

Let's go Hebrews chapter 7 we've got 2 verses to cover in 7 and then on into 8. While you are turning there if you are with us tonight and a guest or regular attendee from the Keller area our Keller plant launches in 2 weeks. If you want more information about that plant, where they will be meeting, will they be like us, the website is behind me. CityViewChurch.net And so if you live out in the Keller area and you've been driving out our way, about 60 Village people, I hate saying that, should have thought that thru a little bit better before we named it, are headed out that way. This is not a satellite venue that means it's not going to be me on video out there. It has a flesh and blood pastor, flesh and blood worship leader, and flesh and blood people. And so if you want to be involved in a church that is in your community, and you live out in the Keller area, this is the route to go. This is our second one. With Barry Kelly's church out in Frisco and it's doing very, very well. So you if live out in that area you need to check it out. I will invite you to not be here. So if you want to go check out that one and live out in the Keller area, I recommend that you do it. This thing works better in community. All right. So if you live out there – I would. I think I'm repeating myself over and over again.

I was a part of waiting room ministries, a non-profit organization, before I came on staff here at The Village. And on Waiting Room with me were several other young men, I was the only one that was married and I got the nauseating privilege of watching some of those guys meet their wives, their girl friends and then move on. None so nauseating as a guy named Shane on our staff. Shane met a girl named Kelly. We immediately nick named her as the K Factor because all of a sudden she was factored into everything we did. And so it was beyond the normal, it was into this whole varsity, professional level of what I consider to be pretty gross, and things like he bought like a separate cell phone that was just for her, the K phone. So if she ever needed to get a hold of him she could just simply call the K Phone. And what made matters worse is that you knew sometimes he was screening your call so you'd try to circumvent that by going straight to the K Phone only to find out that he would have put messages on the K Phone specifically for the K Factor and so you would call that phone and it'd be like "Baby I can't get to my phone right now but huh, thinking about ya. Your eyes are like..." ahhhhhhhh!!!!!!

Wash my hands, you know!!! And then what made matters worse is we were literally living out of a van man I mean there were about 6 or 7 of us and we would go do these conferences and retreats and we'd either stay in a hotel and then get in the van in the morning and book it to the next deal and he would always push us, where as normally we'd finish up at 10, 11:00 at night and then we could spend the night in a hotel, a nice hotel and then head home the next morning. Now that the K Factor's involved, you know, we're getting in the van at 11:00 at night and driving 8 hours because he's got to get home to see her and probably the nastiest it ever was – we were in New Mexico, one of the 3 cities in that state, I'm kidding, we were out in the woods, or lack there of and I am sharing a room with Shane and about you know we did this deal and God just really moved we didn't get back to our room until about 1:30 and at about 1:30 in the morning Shane is actually out on our balcony talking and I can hear him talking and he's like "yeah I see it baby, I see it." And what they're doing is they are discussing the fact that both of them are looking at the same full moon. Ahhhh! And so I'm remembering being so tired it'd be like "Hey Fibel, you wanna wrap this thing up so I can get some sleep". And if you don't know what I'm talking about, I'm not unpacking it for you. So you're on your own. And it was evident in every part of his persona that he was in love because no matter what subject you went to or no matter what we were doing, the K Factor was a part of the equation. I mean it didn't matter that at times we're in Minnesota and she's in Dallas. It didn't matter that she spent an extended amount of time in Paris as a nanny and we were in the States. I mean she

was factored into everything that we did. I mean he literally was always talking about her, always wanted to get to her, always....I mean it was just gross alright.

And you can tell, you can hang out with people and tell what they love. And if you don't believe me, just pay attention to who ever you're gonna eat with after this and I can guarantee you, if you actually talk at dinner, if you an hour, hour and half, 2 hours, I guarantee you, you will know, this guy loves this, this girl loves this. If it's not another person, then it's a thing or it is a sports team or it is a .....we have been created to love and to latch onto something. And here's what I'll tell you about the writer of Hebrews, the writer of Hebrews has a thing for Jesus, all right. I know this because we're 7 chapters in and he hasn't talked about anything else. He has talked about nothing but the person of Jesus. Now, we are at a crossroad in this book. We are through chapter 7, we've got 2 verses left in 7 and we'll get through 8 tonight, Lord willing, and all he's talked about is the person of Jesus. He has not talked about the work of Jesus, he hasn't talked about what Jesus has done for us, he's simply talked about who Jesus is.

