



SEVEN DEADLY SINS

7 Deadly Sins: Laziness

October 23, 2022

Eddie Williams

Proverbs 6:6-10 and 26:13-16

Good morning, Church. Will you please stand for the reading of God's word. Today we'll be reading out of Proverbs Chapter 6, verses 6-10 and Chapter 26, verses 13-16.

"Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest." Chapter 26, "The sluggard says, 'There is a lion in the road. There is a lion in the streets!' As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed. The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth. The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly." This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

I don't quite feel like it anymore. Anyone got anything else to say? Naps? Yeah. Let's do naps instead. Hey, that was from the Bible, that scripture reading, and it's honestly, it's a little bit confusing and maybe there's questions, maybe it's hilarious. It's all of those things. We're going to need some prayer though. Let's pray that the Lord is with us as we attack something like this.

Lord Jesus, sloth, laziness is a subject that sometimes many of us don't think we have, but honestly, there's a lot in our hearts that is yet to be uncovered by you. And so I pray that this message would be an opportunity for that, for that mining to take place. And I pray for those of us that feel convicted even by that scripture reading-would they be ministered to, would the word of God, the Holy Spirit, make these words just sink into their heads where the seed comes. Anything that comes from me, Lord, would that just be discarded. But anything from you, would that be something that blooms in their hearts and minds. We love you and praise you. In Jesus name, Amen.

All right, this is kind of one you don't want to fall asleep in, okay? Because I feel like I have permission to call you out if you're sleeping. So stay awake. I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding. But seriously, I'll call you out. We often think sloth or laziness is kind of funny, right, as sort of evidenced by what we heard there. And it sort of is. Let's be honest, it's sort of funny. But we all have that, I don't know, lazy friend, lazy family member. It's not you of course, but somebody in your life that maybe is a little lazy, right?

But luckily for you, we have footage, we have footage and proof of lazy people. We actually have them on camera right here in their very living room. Check this out. This is the guy, he couldn't get up to bed because he was so exhausted-not from work, but from television, from food, from comfort, from the bar. And now he's sleeping under his dog and his daughter finds him there in the morning. Maybe that's you. Maybe you're feeling like, oh my gosh, I feel a little bit convicted by that. And some of you young people are like, what's this old, weird cartoon? I don't understand. Zinger! I saw one of the kiddos, let me raise their hand. That's the Simpson's kids. Okay, figure it out. Okay, this is a really important cartoon. It's cartoon history.

But let's say maybe this is you, but you figured it out. You know, you've got a routine, you've built a morning routine and you're going to start going to the gym. But the problem with the gym is that it's so far away. It's so far away. And you got to get there every morning. And that's just really challenging. But luckily for you, they have these fancy treadmills. And these treadmills, they have televisions on them. And so you can actually set them to as slow as possible and watch TV and drag your feet. But it's a workout because you're there and you get points for that. But maybe you cut the workout short and grab a smoothie instead, right? I mean, let's all forget the gym.

But let's say the reason why isn't that you're not going in the gym. Let's say it's because you're working from home all the time. By a show of hands, who here works from home at least part of the time. A good chunk of you, right? You work from home. It's hard. It's challenging. It's difficult. You don't get to commute anymore. You can't ride your bike, you can't walk, you can't take public transportation. You can't do any of those things. And so there's no opportunity for exercise there. And the hard part is at 8:00 AM your boss expects a zoom meeting, right? I don't get to commute anymore. I don't have to come in and be lazy. It's hard. But you've got to figure out how to take care of yourself in the midst of that, and how to get "me" time.

And so this is you here. You've figured it out. You've got your very old, PC for sure that's a PC. And it's sitting over there in the corner and you've figured out how to be able to watch soap operas at the same time. You use a broom, you've got your moo-moo on. You're cozy, you're comfortable, and your very funny hat, right? Hilarious. Maybe you're watching General Hospital depending on your age. Maybe you're watching somebody's Twitch stream, if you're 12, I don't know. Okay, you're doing that, but then you wouldn't be working from home, so, nonetheless.

