



Message **Transcript**

Obey Today

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Lord Jesus, we give you all the praise, glory, and honor. And Lord, we gather before your throne today because you are worthy and you invite us to do this because you're the king of kings and the Lord of Lords and you have a great love for each and every one of us. So Lord, now we pray that as we open your word, that it would be faithfully and accurately proclaimed because Lord, we believe that when it is, that you speak.

So our prayer to you this morning is speak Lord for we are ready to hear what it is that you have to tell us. Lord, we do pray for Easter this year at Bandimere. Lord, I personally pray, it's about 75 degrees with a little cloud cover, beautiful day, 20,000 people show up and thousands that give their lives to Christ and are baptized, and Lord, we just trust that you're good and that's not too hard for you.

And so Lord, we're inviting you to do that. And now for all who are gathered who desire to hear the word of the Lord, who will believe what it is that the Lord is saying to you and will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word amen. Amen.

As a pastor, I get asked many questions, but one of the frequent questions I get asked by Christian people all the time is how can I experience more of God's favor in my life? How can I experience the fullness of Jesus Christ? How come it is there are some Christians and I see my friends' life and I look at them, it seems like they're walking in lockstep with Jesus and yet for me, it's very, very hard and I want more of Jesus in my life? What would you tell me?

I'll give you a two word answer, obey today. Obey today. Obedience is essential to growing in Christ. Obedience is more important than a lifetime of seminary classes. While learning the word and knowing the word is essential, applying the word is even more important. It's what are you going to do with this living and active word? And sometimes when you hear me say something like that like obey today, you begin to think like, "Well, is there some other way?" Like how long do I need to obey today?

As long as you're still alive, wake up and say obey today. It's kind of like when we go and we want to get in shape and we hire a personal trainer and we ask, what do I need to do to get in shape? And they say, "Well, you have to start eating differently and you need to drink more water and you need to show up to the gym." And we ask, but how long do I need to do that? Like for a day?

I mean, do you have any options where I can sit on my couch and just get better? Do you have any pills I can take? No, the answer is consistent effort in the same direction. And this is true of anything in life. If you wanted to earn more money and have money for your kid's education or for retirement and you went and talked to a financial planner and said, "What would you have for me?" They would say this, save money and then spend less than you make.

Well, for how long do I need to do that? Probably 20 or 30 years. Well, do you have any shortcut options? There are no shortcut options and there are no shortcut options when it comes to your relationship with Jesus Christ. If you really want to experience Jesus Christ to the full, obedience is essential. I grew up in a traditional

church, we sang the song on Sunday mornings trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

If you really want to experience the fullness of Jesus Christ in your life, obey today. Obedience sometimes means doing something, sometimes it means stop doing something and sometimes it means start doing something different. And the reason that's so important is there are many Christians and some of you fall into that category today where you know that the Lord has told you something, you know he's nudged you in a certain direction, whispered something in your ear, prompted you about a decision that you need to make and what do we do?

Yeah, and that's not what I was praying about God, I want you to talk to me about something else. It's those areas of obedience that God is wanting to talk to you. And if he's been talking to you about something, I promise you that God has a word for you this morning. You're not listening today by accident. And to take a look at four reasons that God wants you to obey today, we're going to be in Hebrews chapter 3, Hebrews chapter 3.

And in this book where we've talked about how Jesus is the greatest, the greatest of all time, how he's the greatest prophet and priest and king, how he's greater than the angels, today we're going to see how he's even greater than Moses and we're going to see reasons, four reasons why we're called to obey today. I'm going to read through chapter 3, see if you can find those four reasons and then we'll unpack them together.

He says, "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession. He was faithful to him who appointed him as Moses also was in all his house. For he has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, but just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

Now Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later. But Christ was faithful as a son over his house, whose house we are if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me,' as in the day of trial in the wilderness where your fathers tried me by testing me and saw my works for 40 years.

Therefore, I was angry with this generation and said, 'They always go astray in their heart and they did not know my ways.' As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.' Take care, brethren, that there not be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God, but encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called today so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end while it is said, 'Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me.' For who provoked him when they had heard?

Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he angry for 40 years? Was it not those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief." And here this author of the book of Hebrews highlights four reasons why obedience is essential to experiencing the fullness of God in your life. If you only remember two words from this message, here's the two words, obey today. Can you say those out loud and loudly with me right now? Obey today.

If you wake up tomorrow and say, "What was the pastor talking about?" Obey today. That God is speaking and he wants you to be obedient in the moment where you're asking the Lord, "Search me and try me O, Lord. See if there's any offensive way in me, lead me in the way everlasting." Some of us say, "I don't even know if there's anything I'm being disobedient to," because we're unwilling to ask God.

Would you be willing to present your bodies as a living sacrifice this morning? Would you be able to pray silently right where you are before you hear this message? Lord, if there's anything in my life today that's out of alignment with you, would you show me because I want to make it right? I may not even be aware of what it is, but Lord, if there is, would you show me, in your kindness, would you show me in your love, would you show me so of that I can walk in the fullness of Christ by being obedient today?

I'm going to give you four reasons from the text that we're called to be obedient

today, and the first is this, obey today because Jesus Christ is greater than Moses. Obey today because Jesus Christ is greater than Moses. Now, most of you that are here today would say, "Amen. We know that, go on to point number two." But you need to realize the book of Hebrews was written to a Jewish audience, and this Jewish audience had followed all of the Jewish customs in ways, and for them, Moses was and is still considered the greatest leader in Israel's history.

He was unlike any other. He was spared at his birth. You remember his mother sent him down in a basket. When he fled into Midian, he was called at the burning bush and heard the voice of God. He became the deliverer for all of God's people. All of the plagues came through him. He was the instrument that God chose. The final plague that came was death of the first born where Moses instructed all the people to paint blood on a doorpost foreshadowing the death of Christ so that the angel of death would pass over.

