

So Jesus, thank you for being our one thing, our main thing, and our only thing. Holy Spirit, we invite you in to touch our hearts. You see, I want to start by just simply telling you three simple stories. The first one is about King David. King David is a man after God's own heart. David loves God. He follows God. He walks with God. His heart is turned towards God. And as the king of Israel, he made sure God's kingdom was able to come and that his will was done. But one season when the kings went off at war, for some reason, David stayed home in his palace. While he was supposed to be off at war fulfilling his purpose, living out his destiny, being on a mission with God, tending his garden, he decided to stay home in the comfort and the convenience of his palace.

Now, we don't know if he was tired. We don't know if he was weary. We don't know if he was bored. We just know he wasn't where he was supposed to be. And day after day, he saw this beautiful woman, and every day, he looked at her. And the more he looked at her, the more the lust in his heart began to grow because lust grows in the eye. And eventually, that lust grew so much in him that his flesh became stronger than his spirit, and he took this woman, he slept with her. And he thought everything was fine until she sent word to say, "Hey, I'm pregnant." David panics. He's afraid. He doesn't know what to do. He's got to take care of this mess. So he ends up having her husband killed. And just about the time, he thinks he's covered up his mess and everything is resolved, he's free and clear in his mind, the Prophet Nathan comes to him and says, "Hey, David, I want to tell you a story."

He says, "You see, in a certain town there were two men. There was one man who was incredibly wealthy and lived in luxury, and he had large flocks and herds. And there was another man who had nothing except one small lamb. And he loved this lamb so much, he treated it like a child in the family. And one day, a traveler came to town and the rich man wanted to throw a banquet for the traveller. But instead of using his own flocks and herds, he took the one lamb of this one man, killed it, and served it at the feast." And as David hears this story, it says that -- he has this righteous anger rise up. He gets all riled up. And he says, "That man deserves to die for what he has done." And Nathan looks right at him and he says, "You are that man." The Lord God says, "I gave you a kingdom and a family and wealth and riches and honor. And if all that wasn't enough, I would have given you even more. And yet you took this one wife from this one man all he had and did what you did."

And David's response is to hit his knees And he says, "I have sinned against the Lord." He doesn't justify. He doesn't explain. He doesn't make excuses. He doesn't try to push it away. "I have sinned against the Lord." And in brokenness and humility, he cries out, "God, restore to me the joy of your salvation. God, do not take your spirit from me. God, cleanse me. God, I was wrong. God, I am sorry. God, I am broken. God, all I want is you."

The second story is the story of Peter. You see, long before Peter became a disciple of Jesus, Peter was a fisherman. And one day, Jesus came walking along the shore after a long night of Peter and his guys out fishing, and he sees Peter, and he says, "Hey Peter, can I borrow your boat?" Peter says, "Sure." Jesus gets in the front of the boat. They push out a little bit, and Jesus teaches the crowd for an extended period of time. And after he's done teaching the crowd on shore, he looks at Peter, and he says, "Hey Peter, put your boat out a little further from shore and let your nets down for a large catch." And Peter looks at Jesus and says,

"Jesus, you're a carpenter. You don't know anything about fishing. This isn't the time of day you fish. This isn't where you fish. And besides all that, we've cleaned up everything. We've put all the nets and the tackle away. Jesus, this isn't really a good idea. But because you say so, I will do it. And he pushes his boat off from shore, let's down the net.

It's so full of fish, it begins to break, and Peter hits his knees, and says, "Away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." In that moment, God's kindness led him to repentance. And Jesus says, "Don't be afraid. From now on, you won't fish for fish. You're going to fish for men." And in that moment, Peter left his entire fishing business behind to go and follow Jesus. The third story is a story of Ephesian sorcerers. You see, when Jesus resurrected from the grave, the gospel began to spread in word and in power, and it went to cities and nations. And most people rejected it, but many received it. And when it got to Ephesus, there were a group of sorcerers. People who spent their lives practicing the demonic, living in witchcraft. And when they heard the gospel, they were cut to the heart. And it says they openly confessed their evil deeds, and they came into a public place, and brought all of their scrolls, and all of their idols, and all of their black magic, and they put it in a big pile, and they lit it on fire.

It says it was worth 50,000 drachmas. A drachma was one-day wage. The average man in his life works 10,000 days. So they burned five lifetimes of wealth, of demonic scrolls and idols and black magic, openly confessing their evil deeds, and they held the name of the Lord Jesus in high regard. I don't know about you, but I want my heart to be soft and responsive to Jesus like that. And I tell you those three stories because those three stories beautifully demonstrate our twelfth and final practice, the practice called confession and repentance. You see, confession and repentance is more caught than it is taught. It's more seen than it is heard. It is modeled and experienced.