Now tonight we're going to turn the corner because tonight, now, for the next 3 or 4 chapters, really heading right into Easter he's going to stop talking about the person of Jesus and he's going to start talking about what Christ has done for us. And so listen, the reason this is so important is because you will never under the person of Jesus outside of the cross, and you will never understand the cross outside of the person of Jesus. You've got to kinda grasp both sides of this coin in order for you to get what the Gospel message is, okay? And so we've spent the last 12 weeks on the person of Jesus and now, tonight we're going to turn the corner to the work of Jesus in the cross of Christ.

So let's go, chapter 7 we're going to start or end with where we ended up last week in verse 26, here's what it says "For it was fitting..." and we said last week that is the understatement of the universe. All right? "It is fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens. Who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices first for his own sin and then for the sins of the people because this He did once and for all..." and we'll get into that when we get into chapter 10, but that "once and for all" line there is huge. "...when He offered up himself. For the law appoints men as high priests who are weak but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints a son making perfect forever." Now all this is is a reiteration of what we said last week. That the old way, the old covenant was this series of laws that the priests would try to guide you into, and so you would come to a priest and say "I've got a lust problem. I've got a guilt problem. I've got an anger problem. I've got a bitterness problem. I've got a wholeness problem. I've got something short-circuiting in me, something is wrong in me. I am empty. I am hollow. I am frustrated. Whatever. You fill in the blank. And the priest would take your life, lay it against say, well, here's how you've behaved rightly, here's what you are doing that's wrong. Now start to live by what is right and let's kill this animal to make atonement for your sin. The problem with that, as we discussed last week was what? That the law makes nothing perfect. That's right. The law makes nothing perfect. Which means that you and I can obey all the spoken and unspoken rules of evangelicalism and not be whole. All right? And we said last week man, there were a lot of people who could raise their hands in here and say, "I've grown up in church, I learned to play the game. It did not satisfy." All right? And so we talked about the fact that so many of us started doing all these things that we thought were supposed to make us whole. We started watching our mouths, we stopped watching these movies, we started doing this, we became Republicans, yada yada yada...all right?

And in our desire to find God we started conforming to this moral code and at the end we woke up and knew the right things to do but we couldn't find Jesus anywhere. And this is just a reiteration that the way of Jesus is better in that, He is not interested in conforming us to a pattern of religion but transforming our hearts so the motives change. Right? And Jesus would teach it this way. You've heard it said, "Do not commit adultery. But I'll tell you, if you've got a lustful heart, you're no better off." And I think the illustration we used last week to kind of clarify what we were talking here is to

use the disease of alcoholism because it's an easy one to use here. Is an alcoholic free, is a man free if he makes it thru today without drinking today but every fiber of his mind, body, and soul screams out for a drink. Well the answer is no. The answer is no. But when the heart is transformed, when the heart is transformed then those things fall into line.

And so we said last week that the good news of the high priest is that we don't have to white-knuckle the behavior but we have to be honest before a God who will grow us into maturity. And that's what we said last week. This is just a reiteration of that. Now let's get into 8 where he's going to attack some miscues that we get. 8:1 and listen, there is a rare and beautiful thing happening in 8:1. Here's what it is starting in verse 1. Now the main point in what has been said is this. Underline that because that rarely happens in scripture. Usually you're on your own to figure out what the main point is. And really, if you've ever thought about it, scripture actually testifies about scripture that it's difficult. Have you ever thought about it? Peter says, "I know you guys have been trying to read about Paul – I don't know." You've got Peter saying, "Man, I don't know. The cat's smarter than I am. I fish, alright." So you've got scripture testifying about scripture that it's not easy. But we've been thrown it here because he goes "Alright, let me clarify, let me make this simple.

