

Alrighty everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. We are so glad that you are here with us today. Wherever you are, whatever is going on in your life, we believe that hope is here. Everyone is welcome. Jesus changes everything. And we are halfway through our conversation on the Sermon on the Mount. We are halfway through our conversation where we're wrestling together through the most important sermon that was ever been preached. And yet, it is one of the most misunderstood and and most misapplied things that Jesus ever said.

You see, the Sermon on the Mount is not a try harder, behave better, do more, rules and regulations speech. No, it is this incredible invitation to a good and beautiful life. And as I've been praying for you and as we've been working this out and kind of wrestling through it, I really believe this entire moment in time for our church is simply about renewing our minds. I believe that God is wanting to wash our minds with His word. Scripture says that we are washed with the Word. Well, if you think about washing something, how do you do it? You've got two options – you can do focused intensity or high volume gentle flow. Focused intensity, like a pressure washer. We're going to get it. Or you step in the shower and there is this high volume gentle flow. And as we work through the Sermon on the Mount, we're doing both. There's some pressure washing I'm trying to do off of your life. And there's some high volume gentle flow that we're just believing is washing over you and renewing your mind so that you can experience the transformation of the good and beautiful life that Jesus offers.

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." See, it's so important for you to understand that Jesus only had one message. When He started, His message was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It's the only message He had. In other words, He shows up and He starts saying, "Hey, think about how you're living. Consider your life. Consider your plans for the way that you're doing things – because there is a new invitation, a new reality that has just arrived. A good and beautiful life is now available to anyone and everyone who wants it." And that's all He talked about.

All He talked about was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Every parable, every teaching, every healing, every demonstration, every declaration, everything He did, everywhere He went was like showing a new facet of the diamond of the kingdom of heaven to try to help us fully grab a hold of that which He came to bring us.

In fact, when the resurrected Jesus appears to His disciples, it says, "He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the..." Uh I don't know about you, but if I just raised from the dead and I'm leaving this thing to these guys, I'm probably teaching them like, "Okay guys, this is how you grow a really big church. Okay guys, this is how you take care of widows and orphans. Okay guys, this is how you don't mess it up. Peter, I went through a lot. Don't mess it up."

The resurrected Jesus spoke about the kingdom because it's the only thing Jesus spoke about. See, contrary to popular belief, Jesus never preached three ways to a better marriage, four

ways to improve your parenting, five ways to financial freedom. If you hang out in the American church, that's what you think Jesus preached. It's not what He preached. He preached the kingdom. And in preaching the kingdom, He addressed marriage and parenting and finances in His invitation to this good and beautiful life. And so if we're ever going to understand the Sermon on the Mount, we have to understand this message of: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Because it is the foundation of what the entire good and beautiful life looks like.

So quickly, let me just walk you through. If this is what Jesus came to preach, then these three sections – repent, the kingdom of heaven, at hand – are the three most important things that we have to take a hold of.

Repent. What does repent mean? Repent simply just means to change your thinking. Change your thinking and change your direction. Repent does not mean hellfire and brimstone, feel really bad about yourself, have a lot of shame and condemnation and guilt. No, we need to repent about what repenting means.

Repent. Change your thinking. Change your direction. And there are two types of repentance. There is sin repentance and revelation repentance. You say, "What does that mean?" Well, sin repentance is: I'm going my own way; I'm doing my own thing. Sin means to miss the mark. I've turned my back on God. I'm running down this worldly road on my own. And somewhere along the way, I am confronted, challenged, convicted by the people of God, the Word of God, or the Spirit of God. And the moment that happens, I have the opportunity to have sin repentance. In other words, I change the way I think and I change the way I live. It's not just thinking differently. That different thinking leads to different living. And I now turn from and towards God. This is why Hebrews tells us, "...repentance from dead works and of faith towards God." Repentance from the unhealthy and broken life towards the good and beautiful life in Jesus' name. That's sin repentance. I've been convicted. I've been confronted. I realize this is not in alignment with God. Therefore, this is not good or beautiful. Therefore, this is unhealthy and broken. So, I'm going to change the way I think, which is going to change the way I live.

This is why Corinthians tells us, "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: What earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done."

See, worldly sorrow is: I'm sorry I got caught. Godly sorrow is: God, I'm sorry I sinned against You and others. And that godly sorrow brings repentance, which turns me. Because now I have earnestness, eagerness, indignation, alarm, longing, concern. What? To do the right thing and turn from things that lead to death and of things that are good and beautiful. Example of sin repentance would be Isaiah taken to the throne room. He sees God. He hits his knees. Woe is

me for I am a sinful man. It would be Peter when Jesus tells him to throw his net over the right side of the boat and he pulls in and it's so full of fish. That kindness led Peter to repentance, he hit his knees and says, "Away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." Or David when he takes another man's wife, has him killed, and the prophet challenges him. And the moment he realizes it, he is cut to the heart and says, "I have sinned against the Lord." They changed their thinking and they changed their living. That's sin repentance. That's what we're familiar with. That's what we're used to. Whether or not we practice it or not is up to you. But that's sin repentance. I was wrong. I've been challenged, confronted, convicted, and I'm turning from, and now I want to go in this direction.

But then there's revelation repentance. Revelation repentance is something I didn't know that has now been revealed to me. And now that I know it, it changes how I think and how I live. An example would be say I had something up here under this tarp and I covered it with a with a a tablecloth or something. You don't know what's under there. The moment I remove it – revelation – it's been revealed to you. Something you didn't know that existed, now you know. And even if I put the tarp back over it, you now can't unknow what was under there. You you've seen it. And it now should change the way you think. Here would be an example of revelation repentance. This would be an awesome scenario if this ever happened to you. Let's say one day a knock was at your door and it was a lawyer. You opened up the door and they said, "Hey, you have a great uncle in England and he just passed away and he left his entire hundred million dollar fortune to you." Revelation!

