

GOOD SEX

Week 5 – Okay, I’ve Messed up in This Area, Now What?

The thesis of this series, all five parts, is this "*You know the truth and the truth sets you free.*" Those aren't my words. They're the words of Jesus Christ. When it comes to sex in your life and the world that you live in, there's a lot of confusion. I really believe that the truth will set you free.

And today it's a very important truth that we're talking about. The truth that we're talking about today is how do you move from the guilt that many of us in here feel to good news? The truth that you need to hear about Jesus – the God-man – is that Jesus understands temptation, Hebrews 4:15. When Jesus walked the earth 2000 years ago, He was tempted in every way, yet He did not sin. Now Jesus intercedes on your behalf in heaven. He understands every temptation. When you say, "God help me with this" or "I'm struggling with this" He understands it.

He understands pain. Not only physical pain – his back was torn open with 39 lashes. Then He hung on a cross. He understands physical pain. He also understands pain of his friends. All you have to do is read through the New Testament and you'll see Jesus feeling people's pain.

John 11:35, "Jesus wept." Jesus' friend Lazarus died and the Bible says that Jesus wept. Jesus understands pain. Some of you in here are in incredible pain right now. God understands. He also understands sexual sin. Not his own – please don't misunderstand that or take that out of context. But Jesus understands sexual sin.

In John 8 there's a situation that takes place. It goes something like this: Jesus is teaching. Then all of a sudden the people bring somebody in front of Jesus. They're trying to trap Jesus to see if He was blasphemous. People really didn't get Jesus and understand him so they bring this woman. She had been caught in the act of adultery. I don't know if she was dressed or she was naked or whatever, but Jesus was teaching and all of a sudden this woman is thrown into the circle. These guys say, "*Jesus, this lady was caught in the act of adultery.*"

I've always wondered as I've read this many, many times, 1) how did they catch her and 2) where is the dude? I don't know why they just bring the woman there but they do.

They say, "*The Law of Moses [the Old Testament] says that she is to be stoned* [I'm not talking about happy weed. We're talking rocks and boulders. That type of thing. Everybody's there and all of a sudden there's a hush in the crowd. Now they want to find out "Is Jesus going to go against the Law of Moses by saying don't stone her?" If He says stone her then He's basically ordering her death. They're quiet.

The Bible says this that Jesus knelt down and He began to write on the ground. The Bible doesn't say what He wrote. We can only guess. Maybe He wrote the people's names. Maybe He wrote their sins and then drew arrows to them. I don't know what He did, but the Bible tells us that's what happened. Then He stands up and He says "*Those of you without sin in your life, you go ahead and throw the first stone.*"

Can you imagine that? Here's all these guys. High school students around at the time they loved to go to stonings. They had their favorite rocks. They had their backpack on their way to school with their favorite stoning rocks in case they just might pass a stoning. They're ready. You want to get the first throw in a good stoning. They've got their rocks ready to go

just waiting for Jesus to give the word. He says *"Those of you without sin throw the first stone."*

They're throwing the rocks down and walking away. Now it's just her and Jesus. *"Jesus says, 'Who is left to condemn you?' She says, 'No one, sir.' 'Neither do I,' Jesus says. 'Go and sin no more.'"*

I want to let you know that as we bring conclusion to this sex series and as we wrap this up talking about going from guilt to good news, what you're feeling and facing in your heart and in your soul, God is so aware of. He loves you more than you could ever imagine or ever love yourself. How do we move from guilt to good news?

I pulled out some quotes people have said to me: "I don't like who I've become... I wish I could start over... Will this crisis ever end? ... God can't forgive a sin this big... I feel like God has turned his back on me..." All of these statements residing in one's life that come out of their mouth that have just lived in this pile of guilt and shame and remorse over what you have done in your life. Guilt is a killer.

Psalm 38, "My guilt overwhelms me. It's a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and they stink because of my foolish sins. I'm exhausted and completely crushed. My groans come from an anguished heart." Guilt is overwhelming.

Some of you, if you don't feel guilt over some of the stuff that you've done, maybe your heart is so hard that you can't even sense the wrong that you have done and you're in serious trouble; serious trouble. People have said, "I've had sex... I haven't had sex, but I've gone too far... I'm struggling with masturbation... I've had an abortion... I'm addicted to pornography..." You name it. You know what I'd say to you? God is crazy about you. You're not alone for people that have messed up.

