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The Faithful Practice of Rebuke

Titus 2:15

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Key Points from Sermon:

The Five Aims of Discipline

- **Expose:** Discipline aims to bring hidden sin to light
- **Warn:** Beyond exposing, it serves as a compassionate warning to turn away from sin and back to the Lord.
- **Save:** The ultimate goal is to save the brother or sister by bringing them to repentance.
- **Protect:** Discipline protects the wider church body from the spread of sin.
- **Witness:** It presents a distinct and good witness for Jesus to the world, preserving the credibility of the church.

The Five Steps for Enacting Church Discipline

- **Start small:** The process should involve as few people as possible, beginning with one-on-one private confrontation.
- **Leadership involvement:** If the process moves beyond individuals, church leaders should take the lead.
- **Patient assessment:** The duration depends on how long it takes to establish that the person is characteristically unrepentant.
- **Presume innocence:** Individuals should be given the benefit of the doubt until evidence indicates otherwise.
- **Congregational involvement:** Leaders should involve and instruct the congregation only when appropriate.

Transcript of Sermon:

At this time, if you will take your Bibles and turn with me to Titus chapter two.

Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Isn't it a blessing to sing of the blood of Christ? It is for the blood of Jesus that we are here. And if you picked up in that song, it is his blood which makes us white as snow. What a righteous position that Christ puts us in. All from his work, all from his love and obedience to the father. And if you're a Christian, as you're here today, you live according to this promise. If you're not a Christian, but you're here today, man, we're glad that you're with us. And it is our hope that you too will be white as snow as you trust in the blood of Jesus.

If you need a Bible, there's some pew Bibles around. You can grab one of those. Turn to page 998. You will be in Titus. We are taking our time through Titus. You think? How could you take so much time through a small book? Well, I think it's just helpful for us to slow down and work through words like rebuke. And so we're looking at verse 15 in particular today, really just one word rebuke. But we're going to go back to verse 11. Give us a little bit of context for our message today.

So Titus chapter two, starting in verse 11, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession, who are zealous for good works. Declare these things, exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you."

Let us pray.

Father, you are good. We trust you. We fear you, and we draw near to you this morning. Thank you as a good father for when you discipline us, your children. Your discipline is meant for our correction and purity and holiness to draw our eyes back to Jesus, to live according to your word, to trust your promises, to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for good, godly discipline, Father. There are times in which you show your discipline through the gathering of the saints, as the church is called to look after one another. We are living and breathing an active body. We're not a building made of brick and mortar, but we are being built one upon another, the kingdom of God to reign forever under Christ our King. With this great truth, we are to care for each other. And when we see one another running to sin, openly embracing sin, choosing to live in rebellion instead of pursuing righteousness, we are called. To give correction. Rebuke. No, discipline seems to be enjoyable in the moment, but if it is godly, it is good according to your word. It produces fruit growth and healing. This is our desire. Lord, please

empower your servant now to preach your word as it is, to add nothing to it and to not take anything away. To you be the glory. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Thank you. May have a seat.

The faithful practice of rebuke is the title of today's message. Rebuke may sound like a bad word to you. It may sound scary or intimidating, and sometimes it is. But it can actually be life saving. And that is our hope as we look to the text today. But maybe you would prefer the faithful practice of mind your own business or look the other way. Sadly, that seems to be the case in much of the church today. It is easier to let someone just go live however they want to live, as long as they're not our problem anymore. Now that's not good and faithful shepherding.

We're discussing those who are church members, those who have made the good confession that Christ is Lord and His Savior, that he is their King. And when you are brought into the church, as we looked at last week, you have been purchased by the very blood that we just sang about a few minutes ago. Christ has purchased every member of the church. He's paid for them in full. And as he pays for the members of the church, there is an expectation placed upon each and every one of them, from young to old. It is a life of holiness. It is a pursuit of godly living before the one who has saved us. And when you join a local church, we said it acts as a passport showing forth that you are members of the kingdom of God throughout the world. But joining a local church, you're saying, I want accountability. I want somebody to challenge me in the faith. I want to walk closely with Christ because I am his forevermore.

But we also receive plenty of instruction that in the church we are to look after one another. And if we see a brother or a sister who wanders away, we are to go after them. There are correct steps that need to be taken, and that's what we're going to look at today.

