

The Perfect Christmas Tree

Alright, we are still on a mission. We have been going through Jesus is a sermon on the plane for the last couple of weeks and we are in a series called On Mission, because when Jesus invites us to follow him, he invites us on a mission. And so today we're going to be looking at what I think is one of the more important topics. And it's one of the most interesting topics because it kind of separates us from the rest of the world, and it separates us sometimes not in a good way, and what I mean by that is this, this topic we're going to talk about today. There are some people outside of the church that have never been inside of a church, that get this right and that understand this is who the church is supposed to be, but yet inside the church we struggle and disagree. Today we're going to talk about judgment. Now I'll tell you that judgment for me, has been a hard topic, because there are times in my life where I have been judged by people and it has affected really my well-being for quite a bit. It's been hard to get past. There was a time about 10 years ago where we had a few families in our church and they left our church and before they left they invited me over to their house and they simply wanted to let me know why they were leaving. I guess that was a courtesy and the reason was I was not a good preacher and it was just one of those things that I always can use work. But it was so hard to hear them say you know, we love this church, but the preaching you're just, you struggle preaching. And the hard part about that was I think about it now and I wonder do they still when they think of this church? Do they think of me 10 years ago? And I hope I've improved in the last 10 years. I hope I've gotten at least a little bit better. But the truth is it's hard when someone writes you off. It's hard when somebody makes a judgment call of something you did or something you were for a moment in time and that sticks with you for the rest of your life.

I was recently talking to one of our church members and they said I had an interesting experience. They told me they said they were going to invite somebody to our church and this person said hey, I will never go to that church because somebody at that church was playing basketball with me and they elbowed me in the nose and gave me a nose bleed and they didn't say they're sorry. And we did some deduction and we realized that really it was somebody in leadership and it was somebody that played basketball a lot at the rec center 10 years ago, and it was me or Joey, and so Joey was not playing basketball 10 years ago and all of a sudden I realized, wait a second. So there's somebody who to this day will not walk into our church because I apparently send against them and I would apologize, but I guess I had an opportunity and I missed it. And so now, even though this was at least 10 years ago, I still wonder, man, it hurts me to think that 10 years later I did something and it's being, and if that person were to come in, I would say I'm sorry, I would own it. I would say, listen, I was probably, if you catch me on the basketball court 10 years ago, there's a good chance I was still working out my salvation with fear and trembling. So it's hard when we are judged, because judging is this, this weird thing that even society knows is a bad thing. In fact, we've actually created now a mascot of judges.

Right Now there is a mascot. They are called Karen's. Everybody have heard of a Karen. Have you ever been called a Karen? My, if you don't know what a Karen is, do not search Karen in the wild, do not search Karen being crazy on social media, because you will get a plethora of examples of people being overly judgmental, stepping in and just deciding.

Today is the day where I get to be right. Today is the day where I get to tell somebody they're wrong and it's a whole thing called a Karen. And in fact, my kids gave me some more lingo. Do you know what a male Karen is called? There's a lot of things.

I've heard that what my kids tell me is it's Kevin. Okay, you're a Kevin, and it kind of hurts me because we have Kevin's in the church right, and so I'm like, oh, that's kind of mean. Here's the thing Every Karen I've ever known and every Kevin I've ever known have actually been

great people. They've never actually been a Karen, they've never actually been a Kevin, but that name is kind of a mascot now, because we all recognize that being judgmental goes against how things are supposed to be. You're not supposed to make a judgment. Call on somebody at one point in time and let that stick to them their whole life. And even those outside of the church know this.

But yet, time and time again, when a survey or a poll is taken of those that don't believe in Christ, of those that don't come into a church, when they're asked to say what words describe those inside the church, what is the word that comes back? Judgmental? They are judgmental. So today I want to kind of wrap around. Why do we in the church sometimes get labeled judgmental, when all of us are going to hear the words of Christ? Do not judge. When we judge someone, basically it's us either elevating ourselves or knocking someone down so that we can have a better standing. And I would just want to point out the mission of this church and every church, the way we say it at this church is we want to leave people from where they are to where God wants them to be. We want to take them on a horizontal journey, because I cannot make you a better person, I cannot make you a worse person. I can simply lead you from where you are to where God wants you to be. That is the role of our church. It's a horizontal destination, but yet when we judge, we try to make vertical, we try to do what only God can do, and so today I hope this will be the most encouraging message you've ever heard on being judgmental, on judging others.