Here's the main point. All right? We have such a high priest who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of majesty in – where? – the heavens." Now keep that in mind because I'm going to attack it here in a minute. "A minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all since there are those who offer the gifts according to the law..." Now I want you to read some of this to me so look down at your scriptures "...who serve a – what? – a copy and a –what? – shadow of heavenly things just as Moses..." now here's where he's going to get into the copy, "just as Moses was warned by God when he was about the erect the tabernacle, for see, he says, that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain. Now here's what's happening here, the writer of Hebrews is attacking this idea that the high priest, or the work of Jesus happened, and now Jesus is somewhere else 4 billion miles away on the other side of Pluto in this place called heaven watching you on TV and hoping for the best. All right? That's the idea that's being attacked here.

Jesus is going to attack it while he's here by saying this, "Beware of those who say the kingdom of heaven is over there, and the kingdom of heaven is over there, for the kingdom of heaven is – where? – within you." Okay. So this idea of heaven that by all movies that I've seen in our culture, is this far off place, and this place behind Alpha Centari, all right? This place deep out in the middle of nowhere where God kinda hangs out, is not the idea of heaven portrayed in the scriptures. In fact, the idea of heaven is very difficult for us because although it is a place, it also transcends all that we understand about time and space. Yes, it is a place, but it is a place also within you and everywhere. So what he's going to try to do is to get you to understand this is say "Hey, I gave Moses a copy of what this looks like." And he's going to reference the tabernacle. Now here's how the tabernacle was built. Now you would walk into the gate and there would be the outer court. And all of Israel, all of the Jews, were allowed into the outer court. And you could come into the outer court, and you could worship, and you could debate, and you could talk about the scriptures, but everybody was welcome into the outer court.

Now, there was in the middle of the court a dividing wall that divided the rest of the tabernacle into 2 parts. The one part was called the holy place. And in the holy place there were pieces of furniture and the scrolls of the scriptures that would be read to the people. And the only people allowed into that room of knowledge, if you will, were the priests and the Levites. Not the Levis, that's a jean. Now on the other side was the Holy of Holies. And the only one allowed into the Holy of Holies was the High Priest who once a year, under the coverage of blood, would walk in and make atonement for his own sin and the sins of Israel. And the only thing that was in the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant and the Shikina Glory of God Almighty. Now what the text just said is that that picture is for you and I a copy of the universe that

we live in. Let me try to explain it to you. You and I were designed and created by God to live in 3 worlds. Two of them are easy for us. The third one is difficult. Here are the 3 worlds.

You have been designed to live in a world of matter. I didn't say a world that matters; I said a world of matter. And this is a world that our senses engage. I got up this morning to the sweet nectar of God brewing in the other room. I get up. I turn on the shower because our hot water heater is completely on the other side of the house and it takes a good 14 minutes to get the shower hot, and then I went and poured me a cup of Joe. I got in the shower with it trying to wake up losing this hour, until Lauren comes in and says, "you've got 25 minutes." And then I "leave me alone" and then I get out, we eat a little breakfast, we get in the car, I am seeing, I am feeling, she reaches across and puts her hand on my leg on the drive in here. I lived this morning in a world of matter. I am living right now in a world of matter. I can feel my shirt against my skin. To me it feels a little warm in here. I can feel the watch on my left hand. I can feel the rings on my left hand also. I live in a world of matter. I can see you. I can walk out and touch you. You might be guests so I won't do that, it might be weird! But I can touch you. I live in a world of matter. You live in a world of matter. A world where you can see, you can hear, you can touch, you can taste and that first part of the outer court, we live in this world of matter.

We also live in the world of the mind. And this is where thoughts, ideas, emotions, the arts. This is where we also live. You also live in the world of the mind. Like right now, you are thinking. You are, and you might not even know you're thinking but you're thinking right now. You're having to process the words I'm putting together in a sentence. And whether you agree with me or not, you are engaged in the world of the mind right now. You live in the world of the mind. So you were designed by God to live in a world of matter and to live in a world of the mind.

You were also designed to live in the world of the spirit. And in the world of the spirit, in the world of the spirit, all that matters in life and in light dwell. We have very little trouble with the world of matter; science has done an unbelievable job there. We have very little difficulty in the world of the mind. We struggle immensely in the world of the spirit, which is why so many of you in here tonight, if you are honest, have done so well in the world of matter. You got that spouse you were always looking for. You've got that house you were always looking for. You've got the things that you've always wanted. You are doing well when it comes to the world of the mind. You think happy thoughts. You are a thinker...you are a...right? And yet something still feels as if it's gone wrong in you. Are you tracking with me? Something still feels broken. Something still feels wrong. The reason is, you were not created to dwell in 2 worlds, but 3 and the third is difficult, if not impossible.