If you study the Bible long enough, you realize that there's a plethora of diversity in the literary devices in the scripture. Okay? A lot of times the Bible talks very seriously. Sometimes it talks very lovingly. Of course we know both of those are in the Bible. But as you study long enough,

you actually realize how cutting, how sarcastic and how sometimes even mocking the scriptures can be. Now just to be fair and upfront, as we study sloth, we find the Bible has literally nothing positive to say about being lazy. Like nothing positive to say about it. Why? And oftentimes we'll see that God will mock those with his words who are slothful and physically lazy. Why does he do this exactly?

Maybe you're thinking, man, that seems mean to mock somebody. Why would God do that? Well, God is the author of seriousness. He's also the author of humor. He's the author of all emotions and he's also the author of what motivates us. Here's what you need to know. sloth and laziness absolutely stand in the way of us being who God has called us to be. So God will often use hard truths, sometimes in the form of mocking or humor, to motivate the slothful people, sometimes us into our calling, okay? Because he knows what motivates us.

But then that begs another question. Why on earth would we spend an entire sermon on sloth at Doxa? Why would we do that? Aside from the fact that it's part of the seven sins and we're trying to go through those, why would we do that? Here's why. Whether or not you're Christian, and let's say that you're here and you're not a Christian, or let's say you're here and you are, either way, a human being's primary motivation in life is often a striving for meaning. We want to matter. We want to belong. We want purpose. We long to know that-our meaning. We strive for meaning in family, work, and our spiritual lives. But sloth is often a barricade on the way to discovering that authentic meaning. Okay? So whether your form of sloth is a physical form of sloth or let's say it's a form of spiritual sloth, either way, sloth is a barricade in between you and where God is calling you. Okay?

So let me give you a couple questions. First, have you personally hit a physical roadblock where you feel unmotivated in your life, in your marriage, in your friendships, or your work-where you just feel like, I don't really want to do anything in regard to moving, I just don't want to do it. Well, you might be suffering from a form of physical sloth. That may be something that's attacking you. Another question, have you hit a spiritual roadblock where maybe you work, maybe you go to work, maybe you work out, maybe you hang out with your kids and you do all these things, but you feel unmotivated on your journey to know who God is. You don't feel like you have enough time. You've got so many things going that how could I possibly get to God.

If that's you, it's possible you have a form of spiritual sloth where your physical outside looks great, but inside we're lazy spiritually. Now, whether you are struggling physically or you're struggling spiritually, it's possible, Friends, that you will never find your created purpose and your meaning until you resolve the sloth in your life. You can make all the money you can. You can climb the corporate ladder. You can marry whoever you want. But if you're spiritually lazy, you'll never know God, and then you'll never know your purpose. You can get all the comfort you'd like. You can lay all across the couch. You can watch as much Netflix as you can. You can be as knowledgeable on World Warcraft or any other video game you possibly can. But unless you know God, you will not know your meaning and your purpose. Okay?

Thankfully, the Bible offers us an antidote. It offers us an antidote in order to know how to get this out of our lives, because we all have it somewhere, some form or fashion. But in order to get the antidote, we need to know what it is. And this is notoriously hard to define. And we also need to know where sloth hides. Okay, what is sloth? Where does it hide? How can I get rid of it?

Okay, let's go on that journey together. First part, what is sloth? Here's my definition for you. And just to be clear, just as a preface, this is a complex sin to define because it has so many facets. So we're going to have to spend some time walking through it. Okay? Here's a definition. Sloth is an intense desire for comfort, an aimless indifference or a loss of desire that leads to a failure to use one's abilities or fulfill a calling. I'll read it again. Sloth is an intense desire for comfort, an aimless indifference or a loss of desire that leads to a failure to use one's abilities or fulfill their calling. Okay? Now again, it's complex so let's unpack each part of this in succession.

First part, intense desire for comfort. Friends, sometimes sloth is as simple as you just really want to be comfortable, very comfortable, like comfortable all the time. Like, don't move comfortable. Like Snuggie and a TV dinner comfortable. Okay? Depending on how old you are, right? The show might change. Used to be "Murder she Wrote" or something like that, "Wheel of Fortune." Now what? You know, I don't know, "Ed, Edd, 'n Eddie", like what are the kids watching these days? Okay, you're watching something and you're watching it all the time. The Bachelor. The Bachelorette. You can't get off of it. Sometimes it's as simple as that. The Bible has much to say to someone, many of us, that finds themselves in the state of perpetual desire for comfort. You just want to be cozy. You don't want to work because work is friction between you and enjoying your life.