And I want to give you some context of where we're going in this sermon because, if you are new here, we've been in a sermon that Jesus has been preaching and it's probably the most radical sermon ever preached in the history of the world, in any religion. It is very, very hard to wrap your mind around. Last year or last week, we talked about love your enemies. How many of y'all nailed that this week? It is a hard, hard sermon. It is radical. It's one that even inside the church, even as Christ followers, we try to rationalize our way out of, and today is no difference. So here's the context I want to give us. I'm gonna be in verse 37 of chapter 6 of Luke. It says judge not and you will not be judged. Condemn not and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Given it will be given to you. Good measure Press down, shaken together, running over, will be put in your lap. With a measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Jesus, in this sermon that, right following the idea of loving your enemies, he then says judge not, do not judge. And he gives this kind of law of the land called the law of sowing and reaping. And it's not karma. The Bible does not preach or teach karma, this, this magical, just force that will even everything out. Instead, what the Bible teaches is if you so, if you continue to so, you'll become the type of person that sows that and you will eventually reap. The same way, if you want to garden and you continue to sow Tomatoes, you continue to sow a certain type of plant, eventually you'll reap those types of plants. It's not magic, it's just simply the way the world works. And he says not only are you going to reap what you are sowing, but it's also going to come back to you, press down, shaken together. In other words, you're gonna get at the maximum amount, you're gonna get as much as you can, because you're the type of person that is sowing that into the world. And so he says make sure you know what you're sowing. Judge not, or you're gonna reap judgment. Condemn not, you're gonna reap condemnation. And then he says hey, forgiveness, you can reap forgiveness if you forgive. Giving generosity, you can reap generosity? How? By being generous. If you reap, if you sow it, you'll reap it.

But here's the riddle I want to give us for the context, because some of us in our minds are thinking wait a second. Technically, isn't every decision we make a judgment call? I mean, we go through our, our entire life, everything we do, what am I gonna wear today? I'm making a judgment call. Do I look good in this? Do I look fat in this? Do whatever it is, I'm making a judgment call. Is that what he's talking about? We're making judgment calls. Do not judge

people. God is gonna judge people, is that? So why would he say don't judge, if he says, hey, everybody's gonna be judged? So when he says you're not gonna be judged, does he mean you'll never be eternally judged? And in the book of Hebrews, chapter 9, it says it is appointed for every man to die and then to face judgment. So what does that mean? Judge not, you won't be judged. And we've been told we're all gonna be judged.

There's a context here that I want to lay the groundwork for first, and that is this it's a riddle. Okay, there's a riddle, it's gonna. You don't have to answer out loud, but this riddle is gonna be different for all of us, but it might be kind of similar. Where is the only place for you that you can, no matter what is going on, you can screw up and not be judged for you? Where is that place where, if you make a mistake, it's not going to be eternally held against you? Where is the one place that you offend somebody, you do something against somebody and it's not going to be held against? They're gonna forgive you? Where do you find forgiveness, even when you don't deserve it? Another part of the riddle where's the only place that, no matter how much you give and give and give, you will always get more? I want you to think about that. Your answer is probably different.

It'd be great if you said connection point church. I would love that. But let's be honest. Here's the answer probably it's probably a relationship, it's probably a person for me, my parents. I'm telling you right now I could give them all the money I have, I could give them everything I have and I can never give them more than they've given me. I could go in there tomorrow and tell them hey, dad, sorry, even though I'm a grown man now, I wrecked the car. I, you know I did this. I did that. They would still forgive me. I just have parents that have this, this relationship with me, and it covers All of the things I screw up on. So the context I want you to understand.

