



LUKE 6

Today we are going to look at the fourth installment of energizing church. You can warm up your Bible to Luke 6. The last thing a person should want to preach on is sin. I have kind of made it my motto to only preach on what I really believe in. I know it makes sense, but there is more. If I'm not living it then I'm not preaching it. I feel I'd be a hypocrite telling you something that I don't believe or that I don't live in my own life. I can talk about tithing, I can talk about miracles, or about Jesus, end times, creation, and much much more, yet sin is not a good one. I am a sinner just like everyone else on this rock we call Earth. How can I uphold my motto if I still and will sin? Sin and makes me uncomfortable from the pulpit.

I suppose it's like a substance abuse survivor. We sit in a room with other survivors staring nervously at the floor. I stand up before you and say "I am a sinner." Just like an alcoholic stands up and says "I am an alcoholic." The difference is (I hope) that they might be able to beat there problems. Maybe they

can and maybe they can't, yet when it comes to sin, I believe it's with us till we die. There are some people that believe we can beat sin, I'm not one of those. I hope their right, but to date it doesn't look good for me or anyone else I know.

It's not like I'm a sin factory or something. It just bothers me that you might think I'm perfect because I'm not. Listen to John in his letter **1 John 1:8-10** **"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us."** Even John believes that sin plays a factor in our lives.

This world is a tough place to work in: there is sin all around us. I deliver (as a mailman) sin in the form of magazines every day, playboy, Maxim, Victoria secret, and much more. I have received drugs to deliver. There are advertisements for gambling galore in my junk mail. Isn't junk mail a sin? Just kidding. There are shows that are on the edge like breaking bad. Movies that have scenes I wish they wouldn't. Have you ever said "oh that movie, I love that movie." Then you watch it and say "oh I didn't remember that scene: seems to happen a lot in the 80's movies.

Sports games sell gambling and sex. The internet says come watch this and come do that. It's free and nobody will know. I went through Vegas once because I

wanted to see if it was the devils playground, it most certainly was. Some days I feel that sin is all around us. Closing in for the kill and there is nowhere to run or hide. So I guess I can talk about it because it's relevant to our world. We might be Christians but we live in the world of sin.

Today I'd like to take us into the world of church sin. I could go into many other kinds, but church sin is a killer. I liken this sin to horse blinders, but I call them spiritual blinders. It's the things we claim to be, but rarely are. It's the way the Bible wants us to do life but we rarely do. The problem as I see it is: we rarely believe that we sin in church and that attitude is like wearing blinders. Most people would like to say they come to church and leave as saints. I believe church leadership has given them spiritual blinders. They sit on your head like this, and we only can see what's right in front of us. Do Christians think because they go to church, read their Bibles, and pray to God that there sinless? The church message at times leads us to believe that.

I feel as Pastors, sometimes we talk less about sin and more about Joy. We address what is good in Christianity more than what is wrong. There is nothing wrong with Christianity today Patrick? Are you sure? Has being called a saint and sanctified so often caused us to get sloppy? Do we really act like Saints inside and outside the church?

What is a Saint? 1 Corinthians 1:2 says **“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.”**

Do you read this verse closely? It says **“to those sanctified”**; **“and those called to be saints.”** We have attached the word Saint to each of us who call Jesus Lord. **Romans 1:6 “among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; 7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.** These verses say that the ones of Jesus are the saints. I read the words “called to be.” It does not mean yes we are, but that we are called to be. Called can mean to be lured, commanded, requested, or to undertake. Sainthood is not what we are; but rather what we are asked to imitate.

It’s like the mom who is looking all over the house for little Willy. After much effort she finds him inside the pantry next to the cookie jar. She says “what are you doing?” Little Willy looks up at her with those innocent eyes saying “I’m resisting temptation.” Little Willy is a saint sometimes and sometimes he ain’t. We are called to be saints, but in church and at home sometimes we ain’t.

The problem arises with our fallen nature. That nature says we (each of you) are number 1. Each of us desires to be right some times, the best sometimes, and

perfect sometimes. This is in each of us. Why do children cry for attention, pout, and pull hair: because it's our nature to win. Our society is created for winners over losers. If you like it's "the survival of the fittest." This is us, and it's our sinful nature to be better than the rest. To be called Saints or forgiven is an intoxicating pride candy. It's like were told to pursue perfection. What happens when we fall short because of our sinful nature?

It makes sense that it's reported that 1 in 10 Americans are depressed. In 2003 over 213 million prescriptions were written out of anti-depression drugs. This is a multi-billion dollar industry based totally on our depressed state. **Depression is a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's thoughts, behavior, feelings and sense of well-being. Depressed people may feel sad, anxious, empty, hopeless, worried, helpless, worthless, guilty, irritable, hurt, or restless.** There are many reasons for depression. I am convinced that sin plays its role in depression.