So there's two parts to this message. The value of rebuke. And then how would we enact church discipline here at Perimeter Road Baptist Church?

Hebrews 12, verse 11 says, for the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. And all the children in the room said, Amen. It's not fun to be disciplined by your parents. And if your parents are godly and love the Lord, then I think they can truthfully say it's not fun to issue you discipline. But when it's done in love, it's meant to correct. When you no longer are listening to the words and so you must receive discipline to gain, capture, take hold of your attention so that you will begin to listen to the words of instruction once again. And it's the very same thing for the church. When a member strays and goes headlong into sin, there comes a time when they are no longer heed. To put it back onto the Word of God, for does no good to approve of their sinful behavior, for in that approval they continue to stray.

And this is where it may be confusing at times when we're talking about who are those who are truly Christ, and can you lose your salvation? The short answer to that is no, you cannot lose that which has been given to you. But when someone says they're a Christian, all we have to go

on at the time is their first, their testimony. And then you watch their actions. So when a child comes to faith and places trust in Jesus, makes the good confession and is baptized. The encouragement is praise be to God. Now we will watch and see. Will you continue to follow him? That's the instructions in the word. It is very dangerous for us to say; hey, I prayed a prayer, I got baptized, now I'm good. Like I will be in heaven. And then you go and live a life however you so choose. But you stand upon that confession when you were younger. But there's been no act of repentance since. There's been no fruit bearing since then. That means there's a lack of sanctification. There's a lack of spiritual growth. There are alarm bells that go off that says, "whoa, hey, stop!" Why aren't you growing in Christ? Why do you not serve King Jesus? Are you truly in Christ?

We ought to ask that question. When we see a brother or sister who is straying from the Lord. It could be very well the case that they fell to easy believism. At one time they prayed a prayer, they got baptized. And so they thought that they were a Christian. But there's been no true repentance and a desire to follow King Jesus.

Question for you today: do you desire to follow King Jesus? Are you following the King? Are you trusting his lead? Is your life fully his? That's the questions we should be concerned about.

So when it comes to discipline, let us see discipline, rebuke the encouragement.

First, discipline aims to expose.

Discipline aims to expose sin like cancer, loves to hide how devastating the news can be. When you visit the doctor and they say, we need to share something with you. We have found a tumor and it has grown to a significant size. You had no idea it was there, but it was tucked away growing for months, possibly years. Sin can hide in our lives. We can hide our sin from others. You know, I ask this question. I'll ask it today in our membership class. So I'll go ahead and give you the answer. What's the very first thing that Adam and Eve did once they ate the fruit? And here's the number one answer that we receive. They hid. Uh, that's not the first thing they did. It's the second thing they did. The first thing they did is they covered up with fig leaves. They covered. They hid their nakedness. And that's what we can do with sin. We hide it. We don't want to expose. And we fall to the lie of thinking that we can keep it hidden and nobody will notice. It will never impact our lives. But we couldn't be further from the truth.

Because here in this church, you in Christ, have the freedom over sin. But if you so choose to embrace sin, you do not have power over that sin. You have freedom to not commit the sin. But if you embrace the sin, sin will rule over you in the moment.

You can't take sin and hide it away, thinking that no one will notice. And as long as no one notices that you're safe, that you're all right. As long as it don't bother anybody else. What's the big deal? Okay, well, sin will continue to grow as you keep it hidden. Discipline exposes the cancer, the sin so that it might be cut out quickly.

Now, I want to use a supportive text today. If you'll turn to first Corinthians chapter five, first Corinthians chapter five. That will be our support text today. That goes right along with this word rebuke that Paul is speaking to Titus, to Crete. And I want you to hear what's going on inside the church. This isn't what's going on in the community. This is the church. When Paul is addressing the bad behavior and corruption of the Corinthians, he said, it is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you and a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans. For a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant, are you not? rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you? What Paul is addressing here to those in Corinth is to say, you're committing a certain type of sin that even the world doesn't commit. Even the world would not give their approval towards. And so with discipline, it is to expose this sinful behavior. Sin will send us into hiding. And one way that we see the effects of this hiding away sin is through church absence. Once you begin to entertain sin in your life, you allow it to stay there. It distances you from God. You don't want to read your Bible. You don't want to pray, and then you stop coming to church. That's what sin does. It separates, it divides. It does not usher you closer to the will of God. And so you begin to see a brother or sister who is part of the congregation, and they're no longer attending regularly.