When we're talking about the church, when we're talking about the gospel of Christ, is a relationship with God, okay, a relationship. In fact. We have a core value here relationship over religion. Relationship over religion is our core value because it is what we call the gospel. Relationship covers the rules in my family and in a healthy family and it may not be your family, it may be A friend group, it may be a group of people who have never sniffed a church, but you found a group of people and man, they just accept you and you feel as if, man, this is just great, they don't judge me and in that group, even when you screw up that relationship, they'll just say you know what, I know you're at the, I'm gonna forgive you and even though you may not deserve it there, the relationship will cover your sins. You'll never get kicked out. I can do whatever I've tried it seems like sometimes growing up to get kicked out of my family and I never got kicked out. I sometimes got punished, but I never got kicked out, and so the relationship of what we're talking about, or the context of what we're talking about, is a relationship with God.

The gospel and following Christ is never about rules, it's never about being good enough, and this is where we all get it wrong, and this is why judgementalism is rampant in the church, because many of us in the church don't understand the gospel. The gospel is a litmus test for the gossip, for for our gossiping I was not gossiping. Judgment is a litmus test for the gospel because it's saying to someone because of what you did or who you are, you are irredeemable, you are not good enough. And the number one giveaway that the nation and our churches have lost the gospel, have lost the, the meaning that Christ gave to the church of living out this relationship, is that we have become judgmental, we have become divisive and known for the things that we hate and are against, and so when we talk about this idea of judgment, this is what we're talking about.

When we size someone up, we size them up and then we write them off. You have a relationship where you draw a line and you said this person did this to me. I'm done with him. I'm walking away. That is the judgmentalism. It is not. Hey, I decided to make a judgment call today and do this. So how do you live a life that helps and corrects and confronts and does all

the things we do as Christians without judging? That's what we want to get to the bottom of today.

So we're going to go through the rest of this teachings and I just want to show you a few things that a judgmental spirit and I'm going to use the word critical spirit because I think that gets to the heart where a lot of us live we have a critical spirit about people in our own families, people in our own church, people at work and the people that we go and do life with. We have this critical spirit that will just write them off so quickly or knock them down a peg just so quickly, and for some of us it's our own family. So I want to show you three things that happen when we have a critical spirit, three things that can cause us to miss the gospel, to miss the intention of Jesus. The first thing is this Criticism, or a critical spirit makes critical people. A critical spirit makes critical people. There is a culture that is created when we are critical, a culture that infiltrates our churches and everything else that we're involved in.

This is what Jesus says in verse 39. He told a parable, he made up a story. Is what that means? Can a blind man and, by the way, just want to say this if you really this is actually supposed to be humorous it's not going to sound humorous Tonight. This is what I want you to do. I want you to read this and I want you to do your best. Old man voice, maybe an old Jewish man voice. I'm not going to do it here because I don't want to be canceled and judged for the rest of my life, but if you say it with that voice, it's kind of funny sounding. It's kind of a funny. Jesus is being funny. He's a Jewish man, using Jewish dry humor.

Here he says can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone, when he is fully trained, will be like his teacher. A blind man cannot lead a blind man and when you are eventually mature, you'll be like your teacher. So Jesus is telling us two things. He's asking you to kind of think about who are you leading and who are you following? Who are you leading and who are you following? All of us, in certain contexts, are leading people and we are following people. And if you are leading people with a critical spirit, it's going to have some repercussions. And if you are following people that have a critical spirit, that are judgmental, it's going to have some repercussions.

So, first of all, who are some of the people that you are leading? If you're at home and you have a spouse, you have kids. You are certainly leading your kids. You are certainly leading your spouse. I don't care if you're the husband or the wife. You are leading. You have a leadership role in this. If you are at work and you are an employer maybe you're just in an office that you are interacting and you kind of know the way that you bring whatever you bring to the atmosphere you're kind of the leader. They kind of follow your lead and you're a leader. It could be at school. You're at school and we all have that experience of there's always somebody at the cafeteria table. That's kind of the leader. You could be a leader.

And so you have to remember who am I leading? Am I leading with a critical spirit. Because if I'm leading with a critical spirit, what's going to happen? I'm going to fall into a pit. And who else is going to come with me? If I'm leading my family with a critical spirit, what is going to happen to my kids? They're going to fall into the pit with me. They're going to become critical like me. They're going to become like me.