Something you didn't know that now you do know, and I promise you that is going to change the way you think and change the way you live. Yes? That's revelation repentance. Something in God's kingdom that we didn't know and when He reveals it to us, it changes everything.

This is why it says, "...the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better." The Holy Spirit wants to give you revelation so you can live with wisdom so you can know Him better and experience the good and beautiful life.

This is why Jesus says, "Consider carefully what you hear... With the measure you use, it will be measured to you – and even more. Whoever has will be given more; Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him." What does that mean? Jesus says, "Hey, be real careful." When something's revealed to you, you are now responsible to steward it. You are now responsible to have the spirit of repentance that causes you to change your thinking and change your living based on that which you didn't know, but that which you now do know. And if you don't change your thinking or your living based on what you know, what you have will be taken from you.

Have you ever sat in church and had something revealed to you and it really moved you? It was so inspiring, but you didn't do anything with it. And so a few weeks, few months, few years go by and you've completely forgot that revelation. That's what He's talking about. You see, the

problem is is if we don't cultivate a spirit of repentance, both sin repentance and revelation repentance in our lives, unintentionally, we start having a harder and harder heart. Unused revelation leads to a hard heart. And the great problem is is if we sit here week after week and hear the Word of God spoke over our life, it's like getting a vaccine every Sunday. Every Sunday you get a little bit of the Word of God thinking that you know it. What is a vaccine? They inject a little bit of the virus into you to build antibodies so that you you have a resistance towards that disease or that illness. Well, if you sit here Sunday after Sunday and get a little injection of the Word of God, of the kingdom of God, of the Spirit of God, of what Jesus is trying to teach you about the good and beautiful life, and there's no spirit of repentance in your life, you're going to build up antibodies and resistance, a hard heart, because you're going to think, "I already know that." Hey, tell me something I've never heard before today because I already know that. It doesn't matter if you know that. It matters if you live that.

That's why we know whether or not we're repentant. "I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds."

Repentance is not emotion or feeling or lip service. Repentance is action. That's how I know I've repented from sin or repented from revelation that has been revealed to me. So when Jesus says, "Repent," He's saying change your mind. Turn from things that are stealing, killing, destroying your life and towards this good and beautiful life and change your mind because there are things you don't know that I'm going to keep revealing to you that should change the way you live. That is profoundly important.

So, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven..." What is the kingdom of heaven? If it's Jesus's main message, we probably should know what that is. The kingdom of heaven is the rule and reign of God. It's where God's will is done. It's the "with God" life, another kind of life. It's life from above, eternal life, interactive relationship with God, the good and beautiful life in the here and now. The kingdom of God is not a place. He's a person and His name is Jesus. The kingdom of God is not the place you go when you die. It's the reality you get included to right now when you put your faith in Jesus. Jesus is not in His kingdom. The kingdom is in Jesus. The kingdom, the rule and reign of God, is the extension of His heart. So when I'm included in Christ, I'm included in His kingdom. And I now get to live under the rule and reign of God, the "with God" life, a life from above, a different kind of life, an interactive relationship with God.

And this is how Jesus tells us we get into it. He says, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom... unless he is born of water and the Spirit." What is this talking about? This is faith. I put my faith in Jesus. And this is the passage that we talk about being born again. I put my faith in Jesus. The Spirit comes into my life and raises me from the dead. I now become a new creation in Christ. And it took faith to enter into the kingdom.

Jesus tells us, "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter into it." How are little children? Little children are people of trust. They

trust everyone and everything. They don't have skepticism, doubt, or unbelief. They just trust what is told to them. So Jesus says, "If you want to enter into my kingdom, not only does it require faith, it requires trust."

And then He tells us that, "...I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not (say it) enter the kingdom of heaven." What is this? He's not talking about the righteousness of the hands. He's talking about the righteousness of the heart, which is a surrendered heart – where I surrender my kingdom to His. So to enter into the kingdom, I have faith. I have trust. I have surrender. I now enter into this good and beautiful life under the rule and reign of God. I become a new creation in Christ. The old is gone. The new has come. And now, now, now I get to learn to put to death what belongs to my earthly nature. And I get to learn how to take off the old self and put on the new self. I now get to learn what being included in Christ looks like. And He will now teach me how to live this good and beautiful life that I have now entered into by coming under His rule and His reign. Does that make sense?

So, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." At hand. What does that mean? At hand. At hand. That was fun. Let's do it one more time. At hand. Within reach. Available. Accessible to anyone and everyone who wants it. Do you realize when Jesus preaches, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." – The people were standing there and they were within reach of Him? It's like the woman with the flow of blood. If I can just take a hold of Him, the kingdom will come. He's literally talking about Himself. He's not saying the kingdom is like, waaaay. He's like, "I am the kingdom." So, it's at hand because I'm at hand. So, grab Me. Change your mind. A good and beautiful life is now here and available to you.

