

Well, Good Morning Grace Hills.

Good morning.

So we had a slight problem this morning and kind of ran out of seats. So we're going to move again. Not really. Thanks so much for being here and coming here and getting out of bed this morning. I know that was especially hard today and so you made it. This is a big step just making it here physically this morning is a big step and I'm glad that you're here for week two of our big healing series. I kind of rearranged the series a little bit when snow and ice came in so that we could save the first healing choice. Sort of the step one part of this message for today. So you haven't missed a lot, but we're just kind of getting into this and I want to share some things with you that today that are really important about healing.

Okay. When we started Grace Hills seven years ago, we decided from day one it would be a healing place for broken people. And by that we didn't necessarily mean that there would always be instantaneous, miraculous healing, but that this would be a place where healing would begin for people. That as we came to grips, came face to face with who we are and what we face and what we struggle with and what we deal with. That we would walk through things together, that we would help broken people and acknowledge that we are broken people and that together as a community we'd find healing through our feelings. Now let's just dive right in. Okay. Week two, I want to talk to you about this topic. I want to talk about how to get real in order to get healed.

Okay. This first choice, this first thing that we do, this first step toward really being healed toward really healing from the inside out and getting healthy in our lives and maturing spiritually is all about getting real. It's all about facing who we are and why we do what we do and getting into how we fix that and how we walk through that with other people and in community and how we experience God's goodness and blessing on our lives. You ever find yourself in life asking why you just did what you did? Yeah. Yesterday my dog ran out the door and when my dog runs out the door, it's like a full on chase. We put out an APB, it takes everyone and if you get close to her, she runs further. But on my way out the door, I heard the boys yell, "Piper's out." So I'd jump up out of the chair.

I got running out the door and as I do, I smack my knuckles on this doorway. Like just catch them pretty hard and they're both like bruised. And they were both bleeding and I remember looking and going, "I wonder why I did that? Why?" And we do things like that in life. Like, why did I just do that? That's going to hurt. And I've asked myself that not just about little things. I've asked myself that about some big things in my life like why do I keep doing this thing that's hurtful? Why do I keep doing this thing that hurts other people? Why I keep doing this thing that doesn't seem to line up with God's purpose for my life? It doesn't fit with who he's called me to be and it's not helping me align with him.

It's not helping the people around me, but I keep doing it. If you've asked that why question before, why do I keep drinking when I want to quit? Why do I keep going from one unhealthy relationship to another when I wish I could stop? Why do I do that? You need to know you're not alone. You're not the first to struggle with that. You're not the only one to struggle with that. I am convinced it's universal. I believe that every last one of us has fallen short of the glory of God. Last week we looked at in Isaiah where he said, all of us, like sheep have gone astray. We've all gone our own way. We've rebelled against God. So every one of us has done things that we then look back on and go, why? Why do I keep doing this? 2000 years ago, a guy who wrote almost half of the New Testament asked that very same question in Romans

7:15 the Apostle Paul said, I don't really understand myself for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.

If you've ever felt that, you need to know that, that is Romans seven and I believe all of us have lived in Romans seven, okay. But then Romans eight is coming and it says, for those of us in Christ, there's no more condemnation and we have the Holy Spirit and we've been adopted into God's family. So there's all kinds of victory coming, but you need to know that universally, all of us struggle with the why question, why can't I stop? Why can't I quit? Why can't I seem to get over this? Where did that come from? Why did I say those hurtful words? Why did that come bubbling out of me and why can't I stop? Those are questions that I believe all of us deal with. Now, the reason why we deal with those is because all of us have three things going on in our lives that are the result of our brokenness and these three things are our hurts, our habits, and our hang-ups.

Okay? All of us have those three things because we are broken because we have gone our own way, like sheep have gone astray because all of us have kind of made up our own pathway and gone our own direction. We all wind up with hurts, habits and hang-ups. We live in a world that sin has infected things. We live in a world of brokenness. We live in a world made up of human beings and we don't all care about each other all the time. There's often a lack of compassion and in all of the brokenness of humanity, these three universal problems affect every last one of us. Our hurts, our habits and our hang ups, and you'll hear those words a lot throughout the series. I kind of, when I introduced this last week, explained that as we walk through these eight healing choices, I didn't come up with these ideas and I mentioned last week, John Baker, founder of Celebrate Recovery.