Proverbs 26:14 says, "As a door turns on its hinges so does a sluggard on his bed." I mean, that's funny. Imagine this door creaking open, right? That's what Proverbs is saying is like a sluggard, another word for someone who's lazy or slothful, turning over in their bed. Nice 'n slow. It's 11:45, not time to get up. I better turn over and get some shut eye. That's what the Bible's talking about. Proverbs takes a mocking tone when it's describing this sort of person, okay? This is the person that says, I'm not lazy, I just love sleep. I just love to be unconscious away from anything I'm supposed to do. Okay?

The verse continues, Verse 15, "The sluggard buries his hand in the dish and it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth." You know, real quick, I've taught this before and I got a lot of anger back at me last time I taught this several years ago because they were like, that's so rude, that's so mocking that you would judge other people for struggling. And listen, I understand. The problem is, that's a quote. I didn't say that. I didn't make that up. Take it up with God. I'm the guy that's supposed to stand in front of you and tell you this says the sluggard buries his hand into the dish and he's so exhausted he can't get the Dorito from the salsa back to his mouth. So he passes out of exhaustion, because, gosh, that's the third bag today. My wrists are wearing out. I'm getting carpal tunnel like I can't do it. This is too much work for me. That's the Bible. Okay?

Now, why is this a sin? This is a Seven Deadly Sin. Why is it a sin? The book of Proverbs is a book of wisdom. Some things we do aren't always sinful, they're just unwise, right? Some things could be sinful and unwise and some things could be very unwise, but maybe not necessarily sinful, right? I made the joke last week, you could drive a car with your feet if you want to- doesn't mean it's a good idea. Are you going to go to hell for driving a car with your feet? Not, maybe. But you're going to get in a car accident for sure. So we have to understand it through a different paradigm.

There are two types of sin-sins of omission and sins of commission. Maybe you've heard this. Sins of commission are things you do, sins you do. I rob a bank, I'm sinning. I steal. I verbally attack somebody, enact wrath on them. Okay? Sins of commission. Sins of omission are things I was supposed to do, but I neglected and didn't do. So for instance, First Timothy 5:8 says a man who does not provide for the needs of his family-he's denied the faith and worse than unbeliever. Okay? That means as a person in your family, if you don't care for your household, that's a sin of omission. That's a sin. It could be another sin like you have got children to take care of and you neglect them. You don't care for them-sins of omission. Laziness and sloth can be sin of commission, but oftentimes is a sin of omission. There are things you're supposed to do that comfort and or a lack of desire in you doesn't allow you to get to. Okay? Okay, let's continue.

So let's get our definition back up there. It says sloth is a combination of an intense desire for comfort, aimless indifference, or a loss of desire that leads to a failure to use one's abilities or fulfill calling. Let's focus in on this aimless indifference and loss of desire portion. Okay? Now, for some of us sloth and laziness is not that you just want to be comfortable. Maybe you're not the guy on the Snuggie on the couch eating nachos and spilling it all over yourself or whatever. So it's not sometimes that some people just want to be comfortable. Sometimes it's a loss of desire to do anything. It's zapped from you. It's not that you want to be comfortable, it's that you don't know what else to do. You're aimlessly indifferent or you're exhausted and you're so tired and you just don't what to do so you just lay there. Now this can happen in a number of ways. We could be maybe depressed over something, right? Anyone been depressed? I mean, I have. Small or large. To be clear, there are clinical causes for depression, okay? But there are also behavioral causes for depression that are related to what happens to us and how we react.