And if I'm following, if I go into work and my boss is critical, my God, my boss has this spirit that just brings everyone down. Eventually, what's going to happen to me? I'm going to do the same thing. Jesus says You're going to become like him. If you are a child and you're always around your family and they're very critical, and you will decide I'm going to follow them. I'm going to follow them. I'm going to let them speak into my life. What happens? You're going to be critical. Let me just show you what happens. First is you're going to just copy. You're going to criticize others. Your kids following you. They're going to become critical. They're going to criticize others. But then, eventually, what's going to happen is not only are they going to

criticize others, they are going to begin criticizing themselves. When we have a critical spirit. It will first of all start with how we talk to other people, but eventually we will begin to criticize ourselves. Every critical person you know, I promise you, spends more time criticizing themselves, feeling not good enough because it was downloaded into them. It was put into them because they were following someone who is critical and eventually it will have a culture of criticism.

I think it's a sad statistic. How many hours of therapy could have been avoided had our parents or the people we grew up with simply had an encouraging spirit over a critical spirit? Let you have a couple of extra pounds without letting them know about it. Let you have a bad baseball swing and not have to have it be perfect. How much of our lives would be impacted if our parents probably did a great job? How much more important is it for us and the people we're leading and following to lead with an encouraging, not critical, spirit? Here's the big idea that I was thinking about. When we are in a critical culture, we will never remember all of the things we were criticized about. You will never remember all the things you were told to do better growing up. The only thing you will remember is you weren't good enough. That is a hard, hard lesson to learn. A critical spirit makes a critical culture. It makes a critical people.

I remember I was playing basketball as a youth minister back when I just got into ministry, and it was very interesting because as a youth minister or as a young man, I like to win. I like to win a lot, especially basketball, which we've already established. I was playing some kids that were very athletic and we were having a competitive game. I was trying to win but then all of a sudden, some fringe students, some students that didn't play basketball, didn't like basketball, but they were in our ministry for the first time and they were new and I just began to realize they want to play basketball. I invited them, they're on my team and very soon I realized you know what, I can't win this game and keep them engaged. I just began to quit shooting. I began to quit playing the way competitively and I began to just try to get rebounds and let them shoot and shoot, and shoot, and they began to have fun and I began to lose a little bit. But then an interesting thing happened. All of the athletic people began to say, you know what, I'm not going to block this kid's shot, even though I could send it out of the gym, I'm going to let him shoot, because I see what we're doing here. We're not trying to win, we're trying to let everyone win. You know, it's funny.

My wife had a comment yesterday that I had not even thought about. It just came to my mind as I'm talking. So we're at this 5k and we're walking, I got it. I got last. Jesus said the last will be first, so I won yesterday, and so we're walking, though, and Brandon Schweres, who used to go to this church we actually we lapped him because he, his kid kept stopping to pick flowers or to jump off stuff, and we just had this. And I was also walking with Phil, who tried to win it last year, by the way, phil Collins tried to win it last year and my wife just said you know, what was the sweetest part of this whole thing was seeing Phil and Brandon come in last, because their kids were more important now than them winning a race, and I thought, man, that's a great kind of picture of who we want to be.

The culture just changes when we, when we begin to realize, you know what, there's more important things than me getting lifted up. So if you're in here and you struggle with a critical. Maybe you grew up in a critical family and you're going to be at Thanksgiving with critical people and you know this. Here's what we do when we are critical. We repent. When we criticize and have a critical spirit, we need to repent. We need to simply say, god, I need your power to help me, to help me walk in a new path, and God's spirit will help you, god's people will help you, but it starts with this simple idea of I need to repent.

The second thing I want to show you is a critical spirit condemns both parties. A critical spirit condemns both parties. This is what Jesus says. Next he says why and again, a Jewish voice would make this much funnier, but I'm not going to do it. Why do you see the speck that is in

your brother's eye, but you do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother brother, let me take the speck that is in your eye, when you do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite. First take the log out of your own eye, then you will see clearly. To take the speck that is in your brother's eye Jesus's brother James. He compounds this, he goes even more into it. I just want to read this to you real quick.

