

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW | SELF-CONTROL

ALEX DIAZ | JULY 31, 2022

Familia. My name is Alex. I am one of the pastors here. We're so glad that you are here, whether you are joining us online or at one of our campuses or here at the Northwest campus.

For those of you who don't know, I hang out and serve with the amazing team that is at Midtown in Broad Ripple. We are six months old as of this last week. So we're excited for what God is doing at Midtown and at all of our campuses.

I'm also excited that next week Pastor Aaron is going to be back to kick us off in this new series called *Among Lions*. Here's why I am excited. We're going to be diving into the book of Daniel for two whole months, eight weeks.

If you are new to Traders Point, if you've been hanging around here for just a few weeks, I want to encourage you, maybe even challenge you, to be here every week for the next eight weeks and I promise you, you should come expectant for what God is going to do. Your life is going to be transformed by His Word, by His Spirit, and by what He is doing here at Traders Point.

Now my task today is to finish a series called *What The World Needs Now*. Have we had great teaching? Let me celebrate every single one—every single one of our teachers and pastors, people I love, has brought some great messages. And my task is to finish today with the last fruit of the Spirit that is in this list in Galatians 5, verses 22 and 23.

And this is where we are going to start today. So if you have your Bibles, go there, Galatians, chapter 5, verses 22 and 23. It will be on the screen. And this is what it says:

"But the fruit of the Spirit," the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives, *"... love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and,"* everybody say these two words together, *"self-control. Against such things there is no law."* Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

As we dive into the idea of self-control, we're going to have, as a subject:

I AM IN RECOVERY

Let's pray.

Father, thank You so much for the opportunity this morning to dive into Your Word. Speak to us. Speak through Your Word. May nobody leave here unchanged. Do a work in our lives for the glory of Your name, Jesus, Son of God. Amen.



At one point or another we have all experienced losing control over something or someone. I wonder if you resonate with this or not. It's happened to me many times in my life.

One of my dreams is to become a pilot one day. It's still a dream, but I have not been able to achieve it. But my wonderful wife one time for Christmas got me a gift certificate for one hour of flight instruction. And I was so giddy to go to the airport.

I finally showed up and I imagined that we were going to be flying an F-16. It was a Cessna really. When I went into this aircraft, I heard the pilot mumbling a few things that I was supposed to pay attention to, but I didn't. I was too excited. Apparently, they have a list of tasks that need to happen so that the flight is safe. I paid attention to none of it.

We got on the plane. And by the way, flying a Cessna kind of feels like flying on a love seat or a small couch. It's so small. But I was still so excited. We get on the plane, and we take off. This happened in south Florida, so we began to fly over the ocean.

And at some point I did understand the pilot when he said, "Alex, it's your turn to fly the plane." Oh my gosh. I was so excited. I put my hands on what I thought was called a handle, but it is called a yoke. Everybody say yoke.

I put my hands on the handle and remembering everything I had learned about flying a plane, which I have learned a lot about flying planes from movies, I jammed that yoke to the left and all of a sudden it all turns, and we were heading down to the ocean.

You would have thought that at that point I would have been thinking of my family, my memories, my wishes, my regrets, but all I could think about at that moment was my internal organs. Because when you're dipping a plane something gets loosened up inside of you. Something that rhymes with the word vowels.

So I was afraid that I was going to lose all of my vowels all over that cockpit—a, e, i—all of them. And at some point the pilot put his hands over the yoke and then he pulled back and with a maneuver that only he knew, it's called recovering from a stall, brought the plane back up and then he said, "Alex, you listened to none of my instructions. You're supposed to handle this delicately."

Here's what happened. You lost control.

At one point in our life or another we may have felt that way maybe about a thing, maybe about something you were driving or flying or riding, but maybe about your own life, your relationships, your plans, and this is what Paul is showing us here in Galatians 5. What the world needs now as we see Jesus in our lives, and we let Him bloom through the fruit that the Spirit of God puts into our lives, this one fruit, the one the world doesn't really have, we are able to showcase for the glory of His name, is self-control.

See, what happened to the church in Galatia is that they were believers who were fighting. This church has never experienced that, but some churches actually experience Christians fighting with one another. The reason they were fighting is because there were those who came from a Jewish background who were asking believers in Galatia if they were from a Gentile background to fulfill all these commands and all of these laws, and they were being really mean about it.