And if you want to know what confession and repentance looks like, you're ready for a really spiritual answer? You just know. You just know. You just know when David says I've sinned against the Lord with no excuses and hits his knees. You just know when Peter says, because you say so Lord, I will do it. You just know when sorcerers openly confess their evil deeds and light their past on fire. You just know. And out of all the twelve practices that we've walked to maybe, just maybe confession and repentance is the most important one that we will talk about. You see, for a year, we've been in a series. A year, a year. This is mid-November. We started this the first week of January. For a year, we've been in a series called A Different Way, Do What Jesus Did, and we've spent an entire year Just saying that if we want to do the things that Jesus did, we have to first do the things that Jesus did. That if we want to live the life Jesus lived, we have to first live the life Jesus lived.

If I want to do what he did on the spot, I have to first do what he did behind the scenes. And so we've spent a year talking about, what does it mean to be a disciple, a follower, a learner, a student, one who becomes like the one they're following. We've talked about Jesus's practices and his habits and his lifestyles and his disciplines that Jesus came to teach us, to show us, not just what the father was like, not just what life in the kingdom was like, but what it meant to be fully human and fully alive. And we've been talking all year about arranging and rearranging our life around Jesus, and the way that he lived and the way that he's trying to teach us to live a way that is good and true and right. And we've said all year that if you want to do the things

that Jesus did, like, have peace in chaos, and joy in every circumstance, and hope in the midst of despair, and love in your relationships, and this deep connection with God and the ability to forgive other people, no matter what if you want to do all those things on the spot. In your life, you have to first do the things that Jesus did behind the scenes.

And so these are the twelve practices that we've just methodically walked through together. If you're new and you're joining us, it's been a long journey. And you really get to see the heart of who we are as a people, and if you've been here, you've walked through all of these. And what I want you to see is that we started with Scripture, and we're ending with confession and repentance. Scripture shows us what the different way is like. Confession and repentance is how we move from our way to the different way. Scripture and only Scripture can show you the narrow road with the small gate that leads to life. Confession and repentance is the only way you get off the wide road with the broad gate that leads to destruction, to get on the narrow road with the small gate that leads to life. Scripture shows us what the different way is like. Confession and repentance is how we actually step onto that different way, and begin living the life that Jesus offers us.

And you say confession and repentance. Okay, what does that mean? Big words. There's a gravity to it. There's a weightiness to it. There is. Confession and repentance is simply agreeing and acting with God. So confession and repentance is, it's agreeing and acting with God. Confession is agreement with God. It's coming into agreement with God. It's this sense of humility and honesty and vulnerability. It's taking things out of the darkness and into the light. It's acknowledging the reality of who I am and what I've done and what God says is true and is good and is right. In fact, confession actually means to acknowledge joyfully and willingly and openly. Just agreeing with God. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness. When we confess our sins that we've missed the mark that we're off, that what we're doing or how we acted or how we behaved or how we think is wrong, it's broken, it's not right, and we agree that what God says is good and true and right.

If I will confess, it's how I receive the forgiveness he's already given me. Forgiveness is a decision God has already made on the cross 2,000 years ago. Confession is how I open myself up to receive that reality. I come into agreement that I was off and I needed your forgiveness. That I was doing my way and I want your way, and so I open myself up to receive that which God Has already given me. Or how about therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. When we confess and we acknowledge and we agree with God and we bring things out of the darkness into the light, there's this profound sense of healing that takes place. I think there is so much sickness in our bodies, in our minds, in our emotions, in our heart, in our soul, in our relationships, in our spirits because we don't do what Scripture tells us to do. You say I confess my sins to God. Great. God says confess your sins to each other so that you might be healed.

Why? Because God opposes the proud. He gives grace to the humble, and there's a humility, it being broken, like the Ephesian elders openly confessing their evil deeds, "I was a sorcerer. I was lost, lonely, and broken. I've found Jesus and my life has changed." And then repentance. That's confession. What's repentance? Repentance is acting with God. Repentance is literally

changing my thinking. You change your thinking, it'll change your living because your thoughts lead your life. And repentance is literally to turn from something towards something else. That's literally what it means. It means, I was going this way, repentance literally means, but I've turned, and I'm now going this way. Repentance from dead works and of faith towards God. It's not just feelings and emotions and wishful thinking. No, it's like actually, I was going this way the dead works, this way of destruction, but I'm turning towards God. Repentance is an actual acting with God. Confession is agreeing with God that this is the way that's right. Repentance is actually acting with God and turning and aligning my life with that which I have agreed is good and true and right.

It's why it says repent then and turn to God so that your sins might be wiped out. The times of refreshing may come from the Lord. Repentance is turning from the world towards God, and every time I do, there is a refreshing that takes place. There is the current of grace. There is the stream of love. There is the springs of living water that refresh my soul. This way is weary and burdensome. This way is easy and light. And when I return, there is a refreshment that takes place. From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent For the kingdom of heaven is at hand." You realize Jesus only had one message. And it wasn't repent angry, harsh, religious. It was repent. My kindness is leading you towards repentance. The way you're on is heavy and weary and burdensome, but the kingdom of heaven is at hand, within reach. It's right.