When they went out from Egypt, they plundered the entire Egyptians. God worked with Moses and came alongside the whole nation as they exited being a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. When they got to the Red Sea and they couldn't cross and the Egyptian army was behind them, God used Moses as his instrument to hold out his staff and part the Red Sea and they walked across it on dry ground.

And then God closed the sea up over all the Egyptians killing all of the soldiers that were there. When the people crossed over and started complaining that there wasn't food, God provided manna. When they complained there wasn't anything to drink, God provided water. When they complained that there wasn't any meat, God

provided quail. God used Moses to do all of that.

And then most importantly, perhaps is Moses was the servant through whom God brought the law to the people, the 10 commandments specifically. And he instructed the people as to how they were to live through Moses. Even in the new testament, we read about the law of Moses. It's really the law of God that came through Moses. But even if you were to talk to a Jewish person today, they would tell you, Moses is the greatest leader in all of Israel's history.

So to write this to them, they would need to believe you mean there's one greater than Moses? There's one greater for his people than Moses? Yes, it's the Lord Jesus Christ. And he's going to highlight three different ways why Jesus is greater than Moses. Notice what he says. He says, "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession."

When we confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord, he said think of these two roles, apostle and high priest. Moses was never called an apostle. An apostle is one directly sent by God. So in some way, Moses was called by God and he was sent by God and he went "reluctantly" to Egypt because God called him to do it. But Jesus Christ was different. Jesus Christ is God. He was appointed by God.

He was sent by the father and in submission, came to this world as the apostle to fulfill the law, die on the cross for our sins and rise from the dead. He is the way, the truth and the life. He is the trailblazer and pioneer of our faith. He is far greater than Moses. Moses was created by God, Jesus Christ is God. And notice what else? He's

the high priest of our confession. Moses was never the high priest. Moses was never the high priest.

The high priest was the one who represented God's people before God, the one who pleaded for the sins of the nation, the one who once a year went into the holy of holies and did that. Moses did not play that role, but Jesus Christ came and threw his sacrificial death in the cross, in his resurrection, from the dead.

He became the high priest for the whole planet for anybody who through repentance and faith would trust Jesus Christ. And in the coming chapters, we're going to spell out who Jesus is as our high priest and how he lives to make intercession for us and how he represents us before the father. Jesus has a greater title than Moses.

Moses was not an apostle, Moses was not a high priest. Jesus is the apostle and the high priest for all who through faith believe in him. Number two is this. Jesus also has a greater scope in his ministry. He's got a greater scope in his ministry. Notice what verses 2 and following say.

It says he was faithful to him who appointed him, that's talking about Jesus, as Moses also was in all his house, for he has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Make no mistake about it. Moses was faithful in God's house.

He built the tabernacle and the arc of the covenant according to the instructions that God gave him. But Jesus Christ is God's house. In John chapter 1 in verse 14, it

says the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, meaning he tabernacled among us. The tabernacle in the old testament was made to specific specifications that God told Moses to do so people would understand the severity of their sin and all the different pieces of furniture in the tabernacle and all the different ways that they brought their sacrifices so they know how holy God is.

In the new testament, we don't have the tabernacle because Jesus Christ himself is the tabernacle. Jesus Christ himself is the way, is the truth, is the life. To see Jesus is to see God. Jesus is greater than Moses, make no mistake about it. And notice number three, Jesus has a greater relationship with God than Moses ever did.

Now you think about Moses, I mean, Moses talked face to face with God, Moses, the glory of God from his back reflected off of Moses' face so much that when he came down off the mountain, he had to put a veil over himself. I mean, Moses had a incredible relationship with God that nobody had, but Jesus Christ was different. Notice what it says.

Verse 5 says now Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant for a testimony of those things, which were to be spoken later, but Christ was a faithful son over his house. Moses was a servant. Jesus is God's one and only son. Jesus is God's one and only son. As a son, he served. Moses was not God's one and only son. Moses was a servant of the Lord and a very good servant of the Lord.

Jesus Christ is God's only begotten son. He has a higher and greater relationship. Jesus Christ is deity. There's never been a time that Jesus Christ hasn't

existed. 2000 years ago, he put on flesh. And in talking about this house, whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope, firm until the end.

Well, what's the house of God?

It's the body of Christ, that when we turn from our sin and we turn to Christ, we're part of his family, we're in the household of God because we are connected to the living one, the Lord, Jesus Christ. He's greater than Moses. He's greater than Moses. He's the greatest being that has ever and will ever live. He's God of all God's. And when he put on flesh 2000 years ago, he's the perfect man as well. He's the Godman for all eternity. That's who Jesus is.

So you may ask if I'm to obey today because Jesus is greater than Moses, like why are you telling me that? What does that have to do with my obedience? Here's why. Because when you read through the old testament, when Moses brought the law to the people, you could specifically read this in Leviticus chapter 26, in Deuteronomy chapter 28.

In Leviticus chapter 26, you read about the blessings of keeping the law and in Deuteronomy chapter 28, you read about the curses of breaking the law. In other words, what Moses brought to the people was so significant that if they kept the law, God blessed them, if they broke the law, God cursed them. Why? Because God wanted to get his glory through the nation of Israel because they were to be the light to all the nations.

When Israel was obedient to God all throughout the old testament, relationships

flourished, their crops flourished, everything flourished so that people on the outside could look at Israel and say, "Whoever their God is, that's the God of the universe." We better live like Israel lives. When Israel was disobedient, what happened?

They were cursed in such a way that people would look from the outside and say, "Whoever their God is, we don't want to mess with him because he's worthy of all the glory." And God said, "Either way, if you do what I'm asking you to do, I'll bless you. If you don't do what I'm asking you to do, I'll curse you. And either way, I'm getting all my glory."

And the writer of Hebrews is saying if God's people needed to be obedient to the law because the law was that important, how much more Jesus Christ who's the giver of the law? How much more important is it for you as a new testament believer to obey all the things that God commanded you to do? Isn't it interesting?

