

# Equipped: To Relate to God Through Repentance

Pastor Ryan Keeney : June 28, 2015

## THE PARADOX CHURCH

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*Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah*

*I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah*

*Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah*

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you. Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*

*(Psalm 32)*

So as we're stepping out of Genesis today and starting in this three week series called "Equipped," I want to just think about what it looks like to walk and follow Jesus as Christians in this life, in everyday life. We've hit some big picture items from Genesis, some big questions from Genesis and now we're going to kind of get on the ground level in these three weeks of just what looks like in your everyday life—like when you wake up, when you go to work, when you don't go to work, when you sit on the couch. Whatever your daily life looks like, we want to equip you to follow Jesus in it.

Now, two years ago I preached on repentance in this series. I guess it's going to turn into a historical thing for us. I guess we'll do "Equipped" for the next many moons. Two summers ago I preached about relating to God in repentance, and then last year relating to God as Father. When you see Him as Father, it really transforms how you read His Word and you talk to Him, like He's your Dad and so it transforms.

This year I want to come back to repentance—and that'll be something we regularly do—and I know that when I start even to say that word, the "r" word, it's like a killjoy for you.

You're like "no, do not talk about that." This is a dreaded conversation. And you start having these images of ripping your clothes apart and putting ashes on your head and weeping on your face, like facedown. Like that's what you start thinking of. And I don't know why you're not amped to talk about repentance today. I don't know why you don't get excited if that's the image that you have.

I get amped because the image that I have is turning to Jesus, my glorious Redeemer, my Lord, my King, Jesus Christ, and beholding Him, worshipping Him, praising Him, thanking Him. And that's the image I have and so I know that repentance is joyful. Repentance is rejoicing. That's why I love talking about repentance, because I love talking about Jesus: Jesus' life, Jesus' blood, Jesus' work, Jesus' grace, Jesus' forgiveness, Jesus' kingship, Jesus' words. So I love talking about this and I don't think it is a killjoy, I don't think it's morose, I don't think this is a Debbie-downer moment. It's actually quite the opposite—it should lead you to rejoice in who Jesus is.

So, a quick definition just to get you in the mindframe, and when we get into Psalm 32 hopefully it makes sense: repentance is a recognition of sin for what God says it is, followed by a heartfelt sorrow, a brokenness over our sin before Him, culminating in a change of behavior, worship, and belief. So repentance is a change at every level—so in how I think, in how I worship, in what I love, and in what I do. My mind, my heart, and my actions.

Now often we focus on one to the exclusion of the other two. Like we'll talk about lies, we'll talk about belief, we'll talk about the lies—the lies about God and the lies about who He has made you, and then we say "repent and believe who the truth is, who God is, and who He has actually made you, that He is God, that He is awesome, that He is provider, that He is protector, and that He's made you His son or His daughter by the work of Jesus." So we say that, but then usually it's to the exclusion of, "and worship." "And worship Him, enjoy Him, delight in Him, and praise Him." And also, that should change your behavior, it should change your actions. What does it look like to believe that truth?

Or we'll talk about the behavior, like this is what I hear peer-to-peer people talk about when they talk about repentance. It's like, "Stop that!" Go on? Like is there anything...no, like that's it. They just tell you, "Stop doing that." "Please stop doing that." "I don't like that" "Stop that behavior" And it never connected to your heart, connected to your mind. It's just, "I do not like the behavior." "You shouldn't do that behavior." "Stop doing that behavior." Well, what about my life? What about how I view God? What about how I worship God? My worship

hasn't changed. Maybe I'll stop doing this behavior, but I'm still, at my heart level, worshiping something other than Jesus. Now, I don't have concern for that, I just want you to stop doing that because that's annoying to me.

So repentance is a change at every level: we are convicted of our sin, we confess our sin to God and to others, and then we turn, we forsake, turn from our sin, turn from our idolatry and turn to Jesus. A change of mind, a change of heart, and a change of actions. Now, I feel as if I talk about repentance a lot. I'm not going to apologize for that, I'm just going to tell you I do. I do do it, and I'm going to continue to do it this morning because I think I'm in good company. John the Baptist: "Repent." Okay, cool. Paul—any time you see "put off" and "put on," like Colossians, any of that, that's repentance. Jesus kicks off His ministry with "Repent and believe, the kingdom of God is near." And then all the Old Testament prophets, that's their one word sermon, like they show up and they're like, "Hey guys, good to see you. Welcome. Repent! Alright, let's go to Luby's." Like "that's it," like "we're done." That's all they had to preach.