Now, when you talk to them, they'll have plenty of reasons of why they're not here. But the concern is that if you're a member of a local church, one of the very first requirements is that you will attend and attend faithfully, to be here, to rejoice and to celebrate every Sunday gathering the resurrection of Christ, that we are his people and we are alive forevermore. But there are many reasons that can keep us from. Let's go with this example. Attending church. It can be any type of addiction. And before we quickly run to alcohol or over consumption of food. We can have overconsumption with many good things on this earth. Things that we would love for our families to be a part of. It's just we enjoy it a little too much. We partake of it too often. But then when you look up, you realize, when is the last time that I've been in church? Wouldn't it be interesting if I said, hey guys, I'm going to take off the next six weeks? I'm not going to be here. Just got some family stuff going on. It's all good. You say, are you going to do that, Brian? On your sabbatical? Yeah. But you would think, no, no you can't. You're to be here to preach. And in the same way you are to be here to worship, to gather. It's not different for the shepherds as it is for the sheep. The people of God. And so there are many things that can draw us away from the church and for whatever good excuses we have. And I'm not going to start naming whatever it could be, but whatever excuses we have, the concern is the longer you're away from the church, the greater the danger.

A few years ago, we would look at those who were a part of community group, our gatherings at 9:00, also known as Sunday School, to you old school folks. And we would examine nine weeks per church member. So for nine weeks we would look at your attendance and we would see if you missed more than three weeks then we'd want to follow up. And it was interesting when we would talk to church members and we would say, hey, just want to call you just wanted to check in and see how community groups are going. Oh, it's going great, man. We love it. Hey, have you been faithful to coming? Yes I have. Well, hey, I just wanted to let you know, unless you haven't been checking in. Um, you missed the last six out of nine weeks. Have I really? Yeah, but to that person, they thought they were being faithful. Now, if you follow that trend for the

whole year, they would miss two thirds of the year while thinking that they're being faithful. Now, there are times of sickness. There are times of travel. We're not going to be legalistic in this approach. The point is, is that sometimes we don't realize the effect that sin is having on us. We think that we look faithful or that we're being faithful until someone approaches us with a godly heart to expose our inactivity. And this could go for all areas of sin.

Second, discipline aims to warn not just to expose.

And understanding when it comes to exposing. It's not exposing everybody's business out in public. It should be done privately, but then when you go to them, it also aims to warn, hey, come back into the fold. Hey, that which you are embracing that behavior. You don't have to live that way. Turn from it. Trust the Lord. A church does not enact God's retribution through discipline. Rather, it stages a small play that pictures the great judgment to come. Last week I showed you a book on church discipline from nine marks. That's where these points are coming from. It's a great statement. It's a small play that's being enacted of what will come in the future. So what is discipline? Discipline is a compassionate warning. It's to say, hey, get right with the Lord. Don't keep going in that direction. And you may think I don't. I don't want to be a part of a local church that will warn me when I'm in sin. What growing Christian who follows King Jesus would not want a warning when you are actively rebelling against God. If you honestly say to yourself that you don't want that, then you need to ask yourself that question.

Why? Would you rather go to a local church that you can hide in and mind your own business and continue in sin? I hope that's not your desire, and I do want you to know that's not the direction that we're headed in. Why? Because we love the church. We want you to be loved and cared for, to offer compassionate warnings when they are needed. Word gets back that your behavior at work is one of foul language, harshness, abuse towards your employees or those whom you work with. Hey man, I know that you say you love the Lord, but I've had multiple people come to me and tell me that your behavior out in the marketplace does not reflect Christ. Is this true? Yes. It's true. Man. Turn from that. Who would not want that? It's not friendly to offer the rebuke, but it's loving. It's loving.

Third, it aims to save.