He didn't come up with these ideas either. Jesus, did. You go back about 2000 years and Jesus wrote the beatitudes and essentially laid out for us eight healing choices we can make in our lives in order to experience blessing and wholeness and spiritual vitality and health and maturity. So all of that comes out of these eight choices, but we're ultimately facing these three things. Our hurts, our habits and our hang ups. I want to explain what those words mean. Hurts are things that have been done to me or they are things that have happened to me. I didn't bring them on myself and sometimes I'm hurt because other people make choices that hurt me. Sometimes I'm hurt because other people may be manipulating me, using me, neglecting me, abusing me. That may happen in my childhood. It may happen in my teen years, it may have happened in my adulthood, but my hurts are the things that have occurred as a result of the choices of someone else. Or sometimes there are things that just occur. It's the weather. It's maybe my health. It's genetics, it's the economy, it's the company downsizing. And so sometimes I get hurt by things that I didn't invite into my life and that nobody chose to do to me, but they're just hurts that I carry.

And as we've said, we're all shaped to some degree by our hurts. I might've learned as a kid to reject people who made me feel ashamed. And so in adulthood I carry this hurt and it affects the way I relate to people because I'm still trying not to hurt, still try not to face the hurt. Habits or maybe a little more easy habits are the things that we choose to do. They often flow out of our hurts, they are things that we do repetitively that are not healthy for our own lives.

Our habits, know they are good habits. But what I'm talking about is essentially the habits that flow out of our brokenness that I develop habits that I go back to and one of our problems is sometimes we look around at habits and we take our habits and kind of stack them up and compare them to someone else's habits. And we go, well, at least I'm not like that. Right? At least I'm not on hard drugs. At least I'm not.

And we come up with that sort of at least I'm not. And we kind of minimize the danger of our own habits or the seriousness of our own habits. But the fact is if I manipulate people, if I overeat, if I drink too much. There are all kinds of things, tons of habits that flow out of this brokenness and I have some of those habits and you have some of those habits and we can begin to deal with those.

But only when we understand the source that they flow out of brokenness. So all of us have habits and then all of us have hang-ups. Now hang-ups, I would say I would define as these are the beliefs and the thought patterns and the feelings that kind of underlie a lot of my actions. So hang-ups would be those areas in my life where I'm believing something that isn't true, but I'm believing it because it seems safe to believe it. Or I'm believing it to avoid hurt or I'm believing it because in the moment it makes sense. It may be a weird association, but I'm sort of coming up with it as a coping mechanism and I'm believing something that isn't true and I have this hang-up. And so a lot of us walk around feeling very helpless or very hopeless or very worthless because we have some hang-ups and they're not from God, and they're not from God's word and they're not the way God made us.

But we have learned to sort of lean into these things over life. So all of us, universally, everybody in this room is broken and has hurts habits and hang-ups. And I don't say that to offend anyone. I say that collectively, including even me, because if we don't face that, we don't get healing. Okay. So I'm broken. I have hurts, habits and hang-ups, and I've had a lot of help with those things and I've experienced a lot of healing with those things. I've still got a travel, a distance. I've still got a ways to go in my life, but all of us can deal with these three things and begin to see healing of our hurts. We can begin to overcome some of those habits. We can begin to correct our hang-ups when we align our lives with God's purposes for us. Now, how do you align your life with God's purposes?

I believe you walk through these eight healing choices. These are not eight steps that are for some people. These are not eight steps for the hard cases. These are not eight steps for people whose lives have completely fallen apart. These are eight steps that every single one of us in this room can make in order to be holy, healthy, and happy. They're the pathway to blessing, Jesus said that himself. But I want to introduce you today the first of the eight healing choices over the next seven weeks we'll look at the rest. But today it's simply this, today I'm getting real. I'm admitting my spiritual brokenness and my need for God to heal me. It's as simple as that. Step one is to get real. Step one is to choose authenticity. Step one is to open up. Now when I talk about opening up, I know that some of you in the room automatically, you're like, "Ah, just tune him out real quick. And I don't open it up to nobody."

I don't know why I always use more country accents for the negative things, but we say things like that I'm not opening up. I'm not doing that. You're not going there. But I just want to challenge and encourage you. We're not talking about something here that's devastating to your life. You think it's going to hurt, you think there's going to be paying. And I want to come back to that in a minute. Why it is that holds us back. But the reality is I need to be able to live authentically and choose openness and just be me in order to heal. I've got to get real in order to begin to experience healing. Now, let me explain what I don't mean when I talk about opening up and I talk about authenticity and I talk about getting real and admitting that unbroken and all of that.

