

The Solution:
August 23, 2026

You know. Sometimes...
We tell our kids...
Little itty bitty lies.
To try... to control their behavior.

For example... **[1 Watermelon]**

Don't swallow the watermelon seeds...
Because they will grow...
Inside of you.

And then you would see someone...
Who was with child...
And you would think...
Oh man.... they weren't kidding.
She must have swallowed...
A watermelon seed.

But we tell them that...
So they don't swallow the seeds...
But why? We don't have to do that.

First of all... the hard shell on the outside...
Can't be digested by humans...
So the seeds come to a "natural end"...
So to speak.

All we really need to do...
Is teach them how fun it is...
To spit watermelon seeds... make it a game...
And they will never swallow one... ever again.

We tell them... **[2 Ugly Face]**

Your face will freeze that way.
It will not stay that way
You just want them...
To stop making ugly faces...

But the truth is...
It's fun to make faces.
And it doesn't hurt anything.

This is my recommendation...
That you as an adult...
Stop fighting the system...

Instead choose...
To make the same face...
Right back at them.

And I hadn't heard this one... until the other day...
But some parents say... **[3 ice Cream Truck]**

The ice cream truck...
Only plays music...
When it's out of ice cream. That's awful.
They just don't want their kids...
To have ice cream.

That's just wrong.
And ice cream is always...
The right answer.

And besides... these little lies...
That we tell our children...
Only go so far...
They get too smart...
They age out...

I remember the day...
When our daughter KT confronted me...
About one of these little itty bitty lies...

She looked me straight in the eye...
And said... Dad... I need to know the truth.
Just tell me... is this true or not.

And when someone gets to the point...
Of wanting to know the truth...
And pleads with us...
Just tell me.
I really want to know.

Then we need to tell the truth.
Even though sometimes...
The truth does not feel good.

That's what this day is about.
The Truth...
About who we are...
And what we need...

It's a straight forward question...
Do you want to know the truth... or not?

I saw an article last week...
And it said something to the effect...
In our modern world... **[4 Sin Talk]**

The church is afraid to talk about sin...
Because it turns people off.
It's negative... accusatory... judgmental...
But that's based... on misunderstanding...

It's not supposed to be like that.

When we talk about sin...
And our human nature...
What we really mean is...
The way... we disregard God...
They way... we hurt each other.

The way... we live our lives...
In direct opposition...
To what Jesus has called us to do.

Love the Lord your God...
With all your heart... your soul... your strength.
And love your neighbor as yourself.

This is the summary of the Law.
This is the way it's supposed to be.

We don't talk about sin...
To be hurtful and judgmental...
Or even to be looking...
At all the other people...
Sitting around us...

And saying... in our hearts...
Look at her... she is such a sinner...
Look at him... he doesn't care about God...
Not one little bit.

When WE talk about sin...
We aren't supposed to be...
Thinking about everybody else.

We are supposed to be looking...
At our own heart.

And the question is... again...
Do you want to know the Truth?
About yourself... or not.

Do you really want to know... what Jesus...
Has done for you... or not.

You know... **[5 Doctor]**
When you go to the doctor...
Do you want the doctor...
To lie to you...
About what's wrong?

To make things up...
To make you feel better...
Mentally... about your health?

Of course not.
The reason you go to the doctor is...
You want to be made well.
You want to be stronger.
You want to be healthy.
So you ask the doctor...
What wrong with me?
Tell me the truth.

And then you ask the doctor...
To do whatever...
Needs to be done...
To make you right.

Acknowledgment of our sin...
Works the same way.
God already knows... the problem.
That's why God sent Jesus.

So that we would have a way...
To deal... with our spiritual sickness...
Also known as... sin.

I've said it before...
And here it is again.

The church is not a hotel...
For the self-righteous...
The church is a hospital...
For people who know...
They have sinned...
And fallen short...
Of the glory of God.

And the way... that we know...
HOW we have fallen short...
Of the glory of God... **[6 The Law]**
Is the Law.

You know... the 10 commandments...
And all the other rules...

And the primary function of the Law...
Is to show us who we really are.

We hear or read the expectations...
And it's like looking into a mirror...
And reflecting on who we are...
What we have done.
What we have left undone.

The Law... reveals us.

I remember when I was a wee little kid...
We would take "lunch" to my dad...
Down at Oscar Mayer's...
I don't remember how many times...
It actually happened...

But I do remember...
We would go at night...
He must have been working...
The second shift.
Because it was dark...
In the evening.
About 7 or 8 o'clock. **[7 Police]**

We would be in the backseat of the car...
And when a police car...
Would drive past...
My dad... would say...
It's the cops...
Get down.

And we would duck down...
As far as we could...
In the back of the car...
Like we had done something wrong.

We had not.
We were kids.
We didn't speed... or rob a bank... or even jay walk...

But it freaked me out...
All the same... because...
I felt like I had done something wrong...
Even though... I hadn't.

We're not supposed to live like that.
God does not want us...
To feel guilty...
All the time...
Like we are constantly... failing at life.

We aren't supposed to have...
This constant and considerable weight...
Hanging over our heads.

God wants us to be free.
Free from sin.
Free from the consequences.
Free from guilt.

That's what Jesus came to do. **[8 Free]**
To set us free.

He said... if the Son of Man...
Sets you free...
You are free... INDEED.

It's pretty clear...
That Jesus' intention...
Was that we should not live...
In pain... or regret... or fear...
Of the past.

And to help us do that...
To help us be free...
He gave us a gift.

Actually... he gave it to Simon Peter...
But the gift... belongs to the church. It's ours.
Not to one man.
Not to any pope or priest or pastor.