So let's discuss the behavioral forms of depression here for a second, stuff we can control. We can begin our journey towards sloth, maybe with a mental or spiritual sadness or sorrow that hits us. Boyfriend breaks up with us. We lose our job. Friends move away. We move across the country. Something happened like I had a fight with my spouse, and all of a sudden that starts us into this journey of anxiety and depression. And now all of a sudden we start spiraling. And now all of a sudden, we're losing desire for other things. And now we can't focus in on anything but what caused that initial pain. And all of a sudden we find ourselves perhaps glued to a couch or a phone. Or even let's say we're not lazy, we go to work, but we're just zombies at work because we're not mentally present. Because you're just so depressed and anxious and so you're mentally slothful or you're spiritually slothful. Proverbs 12:25 says, "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad." Makes the heart glad. The hard part

about these spirals we get into is it's hard to get out of them. And many of you know what I'm talking about. You're in this downward spiral, in this rut and you're depressed and you're anxious and you're trying to feel like, oh my gosh, like I need to get out of this, but you know what, I can't. I'm just going to lay here. I can't do it. I'm sad. I'm a mess. I need help. And maybe you do. And you might ask the question, well, when will I feel good enough to get the motivation to get up and to change?

It's possible, Friends, that you may never, ever feel good enough to begin the process yourself of getting out of that spiral. It's possible that motivation is not going to strike you like lightning. Many of us think that motivation will strike us like lightning. We think that if we're somehow laying there and we're depressed, that one day God's going to hit us with a motivation and a peace and a power. And we're going to get up and we're going to go do everything God's called us to do. And that's just going to happen. The odds are, probably no going to happen. It might not. But that doesn't mean you're totally stuck where you're at. In fact, it might be quite the opposite. Harvard psychologist-psychologists have been study this-Jerome Bruner, he says this, "You're more likely to act yourself into feeling than feel yourself into action." You know what he means by this?

He means that motivation's probably not going to strike you like lightning. But if you begin the process yourself, of working on yourself, even without the motivation and the feelings, that it's possible the feeling will come after. It's possible. I'll give you a silly example. I played a lot of football in case you didn't know, I'm a bigger guy. And in training camp it's really hot and it goes for a long time. Around day 23, nobody is motivated to be there. It is horrible. Everyone hates it. Everyone's hurt. It sucks. We're in all this gear. There's one thing that works though. It's called false enthusiasm. And when you get in your stretch lines and everyone hates their lives, if you just all of a sudden start clapping and you fake smiling like this. Here we go. We're here today! Woo! Let's do this! All of a sudden that fake enthusiasm all sounds really annoying at first, trust me. Over the course of the practice, all of a sudden it starts to be real. And all of a sudden our bodies biologically are starting to feel motivated for something that we started working for before we felt like we should.

That can happen in your spiritual life. It says right here, a good word makes you glad. Sometimes you need to go get the good word. The good word's not going to just fall on your lap. Sometimes you need to go read the scriptures. Go worship in the car even when you can't, even when you're sick of it. Go to church. Be with people in community. Sometimes you need to go find those positive people in your life that are going to encourage you and bless you because you don't have it on your own. You might be more likely to act yourself into feeling than to feel yourself into action.

Okay, back to our definition. Sloth again is a combination of intense desire for comfort, aimless indifference or a loss of desire that leads to a failure to use one's abilities or fulfill a calling. Let's focus on that last piece. Sloth leads to a failure to use one's abilities or fulfill your calling. Again, sloth disconnects you from finding and doing what you were made for. And this is one of the greatest desires we all have-to find what we were created for and to do it. To find meaning. We

long for that. And our purpose in meaning in life oftentimes comes from doing meaningful work, spiritually, physically, emotionally. But when we're stuck in a spiritual sloth or we're stuck in a physical sloth, using our talents to do meaningful work is the first thing on the chopping block. It's the first thing. You ever feel this? You were passionate about something, something you loved or cared about? Maybe it's a person, maybe it's a hobby. And when you get depressed, all of a sudden you stop doing it. You get anxiety, you stop doing it. It goes away really quick. The problem is you need that because that's your meaning, that's your purpose, that's your power.