I'm not necessarily talking about being 100% transparent about all of your life details with everyone that you meet. Like you place your order to drive through and they say, "Can I get you anything else?" "Yeah, actually I go from one relationship to another and just can't seem to." So I'm not necessarily saying that your transparently share all the details with everyone that you ever meet, but you ought to be able to

share the details of your life transparently with someone, with some people, with a spouse, with a small group, with a counselor that there come these times when I need to open up and get transparent about some things. Yes, but what I'm really talking about even more than that is 24/7 wherever you go, you are authentically you coming to a place where there's not this kind of facade that we put on.

In other words I can't really experience healing if I'm always wearing a mask. If I walk into the room and I've got to be the alpha, I've gotta be the top. I've got to be the best. I got to make sure nobody in here thinks that I'm inferior to them in any way. So I'm putting on the mask that prevents me from experiencing the healing that is possible in Christ. But when I break through that and I'm able to start living authentically, just being comfortable with who God made me and walking through and owning my pain and my sin, and dealing with it in a healthy, holy way, then I begin to experience healing. Jesus put it this way. In Matthew chapter five sermon on the mount, the greatest sermon ever preached. Jesus said, God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

He blesses those who are poor. That does not make sense. Jesus's beatitudes are kind of paradoxical there. They're like upside down values from what we learn elsewhere. Jesus says, if you want to own the Kingdom of heaven, you want to inherit God's best. He uses the word blesses. He blesses those. What does that mean? He fills with joy. He blesses those who realize how awesome they are, right? No, he says, God blesses those who are poor. God blesses those who are in poverty. Now, I don't think for a second that Jesus is saying that in order to be blessed, you need less God in your life. What he's getting at is that in order to be blessed by God, in order to have God's best blessing on your life, you have to come to an acknowledgement of your spiritual poverty. That is you got to own that I don't have this on my own. I don't have what it takes on my own. I can't do this on my own. I can't earn God's favor on my own. I can't straighten out my life all on my own. I

was not designed to straighten out my life all on my own. I can't heal myself all the time. I can't fix all of my problems. I need God in my life. And so God says, if you come to a place in your life where you'll hit your knees and go, "Okay, God, I need you." Then God will bless you. That his best is reserved for us when we are willing to declare our poverty before God. The book of Romans is kind of a legal book, and the Apostle Paul who wrote it uses some financial terminology. And a couple of times in chapters three and four he talks about how we need to come to a place where we confess and declare our spiritual bankruptcy that I come to God and instead of saying, God, I'm pretty good.

You'd be privileged to have me instead of I go, God, I got nothing. I come with empty hands. I need you in my life. And when I acknowledge my need for God, then God begins to bless in ways that I hadn't imagined before. So that's what Jesus is getting at. He's laying out before us. This first healing choice that if you come to a place where you acknowledge your spiritual bankruptcy, you acknowledged that without God we don't have what it takes to fix everything on our own, then you can begin to experience the healing and the blessing and the goodness of God. Now, I want to give you three ways to do that today. Three things I think are included in this decision. In order for me to begin to experience healing, I need to acknowledge my brokenness and all of that, but I want to give you sort of break that down into three pieces.

And the first one is this. I need to admit that I'm broken. I need to admit that I'm broken. Now let me clarify again. I'm repeating a little last week because all the snow and the ice in the winter storm and all that good stuff. But let me say, when I talk about brokenness, I am not making a statement about your value. I'm not making a statement about your usefulness to the world. So when I say I'm broken, that

doesn't mean I'm worthless. It doesn't mean there's no hope for me. It doesn't mean that I have nothing to offer. It simply means that there are some things about my life that I am incapable of fixing on my own because it comes from a broken place. We often say that hurt people hurt people, right? And so when you get hurt by someone, it's helpful to understand that they're not just hurting you because they're so awesome and they're being mean to you that they're hurting you because of something in them that's broken.

Why do they keep manipulating? Why do they keep going to those places? Because something in them is broken. They're looking for affirmation. They're creating a facade of perfection in their own life, whatever it may be, but it comes from a broken place. That's true for me as well. I have to admit that I'm broken. Admitting that I'm broken isn't so much a statement of my value as it is a statement of my ability spiritually to save myself, to keep myself, to heal myself. I am saying I'm broken in that I cannot do those things. I cannot accomplish those things on my own. James 4:6 says this, God sets himself against the proud and haughty but gives grace continually to the lowly, those who are humble enough to receive it. So when I'm saying I've got it all under control, I'm good on my own.