Now, oftentimes, like Jeremiah, no one responds, no one listens to him, and he gets thrown into the dungeon, but that's just the one word sermon. Like this is good stuff. So my hope is to equip you in this: to live a life of repentance, be a family of joyful worshipers who regularly confess their sins to God and to another and forsaking it by turning away from it. What you previously love—your sin, your idolatry—now, you hate it. And what you previously hated—God, Jesus—you now love. And this would be a regular rhythm, this would be a discipline of your life. This is what it would look like in everyday life for you to joyfully follow Jesus. This isn't morose, this isn't darkness. This is actually joyful and this is what leads you to joy—beholding Jesus. Like you're forsaking the lesser joy in repentance and you're turning to the greater joy: Jesus Himself. So that's always going to be joyful. That's always going to be hopeful. That's always going to be happy, exciting. Man, Jesus is good, Jesus is faithful, Jesus is who He says He is. He has given me life. Jesus.

So repentance is joyful. Repentance is rejoicing. And I make that claim, not outlandishly or without being connected to anything. It's connected to the first two verses of this Psalm. "*Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.*" Blessed, happy, joyful. Joyful is the man, blessed is the man "*whose transgression is forgiven.*" Hear this church, hear this people of God, hear this that—you might just be a guest, you don't know about Jesus, maybe you grew up in a church, or you got burnt by the church, or you've consciously stay away from gathering with a church on a Sunday—hear this: "*Blessed is the one whose transgression is*

*forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit.”*

What do you really need? What will really change you? What will give you hope? What will give you joy? Being forgiven by God. That's what. Placid, happy, joyful is the man, is the one, whose transgression, whose sin, whose iniquity is forgiven. Now I love this because the first beatitude of the Psalms starts off in Psalm 1:1—blessed is the man who is obedient. That's a little paraphrased, but that's the gist of it. Blessed is the man who is obedient. The second beatitude is this: Psalm 32—blessed is the man who is disobedient, but who is forgiven. Blessed, happy, joyful is the man. Yeah, I'm disobedient. This is me. This is you. And blessed, why? Well not because we're disobedient; because we've been forgiven of our disobedience.

So David starts off this powerful refrain—I feel like it's his anthemic chorus—like he just kinda kicks the door open and starts singing this real loud, like “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven!” And this is the refrain that we'll hear again and again throughout this Psalm. And David is a poet, so he waxes eloquently, so he doesn't just use one word, he's going to use three synonymous words to run the gamut of what he's trying to talk about—the fullness and the extent of sin. So he'll say “transgression” and “sin” and “iniquity.” Like he doesn't want us to miss one aspect of what he is discussing, what he is teaching us here. Transgression, that is crossing a line, like so there's a line and you step over that line. Sin is missing the mark; it's like you're throwing a dart and you don't miss the bullseye, like you miss the target, it goes into someone's sheetrock. Or iniquity, it's being accounted for, so God is saying, this is where you have perverted and stepped away from what I have laid down for you.

But within the same chorus, the same refrain, the same opening line of David's psalm, he gives us the full extent of God's forgiveness. “*Transgression is forgiven,*” “*sin is covered,*” and God chooses to “*count no iniquity.*” So you get to see the full range and nature of sin, but also the full range and nature of God's forgiveness. Grace abounds. He uses this this word “forgive,” which means to lift or to carry away. And then the word “covered” alludes to sacrifices, like there's blood that's been sacrificed and it covers your sin. And then he doesn't count reputes—so like, He had your sin on the spreadsheet, He deleted it from the spreadsheet, now He no longer can see it on the spreadsheet. He no longer counts it against you, He no longer has the cost on it. So “*Blessed is the [man] whose [sin] is forgiven.*” This is a dope hook, this is a joyful proclamation that he would just start off with—“*Blessed is the man.*”

I hope you catch this. Like joyful, happy, blessed is the one whose sin is forgiven. Like this is David's experience, but then this is also my experience, your experience in this very moment if you put your faith in Jesus. And if you don't, I hope as you hear this, you'd just be wooed to then want this—be like “Yes, I want that joy, I want ‘blessed is the one,’ like I desire it, I want that forgiveness, I want to taste and see that.” We do too. I want you to taste and see that as well. Why? Cause I've tasted, seen and it is good. God is good so I want you to taste and see that He is good.