Now, if that's you and you've lost that, God has a really sophisticated algorithm for you to follow in order to recover that feeling. He wants you to go outside, wants you to go to some grass, find a rock, pick up the rock and look at the ants and just study them. Just study ants. That's what he says. Proverbs 6, "Go to the ants O sluggard; consider her ways and be wise. Without having any chief officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in the summer and gathers her food in harvest." You say, Oh no, you don't understand. I've been stuck in this rut for a really long time. I need a life coach, or a counselor, or a Tony Robbins seminar or a really good awesome documentary on veganism, something to motivate me to get out of where I'm at. And God says, well the ant figured it out without a chief, officer, or a ruler. They don't have a CEO or a president or pastor or a counselor helping them. They just figure out how to prepare their bread in summer and gather their food in harvest.

Now, one thing that makes that challenging for us is that in a culture like ours, western modern culture and in a wealthy, nonetheless part of that western culture, it's very possible to be slothful, to be lazy and have all your needs still totally met. All of them. In this day, let's say several centuries before Christ, if you didn't work, you died. Today we can have mom and dad take care of us. We can have Cousin John. We can have our kids. We can have the government. We can abuse and use someone's support all the way towards a slothful, very lazy life, and we won't know it because we are not going without. That's the trap of the modern west. That's why Jesus says it's easier for a camel to pass through an eye of a needle than it is for rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Because you don't know when you're in trouble. It's easy when there's not food on the table. But what if there always is?

Let's continue the verse. Another consequence of sloth, verse 9, same passage, "How long will you lie there, O sluggard?" How long? When is enough? When are you done? Three years, five years, ten years. When are you done being a sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? And here comes the mocking point that God makes, "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber and want like an armed man." God here is saying there is consequences for your sloth and your laziness, for our sloth and our laziness. It's possible that yes, maybe we won't go hungry today. Maybe we won't be impoverished today, but it's possible that our laziness and sloth will cause us to, I don't know, start things and not finish them because we just quit. Do you quit a bunch of stuff? Quit a bunch of jobs? It's possible we are so sick of hard work that we'll just spend all of our time doing things that require less energy and work. And so technically we're moving around, right? We're traveling, we're going out to eat, we're going to shows-all great things, right? All great

things, mind you. But nonetheless, do too much of them and there are bad consequences. Like, it's not a sin to travel. But if you only ever, always travel and eat meals, what happens? Just natural consequences. You go broke. The credit card gets declined. Eventually there's not enough money. You can't do it. You can't do it forever.

Now maybe you won't end up going broke with no money. I know this is the Eastside, okay? But maybe in your spiritual laziness is where we find you in this passage. Maybe it's not your physical laziness, maybe it's your spiritual laziness. Maybe you'll end up one day spiritually poor for not being diligent, with no well of relationship with God. And you say you believe, but when you show up to Jesus at the end, he says, I'm sorry, depart from me. I never knew you, you workers of iniquity. I don't know you. Maybe in our spiritual sloth, we end up with no spiritual backbone. Maybe we've said for our entire lives that you know what, I know I'm going to live my life in college and I'm going to be a young adult, I'm going to do my thing. But once I get kids, then I'm going to straighten out. Then I'm going to get them in church. Then I'm going to get them in Vacation Bible Schools. Then I'm going to start opening the Bible at the dinner table and we're all of a sudden going to give them the spiritual backbone because they're going to need those morals in the world, even though I kind of don't need them. And what happens? Kids get older and none of that's happening. And now you have no spiritual backbone to pass off to your children and now they're 17, 18, 19, 20 years old and it's too late. What are you going to do then?

Or maybe in our spiritual sloth when life's blessings stop working in our favor...by the way, Tim Keller, pastor in New York, former pastor in New York, he says that it's possible for a modern western person to get well into their thirties, even in their forties without experiencing any meaningful suffering in their lives in the modern west so much as maybe say a 95-year-old grandparent passing away. And no suffering has happened. I consider that really awesome. That's very lucky. I know that's not everyone's story, but it is somebody's story. Maybe life's luck stops working and it's not in your favor anymore and someone dies, someone loses their job, a friendship is destroyed, and you'll have nowhere to turn in your moments of despair. Spiritual laziness is bankrupting in your biggest time of need.