It's like we need some kind of High Priest to get us in there. I mean, you know what would have been great? What would have been great is if when Jesus, when He died, the big curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from all of us would have just torn. That would have been great. Oh wait, it DID, all right? So, you've got this copy being exposed at the crucifixion of Christ. At the crucifixion of Christ the huge curtain that separates the Holy of Holies from the Holy places, it's torn to symbolically get across to you that in Jesus, the cross of Christ, the door to the world of the spiritual has been opened. That the gate to wholeness and healing has been opened by the cross of Jesus Christ. The door has been opened. The door has been opened.

And then he's going to go back to the same argument he has in chapter 7 so let's look at it. Let's go 6-9. I'll try to give you 2 word pictures here as we close out this chapter that I'm hoping will burn this imagery into your head. 6-9: "But now he has obtained a more excellent ministry..." this is Jesus that did "...by as much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises." Now does anyone want to argue that Jesus' way is not as attractive or beautiful as the old way. Anyone in here go "no, I kinda want the white-knuckle behavior. I kind of like my heart to stay wicked, and me, with just all my might try to not give in." I don't think anyone wants to argue that. No. Better

covenant. Better promises. The promise of the law is if do this I'll bless you, if you don't I'll have to destroy you. The promise of Christ is "I will come in and transform your heart so this will no longer be an issue." Umm, I'll take #2 please.

All right, here we go. Let's keep reading. Verse 7: "For if that 1st covenant had been faultless, there would be no occasion sought for the 2nd." Or how about this, if righteousness could be obtained by the law, then Christ died for...Nothing! Or like we looked at last week, for the law makes nothing perfect. Or like we looked at last week in Hebrews chapter 7, if the law as enough, why was there a need for a new kind of priest out of the tribe of Judah? Right? Okay, now, let's keep going, verse 8: "for finding fault with – who? – them." That's going to be huge here in a second because I don't want any law-hates in here, 'cause the law wasn't the problem. All right? Let's look at that again. "For finding fault with them, he says, behold days are coming, says the Lord when I will affect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant and I did not care for them, says the Lord."

Now, the old covenant was made through Moses when he came down off the mountain carrying – what? – the 10 commandments. So, the old law was this, the old law, the old covenant was Moses coming down out of the mountain going "let's keep it simple, let's keep it concise. Let's try to do these 10." And what God's saying here is the 10 commandments were not the problem. The problem was not the law, the problem was man and woman's inability to keep the law. Follow me here...I'm going to throw something out there, if you want it, take it. Here we go....you're with me.

What if, Jesus didn't give us the law so that we would obey it, what if He gave us the law to show us we couldn't keep it?

I have a 3 year old that's fiercely independent. Not only that, but she's getting good. Here's what she does when we try to put her to bed. Like I'll kiss her and walk out of the room. And she'll go "Tell me about Jesus and the cross." I mean, you want to talk about what do I do here, all right. It's like 1:30 in the morning, "okay, one more time... propitiation is..." anyway! She's fiercely independent man. I mean fiercely independent. She's much more like Lauren. Lauren is very independent like this, and so Audrey, she just wants to do stuff by herself, man. She just does. Like sometimes she wants to play by herself. But we have this war; it does not break out every morning. It doesn't so much anymore because we just back off. She wants to dress herself. Now, I don't care what she wears, she can wear purple tights with a fuchsia skirt, I mean, I don't care. Wear what you want to wear. But the problem is that a lot of her clothes, grown people couldn't put on by themselves. Like there's a shirt with 14 buttons up the back, she's like "I got it!" No, you can't get it, 'cause 30 yr olds couldn't get that without getting their hair stuck in the zipper and having the buttons all aligned. But she will, even if you try to turn that shirt inside out for her and get it on for her, she will pitch a fit. All right? I mean she will throw herself on the ground and we'll have to...for us it's just a fight we don't want to have. So we do, or what I do is I just go...Okay, do it. Do it. I'll be in the living room. And anywhere from 11 to 15 minutes later I've got a meltdown going on in the other room.

