
Traders Point, how are we doing? Hey, it's good to be with you. My name is Ryan and I'm one of the pastors around here. To everyone at the campuses, everyone watching online, welcome.

We can't go any further without making a special announcement. For those of you who don't know, today is launch day for our Northeast campus. Can we make some noise? Let them hear it through the screens. Let them know we are behind them, for them. Come on. We truly believe the Fishers area will never be the same because you guys went. We can't wait to hear what God does today and in the future.

If you're here for the first time or just checking us out, let me catch you up. Over the past few weeks we've been in this series called *FOBO*. Maybe you've heard of FOMO, it's kind of the sister term there. But FOBO stands for this:

Fear Of Better Options

And here's what that looks like. It's where we enter into a world of maybe's, where everything could be, or it could not be. We get paralyzed by this idea of finding a perfect solution out there somewhere. If we wait a little bit longer, look a little bit harder, then we will find that perfect option.

I know this is something I struggle with. I struggle with options. They say it's because I'm a nine-wing one. I don't know about that. But what I do know is, just tell me what we're going to do and I'm cool with it. I don't need to know all the details. Just tell me and I'm good.

It probably shows up the worst though when I go through a drive thru. I think I know what I want. I'm positive I know what I want until I roll down the window and look at those beautiful options. I completely freeze. I'm stopped in my tracks.

My wife, she finds this both equal parts annoying and hilarious, so much so that she likes to record it and share it for the world to see. Take a look at this video of me at Panera.

I knew what I wanted. I'm not bragging, but I've eaten at a lot of fast food chain restaurants. I know what they have. Just throw one out there and I'll tell you what I get. Chick Filet. Ah, spicy deluxe with pepper jack cheese, waffle fries, large Arnold Palmer. Throw another one out. Taco Bell, don't even get me started. Cheesy gordita crunch, and I could go loaded potato grillers. If you're here today and you've never had pintos and cheese with sour cream, order that.

I can do that now. There's no wait, nothing behind it. I'm not really going to get all those things. But the moment I get behind the menu, the moment you sit down at the Cheesecake Factory. What are they trying to prove with that menu? We get it. You can make everything.

But it's in those moments with options, we're just bombarded with them, when we immediately take a step back and are like, "I don't even know what's up anymore. What should I do and how should I do it?"

And this is life, right? This idea that we go about doing things until we find a better way to do them, until we look for better options. We make bad things good, and then good things better, until ultimately, we want it to be just right. That's the hope out there.

And, FOBO may be a new term, but it's not a new fear. We may feel a little bit unique because in our culture there are so many options to pick from, but the truth is that even with one option it can stop us. Even with one option we can make the wrong choice in search of something better.

That's what we look at when we go back to the Genesis of it all. If you go back to the very beginning of the Bible you see Adam and Eve. Maybe you know Adam and Eve, maybe you don't. No worries. What happens, the way the Bible tells it, is that God created everything. And everything was perfect. And then at the end there, he makes man and woman, Adam and Eve.

He says: Guys, look around. I know. I really outdid myself. It's perfect. And guess what? You guys are at the top. I've chosen you to look over all of it. You have dominion over everything.

Adam's like: Even the wildebeest?

I'm not taking any more questions now, Adam. When I say everything, I mean everything.

And it continues to go for a little bit. But before God stops talking he says: But there is one thing. You can have everything you see, but there is this one thing, this one tree in the middle of the garden with this kind of fruit. Just trust me. You can't have that one. You can have everything else, but you can't have that one.

And not too much time goes by and we see that Eve, the woman, is walking around. It tells us the snake comes up. It represents the devil. And it begins to kind of question everything she believes, everything she thought. And then this fear of better options creeps in with this one interaction. Everything she thought she believed about God kind of comes apart. Take a look at this in Genesis. This is the conversation.

"The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, 'Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?' 'Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,' the woman replied. 'It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, "You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'" 'You won't die!'"

Has anyone ever tried to get you to do something and the way they phrased it was, “You won’t die?” Sounds good.

“‘You won’t die!’ the serpent replied to the woman. ‘God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.’ The woman was convinced.”

Have you ever been convinced? Just in a moment? Like you thought everything was going one way, you were so sure this was where it was going to go, and then in a moment, a conversation, everything begins to turn and you’re not so sure anymore. And then suddenly what you have doesn’t look as good as it once did, and now you start thinking about better options over there.