So they send a letter to Paul and Paul responds to it and he says, "Yes, the law is good. Yes, obeying everything that is in the Old Testament, absolutely, in context under Jesus, is good." But there is something greater, which is the same argument he is making in 1 Corinthians, chapter 13: love. And this love that comes from Jesus comes out of our lives by way of this fruit. And so he finishes this list with these words: self-control.

So I have to be honest with you, I am not a good example of self-control. I am not here to tell you to follow my example on this. So I went into the original language to see if the original language actually blessed me or treated me differently. I looked at commentaries and I read from scholars. And I realized that in Greek the word self-control means self-control. It doesn't do me any favors.

In fact, the original language is the same word that is used for: power, dominion, or even authority over a people. So when believers in Galatia and all over the Roman Empire, when they heard these words, they would have thought of the idea of taking control and dominion over oneself in the same way that a governor, or at this time an emperor, or in our time a president, would take control over a nation or a people.

And this doesn't do me any favors because I'm really, really bad at this. So what I want to do this morning is I want us to travel in time just a little farther back, Paul would have written the book of Galatians around the year 50 or 60, but we're going to travel even farther back a few decades to a moment when Jesus actually shows the utmost self-control. He is the greater example that we need to follow. He is the one who we need to put our eyes on.

So we're going to be in Matthew, chapter 4, verses 1 through 11. And this is where we find Jesus in the wilderness. Any of you remember this moment and this story in Jesus' life? Right after He gets baptized, He is about to begin His ministry and He goes to the desert, and He spends 40 days and 40 nights fasting and seeking the Lord.

And at the end of this season, the devil knows that He is weak, that He is hungry, and he brings three offers to Him. He says, "Jesus, if you're hungry turn these rocks into bread. If You want, we'll go to the top of a skyscraper and then You will fall down. But if You are God, You're going to be able to fly. Or, here's what we can do. We can go to the top of the mountain. I'm going to show You everything that is around You and You can own everything if only You turn to me and worship me."

We can connect with these three alluring offers. Perhaps nobody has ever offered you that much, but similar offers have been made to you because this is the way the devil is offering to Jesus:

Faster provision.

He's saying to Jesus, "If You break Your plans, in fact if You break God's plans, You can have what You want now."

He's also offering Him:

Larger identity

Or at least the perception, the false perception, of larger identity. If You are able to get on top of this temple and You fly, then that will confirm that You are the Son of God. Not by the way that God wants to confirm it, but by the way that I want to see, give me a sign.

Or by going to the top of the mountain and showing Him the whole world around Him, he's offering Him:

Broad power

He's saying, "You can own all of this."

Now Satan does this. He's stalking. He's offering all of this as a way of luring Jesus into a battle over leadership.

Here's what I think happens with self-control and the way that we see it in the life of Jesus right now, and the way that we see it in our own lives—at the end of the day self-control is an exchange over leadership.

SELF-CONTROL HAPPENS WHEN WE MAKE AN EXCHANGE OF LEADERSHIP

In other words, when we are facing a moment when we are about to lose control, we are making a decision that we are handing over leadership of our lives to something or someone else. And if you hear nothing else today, write this down.

You may be thinking that you're perfect, so you can write this down and then go home. For the rest of us who are imperfect, let's keep going. We're going to lean in further to this because what does it mean to exchange leadership? And how do we exchange leadership to something or someone that is not good for us and that doesn't honor God in our lives?

A few weeks ago I heard my children playing in the living room. There were giggles. There was screaming. And they showed up dressed as astronauts. That is one of my dreams and I felt offended that they didn't ask me to play with them. But I still went.

They had put together two chairs from our dining room. They tied them up with tape and somehow they created this spacecraft.

This may be news to you. I couldn't fit in these chairs. I just couldn't fit. I was too big; between them I couldn't do it. So I decided that I was going to be the engine. So, I got behind them and I put my feet right under these chairs and I brought them back and I started to shake them. And then I would turn them to the left. I would turn them to the right.

And I would point at a stuffed animal and toys that we have in our house, and I would say, "Those are aliens. Shoot them. Shoot them." Because that's what you do when you are in a spaceship, you've got to shoot some aliens.

Notice, at that point, that because they trusted me, they gave up control. And this is what we do with our lives when we are losing our control over our lives. We are giving that up to something or someone who we trust more than Jesus. That's one of the ways in which we can lean even more into this concept.