And I realize over these last few weeks, it's been a lot. Some of you are like, "It's, it's been a lot." It has been. And here's what I've been doing. Pressure washing some spots and high volume, gentle flow, showering you to wash and renew your mind. And that's part of my job. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Whatever I'm hearing, my faith in that thing begins to grow. So things that are really important, that I want to have a faith in, I need to hear them over and over and over and over and over again. And I promise you, not a one of us in this room, including me, has a full handle on the Sermon on the Mount. I promise you, not one of us in this room is fully living the good and beautiful life to its fullest, that's available to us. So what happens? I need to hear it again and again and again without the spirit of vaccine, with the spirit of repentance. Wash my mind. Pressure wash the parts out of me, God, that are that are not in alignment with You. And and so here's what I would like to do today. I would just like to loop back through the outline again. I would like to walk you back through the outline of the Sermon on the Mount and the different sections that Jesus goes through. And I just would like to express them to you and try to teach them to you one more time – some pressure washing, some high volume, gentle flow to help us, help me, help you renew our minds so that we can be transformed.

And here's the good news. As a church, we're not in a hurry. Where are you going? I'm not in a hurry to go somewhere. In fact, if I'm in a hurry to anything, I'm in a hurry for transformation. We're not a church that's interested in knowledge. Let me give you something new. I don't want to add to your vaccine problem. I have my own. I want to see you experience transformation. I want to experience transformation. And like any good dad, what does a dad do with their kids? A dad will find their kid and they will say, "This is who you are. This is what you were created for. This is what I see in you. This is how gifted you are. This is what God created you to. And that dad will speak that over that kid from zero until the day the dad dies. Trying to help that kid receive it, believe it, and become it. My job is to speak this over your life until you receive it, believe it, and become it in Jesus' name. Can you even imagine if you were married to a person who is living a good and beautiful life? Can you even imagine raising a child who is living a good and beautiful life? Can you even imagine having a parent who is living a good and beautiful life? Could you even imagine working for a boss, a teacher, or a coach who is living a good and beautiful life? Oh, bosses, teachers, and coaches. Could you imagine if we led people who were living a good and beautiful life? ...would change everything. And so it starts with me as an individual stepping into a good and beautiful life and how different things would be.

So here's what I want to invite you to do. Will you take a big breath wherever you are? Would you now open your heart? And would you give the Holy Spirit room to move and to speak and to walk you through the most important message Jesus ever preached, the declaration and demonstration of the kingdom of God, and and allow Him to wash some things off of you to renew your mind and bring forth the transformation? Because the good and beautiful life is not only possible. In Jesus, it's not only probable, it's normative. Everything in the Sermon on the Mount is how humanity was created to live.

You see, I told you last week that the Sermon on the Mount is this giant outline. And you have to understand the outline to get it. And I told you it's an invitation, not an obligation. In other words, you don't have to do any of this. You're not obligated to do it. It's an invitation. But just understand that you can't pick and choose which pieces you want. You get all of it or you get none of it. So decide whether or not you think Jesus knows what He's talking about.

And I told you the Sermon on the Mount was for you, not for somebody else. We sit here and we hope somebody else hears it. But the truth is somebody else just heard and thought, "Yeah, what would it be like to be married to you if you were living a good and beautiful life?" Yes. So you be the one to say this is for me, not for you. And I told you that the Sermon on the Mount is ordered and the order matters. In other words, Jesus walks us through this journey of agape love, this journey of maturity. And you can't move to the next section if you don't get the first section. It's not ma, uh, random smattering statements. No, it's very logical and linear this growth of wisdom. And if you get stuck on something down here, don't start there. Back yourself up to the one before and the one before and one before and figure out that's where the issue is. And I told you it's not about behaviors. It's about Him changing your beliefs. Be

transformed by the renewing of your mind. And maybe the best thing we said was that it is a declaration, a demonstration of who Jesus is, not a demand of what you have to do.

The Sermon on the Mount is literally a revelation of who Jesus is and what His character and His nature is like. And that spirit of repentance should cause me to think differently and live differently in Jesus' name. So let me walk you through it.

Holy Spirit, come and help us because I want to live a good and beautiful life. And I believe so many of my friends here today do, too.

You see, Jesus was preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And He didn't just preach it. He didn't just declare it. He demonstrated it. And so He was healing all these people. And all these people have been healed. There's this now crowd that's been developed and they're all sitting on the side of a mountain sitting there with Him. And in this crowd is a person who had leprosy that He just healed and a person that had a demon that He just set free and a person that couldn't walk that now can. And a person that was blind that can now see and a person that was deaf that can now hear. And all these people that nobody thought would ever be anything because of their brokenness and their sickness and their situation and their circumstances have all just experienced the kingdom of heaven come upon their life. They're all sitting there and that's the context when Jesus starts the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." And He goes through this whole thing. Blessed, happy, joyful, well-off. The good and beautiful life is available to this kind of person.

And you have two ways that you get to interpret the Beatitudes. One way is that it is a Christian virtue that I need to obtain to; that it is some kind of Christian character that I need to figure out how to live in my life. "Blessed are the..." So if I want to be blessed then I have to go and do these kinds of things. The only problem is, is that sure sounds a whole lot like the Old Testament law, doesn't it? If you behave, then you will be blessed. If you want to be blessed, it's on you. This is the Old Testament. If you do, then I will. God says, "So if you want a happy, joyful, well-off, good and beautiful life, then you have to behave and then I will bless you." And the reason that's how most of us interpret the Beatitudes as these virtues we have to obtain to is because the ear hears what the mind already believes. And most of us believe that God is rules and regulations and that if we want to be blessed, then we have to do all these things just right. The only problem is, is Jesus came to bring grace and truth, not a new form of legalism, not a new form of Phariseism, not a new way of making it harder for people. No, He came to bring grace and truth. So when Jesus says, "Blessed are the..." I believe, what He is saying is these are invitations to the marginalized. These are invitations into the kingdom to people who never thought they would get in. They were all waiting for the kingdom and they thought the

kingdom was going to be for religious elite men, that the Messiah would overthrow Rome and give people back their nation state. And Jesus shows up and He starts saying, "Blessed are all these people." In other words, all of these people are happy, joyful, well-off. The least of these, the least deserving, least expecting. Why? Because the kingdom of heaven was just made available to them.

