
Traders Point, how are we doing? It's so good to be with you on Super Bowl Sunday. Kansas City fans, who thinks Kansas City is winning it? Alright. What about Tampa? Tampa, anybody?

Where are no sports people? You have no care, you're just here for the hot wings? Some good food? I'd probably fall into that camp, if I'm being honest this year.

Um, but hey, welcome. We're so glad you're with us at all of our campuses, and everyone watching online. Today we are continuing in our series Let's Talk About it.

Hers's the big idea behind it. Last year, it was around March and maybe you remember this, or maybe not, we got hit by a global pandemic. Maybe you remember it, maybe you're still remembering it right now.

It's something that we're all facing, we all see the consequences of it every single day. But what we've also said is here is another pandemic. There is another pandemic that is not getting the coverage that the first one is getting.

Here's that other pandemic. Maybe you know about this one:

Mental and Emotional Health Pandemic

It's a big one. Kaiser goes as far as to say it's affecting one out of every two. Campuses, that means you or the person next to you. Living rooms just got real weird, got real tense. You are chewing that bacon for a long time. Like, "Please, don't make eye contact with me."

But it's true. This is something that is affecting all of us at one level or the next. None of us are exempt.

So, what we said was, "Hey, instead of trying to sweep it under the rug or pretend it's not a real thing, let's talk about it."

So, every week we just want to have a conversation around a different topic. Last week we kicked things off looking at anger. I'm telling you, if you missed that one that is one you need to circle back on. A B did an incredible job talking about anger.

And we want to talk about these:

ANGER ANXIETY DEPRESSION

This is a new one we added a couple of weeks ago, based on feedback from you guys:

DOUBT

The one we want to talk about today is this:

ADDICTION

Research is showing that new habits are being formed, and old habits are resurfacing. And this is probably no surprise to you. Maybe you felt this, whether you've turned back to something you haven't done for a really long time, but now you're leaning on it.

Or maybe in this season you got so overwhelmed, and you began to reach out to things and you found something that at first just kind of felt like it was helping you cope. But now it has kind of taken control.

And what we've said is, "Let's talk about it." Because the church should be the safest place to be able to talk about our struggles. Church should be the place where we can raise our hands and say, "Hey, we need grace, we need help more so than anyone else. Not less."

And for you, if you're struggling with any kind of addiction, anxiety, or anything we're going to talk about, we want you to know you're welcomed, you're not alone, you're not even in the minority right now. We are all struggling with this.

And with addiction—it's not hard to believe that we would be struggling with addiction. Our culture is ruthless. The goal is not even for us to like something or to simply enjoy it anymore, it's to be addicted.

So much so, and maybe you've seen this, there is actually a collection on Netflix called Binge Worthy. Do you know how wild that is? To come out and not even to hide it, but to come out and say, "These here, these are addiction-worthy. You should watch these. These are worth your nights, your weekends, your free time." Don't worry about how I know it's there, I just do.

But what do we do? Our pride gets in the way and we say, "Not us. We can just watch an episode tonight, and we'll do it like we used to do in the old days. We'll watch an episode tonight, and then next week we'll pick up on it again and watch another episode."

What happens? You start watching, you're three episodes in with no bathroom break. And then you get this message. Have you ever gotten this one?

“Are you still watching?”

It’s one of the most defeating messages, when you realize you’ve gone too far.

But, am I the only one who doesn’t just read it like, “Are you still watching?” but, “Are you still really watching? Really, man? This is what you’re going to do? I know we said binge-worthy, but this is getting out of control.”

But the thing is, that’s not the only time we’re bombarded with options to continue. To take in too much. To be addicted. We get messages that pop up like this all the time. Messages to:

continue watching continue shopping continue drinking continue eating continue working

You fill in blank.

We are bombarded with all these things. There’s no shortage of what we can become addicted to. And to be honest, there is probably no one here who is not addicted to something.

And addictions, they can come in a variety of different things. We can lean on all kinds of things. But what an addiction is, it’s all the same at its root. It actually has some deep and scary origins. The word itself, and this is what an addiction is:

to be enslaved to, or bound to.