And what’s really important about this is the context that I really want to look at. One, from the beginning it’s a fear we all struggle with. But two, Eve was in a really, really good place. She was in paradise. It’s not like her back was up against the wall. It’s not like she was going through a rough season. She was living the best life possible and still this fear of better options crept in. And she ultimately struggled a whole lot with it.

And what I think that points out to a lot of us is that this isn’t something that’s for a few people. I think a lot of times we see people who are struggling or made the wrong choice or messed things up. We think, “Oh my gosh, I can’t believe that. I would never.”

Can we just kill that noise right now? We are all one decision, one idea away from stepping away from something that was so good and messing it up in a moment. That’s not what this is. And for all of us who are here right now—maybe you came in and said, “I’m here, but I really don’t want to be. I don’t feel comfortable. I don’t feel safe. Because I know who I am, and I can’t match up like the rest of these perfect people who are sitting around here.”

I just want to say that there are no perfect people sitting around here. And if you’re here and you’re having that thought, we just want you to know you’re welcome here. You will always belong here.

And I want to show God’s response. Because he responds to Eve. Eventually Eve listens to the devil. She goes and she does eat from the fruit of that tree. Adam eats from it. And in a moment, they destroy paradise. They completely sever humanity’s relationship with God.

If you think you’ve had a bad week, made some tough decisions, this was the worst. This was the worst thing that could have possibly happened, the worst option. And it did happen. And God responds. I don’t want us to pass this. Look at what God does after their failure.

“And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.”

I just want everyone to see this. If you’re here today and you are wondering, “I’ve messed up. I’ve got a past. I’ve done some things I’m not proud of. I’m afraid of going back to God or going

to God for the first time because I don't know how he will handle it," can we just read this right now? Then you will know with confidence how he is going to handle it.

That even after Adam and Eve failed, when they came to him, he clothed them in animal skins. He made sure they had what they needed. This is the God we serve, not a God who keeps us at a distance, not a God who says, "Stay back," but a God who meets us with grace, a God who meets us with love, a God who meets us with forgiveness. Can we celebrate that kind of God here this morning?

But now what? What do we do? What do we do after we messed up? Because this series has been *Fear Of Better Options*, and everything before today has been how to make wise decisions, how to work through that kind of what-if game in our head. How do we apply this to our relationships so we can move forward?

But what if we already made the bad decision? What if we already chose the wrong option? That's what we're going to be looking at today. We're going to sit in the driver's seat of pain and of failure, and of loss, and of regret and say, "What now?"

Because a lot of times on the other side of our mistakes it can feel like there are no more options left. That we are too far gone. But what today is all about is, that is not even close to true. Actually, what we do after our failures can be the greatest thing that ever happens to us. So much can happen after our failures that God wants to do.

And to look at this we're going to be in 2 Corinthians 7, starting in verse 8. If you have a Bible you can flip there. If not, don't worry about it. All of the verses will be on the screen behind me. What we're going to pick up on is a letter. It's written by a guy named Paul to this church in Corinth.

And this is the second letter he wrote. The first letter he wrote, it was a little, he calls it severe. He had to respond to a lot of crazy things they were doing within the church. They didn't really have a fear of better options. All the options were available to them and they were doing all of the things. It was like buffet style at the church in Corinth.

They were just mixing stuff, putting stuff together. I do think that's where all amazing food ideas come from—buffet lines. Where else do you get chicken and waffles from? Like, you're just going through and you're like, "I can put some waffles on here. And I've got some fried chicken. Let's put them together with some hot sauce," and you create something amazing.

But sometimes you don't. Sometimes you put cheese and gravy on things you shouldn't put cheese and gravy on. That's how the church in Corinth is. They put some stuff in places they shouldn't have.

So, Paul reaches out to them this first time and basically just kind of sets them straight: Don't do this. Please don't do that anymore. Do these things instead. And then look at how he follows up this first letter with his second one. He has possibly the greatest starting line of all times. This is in verse 8.

“I am not sorry,” and I would never be able to write this. But it’s incredible. “I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you, though I was sorry at first, for I know it was painful to you for a little while. Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.”

And here is the big word we’re going to focus in on for the rest of the time.

Sorrow

Sorrow is waiting for us at the end of every bad decision. With every failure we’re going to be met with sorrow.

A few years ago, I experienced sorrow on a whole new level. I was at my parents’ house enjoying the day, hanging out of the couch. My niece was there and she was having a great time. She was dancing. Then she starts doing gymnastics, cartwheels, and doing all kinds of stuff.

She runs over to me and says, “Ry-Ry, can you do a headstand?”