I touch on this word depression because it might come from something missing in your life, or something that has gone totally wrong. I believe that at times it is our sin nature grinding against who we are. This nature tells you "Some are good, but what if you are not good at anything?" Our culture screams money, sex, and consumerism, but what if you can't have it all. Depression is all about what we lack. When our first parents fell, it was Satan saying "God is holding back

on you.” There is something God is not providing. Sin helps us cheat in order to have it all.

Oklahoma state university decided it had to win. Could they win honestly? Sure but competing with the big boys is not easy. So they decided to cheat. They secretly paid football players under the table, offered them sex, and paid for their schooling. All of this is against the universities rules in American college football. Of course they got caught. Did they confess because it was wrong? No, they confessed because they got caught. Sin is the stuff we do to cheat. We want sex the easy way. We want money the easy way; we want to win at all costs. Look at baseball, football, and Olympic athletes. Over and over we read of stories of cheaters.

Today we are going to take a close look at church sin. I want you to see the fallout of this destructive state we have made. We in the church family have created a state of Sainthood. This has falsely caused us to ignore the sin we do and it creates spiritual blinders. I hate to be doom and gloom but this has to stop. We possibly have no idea the destruction we have caused by sin in the church?

A thermal nuclear hydrogen bomb is equal to 10,000,000 tons of TNT. That is a lot of fire power. Sin in my professional opinion is the most destructive force on the planet: bigger than any hydrogen bomb. Think about it: the sin of one man: Hitler (and I suppose many others) caused over 6,000,000 deaths. The first atom

bomb in Japan only killed 200,000 people. I don't want to depress you, but I need to show you the weight of sin in our lives. How many people have been murdered because of sin? Jesus said the weight of our sin would be more than we can bear. I believe it is. Question: how many people have refused to believe in God because of poor Christianity? How many of those will go to hell because of the Christians they have met. Do any of you want to stand before God and give account for the people we have turned away? What is the true number of people going to hell because Christians have shunned them?

There is sin inside a church. I doubt each of us is pure and perfect. Some of us have spiritual blinders to our own sin. So what are spiritual blinders exactly? Glad you asked. This type of sin is the stuff we have been taught and believe in church. I'm not talking about Jesus, baptism, and worship. No, I'm talking about church doctrine, traditions, and practices. These are not the stuff like communion or tithing. It's when we take church doctrine and traditions and use them to judge others and turn them off of God. Our fourth look at energizing church is about the stuff that causes the lost to remain lost. The question is simple really. Is it our fault or their fault that they remain lost?

Our actions in church might have inadvertently killed millions of people who wanted to be saved. That is strong language, but our actions as Christians do influence people's desire for God. Our sin as Christians is horrible because we

look like God to the world. “If God treats me like that why would I want him?” “If God acts like that then why be a Christian?” That’s the responses people give about you and your church in the outside world.

It’s my hope today to show you some of the things we covet, and how we have integrated them into the church. So let’s take a look at Luke 6. This is what I call the sin chapter. Jesus is skillfully pointing out where sin is in the church, and what it will do to us if we let it get out of control. Think of the church in Jesus day as it is in our world today. There are similarities. They had rules and they had traditions. Today we are no different. Some churches say you can smoke and some say you can’t. Another tells you that speaking in tongues is a sign you are saved; while another might believe you can sin all you want and still walk proudly into heaven.

Jesus in Luke 6 begins with 11 verses outlining where the religious people were at that time. Jesus told them that their rules and traditions had been taken out of context. This is tough preaching because the rules and traditions meant well. I am confident Jesus would agree.

Our human nature “to be seen as good and successful” has twisted what was meant for good. Our sin nature wants to win. Generally church rules and traditions were meant to humble us and guide us to be the same as other Christians. There is not supposed to be “me” in our faith but “we.”

Let's read Luke 6 starting at verse 1 **“One sabbath while Jesus was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate them. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" 3 Jesus answered, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? 4 He entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and gave some to his companions?" 5 Then he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."**

On face value it looks like Jesus and the disciples are doing something Wrong. The people were not supposed to work on the Sabbath. Jewish law written down in the Pentateuch dictates that one day a week the people were to rest just like God rested on the seventh day. Believe it or not, my stove has a Sabbath timer. My stove would have been be handy if I was Moses. I could prepare the meal on Friday for Saturday without even touching it on the Sabbath. It even locks so I could not cheat and break the law.