It’s to be powerless, powerless to something. I don’t know if you ever met someone who struggles with addiction, but no one chooses that. No one signs up for that. An addiction is so powerful that it can take the strongest of men and women and bend them to its will to the point where they feel hopeless and helpless.

What we choose to obey, what we bond to, we actually become a slave to. The Bible actually talks about this in Romans 6:

“Don’t you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.”

Whatever we choose to obey, that’s where it’s going to take us.

And maybe you’re thinking, “My thing isn’t actually a sin, the thing I’m addicted to, it’s not too bad. The problem more so than what it is, is what it does.” When we choose to obey, we bring it up a notch. We begin to look to it to fulfill us, to satisfy us. That’s when an addiction becomes a problem. That’s what it is.

And we can look at addiction from so many different angles, but for today this is the way we want to talk about it. We want to talk about addiction through this:

Addiction is how we try to solve a mental and emotional problem.

Addiction in the sense of this is something we use to try to solve a mental or emotional problem. A problem arose in our life that we did not have a solution for, we did not have the words for, we did not have a process in place for, so we began to lean on something.

It might even have happened under our noses. We were working through some unprocessed problems and pain, and then an addiction came, and it allowed us to temporarily suspend the problems we were having. We got all of this good stuff.

We were able to finally be done, we thought. We found a way, we found a way to short-circuit the problems we were having. We bonded to this thing only to become enslaved to it.

When you think about addiction from this angle, I think it does a lot of things with empathy, how we navigate it. But it also makes a lot of sense when you place it under a Christian worldview.

When we begin to look at what addiction is, we can almost say addiction is a response to sin. And maybe you're like, "That sounds a little backwards." But hear me, sin in the sense of separation from God.

Within humanity there is this gap between us and God, and we choose to fill the gap. A lot of times what we choose to fill that gap, that brokenness, with does not fix anything. It actually just creates more problems.

If you go all the way back to the beginning of humanity, what we call the creation story, we see this thing played out. Adam and Eve, placed in a garden, and what happens?

They bond with this snake, with this demonic force, this lie. And here's the lie that Adam and Eve believed, and it's one we are all tempted with and fall into addictions under:

God won't, but this will...

Adam and Eve, God gave them everything but the Devil was able to creep in and say, "What about this? What about this treat? What is God holding out on you? Why won't he give you this? Because, if you had this, you could actually be better, you could actually be more, you could actually deal with some of that tension that you're facing."

And they take the fruit, and they bit into it. What was it? Their eyes were opened. It's the same thing for us. When we feed into the temptation, believe the lie that nothing is taking this away,

we bite into the fruit and our eyes are opened. But not necessarily in a good way. And we can't un-open them once it's there.

What we want to do is process through it. What we want to do is have a conversation around it. Let's talk about it. To do that we're going to be in 1 John 2 starting in verse 15. What we're going to pick up with here, this is a letter written from a guy to a church just like this in times just like this, when people were struggling with addictions.

And we're going to pick up here. I'm going to read it all, and then we'll break it down little by little as we go. Look at this:

“Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.”

So, let's break this down. It says, “Do not love this world nor the things in it because all they can offer you is a craving.” Maybe one of the worst things on the planet is to have a craving you can't satisfy. To have a craving to know exactly what you think you want and you can taste it, but you have no way of getting it.

Maybe it's a sandwich from your favorite restaurant, but they've already closed or they haven't opened. Or maybe they're permanently closed. Like a buffalo chicken from Moe and Johnny's. If you know, you know.

Or, maybe it's to crave something you just can't have. Like to crave a championship from your professional sports team, but to live in Indiana. Don't come to me unless you see Tayshaun Prince in your nightmares. You don't know that struggle.

It's to crave something, but to not be able to have it. He says, “That's what it's like. That's what addiction is like.”

Then he says that it's fading. It's this idea of the roller coaster, that you make your way up to it, and as soon as you get it, if you are able to swing at it to get a taste of it, but it's not enough to sustain. Immediately, once you get your high, you are on the way back down. It is fleeting.

He says, “This is all it can offer you,” and these are the things we turn to from day to day to day to day.