It aims to save not only to expose and not only to warn, but to save a brother or sister. Church churches pursue discipline when they see a member taking the path toward death, and none other than their pleading and arm waving causes the person to turn around. When it comes to issuing church discipline before the local body, that means it's the device of last resort bringing an individual to repentance. So some of you asked the question this week after you heard the message last week, and I said, wait until this week. Let us let us unfold it all. Okay. You asked some really good questions. Are we going to start kicking people out of the church? No, that's not the goal. There's no delight or joy in that. But if there ever comes a time in a member's meeting where we need to bring someone before the congregation to say that this person has been pursued over and over and over again, and they have made it clear that they want nothing to do with the church. It is time that we take them off the roll. and follow what Scripture says and

hand them over. And Scripture says, hand them over to Satan in First Corinthians five. For what purpose? That there would be correction, that they would see the error of their ways, and they would turn back to the Lord. See Perimeter Road. What I'm preaching to you today, what I'm pointing out to you today has nothing to do with what Brian Anderson thinks the church should do. This is what God has clearly laid out for his church, because there was a great price paid for each and every one of you who were in Christ. So it's not up to us to flippantly go about how we want to live. We are to care. For each other. Verse five says in first Corinthians chapter five. You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. Do you see that the greatest concern is for your soul? That you would be saved by God's grace in the end. That you would turn from your ways and trust in what Christ has done to save you.

Number four discipline aims to protect.

So, moving from the individual who needs the correction, we now consider the overall church. Fourth, discipline aims to protect. Just as cancer spreads from one cell to another, so sin can quickly spread from one person to another. First Corinthians five, verse six. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Here's what's dangerous is when a Christian thinks he or she is getting away with their sin. That's a dangerous position to be in. And let me tell you how it's further dangerous when they're surrounded by other Christians and their lack of desire for living for the Lord begins to spread to others. I am firmly convinced, having lived a short 45 years on this earth, I know you're thinking you look too young for that, Brian. Yeah, no. 45 years on this earth, I'm convinced of this. The hardest groups to be a faithful, firm follower of Christ is not in the midst of unbelievers. It's in the midst of people who say they're Christians, but they don't want to live Christ like. Amen. Maybe you've been a part of it. Maybe you are a part of it right now. I am firmly convinced of that. They're the most discouraging, intimidating, harsh people who say they love Jesus, but they don't want to live for Jesus, and they don't want you to live for Jesus either. Because when you start living for Christ, it brings conviction in their life. And they would much rather enjoy the dullness, the apathy. What a danger. Be careful who you surround yourself with, but also to know in the church that if there is behavior like this that we see in First Corinthians five, according to the text, what Paul is saying is you need to get that man out right now, because what he's doing and boasting is he's impacting the whole body to think that this is okay. What things have happened in our culture in the last 10 to 20 years, that's made its way into the church to where we say, it's okay. I mean, what other choice do we have? Think about it. I mean, what can we do? We just don't have any other options. That's what happens when you allow the world to speak into the church instead of the church speaking into the world. That's what happens. That's when you feel helpless. And so Paul is saying, you don't have to feel helpless. Church. No. We want that repentance, but we also have to protect the flock. Care for the people.

Why? For **Number five, it aims to present a good witness for Jesus.**

That's why you've been saved in Christ's church. It's for the witness of Christ Jesus. Every day when you wake up is the opportunity to live for King Jesus, not for yourself. It's to die to those