In my understanding, when there is an exchange of leadership there is an exchange of priorities.

SELF-CONTROL TAKES PLACE WHEN WE EXCHANGE OUR PERSONAL PRIORITIES FOR THE PROVISION, PURPOSE, AND POWER OF GOD

We exchange our personal priorities for the plans and the provision and the purpose and the power of God. We're saying, "Whatever I am experiencing in my life, whatever plans exist, I'm going to exchange those because there is something inside of me that makes me want to obtain that right away."

Here's what happens when there is an exchange in leadership. We miss out on the plan of God for our lives. It may be more difficult. It may take longer, but we miss out on the plans that God has for us because we decide to say yes to one of these offers.

LOSING CONTROL OVER INSTANT GRATIFICATION

This has happened to me before. In the summer of 2000, I was a college student at a large university in South America. And this university was in my hometown, about seven or eight million people within 14 miles in a valley. Even though it's not that long of a distance, it takes forever to get places. So my commute was about 90 minutes each way counting bus lines and subway lines and walking.

So I would go to school early in the morning and I would go for all my schooling, stay at school by day and then by four or five in the afternoon begin to make my way back to my house and begin another 90 minutes of commute.

Some of you are thinking, “I would never do that.” Well, I had to do it. And at the end of every day, I couldn’t get to the subway station faster. I would dream of getting there faster so I could sleep on the train.

On this particular day, my pastor texted me on my flip phone (some of you remember flip phones—yeah, we’re that old). He texted me on my flip phone and he said, “I need you to come out here and I need you to translate for us. There is a group from the United States, they are American students, and they want to share Jesus with students at university.” And I said, “Wow, great Christians.”

I don’t want to do that. And I struggled; I struggled within me for the whole walk from my school to the subway station. And at some point I felt this guilt because I had been saying, as a relatively new believer, “I don’t know how to share Jesus with people. I want opportunities to do this.” And I was looking for large opportunities. And then at this point I thought, “There’s got to be something to this. Maybe I should go back.”

And so as exhausted as I was, I turned around and met this group. And we did share the gospel on that day. We met some amazing people. But there was a surprise that I wasn’t expecting. In fact, I wasn’t even seeking it at that point. Because on this day, in this group, I met my wife. And my life changed forever. Three children later, several ministries, and me still looking this young, I think.

What could have happened if I just exchanged those priorities? If I had said, “Yeah, I know you have a plan for that, but why now? I’m sleepy. Right now I don’t want to translate for anybody because my brain is tired.” And when we do that, we may be missing out on the plan of God for our lives.

I’m so grateful, that we can come back to that by saying yes to Him. So, with that in mind, let’s dive into Matthew 4 and we’re going to be reading right now in verses 1 through 3. And it says this:

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.” Everybody say hungry. “The tempter came to him and said, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.’”
Matthew 4:1-3 (NIV)

At this point Jesus is given this offer that is potentially pushing Him to lose control over instant gratification. And we live in a culture that can relate to this so much because we are all about fast. Finding our mate has to be fast. Getting that promotion has to be fast. Being well-known has to be fast. Being an expert in anything has to be fast.

And this is the moment when the devil invented fast food because he says to Jesus, “Turn these stones into bread. You can do this right now.” And Jesus holds back.

Some scholars believe that this is a temptation that is aimed at the lust of the flesh. It is aimed at the needs that we have for our bodies because things tempt us in very similar

ways. We may not have the power to turn stones into bread, but we do have the power to turn some patience into opportunities. And those opportunities can lead us to sin, to dishonor God.

In fact, some of those opportunities can lead us to addictions and to losing control of everything that we have and everything that God wants for us. Every time that we engage in an activity that puts us away from God's plan for our lives, maybe it's a sexual addiction, maybe it's alcoholism, maybe there is an addiction to pornography, maybe there is an addiction to compulsive shopping—whatever it is....

And by the way it doesn't have to be an illegal addiction, there are many addictions in our society that are legal. In fact there are many addictions that are encouraged by your peers and people in your life.

But listen to how the Bible talks about this same phenomenon. In Proverbs, chapter 25, verse 28 it says:

"Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks," what? "self-control."
Proverbs 25:28 (NIV)

When we lose that self-control our walls come tumbling down. And we leave space for the devil to enter into our lives and to let that sin grow. In fact, when we do this.... Oftentimes there is something that is happening in our culture because we have fast access to things that allow us to lose control if we begin to self-medicate.