A bit of back story on Psalm 32 before you even continue into this text: Psalms 32 and 51 are the firsthand experience response of David from the account that happens in 2 Samuel 11–12, where David, he commits adultery, he lies, and he takes a part in a murder. Like someone dies because of him. He commits adultery, he lies, he takes part in someone's death. And in response to this, he goes silent, he pulls away for like nine months or 12 months. And then the prophet Nathan comes to him and he gives that one word sermon, right, he tells David to repent. David is grieved over his sin, he sees the guilt of his sin, and then out of that he responds in confession and repentance and he writes Psalm 51. Like that is a Psalm of repentance.

My hope for our church, many times, is for us to pray the Psalms, live the Psalms. If you want a good picture of what repentance looks like, just pray Psalm 51. But then, in that Psalm, after he says like “*Create in me a clean heart,*” like he wants a change of heart, after he's convicted of his sin, he also goes on to say “*I will teach transgressors your ways.*” Psalm 32 is a fulfillment of that statement. This is David's attempt to teach transgressors God's ways, to say “look what it looked like for me. God has shown me what it looked like to follow Him, He showed me His wisdom, but I went to folly, I went to foolishness, I went to madness, I went to my sin, but then look how God restored me. Look how gracious God is, look how forgiving God is.” And so then he writes Psalm 32 to teach us, to show us what it looks like to respond in confession and repentance, so we have to listen to the teacher, David.

David is writing here as a teacher to instruct us. It's as if he's saying, “I want you to know that when God gave me instruction and wisdom I chose to walk in foolishness. I did not follow His law and this is the trouble that happened as a result. But here, here, in this Psalm, is the wonderful way that God restored me. Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven.” This is his experiences, this is our experience. But then he goes back into what it looked like, what it looked like for him to not be forgiven. Verse 3. “*For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away*

*through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.”*

So how did David initially respond to his sin? Very similar to how we do it. We go inward, we go silent. We don't acknowledge our sin, we don't confess our sin, we don't bring it to the light. We process it inwardly, we process it alone, we separate from God, we think about, we mull about our sin. And in his silence he feels as if his bones are wasting away, he groans all day, and his strength is dried up like the heat of summer. So you Texans know a little bit about what David 's talking about. You just mowed and now you're like dying. You're on the couch dying. Like that's what just happened. You mowed for 30 minutes and now you're dying on the couch. This is David's experience. Why? Because he kept silent. His bones wasted away, he has no strength.

Now we must know that that all of our suffering is not a result of our own personal sin. We must not assume that our sin is the cause of all are hurt and brokenness, but we must be like David and see if there's a connection, see if it is a possibility. Like David is suffering the consequences of his own sin in this moment in him sitting and then keeping silent in his sin—not confessing, not repenting of his sin, not turning to Jesus—but he is now silent and he is experiencing the consequences. Like this suffering is brought by his own hand.

But like David we often go silent and we don't think that we are suffering the consequences of our own sin, our own anti-repentance, our own lack of turning to God, our own lack of running to God. Rather, we go inward—we talk to ourselves, we justify ourselves, we compare ourselves to others, we think to ourselves, we look inward, we process alone, we separate from God, we excuse our sins, we make light of it. We are blind to our sins so we don't think there's anything to repent of. We're deceived by our sin so we are adamant that there's nothing for me to repent of. You can speak into my life, like prophet Nathan can tell me, “Repent,” and I'll be like “No, I ain't got nothing, like I'm clean, there's no darkness in me, there's no deceit in me, I am good.