Then the slothful, most of us, when we're slothful, when we're lazy, we make excuses for why we can't change. We love excuses. You know what I'm talking about, right? You mean to tell me no one's ever had something they were supposed to do but then was trying to find a reason not to do it. And then found the smallest reason not to do it, and was like, ah, never mind, I shouldn't do that. Has anyone been there? Just me? Okay. The slothful look for reasons not to do something. You don't understand the smoke outside. I can't go to work today. I can't do it. Or you know the terrorist level is high right now. I heard there might be a bombing. Or you know the heat rating for the trees, the fire rating is at high and one cigarette butt could take us all out. There's no way I'm going outside. I'm not working. Proverbs 26 says this very same thing, "The sluggard says there is a lion in the road. There is a lion in the streets!" Now, is there really a lion in the streets? Maybe. It's technically possible that there's a lion in the streets. It's technically possible that this building is surrounded by black bears right now. And if we were to go outside, we would be murdered. It's possible. It's possible. Unlikely though. And the sluggard

loves their excuses. We love to find reasons. You don't understand. I mean, gosh, I mean I haven't worked in six years. I mean I've got no resume. I know. You've got to go to work. It's time to start. Okay? That's what sloth is. Where does it hide?

It's going to hide a few places. First place sloth hides. It hides in a failure to understand the Sabbath. Now just to be clear, there is a difference between rest and being lazy. There is a profound difference between rest and being lazy. And listen, God creates rest. Rest is necessary and good. The problem is when we always rest, that's when it becomes laziness and sloth. Do you understand? So if you're going, Amen! Praise God! I knew we needed rest. That's why I came. I think I'll see myself out of here. Grab a scone on the way out. Thank you. We don't want you to reverse Sabbath, okay? We don't want you to rest six days and work one. We want you to do what God has ordered to work six days and rest the other.

But then there's others of us that go see-work! I got so many lazy people in my family right here and right here. They needed to hear that they're lazy. Well, God created rest and wants us to rest. And it's possible that when you never rest, you never rest and you work seven days a week, you're actually less productive throughout the week. And so you need to work seven days when if you rested one day, you might actually be productive in the six days and get your work done. It's possible. Either way, if you say I don't need rest, you think you're Lord over your life. If you say I'm lazy, I don't need work-you've made yourself Lord over your life. Where else does sloth hide? It hides in modern victim culture.

Now I want to be very careful about what I'm about to say. Today we are doing our absolute best to have our biggest problems in our culture today be external problems. Today we care more about things that happen to us and not things that happen in us. Today we are continually told that the majority of our problems are because of the traumas we've experienced, things that have happened to us, but not things we do. If we have depression and anxiety, they must be clinical, caused by something I cannot control, or a past hurt, but it's not likely sinful in origin in me. If we're unhappy or lazy, or stressed or hurt it's because of my kids, my spouse, my boss, my gender, my race, or my socioeconomic status. If I can't understand something, or I overreact, or I escape from my problems, it must be because of my Meyers-Briggs personality or my Enneagram number. That's just who I am. There's nothing I can do to change.

Now, while there are absolutely clinical diagnoses that we need to heed from real respected doctors, there are in fact, as well, real sins that are being committed by society, by us, against us-totally true. Nonetheless, we must still not fail to take responsibility for what we do and how we act. We live in an age of the victim. To be a victim in society is to be venerated in society. People are creatively looking for ways that they've been wronged. And what we do is we go down the intersections of life and we're looking for different ways we could sort of stack on terms of our resume of victimization. And we build a resume. Because if I build a big enough one, then I'll be venerated in society and I'll be the biggest victim, which means I'll be the most important in society. People are creatively looking for ways to figure out how they've been marginalized or victimized. I want to give credence to the true ones that are there. But when

we're looking for ways to be a victim, that's problematic. Why? Because when you decide to be a victim, it takes away your power to change.