Instant gratification leads to self-medication.

And self-medicating is when we fill gaps in our lives with addictive behavior: we're binge watching on Netflix, with scrolling on our phones, and even responding to people on social media with anger and meanness because they are not in front of us. And some of us even self-medicate by wanting to be right in front of people, even if it hurts their feelings. Or maybe we self-medicate with many other behaviors that are not good for our lives.

And here's what is happening when we self-medicate for the gaps in our life. We are basically saying, "There is no way that God can fill that gap." And whenever we let sin dwell in that gap, something happens, something that can lead us to destruction, something multiplies in our lives that leads us farther and farther away from God.

In the 80s and 90s in my parents' home country of Colombia there was a man who became a very famous drug lord. His name was Pablo Escobar. Some of you have heard his name or have seen documentaries about him. This man was so rich, he became so rich by dealing drugs all over the world, that at some point he offered the government of that nation to pay its full debt. He was trying to buy his way to the presidency.

And in the midst of this he had properties all over the globe. And of course he had properties and a home in the nation of Colombia. And deep in the southern jungles of this country he had a huge farm. And this farm was so big, and he had so much money he decided to create a zoo for his two children. So he had animals flown in from all parts of the globe. There were elephants, and there were lions, and there were alligators.

When he was captured and killed a few years later, they seized all of his assets. And they went into the zoo, and they took all of these animals and sent them all over the globe.

Some of the animals died. But there was one type of animal that didn't seem like it was going to cause too much trouble. There was potential there but there really weren't that many of them. So they decided to keep these hippos deep in the jungles of Colombia.

Now, after a few years stories began to arise about these huge animals going into villages and eating crops in the fields and attacking humans.

If you don't know, hippos are some of the most dangerous animals in the world. And their natural habitat is not in South America. They have no natural predators there. They have summer all year long. They have an unending supply of fruit. And of course with the villages and the crops around them they could eat and eat and eat. So these animals multiplied exponentially.

And after 30 years they now have a problem on their hands. They have to put signs all over these random places in the middle of the jungle telling people that there are hippos there. And it's not like there are one or two, there are dozens if not hundreds now that they cannot get rid of.

The same thing happens when we leave sin unchecked and hidden in the deep jungles of our souls. That sin multiplies. That sin is an environment in our lives that when left unchecked has everything at its disposal and it grows exponentially so we cannot hold it back.

Self-control is an issue of life or death. And in the same way, as with these animals, we have to make sure to keep track of them and even eliminate them.

So what did Jesus do? That's the question that we have to pose this morning. And in Matthew, chapter 4, verse 4 this is what Jesus did. He counteracted. He had a countermeasure. He went on the offensive. And he said:

"It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

Did you notice how Jesus answered the devil here, not with podcasts and not with logic, but with the Word of God.

COUNTERMEASURE: TRUST IN HIS WORD AND PROVISION

In essence His countermeasure is that He is saying, “I’m going to trust in God’s Word and provision for my life. I’m going to trust that God’s provision is greater, and it may be later, but it doesn’t mean it is smaller. It means that it is going to be greater and the longer I wait the greater it’s going to be. He’s going to provide for My needs. Even though I am the Son of God, I still have to wait. But in the waiting, there is blessing and there is blessing that is going to come by trusting in what He has said.” Amen?

It may be that by waiting for that one thing that is tempting you in your mind right now—you may be struggling with an idea or a concept or a person that you want to get closer to, and there is waiting involved, it may be that by passing up this waiting that you may be ignoring what God wants for your life. And He’s going to let you. He will never force Himself on anyone.

And we need to understand what the Word of God says. We need to trust that He doesn’t say how He will provide for every single one of us, but He does say that He will provide. He gives examples in His Word about how other people receive provision from the Lord. And even though we don’t have the exact same plan that we want for our lives, we have to trust, as believers, that His plans are greater than our plans. Amen?

So we keep reading in verses 5 and 6 in Matthew 4. It says:

“Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ‘If you are the Son of God,’” everybody say if you are, “he said, ‘throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.””’ Matthew 4:5-6 (NIV)

Satan is tempting Jesus by saying whatever identity You have I need to see it. Give me some proof. And if You give me this proof that I want then Your identity is exactly what You say it is. So Jesus has the potential of losing control over identity and pride.