At the very end, the Great Commission in Matthew chapter 28 before Jesus ascends to heaven, Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit," and what? Teach them to obey or teach them to observe what? Everything I've commanded you and I'll be with you always to the end of the age.

So what things do we not have to be obedient to? We have to be obedient to it all. And for many people in our generation, specifically people in the church in North America, specifically people in America think that obedience is a secondary option for

people that actually want to grow and for other Christians, it's just not that big of a deal.

Friends, if you want to experience Jesus Christ to the full, your obedience to his word is essential, it's foundational, it's bedrock, it's paramount to you ever experiencing the fullness of Jesus Christ. You can't play with this stuff. You can't say, "Well, it's God's grace. It really doesn't matter how I live because God's going to forgive me anyway."

When you live like that, you cannot experience the favor and the blessing of God in your life. Obey today because Jesus Christ is greater than Moses. And if God was serious about the law and he was, which is why Jesus fulfilled it, which is why he had to die in our place because we couldn't keep the law, how much more important is it for us to be obedient to everything that Jesus Christ has us do? Obey today because Jesus Christ is greater than Moses.

Secondly, this. Obey today because passivity hardens your heart towards God. Obey today because passivity hardens your heart towards God. He says, notice this at the end of verse 6, he says, "We know who we are if we hold fast our confidence and boast of our hope firm until the end." Some people say this and they say, "Well, that means if you keep being obedient, then you're saved, you got to hold on with everything you have."

Friend, you can't make yourself be obedient. It's not about you being obedient to prove that you're saved. Here's what it means. You'll have the joy of the Lord because

if you are saved, there will be a desire to be obedient to the very end. If you are saved, there'll be a hunger to do what Jesus Christ wants you to do. If you say that you've been saved and there's never been a change of your heart where you desire what Jesus desires, check your heart because you may not be saved.

Because when you're saved, Jesus Christ wants to do something new in and through your life. It doesn't mean that you'll always do it perfect but it means when you don't, you will know that you didn't do what God wanted you to do. Because there will be a desire inside that says, "I want that." And here's why you need to know this, because passivity hardens your heart towards God.

He says therefore just as the Holy Spirit says, now he's going to quote Psalm 95. So he says the Holy Spirit says, and he quotes Psalm 95. So who wrote Psalm 95? The Holy Spirit. You're going to see in chapter 4, he's going to say in chapter 4 verse 7 that it's through David. So the Holy Spirit wrote Psalm 95 through David, right? Dual authorship, the Holy Spirit's words coming through David. And what did he say?

Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says today, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me. You're going to see that here, you're going to see it later in the chapter, you're going to see it next week. Because God thinks it's important that when you hear his voice, you do something with it. Passivity hardens your heart towards God.

You say, "Well, what's that mean? What's passivity?" Passivity is indifference, insensitivity, lethargy, complacency. It means this. When you hear the word of the Lord

preached or you're studying your Bible on your own and God prompts you through his word that this is what I want you to do, you need to go forgive that person, you need to give that amount of money, you need to make that relationship right, you need to stop doing that behavior, you need to start doing this.

Whatever it is, passivity is yeah, I'm not ready to deal with that one yet. It's when we say this in our heart spiritually, "Why do today what I can do tomorrow? I'm sure God will bug me about it tomorrow." When you live with that level of passivity, you can't stay on the same plane with Jesus, you begin to plummet. Your heart begins to harden. It begins to atrophy.

It's why for some of you remember what it was like when you first got saved and you say, "I wish it was like that all the time." And for some of you, the reason it's not like that now is because there's a specific area of your life that the Lord's asking you to deal with and you don't want to deal with that area of your life. And I know what this is like. I've walked with the Lord for 30 years.

I've had seasons like this where I'm asking the Lord to bless this thing over here and he starts telling me about this thing over here and I don't want to deal with this thing. And I think Lord, I'm not talking to you about that right now, I'm talking about this. But when the Lord puts something on your heart, he wants you to do, he will never leave you alone until you do it.

So don't be passive because passivity hardens your heart if you're lethargic, if you're insensitive, if you're complacent. When you read the Bible, it's not just about

gaining more Bible knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, love builds up. Put it into practice. Let me just tell you this. I've had a lot of formal education, but I can tell you this, five minutes of obedience with Christ is more important than a lifetime of education in the Bible.

There's a lot of people that know a lot about the Bible but aren't living the fullness of Christ because they're not obedient. That should give you great hope. Young people, that should give you great hope. People that say, "I don't know much about the Bible yet," should give you great hope. You don't have to, just apply what you do know. Take what God's showing you and put it into practice and he will reveal more wisdom about who he is.

The way you grow in Christ is not simply by reading your Bible, it's when the spirit prompts you through reading your Bible that you do what he tells you to do. That's how you grow because passivity hardens your heart. So when you read the word and you hear God's voice, apply it. He says, "Do not harden your hearts as they provoke me as in the day of trial in the wilderness where your fathers tried me by testing me and saw my works for 40 years."

What did Israel do all the time in the wilderness? They complained and grumbled. I mean, that was their spiritual gift. And you know what God did because of that? Because he took the 6,000 out and he loved them and he delivered them and he freed them, but because of their complaining and because of their disobedience and going into the promised land, you know what he said?

I'm going to give you all a 40 year camping trip and only Joshua and Caleb are going to survive. Now we laugh. I don't like camping. A weekend camping trip sounds like a long time to me. This is 40 years. And it's 40 years camping with the same people and you know everybody that you're camping with is going to die before God's going to put his favor back on you.

It's tragic all because of what? Not because God's not good, not because God doesn't love Israel, not because God didn't want to bless them, but because Israel said to God, "We don't want to do what you want us to do." And for 40 years, their life was miserable. Some of you that know Christ, your life is miserable because he showed you something to do a week ago or a month ago or a year ago or five years ago or 10 years ago and you said, "No, not going to do that."

Friends, passivity hardens your heart towards God. Notice this. He goes, "Therefore, I was angry with this generation," said, "They always go astray in their heart and they did not know my ways and I swore my wrath they shall not enter my rest." That's exactly what happened to the nation of Israel. Living passively leads to rebellion, it leads to rebellion.