It is a gift... that belongs to the whole people of God.
The church.
The saints.
The sinners.
Us.

The gift is called... **[9 The Keys]**
The Office of the Keys.

Here's what happened.
Jesus was hearing all kinds of rumors...
About himself.
About who he was...
And what he came to do.

So he asked his disciples...
Who do YOU... singular...
Think that the Son of Man is?

This was not an opportunity...
For brainstorming...
Or group think...

He was asking them... INDIVIDUALLY...
Who do you say that I am?

And Peter...
Because he is brave...
And lacks all common sense...
Spoke.

He said...
You are the Messiah.
The Son of the Living God.

I imagine... Jesus was a bit... flabbergasted...
I don't think... he really expected...
Any single one of them...
To get the right answer.

But by God... literally... by God... Peter got it right.
Jesus said... My Father in heaven...
Revealed this to you.

And now you all know... who I am...

And on that rock... I'm gonna build my church.
BTW... not Peter...
Even though he is the Rock
Jesus is not building a church on Peter.
He's just a guy. Following Jesus best he can.

Jesus was talking about Peter's confession.
That is the rock. On that truth.
That I am the Messiah.
The Son of the Living God.
That's what I'm going to build my church on.
That is the foundation.

That's what this ministry... and mission...
And everything... is all about.

And so now...
I am going to give you power...
So you can do my work...
In the world... as the church.

I will give you...
The keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.
Whatever you loose on earth...
Will be loosed in heaven.
And whatever you bind on earth...
Will be bound in heaven.

Two keys.
A Binding key.
And a Loosing key.

Now... the Loosing Key...
That's the easy one.
We feel comfortable...
With that one.

You as part of the priesthood...
Of All Believers...

You have the power...
To ask God directly..
To forgive your sins.

Or you can do it here...
In worship... at the beginning of each service.

Or you can come to me...
Or any other brother or sister in Christ...
And tell them... you need to be forgiven...
And confess...

And by the power...
Given to us...
By Jesus himself...

We can declare...
That your sin has been forgiven.
In the name of God.
Here on earth.
And in heaven.

And that's it.
It's done.
You are free.

The other one...
Is a bit more tricky.
The Binding Key.

It's the one we use...
To hold another person...
Who is hurting themselves...
Or others... accountable.
For their actions.

Has there ever been a time...
When you know...
You're doing something wrong.

OR better yet...
A time when you don't know...
That you're doing something wrong...
And someone tells you the Truth...
Because they are worried...
Or Scared...
And they love you?

That's the binding key.
The time when you need someone...
Outside of yourself...

To give you perspective...
To help you see...
To give you the opportunity...
To make things right...

And to stop it.

I have several serious examples...
But I'd rather tell you...
One that I still can't believe. **[10 Shovel]**

This happened...
When our oldest daughters...
Were little.

There was a play house...
In the backyard...

They would go out...
And play... all day long.
And there was a window...
Over the kitchen sink...
Where I could look out...
And see them playing...
You know... check on them.

One day...
I decided to take a peek.
And in that moment... I saw the younger of the two...
Holding a shovel...
Over her head...
Like she was going to hit...
Her older sister...
Who was completely unaware.

I don't scream....
But I yelled in my biggest voice.
KT Hank... don't hit your sister...
In the head...
With a shovel.

She said ok. And dropped it.

I never thought I would have to tell ANYONE...
That it was wrong to hit another person...
In the head... With a shovel.

But I did.
And she stopped.
She repented.
Turned around.
Stopped doing the bad thing.

Sometimes we need...
An external voice...
To help guide us.

The world is full of motivational podcasts...
And self-help books...

And all kinds of things...
That focus on... our human potential.

But what if you get to a point...
Where you can't be motivated...
Or you're not able to help yourself.
Or you have no potential.

What if we just need to hear someone say...
STOP. Stop what you're doing.
Don't do that anymore.
It's going to hurt you.
It's going to hurt the people around you.

God doesn't want that for your life.
Can't you feel... that it's wrong. Well... that's sin.

And at the very least...
When someone calls us out...
It gives us the opportunity...
To turn our lives around.

And you know...
As well as I do...
We don't get better...
If we don't admit...
We have a problem.

The Office of the Keys...
Is not meant to make us...
Feel terrible about ourselves. **[11 The Solution]**

It's designed to be the way...
To get out from underneath...
The burden of sin.

And I don't know...
What's in your heart today.

But if that resonates with you.
It's ok. You're not being singled out.
You're not being judged...
We are all the same.
We all need the power of God...
In our lives.

We all need forgiveness...
Of our sins.

We all need Jesus...
To give us hope...
For the future.

And there are no exceptions.

I mean... you might think...
You're pretty great...
But come on.
Be honest.
Tell the truth.
Join us.
Join us sinners...
So you can be set free.

And when I need it... please...
Help me... to be set free.

Use the keys...
You have been given...
Not only to open the doors...
Of the church...
And welcome each and every person...
Which is one function of the Keys.

But use the Keys...
Use your God-given power...
Use the Word.
Use Jesus.

To give people a second chance.
To give them new hope.
And even... to get hope for yourself.

Well... HEAR THE GOOD NEWS.
No one has to live...
Under the shadow of sin...
Anymore.

You don't have to live...
Like sin has the power...
To hold you down...
Anymore.

We have a solution.
To sin.
And fear. And sorrow.
And everything that threatens...
To separate us from God.

We have a solution.
His name is Jesus.
Come to him.
And be set free.

Thanks be to God.
Amen.