I don't need you. I don't need God. I don't need anyone. I've got life down pat and I can handle it. I am resisting the work that God wants to do in my life. So the whole time that I'm sort of being proud of who I am and I'm saying I've got this handled, I am preventing God from walking in and doing his healing work. I'm not leaving room for him. I'm not opening the door for him. I'm keeping him out. But when I humble myself before God and my heart is broken and I come to a place where I'm no longer declaring that I'm my own God, I'm no longer going to fake it. I'm no longer going to act like I've got everything under control. Then I ultimately open the door and invite God in to work in my life.

Okay. So it's about asking. It's about coming in, admitting that I'm broken. It's admitting that I need God's help. The reality is you weren't designed to be able to do all of life on your own. You weren't designed to be a lone ranger. You weren't designed to fix it all by yourself, and a lot of us keep trying, but at the end of the day, when I finally admit that I'm broken, God begins to work in my life. Way Back in Psalm 51 God works in the heart of King David. He's committed as great sin and he talks in the songs about how God, which you really desire for me wasn't my great performance. It wasn't perfection. It wasn't me being awesome at everything, which you really wanted. God was broken heart and a contrite spirit, but that's the sweetest sacrifice that I can possibly give to God, is my willingness to say, God, I don't have it all together.

I have not arrived, haven't figured it all out and I need your help Lord. I want to depend on you. I want to come back to you. Here's a second thing that's wrapped up in this big healing choice, and it is asking God for help, okay? It's admitting that I'm broken and it's asking God to intervene. It's one thing to come to a place where I admit that I'm broken, but sometimes what I do is I'll admit that there's some stuff that's messed up about my life. I'll admit that I can't seem to do this right or fix it on my own, but instead of coming to God for help, I actually let that sort of keep me at even greater of a distance. I'll allow shame to keep me back from God and instead of approaching him and understanding that he lavishes and pours out his grace on the humble.

Instead I go, I don't want to face God. I don't want to deal with that, and so we don't ask him for help, but there come these moments in our lives where sometimes we realize, I've got to be saved. I've got to be healed. I got to be redeemed. I can't do this on my own. I desperately need his help. In Second Corinthians chapter one, Paul wrote this. He said, we felt like we'd been sent to death row, that it was

all over for us. As it turned out, it was the best thing that could've happened. Instead of trusting in our own strength or wits to get out of it, we were forced to trust God totally. Not a bad idea since he's the God who raises the dead. I love the way that's worded. And so when bad things happen to us and we start to think, God's mad at me, God doesn't like me. This is so awful. I'm not gonna be able to stand up under this.

Often what God is allowing to happen is for me to come to a place where I go, I'm going to have to lean on God. As a pastor, I've had this recurring dream for 20 years of adulthood. Ever since I've been a pastor, I often have this dream where I get to church, right? And it's, I don't know, maybe a new building or something and the room is filled and there's not enough seats and were pulling chairs out and all that's happening and it's just about time for me to go up there singing the last song and suddenly it dawns on me I completely forgot to prepare a sermon. I don't have any notes, I can't find a bible. I got nothing.

And so in my dream, I'm running around the building and driving around town and going where's my sermon? Where's my notes and I can't find them. And so I finally realize it comes out of this recurring fear that I have, but I'm going to forget what I had to say, that I'm going to forget all this stuff that I prepared. And it reminds me sometimes that at the end of the day, if that ever really happens, I'm then going to have to like depend on God or something. And it occurs to me that maybe sometimes not having all the right resources and not having everything I need and not having the easy, quick fix might actually be the best thing that's ever happened to me. That when my life, I come to the end of my resources, I come to the end of myself and I don't have the strength anymore.

I don't have the answers anymore. I don't know what I'm going to do. When I come to that spot and I go, I don't know what to do. Sometimes that's the best spot to be in because what ultimately do is go, God, you're going to have to help me here and usually like a good father who whisper to us. I wondered when you'd ask, let's get started. I've got to ask God for help. Here's a third thing that's wrapped up in that, I need to accept help from other people. This one is actually harder for a lot of us than the second one is because I get to deal with God a private basis, right? I can talk to God anywhere at any time when nobody else is around. I can get to bed time and everyone else is asleep and I can talk to God then about all my problems.