A mentor once told me, "Do your work because it's the only work you can do." When you, when us, when we perceive that all of our problems are caused by society or others, we are tempted to try to fix other people and do their own work for them. And we say, "This is what you need to do in order for me to feel comfortable about my life." The problem is that's never going to work because you can't change anybody no matter how mad we yell or how much we cry. What you can do is do your own work. You can spiritually connect with God in a non-lazy way that makes you more resilient to suffering, that makes you more resilient to hardship, that makes you more resilient to systems of oppression in your life that are causing harm to you. And that way, when those things happen, you've got an inner ballast that's connected to Jesus. So you're less moved by the anxieties of the day. And you know what people really need? They don't need more bets and tips and tricks on how to get through life. They need a person, a people that can stand in the face of anxiousness and deal with the anxieties in the world. And then all of a sudden, that's a special person that I want to follow and be a part of and I'll listen to. But when we're always victimized, even if we literally are victimized, and we never grow and never change, it can't happen. We cannot live in that.

There's a doctrine in the Bible, it's called Christus Victor. Christ is our victor. What happened to salvation by deliverance? The Bible says Christ is our counselor, but he's also our victor. He counsels us, but he doesn't counsel us to stay in it. He wants us to grow and to change and to grow better. He died so that way you could be free of your oppression, free of your lost brokenness, not to wallow in it. And in culture we're told to wallow and Christ didn't die so you could wallow. Psalm 34 says, when the righteous cry for help the Lord hears and what? Delivers them out of their troubles. He doesn't hold your hand while you sit in your wallow. He ministers to you. He loves you. He prays. He holds your hand. He sits with you in your suffering. He's been tempted in every way as we are yet without sin. And he leads you lovingly out of it. He doesn't want you to stay there.

Where else does sloth hide? In a failure to order our lives well. Now maybe you're saying, you know what? I still don't get it. I work hard. I love Jesus. I'm just so exhausted. I'm just so exhausted. You don't understand. I'm fried. Let's audit our day here for a second to see if our sloth might be caused by something else. Okay? By show of hands, do you for work all day, stare at some version of a screen. Good. You can be honest. Couple. Mostly. So like 85% of the room, most people stare at a screen all day. Okay? Now don't raise your hand for this one. Do you come home from that and then look at another screen like a phone, iPad, a tv, yeah? And then after that, do you lay in bed and look at another screen and go into a coma each night before going to bed? Just me? Okay. And then do you stay up later than you wanted because you couldn't fall asleep because you're looking at said screen? And then do you wake up groggy and needing caffeine because you stayed up way later than you're supposed to. And perhaps maybe you missed the gym or were late for work because of how tired you were? And then maybe needed more carbs and sugar to give you a little energy boost. Hmm. Yeah. So maybe your work isn't what's exhausting you here on the Eastside. Maybe it's the screen addicted

culture that makes you feel anxious and overwhelmed. Maybe what makes us lazy on the back end is us staring so much and maybe we're not so tired as much as we are wired and anxious. It's possible we may be confusing being tired from hard work with being tired from not organizing our lives well. There's a huge difference. So order your life well so we can be a good steward at the energy levels God has given us to free us up for the work he's called us to.

Okay, let's talk antidote here for a second. What's the antidote? I'm on pins and needles. I didn't expect the lazy sermon to be this serious, but here we are. The antidote to sloth is passion. It's passion. Passion is a zeal or great enthusiasm with a fervor for a purpose. Now you might ask, why is passion the antidote to sloth? Well, passion stems from the Latin word *pati*, which means to suffer. To suffer, or means capable of suffering. Later we've added the French definition that says a strong desire for. So passion essentially is something you have such a strong desire for that you are willing to suffer for it. That's what passion is. Something you have such a strong desire for that you're willing to suffer for it.

So I guess the question is, what are you so passionate about that you're willing to suffer for it, sacrificing time, money, energy, relationships for it. What is it? That tells you what you're passionate about. Now, for many of us, we lack this passion for God, for life, maybe even for serving others. And maybe we get complacent because we're just so comfortable living in the ways of comfort. Maybe we've lost desire and we're just going to stay here. We're just stoked in it. We're just going to be here. But there's a big problem with that. God wants your passion because it means you're moving. God can't use you though if you lack passion. He absolutely cannot use you if you're not moving towards something.