Like I see this when I think about some of the things I say to myself, like after my sin, like in my mind, in my heart, what I say to myself, like “you're really not that bad, you're a pretty great guy, actually.” Like, where did that come from? Like that is not the truth. That is not reality. Like I'm trying to explain it away, I'm trying to justify it, I'm saying like, “Well, I did this, but it's really not affecting me. Actually if I can look back, I can be an accountant, and I can see all the fantastic things I've done, and those outweigh this little measure over here.” Like

“I'm pretty good.” Or, I get to a spot where I think this is just my sin, like it's just connected to me, it doesn't affect anyone else, almost like it's my thing so I don't need to tell anyone else. It's like I won't confess that, I won't walk in the light as God tells me to do so, very explicitly, in 1 John. I won't do that because it just affects me, it's just my own thing. Or, I'll say things like this: “Don't tell me what to do.” And I don't know who that's like, who I'm telling that to, it's just like anyone, like everyone—don't tell me what to do. You don't tell, you don't get to speak into my life.” Who? Anyone! No one gets to say anything to me.

Like those are the thoughts that go into my mind when I go inward, when I just go self-focused, and I speak to myself, and talk to myself, and I process it alone and I separate from God, like David. I keep silent and then, what? My bones waste away, my strength is dried up, and His heavy hand is upon me. Like this affects David's life, his whole life, his whole being.

But what I love, what I love, what I love, I love, I love, just being in these first four verses—that God doesn't leave him there. Like he's separated, he's tried to pull away from God, he's silent, he cut off communication to God, but God did not leave him there. He didn't say, “Oh, okay, you don't want to talk to me. Whatever, man.” No. God's heavy hand was upon him. And you think, maybe that's not a good thing. No, that's a fantastic thing! That's a fantastic thing for the God of the universe to see David's sin and not to leave him in his sin. Like that's God's kindness that leads to repentance. That's what's happening here. His heavy hand on David, saying “No, don't stay in this, don't continue in this way.” Like, “This has almost been a year. Stop.” Like, “Come back to me.” He's wooing David to Himself. Like, “See the gravity of your sin. Grieve over your sin. Be broken before me and come to me.” Like, “Love me. Worship me. Enjoy me. Turn to me.”

God's heavy hand is a sweet gift to convince David that Jesus is better, that God is better than the silence, better than that sin, better than staying in kind of that inward cycle. God doesn't want us to remain in the sin or in the silence. He wants us to taste and enjoy His forgiveness in this very moment. This is God's steadfast love for David—this heavy hand that's upon David is God's steadfast love, and He loves David so much that He's going to turn David's heart to Him.

Now in this heavy hand is a good description of conviction. God's kindness that leads to repentance is conviction. He convicts us of our sin. He shows us the brokenness of our sin. Now, if you move too quickly past this you'll kind of go into the cul-de-sac of self-deception and you'll confess, you'll say things that you think—no, you'll say things that are wrong—and tell

people what they want to hear, but you're not actually convinced that it was wrong. If you just kind of skip over conviction and you're like, "Oh, I kind of heard about that. Yeah, I need to get over that. Uhh, sorry about that. Alright." And you just kind of stay in that moment being self-deceived because you don't believe that this is what it is—that God says "This is your sin." He convicts you specifically in your sin. But if you're not convinced that it is what it is, you're not convicted, you're not broken, you're not sorrowful—like, not that worldly sorry, like you got caught kind of thing, but that you're broken over your sin before an infinite and holy God. This is this conviction.

Now, I have to have—for my own mind, and hopefully it's helpful for you—just some anchors that orient me in what this looks like in everyday life. And this has just been helpful—to think about who is at the center of your repentance. And if it's not Jesus, then I think we're missing it. Now, I don't want you to think and take away from this that this is another discipline that I've got to perform perfectly to earn God's favor. No, this is God's grace to you, His favor to you, that He would lead you to repentance. And if you duff it, you duff it. You know how many times—I don't know how many times, so I don't know why I'm asking you—how many times I've repented of my repentance? Like how selfish, how self-involved I was of what I said to God, like bummed that I failed myself because I think I am so awesome. When you say those things out loud, it hits you right after and you're just like "Oh! I need to repent of that. So let me do that, let me repent how like awesome I think I am."