"It's one step away," is what he is saying. The kingdom of heaven is one step away. If you will turn from that towards this, you can access and grab and bring a hold of the realities of heaven into your life and the here and now. And repentance is how we get into the kingdom, but repentance is also how we live in the kingdom. A lot of us repent enough to get in the kingdom, but not enough to live in the kingdom. We repent enough for the forgiveness of our sins but not enough to experience eternal or abundant life, if you will, knowing God in the here and now. We repent enough to become Christians, but not enough to become disciples. And so we miss the very life that God offers us. In fact, this verse that we've been using in season four of A Different Way, then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me in the gospel will say that what good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul. Can you see it? Confession and repentance. Confession denying myself, coming into agreement with God denying my opinions, and my perspectives, and my feelings, and my beliefs to come into agreement with what he says is good, true and right regardless of how I feel and take up his cross. There's actually an action. There's an agreement. And then there's an action that takes place to follow him. And I love this that if we're going to come to him and we're going to follow him, we're going to have to live a life of confession and repentance. In other words, confession and repentance is how you get into the kingdom. Confession and repentance is how I live in the kingdom. This is not a one and done. A lot of us think confession and repentance is you're a sinner in need of a savior. You did it, you're in. No, Jesus says that's how you come to him, but now to live with him is a constant lifestyle of confessing and repenting, agreeing and acting.

I can only come to him with an agreement and an action, and I can only walk with him with agreement and action. You see, confession and repentance has two dynamics to it. It has sin, confession and repentance, and revelation, confession, and repentance. Sin, confession, and repentance is the one we're familiar with. I'm walking this way. I'm living my life and through the Holy Spirit, conviction, the word of God, the people of God. Somehow, something in my life is exposed that there is sin in my life. I'm living contrary to how God created me to live in his kingdom, and so confession would be an agreement that I have been a judgmental person. Repentance is, I'm now going to start practicing blessing people in my life. Confession would be I'm walking along and I realize I've been disobeying my parents. Repentance is I'm going to start obeying my parents regardless of what they ask me to do. I'm walking along and I realize I don't do the good I know I'm supposed to do.

Confession, repentance is, I actually start doing the good I know I'm supposed to do. Does this make sense? There's an agreement but there's an action. That's the sin side of confession and repentance. But then there's the revelation, confession, and repentance. Revelation is something you didn't know. It's something that was hidden from you. You had no idea it existed, but once it was revealed to you, everything changes. And you're walking along in your life and you think everything's fine, and all of a sudden, something you didn't know was revealed, through the Holy Spirit, through God's word, through the people of God. All of a sudden, you have this revelation and you realize my whole life I thought I was a sinner just barely saved by grace confession. But now I realize I'm actually a beloved son or daughter in whom the Father is well pleased. So now I'm going to live like it. Action. I'm walking along, and I thought, man, I always thought there was going to be this distance between me and God, but now I have learned that I can be as close to God as I want to be confession, and now I'm going to live like I can actually be close to God. Action. Make sense?

I lived my whole life thinking I had to do it. I had to make it all happen, but then I've now realized his divine power has given me everything I need for life and godliness. So I'm going to start acting like His divine power is actually making me godly and giving me life. I've spent my whole life thinking I just had to be a Christian and go to church, but now I have a revelation that I can be a disciple of Jesus, and so I've come into agreement with that and now I'm going to act and actually start living like I'm a disciple. That's revelation. Does that make sense? So there's the sin side and there's the revelation side. They're both incredibly important in this journey. And if you've been tracking with us for this year, you're probably sitting here and you're like, hang on a second. The whole thing you've told us all year is that if I want to do the things that Jesus did I have to do the things that Jesus did. But Jesus was perfect and he's the living word of God. So he didn't have any sin to confess and repent of, and he's the word of God so he didn't need anything revealed to him. You're right.

He didn't have any sin and he didn't need any revelation, but he shows us the heart posture of how we're created to live with an ongoing dynamic practice of confession and repentance. You see, when Jesus was heading to the cross, he had the last supper with his disciples. After that was over, he went into the garden of Gethsemane with them. He knows he's about to go to the cross. He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with Him and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." Confession. Acknowledgement. Agreement with God about what is real and

what is actually taking place in the moment. Stay here and keep watch with me. Going a little further, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me." Yet not as I will but as you. Repentance.