Now, I'm sure your kid is not that way. I'm sure your kid walks up to you and goes, "Father, will you grant me the privilege of putting on..." All right, not my kid! My kid's melting down in the other room screaming, "I can't do it!!!!" I will tell you that what I am learning, and if you're parents, I think you'll be with me, what I am learning is one of the most difficult parts of parenting is those moments when you have to let them learn by failing and pain. But there comes a time when you're just like, okay man, you're not going to listen, you're not going to pay attention...okay. And you've got to let them learn through a little suffering. So I sit in the other room until she works with all her might, fails, and will finally come get help. Or, my favorite, and God I mean, I'm so excited for Blake Chilton, our youth minister, they just had a baby 2 weeks ago, Josh Patterson, our executive pastor, they just had their baby on Tuesday. I'm so excited for them because I'm telling you, kids open up so much of who God is to you.

Like one of the things that she does is, and I'm going this is so us, is that she'll put the shirt on and then she'll have like one button here and half way zipped up there and the shirt won't be on at all, it'll barely be hanging on, but she'll put a jacket on over it, and then come out and go "Okay." And I'm like, why are you wearing a jacket? You know? "Cause I want to." I'm like "It's July...you're not..." And you take off ...and it's all...she wanted to do it by herself and even when she failed she'll still pretend like she didn't...Ohhhhhh! Oh, maybe...yeah. And then finally, when she's either busted in her pretending or is at her wits end, she sit down in my lap and I'll fix the buttons that are broken. And I'll button it straight, zip it straight. Make sure there is no hair in the zipper. Kiss her face. And we'll go play.

The law was not given to merely be obeyed; it was given to reveal we can't. And in our failure we would find our heart's ready for a savior. And listen, if we..., we said it last week. If we had time tonight and energy tonight, I would love to hear the horror,...no I wouldn't, it'd be just disheartening for me. But I know so many of you have these horror stories of belonging to churches that just suck the life out of you and beat you up. And it was all based on this and that, doing this and doing that and you just kept failing and pretending that you weren't failing. And then finally you just give up because you think that Jesus doesn't work for you. And in reality you never tried Jesus. Because Jesus always goes "Of course you can't! Of course you can't. Are you tired enough yet?" No...I've got it. "Okay, okay, I'll be in here, I'll be in here. When you get tired enough, I'll be in here. I'll be right here."

All right, let's finish up this text. So, what's the new way then? What's the way of Jesus if you will? Let's look in verse 10. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel." So this is what's new...the old way has gone, the new has come. Let's look at it. There are 4 provisions in here that will belong to the new way... "After those days....and that's the day of the cross....says the Lord, I will put my law into their minds and I will write them on their hearts..." So if you remember in Deuteronomy, what He told them to do with the law was to put it everywhere. Like you were supposed to write the law on your hands, you were supposed to put it on your doorpost, you were supposed to put it on your gate, you were supposed to wear this wooden box on your forehead that had the laws in them. Now the reason for that was that no matter what you were doing or where you were going, you would always be reminded of what you should be doing. So it's hard to get around what you should be doing if you actually wear them on your forehead because no matter where you look, there's your forehead. You are seeing it. You are working with your hands – you are seeing it. If you're walking into your house, you are seeing it. If you are walking out your gate, you're seeing it. And you're always being reminded of what you should be doing, and just another layer on top of the law, you'll always be reminded of how badly you are failing. Huhhh? Huhhh? Yeah.

And Jesus goes "Here's the new way. I'll write it instead of on your hands and your forehead, I'll write it in your mind and I'll put it in your heart so that the foundation that well that once spewed out what is sinful, will now spew out what is right. I will change your heart so that its mantra is my law." And the way I would tell you this works if you've walked with Christ for any period of time, is you'll find yourself being refined and sharpened and things that you struggle with so badly today or maybe 5 years ago have lessened if not disappeared as you've grown into the fullness of Christ. And if you're sitting in here today and you're going, "man that isn't my story man, I'm still struggling really bad, I'm still hurting, I still fail all the time, I still blow it all the time." Well, we've got good news for you but it's a couple more verses down.