Not everyone who is poor in spirit is blessed. But everyone who wants to be blessed that's poor in spirit can be. And when He says woe to the rich, not every person who is rich has woe. But every person who thinks they're blessed because of their earthly riches, oh, they have a lot of woe. Because what Jesus is helping us understand in the Beatitudes, that our blessing does not come from earthly things. Our blessing comes from the fact that the kingdom has now been made available and accessible to anyone and everyone who wants it, including this person and that person and that person, the poor in spirit, the brokenhearted, the leper, the sick, the demon-possessed. Yes, the kingdom of God, the rule and reign, the good and beautiful life has come to them. And if it comes to them, then it's available to you. So a great question for yourself is just look at the Beatitudes and which one do you resonate the most with and then you can remind yourself that no matter what situation, what circumstance, what hardship you're in, yeah, even in that moment, you're still blessed, happy, joyful, well-off. Why? Because the good and beautiful life is available and accessible to you through the kingdom of God. Not your worldly circumstances and situations, not your station in life, but the fact that Jesus, the kingdom of God, just came and was made available and accessible to you.

He then says, "You are the salt of the earth, the light of the world." Who is He talking about? Those very people that should have never got in that are now blessed. And He says they are literally now living Beatitudes. They are a walking declaration and demonstration of the good and beautiful life and who it's available to.

He then goes on to say that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Now, at first when you hear that, that's very overwhelming. Pharisees, teachers of the law, these guys, they tried to live an external life of perfection. They dotted every I. They crossed every T. Their life was lived to fulfill the law. They knew all of the nuances, all the regulations, all the rules, and they arranged their life to perfectly accomplish it in the external. And so when Jesus says your righteousness has to surpass that, it's not even possible to surpass that because they did it all and they did it in its full. So He's not saying do more of the same of religious people. No, He's talking about having the righteousness of the heart. See, the Pharisees had righteous hands, but they had very broken and unhealthy hearts. These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And what Jesus is saying is, if you want to enter into My kingdom, it's not about righteous hands. It's about a righteous surrendered heart, because there is now a righteousness apart from the law that is available to anyone in Christ Jesus. A righteousness that comes by faith. And so when we surrender our heart to Him, we enter into His kingdom.

And now as we know who's blessed and we know how to enter in by surrendering into His kingdom, He starts talking to us about what life in His kingdom actually looks like. "You have heard it said, but I say to you..." In other words, this is how the world lives. But let me help you understand how to live in My kingdom a good and beautiful life. And He starts with anger. He starts with anger. At the root of all human evils is anger. Anger, rage, condemnation. The nice word that we excuse ourselves, frustration. I'm not angry. I'm just frustrated.

Yeah. Okay. Anger is destructive. It's destructive. When Jesus says when you're angry, you're in danger of the fires of hell. He's not saying you're in danger of going to hell. He's saying you're aligning your life with darkness and the fires of hell will singe you and singe everyone else around you. It's destructive.

So where does anger come from? Well, anger comes from one of two places. Control or fear. Anger comes when I don't feel like I'm in control. I have a will. I have a desire. I have a choice. And someone, somehow, somehow has violated it. And the moment my will is violated, my rulership over my own kingdom is violated. My natural response is to be angry. This is why when you're driving down the road and someone cuts you off and gets into your will, your way, there are friendly gestures and words that just fly out of you. Because your will was violated. You weren't in control. You didn't get to do what you wanted, how you wanted, when you wanted. This is why when we're waiting in line and people are taking a really long time, we're finding ourselves why? Because you're out of control and your will of being fast is being violated. This is why when you can't return something and you lose it on the customer service person. Why? Because they're not aligning with your will as if you are the king of the universe. So you're out of control. So we respond in anger or fear. We have fear that something we value, our kingdom is in jeopardy. So we respond with anger as a way to protect it. Here's the only problem with that reality. The moment you enter into the kingdom of heaven, you have been crucified with Christ. It's no longer you who live. If it's Christ who lives within you, which means you no longer have your own kingdom. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth and as is in heaven. Not my will, but Yours be done. Our problem is, is we want to live in His kingdom and still rule our own. And that's why there's so much anger and rage and bitterness and frustration in our soul.

Listen, you could think about it like this. Anger is your flesh's response to not getting what you want. It's all it is. It's your flesh's response to not getting what you want. Well, when I realize I'm dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ, I'm now included in Him. I don't rule over my own kingdom. I no longer have to be in control. Why? Because I don't rule this kingdom. It's His kingdom. And I don't have to be afraid because my kingdom was very shaky, but His is unshakable. So, I I can let this go.

I'll never forget driving with one of our elders years ago and I was so frustrated about so many things and I was venting to him about my frustration and he just graciously listened to me for probably 30-45 minutes, and at the end of the conversation he just very kindly just said, "Hey

John, anger is destructive." And that statement pierced me. Anger is always destructive. I've never, I thought about this: I've never done anything good in my life through the spirit of anger. Not one thing. Not one moment in time can I look back on and say that anger actually was good. And every place you're angry in your life is a place that's destructive and you're angry because you haven't surrendered that part of your kingdom to His.