And then, this is incredible, the brilliance of the Bible written thousands of years ago finds a way to take all the things we struggle with, the addictions we face and to boil them down into three categories. Look at this:

Pleasure | Possessions | Pride

I just want to spend a little bit of time working through each one of them. Things we find ourselves addicted to. Let's talk about it.

Pleasure

Now, there are a lot of things that can bring us pleasure. The fascinating thing is our brain registers it all the same way. No matter where the source of it is, it gives us the same dopamine hit that we want to have.

We will give up everything to have this one thing, pleasure. Now, obviously we can look at pleasure from different angles. There are definitely bad sources of pleasure like pornography, promiscuity, drugs, alcohol. There is a sense of pleasure those things give us, and we definitely need to be on the lookout for those.

But there're also good things that we can kind of make god-things. We can elevate them and when they become our main source of pleasure they can actually cause a lot of pain and a lot of problems. Like, what about food? When we look to food to solve a mental or an emotional problem, we call it emotional eating. When savory becomes your savior.

I wrote that in the notes. I thought it was clever. It's this idea that it could be anything. My pleasure, my main source of pleasure, is there anything in my life outside of God that I say that I need, for me and this bonded together to feel complete?

The second one is this:

Possessions

We can see a lot of addictions around accruing different things, having things, craving them. It could be anything. It's the scale of where you live and your spectrum, right? It could be shoes, clothes. It could be houses. It could be cars. It could be more stamps for your stamp collection. Do you crave things? Is the best part of your week that Amazon package? Is that what you look forward to more than anything?

And you know, research used to think that addictions were just for things like drugs and alcohol. But we see it's actually the same response we get from shopping. It can be found there.

Here's the question: Is there anything I need outside of me and God? Is there anything I need to possess or own, anything I need to bond myself to in order to feel complete?

Pride

Now pride is where it gets kind of tricky. Pride is kind of the underbelly of the first two. A lot of times it's the vehicle that drives our pleasures and our possessions. We find ourselves at the center of our pleasures. All the things we are acquiring, all the things we want, are for us and our good. There's a pride thing there.

I'll tell you, the tough thing about pride is it can actually look really, really good. Pride may be what is driving, but the results are being celebrated. That's a really tough spot to be in.

Maybe you're a workaholic and you put in 60 to 80 hours a week. No one is holding an intervention for you. You're getting a pat on the back. You're wearing it like a badge of honor.

But what is it that's driving? Why are you working those hours? Is there something you're trying to prove to someone else? Are you trying to feel superior?

What about this one? This addiction of people pleasing. It's one I struggle with. I can feel myself, whenever I go through a season or a week when I'm not getting affirmed the way I think I should. It begins to spiral to my identity and how I feel about myself. I could be completely wrecked by the end of the day. What is that? That is an addiction to pride.

It's this idea that I need something else. I need to achieve something, to be something, possess something that I don't currently have. Until I get it, I won't be enough. I need to bind myself, I need to be bound to something else so I can feel worth it.

And John takes all three of these and says, "Don't fall into the trap. Don't fall into the trap of believing that this will but God won't. That there are pleasures that will do for you what God can't do for you. It's foolishness."

But our culture tries to wrap us in that so we can be thankful for the quick pleasure we get and the diminishing possessions. But it's even more than that. It's actually like a double-edged sword. It's not just the things we're trying to go after that are fleeting or fading, our desires as well are unending. We are a bottomless pit that cannot be satisfied. Look at what it says in Proverbs:

"Just as Death and Destruction are never satisfied, so human desire is never satisfied."

Now, I'm going to use an example and pick on small children to prove this. But know, we can make it true for all of us. Go with me. Have you ever, if you have kids, wakened up one day and you're like, "Today is going to be the day I'm about to blow their minds. Today is going to be the day they look back on for the rest of their lives and say that was the best day."

You wake up early. And you go downstairs and make breakfast for everyone. And not just any breakfast, you think about it, you think about it and you make his favorite breakfast, and her

favorite breakfast. They come downstairs and they lose their minds. “Are you kidding me? How did you know this is my favorite?”

“Because I live here with you and I know you eat three things.” But you make it, and they’re losing their minds. This is the best day ever.