Like I would love it sometimes that someone—I guess this would probably shake me out of it, so maybe it would just be internally, like in my own mind—if I could just sit there and be like [in singing voice] "Awesome. Who? Ryan! Ryan is awesome! He's awesome!" Like, I think about it. Like I think about how awesome I am. And that shows in my own repentance that it's about me. It's about me. Know who it is about? It's about Jesus, so we stop. Instead of just thinking to ourselves and mulling over it ourselves we begin to speak to Jesus. And then instead of trying to justify our sin and judge our sin based upon what we think it is, we then believe what Jesus says it is. He becomes the center of our attention. He's the focus of our attention.

If we do not allow our conviction to lead us to Godly sorrow over our sin then our pain-filled cries to God just kind of degenerate into Him taking our bad feelings away. Like, "My bones are wasted away, please take this wasted away feeling away. And I have no energy, so please give me some energy." And that's the extent of our communication, our relating to God is to take these bad feelings away. And that's what it looks like when there's not conviction.

We're not convinced that this is sin. You just ask Him to take away your problems, your circumstances, or to change your circumstances.

But what repentance looks like is confessing—telling the truth from a changing heart. It's humbly telling the truth about your sin to God from a heart that is changing because you're more concerned with His glory than yours, and you're more wooed by His kingdom than yours. You're seeing that this isn't about me, and how ridiculous would it be if multiple people outside myself, if people started singing “awesome” to me? It would be foolish. It would be madness. Because He's awesome. There's only one that is good, it's Him.

So we ask Him in this to show us His grace and mercy and change our hearts that we might see Him, that we might rejoice in His forgiveness, that we might praise Him for mercy, that we might talk to Him and thank Him for his kindness. This conviction, this godly grief, leads to telling the truth, to transparency, to agreeing with God, to speaking the same things to God. It just leads to confession, which is verses 5 and 6. *“I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.”* So we return back to verses 1 and 2, right? “I kept silent, my bones wasted away. I confess, I acknowledge, I spoke to you about my sin, repented of my sin, and you forgave me.” Which means what? “Blessed is me!” Like happy, joyful. Why? Because I've been forgiven by Jesus.

He's seen my sin for all that it is, even more than what I think it is, and He sees the depravity, He sees the darkness of it, He sees the brokenness of it, the ugliness of it. He sees the sin against Him, the treason against Him—that I think other things are better than Jesus—and what does He do in that moment? He forgives. He takes the burden away. He covers the sin. He no longer counts it on my account. This is the love, this is the mercy, this is the forgiveness of Jesus.

And again we see David waxing eloquently, like he's going to use three words again, three words that are synonymous, to convey the extent and fullness of this confession. He acknowledges his sin, he does not cover his sin, he confesses his sin. So everything for David is now out in the open, he's laid bare before God. He's no longer hiding, he's no longer concealing, he's no longer wasting away by himself. He's now confessing, laying his heart, his life, bare.

Confession is not just about mouthing words, but it's telling the truth from a changing heart. So it's not just mere saying this, like “I'm really sorry about this.” It's from a contrite

spirit, a broken heart over our sin, a godly grief over our sin, confessing it to God that He would change our hearts. Which means, I don't sin generally, like I don't just like, "I did some bad things last week" or "I remember this point in time where I'm sorry for failing that thing." You're like, what are we talking about? I don't know. Because you don't sin that way. You sin specifically. You sin in specifics, so what does the Spirit do? He convicts specifically. And He cuts to the heart.

If there's like this vague ambiguity of condemnation and guilt that you have that you can't pinpoint what is actually your sin and feel unsure and you feel insecure about and you don't know what to do, then that's the enemy, that's not the Spirit. Because the Spirit cuts to your heart and He convicts you specifically that you might turn from that and you might turn to Jesus. But the enemy wants just to keep that condemnation, like "You can't figure this out. Just stay under this. Stay under this banner, stay under my wrath, stay under my condemnation. You, as a whole, are just a failure."

