

The Word Became Flesh

Betrayal and Denial

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

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Words are powerful. Many of us remember the phrase when we were kids, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." We were taught to say this phrase, maybe when somebody said something to us that could be hurtful in hopes that it would lessen the blow, but unfortunately, if you are like me, you learned that that statement is not true, right? Words do hurt. They can be painful.

And because of that, many of us have tapes that play in our minds over and over again of things that people have said to us that hurt. And so, we are reminded of those things. For some of us, those may even be our core memories. Those memories that are so strong that you can remember the exact setting where something was said to you. You remember the lighting in the room, maybe you even remember the smells that were there.

Some of these memories can also be good memories. You can have good core memories of things that have happened or things that people have said to you that will stick in your mind and help shape who you are. Here are some possible examples of what could be good memories. Maybe it was a compliment from a teacher or a coach that you respected. Maybe it was your mom or dad giving you a hug and telling you that they loved you, and so that plays in your mind over and over.

Maybe it was a time on the holidays when you opened that perfect gift. It was what you really wanted, and you didn't think that your parents were going to get it for you, and you opened that gift, and so you have that memory. Maybe it was your wedding day. Maybe it's the birth of a child. Maybe it's a moment on vacation that you can remember all of the sights and sounds and smells. But we also can have core memories that have negative emotions and feelings that are tied to them.

Some of those might be hurtful words that have been said to you, maybe by a parent or by somebody that you cared about, or a sibling, or definitely a peer in school. Maybe it was a fight that your parents had, and you remember sitting there and hearing the words, you can remember the exact moment because that fight changed everything. Maybe it was the moment that the phone rang with terrible news, and you picked up the phone, and you won't forget what was said on the other side.

Maybe it was the appointment in the doctor's office when the doctor came in and gave you news that you never wanted to hear. Maybe it was a day in court. Maybe it was the moment of a car accident. These moments that can play over and over again in our minds, and it never ceases to amaze me that most of the hurtful and impactful moments in our lives include harmful words. It's like a recorded message that for whatever reason seems to play in our mind and it shapes us.

But what does amaze me about these horrible moments and messages that can play in our minds is that they can be deleted with just three words. "I am sorry." These words in my own life have proved to bring healing to many of the negative tapes that maybe we hear. I'm not talking about the apology that your mom or dad made somebody say when they did something to you.

If you have a sibling and they hit you or did something wrong and your parents say, "Now say you're sorry." And so they say, "I'm sorry." I'm not talking about that kind of apology. I'm talking about a real heartfelt apology where somebody did something wrong to you and they recognize that it hurts you, and so they feel that pain and they say, "I am truly sorry." Because all of us have made mistakes. Every single one of us have made a mistake. The Bible is very clear on this.

Scripture says in Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All of us make mistakes. All of us are failures when compared to perfection. We have all done things or said things that are hurtful. Every single one of us, as much as we don't want to hear this, every single one of us has probably said something to someone in their life, something in their life, that ends up being a tape that is played over and over again that brings pain and shapes who they are.

Now most of us would want to know what we said and who we said it to so that we could apologize, so that we could say those three words, "I am sorry." And when you truly fear that sorrow, it is a sign of the Spirit that is inside of you. It's not your mom or somebody else making you apologize. You truly feel that guilt, that shame, that you actually hurt somebody else.

And there is a huge difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow, or this genuine repentance and worldly sorrow. Worldly sorrow simply makes somebody feel sad because they were caught. It is an inward thinking. They are sorrowful because they're thinking about the consequences and the personal feelings that they have, and we have all had that type of sorrow as well. We're just upset, we got caught, we don't really care who we hurt.

But genuine repentance or godly sorrow understands the pain that has been caused to somebody else, and you have a desire to relieve that pain, if at all possible. Now, why are we talking about this godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? Well, it's because we're going to jump back into our series that we've been calling the word became flesh. We've been doing the series on and off now for, I think, eight years, which is crazy. This is lesson number 28.

We're going to take a break after today as we wrap up John chapter 13. But as we wrap up this chapter, you're going to see two individuals, one who has godly sorrow and one who only has worldly sorrow. And how they respond to that, how they respond to their mistakes, changes everything. Worldly sorrow only leads to more pain and suffering, but genuine repentance can lead to healing.

Again, the truth, we all make mistakes in life, but how we respond is what shapes us. We all make mistakes. There is not a person in here that is perfect. There is not a person in here that has not done anything wrong, but how we respond shapes us. Do we blame others and not take responsibility?