You’re like, “There’s more. Go get dressed. Put your shoes on. We’re going to the park.” You wrap everybody up, you go to the park, and you’re there for a long time.

Parents like to be there five or ten minutes. “Are you guys good?” No, we’re there for a long time. We’re getting there before other families. They are leaving, you’re pointing it out. “Hey, do you guys remember, we were here before them and they are leaving before us.” Because that’s what dad does. Best day ever.

And then, you’re at the park for hours and it’s time to eat. You’re not going to take them home for peanut butter and jelly. No, you’re going to go to the place we all pretend we don’t take our kids to, “Yeah, we’re going to McDonalds, because that’s what you love.” Chicken nuggets and French fries. We’re going to throw apple slices in there just to pretend like we really care about this meal right now.

And you’re still not done. You’re in there eating in the dining room. Remember when we used to do that? And you slip away for a second, “I’ll be right back guys,” and you go and you get ice cream for everyone. You throw it down on the table. It just keeps going. Eat it.

And there is just chocolate and vanilla all over their faces. And now it’s mid-afternoon. You’ve been gone all day, and you go and you’re walking... You’re excited. You just did something really cool. Your kids, they love you. And you walk through the doors and they kick off their shoes. And before they can get from the front door to the living room, they’ve already scanned the room, “Aw, I’m so bored. What are we supposed to do now?”

I don’t hit my kids. I don’t. But, I wanted to trip them as they were walking into the living room.

“What are we going to do?”

“Well, for the next few minutes you’re going to figure out how to get back up. After that, you can find something to do.” Never satisfied.

Now, that was a dark moment looking into my heart, showcasing small children to prove a point. But the truth is, that’s all of our hearts. When we search after these things, we go after them and then we finally get them—we work years for this, or maybe our whole life for it and we get it and we’re like, “Huh, it doesn’t feel like I thought it would. That didn’t take away the feelings I thought it would.”

Because, we need to talk about it. Addiction isn't just this thing that kind of hits on a surface level. We have to go deeper and ask the hard questions of why. What is the problem we're trying to solve?

I think we look at it like this graphic of an iceberg. You see, a lot of times we look at addiction from above the water. We see someone with an addiction, or we struggle with an addiction and we think, "We do that. Let's just stop doing that." You're addicted to this, "Stop doing it. Pull yourself up by your boot straps."

One, my boots are strapless. Two, I don't even know what that means to pull yourself up from the bootstraps. But, what we have to do is realize it's not just a surface conversation. We have to get to the problem underneath the problem.

The addiction didn't just start out of the blue, but if it's created to solve a problem, what is the problem we are trying to solve? So, we have to go into the deep waters of trauma to ask the hard questions of ourselves, "What is it really that I'm trying to solve? Why do I lean onto these things the way I do?"

And I think a lot of times we think trauma is reserved for certain people, people who have really rough upbringings or are abused. It is for them, but we all have traumatic experiences—moments in our lives that have shaped us and caused us to look for healing in different ways. We've all had traumatic experiences.

I could tell you seventh grade, and if there's anyone here in seventh grade today, may the Lord keep you and bless you. You are doing a good thing just being there. That is a tough year.

I remember being in seventh grade. Beginning in seventh grade, this is when you go to gym. This is when they don't just let you go into gym with your jeans and your tee shirt anymore. You've got to put on gym clothes. And you're standing there, never having changed in front of anyone who doesn't have your last name before.

There is this guy next to me who looks about 35 and is in seventh grade. He takes off his shirt and is just covered in hair. So, I'm like getting dressed as fast as I can, getting my shorts on. I get through gym, get to lunch. And sitting at the table, I remember this kid sits down and he starts talking. And he starts making fun of me and says I have a cottage cheese belly.

And I remember taking that in, ha ha, laughing and I made fun of him. It was probably something about him and his mother. But, it stuck with me. It is 20 years later and I can still remember where I was, how it went.

And that shaped my friendships, how I viewed myself, how I tried to overcompensate. I still think of that sometimes when I'm getting changed, when I look in the mirror, when I go swimming. I still have those voices in my head.