There's a guy in the Bible. His name is David. The Bible describes him as David has a heart for God. Here's a dude with a heart for God and you know what David did? Talk about sin, but sexual sin! The King of Israel and he's cruising the top of his palace and he looks down and he sees this lady taking a bath. She wasn't like in a bathing suit or swimwear; buck naked. He sees this and all right! He not only has the thoughts that enter his mind, which are very, very normal as we talked about a few weeks ago. But then he says to his guards "Go get her. Bring her to me." He's the King of Israel. He's got that kind of power. The guards, Billy and Bob, go over, introduce themselves and say, "Hey, Buck Naked, he wants to be with you." She comes up. They have sex. She has an affair. She was married. She gets pregnant.

You know what David does? He freaks out. Her husband is away at war. He brings the husband home and says, "Go be with your wife." Thinking that if he goes has sex with his wife that when she has the baby they'll think the husband and wife did it and he'll be clean from this thing. But this guy is a true soldier. He says, "I'm not going to come home and have sex with my wife when everybody else is out there fighting." So he doesn't. Then David knows he's now going to get busted. He says to the commander. "Put the husband on the front lines." And guess what happens to him on the front lines? He dies.

Psalm 51. You might read Psalm 51 and listen to David's heart. Listen to the pain in his life as he asks God's forgiveness over this incredible act. I guarantee you that many of us in here have messed up sexually in the past, but you haven't done what David did. You may have messed up in a lot of ways but that was some pretty major stuff. And yet he sensed

and he found God's forgiveness. He was able to move from guilt to living a life of good news. That's what God's all about.

Seven action steps I want you to think about as you walk out of here today. Things I want to give you to take home and read over and look up the verses in your Bible and mark them down. Here are some action steps that will take you from guilt to God's grace.

1. You've got to learn about God's FORGIVENESS

You've got to be able to separate the myths from the truth. Some of you in here have a myth. The myth is that God sits in heaven just thinking of ways to punish you. You think that's what God is doing, that He's just sitting in heaven waiting to figure out how to wipe you out. The reason we have myths like that is we have myths in the world, especially sexually. "If you do this, you get this disease... If you masturbate you'll go blind or have hairy knuckles..." All these things you hear about. Like God's up there in heaven going, "Okay, Johnson just messed up. Give him a receding hairline." God's not like that! God doesn't sit in heaven thinking of ways to punish us. If that was his plan, He would have never sent Jesus to pay for our sins.

You might be sitting there asking, "If God forgives us does He also take away our consequences?" That's a good question. No. Consequences are really a part of life. Actually the greatest way, and some of you who are thinkers, the greatest way that God showed his love was free choice. God could have made us all robots; we just walk around with strings connected. But that's not love. So God says I give you free choice. So with our free choice what many of us in here have done is we've gone our own way. We've blown it. And consequences happen. And unfortunately God doesn't take away those consequences. Does He bring healing to them? Yes. But some of us in here we're going to have scars for the rest of our lives.

But what happens when we ask God for forgiveness? *Psalm 103, "He's removed our rebellious acts as far from us as the east is from the west."* He just gets rid of them. *1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins to him..."* There's an "if" there. *If we confess.* [If we do our part, what's his part?] "... *He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from every wrong.*"

God's forgiveness is instant (right away). It's free. And it's complete. For those of you who are checking out church, you're checking out God, you've got to hear this: forgiveness is the backbone of the gospel. We are not trying to teach you to be religious here. What we're trying to do is teach you the Bible that says that God wants a relationship with you. And the backbone of that relationship is forgiveness. It's the definition of love.

Some of you have never heard this before: God's love is unconditional. What is "unconditional"? It means without condition. Our love, human love, is not like that. I love you if... I love you when... As much as I try to love unconditionally, sometimes I have conditions. I don't mean to, I just do it. It's my human type of love.

Yet God's love is without condition. Even though we have walked away from that unconditional love, God loves us just the same.

Have you ever had a friend that has hurt you, hurt you bad and then you have forgiven them? You know how we're different from God?

2. You've got to enjoy God's FORGETFULNESS.

You may have forgiven them, but the fact that you're raising your hand means you remember. God doesn't remember. You've got to enjoy his forgetfulness. What He forgives, He forgets. *Jeremiah 31:34*, "I will forgive them. I will never again remember their sins." That's God's forgetfulness. When we ask God for forgiveness remember I said it's free, it's complete, it's instant – it's done! You don't have to say "God, forgive me again!" God's going, "What do you mean 'again'?"