All right. Let's look at the next part of the constitution because the first is that God's going to transform your heart. Let's look at the next part. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after the days of the cross says the Lord. I will put my laws into their minds and I will write them on their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people." Now, every human being has this deep desire and longing to belong to something. Like if you've ever been around guys who like sports they will always talk about their time like "We" Like "We beat 'um!" You're like "You play for the Cowboys?"..."No, but we did it!" I want to belong. I want to be a part of something. It's what drives athletics. Absolutely what drives athletics is a desire to belong. It is what drives fashion. I mean if you don't think belonging drives

fashion, then you're not paying attention. I will wear this because it makes me socially acceptable. Or, my favorite, it makes me socially unique with all my friends who borrow those clothes...and, right? The girls are laughing; the guys are like "huhhh? I'm not borrowing anyone's shirt. Except my Metros in here, hey once man, it was a good shirt.

So the way I would point this out man is like the example for me, and I graduated high school in '93, supposed to in '92, spent a little extra time in the eighth grade, but that's neither here nor there...is like in our day there were the athletes, and there were kinda the people who like math and then there was this extra push-off, this kind of gothic, everybody wore black, everybody, I mean I don't know if you remember that day or not, but that's what it was when I was in school. And the funny thing about it is very quickly, in order to be unique; there was 150 Goth kids. Are you tracking with me? I want to belong. I want to belong. Throw in, throw in the utter failure of men to build safe homes where children are loved and this problem is compounded by a billion. They want to belong. They want to be a part. They want to find this crew that is theirs....right? Okay, we have this longing to belong to something and God says, "You belong to me. You...are... mine. And I am not ashamed of you. You are mine. You're mine."

Now let's look at the next part because the next part's kind of confusing. I'll try to explain it to us. So the first part is that the law will be written on our minds and our hearts rather than our foreheads and hands. The second is that we will belong to God and be His people. Now look at verse 11. "And they shall not teach everyone, his fellow citizen....that's going to be key...and everyone his brother,... that's going to be key....saying know the Lord, for ALL will know me, from the least to the greatest of them."

Okay, so if you're reading this and go wait a minute, we do have to tell people about the Lord. Yeah, you do. But you don't have to tell people who have been saved to know the Lord because they already do. And what this is attacking is a merit system that would say, "Once you do this, and do this, and do this, and do this, then...you'll know the Lord." But from the least to the greatest. From the one who for hours can sit around and talk higher-level theology to the one who got saved 15 minutes ago, they both know the Lord. On a park bench at the university of Mary Hardin Baylor when Christ awakened my soul until Himself I knew very little outside of children's Bible stories and yet, in that instant, I knew Jesus. I knew Him. I didn't have to do this and do this and do this and do this to know Him. I knew Him. In a moment when I couldn't quote much scripture to you, in a moment when I could not even tell you fully what happened to me, I knew the Lord. Knowing the Lord and being known by Him is not a future occurrence brought about by discipline, but it's an awakening of the soul by the Holy Spirit of God.

Now to maintain that relationship you've got to dive into it. But you know the Lord in an instant. You don't have to "do" to know. And that's what Paul is going to say to the Galatians. He says, "Hey man, who's bewitched you fools? Who's bewitched you? I'd like to know one thing from you, did you come to know the Lord by doing or by believing in faith?" yeah...alright now here's the good part, if you're going this new covenant sounds great, I don't know if I'm walking in it I struggle so much, I fall so much, I get so frustrated. This is a great, great, great part and then we'll talk 13 and get you out of here.

Verse 12, the last part of the new constitution, "For I will be merciful to....their what?....iniquities." Now iniquity is not the same as sin. Iniquity is a bent towards something. So we actually have a bent towards something, a draw towards something. It literally means crooked. That we have a crooked path and if we...it's best put like this: There is a way that seems right to you and me and in the end everybody gets killed. All right, you following me? That's iniquity. "And I will remember their – what? – sins no more." Okay, so let's talk again about this big word "sanctification". That we have this moment where the truth and the light of Christ, or maybe we have this time frame, maybe we can't nail it down at all, but there's this time period where Christ became alive in our hearts and we stumble and fall and we struggle and the

good news of the new covenant that God rejoices in the steps. I've used this illustration 14 times since I've been a pastor here. I make no apologies for using it again tonight. It is the best word picture I know.