We have to be able to do the hard work of processing why, not just that we're doing something and stop doing it, but why. What is it that we're seeking? What lie are we believing, either with our words or our actions, that God won't, but this will.

What is it? What's in the deep waters of why you are acquiring things, so many things? You like nice things, we all do, but why? Is it because someone told you that you would never amount to anything? So, you spend your life amassing all the things you can and storing them in your office.

Is it because someone told you that you weren't beautiful, but you think that if you just cloth yourself in nice clothes then people won't think that about you, and you won't think that about you?

Is it because someone made fun of your stomach? So, you thought, "I'll just invest in nice shoes and clothes and they won't worry about the way my body looks?"

What is it? Why? What is it that you are seeking to be satisfied from? Addiction solved it temporarily. It suspended it. But what are you really trying to get to? Why? Why do you care so much about what people think? Why are you addicted to that?

Drinking, what are you trying to numb? What are you trying to forget? Working, why do you work as much as you do? Why? Not that you just like to work or you're really good at it. Why? What is driving you? Working out, it could be anything.

We have to get to this spot of why because we begin to believe these lies of addiction—that they are actually helping us. That they are the things that are driving us to be better and actually deal with the trauma. That they are somehow some kind of answer, but they are not.

And I think the Bible sums it up pretty good as to what we want from all addictions. It's in Proverbs 24. You see, addictions don't heal anything, but here is what they can do.

"Don't gaze at the wine, seeing how red it is, how it sparkles in the cup, how smoothly it goes down. For in the end it bites like a poisonous snake; it stings like a viper. You will see hallucinations, and you will say crazy things. You will stagger like a sailor tossed at sea, clinging to a swaying mast. And you will say, 'They hit me, but I didn't feel it. I didn't even know it when they beat me up. When will I wake up so I can look for another drink?'"

You can replace this with any food, drink, work, pride, possession. This is what we're after with addiction. They hit me, but I didn't feel it. I can't stop the thoughts from coming into my head. I can't stop replaying the story. I can't stop seeing the screen. I just need it to stop.

And then we find something that we can become addicted to, that we can bond ourselves to, and we can say with pride, "Keep on swinging. Keep on hitting. But I can't feel it as long as I have this thing." And you believe the lie that there is somehow any kind of healing in that.

But we need to ask why. We need to do the hard work of going into the trauma. To go into the deep waters, and to feel it. To feel the why, to feel the pain, to feel the story, to feel the words so that we can process it.

Feel it, not so we have to live there or believe that that's where we belong. Feel it, so that we can grab ahold of it in the deep waters, in the darkness of our minds and our hearts, and we can begin to pull it out and drag it kicking and screaming out of the water and into the air so that God can actually deal with it. So that God can bring healing to it.

God can't heal anything we don't acknowledge. But we have to be willing to process it. We have to be willing to go to the parts we said we would never go to before. We have to stop pretending that it's not that big of a deal. We have to want healing.

I just want to give us a few things that we can all do, because we're all addicted to something. How do we find healing? Here are a few things.

First, we have to identify it. Identify what we are addicted to. Here is a way to frame it up and to begin to look at it so we can pinpoint what it is we could be addicted to.

Do I find it hard to love God and love people because of this?

In 1 John he talks about how they are in complete opposition. The ways of the world, our addiction or the things that we obey, and God. So, if we can look at it from that angle and say, "Is there anything in my life that I'm leaning on too much?"

The way we can know it is if it's stopping our relationships. It's taking down our relationships with one another, us and our friends, and it's stopping us from being able to have a close relationship with God. We need to identify it.

The second thing is this:

Invite someone in.

Invite someone in. Addictions feed on this idea that you are the only one going through this. You are the only one that this has happened to. No one will ever understand why you do what you do. That is a lie.

You are at a church right now, thousands of people, that no matter what your addiction is, no matter what your struggle is, chances are, whether it's happened exactly to them or not, they

can relate to you. The moment you raise your hand and invite someone in is the moment that you see how many other people are struggling just like you.

And in Proverbs, it says this when it is talking about our hearts.

“The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.”