But this idea of accepting help from others is a really tough deal for us. It's a hard thing for us to get over and to get past. But God did not wire us to do life alone. He didn't make us so that we'd be strong all by ourselves. You can just kind of look around this room and see other people, many of whom are believers in Christ, right? The Bible says in Ephesians five Christ died for the church, not just that he died for individuals, but that he died to make a family. He died to make a community. And this community of people would spend the rest of their lives figuring out how to get along and help each other and support each other so we could get ready to live together forever and forever and forever. Right? And so God made us to be in community with other people.

And there's something extremely powerful about not only admitting that I'm broken and asking God for help, but talking to someone else about my issues and about my problems. It kind of echoes this verse out of James Chapter Five where he says, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other that you might be healed. Now, I don't know if you catch what I catch in that verse, but it's not really what I expect. What I wanted to say is confess your sins to God and you'll experience healing. It doesn't say that. It says something else. Something much harder and much more challenging because the reality is

scripturally, when I confess my sins to God, when I come to God and say, God, I have blown it. I have sinned. I've rebelled against you. I don't deserve heaven, but I'm asking you God to save me and forgive me and wash away my sins.

Anyone that comes to him in that kind of a contrite spirit confessing our sins and asking forgiveness on the basis of the cross, we get instant, immediate, almost scandalous levels of forgiveness, right? It's gone. The guilt is gone. But then he says, now if you want healing from that, you're going to need to talk to some other people. And some of us go, ah, I don't know, you may just crossed a line there God. I really just needed forgiveness. I'll just go right back to my habits. Okay. Because that's what ultimately happens when I don't talk to anyone about the problems in my life. So who am I talking about speaking with? Well, let me say this that sometimes I believe that it's wise to be careful about who you speak to about what, when you're talking to other people perhaps who are also in a very similar pattern of addiction or a pattern of habits that are destructive.

I don't know that they're always the best people to talk to about the issues that you're struggling with because we sometimes as human beings tend to enable each other, right? I'm going to reduce the seriousness of what you're struggling with. If it's what I'm struggling with so we can both go on and feel better about our situation. You also might not need to talk to someone who has a pattern of manipulation. Someone that has used you, someone that is abused you. I'm not challenging you to go and choose that person as the person to whom you open up and become completely transparent about your deepest hurts, habits and hang-ups, but you do need someone. It's why I'm thankful for my church. I'm thankful for my small group. I'm thankful for some friends. I'm thankful for my wife. I'm thankful for counselors. Let me just be really clear about this for a second.

As a church, we've always taken a very clear position on this, that we treat people holistically. Then when you come and say, my life is in shambles, I keep doing these things and I'm an addict or I'm experiencing depression or whatever it may be that we don't look at that and go, oh, just pray and have more faith and you'll get over it. No, sometimes are physical causes. Sometimes there is mental illness, sometimes their emotional issues. Sometimes you've walked through trauma. Sometimes there are things in which you need a specialist. You need somebody trained, certified. You need friends that really care about you, that love you, that want the best for you and want nothing in return. You need those people in your lives. And so we are big on the idea of seeking out counseling, seeking out help from those who are trained to do so.

I shared with you last week at the beginning of the message, I just walked out on stage and said, my name is Brandon and I'm a Christian who's had struggles with anger, anxiety and depression. You remember that? And they're right now I'm in the suite season of experienced a lot of healing, but I've been there and I may be there again, the potential's there and so that's who I am. I can own my brokenness. Well I also stand here and say I'm a pastor, doesn't have it all together. I have sought counseling. I'm happy to say I've sought counseling at different times in my life and sometimes it's the very best, healthiest, smartest thing you can possibly do. My old pastor, Rick Warren at Saddleback Church, when we were in southern California, he used to share that MasterCard had saved his marriage. And some of your like, "No, Dave Ramsey said." But anyways, he said, "MasterCard saved my marriage." "How did MasterCard save your marriage?"

Well, when they'd been married a few years and they were planting Saddleback and they were a couple of years in, there was all kinds of tension and stress and they just weren't connecting well. And so it's

okay we need to go seek counseling. And and she was a little resistant to that. And one of the reasons she brought up is it costs a lot of money and we don't have that much money. And so he went and put six months of counseling on this MasterCard and to this day he said, MasterCard saved my marriage. Best investment I ever made. To this day, when we were there seven years ago, that a person on staff at the church whose job was to counsel other staff members. And I don't take notes and I don't tell your boss, but you need somebody to talk to. And I believe in that strongly.