Jesus shows us the heart of confession, joyful, willing acknowledgement to both God and his godly relationships. And the heartbeat of repentance which is not my will but yours. Not my thought, God, but Your thoughts. Not my desire, God, but your desires. Not my feelings, God, but your feelings. Not my kingdom, God, but your kingdom, God. God, not my will, but your will. Not what I want, God, But what you want, God. That's the heartbeat of repentance. This honest acknowledgement, agreement, but an acting to say, not my will, but yours. So can I ask you a real honest question? This year as we've gone through this journey, has this been the heart posture you've taken? Joyful acknowledgement, agreement about the realities in your life? Vulnerability, humility, honesty to both God and others with this spirit of not my will, but Yours. The question I've been asking you all year is who are you becoming and who do you want to become?

Have you become anyone different in a year? Have you grown? Have you changed? Have there been any points along a year of your life that most of us only get 80 or less of? Where you have said, Not my will, but yours be done. Because Jesus shows us how to live. IF we want to do what he did when He went to the cross and forgave the world and gave up his spirit and resurrected with hope, then we got to do what he did. Have this kind of heart posture in our life. In fact, this is why Jesus says, "Pay attention to what you hear." By your own standard of measurement, that is to the extent that you study spiritual truth and apply godly wisdom, it will be measured to you and you will be given even greater ability to respond. And more will be given to you besides.

For whoever has a teachable heart to him, more understanding will be given, and whoever does not have a yearning for truth, even what he has, will be taken away from him. You say what does that mean? Here's what it means. What have you done with what we've talked about this year? Jesus says, "Pay attention." Another translation says, "Consider carefully." Have you paid attention and considered carefully what God has been speaking to you this year? Have you studied the spiritual truth and applied that godly wisdom to your life? Have you had a teachable heart and a yearning for truth? And if so, the grace of God is giving you ability. This internal transformation you're experiencing spiritual formation, the process of being formed into the image of Jesus to become a person of love, or have you just kind of let it all go? See, I want to be the kind of person that has a soft and responsive heart to the Lord. I don't want to be like the Israelites when God calls them, they are stubborn and stiff-necked.

Stubborn, obstinate, difficult, resistant, stiff-necked. It's a weird phrase, like, what does that mean? Stiff-necked means unrepentant. My neck is so stiff that I can only look in this direction, and I refuse to have a soft and flexible neck and allow God to lead me where he wants me to go. I don't want to be stubborn and stiff-necked. In fact, Jesus says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Listen to me. You listen with your ears, but you hear with your heart. And when I hear with my heart, I'm hearing to obey. Did you listen with your ears through these 12 practices, or did you hear with your heart? See, here's what I want to say to you. You are exactly

where you want to be spiritually. Like, right now, in this very moment of your life, wherever you are, you are exactly where you want to be spiritually.

Your level of maturity, your level of discipleship, your level of becoming like Jesus, you're exactly where you want to be. And I know when I say that it's almost like this, like, whoa, hang on a second And we have all the reasons and all the excuses and all the justification and all the blame and all the why it's not, and my spouse does this, and it doesn't allow me to do that, and my children require this from me, So I can't do that. And my parents do this and I have this job that won't let me do that. And I have all these bills that I have to pay, all these different kinds of things, and we say it's all their fault that I'm not where I say I want to be but none of them have authority over your heart. You've been given a free will by God. So the paradox is this, most of those things you've chosen, you've chosen that job, you've chosen to buy those things, and therefore, you have to pay for them. You've chosen to bring those activities and commitments into your life. You probably chose to marry that person, or have those children, like, most of those things you've chosen your life so that's your responsibility.

But even the ones that you didn't still don't have authority over your heart. Because no one has authority over your mind or your heart or your spirit except you. He's given you free will which means your life is arranged exactly how you want it to be arranged. Your life is ordered exactly how you want it to be ordered. And the moment we take responsibility for that reality, that's when we can actually get where we say we want to go. You're exactly where you want to be spiritually. You say, no, I'm not. But the verse we used all years train yourself to be godly. Don't wait around to be godly, don't hope to be godly, don't just assume one day poof magic will happen and you will be godly. Hope is not a strategy. Hope is a great heart posture but it is not a strategy. Train yourself to be godly. Have you been training yourself? Have you been practicing and disciplining? Why? Because you don't like where you are and you want to get somewhere else, and so you've been working on it.

Ask any coach, any instructor, any teacher that trains or instructs or teaches anybody, they will tell you people are exactly where they want to be. Why don't I train? Because I really just don't want to. Why don't I put in the work? Because I really just don't want to. Why don't I do extra? I really just don't want to. The analogy we've used all year is running a marathon. You can't start at zero and run a marathon, but you can put on your shoes and you can walk to the mailbox the next day. And the day after that, you can take a walk around the block. Day after that you can take two walks around the block. Day after that you can go for a one-mile walk. Day after that you can go for a two-mile walk. Day after that you can go for a one-mile run, right? Okay, so have you had a plan to train to be godly? Because if you don't have a plan, you know you're not training. See, I think a lot of us like the idea of running a marathon more than we like running a marathon. We like the idea of being a disciple of Jesus more than being a disciple of Jesus.

