for people like Shekinah who remind us of the hope that we have in God despite our grief over our sin or the sins of others thank God for people like Shekinah who aren't afraid to diagnose the problem but who also don't forget the important part of offering a prescription the treatment the solution to our problem

Shekinah knew that there was reason to hope because he knew God's word he would have known Exodus 34 6 through 7 where if you remember God appears before Moses Moses is allowed to see his backside and God declares who he is to Moses it's an awesome passage let's read part of it Exodus 34 6 through 7 the Lord passed before him and God is proclaiming this of himself the Lord the Lord a God and how does he begin not wrathful merciful and gracious slow to anger and not just having some love but abounding abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness keeping steadfast love for thousands forgiving iniquity and transgression of sin but who will by no means clear the guilty visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation this is how

God reveals himself to us David King David sinned big big but despite his many sins he experienced that God is more eager to forgive than he is to condemn in Psalm 103 8 through 9 he says the Lord is merciful and gracious slow to anger sound familiar and abounding in steadfast love he will not always chide nor will he keep his anger forever I remember a time when I was I was in high school I think I was either a junior or a senior I had a car and Friday and Saturday nights I would go out with my friends and before I left on one of those nights my dad called me upstairs and he was on the computer he was working and

I thought I'm in trouble I don't know what I've done but I must have done something so as I yeah I'm coming as I'm walking up the stairs I'm thinking what did I do what did I do what did I do and he looked up at me and he said Michael I just want you to know if ever you need anything if ever you get in trouble don't ever be afraid to call home Christian whatever your sin may be and how guilty you may feel right now because of that sin God says the same thing to you don't be afraid to call home don't avoid the only one who can truly help you and who totally loves you and if you're an unbeliever understand this

[ 30 : 23 ] God desires to be your father father who saves you and who keeps you and who loves you and who is continually merciful and gracious to you Hebrews 4 16 says let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need 1 John 1 9 reminds us if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness God is ready to forgive and restore those who repent of their sins and give them a hope that puts an end to their suffering their shame their guilt their sin and the consequences of that sin he puts it away here's another great passage psalm 103 verses 11 through 12 for as high as the heavens are above the earth and they are incredibly infinitely more higher than the earth so great is

God's steadfast love towards those who fear him for as far as the east is from the west and those two points never meet so far he removes our transgressions! from us! Isn't that awesome? Wow! Shekaniah reminded the people of the hope that they had in God despite their sin and he encourages them to do something about it to play the role of peacemakers and in verse 4 he says therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and their children according to the counsel of my Lord of those who tremble at the commandment of our God let it be done according to the law now you might be thinking what what is breaking up homes and separating fathers from their wives and their children the best course of action this seems cold or you might be thinking

I know a Christian married to an unbelieving spouse should I encourage that believer to get a divorce or you might be thinking I am a Christian married to an unbelieving spouse am I in sin should I get a divorce I'm going to answer those questions but first I want to stress the importance of using scripture scripture to interpret scripture and by that I mean there are some passages like this one where if we don't use all other scriptures if we don't consult the whole counsel of God in this case about divorce we could walk away with the wrong interpretation and we could do a lot of damage with that misinterpretation one thing that is helpful to get the right interpretation in application especially of a difficult passage is to consult the original language it was written in some biblical scholars note the

Hebrew word translated as married in verse 2 in the ESV at least is not the customary word for Hebrew word for married and it's only translated that way here in Ezra 3 and Nehemiah 13 where they're dealing with the same issue it literally means to cause to dwell or gave a home the same word is used in Proverbs in reference to a relationship with a harlot in addition the word translated in English as foreign in verse 2 is the same Hebrew word rendered as adulterous in the book of Proverbs also the customary Hebrew word for divorce isn't the one that is used in this text instead the Hebrew word translated literally is to put away and was most often used in reference to a rebellious child or a disobedient slave that was kicked out of the house so it's possible that what we have here is

[ 35 : 17 ] Jewish men who took foreign women into their homes to live as their mistresses living in sin as we sometimes call it I say all this to make this point these were highly unusual circumstances involving the purity of an of a highly unusual race of people the covenant community of God Ezra and Shekariah understood a principle that Paul would later share with the Corinthian Christians who were tolerating a sinful relationship in their church and in that case in 1 Corinthians 5 6 he said you're boasting they're boasting about tolerating this we're progressive look at us he says your boasting is not good do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump if this sin was not confronted it would have spread even further to tolerate sin would have reduced the

