

Joke- A bored young man decided life would be more fun if he had a pet.

So he went to the pet store and told the owner that he wanted to buy an unusual pet. After some discussion, he finally bought a talking centipede, which came in a little white box to use for his house.

He took the box back home, found a good spot for the box, and decided he would start off by taking his new pet to church with him. So he asked the centipede in the box, "Would you like to go to church with me today? We will have a good time." But there was no answer from his new pet. This bothered him a bit, but he waited a few minutes and then asked again, "How about going to church with me and receive blessings?" But again, there was no answer from his new friend and pet. So he waited a few minutes more, thinking about the situation.

The guy decided to invite the centipede one last time. This time he put his face up against the centipede's house and shouted, "Hey, in there! Would you like to go to church with

me and learn about God?" This time, a little voice came out of the box, "I heard you the first time! I'm putting on my shoes!"

Genesis 2:15–17 (NIV): 15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

Genesis 3:1–10 (NIV): Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' " 4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,

knowing good and evil.” 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

Let me ask you a question. What is sin, and for those of you who I have mentioned I was working on this message you can't answer. But for the rest of you what is sin?

Now if I were to actually have you yell out what sin is to you we would have a plethora of answers. However, I want to deal with just one today and it is probably not one on the top of your list. Yet one that can cause so much pain and

difficulty in your life.

Satan lures us into thinking that evil appears desirable and good. And even makes us believe that what God tells us is liberating and holy, will actually be a place of bondage.

Satan always twists what God says and makes it appear as if he is withholding something from us.

Greg Locke has stated that, "Satan's target is your mind, and his weapons are lies. So fill your mind with the Word of God."

So before I really get started let me say this, Paul said to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

And church here is a truth for you, you won't do anything that you did not think of in your mind first. Everything you do starts with a thought.

That's why we need to remember that you have the mind of Christ and when thoughts enter that are not of Christ you

need to take those captive.

In the garden every tree you can have , but that one tree don't touch.

Satan got Eve to believe that God was holding something back instead of understanding the abundant goodness which He had provided.

Think about this for a moment. The garden which Adam lived in was perfect. God would come to him in the cool of the day. Every day. Adam had no other women to look at and lust over. No other woman to have an affair with. No big parties going on in the garden with the group getting wasted. But yet the sin he committed caused each of us to be in bondage.

What did he do that caused so much destruction to us? He was disobedient to what God had told him. That's it.

Think about this, before their disobedience there was no drunkenness, no gossip, no hatred, no anger, no drug

abuse. Sickness, disease unheard of. The list goes on and on. That is the power of lawlessness. It brings consequences that you probably won't enjoy and may not of thought about.

Now let me say this on the onset. This is a difficult message to preach, not because I'm afraid to speak about sin. But because many in the Body of Christ believe and may I say wrongly that anytime someone teaches that we are to act a certain way that it is legalism. Nothing is further from the truth but there has been a theology floating around the Body of Christ for some time now that says because of His grace I can do what I want, and because of the cross all my debts been paid. Which is true they have been but grace empowers us to live right, not licenses us to do as we please. I even heard recently to stay silent on sin altogether. And I don't recall Jesus staying silent.

I believe church that one of the main problems in the Body of Christ is that we have defined sin incorrectly.

So let's define it according to Scripture:

1 John 3:4 (NIV): 4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

Lawlessness simply means choosing not to submit to the law or authority of God.

Let's look at a parable for a moment that hopefully will help us understand this a little better.

Luke 14:15–24 (NIV): 15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.” 16 Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ 18 “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ 19 “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ 20 “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ 21 “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner

of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' 22 " 'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' 23 "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.' "

Look at verses 17 and 18 again

17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' 18 "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

There is no one here that would ever tell you that buying land is a sin. But here is the issue, when possessions become more important than following the voice of God it becomes sin.

Verse 19

19 “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

He bought oxen that he most likely needed for his livelihood and that in itself no one could honestly say is sin. However, when business becomes more important than obeying the voice of God, the will of God, or the Word of God. It is lawlessness and as we already defined that is sin.

And it continues verse 20

20 “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

Is getting married sin? Of course not. However, when the desire to please a mate is greater than the desire to please God then it becomes sin.

As in the garden Adam sinned because he choose Eve’s request over God’s command.

So the story continues verse 23

23 “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.

Those in this verse, the people he was instructed to get represent the thieves, the gang members, the prostitutes, the drunkards, the oh can I say it, the ones that we probably thought about at the beginning of this message when I asked you the question of what is sin? Those sinful ones. They will show up for the feast.

Look what the Lord says. . .

24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’ ”

The ones that attend church, claim to love the Lord, well they want to only obey when it's convenient and doesn't interfere with their schedules and plans. And Scripture tells us they will not be part of the honored place that they

were first invited to. Why? Because people, places, and things became more important to them than God.