In James, chapter 2, Jesus's brother says this if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scriptures, the royal law is you shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well. But if you show partiality, that is, you judge someone, he says you are committing a sin and you are convicted under the law as a transgressor. He says whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of it all. And he who said do not commit adultery also said do not murder. If you do not commit adultery but you do murder, then you have become a transgressor of the whole law. So speak and act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty, for judgment is without mercy to the one who shows no mercy. But mercy triumphs over judgment.

What he's saying is when you go to someone and you criticize them, and you criticize them so quickly and you never consider you're a sinner too, you could be criticized for some other point. In the same way, he says you are condemning not just that person, you are condemning yourself. You are saying to God I'm above judgment. My sin is not as bad as anyone else's, and God says if you have done one transgression, you are a sinner. So you are blaspheming, basically, to a God who says we are all sinners you and I know we are all sinners. Your sin is not worse than my sin. So when I criticize unfairly, I am writing off the potential of a person, I am writing off God's potential to do something in someone's life. I thank God for the grace this church has given me and the people that have been with me as I've become a pastor over the last 25 years, that they did not judge me based on some of the things I did and said 15 years ago, because some of us wouldn't be here. I wouldn't be here if I had been held to some of the mistakes I've made in the past.

We kill people's potential when we criticize, but we also condemn ourselves. We are saying, when we judge other people, my sin and that bad, and we're saying that in front of a holy God who has no sin. Now, what I want you to think, though, is there's an objection here, because some of us have people in our life that you look at them and you're like somebody needs to judge them. That's what you're thinking. Hey, somebody needs to tell these people some things, otherwise they're going to keep ruining their lives or whatever. It is Okay. So we should confront, but we do not judge.

Notice what he says. He says first take the log out of your own eye. But then he says but then go and remove the spec. So there's a way we confront, there's a way that we can do this and not be judgmental. How is that? How do we do this? Well, here's what I know.

There's two types of people. A lot of times, when we talk about confronting someone or correcting someone, there's one type of person that is real quick to judge. They're going to go in real quick and they're going to wave their finger. That's how we do it when we're really animated and we're going to just say you are this, this and this, and we're going to judge quickly. And when we do that, we're minimizing our own sin. But then there's some of us who will say you know what? I could never say something to them, because I know myself I'm a sinner too and I'm not worthy. I've made that mistake. I hear parents all the time that will say you know what? I could never tell my kids not to do that. How could I? Because I've done that and so we're so scared of being called judgmental that we'll never correct. And both of those are mistakes, because he's telling us listen, you've got to correct. So how do we do this?

The first thing I'll tell you is this is when I see someone who needs to be corrected, I need to speak inward before I speak outward. The first thing I have to do when I see someone who

needs to be corrected or someone who needs to have, I need to confront about a sin that they're struggling with. When I see that, I need to first of all go to my heart and say Joel, you are a great sinner for the Lord, you have done many things and I need to humble myself and recognize I'm not going to go to someone so that I can knock them down or I can elevate myself. Instead, I'm going to go to them and here's the key word I'm going to walk with them the same way that someone walked with me out of my sin Not judgmentally, but with the same. If we are in the same boat, that's far from where we are to where God wants us to be. We're all somewhere on our journey with God, and I may be a little ahead of you, I may be a little behind you, and all we need is for us to come beside each other and say listen, I'm not perfect, you're not perfect, but let's walk together out of our sins and struggle. But we lovingly have to correct people and this is what I want you to do.

This is so hard for me to portray to people walking in this church, because almost everybody who comes to a new church or to a church for the first time, something has usually happened. Maybe, maybe not, but a lot of us have been broken or experienced something. And we walk in here with this mindset that look at all these normal people, look at all these people that don't have problems, look at all these people with their life together. Man, I got to act like I got my church shoes on and my church face on Because I don't want them to know, because they'll judge me. They'll judge me, they'll judge me In the heart of this church. In fact, if you see this broken, I want you to come talk to me and I want to give you permission. If you see me breaking this, I want you to come talk to me, because here's what I want you to know we strive and strive and strive to see the potential of everyone and not be judgmental. That is our goal, and none of us are perfect at it. But in this church we want an environment where there is not a critical spirit, but there is an encouraging spirit, because this is what I know. This is hard for people to believe. You're the pastor. You're just judging. That's what you do. That's your professional judge. Some of you all think that's not the case. Here's the way I think about it.