When you hear God's word and some of you hear it when you're here at the church because I know how this works because when the word of God has faithfully proclaimed the Holy Spirit will speak to you and some of you have different weekends than others have and God speaks at different volumes and different levels about specific things.

So there's some weeks you're here and you're like, "I needed to hear that." Some weeks you're here and you're like, "Yeah, that was okay for me." And other weeks you're here and it's as if you're sitting there saying, "Did somebody send a letter to Pastor Jeff? Because he's reading my mail."

And God's pounding on your heart and on some of those days, what you want to do is get up and leave the building as quick as you can when God's saying, "No, linger in this. I'm giving this to you because I love you. I'm giving this to you because I care about you and I want you to make it right." And the good news of the gospel is through repentance and faith, God, we can start fresh through the blood of Jesus all over again, right in a moment. Isn't that good news?

Passivity hardens your heart. We end up procrastinating where we tell the Lord, "Maybe it's just not now, maybe tomorrow, maybe the next day." I had a friend in college who was struggling with his classes and so he went to see his academic advisor. And I asked him later in the day, I said, "Hey, how'd it go?" And he said, "Well, they gave me these two brochures."

And he held them up and one was on time management and one was on overcoming procrastination. And I said, "Well what'd you think about them?" He said, "Well, the time management one was pretty good." I said, "Well, what about the overcoming procrastination one?" He goes, "Eh, I'll get to that one later." That's how many of us are spiritually.

God begins to talk to us about something specific in our lives that we don't want

to deal with and we begin to think, "Okay, I'll deal with that tomorrow. I'll deal with it the next day." You know what Satan's biggest lies about obedience is? Go ahead, obey Christ, just don't do it today. He loves you enough, you can do it tomorrow.

And you know what he's going to say when you wake up tomorrow? It's okay, just do it tomorrow. And we put it off and we put it off and we put it off. Did you know procrastination's a sin? James 4:17 says anyone who knows the good he ought to do and does not do it sins. Here's what it means. If God's been speaking to you about something specific, he wants you to start doing, stop doing or start doing differently and you do nothing with it, that's sin.

That sin's forgivable, but when you're passive and not responding to God, it leads to rebellion in your life. It's why some people who have genuinely been born again are living as though they're not in a season. And what we see in the nation of Israel, God's people is they provided an example to us. Paul tells us in first Corinthians chapter 10, if you want to turn there, why God took Israel through these different things and how they're an example to us.

As you're turning to first Corinthians 10, let me read the first few verses. He says, "For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.

Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not well pleased for they were laid low in the wilderness." What's he saying? Every single one of them experienced all of God's blessings. Every single one of them saw the power of God. Every single one of them saw God provide for every single one of their needs. And yet what? 600,000 of them that came out all died in the wilderness because all they did was say, "Yeah, I've seen it, but show me something else. Show me more, that's not enough for me."

They didn't continue to walk in obedience with their God. And God tells us this in first Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 6, "Now these things happened as an example for us." So if we study the nation of Israel and we study what God did through his people, they'll be an example to us. And there's five things he highlights that when we live passively, the types of rebellion that we'll notice in our own hearts, see if any of these resonate with you.

If you're not walking obediently to Christ, one of these is going to resonate with you. Notice what he says. He says, "These things happened as examples for us so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved." When you're passive and it leads to rebellion, one of the things that will go off in your heart is you'll begin to crave evil.

There'll begin to be a desire for things that God doesn't want you to do. It's desiring to do the opposite of what God demands out of curiosity. There'll be this craving that comes up and you'll say, "Yeah, I know what the word says, but I don't really want to do it. I wonder why I can't do this. And why can't I get away with that?"

And who's really going to know anyway?"

There'll be a craving to do things that go against the word of God when you live passively and don't honor him. Number two, he tells us in verse 7, "Do not be idolaters as some of them were, as it is written, these people sat down to eat and drink and stood up to play." You'll remember in Exodus 32, Moses goes up on Mount Sinai to get the law and God writes it with his finger and he comes back down and what are God's people doing? They're going crazy.

They've seen the living God serve them in awesome ways, deliver them and give them freedom and yet they take all their jewelry and pull it together and make a golden calf and worship the calf. It's crazy. You say, "We'd never act like that." You know what idolatry is? When you live passively, and it leads to rebellion idolatry starts to take over your heart. Idolatry is placing your ultimate allegiance in that which is inultimate, placing your ultimate trust in that which is inultimate.

You say, "Well, I'd never worship a golden calf." You're right, you would not. But you know what you would do? You'd love your house more than you love Jesus. You'd love your car more than you'd love Jesus. You'd love your job more than you love Jesus. You'd love job security more than you love Jesus. You love your money more than you love Jesus. You love your vacation time more than you love Jesus. You love your family more than you love Jesus and anything that you place above Jesus is called idolatry.

And when you're not walking in obedience to him, something else will go off in

your heart and you'll say, "I love that more than Jesus." And Jesus is good, but this is more important to me. Notice what else they went after. Let us not act immorally as some of them did and 23,000 fell in one day. You remember Numbers chapter 25, 24,000 died with that plague, 23,000 died in a day according to the new testament because of what? Immorality.

You say what's immorality? Immorality is fulfilling godly desires in an ungodly or selfish way. Immorality is trying to fulfill a godly desire in an ungodly or selfish way. Sexual immorality is this, God created marriage to have sexual fulfillment, it's trying to achieve sexual fulfillment some way outside of the bonds of marriage. And I could stand up here and go into great detail because I've counseled hundreds of people, I'm like, "You've tried that?"

There's all sorts of crazy ways we try to fulfill it. And here's what happens. When you try to fulfill a godly desire in an ungodly or selfish way, you'll never be satisfied. And you've always got to go back and go back and go back, and the more you go back, the more empty you feel. God hates immorality. When you're passive towards the things of God and rebellion creeps up, craving evil, idolatry, immorality are part of the things that happen.