Are we comfortable just steamrolling over other people in order to better ourselves, or do we admit our wrongs and truly say, "I am sorry." So as we jump back into the story, if you have your Bibles, I encourage you to open up to John chapter 13, verse 18, John chapter 13:18, and I will recap where we're at and then we will jump in. But before we do that, let's pray. Heavenly Father, we come before You.

I thank You for the opportunity that even though we make mistakes, we can repent, we can turn from our mistakes, and Father, we can turn towards You, and that You have loving arms to welcome us and to care for us, and that You love us despite our mistakes, despite our failures, that there's nothing we can do to earn your love or earn your favor. That's why we call it grace and mercy, because it is a gift that You give to us.

And so, as we continue reading in John, and as we read about the final moments of Jesus and this opportunity He has with His disciples, may we take this as an opportunity to take our next step towards you. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen. So for those of you that weren't here last week, last week when we left off in the story, Jesus is in an upper room somewhere in a house in Jerusalem, and Jerusalem is packed with people because all the Jewish people who were physically able had made their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

This was one of their main feasts. It was one of their main celebrations, like Christmas time. Everybody gets together, but with Passover for the Jews, they were celebrating their release from bondage from the Egyptians. They were remembering how God sent Moses to save them. And so, as a time of excitement, as a time of energy, and this year, during the time of Passover, when we're in John 13, there is even more buzz in the city because people are talking about Jesus.

Some people are claiming that He is the Messiah, that He is the Lord, and they're talking about what took place just a few days earlier, when Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the dead. Now, of course, nobody had seen that before, and so something was different about Jesus, and so they were excited. The disciples are in this upper room eating this Passover meal with Jesus, and He has just, last week we talked about, set an example for them of what leadership looks like in this new kingdom that He is establishing, and leadership was exemplified by washing His disciples' feet.

John made sure to inform us, the audience, that Judas was there, Peter was there, all of the disciples were there. And of course, we know from the beginning of John 13, the disciples don't fully understand everything that is taking place, and they are certainly unaware of what is about to happen. Jesus has been trying to explain it to them. He's been trying to give them hints, but it's almost as if there is a mental block, they can't make sense of what Jesus is saying.

He has told them that one of them is unclean as He was washing their feet. And that's where we jump in to John chapter 13:18. Jesus says, "I am not referring to all of you. I know those I have chosen, but this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture. He who shared my bread has turned against me. I am telling you now," Jesus says, "before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe that I am who I am." And we'll get back to that because that's an important phrase.

"Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me, and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me." And after he said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and he testified, He told His disciples, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me." Now, of course, those of us that have maybe were raised in the church, we grew up in the church, we know what is about to happen. We know what is going to take place.

We know that Jesus is referring to one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, but in this moment, in the story, only Jesus and Judas know what is going to happen. Only they know what it means that he is saying the one who dips their bread with me is going to betray me. Some translations say is going to lift up their heel against Jesus. Now the neat thing about this in John chapter 13 is that this comes from a Psalm, Psalm 41 to be exact.

And this ends up being a prophetic Psalm, but I don't believe that the author of this Psalm nor the disciples knew this was a prophetic psalm about Jesus until it happens, which is going to happen in the next few minutes as we are going to read. The Psalm is going to be fulfilled as a prophecy. For Judas has already gone to the religious leaders and he's already agreed to betray Jesus to hand him over to be crucified. Can you imagine how awkward it was for Judas in this moment?

You're caught red-handed. He knows exactly what you are going to do. And then Jesus says, "I'm sharing with this, I'm sharing you with you this so that you will know beforehand, so that it will be confirmed that I am who I say I am." And so he uses that phrase, "I am who I am." Now, there will be people that will want to talk with you about faith and about Jesus, and they'll want to claim Jesus was just a good guy, he was just a good teacher, he was just a prophet, he was not the Messiah, and He never claimed to be the Messiah.

For those individuals that want to make that claim, that reference, can I just encourage you to take Him to the Gospel of John? Because over and over again, Jesus makes this statement, "I am." He says, "I am the vine, you are the branches, I am the bread, I am the water," and then here specifically in the upper room to His disciples, He says, "I am who I am." There is no doubt that Jesus was claiming to be God, because this comes from the

Exodus story when Moses is looking at the burning bush and he says, "Okay, you want me to go back and rescue the Israelite people?"

Who am I supposed to tell them sent me?" And God says, "Tell them that I am who I am has sent you." Jesus is claiming to be God. There is no doubt about that. He either is God or He's crazy or He's a liar. Those are the only options. He cannot just be a good teacher. It's very, very clear in John. All right, let's go back. Verse 22. "His disciples stared at one another at a loss to know which of them he meant.