things and to live as Christ every day. Church discipline, strange to say, is actually good for non-Christians. Because it helps to preserve the attractive distinctiveness of God's people. You know what lost people need to see? They need to see people who truly love Christ and follow his commands. Lost people don't want to hear about people who love Jesus but don't live for him. That actually frustrates many lost people. Many conversations I've had that says, you know what? I get what you're saying. Why don't I see that in the Christians who live in this town? There should be something rather distinct about you. I've used this example before, but it fits. You know, the expectation is that we would be here on Sunday mornings, that we would be in the gathering of the Saints. Now we do additional things during the week, like on Wednesday nights, we gather together for equipping and Bible study. And culturally, thankfully, over many decades, that's been acceptable in the South that you don't plan events, you don't plan sports and activities and everything on Wednesday nights, because there was an expectation that a lot of people would go to church on a Wednesday night until many started getting away from that. And we've had discussions about teams who play locally on a Wednesday night. And you said, I want to be at a quip, but my kid has this ball game. Um, and it's in a hara at 7:00. And so we're not going to be able to make it. What do we do? Well, if you're coaching, you get to go to your local rec department and you say, hey, I'm going to coach because I know you need them, but we're not playing on Wednesday nights. One I'm a pastor. I got to teach and I can't do that. Well, you know that if we if you miss that game, it's going to be a forfeit. Yeah. Put a forfeit on there. Go ahead, because you're going to have 11 parents that are going to call you and they're going to be upset with you. And I go, okay, yeah. You're right. And so then you further conversation by saying, I just, I just want to ask you about chance. And I had this conversation with one of our leaders at the rec department. I just want to ask you, has anybody from any local church come to you and requested that you guys not schedule games on Wednesday nights? He said, Brian, I can honestly tell you there's not been a single one. Not a single one. What about the Sunday afternoon games? Not a single one. Okay. And look, if you're if you're faithful to the church house and you go and you're here, then the rest of the weekend, enjoy. I get that. But the point is this nobody, according to this person, has gone and said, have you considered this? Because we sure do complain about it a lot. That type of mindset, when we get frustrated with what's going on, what the world needs to see are Christians who would step up and say, hey, this is really important to us. We want to make a request that you not schedule this. It's just one example. But if we don't speak up, they don't know. Amen. They don't know. And look, sports is just one of hundreds that we could talk about. But think about what you do on a day to day basis and the people that you interact with, the people around you. One do they know that you're a Christian? Two do they see Christ like behavior in you? Because we're to present a good witness for Jesus. And so if there's someone in the local church who says, I no longer want to live for Jesus, and we bring church discipline to that individual. It's for the name of Jesus, first and foremost. First Corinthians five one. And a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans. Lord, save us from being the ones who drive the world into further sin. But may we be a people that point their eyes to Jesus, the light of Christ.

Now I want you to hear this. I'm not standing before you today telling you that I've got all this figured out. I'm not pridefully saying these things. This. This is tough to be the brother who's up before you today speaking these things, because I face it too. We all face this, which means we

have to be honest when we hear this message. You shouldn't be thinking about anybody else right now but yourself.

So these five areas are why discipline is good.

Now, how would we carry this out in today's local church? It's a good question. We are to strive for meaningful membership, meaningful membership. Another way of saying it is your membership. It means something. If you're a member at Perimeter Road, you have something to give. Amen. Oh come on. If you're a member, a perimeter road, you have something to give. Amen. Okay. You do? Are you giving? Are you contributing? Are you using the gifts the Lord has given you meaningful membership, which means, hey, there's an expectation upon me that I serve, I give, I love, I teach, whatever the gifts you have, you use them. So how will we carry out this meaningful membership to somebody who's not living for the Lord?

All right, now, I want you to know these five steps are not carried out in one week. These five steps are not carried out in one month. Possibly these five steps will take longer than a year to go through. Does everybody hear that? We're not talking about in a day, in a week or in a month, possibly a year, possibly a couple of years. These five steps.

The process should involve as few people as possible for yielding repentance.

Turning your Bibles to Matthew 18. Matthew 18. As few people as possible for yielding repentance. Can one person go to confront another? Let him do it. Let her do it. As few as possible. Matthew 18, verse 15. If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. It's private. It's not time to go. Tell everyone this person's issue. You see that there is a problem. There is a concern. You hear that? Hey, you hear that? They're not speaking well of their spouse again and again and again. And you go to them and say, hey, I need to talk with you, man. You haven't been talking well of your spouse lately. How are things going? Hey, man, I hear when we go on our round of golf, man, your language has really gotten out of hand lately. What's up? One on one. Man, I see that you're getting really angry. In our conversations, the smallest things really set you off. Are you okay? Is everything all right? Is there something you need to share with me? Can I be praying for you? One on one. Private conversations should involve as few people as possible. Which means that if it's this kind of heart, then it's not about your name. It's about Christ's name and why you would confront someone.

Number two, when the process moves beyond one or several people, church leaders should lead the process.