LOSING CONTROL OVER IDENTITY AND PRIDE

See, in the same way Satan attacks our pride. And he puts these mines under our feet, and we may step on them. And when they go off we are given a perception of a greater identity and we begin to chase that, each one of us.

In fact, this world is filled with examples of this. There are many of us who follow Instagram, Facebook, TikTok influencers who give graces about ourselves and how we, ourselves, can grow greater if we do all of these steps.

In fact, there are people who test that. If you are who you say you are, then do these things in your life. But this is not the example that Jesus gives us. Now whenever we are

tempted with this, it can also lead to destruction if we turn that temptation into opportunity. And we see it all over the world.

There was a man called Jose Luis De Jesus Miranda from Puerto Rico who, in the 80s and 90s, thought that he had a vision and in the vision something showed up for him that told him he himself was Jesus resurrected. So for decades he began to build his church, and at last count there were over a million people who were following him, and they would worship him. It would be the equivalent of being at one of our campuses, the dude was just right there. We would be singing to this dude.

So he built this, became rich, and when he was chased out of the city (he was sued many times) he hid in the state of Texas for the last few months of his life. He got cancer. And he went on YouTube and did a live broadcast. It was easy to tell on the broadcast that he had lost a lot of weight because of his illness. And he still had the pride to say, "You may see that I have lost a lot of weight. I have done this myself so I can be healthier so I can be God." And, you all, he died just a few weeks later.

And you know who is still in his suit? That man. You know who is not in his suit? Let me hear that. Jesus. It is Jesus who is not. And if Jesus had succumbed to the temptation of pride and identity....

You may be thinking, "I don't want to do that. I don't want to be worshiped. I don't even like to be in front of people." But we deal with this even in the church. How many opportunities have we had? If we have been believers for a while, we may have had opportunities to attack one of our leaders because there is pride, there is this discontent in our hearts or in somebody else's heart.

And whenever we're attacking, we're basically saying, "Who you say you are is not really it, but who you say I am really is because I do have this idea that I can be better than what you are doing now."

And when we are doing this, we're losing control over our pride. It doesn't mean that there is no accountability in the family of God, but it does mean that we have to make sure what our role is in the process of accountability. We have to make sure that we are delivering truth in grace and helping rather than letting our pride fester.

Charles Spurgeon said it like this. I love this quote:

"Be not proud of race, face, place, or grace."

It is not our place to be proud over something that is not what God wants us to be proud of. It is not our place to use any of these elements in our life to attack or to go toward people and to deliver something that would benefit us more than others. We all face this temptation. We also have the temptation of pride and identity.

So what did Jesus do? In verse 7 of Matthew 4 it says:

"Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."'"
Matthew 4:7 (NIV)

Do not test God. Here is the countermeasure that Jesus used:

FOLLOW HIS WILL AND PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE.

When we are testing God, when we go, "If you really want me to be or me to have, then do this for me." In fact, this is how we pray our prayers. We give Him a list of things that He has to do to prove Himself to us, even though He is Creator. And when we do that we're basically saying, "I don't fully trust Your plans and Your purpose and Your will for my life. You may have a purpose, but I still haven't seen it, so I don't approve of it until You show me how I'm supposed to do this."

In fact, what we need to understand here is that Jesus is showing us a God dependency that is greater than our self-sufficiency.

Move from self-sufficiency to God-dependency.

What the world wants us to learn right now, this is what many cultures around the world are teaching us, is that self-sufficiency is actually what makes us better or greater. We can become influencers. We can become famous if only we have a phone and we start talking. But instead we have to move from this sense of self-sufficiency to God-dependency.

Some of you may be thinking, "Well, why should I depend when I want to be independent?"

I met with a friend who is a recovering alcoholic. And we were talking about this. He mentioned that in the AA meetings they have had conversations about what a sense of dependency really is. And the fact that when we depend on something greater, it's what they teach, we actually get a greater sense of freedom when we are dependent. This is counterintuitive.

Let me give you an example of electricity. Right now we are all dependent on electricity. If the lights were to go down right now, many of us would be shrieking because we're dependent on those. But once we have it, it gives us freedom to do so many things.