So that might be something worth thinking through. Why am I angry here regularly all the time? Because maybe it's about my will still instead of His will, because I'm no longer in control and I don't have to be afraid. That's anger.

Then He goes to lust. Anger and lust, violence and sex. You deal with these two things, you don't even need the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. Pretty much everything takes care of itself because at the core of all human brokenness is anger and lust. What is lust? Lust is, this sense of I want to use you to satisfy the cravings of my flesh. I want to use you emotionally or physically in some way to satisfy the cravings or the desires of my flesh. So I will hurt you and use you for the good of my will. And Jesus says in His kingdom there's no place for lust because we're now people of love. We don't live for our good. We now live for their good. And so you have to ask yourself the question, where does lust come from? Well, lust comes from the fact that we were created for intimacy, communion, and union with God. Deep in our spirit, you are created for intimacy with God. And if you don't have intimacy with God, you will try to find intimacy with your flesh to satisfy the deep desire of your soul. This is why when Paul talks about people who go off and and live with a depraved mind, this darkened life, and they go further and further down darkness, they become more and more sexually immoral, more and more sexually lustful. Why? Because they are getting further and further from God, and they are trying to satisfy in their flesh that which their spirit or their soul was created for. That's why sexuality down the road of depravity increases. Because I was created for intimacy, but I won't get it via the flesh. Via the flesh.

If you can track with me for a second, I want you to really think about this, because this is, again, renewing of your mind. If you think about it like this, you don't lust for things that are beautiful. You don't lust over beautiful things. Think of the language we use when we're lusting. When we're looking at pornography, an affair, adultery, whatever it may be, we use language like, "They're so hot. They're so sexy. Oh, I desire them. I got to have them. I just, I just gotta, I just got to have her. I just got to have him." What is that language? That is language of consumption. You're so hot. You're so sexy. That is me wanting to consume you. But something that's beautiful, we don't use language like that, do we? Things that are beautiful, we protect, we honor, we appreciate, we admire, we lift up, we share with others. So if you can even understand even what we think it's like I'm not actually lusting for beauty like lust is a cheap counterfeit to the beauty of God and I just want to consume it for my good. And here's something to think of. A lot of us think that once I get married then then lust will be over and I can just do whatever I want. The only problem is is if lust is using someone else to satisfy the cravings of my own flesh, then even in a marriage, if I am using you to satisfy the cravings of my

own flesh with no good will towards you, then I'm still doing exactly what Jesus is talking about in the unhealthy and broken life.

What is sex? Sex is a man and a woman in a covenant relationship with God coming together in intimacy in union in communion the mutual benefit of each other the good of one another where we give and receive from the heart of love, not I'm lusting you for my good.

Do you remember David's son Amnon and Tamar? There was this man and he had this lust over this woman named Tamar and he wanted her and so to this point his lust was so great it literally made him physically sick. And he devised this whole plan, because that's what lust will do, to get her. And he took her and he and he slept with her. And the moment he was finished, it, literally, says he despised her more than he wanted her. Because it's really sweet going in, but it becomes really sour going down. And the interesting part about lust is, I will hurt you to satisfy the cravings of my flesh, to keep my flesh alive, that's supposed to be crucified in Christ. That's a profound paradox right there. I will hurt you to keep my flesh alive, that's supposed to be crucified in Christ. So every time we're engaged in pornography, adultery, sexual immorality, having an affair, in those moments, you have to just stop and acknowledge what it is. This is me using someone else to keep something in me that Jesus wants to be dead, alive. And even when I'm doing that, if I'm a follower of Jesus, I still am the righteousness of God in Christ because I am a new creation. My behavior didn't make me a new creation. So my behavior can't take away my new creation reality, even if I'm engaging in an old way of living.

And one more thought for you on lust, and it's simply this, is you will never be free of lust if you only want to be free of its consequences. We want to be free of the consequence of lust, not the brokenness of lust. See, lust in the heart, which is what Jesus is addressing, what He's basically saying is that kind of lust will act, given the chance. I would act on it if I wouldn't get in trouble and there weren't consequences and nobody would see me. We want to be free of the consequences. Jesus is trying to free us from the brokenness. So, that might be something worth thinking about.

Then He moves on to lying. He moves on to lying, and He says, "You're now people of the kingdom." We live in the truth. We live in the light. There's no place for lying, manipulation, using your words for your good. Why do you lie? You lie for two reasons. You lie to get what you want or so that you don't get what you don't want. That's why you lie. I lie to get what I want or I lie so I don't get what I don't want. Every time you lie to close a business deal, every time you lie on your taxes, every time you lie to your spouse, every time you lie about what you're looking at or what you're doing or or making promises that you know you're not going to deliver on, what are you doing? You're doing that because you want to get something or you want to make sure you don't get something you don't want. But Jesus says, "Hey, you're now in My kingdom. And in My kingdom I will meet all your needs and you will never be shaken. Even if things come that you don't want, you are living loved in My unshakable kingdom." So it might be worth asking yourself where you lie and where you lie regularly that

you're aware of. Why do I do it? What am I trying to get? What am I trying to get? And can I step into the truth to say He will meet my needs and I won't be shaken even if I get what I don't want.