Jewish people's distinctiveness as God's people worse as Ezra stated in his prayer in chapter 9 verse 14 God could have and would have been just to destroy the people until there was no remnant left so it's possible that these marriages weren't really marriages as God defines marriage in scripture but maybe they were legitimate at least in the legal sense so in that case should believers divorce their unbelieving spouses today well at this point again we need to zoom out from Ezra where divorce appears to be commanded and we need to look at other scriptures the first one we're going to look at is Malachi 2 16 there it says for the man who does not love his wife but divorces her says the

Lord the God of Israel covers her garment with violence says the Lord of hosts! faithless in Matthew 5 31 through 32 again the sermon on the mount Jesus said it was also said whoever divorces his wife let him give her a certificate of divorce but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife except on the ground of sexual immorality makes her commit adultery and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery even though Jesus granted permission in the case of infidelity for a divorce we can also look at the rest of scripture and see that it is better to seek and to extend forgiveness and pursue restoration because ultimately marriage symbolizes the relationship that Jesus has with his church you can read about that in

Ephesians chapter 5 Jesus does not divorce himself from us despite our sin does he he continues to forgive us he continues to purify us through his spirit and through the reading of his word restoration is possible and the best path to pursue because as the verse in Malachi points out divorce is a betrayal of vows and tears apart families in ways that have lasting effects especially on children but now you might be thinking well but isn't that the case for the wives being put away by the men in Ezra chapter 10 well in this case in that case I should say we have men knowingly entering into a marriage with an unbeliever which is something God explicitly forbade in scripture and we have some other examples from the old testament prior to this time of women who were outside the covenant community of

Israel who were foreigners who became or who were married to Jewish men one of those examples is Ruth who was a Moabite and she married Boaz a Jew but in her case as with the other cases Ruth converted to Judaism prior to the marriage so it probably was the case that not only did these men disobey God's command but the pagan wives refused to forsake their idols and turned to God in repentance and as a result these men were unequally yoked with their wives in 2nd Corinthians

14 through 16 Paul writes about that and he says he gives a command do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers for what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness or what fellowship has light with darkness being unequally yoked pictures a pair of oxen that a farmer would use to plow his field these two animals were connected by a firm collar or a yoke if the two oxen had different ideas concerning their roles as plow pullers they would pull the plow in different directions with one going to the left and one going to the right as a result of that the work would come to a standstill and the plow itself would potentially be destroyed in this contest of wills and so at this point

[ 41 : 21 ] I want to say to our young people and to our singles! And this don't be deceived into thinking that it's God's will that you use dating as a form of evangelism dating is not a form of evangelism show me the scripture that supports that you won't find it trust God's word over your feelings in all cases in everything trust God's word over your feelings if you do that it'll save you a lot of heartache it'll save you from a lot of pain but

I understand and the same goes for our single adults but I understand that you want to be married and for some of you you are eager to have children and those are good desires but don't sacrifice your spiritual convictions to satisfy other appetites trust in God's plan and trust in God's timing and also understand this thing that I don't think we hear enough about in our churches singleness is something that that scripture honors in fact Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7 that it is better to stay single than to get married because you're free of all the anxieties that come along with having a spouse and having a family and you can focus more of your attention on the Lord and serving him now some of you became a

Christian after you were married and your spouse is an unbeliever Paul addressed such cases in 1 Corinthians 7 12 through 15 to the rest I say I not the Lord that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever and she consents to live with him he should not divorce her and you can flip the roles too husband wife wife husband if any woman has a husband and he does that who is an unbeliever and he consents to live with her she should not divorce him for the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband otherwise your children would be unclean but as it is they are holy but if the unbelieving partner separates let it be so in such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved God has called you to peace if that's the case for you I know that's a hard situation harder than harder than

I know harder than a lot of us know but I want to tell you your situation if that's you it isn't hopeless it isn't hopeless trust God pray for your spouse set an example for them that God can use to lead them to repent over their sin and they'll be blessed by having a spouse who loves Jesus and who seeks to love their spouse in the way that Christ has loved the church and I've seen it happen I've seen it happen many times sometimes it took years in the case of one gentleman it took 40 or 50 years before he was saved and was baptized and became a committed follower of Jesus Christ God is using you in ways that you can't see so please don't lose heart and understand this we support you we're thankful for you and we want to help you and encourage you in your obedience to the

Lord so bringing all of this together and there's more that could be said and if you have more questions please find me and we can talk more about it but putting all of this together I think it's important that we come away with this understanding this was a highly unusual circumstance!