And then third is this... Or fourth is this, it's testing the Lord. Notice verse 9, nor let us try the Lord or test the Lord as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents. You'll remember that story in Numbers chapter 21. Testing the Lord is asking the Lord to prove himself while not believing and thanking him for what he's already done. Testing the Lord is when you say, "God, do something for me," while you

disregard everything he's already done.

Israel did this all the time, the religious leaders in the new testament, the Pharisees did this all the time. When Jesus Christ was here, what did he do? Well, he restored sight to the blind, he healed people, he raised people from the dead, he fed 5,000 people out of five loaves and two fish.

Everywhere he went, miracles abounded, he stopped the storm on the sea. Over and over again, all we see is his miracles and yet every time the religious leaders showed up, what did they say? Oh, just give us a sign, that will be enough. What else do you want me to do? I mean, even if I rise from the dead, that won't be enough for you. You're putting me to the test. You're not honoring me for what I do.

And many of us do that too. We'll experience God in a service, we'll experience God on a Tuesday night, we'll see God at work in our life, we'll see how he provides, but instead of thanking him and blessing him for all he's done, here's what we tell God, "What have you done for me lately? You're no good. I need you to show me the money." That's what we talk like. Israel was great at that.

And then this final one, which we've already hit on a little bit, verse 10, nor grumble as some of them did and were destroyed by the destroyer. You remember Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16? Here's what grumbling is. It's complaining and whining for your selfish desires to be met.

It's what we're naturally good at when we're not being obedient. We complain and we whine for our selfish desires to be met, all the while, we're not living obedient

to Christ. We're not living obedient to Christ in our dating relationships and yet we're whining to God that we haven't met the right person yet. We're not being obedient and we're whining and complaining to God to how come our marriage doesn't have wholeness in it.

We're whining and complaining to God and we're not living obedient about why our job isn't working out the way it is. Friends, God hasn't asked you to grumble and complain, he hates it. Parents, you know what it's like with your kids when they whine. I mean, when your kids are whining and complaining, do you say, "Hey, great job. You're so good at that." We don't do that. Like stop it, we don't like that.

And why did they go through all this? In verse 11, now these things happened to them as an example and they were written for our instruction upon whom the end of the ages has come. Why do we see all these things? Because we look at Israel sometimes we're like, "How silly were they? I mean, they had God right with them the whole time and all they did was complain."

Friends, how silly are we? Jesus Christ who rose from the dead is with us all the time and he loves you with an unconditional love, and yet for many of us, we don't walk in obedience to him and then we do all these same things. We crave evil, we test the Lord, we go after immorality, we whine and complain and then we wonder why our life with Christ isn't any good. Obey today.

When you start walking in the fullness of Christ and you begin to obey, you can experience God in greater and greater and greater and greater and greater measure.

You say, "Well, what do I do?" Well, when you're obedient, you worship differently. You rejoice differently, you pray differently, you serve differently, you encourage differently, you give differently. You give thanks differently, you give financial differently, you give of your time differently. Everything's different when you're walking in the fullness of Christ.

And it's not a have to, it's a joy. When you're living obedient to God, God does not tell you something to do in the word just so he can look down and say, "So yeah, I'm making you do that. Yeah, I know you're miserable, but I'm making you do that." That's not why God makes you be obedient. God says everything I've designed for you, if you're obedient to me, will give you the greatest joy and bring me the greatest glory.

If you really want to be satisfied, the way you were designed as a human being in the image of God is to walk obediently with Christ in every single way. That's why it's important that we take inventory. Sometimes we're very aware of what it is. Some of you are scared because you're hearing this message and you're like, "I know exactly what it is that I haven't been doing. I know what exactly what it is the Lord wants me to start doing. I know exactly what it that I have to start doing differently."

And some of you may be sitting there like, "I can't think of anything." And perhaps there's nothing right now, but would you have the courage to pray and say, "Search me, O Lord and try me. See if there's anything offensive in me and lead me in the way everlasting." And he'll meet you right where you're at. See, God tells us about who he is because he has the power to forgive and through his forgiveness and the shed blood

of Jesus, we can start over in a moment and experience the fullness of Christ.

Obey today because Jesus Christ is greater than Moses, obey today because passivity hardens, calcifies your heart towards God. And third, obey today because sin deceives even within a community of believers. Sin deceives even within a community of believers. Did you know that? Did you know that just because you're a believer and you come to church, you're not immune to sin anymore, you're not immune to deception anymore?

I mean, notice what he says in verse 12, take care, brethren, that there not be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. And most of us would say, "Well, that's not Christians because Christians can't fall away from the living God." Okay, well who's he talking to holy brethren? Who's he talking to in this community? He's talking to us.

Sin can still deceive you even if you're a Christian if you're unaware. It's almost verbatim as to what Paul says in first Corinthians 10 verse 12. After he says all these things, he says, "Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall." Friends, this is a warning passage for all of us. Just because you're a Christian doesn't mean that you won't sin. I won't even ask you for show of hands because I know it'd be everybody that's a believer.

If I asked this question, how many of you from the time that you became a Christian, there's at least one time in your life that you sinned in a way that if you could go back, you would say, "I'd never repeat that again."

I mean, everybody, all of us. Because we think we know better, we think we can get away with things and we think that we can cut corners and it'll be okay. But I'm here to tell you, sin deceives even within a community of believers. So take care, pay attention, see to it, brothers, that there not be any of you with an evil, unbelieving heart.

Because when you're passive, you'll crave evil and you'll live as though you don't believe who falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called, there's that word again, today so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Why is community so important? Why is it so important I have people in my life?

It's not just so we can be best buddies. It's so that I have people that know who I am in Christ and love me enough to speak to me when they see things in my life that tend to be going the wrong way, that they love me enough to say, "Hey, that thought you keep talking about and you're thinking about, that doesn't sound like it's of the Lord and I love you enough to come alongside and tell you."