See here's the thing church many believe that since God's grace is sufficient, which it is, they think that they can just continue in a behavior that is in direct conflict of what God has said. And so we have believers in a constant state of disobedience because they have had a lopsided teaching of grace that has caused them to become numb and downplay the importance of obedience.

Oh, here's another thing we often times feel like we need a prophetic word telling us how God wants us to shape up. Tell us His plans for our life. Or whatever else we feel we need to hear in the moment. And listen I love the prophetic, taught on the prophetic, been involved with the prophetic, been encouraged by the prophetic.

But truth is church we have the Scriptures that tell us how we ought to live and what His will is. And if we can't be obedient to what His Word says, I doubt we will be obedient to the prophetic words we receive.

Hosea 4:6 tells us people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (NIV): 13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

Well pastor that's good but that is all Old Testament. I need something from the New Testament.

Ok but before I do that listen to this one. . .

1 Corinthians 10:1–6 (NIV): For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of

them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

And then verse 11

1 Corinthians 10:11 (NIV): These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.

Oh wait that was New Testament, but here's some more. . .

John 14:15 (NIV): 15 "If you love me, keep my commands.

John 15:14 (NIV): 14 You are my friends if you do what I command.

Luke 11:28 (NIV): 28 He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

Well that's great pastor New Testament stuff but that was before the cross, so still old covenant message. I need

something after the cross because then we have some New Covenant material and that's where we are living now,

Ok here it is. . .

James 1:25 (NIV): 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

1 Peter 1:14–16 (NIV): 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

2 John 1:6 (NIV) - 6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

See here's the sad thing that is happening in many of our churches. We come because we love to hear the

preacher and the teaching and the worship. But the truth is, people are not being transformed into His likeness because in reality we love our own will more than God's will. And so the church has lost its influence in the culture because our lifestyle doesn't give us much of a witness.

2 Timothy 3:1–5 (NIV): But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

Listen to that verse from the Passion translation

2 Timothy 3:1–5 (TPT): But you need to be aware that in the final days the culture of society will become extremely fierce and difficult for the people of God. 2 People will be self-centered lovers of themselves and obsessed with money. They will boast of great things as they strut around

in their arrogant pride and mock all that is right. They will ignore their own families. They will be ungrateful and ungodly. 3 They will become addicted to hateful and malicious slander. Slaves to their desires, they will be ferocious, belligerent haters of what is good and right. 4 With brutal treachery, they will act without restraint, bigoted and wrapped in clouds of their conceit. They will find their delight in the pleasures of this world more than the pleasures of the loving God. 5 They may pretend to have a respect for God, but in reality they want nothing to do with God's power. Stay away from people like these!

Church you need to understand something, Satan is a liar and the father of lies. He is a deceiver. And he has made some believe that the choices you make doesn't effect anything or anybody. But truth is people are watching and some of the things you do and things you say have turned people off to church because the truth is the lifestyle has destroyed your testimony. Why? Because we haven't been obedient to what He has told us, revealed to us, or spoken over us.

Listen to this story. . .

1 Samuel 15:1–3 (NIV): Samuel said to Saul, “I am the one the Lord sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the Lord. 2 This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. 3 Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.’ ”

That’s what God said. . .listen to what Saul did.

1 Samuel 15:7–9 (NIV): Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt. 8 He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. 9 But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally

destroyed.

Oh it gets better.

1 Samuel 15:20–23 (NIV): 20 “But I did obey the Lord,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. 21 The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.” 22 But Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.”

Verse 23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.

Another translation says rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft. It should more accurately be translated

rebellion is witchcraft.

Oh and Saul shows us that partial obedience is still disobedience. See we want every one to look at the 99 percent we listened to, not the 1 percent that we thought we knew better of.

See church here's the thing often times we view lawlessness as freedom. . .but the truth is there is no freedom in rebellion.

Romans 6:15–18 (NIV): 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Whom are you a slave to. Fear of people over fear of God, sin over righteousness, your ways over His ways, your will over His will?

Hebrews 11:24–26 (NIV): By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

Now once again from the Passion translation. . .

Hebrews 11:24–26 (TPT): Faith enabled Moses to choose God's will, for although he was raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he refused to make that his identity, 25 choosing instead to suffer mistreatment with the people of God. Moses preferred faith's certainty above the momentary enjoyment of sin's pleasures. 26 He found his true wealth in suffering abuse for being anointed, more than in anything the world could offer him, for his eyes

looked with wonder not on the immediate, but on the ultimate—faith's great reward!

From his book *Translating God*, Shawn Bolz has said, "holiness is not sinlessness, it is the ability to see what is worth protecting and then say no to sin to protect our yes to love."

It's time for the church to regain it's influence. The culture has effected the church rather than the church effecting the culture. Because we have allowed the enemy to twist what God said and have become lovers of ourselves over lovers of God.