I said, “Child, please, can I do a headstand? You’re lucky I’m not doing a headstand right now. That’s how good I am. Sometimes I just do them for no reason. Yes, I can do a headstand. Step back and watch me.”

I get to the middle of the living room and I go up and start doing a headstand. I was honestly surprised at how good of a headstand I was doing. It was unbelievable. Legs stretched all the way out, it was amazing. My niece is losing her mind on the couch. This is the best thing she’s ever seen.

She gets so excited that she jumps up and runs over to give me a hug while I’m still in the headstand position. I was not prepared for that kind of love. So, when she runs over and grabs me, I fall over. And I don’t just fall over, but I fall on top. Not just on top of her, but directly on top of her arm.

I may have broken her arm with her body. (That gasp, that was sorry and you weren’t even there). The sorrow I felt after that, just constantly playing back the scenario in my head. “Why didn’t I do more? Why wasn’t I clearer? Why didn’t I tell her never to get off that couch? Why was I so stupid? How could I let this happen?” It weighed so heavy on me.

The next week I picked her up to take her out to lunch and say I was sorry. We go to lunch. At the end of her order she says, “And I would like a large chocolate shake please.” And I said, “Grace, it’s lunchtime. I don’t think we’re going to get chocolate shakes.”

She looked at me and she said, “Ry-Ry, you did break my arm last week.” And I looked at the waitress and said, “She is crazy. She says things sometimes. But we’ll take a large chocolate shake.”

It’s this feeling of sorry that is waiting for us at the end of every bad decision. It’s there. After the lie, it’s waiting on us. After we send the message we wish we would have never sent. We said the thing we wish we would never have said. After the moment of weakness. After that drunken night. After the night you had no control over, but it still happened to you. And you’re living with the sorry.

The rock-bottom addiction moment. After you exploded in anger. After you left because you couldn’t process what you were feeling and what you were going through, and you thought the best thing was just to leave. But then you left for so long that you don’t know how to come back. And all you can experience now is sorrow. We’re going to feel sorrow. If you are breathing, you will feel it at some level in the near future.

I’m not a smart man, but I’ve come to know this. People fail a lot. There is no way to avoid it. Every wrong decision is going to be met with sorrow. The good news here is that Paul says there are two different kinds of sorrow. And I’m almost convinced that most of us have only experienced the one kind. But look at this. He says there are two.

“For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.”

So, we’ve got two different kinds of sorrow here:

Worldly sorrow & godly sorrow

And they couldn’t be more different. Worldly sorrow is that kind of debilitating sorrow. This is the sorrow that you wake up with the next day. This is so heavy you can’t even move, it’s the only thing you can think about.

And if you’re here today and you are wondering, “I don’t know if I’m living in that kind of sorry,” here’s what that can sound like:

I can’t forgive myself

I know what I did, or even I know what was done to me, and I can’t move past it. I can’t move that picture out of my mind. And eventually we sit there so long staring at that mistake, staring at what happened to us, and we get so close to it that eventually we can’t tell the difference between where we end and where our worst mistakes begin. They just kind of become one together.

And this is the kind of worldly sorry that Paul says leads to death. But can we just pause for a moment? If you’re here today and that thought was in your head on the way to church today,

can we stop and say that is not what God has for you. That condemnation is not what's there for you. Jesus offers forgiveness. Jesus offers peace. Jesus offers a way back, hope. There is nothing bleak about it.

Here is what God intended for sorrow:

Sorrow is a conviction, not a home.

Sorrow is not supposed to keep us stuck in sin. Sorrow is supposed to lead us out of it. It's a conviction that moves us closer to God. Sorrow is not a death sentence. It's actually something God wants us to experience because it's where he can do his best work.

And he says: The best work that I do is through this godly sorrow, and through that there are no regrets. No regrets. That's the whole thing about sorrow. How can there be sorrow without regrets? That's what God is talking about there. He says once you have it, you don't let it become home. It doesn't get to live there. It doesn't become a cancer and eat you from the inside out.

It's a conviction that you do something with it. Godly sorrow leads to action. It moves us away from sin and toward Jesus. It moves us out of hopelessness and into hope. It moves us out of this idea that you are a failure to you are a child of God. Godly sorrow produces so much in us.

That's why Paul says he is glad. He is glad that they felt sorry in the beginning because of what it was able to do for them after they got the letter. He goes on in verse 11 to share all the things that happened because they felt sorry—godly sorrow. Look at this.

“Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. **You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right.**”

It produces in us what nothing else can. Godly sorrow produces so much in us that it leads us closer to him. It doesn't just stay as a home, but it convicts us and moves us forward. And you see, a lot of times when we think about the idea of success or failure, or making the right decision or the wrong, the Bible doesn't use those terms.

Primarily, the Bible is focused on growth. The Bible says: Yes, you can grow through discipline. You can grow through doing the right things. You will grow if you wake up and you read the Bible and apply it to your life. You can grow if you do good things. You can grow if you love people like Jesus loved people. That will help you grow.

But it goes a step further and says: Even in your failure—your failure can produce growth. Even in your weakest moments, when you mess up, if you allow godly sorrow to convict you, it can produce so much in you. Look at all the things it says it produced.

It says because you felt this and you were convicted and did something, now you're more sensitive, now you're more reverent, now you're more passionate than you've ever been. Now you are more responsible. From a godly standpoint all things lead to growth. It's always an option. And I love this catch-all statement he uses at the end of this, "You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right."

Here is the question for all of us this week as we're going through it, or the next time we find ourselves on the other side of a mistake or a failure. Can we say this about ourselves?

Have you done everything necessary to make things right?

Because this is as far as we can take it. We can't go back in time. We can't reverse the past. We can't make things go back to normal. And for a lot of us, the sorry we're holding onto wasn't even our choice. It was something that happened to us. And those people aren't even around if we wanted to have a conversation with them in the first place.

But what we are called to do, as far as it depends on us, is to live at peace with one another. That includes other people. That includes ourselves. And that includes God. Have you done everything necessary to live at peace with the people around you?

It won't always be met with forgiveness. It won't be met with things going back to normal. But it will be met with peace. It will be met with growth. And here is just a kind of a prayer you can pray this week. Maybe there is some stuff going on under the surface, in the deep waters of your heart. There may be things you feel, sorrow you feel but you can't identify, "Where is this coming from, and why do I feel that?"

Just pray, "God, would you search my heart and show me if there is anything in there that hasn't been addressed. Bring it to the surface." And here is the second part, "God, give me the courage to act on it. Give me the courage to send that text message. Give me the courage to forgive myself. Give me the courage to walk in freedom. Give me the courage to move forward and not be tied down with this sorrow."

I know for me this week, as I was studying, going through this, going through this sorrow and asking God to search my heart, something came to the surface. And it was something I needed to do. It was a letter I needed to write. I had said in the back of my mind that I had forgiven, that all things were fine, but then God raised it out. He said, "No, it is still there."

And it's not dependent on the other person or what they say, but it is dependent on you getting the words out and what you need to say. Then you will have peace. Have you done everything necessary? Because when we do that, that's when sorrow leads to action.

And the word the Bible uses is repentance:

Repent

And he says this is the main difference between worldly sorrow and godly sorrow. It is repentance. And I know the word repent is weird, we don't use it in our vocabulary. It's a lot of times used at the wrong times and in the wrong context. But here is what to repent is.

When we come to this spot and see this life we've been living, this one mistake we made, we see the pain we've brought and we look at it, but we don't live there. It's a conviction that says, "I don't want that. I'm not going to focus on that. I'm actually going to turn. I'm not just going to walk away from this thing over here, I'm going to walk toward something. I'm going to walk toward Jesus. I'm going to walk toward what he has for me. I'm not going to let that sorrow creep in, but I'm going to do something with it. I'm going to repent from all of these things and see what God has for me."

So many of us never get to that spot. We just let it end with this deep bellow of sorrow and pain that we just feel like we have to live in always and forever.

I could picture it like this. Say this rope is sorrow and these cinder blocks represent our sin, mistakes, failures, pain. And a lot of times when we mess up we feel this sorrow. It brings us right over here to this. And we get so close to it and see our mistakes, our downfalls, and how we could have done it better.

Sorrow leads us right here. And it begins to wrap itself back around it—around us, and around these blocks. Eventually we're tethered to it and we can't tell the difference between where we end and where our mistakes begin. And we try to move and it feels like we are all moving at the same time.

How many of us have picked up an identity? Have become things because of one night in middle school? That's just who I am now? Or one night in college? Or some of us, we take it a step further and say, "This is who my family is. This is who my dad was and who his dad was. This is who my mom was. This is just the life I have to accept. This is who we are."

And we just stand here and focus on it over and over again, getting wrapped up in our sorrow, never being able to feel like we can move past it. And if we let it, that is where worldly sorrow will lead us and keep us. And that's why there is such fear of making a wrong decision and failure. We believe we are going to get so close to this and wrapped up with it that we can't do anything. We're just going to be led back over and over again.