On the surface it looks like Jesus broke his own law, except this. Jesus is recounting how David was able to eat the consecrated bread from the temple, yet they were not allowed to eat grain from a field. Two things: One is Deut 23:25 **“If you go into your neighbor’s standing corn, you may pluck the ears with your**

hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing corn." The religious rulers had taken the law farther than it was supposed to go. The law says don't work. The law was not to deny anyone food with their hands. Jesus was pointing out the difference between working, hunger, and intent.

The second thing Jesus is pointing out is what the law was meant for. It was meant for rest. What blows me away is where the Pharisees are. Are they resting; are they with their families at home, where are they? Jewish people were permitted to travel a distance on the Sabbath. The distance was unclear. Some say you could go nowhere, while others say just between cities. Yet these men are traipsing around the countryside on the Sabbath looking to catch Jesus sinning. Can't you see the comedy and horror of it? I had a boss once who left the mail sorting plant to catch a guy working at another job. While he was gone there was a fire back in the plant. I loved the irony of the whole thing.

Jesus wants to point out the heart of the law more than the law itself. Think of the teaching of Jesus. If someone is hungry: feed them. If someone is poor: clothe them. I could go on and on. The character of God is to care for people. The religious leaders had on spiritual blinders. Their doctrine and laws were their God, and their idols. They were not concerned for their own observance of the law but the observance by others. They ignored their rest, ignored their families, and they were not concerned for the hunger of Jesus or the disciples: it's was about the law.

Are we like that today. Is your strong belief in doctrine or traditions clouding your compassion for people? Do you sit in church and study everyone else instead of listening to the sermon. What is your main topic on the way home? Is it Betty's cleavage and the luke warm coffee or is it the message and your feelings on what God is saying to you? Did you stick to your safe clicky group in the foyer or did you reach out to someone new? Are there spiritual blinders in your life? Ok let's continue in verse 6

On another Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. 7 The scribes and the Pharisees watched him to see whether he would cure on the sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against him. 8 Even though he knew what they were thinking, he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come and stand here." He got up and stood there. 9 Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?" 10 After looking around at all of them, he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was restored. 11 But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Jesus is talking to you today. What is lawful on the Sabbath? What is lawful in your life and inside the church? I have a friend who believes some are saved and

some just exist. We are to seek out those God has predestined for good works, and leave the others for the devil. He believes we must go to church, read our bibles, and take communion to show that our faith is alive. He has his spiritual blinders on looking for perfection in an imperfect sinful world.

God gave us the Ten Commandments and that went south. The religious rulers in Jesus day had 513 rules beyond the basic 10 and that went south. We just read it here that they missed the point. Listen to verse 11 again “**But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.**” Church sin is crazy bad for us. Can anger and fury exist in your heart alongside of love and compassion? I argued with a friend once over his bible. He was reading the extra comments we have in the bible and considered them scripture. They are not scripture, but he treated them like they were. I said what does scripture say and he said these comments are scripture. He missed the point. It is inspired by scripture, but it is not scripture.

We in the church have written doctrine like our creeds that are inspired by scripture, but they are not the gospel. The actions of Jesus, God the father, and the spirit in the Bible is our gospel. How do they see people and circumstances? Is reading your Bible or keeping the Sabbath why you are saved? Is dressing right or not drinking the reason you have eternal life. No it is not. God put aside his desire for holiness to work inside sinful people. We need to do that too. Jesus healed the

man with the withered hand because he cared, not because he was commanded too. He wanted the religious rulers to look past rules, traditions and doctrine, and towards the hearts of others.

Amazingly enough right after that Jesus calls his disciples. These men were a rag tag group that couldn't save themselves. They probably were sinners, they smelled like fish, and did jobs the righteous people despised. Did you realize in the first 11 verses Jesus was alone. No disciples and no pastoral education to give him credentials. Just Jesus and a few slivers and callouses from being a carpenter's son.

Listen to verses 17-19 **“He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.18 They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured.19 And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.”**

Imagine the power of a perfectly godly man: a man with no sin, no secrets, and a pure love for God. Jesus was that man. Yes he was God, but he was also fully human and fully capable of sinning, I believe that. Yet, the spirit of God just pours out of him. The people can see it and they are scrambling to touch him. If we are saints, if we are good little Christians, then where is the power? Where are the

miracles, the healings, and the love for others? Maybe we are less than we think. Maybe we need Jesus more than we think. Maybe we are not number 1.

Let's take a quick look at the rest of this chapter. If sin is not in the church then this does not apply to you. Jesus goes into a set of blessings and woes. Verse 20 and 21 **"Then he looked up at his disciples and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 'Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. 'Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.'**" Doesn't seem like the best preachers, the most famous business men, or the cutest girl gets into heaven does it? Verses 24 and 25 **"But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. 25 'Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. 'Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep.'**" It's saying "you are doing great now but how about in your heart?" You put on a good face, but who will be laughing at you in the end? Maybe treating others as less important than you is not a good thing. Jesus seems to point out that the hurting and sinful wretch has a better chance at heaven than those called as saints. I look at it this way: if you think you're a saint you probably ain't.