One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved," this is John, by the way, the one who's writing this story, was reclining next to Jesus. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple, to John, and he said, "Ask him which one he means." He wants to know, like, who is he talking about? What's going to happen? So, leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.

Then dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas the son of Simon Iscariot. And as soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly, but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Only afterwards would John and Peter and the others know. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, the Passover, or to give something to the poor.

As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out and it was night. The disciples are starting to understand what Jesus has been trying to tell them. One of the twelve is going to betray Jesus. And of course, for those of you that have read the gospels and you kind of get a glimpse into Peter's personality, of course Peter wants to know who it is. Why wouldn't Peter want to know who it is? What do you think he's going to do if he finds out? He's probably going to try to stop him, right?

This might be a hint into why Jesus had to kind of say things in a backwards way or beat around the bush because this had to be fulfilled. And so finally, they're starting to recognize, wait, someone's going to betray you from amongst our group? Who is it? And so he gets John's attention who's sitting next to Jesus. No more riddles, no more analogies. Jesus clearly speaks to John. It's the one whom I will give this piece of bread that I have dipped it into a dish, and so then he does and he gives it to Judas.

Judas has been caught. He's made a mistake. And so the question is, what will his response be? What is Judas going to do now that he has been caught? Is he going to be sorry? Is he going to have sorrow or is he going to do it anyway? Is he going to have godly sorrow, or is he going to have worldly sorrow? And this is the choice that every single one of us has. Will we repent and turn back to Jesus, or will we continue to betray Him?

This is the decision that Judas was left with. He had been caught. He had made a mistake. Even up to that point, he could have turned back on His mistake. Jesus would have forgiven him. He may have had worldly sorrow, but it certainly didn't lead to godly repentance in the life of Judas. An interesting note as you read through the gospels, knowing now that Judas betrays Jesus, is that Judas never calls Jesus His Lord, like the other disciples do.

As far as we know from Scripture, He only referred to Him as Rabbi. And so we know the choice that Judas is going to make. We go on to verses 31 through 33. When Judas was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. And if God is glorified in Him, God will glorify the Son in Himself and will glorify Him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little longer.

You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so now I tell you where I am going, you cannot come." Jesus is now speaking more clearly, more plainly to them, telling them of what is going to come. He's trying to prepare them, but there is no way that they could be prepared for what was about to happen. And so he wants to use this time to continue to teach them. Look at this in verse 34, "A new command I give you, love one another, as I have loved you, you must love one another.

By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." These are some of the final words that the disciples are ever going to hear from Jesus. So it must be important. As we read Scripture, understanding what's going to take place, know that if Jesus is like, this is His final teaching that He can give to His disciples and He wants them to know the importance of loving one another, that by the way they love one another, the world will know that they are followers of Jesus.

That will be their defining characteristic. Now that is another sermon for another day, and I have done that sermon before, and all of you know that my belief on that as a church is that we have a lot of work to do in learning to love one another the way that Jesus tells us to love one another. But even if we were in that room, I do believe we would not have been concerned about this new teaching that Jesus is giving us. We would have been like Peter. Peter is catching on to what is about to happen.

He's concerned not about the teaching that Jesus has, but he's beginning to say, wait a second, Jesus, you're going somewhere and we can't go with you? Of course He doesn't want that to take place. So look at this, in John 13:36, Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" And Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later." Of course, Peter doesn't want Jesus to leave. Things were just starting to get good.

Remember, I shared with you all of the disciples were expecting Jesus to establish a new earthly kingdom. He's just raised Lazarus from the dead. People are starting to talk about Him. When He entered Jerusalem during this time, all of the people were crying, "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." They were ready to proclaim him as king. All of the people were behind him, and so Peter is thinking, "Everything is coming to fruition. Why are you going to leave now?

And what does it mean that we can't follow you?" It was time for the renewal of the kingdom of Israel in Peter's mind, but Jesus was ready to bring the kingdom of heaven. Verses 37 and 38, Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Peter was willing to give and to sacrifice everything. He's saying, "I don't care where you go. I don't care what happens.

I am going to follow you." And then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me?" Very truly, I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times. And here we learn another valuable truth that even those with the best intentions will make mistakes. Even those with the best intentions will make mistakes.

Jesus must remind Peter of his humanity that Peter is also going to allow his fear to rule his decisions. But this is where Peter and Judas are very different. For those, of course, that know the story later on, Peter would do exactly what Jesus said he would do as they go to the garden and Jesus gets taken away, and Peter goes to try to find out what is going to happen to Jesus, there are multiple times that people begin to recognize Peter later on in John, and they say, "Hey, aren't you one of the people that were following Jesus?" And on three separate occasions, Peter says, "Nope, not me." It wasn't me.