Then He moves on to vengeance, unforgiveness, bitterness, this sense of loving our enemies. And He does the eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth thing. What is that? Under the law, it was eye for eye, tooth for tooth. You take my eye. Legally, I'm allowed to take your eye. The only problem is, is once this cycle starts, it's really hard to get it right. You hit me, take my eye. So, I'm now allowed to take your eye. But in the process of taking your eye, I accidentally break your nose. 10% more. You now have the legal right to break my nose. And as you break my nose, you knock out one of my teeth. Well, I now get to take out one of your teeth. And as I come at you, I knock out both teeth. And Jesus is saying, you can live this way if you want, but the cycle will only end when one of us stops defending ourselves to the other. When one of us turns the other cheek and allows the Lord to be our defender. You have to understand, if you're defending yourself, the Lord isn't defending you. He only defends those who don't defend themselves. Think of how many marriages live in this cycle. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. How about just turn the other cheek? Turn the other cheek. Not to be taken advantage of, but to let the Lord be the defender and learn to love, not in feeling, but in action. And our problem is we want to make all these rules and regulations. And so when He says all these things like go the extra mile and give your tunic and if someone asks you give it to them and if someone borrows don't turn away. We make laws and rules and regulations in our own minds. But the point isn't to make laws and rules and regulations. The point is to be kind, become the kind of person that Jesus' illustrations are an illustration of. That's what it means. A person who actually loves their enemy. If it, if it's, if you want to take it like literal then, hey guess what, it says give to the one who asks you. So can I have your house? Jesus says, and He says don't turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. So I'd like to borrow a million dollars. You got that? He says you can't. I mean that's the law right? It's not what He's saying. He's saying are you the kind of person that can love even those who come against you so that you may be perfect and there's nothing impure within you.

He then moves on to pride, vain glory, the performance or the approval of man. And He talks about three holy exercises. He talks about prayer or giving, prayer, and fasting. But it's not about giving, prayer, and fasting. It could be about anything. And His whole point is don't let your motive be to be seen by others to get a reward from them. Because if you do, you've received your reward in full, singular. If you want the approval of man, then go ahead and live your life that way. You can do that. It's a choice. He's saying it's a choice you can make. But just understand that's the only reward you will get. But if you live to please God, then whether nobody sees you or everybody sees you, He will reward you. Plural ongoing. The problem is we live so much of our life trying to win the approval of others. Do we not? What we wear, what we dress, what we do, what we buy, what we agree to, what we don't, where we go. How about just this? What you post on social media. Is what you post on social media is the motive

to win the approval of others to be seen and noticed by them. You can do that if you do understand you've received your reward in full. And what Jesus is saying is the crowd is a very difficult group of people to win their approval because in one breath they were shouting, "Hosanna. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." And in the very next breath they were shouting, "Crucify Him. Crucify Him. Crucify Him." Says there's a better way to live.

Then He goes on to treasure. And He talks about treasures. He says, "We were created to treasure things." And He's not telling you not to treasure. No. To be human is to treasure, is to value things. Just make sure you treasure the right things. He says, "Don't treasure things of this earth, money, possessions, stuff where moth and rust destroy, thieves break in and steal." Why? Because it's always falling apart and running down and and and decomposing. But but treasure yourself the things of heaven, the kingdom, His Word, His people, His Spirit, His presence. And so the question you have to ask yourself is, what do you treasure? What do you treasure? You know what you treasure based on what you pursue, what you keep, and what you protect. So the question is, do you treasure the right things?

See, I think a lot of us, if we were honest, we treasure money, time, and our body. We treasure money. We pursue it. We keep it. We protect it. Well, we treasure time. We pursue it. We keep it. We protect it. This is why I can't commit to being a part of anything or serving or being on mission because it's my time and I treasure it. And my body, it's got to look a certain way. I got to present it to people in a certain way. All the different kinds of things. And and I I think where we make a mistake is that we treasure what we're supposed to steward and we steward what we're supposed to treasure. Say what does that mean? I think we treasure what we're supposed to steward and we steward what we're supposed to treasure. We treasure, pursue, protect, keep that which we're supposed to steward, rule over, money, time, our body. We're supposed to use those things for the good of others and the glory of God. And instead, we steward, rule over God, the thing we're supposed to treasure. We treasure what we're supposed to steward and we steward what we're supposed to treasure. You say, "What would it mean to treasure God?" To love Him with your all, your heart, mind, soul, and strength. It means I'm pursuing Him. I'm keeping Him. And I'm protecting Him above all things. Does this make sense to you?

Okay. So then here's a great question. Why do so few Christians tithe? Professing Christians, I believe in Jesus. I follow Him. Why does so few Christians tithe? It's not lack of knowledge. It's all over the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It's very clear. God doesn't need our money. He says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart is also." So He He wants our heart. So So why do so few of us actually do that? Give God the first and best 10% portion of our income. The answer is because we treasure money. Pursue it, keep it, protect it. Now, that's the easy answer. Yes, we treasure money. But why do we treasure money? Well, like I've been trying to teach you, you got to back it up. You treasure money because you still haven't got free from the approval of man. And money somehow makes me look good in the eyes of others. And I want to look good to them. And maybe you have to back it up even more than that to anger. Maybe I treasure money because that's the one area of my kingdom I have yet to

surrender to Him. I live in His kingdom, but I rule over money as my own kingdom. Or or maybe I need to back it up all the way to I don't really believe blessed are the poor. I believe blessed are the rich. And if I'm not rich, I'm not blessed. So I can't get rid of this because I treasure it. Because I don't actually believe what Jesus says is true about reality and His kingdom and His life and my life.