The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are not reachable. If you think you have reached them then you are Jesus. They were not meant to be reached. Then why say them Patrick? Have you ever heard Jesus say "heaven is like?" He says that several times in his parables. The Ten Commandments are like

heaven, or the Sermon on the Mount is like heaven. Our sin nature says I can achieve whatever I put my mind too. Jesus is saying no you just don't get it. It's not come and be it, but this is the way to go. Why do we have to be perfect? Why were Christians called "the way and not the Saints?"

In verse 27 Jesus says love your enemies. That is one of the most ridiculous statements you could make. Enemies make your day bad, and they ruin your life at times. Yet Jesus says to love them. On the surface it seems ridiculous to love those who hurt you.

One of the worst things we could do to someone is command them to love their enemies. Well you are not Christian if you don't love everyone right? This is spiritual blinder nonsense. Should your raped daughter love her raper? Yes because God commanded it? Well no, it's not a command to love but a life style to love. We love first, we are compassionate first, and we care first. We can forgive through Christ who strengthens us. We won't forget but we can gain the power to forgive through Christ. Look at verses 31-32 **"Do to others as you would have them do to you. 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them."** And verse 36 **"be merciful, just as your father is merciful."** Many people in church worship there doctrine and traditions but when it comes to being nice, it goes out the door. Your spiritual

blinders only show you and your sainthood in the mirror. Jesus isn't asking us to be perfect, but he is asking us to step up our game.

“He also told them a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? 40 A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher.” Yes we will be like Jesus but not Jesus. If you think you're a saint, are you blind to your own sin? Is your pursuit of perfection drawing in others to think they can be perfect too? Again I have learned one thing in life so far: Jesus is God and I'm not Jesus. I'm Patrick standing before you as a sinner.

Let me tell you a story. I knew a boy who was about 10 years old at the time. Would you consider a boy of ten to be capable of going to hell? Well one night I encouraged this 10 year old and my son to attend a youth event. I was certain this would be great for them. It's a good place; they will be protected by my pastor friends, and the kids that are Christian, what could possibly go wrong? As it turns out they took my friend and pushed him in a corner of the sanctuary. A youth leader and pastor cornered him and told him he was going to hell and needed to make a choice for Jesus.

Since that night he has never darkened the door of a church. He said “If that's the love they will give me when I enter that place, they can take a hike.” He turned gay because in reality, that community embraced him for who he was. They

loved him, cared for him, and accepted him. He hates the church, God, and every Christian he meets. Do you blame him? Is he foolish in your eyes at ten years old? At ten we can't drive, we can't drink, we can't vote, we can't work, and we can't have sex, yet at ten someone in a church felt this boy was old enough to decide between heaven and hell. I wasn't mature enough to make that decision until I was 33. Theoretically this boy is going to hell now at 23. He is the walking dead. Church sin can be a killer.

Listen to Jesus today starting at verse 47. **"I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them.48 That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house."**

What is your foundation? Is your life built on what Jesus built for you or is it built by your own hands, your own understanding. Jesus said he came to fulfill the law. He did not come to enforce it. Fulfill means to succeed in achieving. It's about the heart of the law. It's nice to say you will not kill because the law says not to. Isn't it better to not kill because in your heart you know it's just not the right thing

to do? In church we are gathered together as saints. We are those called to be good, holy, and representatives of God. Are we trying to be saints or are we letting the spirit of God change us into saints?

This chapter is trying to take off the spiritual blinders. Church is for the loved, the compassionate, and the forgiven. Why does the outside world think we suck? Our sin and hypocrite ways make us suck that's why. I know a Christian that won't hire Christians. He says they are the worst workers. We have become lazy because we think being saved and sanctified spells "finished." We are baked, done, finished. No need for Jesus and the spirit because it's all over for us.

That's the spiritual blinders talking. We still need a savior for our sin. We still need the filling of the spirit daily. For me it's hourly. Being saved is not a thing to be won. It's a privilege, an honor, and a blessing. God spent his whole time in the Bible asking us to be like him. Perfect? No, no, no. Stop it with the perfection pursuit. Our chapter says forgive more, judge less, and bear good fruit. Verse 45 says **"The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks."**

Do you want to be good or are you commanded to be that way? Do we really think we are fooling God? I hope he opens the eyes of our heart today to our own sin, and casts aside our spiritual blinders.