I got married 3 years ago to my wife. It took. When the preacher said, "I now pronounce you husband and wife," it took. I'm married. I don't have to keep going back and saying, "Tonya, will you marry me?" again. She'd think I was a freak. We're married. It took.

Same thing with God's forgiveness. God forgets. How can he forget? What you and I need to remember is those of you who have a relationship with him, you have asked him into your life. When God looks at you, he sees Jesus Christ. When you look up here on stage you see a buff, body-builder type guy. No. You see a guy who's getting to the age of some of your parents with a receding hairline and developing a little chub. When God looks at me He sees Jesus Christ. And that's how He can forget. He sees Jesus Christ. The Bible says in *1 John*, "There is someone to plead for you before the Father." Those of you who have a relationship with God, you've got to realize when you ask God for forgiveness He sees his Son, Jesus Christ and He forgets.

If you want to move from guilt to good news you've got to learn about his forgiveness, you enjoy God's forgetfulness...

3. You've got to recognize that the past is OVER.

Quit looking back. You are not responsible for the sins of the past. You are responsible for living today. You can change. Physical changes are very natural. But spiritual changes are supernatural. I am not the same today as I was when I was a little boy. I have changed. When I was a little boy, I thought different. But, physical changes are natural, but spiritual changes are supernatural. That's God's part in the game. It says in *2 Corinthians 5:17*, "Those who become Christians become new persons they are not the same anymore for the old life is gone and a new life has begun." We paint this picture every week that when you move from the world's way that "the old has passed away and behold the new has come." You're totally different. In God's eyes you're spiritually pure.

Sometimes when you're flipping the channels and you get to Christian television – not something I encourage people to watch. It's pretty bizarre. Every once in awhile I do for a laugh. They use big words... repent. Repent just means to confess, to turn it over. It doesn't mean you're never going to sin any more. If you say to God "I'm never going to sin again!" He knows you're going to sin again. But you change.

It's like a recycling program. Once you were a tree, then all of a sudden you're paper. Paper does not go back to be a tree. Once you come to Christ, the old has passed away and the new has come. I grabbed this from the back room – a fleece sweater. You know what these are made out of? These are made out of two liter recycled bottles. When they recycle bottles, they make something new; sweaters. This sweater will never go back to be a bottle. You do not serve coke in this. This is a sweater, not a cup. It's changed.

That's what God does. Recognize the past is over.

Some of you in here, you lost your virginity. You have messed up sexually. And over the last four weeks you've realized that was not in God's plan. But please hear this, with love in my heart, the past is over. Start over. If anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation. The old has passed away, the new has come. Get on a new track. In God's eyes, you're forgiven and you may start new.

But here's what happens. Those of you who are Christians, you get reminded of the old stuff every once in awhile. Even though you've asked for forgiveness of it, you get reminded of it. It's not God who reminds you. It's satan, the enemy of God. If you're a Christian, you have been lost for eternity – satan has lost you. You're not going to be with satan forever. You're going to be with God forever. The only thing satan can do now is make you ineffective today. And make you a lousy witness today. That's the only thing he's got on you. And it works. When you're reminded of your past, that is not God. That's satan. If you've asked for forgiveness, God's forgotten, forgiven it. It's satan that's trying to make you ineffective.

When satan reminds you of your past, just remind satan of his future. I've read to the end of this book many times. God wins. That's the future. Recognize your past is over.

4. Begin to forgive YOURSELF.

The price has been paid. You don't have to keep paying it. Some of you have seen Fight Club. Remember the guy who gets ready to fight, he's just beating himself up taking hits on himself. He's just bringing himself pain. Some of you who have given yourself hickeys on your arm you know what I'm talking about. You burst your own blood vessel just to see if it worked. It works. All you have to do is go to McDonalds and look at the people behind the counter. They've all got them. You beat yourself up and it's crazy. God has already paid the price.

Somebody once said, "I think my sins are too big for God to forgive." I said, "Your understanding of God is too small." *Ephesians 2:4, "God is rich in mercy. He loved us so very much that, while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. It's only because of God's special favor that you have been saved."* God's special favor – Grace. That's what grace is.