And so what's funny about this is I believe in this so strongly, it seems like common sense, right? You're dealing with stuff too big for you to deal with things that hurt too bad for you to fix. Problems that are devastating your life. You should go talk to a counselor and yet still some people will say, Oh yeah, I'm not doing that. I'm not opening up about that with my life with anybody and we've got all these reasons and all these excuses and we assume that that kind of stuff is for someone else. Let me put it this way to you. I think if you take all that we've said so far today and pull it all together, sometimes we're like a train headed for the bridge is outside, right? That's where we're going and we can address the problem now or we can address the problem later.

And the longer we wait, the bigger the threat gets and the more the pain is going to be and the worst of the damaging effects if I don't get help. And it's better to address it today, than tomorrow. It's better to take all the action that I need to take right now to deal with that than it is to wait. Because I think at the end of the day when I talk about these healing choices, this admitting my brokenness and asking God for help and allowing others to help me, the reason why we sometimes don't do that is because of our fear of the pain. I think this is human nature one on one, we want to avoid the pain. And so what I imagined in my mind is if I talk to someone about this wife's going to fall apart. If I open up about this, that changes everything.

All of a sudden I'm exposed. All of a sudden I got to deal with the shame. All of a sudden I got to walk through these things. And so we stay back from this pain that seems so big to us, right? It's such a threat. And we would prefer, now bear with me, this is really important to recognize. We prefer to stay in our habits, give us a little bit of pain over time. We'd rather just kind of sit and rest in what hurts some now than to take the step that invites an immediate kind of pain but helps us forever. My grandfather was in World War II in the Philippines and his job was to string telegraph wire. So the rebuilding infrastructure at the end of World War II. So he tells a story, he's walking along the road and it's 25 feet from the edge of the road downhill to the bottom of the telegraph poles. And then you'd have to, you got the spike boots on. You have to climb to the top of the pole, but it's really steep, which makes the pole only about five or six feet away. And so my granddad gets his bright idea. I'll just jump. Oh, I'll grab that pole and I'll be at the top already. So he gets back a little bit, he jumps, makes the pole slides all the way down. And this half inch wide splinter goes in one of his hand out the other. I know see, I tell this story and people, that's always the reaction. So he's got this splinter and he kinda, he breaks it off. He's got this piece of wood through his hand. What am I going to do now? So he goes into the medic station and how compassionate they are in the war and everything. And so my granddad lays his hand out there and he goes, I don't know what to do about this. And he said, the medic goes, "Man, that looks rough." And he grabs a scalpel. He goes right down the middle of that. Then my granddad says, when I woke up, it was all bandaged up and he's better to this day. Same grandfather that cut off several fingers with power saws. He's got a thing, right? But he's in heaven now and he's healed and he's got all those fingers back in his hands is okay. But sometimes I'm just so afraid that when I talk to somebody, they're not going to believe in me. They're going to think less than me and I'm going to let everybody down and it's going to fall apart.



And my wife might leave, my kids won't know who I am anymore. My friends will walk out, I'll lose my job, my money, whatever it is. The fear of what might happen. And by the way, that fear is amplified by the enemy. It's blown up so much bigger than what it is. One last story, I promise. Last, it just popped into my head. I got to tell, never mind, I'm not going to tell that one. But we sometimes draw back and avoid this extreme pain. And what we wind up doing is we become content to live with moderate pain the rest of our lives. I'd rather just stay sick. I'd rather just stay unhealthy. I'd rather just not go through the pain of immediate confession and change because I'm afraid of what it'll cost me. Meanwhile, it's costing me that a little at a time every day. What God does in the scriptures after you have Genesis and the early chapters where sin enters into the human picture from then on, what you have is the rest of the scriptures from Genesis chapter three onward is God providing for our sin, not just providing for our sin, not just providing forgiveness through his son Jesus.

Not just taking care of the payment necessary for our guilt and giving us a savior, but going also to great links from that moment in history on to today going to great lengths to make us understand that the invitation to us is wide open. That with open arms, God says, come home to me. Come home to me if you're scared, if you're worried, but talking to God about your sin, about your hurt, about your pain, about your addiction, about your habit, about the destructiveness of your relational, whatever it is. If you're scared that God is going to be mad at you. When you finally talk about it, here's what you need to know. He already knows about it. You're not keeping it from him. You're keeping it from being a place of healing, but he says, come, and Jesus said, anyone that comes to me, I will never turn away. I will never turn away. Nobody has ever come to God.