He lies to save his own skin, but his response is completely different from Judas. Did he make similar mistakes? Absolutely. Was he perfect? Not at all. But Peter doesn't end with worldly sorrow. He ends with godly repentance, and this makes all the difference. This is the moment that shows the condition of your heart. Peter will break down and weep after his mistake.

He will own it. He will repent of it. He doesn't blame anybody else. He doesn't try to shift the blame or responsibility. His actions and his response shows that he was sorry. Again, later on at the end of John, once Jesus is resurrected and he comes back before Peter and He says, "Peter, do you love me?" And Peter says, "Yes, I love you." How many times does Jesus ask him that question, for those of you that know? Three times. Do you think that's coincidence? Not at all.

It was to give him an opportunity to make up for the three times that he had denied him. Three times he was able to finally say, "I'm going to do what's right this time." We see His repentance. We see the change in Peter's

heart. So where are you today? The question isn't whether you're here today and you've made mistakes or not. I already know the answer to that question. God already knows the answer to that question. You know the answer to that question. Every single one of us in here has made mistakes.

Every single one of us have done things or said things that we regret and that we know we shouldn't have done or we shouldn't have said. Again, the point, we all make mistakes in life, but it is how we respond that shapes us. Maybe you're here today or you're listening on the radio, maybe you're even watching online and you've denied Jesus. Maybe you're here today because somebody asked you to come or you just decided to check things out. Maybe you're watching online because someone sent this to you or you're just scrolling through radio stations.

And you would say, ah, I'm not sure I buy this whole Jesus thing. I'm not sure it makes sense. I'm not sure I understand it. Maybe you even denied it and you say, "There's no way it could be true. I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to believe it." Maybe you're here today or watching and you say, well, maybe I believe it's true, but I just don't care at this point in my life. I want to do what I want to do, and I know if I'm going to follow Jesus, I have at least a little knowledge to know. If I follow Jesus, my life is going to have to change, and I don't want to change.

You want to do things your own way. Can I just remind you, it's never too late. It's never too late. The mistakes that you have made, the things that you have said don't disqualify you from God's love. It is how you respond that matters. Scripture is very clear that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. You can have salvation.

You can have a relationship with Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter what you've done in your past. It doesn't matter if you've made the mistakes of Judas and Peter and everything else. It doesn't matter if you have denied Jesus over and over again to this point in your life. Scripture says that if today you will repent of your sins and you will turn to Him and proclaim Him as Lord, He will give you salvation. You don't have to worry about what's going to happen tomorrow. You don't have to worry about what's going to happen at the end of your life. You don't have to worry about eternity.

You get to go forward knowing that your eternity is secure in Jesus because He paid the price for you. He died on the cross. He shed His blood for my mistakes, for my errors, and so that is available to every single one of you. It's available to me if we will receive it. Again, proclaiming Jesus as Lord, that seems easy. Okay, I'll say it, okay, I'll believe in the resurrection. But when you proclaim Him as Lord, if you truly know what that means, if you truly understand that, it means that you are giving up control of your life.

You're saying, "I no longer do the things that I want to do simply because I want to do them. I'm going to do the things that He asks of me." And I wish I could tell you it's always easy, that there's no pain, there's no heartache. I can't tell you that. That's not true either. What I can tell you is in the midst of the pain, in the midst of the hurt, you will have a peace that Scripture says that surpasses understanding. You will make it through, and He will bless you through that. Maybe you're here today and you say, "Pastor, that's great."

I've already received Jesus. I've already proclaimed Him as my Savior. I'm living my life for Him." Well then today, for you and for me, don't we have a lot to be grateful for? Don't we have a lot to celebrate, to offer praise to God that He would overlook all of my mistakes, all of the hurtful things that I've said, all of the hurtful things I've done, so that I can have a relationship with Him, and so that I can move forward doing my best to love others well to the best of my ability, this new command that Jesus has given us, not so that I can earn His favor.

I already have His favor, but I do it because I love Him and I know it's what's best for Him and for me and for others. And so we offer this gift of love to others. Let me pray.

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for the sacrifice of Jesus to know that you sent Jesus with the intended plan and purpose to die on that cross for my sins, for my mistakes, so that I could be forgiven, so that I could be

made holy, so that I could be made righteous before you, not because of my own efforts, but because of what Jesus did.

Lord, if there is anyone here, anybody listening or watching that hasn't proclaimed you as Lord, I pray right now that Your Spirit would open eyes, open ears to hear from you, to believe the truth of who you are, that they would ask you to come into their hearts and into their lives. Thank you for loving us. Thank you for the opportunity we have to live for you.

May we be obedient to the best of our abilities and may we love others well. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.