And sometimes we think in church, "Well, it's not our job to judge. Do not judge, lest you be judged." No, that's for non-believers. We're called to judge the body of Christ. God's already judging. Our sins been judged at the cross, but we're called to come alongside each other. Paul says in first Corinthians 5, when you have a young man who's sleeping with his stepmom saying, "I've judged him already. You want me to come and judge him in front of you all? That's wrong. Don't do that." Right?

That's what Christian community truly is. I love you enough to tell you that what you're doing and what you're thinking about's wrong. Do you have people in your life that'll do that for you? Well, I'm not going to, I'm just going to do it by myself. If you separate yourself from Christian community, you will fall. You can't walk to the fullness of who you are in Christ without other people around you that love you. That's why God created the church, so we could be that for one another.

Notice what he goes on to say. For we have become partakers of Christ, these are these words again, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm till the end, what does that mean? It doesn't mean, hey, if I keep being obedient, then I'll be saved. No, it means this. If you're really saved, you will live obediently. If you're really saved, there'll be a desire to walk with Christ. And if you're really saved and you're not obedient, there'll conviction of your sin and a desire to change.

That's evidence. You're not saved by your works, but you are saved for good works. Amen? And notice this, he repeats it like any good preacher would do. Psalm 95 again, today, if you hear his voice, not tomorrow, not yesterday, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. Don't be passive, don't sit there indifferently as when they provoked me.

Do you know God loves you enough to point out your sin? And he doesn't do it so that you feel conviction and God's up in heaven, "Oh, they felt me." God loves you enough to point out your sins so that you'll do something about it, so that you'll repent of it, so that you'll get right with God. Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your

heart as when they provoked me.

I mean, isn't it interesting when you study the higher Bible that sin deceives, even within a community of believers? I mean, probably one of the most incredible stories in the Bible is when God created Adam and Eve and God created mankind in his image and they had no sin inside of them and they didn't even know what it was to sin and God was walking with them the entire time and they could talk to God and be with God all the time, and yet Satan gets in there and deceives Eve and Adam as they're sitting there and they sin right in front of the Lord.

And we're like, "How could that happen?" Because sin can be deceptive even in a community of believers. There's so many examples of this throughout the old and new testaments, here's just a couple. Remember in Joshua, Joshua chapter 6, after they crossed into the promised land, their first battle was going to be against Jericho. And in Joshua 6:18, they are told, "Don't take the spoils of war for Jericho. This will be our first battle, they all belong to the Lord.

Don't even look at those things because if you look at those things, your heart's going to want those things. Just leave all the spoils of war in Jericho." So Israel goes in, God knocks down the wall in Jericho, Israel destroys Jericho. They're so on fire and cheering so much to see all that God's done, they decide to take the next effort and go and rout Ai, which was a town a little bit to the north.

And they said, "We don't even need to take everybody up there." I mean, if we can beat Jericho like this, we'll send 2, 3000 guys, it'll be fine. So they send them up

there and they get routed by Ai and about 35 people die in the battle. And when they come back and tell Joshua, Joshua's lamenting and he's saying, "Lord, why did you lead us like this? Oh man, this is terrible. We're going to look bad. You're making yourself look bad, God. You said we were your people and we just got destroyed."

Remember what God said to Joshua in Joshua 7? My paraphrase, stand up and be a man. The reason you got destroyed is because there's sin in the camp. And you need to discover where the sin is and you need to put an end to the sin. And so they begin to uncover where it was and it fell upon Achan that he was the one that did it.

And so what they did was they stoned him, they burned everything with him and then they piled stones on top of him and then God was satisfied. And then guess what they did? They went and routed Ai. What was the point of the story? You can't be in a community, you can't be in God's community living in sin without impacting negatively the entire community.

You can't come to BRAVE Church and say, "Well, nobody really knows who I am, I can live however I want. It really doesn't affect anybody else." It affects God's ability to move in power in our church. And oh, by the way, you can hide your sin from everybody else in the church, but you're not hiding from God, and all of your sin will ultimately be exposed.

Numbers tells us that you can be certain of this, that your sin will find you out. So it's important that we understand this. Or how about David, King David, the anointed one, the one that killed Goliath, the one that's going to be king that's been anointed?

The one that's doing everything God wants him to do until we get to second Samuel chapter 11.

And it says then it happened in the spring at the time when Kings go out to battle that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah but David stayed at Jerusalem. David's the king, he should have been leading them into battle. Why'd he stay at Jerusalem? Because he was passive. And what happens when you're passive?

You get a cold rebellious heart, you start craving evil, you start leaning towards idolatry, doing all these things. Did that happen to David? I mean, it's David, he's a man after God's own heart. That wouldn't happen to David, would it? Yeah, it wasn't too long after that he was watching Bathsheba take a bath, summoned her, had relations with her, got her pregnant and instead of coming clean then, had her husband Uriah killed and was just going to brush it under the rug as if it was no big deal.

So God sent Nathan the prophet to him to highlight his sin and it was then that he repented. And the baby that came out of Bathsheba died. You cannot outsmart God with your disobedience, it does not work. And the rest of David's life was not nearly as blessed as his first half because of his sin, right? You say, "Well, that's old testament stuff where God was really mean. Good thing he doesn't do that anymore."

You ever read Acts? Remember in Acts chapter 5, there was a couple that decided to bring their offering before the Lord named Ananias and Sapphira. They sold a piece of land, they brought the property, the proceeds from the property to the

church to present it to the church. But apparently what they did was they said, "Here's our offering. It's the total price of all the land."

But they had pocketed a bunch for themselves, which was totally fine because giving is free. Well, you can give whatever you want but they were saying, "Look at all this," but they weren't being honest, they were lying. And through the Holy Spirit, Peter looked at Ananias and said, "Why did you lie to us? You weren't lying to us, you're lying to the Holy Spirit," and boom, he died.