I like the idea of being godly more than I actually like being godly. And so I'm exactly where I want to be spiritually because if I didn't want to be here, I would train and I would move. Listen to me, we have professional athletes in our church that their bodies are like a work of art. Why does my body not look like their body? Because at the end of the day, I just don't want to do it. There are professional musicians in our church that can play amazing music. And I will tell

you all day long that I want to play the keys. Why don't I play the keys? What's stopping me? Me. Because at the end of the day, I just don't want to practice. There are so many people in our church that are bilingual. I wish I could speak another language. Why can't I speak another language?

Because at the end of the day, I just don't want to do it. So I'm exactly where I want to be. I asked a young leader in our church about halfway through this series, hey, tell me what you're hearing. Tell me what you're seeing. Tell me what the young adults are experiencing in this journey. And he said, "Well, I think the reality is this is that we don't want it as much as we think we do. I've super appreciated the honesty. We don't want it as much as we think we do. We say we want it, but at the end of the day, do we really? I mean, just think about this, like, if you wanted to do these practices, you could. If you wanted to memorize Scripture and meditate on it, you would. If you wanted to Sabbath, you would. You'd start arranging your life that way. If you wanted simplicity, you would actually have gotten rid of some things in your life. If you wanted community, you'd move towards it. If you wanted to be generous, you would have given something away. If you wanted to fast, you actually would like just deny yourself some food in that moment. Does that make sense? Like, if you wanted to do it, you would. But here's a great question for you just think through.

This year have you made it a priority to be here on Sunday every single week as we've gone through this series? And if not, on the weeks that you missed, did you go back and watch online to catch up? And every week when we did one of these, did you do the practice plan that I made so accessible for every person, knowing we're all from different places and different dynamics, at different places. So I tried to make, did you do everyone that we talked about? If not, that's okay. I just want to help you understand. Then you are exactly where you want to be spiritually, which is actually very free. Because if I can believe and acknowledge and admit that I'm exactly where I want to be spiritually, then now I know I can get exactly where I want to go. But I will never get where I want to go until I first take responsibility for where I am, and it is no one else's fault. It doesn't matter what childhood you experienced. It doesn't matter what your spouse is like, It doesn't matter what your parents are doing. It doesn't matter what job you have. It doesn't matter what sickness in your body. It doesn't matter what hardship. It doesn't matter what circumstances or situations. I can give you a thousand examples in Scripture.

You are where you are because this is where you want to be. Repentance starts where excuses end. And you can make change or you can make excuses but you can't make both. And I know some of you are like here you're like about to panic in your chair. You're like, I am not where I want to be spiritually. I'm doing my best and I'm not where I was but I'm not where I want to go. Then you're exactly where you want to be. You're not where you were and you're not yet where you're going so you have a vision which means you are a person in progress, a person in process. You are exactly where you want to be, which is exactly where I want to be. I am not where I was. I am not where I'm going. I am a person in process, a person in progress. It's why Paul says, "By the grace of God, I am what I am and his grace to me was not without effect." No, I worked harder than all of them yet not I but the grace of God that was within me. We can't change ourselves but God's grace can. And when I agree and act with God's confession and repentance, his grace starts to change me from the inside out.

This isn't just to get in the kingdom. This is to live in the kingdom and become a person of love. See, the whole thing. We've said this whole year is that vision intent means, right? How do you change? You have to have a vision. You have to have intent. You have to be devoted with tenacity and effort. Then you have to have means, next steps, opportunities, pathways. And all year, my job was to cast vision for you and try to equip you with means. But I can't touch your intent. I can't touch your intent, your tenacity, your desire, your devotion, what I actually want my life to look like. We've casted a vision. Do you have one? And there are means everywhere. Have you been using them? But the real question is, do you have intent? See, I think when intent develops, the means will appear. Remember that old saying that says when the student is ready, the teacher will appear. When intent develops, the means will appear.

There are so many means we present to you every week that I honestly don't even think your spirit hears. They just go right through you. Why? Because there's not intent there. So you don't even notice the means. And I think a lot of us have good intentions but no intent. And there's a big difference. Good intentions, I have good intentions to look like some of my friends in this church, and to play the piano, and to speak another language. I don't have intent though. I wish I could do it. I'd like to do it. I'd like to talk about it but I don't actually have intent to make the effort, to agree and act, to turn from how I live my life to a different way of living my life. Fair? See, if you can catch this. A king rules his kingdom through words and actions. I've tried to teach you this the last couple years. A king rules his kingdom through words and actions. What he says and what he does? He has a domain. He's a king. He has a will. And whatever submits to his words and to his actions is a part of his kingdom, his domain.