But Jesus says that there are two options. There is a repentance through faith in him that doesn't lead to sin. It doesn't lead to death. It leads to salvation. It leads to hope. It leads to forgiveness.

And when we come over here and we feel that conviction of sin, and we wonder what we are going to do with this, everything changes with what we focus on. We will either become what we focus on, which will be either who we are not outside of Jesus or who we are because of Jesus. But what it says is that we have the power that as you follow this rope back, this sorrow back over here to your mistakes. You don't have to stay here.

You don't have to try to pull this with you. That's not you. You're something completely different, and through this godly sorrow you can unhook from this. You can take this, you can leave this behind and walk over here. Jesus says: Because of what I've given you, you can hook that sorrow here.

And then when it comes here, it can lead to so much. It can lead to salvation. If we bring it all to God, and I'm telling you that anybody who has ever experienced this, that you've felt like you've been carrying all these cinder blocks, all this weight, you can come in this newness of life.

If you've seen him remove it as far as the east is from the west, if you've seen him take your sorrow, can we celebrate him right now? That God is for you. God has something so much more than a life of being fixated on our downfalls, and our sin and mistakes. He says: No, no, no, bring it all to me."

1 John says this. "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."

When we make that move and turn and stop focusing on this, and we repent and hand it all over to Jesus, Jesus says to come to me, all who are weary, all who have been carrying all this with you. Come to me.

And that will be a thing of the past. Because what Jesus offers us, what he is trying to get through to us, sometimes painfully, is that's not who you are. This went to the cross. This was nailed when Jesus died for us.

You see, the gospel, the Good News is that Jesus the Son of God would come to earth. He would live this perfect life for me and you because we messed it up a long time ago with Adam and Eve through this fear of better options, thinking that we knew better. And we landed flat on our face. And over and over again we did this until God decided that now is the time, and he sent his only Son, born wrapped in flesh and skin. He lived a life we couldn't live. Every single decision, he made it right, perfect, blameless, flawless.

He went to the cross for me and you. And when he went, he took all of that. Every ounce of it, every bit of it, the things you're afraid to mention, the things you're afraid to uncover. Because as you began to pray, "God, search my heart," the stuff that comes to the surface, the darkness, the wickedness, the horrible things you're afraid to mention, God says: I've already paid for it. I knew ahead of time, and I still bankrupted heaven to give it to you. Trust me with it.

There's no turning back for him. He's already gone all-in. He's for us. And in this moment, what we want to do is create a spot for us to be able to respond to Jesus. We know how God is going to respond, that in the beginning God clothed them with what they needed.

And Jesus would come, and he would clothe us in exactly what we need—in grace, mercy, and forgiveness. And that's something we can all walk out of here with. We don't need to walk out of here with that. We can walk out of here in newness of life.

And what I want to do right now is pray. And if you could just not rush out of here, we're just going to pray. This may be the only moment of quiet, the only moment where there's not another option knocking at your door. Just a chance to reflect and to say, "God, search my heart," a chance for your soul to be met with the kind of love that maybe it's never experienced before. A moment for all that sorrow to fall. For the conviction to rise, but it to go straight to Jesus. And then you can walk out of here.

Would you pray with me?

God, we thank you so much for today. God, we're sorry, sorry that we've messed up, sorry that we've fallen short. We see what our pain has done. We see what other peoples' pain has done to us, the places of isolation it's moved us to, God, the things that we've had to put in place just to survive, to suppress so much and to not deal with it, but God we are. They are keeping us from you.

So, God, I pray right now that through your Spirit you would do a work; that you would begin to meet us right where we are. As those thoughts come up, as those wounds get touched, as they come to the surface, the first thing they are met with is not condemnation, but love and grace.

God, I pray for the first time we could all walk out of here saying that we forgive ourselves, because we know you've already forgiven us. God, I pray for repentance. God, we pray for godly sorrow. God, no matter what we've done, what we've faced, what tried to break us, what tried to kill us, none of that is strong enough to go against your grace, your love, and your mercy. Nothing that we've been through is too heavy to be cleansed and removed.

So, God, meet us in this moment. We pray that your Spirit would do a work right now. I pray we would be open to it. God, take away any fears. This is the choice. This action is what has no regrets. We can't get it wrong. It can't lead to sorrow. It will lead to you, Jesus. We love you. It's in your perfect name we pray. Amen.