So the apostles had to pick up his body and go dig a hole and bury him. Couple hours later, his wife Sapphira came in, Peter asked her, "Did you give all the money?" She's like, "Absolutely." Boom, she died. So by the time the apostles are coming back from digging her husband's grave, they're like, "Great, we got to dig another grave." And word spread about that. You can imagine. Don't go to First Church at Jerusalem and lie about your tithe, you'll die.

Now God doesn't always take a life because of sin or we'd all be dead. But there are different seasons where God is trying to get something done where God does take somebody out of the way because they're living in rebellion and stopping the work that he's trying to do. Paul says in first for Corinthians that some of them have taken communion in an unholy way, and that's why some of them have died.

Because God's trying to get his word out. Friends, I'm here to tell you that sin is deceiving because it distorts what we see. There's a distortion that comes with sin that things look better than what actually is. What I'm about to tell you are five ways that

things get distorted in your life through sin. In different seasons of my life, I've been a living testimony of this as a pastor, I see this over and over and over again.

You may want to write these down, five distortions that happen when you sin. See if you see them play out in your own life. First is this. The Lord's voice is distorted. The Lord's voice is distorted. When God tells you, "Here's what I want you to do," and you don't listen, you don't hear God nearly as clearly anymore.

Some of you wonder, "Why don't I hear God like I used to hear God?" Perhaps it's because God showed you something he wanted you to start doing, stop doing or start doing differently and you said, "Yeah, I'm not dealing with that." And now you don't hear him as well anymore. And you begin to ask the question like the enemy asked of Eve, "Did God really say that?" Because you're not hearing his voice clearly.

When you're not hearing the Lord's voice clearly, this is the second thing that gets distorted, your inner peace is distorted, your inner peace is distorted. You begin to feel icky or you begin to feel distant from God. You can be in church, you can be in small group, you can study the word but God doesn't seem as if he's walking with you like he used to walk with you. Seems a little distant right now. Your inner peace is distorted.

You know what happens next? Your worldview becomes distorted. You become confused about your current situation and it really doesn't make sense. Why am I having to go through this? Why is God not with me right now? How come nobody else is dealing with what I'm dealing with? And once your worldview becomes distorted,

here's what happens, your reality is now distorted.

You become frustrated with your situation, comparison abounds. You're upset that you're going through this, but nobody else is going through this. You become frustrated with God, even mad at God, even demanding of God for what he needs to do, and then guess what? When you get there, then your decision making becomes distorted. Your decision making becomes distorted because you choose wrongly to alleviate your pain.

And when you choose wrongly to alleviate your pain, that's when you sin and then there's a consequence to that. And when you sin and there's a consequence to your sin, that's when you hear the same enemy that tried to get you to not listen to God's word, lie to you and say this, "God doesn't like you anymore, you screwed up. God doesn't love you anymore, you're done. God has no hope for you anymore, that was the end."

When the truth is, hey, listen, you did do wrong and God's convicting you of that, but through repentance and faith in Christ, he will wash you afresh again right now. You say, "Well, how does that play out in my life?" Well, I'm glad you asked. I can think of a hundred examples. Singles, some of you are here and I'll tell you on the authority of God's word, don't date and don't marry somebody that's not a Christian. There weren't amens that are loud enough so I'm going to say it again. If you're a Christian don't date and don't marry somebody that's not a Christian.

Amen.

And some of you are like, "Oh, I don't know. I'm not so sure about that. I mean, I saw it work out with somebody else. They married somebody who wasn't a Christian, they became a Christian later. And by the way, she's hot, he's handsome, he has a lot of money. That pastor doesn't know what he's talking about."

When you go down that way, the Lord's voice is going to be distorted in your life and you're going to say, "Where does it say that in the Bible? I'm not so sure that's totally true." But deep down, your inner peace is going to get distorted and you're going to begin to feel icky and distant from God.

And while you're pursuing this ungodly relationship, you're going to start sensing that God's not walking with you anymore and it's going to frustrate you. And now your worldview's going to become distorted and you're going to be confused about your situation and why is it that God doesn't like me? And if he really liked me, why wouldn't God give this relationship and how come everybody else gets relationships? Which leads to point number four, your reality is now distorted.

Now you're not only frustrated with your situation, but comparison abounds. Hey, they didn't have to do it that way and they seem like they're okay, and all that kind of stuff. Then your decision making becomes distorted and you're like, "Well, forget that. That's what it means to be a Christian. I don't even want to go to church anymore. I'm getting married."

I'm here to tell you on the authority of God's word, you think you're a Christian who's miserable being by yourself, marry a non-Christian and there'll be miserable

times a factor of infinity. And I could walk people up on this platform who married a nonbeliever and they would tell you, "He's telling you the truth, don't do it. Break up today, obey him today. Trust that God has purpose and plan for your life today. They're not it. If they get saved and come back, it's a different story, but keep walking with Jesus now and don't give up on them."

All the married people are like, "Yeah, that's right," so let's talk to you all. Some married people hear the lie that, hey, maybe you married the wrong person. She's not what you thought she was when you got married and he's not what you thought he was when you got married. Did God really say that marriage is permanent? I'm here to tell you on the authority of his word, yes he did.

But see, if you don't have that in your heart, then the Lord's voice becomes distorted. And your inner peace starts feeling distorted because you feel icky and distant from God inside and you look at other people and say, "Well, they seem happy and that spouse seems to be doing things that my spouse will never do. And I wish I would've married somebody more like that."

And now your worldview becomes distorted because you're confused about why your situation doesn't make sense and why it's not working for you, and why doesn't God care about you enough to give you the right kind of spouse. And now your reality's distorted because you're frustrated with your situation and you start comparing to what other people have and you're looking for a way to get out of it, and then your decision making's distorted and you make a decision to alleviate your pain.

Maybe you're immoral with somebody else or you get divorced only to find out that there's more pain in that and having counseled many people that have engaged in adultery or divorced, I've never met somebody that told me, "That was the best decision I've ever made as a Christian." It's never happened, right? And why? Because the enemy can distort and deceive even within a community of believers.