There are a lot of things even this week when you begin to try to process it, that you won’t be able to pinpoint. You won’t be able to figure it out on your own. You need trusted mentors and friends to draw it out. To be vulnerable enough to say, “I’m going to share this with you.”

Not with social media. This doesn’t need to be a post to thousands of people. It needs to be a conversation with a few. “Help me work through this because I want to get to the root of it.” Invite someone in.

The third one is this.

Will you fast from it this week?

There are probably a lot of you, who since we’ve been talking about addiction and what it is, you’ve gone back and forth over the past 30 minutes. “That’s not an addiction, that’s just a little thing I do. I’m in control of that. That’s not what he’s talking about.” It is.

That thing that you’ve had to second guess, that’s the thing I’m talking about. That’s the thing that could be stealing from you, stopping you from the life that God has for you. I just want to ask you, if that’s you and you’re on the fence about it, fast from it.

And not just fast from it, but begin to ask the questions and to process what is going on. When you feel those moments come, when you go to lean on that thing, when you go to look for that pleasure. To ask the question, “God, search my heart. Why do I want this? Why am I believing the lie that you won’t, but this will?” Will you fast from it?

I want to be clear to anyone who is on the fence about it. There are some people here today and you know you have an addiction. You don’t need an experiment. You don’t need another day. You are saying, “I know that is me and I struggle with that.”

And if that’s you, I don’t want to recommend anything other than please raise your hand. Not physically in this moment, but please reach out for help. To meet with an expert, to pray with people, and to just open that door for healing.

And we just want you to know that as a church we are for you. We’ve actually created a whole page:

tpcc.org/care

On this page, you will find clinical specialists in different areas of addiction. You'll find support groups that meet all over the city. You'll be able to branch out and find other groups so that you do not have to do this alone.

Know that you are not alone and that God can bring healing. From what I've seen, God brings healing in three ways.

His Spirit His People His Word

And I haven't seen anything God can't meet. I can't see anything that God can't do. I've seen God work through his Spirit miraculously in a moment. I prayed with someone, I talked with someone, and I've heard stories and they come back and say, "I don't have that craving anymore."

And that is beautiful. But I will say, more than I see that, what I see is that people wrestle with addiction, choosing to go to God every single day. Waking up and saying, "I'm no longer going to be enslaved to or bonded to this thing, but God, I'm going to look to you."

I think the way God does this is because freeing us from an addiction is not his primary concern. If he just frees us from an addiction, we'll just find another addiction. It's not enough just to free us from that.

What he is trying to get us to is to see that only he can be depended on. Only he is strong enough to sustain. Only he is the only one who doesn't over-promise and under-deliver.

He is the only one who can truly sustain more than a craving, that actual substance and life is all found in him through his Spirit. Every single day that you go through your addiction (and some days are better than others) even when you fall, even when you relapse, you know the Spirit of God is there waiting for you. He is ready to take you in; ready to meet you with his grace through his Spirit, through his people.

God has gifted some of the brightest minds in the world to be there for you, to help you navigate this. This is not just a mental or an emotional problem, it is a spiritual one. And we get to be around people and they get to pour into us. We don't have to do this alone. He uses his people to bring healing. We need them.

And then finally his word, that it is new and living every single day. It's filled with wisdom that we can go to every day. And what it does is it reinforces the other two.

I wake up and I read God's word and I know his Spirit is still at work doing miracles, changing lives, and giving me the strength I need to make it through this one day. I pray God takes it, but

even if he doesn't I believe his power will give me enough to sustain me throughout this day. I read that in his word.

And I read in his word how important community is. We were never meant to do this alone. Addiction will try to isolate us, keep us alone, and keep us in shame. God's Spirit and his word will constantly be pushing us into community. And then over and over again we begin to find healing.

And I want to talk to anyone right now who is struggling, who has done everything, tried this and that, tried to live for this and tried to live for that. You're at the end of your rope. You don't think there is anything that can satisfy you. You're beginning to think that it just be you. You must be broken.

It is not you. The world has no way to satisfy you. The cravings that you have cannot be satisfied in a pleasure, a possession, or in your own pride.