Not one time in history has anyone humbly come to God, and God said to them, well, I'm sorry. Your sin is too great. It's in that category. It's labeled a certain way by the church. It's something that's out of bounds. You just too far gone. Instead, what you see his picture after picture after picture from prostitutes and murderers and connivers and manipulative people and embezzlers and people of all walks of life with every stripe and color of sin and brokenness and habit and every kind of pain and all kinds of suffering coming to the father and him pointing us back again to the cross again to Jesus and saying, all of your suffering, all of your sin, all of your pain, Jesus took it all and we want you in our family. I want you in my family. It's what God says.

As for other people, as for opening up to people in your life, God created this church and it's a mess sometimes, right? Churches aren't perfect, haven't found a perfect one yet, right? And if you find it enjoying it, you ruin it. So we know that, but the church is this dynamic body of people and God pieces them together and he pulls us from all walks of life. And here's something I can promise you. I can promise you what you struggle with. I promise you. Others in this room struggle with it as well. I always some ... Often happens to me, I'll get a text from a guy, "Can you do coffee? We'll get together for coffee. I got to tell you about something." And I can tell by what they're about to say. What they're thinking is, you've never heard anything like this. I'm about to shock you with the depth of my sin. And then they share it and I don't get shocked why? Well either have been there myself or I've heard from others who have, or I just know this is epidemic and nobody's talking about it. And what you're struggling with is all around you. You just don't know it. Because when we get to church on Sunday, I mean how many of us wind up in this building and well, like we fought all the way here, but when we pulled in the parking lot, it's like everybody smile.

We come into the building and we do our best to make it. But you got to know you are never alone in your pain. You're never alone in your pain. Jesus was sinless so he didn't do all the things we've done,

but he's felt at all. He's walked through the temptations that we've walked through. He's gone through the rejection, the loneliness, the isolation. He's gone through all of that on our behalf. You are never alone and you can wait. You can leave here and you can decide I'm going to take another few years and just make it on my own. And the potential pain will increase when that moment comes and the carnage that we sometimes leave behind will increase as well along the way, slowly creeping into our lives. Or you can decide today and every day I'm going to live openly with God.

I'm going to acknowledge my brokenness before him. And this is not just a onetime thing. This is not just, I'm doing this today and I'll never have to do it again. No, it's choosing a life in which I come to know Jesus today as my savior and every day I continue to come to know him. I opened up to him today and I live openly from now on. I give him my life and I continue daily to die to myself and give him my life. It starts though with this one big decision. I'm going to admit my brokenness. I'm going to ask God for help. I'm going to allow others to step in and help me.

Could you bow your heads with me for a minute? I want to acknowledge that it's very possible someone in this room, you're at this place where you realize, I've never done this with God. I've never opened up to God. I've never trusted him, received him, given him my life. I've never admitted to God that I'm broken and he knows it, but he asked you to come to him humbly receiving what he wants to do in your life. Someone invites you right now, right where you sit. If you've never trusted Jesus, never started a relationship with him, you can begin that in a very simple way. A lot happens in a very simple way when you simply pray to him, echo to God from your heart, from your attitude.

Jesus, I'm willing to believe in you. I am broken. I have sinned. I have hurts I didn't ask for. I have habits through which I've created some destruction around me. I've got some hang-ups I need help with, but I come to you God and I humble myself and I receive Jesus. I receive him. Scripture's clear when you come to him, he never ever turns you away. Jesus, I come to you. I receive you. If that's you, if you're coming to him for the first time today, you lift a hand and declare it. I'm trusting him as my savior today, claiming him as my savior today. Could be that you're in this room. You're a believer, you're a Christian and you've gotten stuck spiritually. Things are broken. People are hurting and it's been awhile since I've talked to God about it.

He asks for his children to relate to him and to know him and you might just say to God right now, Lord, I haven't come to you in a while. I need help. I need your healing in my life. I'll talk to someone. I'll reach out to a counselor, pastor, friend, a small group, a mentor, a coworker. I will refuse to isolate. I'll tap into the community you've put around me, but God, I own my brokenness. Do a healing work in my life. God, we praise you. We worship you for who you are. Ask you God to just have your way in this place. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.