Because it's responsive to his will that he expresses through his words and through his actions. Okay. Well, you have a kingdom, a place where you have free will. And your kingdom is your body. If you're a student, it might be your room. If you have a house, it's your house. If you have a business, it's your business. If you have a place that you tend to garden, it's your garden. You have a domain, a place where you have free will. And through your words and your actions, your will is expressed into that space and it is done. Confession and repentance. Confession is words, repentance is action. Confession and repentance then is how I submit and surrender my kingdom to his. Confession and repentance, words and action is how I submit and surrender my kingdom to his.

The reason confession and repentance is such an important practice is because confession and repentance is where I take off my crown and I lay it at his feet. And I say, your kingdom come. Your will be done, in this body, in this room, in this home, in this business, in this church, in this life. Your kingdom through words and actions I rule my kingdom what I've been given authority and domain, and no one has the ability to violate your will. God won't even do it. So when I confess and repent, it is how I submit and surrender my life to come into alignment with his kingdom through agreement and action. That's how you get saved, right? If we confess with our mouth, that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart's action that God raised him from the dead, we shall be saved? It's why it says that at the name of Jesus, every tongue will confess and every knee will bow, words, actions. At the end of all things, the only question is, is do I want to in this life acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and bow my knee to his supremacy and say, not my will but yours, not my kingdom but yours.

Every time I confess and repent, I'm deciding I am not the king you are. And every time I refuse to confess and repent, I am saying I am the king, you are not. I am the king and you are not. I'm the king and you are not. You take off your crown and you submit to my words and my actions. This is why it matters. If you're where you want to be spiritually, then it also means that we as a church are right where we want to be spiritually. Because we're the body of Christ, and we've been assembled together, as in a sense, one person. And if we don't like where we are then we have the free will to change that. We're the kind of church that you want it to be. Because if we wanted it to change what we would do, confess and repent. We would pursue community and serve and give and invite and create culture and live on mission and move forward in our own life.

So we're exactly where we want to be, is this the kind of church we want to be. And some of you are like no, no, no, this is not the church. I want to go further. And some of you are like we've gone too far. I need us to slow down. And while we each as individuals have our own thoughts and feelings together corporately, we are exactly where we want to be. So if you wanted to move forward, then you don't worry about anybody else. You just make sure your words and your actions are submitting and surrendering to the lordship of Jesus because as the more and more of us as individuals live that way, the body starts to live that way. Is this who we want to be? See, my heart for you in this whole series is that in some way, say, perform, you will be cut to the heart. I've said it in January, February, saying that now here is where we're ramping up. Oh, I want you to be cut to the heart.

I mean, when the first gospel was preached in the name of Jesus was declared, it says when the people heard this, they were cut to the heart. And they said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, watch how we do." Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized. They acted. The name of Jesus was lifted up, they were cut to the heart. When you're cut to the heart, how do you know? You just know. Why? Because your immediate responses to confess and repent, to agree and to act. It's not just agreeing, it's acting. And every time we confess and repent, there is wave of forgiveness and a wave of freedom that is released into our life. Every time you confess and repent, there is wave of character and a wave of power that is released into your life. Every time you confess and repent, you save yourselves from a corrupt generation, a wide road with a broad gate that leads to a destruction, and you move your life towards the roads, small gate that leads to life. There is an action though that takes place. It's not just words. I'm actually moving my life which is what a different way actually looks like, and so the question that I have for you is just, have you been cut to the heart at all of this year? I cut to the heart of the ongoing unrepentant sin in your life. Have you been cut to the heart over the lack of personal holiness that you have? Have you been cut to the heart over the thoughts you think, where the words you say? You've been cut to the heart over the pride of life and the cravings of the flesh and the lust of the eyes. Have you been cut to heart over your addictions in the way you treat you people and how you live your life have cut to the heart over your lack of awareness, of God's goodness and his glory, and you're like has there been any level of cut to the heart that has caused you to agree and to act with God.

Because confession and repent isn't just salvation. It's kingdom love for you. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fool's despise, wisdom, and discipline, the fear of the Lord, all one wonder reverence, respect, his grandeur, his greatness. The fear of the Lord should be the thing that causes us to confess and repent. Because you say so, Lord, I will do it. I have sinned against the Lord. I am openly confessing my evil deeds and burning my past. I don't even want to sell it because I don't want anyone else to have access to it. I'm burning it. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. It says, knowledge, interactive relationship. When I have the fear of the Lord, I know what a different way is, why I should live a different way, and how to live a different way. But when I don't have the fear of the Lord, I'm a fool and I despise discipline. What have we been saying? Discipline is doing what I can do now so I can do what I can't do now later.