You see, addiction is our attempt to feel love, to feel worthy, or to numb the pain of not feeling loved. What God provides through his gospel is a very clear message that you don't need to hide, you don't need to live in the dark, deep waters of trauma. You don't need to believe the lie that you are unworthy of love.

You are loved. You are worth dying for. You are worth moving heaven, earth, and hell just to get to you. There is no pleasure to be found outside of God that will satisfy you. The only pleasure is God's unconditional love. And we can come face to face with that. You can know you are fully known and fully loved. You don't have to hide.

But it's not possession. It's nothing you can attain. It's nothing you can work toward. It's only when you realize that you are God's prized possession, you are God's masterpiece, you are hand-crafted, you are beautiful even with your flaws and all. You are made in the image of God. Only when we realize there is nothing we can attain, but that we are that prized possession, that's when we get satisfaction.

Pride—the only thing that can deal with our pride is humility. And there is nothing more humbling than the gospel message. It says we didn't just meet God half way. He didn't tag us in. No, we were dead in our sins. We had to be rescued. We had to be saved.

It was nothing we did. We couldn't acquire it. We couldn't work through it. No. Humble yourself.

It's not that you're a doctor. It's not that you're successful. It will be nothing you can achieve, nothing you can prove. It is with open hands you can attain this grace and this gospel.

It's not next to a bank account, not next to a resume. It's only when we come to this place of our identity and say, "I am a son of God. I am a daughter of God." That is the only thing that can satisfy us.

The problem with addiction is not that we want too much, it's that we don't want enough. It's that we don't think we're worthy of all that God has. It's that we don't think we're worthy to stand in front of him.

But he has proven it. He sent Jesus here for you. God went through excruciating pain, died on the cross for all of our sins, for all of our addictions, all of our faults, all of our shortcomings. He wrapped it all up and covered it in the blood of Jesus.

We have nothing to hide from. We have no reason to run. We can stand in confidence coming to Jesus. And we know how he will respond. The only thing that can break an addiction, not just at some surface level, but to get to the root of it, to unbind us from whatever we are bonded to, is to come to this truth.

There is someone so much greater, so much stronger, who has already promised an unbreakable bond to you. And let anything come, but nothing can separate what God has brought to you. Can we celebrate here this morning what God has done? What God is willing to do right now.

I don't know about you, but I've seen addiction take too much. I've seen addiction kill. I've seen addiction steal my family, my friends.—all because they believed the lie. I'm going to spend the rest of my life telling people that they are worthy of love.

God has laid it all out. There is one thing strong enough, and that is Jesus Christ and Jesus alone. That's for you today, anyone, no matter what.

I just want to close today by praying this prayer. It's in 1 John, and it's how he closes it. I want to close this way for all of us.

Right now, I just want to ask you to stand. Stand with us in this moment, this moment pointing toward Jesus and believing he is as good as he is. He is as strong as he claims to be. He is the only one.

Look at this prayer from 1 John.

"Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts."

We're going to war with all of it. Would you pray with me?

God, we thank you so much for today. We thank you for your word. We thank you for your Spirit. God, we thank you for one another so that we don't have to go through this alone.

God, right now in this moment steal from our minds and our hearts the lie that you won't, but this will. The truth is, you already have and you already did. God, allow us, help us to believe that. Help us to live like that is true.

God, help us this week to do the deep water work. To go into the depths and not be afraid of what we'll find, because we're taking you with us. And God, we will grab it kicking and screaming to you, for it's only you who can bring healing. It's only you who can break us from these bonds. It's only you who takes us out of slavery.

God, let us spend the rest of our lives championing you, celebrating you, pointing to you, waking up and learning to be more and more dependent on you until it's less and less of us until it's completely you.

God, for everyone here today who is struggling with an addiction, in your Spirit, right now, God, bring this moment of hope that there will come a day when the addiction will end, when the desire will fall, when the craving will stop. You've made a way to eternally be with you forever. There will come a day. Help us until that day to hold on, to hold on to hope, to hold on to you.

Jesus, you are our anchor. It is you we trust. It is you alone who are faithful. Jesus, we love you. It's in your perfect name we pray. Amen.