How do I know? Revelation 3, "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth." Verse 19, "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent." Friends, God can't use you if you're slothful. Even if he says hot or cold. Okay? Even if you're going the right direction, God can absolutely use you. Even if you're going the wrong direction, fine, God can at least redirect you back this way. But when you're just on the couch spiritually or physically, he can't use you. He's got to spit you out of his mouth. God needs people that are moving. Man, sloth amounts to waste. It amounts to waste. Physical sloth amounts to waste. You have abilities and gifts that you are not using. Spiritual waste.

Listen, you can climb the corporate ladder. You can be a CEO. You can make a lot of money. You can be down and out on your luck. You could be out on the street. You can not be caring about anybody. You can be all alone. You can be any of these combinations. You have a great family. But if you're not spiritually alive and awake, it's a waste. Wasted ability, wasted resources, wasted time, wasted purpose. But remember, all of us know a human being's primary goal in life is to find meaning and purpose. We do not want to be a waste. We all feel that intrinsically. We do not want that. But sloth is a roadblock to us becoming who God wants us to be. In order to overcome sloth, we're going to need to remember something specific. That passion originally didn't come from us intrinsically. It comes from somebody else. That passion comes from a guy named Jesus.

Now, you may have heard the title, "The Passion of the Christ." That word passion means to have such a strong desire for something that you're willing to suffer for it. That is the definition of the life of Jesus. He came into the world and lived perfectly. He was so perfect, so kind, so loving. He was singular minded in his mission. He had one mission. My people are my sheep and I need to find my sheep and rescue them. He was so single-minded and so passionate about what he was called to do that other people who are insecure and spiritually lazy got sick of him and wanted him dead and killed him because they weren't connected with God. They were disconnected with God and so they were on the corporate ladder of their own lives, their spiritual religion. And if the way I'm known is by discovering my meaning and purpose apart from God, who's this guy? Kill him. Whoops, killed God. Jesus' death cannot hold him so Jesus rose three days later, and he came back saying, anyone who would exceed the passion that I have for you and embrace it would receive the power of the Holy Spirit in you. And that spirit would awaken in you another passion that would cause you to be so excited and so fervorous and so meaningful in your life, that you would finally discover the purpose that's meant for you.

And this is where it all aligns. The deepest desire for any person is meaning and purpose. Our purpose though, is aligned with our passion in Christ's mission. Jesus Christ tells us that you are created for this specifically. Not only that, I'm going to give you the motivation to do what I've called you to do. And when we live outside of that, we feel the friction and we start trying to find creative ways to do our own work or to do someone else's work. And we all feel it. And that's what happens when laziness kicks in. This is where everything aligns. So God says, when you finally find the purpose that you're called for, you're going to find meaningful, purposeful work. And that work now won't be being done for other people. Because one of the hardest things when you don't understand your purpose in alignment with Jesus is that you start working for others. And what happens when you work for others? Expectations. Expectations and what happens when you fail them? That's where interpersonal conflict all comes from. But if we understood we're performing for an audience of one that might change.

Colossians 3 says, whatever you do, Friends, work at it with all your hearts-that's passion-as working for the Lord, not for human masters. Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. The anecdote to sloth and laziness is a passion that comes when you accept Christ as your Lord and Savior. He grants you the power of the Holy Spirit in you. All of a sudden you are now motivated to do the things he's called you to. And that's when you begin to live in sync with your created purpose. And that's when sloth and laziness go away. You're most joyous and you find the most meaning and you eliminate sloth when you understand Jesus has redeemed you and bought you. Let's pray.

Thank you for my friends, Lord. A sermon like this maybe is unexpected, but I trust that in the text that you've given us to preach, Lord, that there's so many good things for us to hear. Many of us are in different seasons. Some of us are in seasons of depression, legitimate depression and anxiety. We can't get out of bed, Lord. I pray that you're gentle to them, that you would in fact send motivation, like lightning to them, that they would get the help they need, that they would come to know you in an amazing way. Some of us are physically lazy. We love comfort.

Lord God, would you minister to my friends and let them know comfort is not the meaning of life. The purpose you give them is. For my friends who can't rest and they always work, Lord, would you show them that being lazy one day a week is not laziness. It's rest. And for all of us, Lord God, I pray that we can grow in this. This is a lifelong battle. But give us passion and zeal for you, who is first passionate to us? In Jesus' name, Amen.