When my daughter first walked I don't think it was her intention to do so. I think she had a gigantic head. I think she let go of the coffee table, her fat head fell forward, in order to save her own life as the head fell, she put her foot out. That created what's known in physics as momentum. All right? So that step led to that step led to that step and she fell on the ground and we celebrated. An epic celebration of all things good. We're making cupcakes, we are partying because why? She's walking! I mean my kid is walking and for the next 3 or 4 months she can only take 6,7,8, 10 steps tops before she falls over and every time we giggle and laugh and celebrate. And not only that, but the poor kids becomes like show and tell thing every time somebody new comes over. "Watch this.....ye, yea....YEAH!!!! And we celebrate the kid's walking even though I don't think she decided to. I think it just progressed...right? And here's the thing, never, ever, ever, did I even think about the falls. I just loved that she was walking. I mean we just, I mean never did I go "When's this kid going to learn! I mean it's been 5-6 months. I can do it. Her mom can. For a milk dud I can get the dog on his back legs walking around the kitchen. No, no, you celebrate the steps. You celebrate the steps. And when she falls, look at me, as often as she falls, never have we ever been frustrated by the falls. If anything, see she's 3 now, she's running about an 8 240, which we're trying to get that down but that's all we got right now. There's flip-flops involved now and man, sometimes the falls are bad. In fact, sometimes the falls bring blood and tears, and I still never find myself frustrated by the falls. But I do find myself when those falls occur kissing boobooos, putting Band-Aids on bloody knees, holding and kissing until the tears are gone and she feels safe to run again. And then put her down and let her run again.

So it is with our Father, who rejoices in the steps and heals the falls. So it is with our Father who loves to see us run and doesn't tire of picking us up when we've fallen. See, that's the good news in all this. The good news is for the man or woman who's running towards Him. That the falls do not appoint us to suffer wrath but mercy. Mercy towards iniquity, in fact, He says, "I've forgotten all about the fall. In fact, I was so excited about you running that I forgot that you even fell. I was so excited about the fact that you were moving and you were running and you were healthy that I don't even remember that you fell." While most of us beat ourselves up over the fall. Jesus is going "What fall? I just saw you running!"

Verse 13 and then we'll close it out. "When He said a new covenant, He made the 1st – what? – obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to – what? – disappear." Oh that the life-sucking law would disappear. Why, why, why do we love her so much? I mean, it's a horrifically unhealthy relationship. It's like we're all a bunch of co-dependents or something. I mean, why do we love her? Why do we love the law? She's brought us nothing but grief. She's like that psycho girlfriend or boyfriend we all had at least once. Some of you actually made a long life of it, but why? Why do we love her? Why do we keep going back to her? She doesn't satisfy. She just keeps stealing money out of our wallet in the middle of the night. Sorry. Why? Why do we love her? Well, here's why. I think part of it is pride because some of you absolutely have your identity wrapped up in you being the good church kid. And you've had your identity wrapped up in that since day 1. And the thing about the law, since you've mastered either obeying it or pretending to obey it, is you have elevated yourself past everybody else. If everybody could just live like you, they'd be all right. If you don't think people think this way, listen to Christian talk radio this week. It is an "Us vs. them" mentality. And some of us, you're holding on so tight to "Wait, I'm good and everybody should be like I am." That we won't walk away from what's obsolete and broken and making nothing perfect because it gives us our identity.

Some of us don't walk away, don't want to walk away from it because in some ways it just feels easier to know that if I just do this do this do this do this, I should be okay, despite the fact that for a decade or longer some of us have been doing those things and are not okay. Some of us love her because she's all we know and we're afraid that

maybe this grace thing is too good to be true. So at least with the law we have somebody. What if grace turns out to be even more of a freak?

I'll lead you where I led you last week, because I don't know where else to lead you. We are just at the place in the church where we're building out discipleship, and we're building out what that looks like here at The Village. Last week I said that if something's misfiring in you, like if something's off, if you've got this short circuit that's happening. Like if you've got this....you don't know how to trace it....like I always found Psalm 19 to be so interesting that when David says that his heart and the wickedness of his heart is hidden, that it's baffling to him. He doesn't know why he's behaving the way he is. He doesn't know why he gets into the things he gets into. He doesn't know why he's drawn towards the things that he's drawn to. I always find that to be so true about my own life that so many times I'm doing these things and I don't even know what the root of them are, I just know I'm doing them.