Fools don't care. Fools do what they want, when they want, how they want. They don't care at all about the future and who they're becoming. But people who fear the Lord care deeply about who I'm going to become so they have discipline. And they do what they can do now so they can become the kind of person that can do what they can't do now but want to do later. So they're moving their life exactly where they want to be. So here's your Practice Plan for Practice 12. By grace and through faith, confess your sins to someone, and then, share with them your plan to repent. Remember, you don't have to do any of these. I've left them all open to you, but what I'm trying to show you today is you're exactly where you want to be spiritually. So by grace, through faith, by grace, it is the grace of confession and repentance opens us up to the grace of God. By grace, by the power of God working within me that I can't do on my own, and through faith, not feelings, being sure of what I hope for, certain of what I do not see, confess your sins to someone that you trust and share with them your plan to repent. Because often we're quick to confess, but we have no plan to change. You say, what does that look like? Confession would be, hey, I've been looking at things I shouldn't look at. Repentance is, and I'm going to delete those accounts. Confession is, hey, I've realized I love money. Repentance is, and I'm going to start tithing. Confession is, I worship the idol of time. Time is my God, but I'm going to repent and join a serve team. Does that make sense to you?

When was the last time you did that? I've told you that every Thursday, we come in this room and we walk through all the slides. And when I got to this Practice Plan, I felt like I took the breath away from our staff that was in here. Like, we're really going to ask people that. And it made me really sad to be honest with you because this is one of the greatest gifts God gives you in your life, is the ability to come into agreement with him and act with him in a way that opens my life up for his grace to change me from the inside out. One of the greatest gifts that God gives you is to get you off the wide road, the broad gate that's weary and burdensome, and get you on the narrow road with the small gate that leads to life. And it's his kindness that leads you to repentance, and this shouldn't be an awkward, hard, uncomfortable thing for us. And if you don't want to, if you're instantly, like, I'm not doing. Okay, great. But why?

Just ask yourself, just why? Spend a little bit of time contemplating and reflecting, why, why don't I want to do that? What am I afraid of? What am I worried about? Why don't I think it's important? Why am I finding myself resistant to it, like, by grace, through faith? Listen, a lot of us think confession and repentance. Some of you are literally sitting here and you're like, I don't need, I did this. I did it 20 years ago when I got saved. Yes, you're a sinner in need of a savior.

So you confessed and repent. But now, you're a beloved son or daughter in need of discipline. So you confess and repent. Or you're a believer in need of training. So you confess and repent. Or I'm a Christian in need of discipleship. So I confess and repent. It's not only how I get in the kingdom, it's how I live in the kingdom, it's how I advance in the kingdom. Both sin, missing the mark, and revelation, things I do not know. If this is like something that's like totally foreign in your life, it means you think you know everything.

Because you don't ever need to change because you have the perfect course of life, and you know all things. Then you're God and he's not. I mean, look at this. When Jesus says, from that time -- now, if you've been with us, I have never done a slide after a Practice Plan. Fair? That's how important these next three verses are. From that time, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When did that time end? When did that time end? From that time, that was his message. When did he stop preaching that message? That's still the only message he preaches. Change your mind, change your direction, change your life. Come into agreement with me because the kingdom of heaven is one step away. More of heaven is one step away. It's at hand, it's in reach. It's one step, it's right, it's right. It's not way, it's not, it's right here.

But you have to agree and have to act to position my heart, my will, take off my crown through words and actions. Your kingdom, not mine. "Therefore, go and make disciples, the resurrected Jesus says, "Of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything, I've commanded you. Make disciples and teach them to obey." Make disciples, learners, followers, students, those who become like the one they're following. Help people count the cost and consider their way, and decide if that's the way they want to keep going, or if they want to take the way of Jesus. But if I have chosen the way of Jesus, then I'm learning to obey, which is confession and repentance. Obedience is confession and repentance walked out. That's all it is. Obedience is confession and repentance walked out. And if I say I'm his disciple, that means I'm saying, you know, what is good and true and right.

So when you tell me to turn this way, every time I don't, I'm saying you don't know what is good and true is right. You know what is bad and you tell lies and you know what's wrong. And I know what is good and true and right. So I actually have to decide at the point of confession and repentance is, do I believe Jesus knows what he's talking about? Because if not, there's nothing I can say. There's nothing your friends can say. There's nothing the world can say that's going to move you. If you don't think Jesus knows what he's talking about and he's worth following, then you'll never live a life of confession, repentance, obedience, because you think you're the king and you know better. And this is why God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. It's like we are living in direct opposition to God because we're trying to make our name above his name. But when I'm humble, I confess and repent, and there's grace that flows through my life. And Jesus says, if you love me, you will obey what I command.