In the same way we have to understand that without God we are helpless. Without Him we may think we are independent. We're absolutely dependent on something else. It reminds me of Romans, chapter 5, verse 6 where it says:

"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners."
Romans 5:6 (NLT)

It's basically saying, "Jesus died for us because we thought we were independent, but we were actually dependent on sin." And we lost control because we were dependent on

sin. We were not dependent on God who gives us grace and forgiveness and redemption and salvation and a brand-new life. And all of this is motivated by something called grace.

In fact, Jesus not only shows self-control in this moment of His life in Matthew 4, but He also showed self-control on the cross because He had the power to come down from the cross. Do you know why He didn't do it? You know why He lets us be dependent on Him? It's because His motivation was love. And we will not grow in our self and in our sense of who has control of our lives until we understand that:

CHRIST-DRIVEN SELF CONTROL IS MOTIVATED BY LOVE.

Whatever you love is either the fuel for the fruit of self-control or losing control of your life. Jesus—the Bible says that He loves us so much that He gave His life for us by showing self-control on the cross, dying for our sins and coming back the third day.

I am reminded of people who have lost their sense of self-control because of the fact that this world is offering something greater. I am reminded, for example, of Bernie Madoff. Some of you know the name. He was an investor in Wall Street. And he had built a huge empire that eventually fell over because it was all built on lies. He had lost control of himself at some point in his professional life. He didn't necessarily want to do this, but in the last few decades he actually began to build his business because he wanted to be Bernie Madoff. He wanted his brand to stand.

And I still remember when his empire came down. I lived in south Florida at the time, and I remember yachts that had no owners, and condos that were empty and people who killed themselves by suicide because all of their savings were lost to this man who was filled with pride because he lost his sense of who he was.

How many times have we offered that? We read in Matthew, chapter 4, verses 8 and 9 that Jesus continued to give us even more ways to avoid what happened to that man. It says:

"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.'" Matthew 4:8-9 (NIV)

At this point they go on top of a mountain and Satan says, "If You worship me, if You give me Your love, that same love that You think You're going to show on the cross, give it to me and I can give You all of this."

In Little Rock, Arkansas, where we used to live before moving to Indianapolis, we were there for six years, there is a mountain that is 15 minutes from the city, it's called Pinnacle Mountain. And I loved hiking that mountain because I would get on top of that mountain and I could see the deep river valley, I could see the beginning of the Ozarks, I could see the city of Little Rock and the suburbs. I could see trains and I could see cars.

But not once at the top of this mountain did somebody say to me, “If you worship me I can give you everything.” Because it would have been a lot. In the same way Satan is lying to Jesus and he’s saying, “You can have all of this if only you lose control because You want more. You want a greater position. You can worship me.”

How many times have we been offered a fast road to a promotion? How many times do we think about finding loopholes in the law or in our taxes? In fact, how many times do we want to allow ourselves to lose control so that we can retain position?

LOSING CONTROL OVER WORSHIP AND POSITION.

Some are very proud about that we are excellence drivers even when we are cheating. And those of us who have that sense of pride do not have a Traders Point sticker on our cars. I’m talking to some of you right now. Because we know that whenever we lose control and we say, “I think it’s okay if it’s being over,” there is a risk. And we think that we can surpass that risk when in reality is it really what honors God?

Here's the kind of measure that Jesus shows in Matthew, chapter 4, verse 10. It says:

“Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”” Matthew 4:10 (NIV)

He is saying, “Get away from me because I know what the Word says. I know that I need to worship Him alone and see His power at work.” That is a countermeasure that He used:

WORSHIP HIM ALONE AND SEE HIS POWER AT WORK.

He’s saying, “God is going to be the object of My worship. Even though I am Him, I’m going to worship Him because I’m one of the persons of the Trinity. Because I want to see His power at work, because I know that there is a plan, because I know that I need to wait for what He wants to say.”

Part of the reason why we fall for this type of temptation is because we want to be greater, we want people to think that we are greater than we actually are. And so we fall for temptations that pursuantly give us a position that is different than what we have because we want to go in that direction faster than ever.

In fact, for some of us, it’s so prevalent in our lives that we have something called a messiah complex. Meaning that wherever we go, whatever space we enter, we think that we can be the savior. “This church doesn’t look like a great church, but I can save it.” “This company doesn’t look like a great company, but I can save it.” “This person, I know that there is something wrong with him, he’s broken, and there is something going on inside of him, but I can fix him because I have a messiah complex.”