So last week I said if you're short circuiting, if you're firing off wrong, whether it's anger, lust, loneliness, bitterness, despair, frustration, a tendency to know the law but not know how to walk in grace....I don't know....I don't know where you are tonight....I want to invite you to come join us on Thursday nights at 7. Thursday nights at 7 is this thing called Celebrate Recovery that we do here at The Village and I'm afraid that it's been given this word around town, that its oh, recovery so it's just for drunks and druggies, no well, it's from all kinds of recovery addicts, even church addicts, lust addicts, loneliness addicts, anger addicts, bitterness addicts. I'll let Tom, the guy who will greet you if you come, he always says that they should call it "Celebrate Life".

So maybe you're misfiring and you don't know where to go and you don't know what to do and every week you come in here and you hear me say these things and you can feel it stirring in you like it's right but you don't know what to do when you leave. Come join us. We've got childcare. Thursday night at 7. Come sit....it is a safe place. Look right at me I'm going to say this and then I'm going to pray, we going to sing a song and go. This is a place where it's okay to not be okay. Are you looking at me? This is a place where it is okay to not be okay. The only thing I'll ask of you is don't walk around pretending that your shirt is buttoned when it's not. If your shirt's not buttoned up, don't put on the jacket and sweat to death. Just go "Someone help me with this shirt!"

And if you're going, oh man, I don't know, I don't know. Here's what I can promise you, since I know we've got some felons involved, I don't know that you're going to have a story that makes anyone gasp. If anything, you'll find a place where maybe for the first time in your life you can be honest about exactly where you are. And what a breathing out that is. Ah, but pride is powerful and narrow is the way, huh?

"I will be their God, they will be my people. I will transform their hearts and from the least to the greatest they will know me. And I will be merciful towards their iniquities. And I don't think they've fallen. Did you guys see it? I was too busy celebrating the steps."

Let's pray. "Father I thank you for these men and women and I thank you for a chance to talk about grace again. It's my favorite subject. I know we'll move on from here next week and I pray that you might simmer some of these things into our soul. That you might, well, that you might let us really hear tonight, that we might really hear. Like in the deep places that we would hear. I pray especially for my brothers and sisters in here tonight who have just kind of found life to be weighty and overwhelming and they have carried this great burden of guilt because they know that you say that you set people free and they say that you heal and they say that you restore and that you reconcile and yet they feel like few of those things, if any of those things have happened in them. So they sit around and feel guilty and overwhelmed. They think that you don't work. And I pray for them, I pray for them tonight that sit in here. I pray for my rule-followers in here tonight who are doing all they can to do what's right and find their souls so empty and a relationship with you

so frustrating. I have never ceased to be baffled by the fact that in your story while you walked here on earth, for those 3 years, that the religious had such the difficult time coming to you. But the really broken and the really frustrated, and really lonely, and the really...they found it so easy to come to you. And so that's what I pray for tonight. I pray for ease in coming to you. And I know that there are some in this room that think "I can't imagine walking into a room full of people with my junk." and I just pray that they would buy into the better hope tonight, Father. That you would stir in their hearts the ability to buy into the better hope. And I guess I pray tonight that they would be tired enough, cause I know that that's who will show up, I know that's who will move, that's who are finally weary enough, those who are tired enough, those who are overwhelmed enough trying to get someplace only to find themselves doggie-paddling in quick sand. And so I thank you that this thing is not built on our merit, but on your cross. And I thank you that that makes a mockery of any idea of Christian elitism. And that from the greatest to the least we can know you. So help Father, I know that a lot of these ideas are abstract and a lot of them stir the soul, but we don't really know what to do with them so I just pray for my friends in here who are mis-firing. I just pray that they would be led to Celebrate Recovery, if not there, to the Center for Christian Counseling that just basically does discipleship with people, but I just pray that you would heal and restore the broken places...the broken places. I love you. And I want these men and women to love you Father and to experience the freedom that comes in you and I pray that this would be a place where what is obsolete just disappears. I pray Father that this would be a place that what is obsolete would just finally disappear. And it's for your beautiful name that I pray these things. Amen."

Will you stand with me, we're going to sing One Day, an old hymn, and then we'll be dismissed.