This is why it goes on to say in the New Testament, "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." People eager for money have run off and pierced themselves with many griefs. The love of money, worshiping money, pursuing money, treasuring money is the root of all kinds of other evils. You will do all kinds of other things and you will wound not only yourself but everyone else around you. Have you ever met anybody whose dad loved money? I meet them every day. Have you ever met anybody whose dad loved, maybe your dad loved money. You say, "How do I know if my dad, what did he treasure?" Did your dad treasure God or money? Because Jesus says you can't love both God and money. You'll be devoted to one and despise the other. So, so, so, so what did it mean to love money? It means that's what he pursued. That's what he kept. That's what he protected. Have you ever met anybody whose dad loved money? If you've met that kind of person, you've met a wounded person. Because that dad pierced not only himself but his children with many griefs in that pursuit of treasuring that thing.

So, dads, you want to raise a good and beautiful family, be free from the love of money. It's the only way. Jesus literally says right there in the Sermon on the Mount. Go read it this week on your own. I'm I'm probably even going to stop here because I think this is that important. Read it on your own. Jesus says, "You cannot serve both God and money. You will love one and hate the other, or you will be devoted to one and despise the other." What does that mean? That means if I do money money's way – pursuing it, keeping it, protecting it – I serve money. But if I do money God's way – tithing it, stewarding it, and using it to bless and build – then I serve God. Which one are you?

And don't be like, "This dude's telling me..." I'm not telling you anything. I'm telling you this is the way Jesus says a good and beautiful life happens and you can't start at treasure. If you don't, just hear me, if you don't tithe your problem is not at treasure. If I just tithe the problem goes no, because ask yourself a question. Why don't I tithe? Because I love money. I know but why do you love money? Because you still have a lot of approval of man inside of you. The orphan spirit still wanting to be rewarded and seen by other people. And if I look like this or dress like this or have this number or can buy these things, buy these friends, and that reward lasts real long, doesn't it? And maybe it's beyond that. And you got to back it all the way up, like I said, to yeah, you've surrendered and you've come into God's kingdom, but not in the area you're are you still the king over your money? Then that's an area you will always be angry in. That interesting? Isn't it interesting that people who love money are usually angry about money? The only person who's not bothered by me talking about money right now is the

person that's free of the love of money. Everyone else is like, because I, literally, I can see you guys at every campus. You're all like, "Is this over? Come on, get to worry. That's my wife's issue." I know we'll get there, but she'll like you a lot more if we get here first. And that sex you're longing for will get a lot better because you're moving towards each other. Maybe, just maybe, everything we want, that everything we value, everything we need in life is actually contained in this masterpiece sermon that Jesus delivered saying, "This is what life in the kingdom looks like, and I will address every human need that's in there, and I will set you free, and you can live totally different." The question is, do you have the spirit of repentance? Cuz see, here's the bummer. Bummer for some of you. You've now heard it. I've taken the sheet off. You've seen it. You're now responsible for it. And if you come back without having done anything in the weeks to come, it's like getting a vaccine. It's an inoculation. You will now be harder to preach to about being set free of treasure because you'll think you already heard it. You think you already know it. You do know it. You just didn't live it. So you'll be more resistance towards it.

I know some of you you like in your heart of hearts like you long for just like comfortable like could you just give us like three ways to feel good about the week. I know. I know there's so much of that out there though. Like I bless you. It doesn't solve any problems. That's why Jesus didn't do it. We're just trying to do like what Jesus did and He's like, "Hey, this is, this is the..." And and what I'm trying to help you do is think deeply about deep things, which requires time and meditation. You know what that requires? If you if you are challenged by treasure, then you can't just go run back into this week and go pursue and keep and and protect treasure. You actually have to carve out time to sit down and say, "God, that was really convicting. That was really angry. I'm finding myself angry at that dude in the green shirt. I don't even know his name, but I'm mad. I'm going to tell everybody how mad I am about it." Okay? But then just ask Jesus like, "Why am I mad?" Because anger was the first thing you dealt with saying, "This no longer has a part in my kingdom." So if I'm angry, then what? Am I afraid or am I still in control? Because it's only one of two options. So I'm either in control over money and that's why it's violating my will. Or I'm afraid. I'm afraid. I'm in a bad place with debt and I don't have enough and I'm trying to do. Yep. Okay. All that. That's all. But all those reasons are not a good reason to love the God of Mammon. The love of money, the spirit behind treasure that wants to enslave you. When the, when Jesus is actually called the treasure in the field is literally the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure in the field. When a man found it, he went and sold everything he had to come by the field to get the treasure. Does he care how much the treasure cost? He does not care because he has the treasure. Jesus is the treasure. And the problem is it's it's one of the most blunt things that Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount. You cannot serve both Me and money.

And some of you, in Jesus' name be free from baggage of wherever you've been in your life and you felt like church did this poorly. I, in Jesus' name, may you be healed and forgiven. I'm sorry for any ways you've been impacted by it. Don't let a man keep you from freedom. And

this is the whole eye for eye, tooth for tooth, like I'm going to I'm going to show they hit my eye. I'm going to get let the Lord be your defender. Trust the Lord and become a person that can love your enemy. You're my enemy. Like some of you make me your enemy. That's fine. I'm not really your enemy. It's not even about me. This is about Jesus. And this is what He says.