No, the Spirit speaks to you specifically of what your sin is that you might turn Him, which is 1 John 1: "*If we confess our sins, he [Jesus] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" This is just, this is Psalm 32, right? "I didn't acknowledge it, I kept silent, but then I acknowledged, I confessed, I acknowledged, I did not cover my iniquity. And He forgave me." This is the promise of 1 John. If you confess it to Him, you speak to Him, you run to Him, even if you've been kept silent, even if you tried to conceal your sin for a year. If you go to Him this morning, He is faithful and just to forgive you your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Now, in the context of this chapter, confession is just the verbal part of the inward transformation that's happening. So this is the external sign, the external expression, like he's confessing, he's putting this into words. You put these into words of what's happening in your heart. And what's happening in your heart is your heart is changing, it's turning, it's forsaking your sin and turning to God. It's the external evidence of repentance—confession is.

So, if you don't know what it looks like to confess, if you feel like you're in this sin right now, or for the past year, or maybe three years, or four days, learn from David. Hiding your sin doesn't work, covering your sin doesn't work, keeping silent doesn't work. But when we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us, and covers them, and they are hidden from sight never to be seen again. There's a play on words here in Psalm 32. If you cover up your sin, God won't. You hide it, you conceal it, you keep it in the dark, you don't speak of it—God will not

cover that. God will not forgive that. God will not remove that. But if you uncover your sin, God will cover it. God will take it. God will remove it. God will wash it away. God will forgive it. So learn from David. Don't keep silent, don't keep talking to yourself about your sin, don't keep trying to excuse it away, or minimize it, or make it less than, or justify, or compare to other people, or walk in blindness towards it. Turn from it, talk to God about it, confess it to Him, repent of your sin.

This is how I think of with my son—whenever he's in trouble and he is disobedient, there's two things that he often does. He screams, like just screams, for no reason, just screams at me. Like, "Okay, cool. I don't know what to do with this." Or, number two, he hides, or he tries to hide. And what I mean by that is like, "Buddy you know, I told you, don't do that." And he does it, and then he like turns and he like puts his face in the couch. And I'm like, "I can see you man, you're right there. That's not a very good hiding spot." Which is cute. Like when I get home and he's like hiding from me, and he puts a pillow on top of himself, but you can see all of his extremities. I'm like, that's kind of cute. That's cool.

But when he's disobedient and he does it, I'm like, "This is a bad hiding spot. I see you." I have to like tap him on the shoulder, "Hey buddy, I know you're right there." But then I grab him and I scoop him up in my arms and I look at him face to face and I get to talk to him. I get to talk to him about what just happened, why he's doing what he's doing. I get to talk to him about Jesus. I get to pray to Jesus with him. Usually we end with a prayer and then I look at him and I say, "Jude, look me in the eyes. Do you know daddy loves you?" "Yes." "Do you love daddy?" "Yes." "Can you give me big hugs and kisses on the lips?" And he does. And I set him down, and you know what he does? He goes back to play. And he grabs that dump truck, and he has fun, and he runs around, and he dances, and he starts talking about other stuff. Like this is the joy of forgiveness of God, it's that He forgives you, washes you, and then there's nothing between you. So what? You get to rejoice. You get to be glad and rejoice. You get to party. "*Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven.*"

And so when you taste and see the forgiveness of God, you experience that forgiveness that He's extended to you—that you get to be glad and rejoice. Repentance is joyful. This is a good thing. This is a wonderful thing. What a beautiful gift that God would give us to let us walk in again and again and again and again. "Do you know that I love you?" "Yes." "Do you love me?" "Yes." "Big hugs?" "Yes." "Then go play." Be glad and rejoice. Blessed is the one. Blessed am I after I've tasted and seen that the Lord is good and that He has forgiven me.

Now I've done a few weddings in this location, and the couple comes up and they stand in front of me and they make covenants to one another and they make a covenant to God and I get to announce them as husband and wife and it's a beautiful thing. But it's this epic ceremony, this one-day ceremony that some people spend six months and thousands of dollars on what often is for me like 20 minutes. The ceremonies I do are like 20–25 minutes, and you spend a lot of money on that moment, which is fine—that's completely a sidenote. But they have this huge epic ceremony and that starts off their marriage, right? Like they made the vows, and I announced them, like it's legit. I signed the paper afterwards. But then they go and they live life together, and they live in this relationship, this covenant relationship to one another for the rest of their lives.