And then there's this lie. Well, God doesn't love you anymore and your life's over now and God doesn't care about you. And look, you're an adulterer or look, you're a divorcee and there's no hope for you. But the truth of the word is no, no, no, you don't understand Jesus Christ died for that. And if you repent and believe and you come back to him, he'll restore you right now.

I mean, do you see how he works even in a community of believers? You're not protected just because you walk into a church building, you have to be aware of what he's doing. Sin deceives even within a community of believers. Let me give you a final point. Obey today because unbelief robs you of rest. Unbelief robs you of rest.

When my kids were babies, some of the biggest arguments I've ever gotten with my wife about 3:00 in the morning when our kids were babies like, "You go take care of them, you go change their diaper." I mean, I like being woke up in the middle of the night, frustrated, tired. Like, are we ever going to get sleep? Can't wait till my kids get older. Then my kids get older and now they want to talk after I go to sleep. I'm like, "I'm never going to sleep."

I mean, we need rest, but spiritually we need the same kind of rest. And notice

what he says in verses 16 through 18. For who provoked him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he angry for 40 years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell the wilderness?

And to whom did he swear that they would not enter rest, but were those who were disobedient? And here's what he's asking. He's asking three questions. Who rebelled after hearing God and seeing all he did? Well, it was Israel, his people. Who was God angry with for 40 years? It was his people. Whom did God promise would not enter his rest? It was people. Why? Because of disobedience.

You can't take a shortcut on disobedience and experience rest with God. And if there's anything I see in the Christian community that we need more of, it's rest. If you don't have rest, Christian life gets really, really hard. In the Psalms it talks about how God works for his beloved even while they sleep.

I mean, if you're walking with the Lord and if you're abiding his word, he says, "Ask me whatever you wish, it'll be done for you." Isn't it good to know when we're walking in obedience, we can ask God for whatever we need and he's going to provide it? Hey Lord, I need your help on this and I'm going to go to bed while you do the work.

I mean, there have been so many times in the last year and a half, we've been trying to acquire these two different buildings and I'm done thinking about it, Lord, you have all the answers, you know the day we're going to close and I just trust you and I'm tired. So work it all out, and he is. There's peace in that, there's rest in that.

If you don't have the rest of God, then you have to hold onto something. Your job, your money, your finances, your vacation, your family, whatever it is. You got to make it work, you got to control it all. And there's no peace and rest in that. That's why Jesus says, "Come to me all of you who are weary and heavy laden, I'll give you rest. Rest for your weary soul. Take my yolk upon you and learn from me for I'm gentle and humble in heart."

Friends, obedience is a way to bring rest for your soul. It's nourishment to you. So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief. Unbelief robs you of your joy. Unbelief robs you of rest. Well, could God really do something with my life if I try... Could he? He designed you for destiny and greatness and your obedience gets you one step closer to that.

Faith is being bold enough to believe that if you take the next step of faith, that God will show up and that God will do what only God can do. And yet too often we hear a message like this and we think to ourself, "Will I remember all those four points? I'm not sure I remember them all." That's not what this message is about. I don't care if you remember any of the four points.

Here's what this message is about. Where in your life has God tapping on your heart saying, "This is what I'm saying to you. This is what I want to change in you. This is what you've been pushing me away from and today it stops because I want to give you peace, and I'm showing you this because I love you."

Oftentimes we end our message and we sing a song or two and we send you

home, but today's going to be a little different. You're welcome to do that today, there's no problem with that. But I think God wants to do some spiritual surgery on several of us today, he certainly did in our first service. Because there's some of you here who heard the voice of the Lord today and it's like that's you, I'm talking to you.

And I think it would be spiritual malpractice on my part to just send you away and say, "Hey, go be well, be well fed, have a great day, you are loved." Because I think there's some of you that God wants to heal and deliver and save right here in our community today. So what I'm going to do on both campuses, I'm just going to invite you to stand.

And as you're standing, I'm just going to invite our elders on both campuses to come forward. And here's what I'd like to do today. As we sing this closing song, if God's talking to you, I'm just going to invite you forward because there's men and women up here that just want to pray over you, that love you, that care about you, that want to see God move in your heart.

There's going to be no judgment here, there's none. All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But I'm telling you right now, there's power in the Lord and he wants to heal you today. You say, "Why do I have to come forward?" Well, you don't have to come forward, but there is something about taking that step of obedience where you say, "You know what? God's talking to me and I'm not going to run out the building. I'm going to run to Jesus and I'm going to let him do spiritual surgery on my heart."

So I'm just going to pray for you. And as this song starts, I'm just going to invite anybody here who says, "That's me, the Lord's talking to me, I need to get right with the Lord." Maybe you don't even want anybody to pray for you, you just want to come to the altar and kneel and say, "Lord, I heard you today, do a work in my heart." So would you pray with me?

Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, honor and praise for who you are. And Lord, we pray in this moment you would do an amazing work. Lord, we believe that you are greater than Moses, that you came and died on the cross and rose from the grave and that you want to offer life to anybody who's here, that there's some here who need to repent of their sin and trust Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and savior.

Lord, there's others who have been disobedient because they put their job ahead of you. There's others who have been disobedient and have been craving evil in their life. There's others who have been looking to be immoral that are about ready to jump off the cliff of immorality, that you're saying, "Nope," today's your chance, get right right now.

Some of you are single, some of you are married. There's some of you that have said in your heart, "I don't believe God can actually physically heal me," and he's telling you today he can. Lord, we come to your altar today because we believe at your altar, there's healing and grace and mercy.

And just as the prodigal son was welcomed home, Lord, I pray that as everybody

comes today, that even as they begin to walk down the aisles on both of our campuses, Lord, that they would experience a measure of your grace that they've never seen before because of their desire to start afresh with you, and that they would understand obedience is simply walking in your truth, not committing to you that they'll never do something again. So Holy Spirit, we invite your work to come in this place. Do what only you can do. We give you all the glory, all the honor and all the praise in Jesus' name, amen and...