So I would just say to you that one of the prevailing spirits in the place that we live is the love of money. If you want a good and beautiful marriage, you have to be free of it. If you want good and beautiful singleness, you have to be free of it. If you want good and beautiful church, we have to be free of it. If you want good and beautiful future, you have to be free of it. There is something about like I didn't even get halfway and we're way out of time. And I don't care because I'm not in a hurry. We're don't, don't, no. I'm saying it funny. Because I told you in the beginning it's about transformation. Spirit of repentance. So now we know, now we know that doing money the world's way is not only sin, missing the mark turning my back on God. I now have a revelation of why I do it. And I now have a revelation that if I treasure it, I can't treasure Him. So now what do I do? And here's the irony. Over 10%. Don't lose all of your heart for 10% of your money. Don't lose all of your marriage for 10% of your money. Don't lose all of your children's future for 10% of your money. You may not see these people. I see them every day. The orphan spirit that is at work in the lives of people because their dad loved money and taught them that money is the god. Self-made. Get it right. Take care of yourself. Make something of yourself. Get some more. You spent what? You broke this. Why does a dad rage when a \$15 item gets broken in the house? One, because he hasn't dealt with the anger, so his will was violated. But two is he treasures money and he just saw that money rip out the door. And so his treasure, what he's pursuing, what he's keeping, and what he's protecting, has been violated. Do you see what I'm saying? This is called you got to think. You got to think about your life, got to wrestle through these things.

Only the Holy Spirit can unseat the God of Mammon from your heart. I cannot. But I can point you to what Jesus says and the good and beautiful life that He offers. I pray that in some way the longing for a good, healthy, whole, dynamic, abundant, radiant, vibrant as it was meant to be. and beautiful, glorious, holy and and special and set apart and unique kind of life would be more compelling than that of the way that you've been living. Because His name is Jesus, the good and beautiful God who offers us a good and beautiful life and doesn't shout repentance the way your ear may hear it because that's how your mind believes it. He whispers it with kind compassion to say, "Hey, you don't have to live like this anymore. I got so much more for you." If you'll what? "Just trust Me with faith, trust, and surrender." Just just trust. And He will just keep wooing you and wooing you and wooing you. And so I just, maybe close your eyes. I just don't feel like the moment's done, but the time is. And so maybe what's the Holy Spirit just trying to say to you? Without without resistance, without battling, without fighting, without anger, just can you just open yourself up enough to just be like, "Ah, Jesus, I hear You talking. I don't even like what You're saying. But something is moving inside of me. Something is stirring in my mind. There is a freedom I feel like You're offering me. But I'm terrified. And I can't tell my wife, my children, my husband, my parents, my friends, the other young adults that I run

with. I can't say that cuz that would, that would make me look bad in their eyes. But but then I realize, that's the one right before treasure is vain glory and pride and trying to do things in a certain way so people think a certain thing about me. And and so this pressure washing that I didn't see coming today, it's got to be from You."

I think, I think, John thinks that today there was a moment of pressure washing that needed to take place. The question is, is did we did we get it? Did He get it? Did you get it? Will you let Him get it? So, Holy Spirit, I don't believe that we're done, but to honor everybody else, we've got to move forward. And so, would You help people linger, help people wrestle, help people think, help people all week? I pray that every one of us this week that you would just you would just be so like that we wouldn't be able to get our thoughts off of You and off of what You say and off of what You're doing and off of what this good and beautiful life looks like. And I just pray, Holy Spirit, that You would stir up within us the spirit of repentance. Not the repentance that says, "Yeah, yeah, I'll get around to it." But like the repentance that, like doesn't leave this room until I repent. The repentance that, like doesn't go home until I've repented. The kind of repentance that's like, like right now. Right now.

Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a tax collector who loved money. He wasn't living a good and beautiful life. Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, I want to come to your house." Zacchaeus invited Jesus over. They went down. They sat down. Everyone was upset because Zacchaeus shouldn't be blessed. He shouldn't be in the kingdom because of who he was. And Zacchaeus, all on his own, stands up and says, "Look, Lord, here and now I give half of everything I have to the poor." What was that? It was the spirit of repentance because the Son of Man came to seek and save that, not who, that which was lost. You know what's lost for so many of you? Your heart. Where your treasure is, there your heart is also. This is why there's no life. This is why you're apathetic. This is why you're numbing. This is why you're in all the addictions. This is why you feel like you don't even know why you wake up in the morning because you've lost your heart, because it's been captured by treasure. So, do you want to be free? Jesus says, "I've come to give you a good and beautiful life, a life that will set you free in every way."

So, here's what I'm going to do. I'm – Campus Pastors, I'm going to close it here. I think the Lord wants to invite repentance. And so we're going to have people, in fact, our prayer teams, ministry teams, if you want to come up at all of our campuses, just come down now. In a second, I'm going to dismiss. If you want to repent, if you want to pray with anybody over anything, just come down and let these people pray for you, with you. And let's let the Lord restore this good and beautiful life that He offers you. For those of you that want to give, we give at boxes on the doors on the way out or online. Why? Because giving is a response to the grace of God. I'm not giving to be blessed. I'm giving because I am blessed. And there is this grace that has moved in my life and transformed me from the inside out. And so, you can do that. But you don't have to do that. It's an invitation, not an obligation. But I pray that you would go this week. And the best thing I can just say to you is this is not done. Don't let it be done. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Walk it out with the Lord. Don't quit.

"How To Get Everything You Want"
October 11, 2026 | Pastor John Stickl

Don't stop. Work it out. Ask your questions. Have your doubts. Have your frustrations. Bring them to the surface. Get in a Circle. Go to your team. Sit at the kitchen table. This is what I'm talking about. A good and beautiful life doesn't just mysteriously appear. No, it's pursued when Jesus speaks and we follow. I love you. I'm so proud of you. And I believe there is a moment right now for so many of you to move towards the good and beautiful life in Jesus' name.

So I speak over you that God is good, that Jesus has forgiven you, that you, my friend, are loved, and everything, including the good and beautiful life, is possible in Jesus' name. I love you at every campus. Respond to the Lord. We'll see you next week.