In my life I've been very blessed. I have a great family that encourages me. I've got a church family that loves me and y'all have been so supportive. I can't tell you enough what a blessing it is here. I have struggled with sins my whole life. I have never been perfect, never claimed to be perfect. There are some sins that have taken me decades, and even multiple decades to overcome or even see somewhat of a victory in. And I have actually, if I go into work and I know I'm struggling with a sin, or I can actually say I'm taking this day out, I'm just going to spend time with the Lord, I'm going to get my. I have some advantages that you may not have. I have a family. Growing up, I was encouraged, I was never abused, I haven't been divorced, I haven't been left. There's so many things that I have not experienced that some of you have experienced, and I struggle with my sin. I struggle to fight every single day. How could I ever look at someone who has been through so much more than me your journeys for some of you that are in this room, just to get here is a victory of God how could I ever look at you and say, oh man, I hope you can get better. I hope you do.

The heart of this church, the heart of this church is we don't want to condemn you, because if we condemn you, we condemn ourselves. We are all guilty before a holy God, but thank God he has given us grace in a relationship that covers our sin. The last thing I want to show you is that a critical spirit corrupts my heart. If I allow criticism and judgment to be a part of my life, it is going to change my heart, and not for the better. You know people like this. You may have grown up with people like this. Jesus says this, for no good tree bears bad fruit, and nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not to be gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person, out of the good treasure of his heart, produces good, and the evil person, out of the evil treasure, produces evil. For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

Bill Parcellus was the coach of the Cowboys and after every game somebody would say to him hey, you almost won that game, except for the 14 fumbles. Right, and they aw, we're so close. And Bill Parcellus would always say do y'all remember what he said? He'd say you are what you are. He would always say you are what you are. We're a team that had 14 fumbles, we're an eight and 18,. That's who we are. We can't try to say that's not who we are. Jesus is saying listen, you are who you are. If critical spirits, every word you say coming out of your mouth is critical, but you're telling me oh, I'm a good Christian, you know what? I'm a good person, I'm good. Jesus is saying no, you are who you are.

So my question to us is what is coming out of our mouths when we serve in the kids, when we serve as greeters, when we serve in this church. What is coming out of our mouths? Not just to the people that are new and we're putting on our church shoes for, but what about the people that we're working with? Oh, here comes that kid again. Hopefully that's when my kids walk in. Hopefully that's not the first thing you say. Is that a critical? Because you are who you are.

Out of the mouth, the overflow of our heart is speaking. When your kids mess up at home, what do they expect to meet? Do they expect criticism? Do they expect to be written off? Do they expect it when your coworkers screw up? Or the people around you? Where do they come to you and say you know what I screwed up and they know that you're gonna meet them with forgiveness and encouragement. Or how do they know? Because you are who you are? So I wanna give us three kind of challenges to leave and then a big challenge overall.

Okay, some of us in here recognize you know what I've been leading or following and I've got a critical spirit and it's affecting my family. My marriage is as effective because I'm I mean well, but I'm critical. You know what my serving in the church. I mean well, I just want it to be better, but I've got this critical spirit. If that's you and you recognize, you're putting into your kids, you're putting into the people around you criticism and judgment that might affect them the way they view the church, the way they view their time at home. You need to repent, you need to get with God and you need to say God, I have been walking away, I've been critical and when I am critical of others, it's showing that I don't rightly understand who. I am my own sin and you need to just spend some time recognizing your struggle with sin and when you meet someone to help and walk with them, you're walking with them to help them the way somebody walked with you. If you're struggling with criticism, a critical spirit, you need to repent.