Especially in the economy of the kingdom of God, there is no way that we can go for the position of savior. Here’s how I want us to remember this:

The only positions open in the Kingdom are the positions of servants. The position of Savior is already taken.

And if the word *servant* makes you uncomfortable, understand that we are all servants to something. We may be servants to our:

Senses

We may be hedonists in the way that we live our lives. We may be servants to our:

Sin

We may relish in the way that we dishonor God. Or we may relish in the ways that are not part of His plans for our lives. We may put:

Self

In the center of our lives. So we are servants to what we are or should be. Or we can be servants to our:

Savior

So we can counteract this temptation. We can say, "I'm not going to lose control over this, because Jesus is in control. By me having power over myself what I'm saying is, the Holy Spirit lives in me, He is bearing His fruit, and this fruit allows me to give up my sense of self-control so that He can have control."

Here's what is beautiful about the story. Even after all of this, there is a moment of respite. In Matthew 4:11 it says this:

"Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him." Matthew 4:11 (NIV)

After the devil left Him, the angels came and attended to Jesus. God gave Jesus what He needed at that moment. And in the same way He is there is to battle what we face that doesn't have a fulfillment of our needs at one point or another, whether on this earth or in eternity. God responds. God sends help.

This is what we have to understand:

SELF-CONTROL TAKES PLACE WHEN WE EXCHANGE OUR PERSONAL PRIORITIES FOR THE PROVISION, PURPOSE, AND POWER OF GOD.

A few weeks ago I witnessed something amazing at our Midtown campus. We were having an event. And I was talking to this man who was very open about the fact that he, himself, is in recovery.

And when we were talking he opened up about the fact that the reason he's in church, the reason he pursues Jesus, is because he had lost control of his life due to alcoholism and other addictions. And then he found God in that valley.

And he used the term over and over again, *in recovery*. “Alex, I’m in recovery.” But he didn’t say it with any kind of shame. He would just say it with this joy because he knows he’s in recovery, he knows he’s dependent on Jesus.

We were having this conversation and a woman comes in, she hears what we are talking about, and she says, “Did you go to AA?” And he says, “Yes. I’ve been a part of Alcoholics Anonymous many times over the last few decades.” She says, “I am in recovery too.”

Now these were two different people with different backgrounds, different ethnicities, they grew up in different parts of the city, different professions altogether, probably different tastes in music and perhaps even in food or in relationships. But they were coming together with the fact that they both knew how utterly helpless they are without Jesus.

And they both shared that story in that moment, of how they had lost control of their lives. But they were in recovery. And I want us to recall that same term that we threw out at the beginning of this message, because in some way or another we are all in a process of recovery. When we say yes to Jesus, we enter into a process of growth and development so that other people can know who He is, so other people can know who we are worshiping and who we are following.

And we are professionals in churches today at not admitting our sins, not admitting our gaps, not admitting where we are weak. But for some reason in this program that was created with Christian principals, people are taught that regardless of where they meet, regardless of the environment or the space where those meetings take place, regardless of how deep they were in their sin, or how much control they actually lost, they must be in and forever carry the term, and understand that they are in recovery.

Isn’t that a picture of the church? The church in our society today is treated like an assembly line, when in reality we are a hospital. And we are all in recovery.

So regardless of what your path is, regardless of your background, I want you to know:

YOU ARE IN RECOVERY

If you have been tempted to lose control or in fact you have lost control of your life in such a way that has dishonored God.... Maybe some of you have lost everything. Some of you may not be there. You may be thinking, “Well, that doesn’t apply to me. I’m not an alcoholic. I don’t have a drug addiction or substance addiction of any kind,” remember this. Satan tempts us in the same way that he tempted Jesus.

And he may say, “Turn temptation into opportunity.” And if that’s been you, I want you to know that Jesus loves you. That He knows that you are in recovery. That He knows that you need forgiveness and redemption and a new life. And you can joyfully depend on Him because He died for you and your sin. Amen?

Let's pray.

Jesus, thank You for covering us one more time. Thank you for Your grace and Your provision and Your plans and Your purpose. It's so hard to wait. It's so hard to say *no* to things that would give us instant gratification.

But Jesus we want to say yes to You so badly. So please give us in this moment the opportunity and the strength to say yes to Your plans for our life so that You can have the glory in us as we are all in joyful recovery and are dependent upon You.

We pray these things, Jesus, in Your name. Amen.