[ 46 : 06 ] involving the purity of a highly unusual race of people during a unique time in redemptive history Shekinah continues in verses 4 through 5 stating that the sin has been exposed the sin that has been exposed now they must do something about it it must be confronted in verse 4 and 5 he says arise for it is your task and we are with you be strong and do it then Ezra arose and made the leading priests and Levites and all Israel take an oath that they would do as had been said so they took the oath revival and reformation come at a cost it is costly to our personal relationships and it costs us to sacrifice our desire to maintain the status quo to feel comfortable but at this point

Ezra and some other leaders with him consecrated themselves despite the cost because they were willing to put God first and their own well-being second they modeled a commitment that the church ought to have as well to confront sin and we'll get into it next week but I don't want to leave without saying to confront sin but to confront it in the right way and James shows us the right way in chapter 5 verses 19 through 20 my brothers so so that's the motivation and the right way to do it is to do it in love because you truly care about that person and you truly care about their lives and you truly love the

Lord and you're going to confront it with a spirit and an attitude resemblance that resembles Jesus Christ so how do we adjust to what we've just heard I think it's to repent of the sin that you want to conceal and you could spin it another way to confront the sins of others that you would want to have stay concealed I've shared this story before but I remember my first day in seminary was an ordination and you know most of us are young freshly out of college men and we're just excited we're in seminary you know we've got our suits on and our ties on and we're we're taking each other seriously and and taking this quest this journey that we're on very seriously and I remember one of our professors got up before all of us and he said to us men now is the time if there is something that you're struggling with in your life whatever that thing may be now is the time today to uncover that to us to reveal that to us so that we can be praying for you and so that we can help you because if we find out later on the consequences for you are going to be a whole lot worse and then he said something that has always stuck with me whatever you try to cover! God will uncover and so maybe that's the case for you today and that's the invitation for you you know that you know what I've been avoiding this thing I've been making peace with this sin in my life and I realize that I can't do that and so what you need to do is just to confess your sin and you've heard from God's word you know what he is he's!

[ 50 : 17 ] he's eager to forgive he's merciful and he wants to forgive you he doesn't want you to bear that anymore maybe for you it's you know something that's going on in somebody else's life and you'd rather just not deal with it because you want to maintain the status quo and you feel like it's going to be uncomfortable you you've heard from God's word today that peacemakers are those would repent and wouldn't be hurt any longer by that sin that they've tolerated in their life and as an unbeliever today the invitation simply for you is to come to the Lord Jesus Christ to repent of your sins and turn to him because ultimately Jesus is the peacemaker Jesus came to us became one of us God didn't just stay in heaven and say you know what they want to sin let them sin no he sent Jesus to confront our sin speaking the truth in love telling us what our sin incurs and then he died on the cross for our sins becoming the sin bearer taking God's wrath for the sins that we've committed and he rose again on the third day as evidence that he has solved and resolved our conflict forever and it's not about what you must do it's just you coming turning to Christ in faith and recognizing I'm a sinner Lord God please save me it can be that simple right now I'm going to pray I'll be down here if you would like me to pray for you or afterwards I'd be happy to do that let's pray Lord we need your help

God because often I know I find myself and we in your church find ourselves rationalizing the presence of sin in our life seeing the sin being committed by others within our church thinking somebody should say something something something should be done but but then excusing ourselves from being that person God we want to see revival Lord we pray for a movement in our church in the church in our nation in this world of people realizing how seriously you take sin knowing that you're a holy God and crying out to you in repentance that they would be saved and so God I pray that if we're serious about that that we would do what your word prescribes for us to do and if we're not serious about that

Holy Spirit I pray that you would break our hearts and that you would help us to see that our mission that you have for us is incredibly important and one that we need to take more seriously God whatever the case may be we are thankful to know that you are a God who is eager to forgive your people that you are a God who is eager for sinners! help us to be more like him in Jesus name we pray Amen Amen