The second type of group I wanna talk to is those of us that are in here and we have seen someone that we need to correct, but yet we've walked away because we don't think we can actually correct them, because we know we are sinners. If that's the case, I want you and, by the way, if this is you, you probably know who you need to talk to. I wanna encourage you, then. At this moment I want you to understand it is our business, when we see clearly, to correct and walk with people. We first gotta deal with our own sin and come from a humble perspective. But we love does not walk away. Love does not let somebody struggle and struggle and struggle and never come and say I will walk with you. I've been where you've been, I will walk with you. Love corrects. We have to do it in the right way, but love corrects. So if there's somebody that you've been saying you know what, I'm not gonna go talk to them, I'm not gonna deal with it, they can just figure it out themselves. I wanna tell you you need to correct, you need to take the plank out of your eye and you need to go and you need to take the speck out of theirs.

And the last group I wanna talk to is that someone wrote you off. There are some of us in here where somebody came at us and they came and we judged them as a judgmental person. We said you know what? Because of the way they tried to correct me, because of the way they tried to confront me, they did it wrong and I am not gonna listen to what they said. I am not

gonna listen, and so I just wanna, by the way, say there is no perfect way to do an intervention. I don't know if you know this, if you've ever been.

One of the things that I do a lot as a pastor is I have to confront sin, and I've never had someone well maybe once or twice in the many times well somebody say you know what? That is the perfect intervention there. That is exactly how I wanted to be confronted on my sin. That's the perfect way. If somebody has confronted you on your sin, I want you to listen. I want you to, instead of judging and snapping your fingers back at them. That's what I always picture judgmental people doing. Instead of you having this attitude, I want you to listen and say you know what I don't know about their heart? I don't know, but what they said, there might be a kernel of truth. I want to receive that and I want to see if maybe I need to change, because here's what I know If you are defensive, defensiveness ensures that my past will define my future. Defensiveness ensures my life never changes, and so I have to, even if it's done the wrong way, even if it's not the person I wanted to do it. I have to be able to say you know what, I'm gonna listen. I'm gonna listen to this person and see what God is saying. But here's what I want you to think about as you go through these.

Wherever you are on that list, what would your marriage be like if you became known as the number one encourager in your family? What would your family feel like if your kids thought you know who my number one encourager is. It's mom, it's dad. They're my number one encourager. What would your workplace be like If, even in the chaos of whatever you're dealing with, everyone in your little sphere said you know who my number one encourager is. It's Bob over in cubicle four, whatever. Can you imagine how life changes if you simply go from being known as a critical person? How would our children's men are, wherever we are? How would it change if every one of us became known you know who the most encouraging person is. It's my Sunday school teacher. It's my small group leader. It's my mom, it's my dad. What would this community look like if just the 150 of us that come to this church were to become known as the most encouraging people in Wiley. It would change everything.

I believe, without a doubt, that God is doing something great in this city and it starts with us in our church, of repenting and saying you know what there's a work that God has for us in this community. Last week, I put together a 28 day challenge for you to love your enemies. I hope some of you have been, and I know in my connect group and my small group we've been praying for our enemies daily 28 days. December 10th is the final end of this challenge. You're hopefully, every single day, just pray for your enemies. Pray good things for your enemy, not bad things. I wanna add we got 21 days left. You can remember December 10th, we play the Eagles, so we're praying for our enemies. Okay, now, December 10th, I wanna add something to the challenge Every single day, what would it take to be known as an encourager?

What would it take if this church really became known as a church that is full of 100 and some odd people who are the number one encouragers? I guarantee you this would be a place where we can lead people from where they are to where God wants us to be. Let's pray, lord. I thank you for the heart of this church. I thank you for the people that right now are serving, and they're doing so because they love you and because they know there is a purpose to what we're doing.

We are changing not just a week for somebody, not just making this a good day, but, lord, by the way, we love those kids. By the way we love the people that are walking in to this church. By the way we love each other, even though we are broken and sinful and struggle every single day. Our eternities are changing. Our family trees are changing. Some of us come from broken homes and all of a sudden, our marriages are being restored. But let us never forget that the reason we do these things is because you first loved us, sent your son to die on a cross to cover our sins, so that we could have a relationship with you. Not one person in here is guilty before you when we call in the name of Jesus. Not because we are good, we won't face

judgment, not because we haven't done something worthy of being judged, but we have a Savior that is so great. He has covered our sins. Lord, just help us daily to encourage one another to follow you. Stay connected to you and Jesus. Then we pray amen.