If you're a Christian and you're living in sin and you feel some guilt, Hello! That's called the conviction of the Holy Spirit. You've asked God into your life and now you're not living his way and you feel guilty. That's the role of the Holy Spirit. When I teach in here and you feel guilty, that's not my job. I don't make anybody feel guilty. I just teach the Bible. If you are a Christian, that's the job of the Holy Spirit. He's convicting you, trying to get your attention. It's not to haunt you. Haunting you is the accusation of satan.

Somebody said to me this week: "I know God's forgiven me but what about when I look at other people and I still feel guilty? They make me feel guilty."

Please hear this. Nobody can make you feel guilty. You choose guilt. You can't make me feel guilty; I choose guilt. You care about their opinion and it's paralyzing you.

You can imagine in 13 years doing this I get a lot of mean letters. One time somebody wrote me like five pages of what they don't like about Bryant Johnson. I wrote back, "There's a lot more you don't know." Begin to forgive yourself; quit beating yourself up. The price has been paid.

5. Avoid the hurdles to HEALING.

Here are three hurdles to healing: burying it, blaming others and beating yourself up.

A lot of us in here take our guilt and bury it. We don't want to talk about it. Let's don't deal with it now. Let's bury it. You know what happens when you bury it? It begins to come out in other areas of your life.

When a cat poops in the litter box, he buries it. It disappears, but does it turn into a beautiful flower? Does it become origami art? No. It's poop and it still stinks. And eventually when enough is buried the whole place begins to smell.

Instead of burying it – which is the hurdle – look at the healing part. Admit it. *Psalm 32, "I refused to confess. I was weak and miserable. I groaned all day long. Finally I confessed my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. And I said to myself I will confess my rebellion to the Lord, and you forgave me and my guilt is gone."* Don't bury it.

Another hurdle: Don't blame others. I know this is silly and childish. How do you spell "blame"? "B lame". That's exactly what you're doing when you're blaming other people. You're being lame.

Instead accept responsibility. "I messed up. I blew it."

Quit beating yourself up. We talked about that.

There is one time when it's fair to blame. That's when you've been sexually abused. You were abused when you were a child or you're being abused now or you were date raped. I don't want to take this lightly. That's the time when you can blame. It is never your fault. I don't care if you put yourself in that situation. I don't care what you created in your mind. It is never your fault if you've been abused sexually.

Some things I want you to hear:

1. It's not your fault.
2. You've got to seek help. Don't suffer in silence. I'd be happy to talk to you, refer you to somebody else. Any adult here. Don't suffer in silence. There is hope. You can be healed from this.

From guilt to good news. You've got to avoid the hurdles to healing.

6. Cherish God's grace, don't CHEAPEN it.

We're talking this forgiveness that's free, it's instant, and it's complete. This is God's grace. Cherish it. Drop to your knees saying "God, thank you. I don't deserve it." Don't cheapen it.

What do I mean by cheapening it? Here's what people do sometimes. They say, "If God's going to forgive me, why don't I just go mess up now and then say, 'Hey God, forgive me.'" There will be either some uncomfortable silence or giggling at this point because that's what many of you do. "God's going to forgive me so I'm going to get stoned or I'm going to have sex or I'm going to go to this party or I'm going to do this. Then I'll just pray for his forgiveness because God's forgiveness is real." You've just cheapened it instead of cherishing it. It's really not a sign of maturity. It's a sign of very immature Christians.

God's grace is free, but it's not cheap because Jesus died on the cross. There was a price that was paid.

You can do that if you want. The Bible says you ask for God's forgiveness and God will forgive. But the consequences will linger. They will not go away.

Have you ever had food in a car, and when you got out you forgot to get it out. Then a few days later you go to get in the car and as you open the door the smell hits and about knocks you out. It's at that point that almost no matter what kind of air freshener you use, nothing works. The smell lingers. There's always a hint of that banana peel that was left under the seat.

That's a great example of what happens with consequences. You might have been forgiven. But the consequences still lingers. Cherish God's grace, don't cheapen it.

Romans 3:8. Basically this is saying if I sin and God's grace shows up, maybe I should go sin some more so more of God's grace will show up. He says that's foolish.

7. Lift your head up, then lift GOD UP

Here's what guilt and shame does: some of you cannot even look people in the eye because you feel so much guilt and shame. Ask God for forgiveness then lift your head up. When you lift your head up, the next thing you do is you lift God up.

Psalm 32, "O what joy that I can lift my head up, whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight. Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin whose lives are lived in complete honesty." I want you to walk out of here tonight not looking at your past but looking forward to what can happen when you ask God to forgive you. You put your eyes on him.