This is a really good picture of what repentance and faith look like, what it looked like for you to meet Jesus as He wooed you to Himself, as He gave you a new heart, you responded in turning from your sin and putting your faith in Jesus for the initial time, for the initial act of your conversion, that's what it looked like—just like the wedding day. But then what does it look like to continue following Jesus day in and day out? Repent and believe, repent and believe, repent and believe, that we might taste His forgiveness, that we might know His grace, that we might see Him face to face, enjoy Him, delight in Him, and be joyful, be glad and rejoice.

So don't go silent, don't go inward. Speak to God, confess to God, repent to God. Agree with Him. Change is a relational act and so stop just talking about yourself or to yourself and start talking to God. Speak to Him and confess to Him and repent to Him. And then taste His forgiveness and praise Him and thank Him and worship Him. And cry and weep and thank Him, praise Him, rejoice in Him. Be glad and rejoice.

Tim Keller said, "The more you see your own flaws and sins, the more precious, electrifying, and amazing God's grace appears to you. But on the other hand, the more aware you are of God's grace and acceptance in Christ, the more you're able to drop your denials and self-defenses and admit the true dimensions of your sin." So we don't go silent, we turn to God. We run to God. We confess it to Him. Speak to Him. Talk to Him. Don't sit in it for nine months, for a year, don't sit in it for two days.

A beautiful, beautiful sign that you're growing in grace is quicker repentance. Where it was previously 12 days, now it's five. And where it was five, now it's one. And where it was one, now it's immediately after. And then you wake up, like "It's been like six months. I haven't ranted about sin in six month. I haven't thought about it, I haven't been concerned about it. It

doesn't have the same taste to me. Now it's bitter. I know that it's bitter. I don't want to go after it." Why? "Because I've tasted and seen God's forgiveness and that He is good. And He's better than, sweeter than, anything else that I could run after.

So in regards to equipping, I would like to end with this, giving you two very practical examples of what this could look like for you in your everyday life. And I expect these examples to cover at least one person in this room.

So here we go. Number one: Have I looked down on anyone? Have I judged someone out of my own insecurities? Have I caught myself saying, "Who do they think they are?" or "Do they know who I am?" Maybe that's one person in this room. I expect like 80%, but this is our life, this is the things we think of, this is our sin. Repent like this: "Father, thank you for reminding me of my sinful pride, forgive me for my self-glory, for thinking and acting like I am at the center of the universe. Lord help me to remember that I can do nothing apart from Christ. I praise you that I've been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me. Help me to boast only in the cross and in Christ Jesus." Alright, if that was only half of you, let's go on to number two. Because this is what it looks like to turn to God, to speak to God with candor and honesty and humility.

Number two—maybe this is someone: "Have I spoken or thought unkindly of anyone lately?" Maybe someone. "Have I been impatient and irritable? Have I been self-absorbed, indifferent, and inattentive to people?" Repent like this: "Father, forgive me for my cold and self-centered heart. I praise you for the sacrificial love of Christ and for your long suffering towards me in spite of my continued sins against you. Lord, may your love do its perfecting work in me so that I can love you with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength and I can love others like Christ."

Don't go silent, church. Don't waste away. Don't have your energy removed from you. Don't go silent. Confess. Run to God. Speak to God and be glad and rejoice. Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven. Whether this, in this moment, is the first time for you—like you're going to meet Jesus in this moment—or this is the thousandth time for you: He loves, He forgives, He graces. Hear this again: "*Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit.*"

Father, I thank you that you are poised, ready in this moment to forgive, to extend forgiveness to us. I ask, Spirit, that you would convict, and I bank on that you've been convicting throughout this, that you convince us of our sin against you—that like David, that we've sinned against other people—that we would see, that we'd be most sorrowful, most broken over our sin against you. And that this would be your kindness, that we would take great delight in it, even if it is difficult or heavy in this moment. It leads to seeing you, it leads to rejoicing in you, it leads to putting our hope in you, and thanking you and praising you. So I pray that our hearts will be stirred to see you, to look at you in this moment, to turn to you, our faithful and just God who forgives us and cleanses us. So I ask that we'd respond in great joy. Great joy. We love you because you first loved us. Amen.

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