Listen, we confess and repent, not out of duty, not out of fear, not out of religion, not out of obligation, but because I love Jesus. And I love Jesus because Jesus loved me first. We love because he first loved us. I was lost, lonely, and broken on a road, wide road, broad gate, on destruction. I was blind. I couldn't see nothing. And his kindness led me to repentance. It

opened my eyes. It turned me this way. It's now his love that is giving me love back in my heart to him. And I want to love him. And he says, if I will obey, if I will confess and repent, and do the things that he invites me to live a different way, that's how I show love for him. And paradoxically, his love, the love that he wants from us is actually his love for us because he knows this is what's good for us. So confession and repentance isn't hellfire and brimstone. It isn't weeping, gnashing of teeth, heavy, and this dark religious gravity.

It's God's love in your life. It's God's love in your life. It's God's love in your life. By grace through faith, confess your sins to someone because you want to move where God is inviting you to go and share with them your plan to actually repent. Don't just say it, do it. Confession and repentance is how we actually live a different way, which was the entire series. If you finish this year and there's nothing different in your life, you're exactly where you want to be spiritually. And here's the thing, how will we know if you're living a different way? How will you know if you're living a different way? You'll just know. Because confession and repentance is proved by her deeds. There is a fruit that is born. There is a life that has changed. And it doesn't mean you're perfect.

It means you're quick to confess and repent. Every time I'm quick to confess and repent. If there was one practice, if you're like, I don't like this whole thing, I'm glad we're almost done of the series, if there's one practice that you would take with you, if I could just give you, it's confession. Become an expert at confessing and repenting, your life will change. You're like Sabbath, solitude, simply didn't get any of it, great. Get confession and repentance and your life will change. Why? Because it means I'm agreeing and acting with God whether I get it or not, whether I like it or not. I've told you my heart for you is that you can say, I love what we're doing. I love where we're going, and I love how it's going in me. The only way you will be able to say that is through the practice of confessing and repenting because I've moved from the world's way, from my way to his way. And when I'm living his way, I can start saying, I love where I'm going.

And I love what I'm doing, and I love how it's going in me. So we close our eyes. What does the Holy Spirit say to you today? For some of you, today is the day of salvation for the first time. Say, Jesus, I confess and repent that I've lived my own way, broken, lost, sinful, evil, but I see your kindness and your goodness and your grace. So I turn to you and receive refreshing forgiveness in the Holy Spirit.

For some of us, my sense would be you're sitting here, and you're like, I want this in my life. I want more of this in my life. Keep going. Take a step of faith this week. Confess and repent to somebody. And if somebody confesses to you, here's my encouragement. Just look right back at them. No counsel. Don't give them a correction. Don't tell them what they should do. Just look them in the eyes and say, "In Jesus's name, you are forgiven and free. And may his divine power give you everything you need for life and godliness." That's all you say. That's all you say because it'll change their life. And then some of us, we're trying to decide. What do I want to do? And that's okay. That's why you're here. It's great. Be here, seek, think, wrestle. Just don't deceive yourself into saying you're one thing when your life is pointed in a different direction.

That's the beginning of confession is acknowledgement, joyful, freely, open, acknowledge. I've told you all year, just say, hey, I'm just not there. I don't want to do it. So I am exactly where I want to be spiritually. That's great. That's better than pretending and lying and deceiving and covering things up in the darkness. Do you know our first practice plan that we gave you was "Jesus, help me be open to a different way?" That was the first practice plan was just praying because I know my heart too. We get so lost in the things of this world. We're not actually even, oh, we don't even want to want it. The prayer was, Jesus, help me want to want it. And maybe some of you, that's your practice plan because you're not at this week's practice plan. So maybe your practice plan is, Jesus, help me want to want it because I don't. So Holy Spirit, do what only you can do. Thank you that your kindness leads to repentance. Thank you for the grace and the love of Jesus that is trying to set us free.

Thank you, God, that you are not mad at us. You are not trying to get us and you are not trying to make our lives religious or difficult or hard. You say, come all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for my way is easy, and my burden is light. May confession and repentance be a practice of the people called Valley Creek Church because we long to live a different way. In Jesus's name, Amen. We're so glad you're here with us today. And just remember, these practices are ways were formed more in the image and mightiness of Jesus, and so I hope that you except his invitation as we follow him together.

And if you like to serve or financially support what God is doing through Hope on the Move groceries, this is valleycreek.org/groceries to learn more today. And as a church, we believe that giving tithes and offerings is just what disciples of Jesus do, giving back to God what's already his. And so if you'd like to give, you can do so online anytime at valleycreek.org. And we would love to hang out with you at one of our Hangouts. Remember, Hangouts is just a relaxed Zoom meetup with people from our online campus where we talk and connect. And so no matter where you are in the world, it's a great next step in the community here at Valley Creek. And so just head to valleycreek.org/Hangouts right after we wrap up today. But hey, before we go, let's go knowing and declaring these four core truths out together that God is good, that Jesus has forgiven me, that I am loved, and that everything is possible. We love you guys. Have a great week.