We continue to read. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. Oh, what a blessing. That's what we want. That's what we want. Gain a brother. But if he does not listen, take 1 or 2 others along with you. That every charge may be established by the evidence of 2 or 3 witnesses. This goes back even to the Old Testament of God's people and having witnesses around. And you need evidence. They're not listening to you one on one. Hey, man, mind your

own business. Hey, man, go get a life. Hey, man, I don't need you butting into my marriage. Okay, well, then you go to them again and they continue to resist. You go to them again. They continue to resist. Hey, I need a. I need a brother. Hey, man. Listen, here's the situation. We need to go talk to fill in the blank. We need to really press in on what's going on in his life. And man, he's resisting me. Maybe if we bring someone else, as we see in the Bible, that he'll listen. Okay, so here's a witness that goes along privately. Privately. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. Man, that seems so abrupt, doesn't it? It just seems like, oh, we have one conversation. And then here. Two. Three. Hey, church. Guess what? No, you don't immediately jump to that third phase. Why? Because it is a really big, important deal when you bring someone's name before the gatherings. It's a last resort, but it's when you don't see it going any further with the people who have approached him or her, the church leaders should lead the process. So when you go to a pastor, when you go to an elder and you say, hey, we need your help. I've been trying to work with this person one on one. I need you, the two of you go.

And then number three, the length of the process depends on how long it takes to establish that a person is characteristically unrepentant.

That's what you're looking for. If they're if they're not willing to repent of open and known sin. Listen. Somebody come. Pause right here. Somebody comes to you and your accountability group and they say, hey, I need you to pray for me because I looked at something this week online that I shouldn't have looked at. Will you pray for me? That's not what we're talking about. Where you go, oh, I need to go tell the church. Right. No. That's confession. That's someone who's repenting. That's someone who says, hey, man, I, I fell this week. I had a very weak moment this week. That's repentance. They're seeking repentance. What we're looking here is that someone who is unrepentant, who does not want to turn. So the length of the process depends on how long it takes to establish that a person is characteristically unrepentant. It's multiple visits. It may be multiple elders that are called upon to approach this person.

Number four, individuals should receive the benefit of the doubt until the evidence indicates otherwise.

Individuals should receive the benefit of the doubt until the evidence indicates otherwise. I hope you see the love in this and the care and the patience. This is not rush judgments being made. This is not how can we embarrass someone? No. This is. How can we help save someone? How can we be such a genuine community that's different than anything else in this world that we don't give up on one another. And so receive the benefit of the doubt until the evidence indicates otherwise.

Number five leaders should involve and instruct the congregation as appropriate.

So if it comes to a time that you need to inform the church, then you will do so. But after much patience, much pursuit.

Let me give you an example that I've seen this play out at another local church. There was a young lady who was committed to a church. A member joined went through the membership class that I'm going to be active and I love the Lord and and I want to serve in the local church. I want to become a member here. And then there was a time in which she took a job overseas. Now, the elders of this church knew that she was moving. And before she left, they said, hey, the encouragement we want to give you as you remain a member here at this church is that when you go that you will go find a gospel preaching church there overseas, and that you will join that church and that you will be an active, faithful member so that you'll continue to grow in Christ. Will you be committed to this? Yes, I will. She moves. She goes there. After one month, she gets a phone call from one of the elders. Hey, just wanted to check in. How's everything going? Have you gotten settled in? Yes, I have. Oh, I love this place. The community is great, and I've been checking out some local churches. Good. Well, we hope you find one. We're praying for you. Two months later, someone from the church, a friend reaches out. Hey, how are things going? Great. Hey, how's it going? Looking for local churches right now? Well, I'm still searching. Still still looking through. Fast forward six months. Still the same answer. Fast forward a month. A year later. It's been one year since she moved overseas. She's a faithful member, still on role at this local church. And they care for her. Hear this. They care for her soul. Not just because she's a number within the congregation on a Sunday morning, so that that pastor could go with his other pastor buddies that week and say, hey, we had 551 people here. No, they care for her soul. So they reach out to her and she says, you know what? I haven't found a church. And I don't know if I really want to. I said, well, what do you mean? Well, I'm not quite sure if I'm believing God's word, but you made the good confession and you want to follow Jesus. Tell us more. Well, I don't want to tell you any more right now. I'm not interested. Two months later, another elder called to say, hey, how are you doing? Hey, I've already told you guys, I'm not interested. In fact, I live overseas now. I am far away from you. I don't I don't care to hear from you anymore. Hey, do you still hold to that good confession that you're a Christ follower? I don't think I do. In fact, I don't even know if there's a God anymore.

This is the direction this person was going. This was the care that one local church took for someone who's, who's not even there on a Sunday morning, but living over across the world, yet they still care for her. And so this is a church that has regular members meetings on a Sunday evening, once a month or once every other month. And after two years of pursuing this sister in Christ, or who they thought was a sister in Christ, wanted to be a sister in Christ, after two years, they let her know, listen, we're going to send you a letter, and it's with heavy hearts that we're going to need to take you off our roll, which means that we no longer have confidence, based on your own testimony that you're a follower of Jesus. And according to this scripture, it is our hope and desire that you will turn and look to Christ. Please look to Jesus. She says, do whatever you need to do. And I was there the night that we sat in that member's meeting, and I listened to these elders explain this with great patience and heavy hearts. And there were a couple of questions from the members who asked about her, and some who even gave testimonies that I tried reaching out. She wouldn't respond. And here's what they said. Hey, tonight we want to let you know that in two months, we're going to call upon the church to give a vote that she will no longer be on our roll, and she will no longer be seen as someone who follows Christ. But our prayer is that she will soon look to Christ and follow him. Two

months later, they voted and they took her name off the roll. That was two years and two months.

This process that I just explained to you, and why I'm taking my time. Sharing it with you this morning is because it can easily be misinterpreted that we're ready to start casting judgment. That's not what church discipline is about. Church discipline is to save a life. It's to save the congregation. It's to be a genuine group of people who have been redeemed by Christ. I hope for each and every one of you who are here that are members. They would never come a day when we would have to say to Perimeter Road Baptist Church, this person no longer wants anything to do with the church. Sadly, we have to bring this before you, but it's here for our instruction.

And, you know, many times you have come to us elders and you have said this. We really appreciate how you guys preached the word. And man, we appreciate that too. But we would be cowards if we didn't preach this. We don't want to be cowards. We want to be faithful. We want the world to see a group of people that's so genuine, in love with Jesus, that has a type of love that the world does not know of. That is so attractive and so appealing that they're drawn to it. That there will be many people who are saved in Christ due to the faithfulness of the gathering of this congregation. That's what we see in the Scripture.

I am with this Hebrews 13:12. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. No one has suffered like Christ. You have not encountered a suffering that compares to the suffering which Christ took upon himself for you. Christian. No one has endured that type of suffering. The wrath of God placed upon him for many sinners. Why? In order to sanctify the people through his own blood. What is most important for you to hear today when we're talking about church discipline, is that all of us would appreciate that truth. At what cost? At what price did it take for you to become a follower of Christ? Not to waste your days, but to live each and every day to the fullest for the glory of God?

If you're not a follower of Christ. Would you trust today that Jesus suffered on your behalf, that he paid for your sins, that you commit willingly and unwillingly? He paid for your rebellion. One who is innocent yet went to the cross to pay for you. Would you trust this? Would you submit to King Jesus? Confess your sins to him today and call upon Him as Savior. Be saved from your sins and follow Christ. We would love to know that we would want to walk alongside you. We would want to see you baptized. Maybe you want to come talk to us in the back after the service. Or you can indicate on the connection card. I want to know more about following Christ. But if this is where you are, you're in church today as an unbeliever. But hey, you don't have to remain an unbeliever. You don't have to remain separated from God. Trust in Christ.

Show great appreciation for the price that was paid for you. And may we appreciate one another all the more. What we should be known for, first and foremost is our love for one another. And if we love each other. When the time calls for us to have difficult conversations, we will do so. Not because we're ready, but we're willing to care for each other in the most faithful ways for the sake of our souls to love the Lord.

Let's pray.

God. It's heavy to discuss discipline. Many times we don't discuss discipline with a smile. But it can lead to great joy. May this be known of us as we follow your word. May every member here at Perimeter Road hear this message and have appreciation that they could be a part of a congregation that would truly love them, to challenge them and be challenged. Help us to grow in our learning and understanding of church membership and church discipline in the months ahead. That we will be known as a people who love you and love each other and are faithful until the end. To you be the glory. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.