

When Towers Fall

Say What? The Hard Saying of Jesus: Pt. 4

So far this fall, we've been looking at hard sayings of Jesus; things Jesus says that are odd, difficult, outrageous, category shattering, and startling. You're not going to hear the one we're looking at today preached on much – I know *I've* never preached on it in 20 years. And it's probably because it's not so much one of the great passages that expounds the great doctrines – but we do need to look at every part of the Scripture. It's all there for a reason.

But I want you to know that once I've gotten into this, I find it to be very helpful practically. It's a helpful, quirky, odd passage – but one that has something important to reveal to us. So let me read you **Luke 13:1–9** and see what we're taught about repentance here.

1 Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. 2 Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? 3 I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

4 Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish." 6 Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any.

7 So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' 8 'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

There it is, but what does it *mean*? This teaching starts with two incidents that are brought up, two, what we call today, tragedies. One of them is an atrocity; one of them is a natural disaster. The atrocity is here in verse 1 and was brought up with Jesus, as something everybody knew about. In a sense, it was kind of current news.

Pontius Pilate, the Roman colonial governor of Judea – he will feature prominently in the Easter story - evidently had fallen upon some political enemies and destroyed them, which was not at all abnormal in the days of the Roman Empire. I know we think our political situation is the worst, but believe me, there's plenty of room further down that ladder.

But what was particularly grisly about this was Pilate had sent his henchmen, or whoever went and did this, to find his political enemies at a time in which they were not on guard. They were *worshipping* at the temple. They were offering sacrifices at the temple. And as a result, they expected nothing, and they were slain as they were worshipping, so that their own blood mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. How grisly. That's an atrocity.

I heard a story on NPR while driving to work one morning this week, about a young girl that was killed without warning in one of Putin's missile strikes against the Ukrainian civilian population. The radio broadcast the wails of the mother as she was shown the body of her daughter. It was gut wrenching. The vicious cruelty of humanity. We know something of atrocities.

Now there's another one of these tragedies that Jesus himself brings up, and that is in verse 4. He says, "What about..." and he tells about another incident everybody seemed to know about, and that is that at the place where the southern and eastern walls of Jerusalem come together there was a reservoir called the pool of Siloam.

And evidently, at that spot there was a tower on the wall, perhaps for fortification, and the tower collapsed. Eighteen people were killed. And the question that comes up is a natural question, a very relevant and very contemporary kind of question. The question goes like this. "Why the unbalanced way in which pain and comfort is distributed amongst the human race? Why is it so uneven? As the great British hymnist Roderick Stewart sang...

Some guys have all the luck
Some guys have all the pain
Some guys get all the breaks
Some guys do nothing but complain
Woo woo woo

Why is it some people have all the luck, and why other people seem to have all the pain? Why did such tragedies happen over here and over there? Why do some people suffer so much more than other people? Why these incredible inequities?" See? "Why did that fall on them? Why did that happen?" That's a pretty up-to-date question.

And Jesus' answer to the question about falling towers... Why do towers fall on people? His answer, of course, as usual, is totally unique, completely counterintuitive - absolutely counter to the conventional wisdom of this world. So Jesus Christ helps us understand falling towers and suffering and tragedies, and he does it in two ways. He explains how *not* to respond to falling towers, and then how *to* respond to falling towers and all the rest of the suffering.

So first of all, How *not* to respond to falling towers.

But there are some twists in here that are different than almost any of the other places I've ever brought you material like this. First of all, he takes the two normal ways the world sees falling towers, and he contradicts them. He says, "No. *Don't* see them that way. That's not the right way to do it." But almost everybody sees it in these two ways that he contradicts. What are the two ways I'm talking about?

Well first of all, there is what I'll call the religious, moralistic approach to look at suffering and trials and falling towers. Now the religious, moralistic way, Jesus himself brings up because they clearly had posed this to him. See? Look at verse 2. Jesus says, "Do you think these Galileans are worse sinners than the others because that happened?" Verse 4. "Do you think they were more guilty than all others?"

That's the religious, moralist view, and it goes like this. "If you live a good life, you'll *have* a good life. If you obey God, He'll bless you and prosper you and answer your prayers. And so if things are always going wrong in your life and your prayers aren't being answered and bad things are happening, *you* must not be living right.

You're being *punished* for some reason. There's just something *wrong* with you. There's unconfessed sin in your life. There's something wrong. So if the tower is falling on you, you're doing something wrong."

Now I know there are a lot of you out there who are going to say, "Well, what a terrible attitude..." Before that happens, let me suggest to you that there is something very natural and visceral and even instinctive in the human heart. We *all* naturally tend to have that view. What do I mean by that?

Christopher Plummer died last year, he was an amazing actor who was, unfortunately I suppose, most know for a movie he starred in which he *hated*. Later on in life, he would refer to it as "The Sound of Mucus." And in that movie, the Christopher Plummer character falls in love with the Julie Andrews character. And as they fall in love, they suddenly realize they're going to live happily ever after, so they sing a song about it, of course.

Now, I used this illustrative several weeks ago and I sang this to you. Speaking of atrocities! So I'm not going to do that again, but I liked the point it makes so much that I've decided to just play you the clip, so let's take a look and listen closely to the lyrics.

[Something Good 1:17]

What are they saying? They're saying, "If my life is turning out well, I must have done something right. If my children are turning out right, it's because I was a smart parent. If my career is going well, it's because I'm a hardworking, savvy, intelligent person. If I have a number of good relationships, it means I'm an attractive person." In other words, there's something natural in the human heart that wants to take credit.

Do you see what they're saying? They're saying, "If something good happened to me, then there must have been *somewhere* I must have done something good." When they say, "Nothing comes from nothing," what they really mean is this couldn't be grace. See, grace is goodness out of the blue. Grace is goodness for nothing. "Oh it couldn't be that. I must have done something good."

And therefore, *because* the human heart wants to take credit for the good things that happen, *as a result*, when your life starts to go *poorly*...when things start to fall apart, it is absolutely instinctive to say, "I must have done something *bad*." Only we don't sing songs about it. Rodgers and Hammerstein don't write songs about it. Maybe there is one – I'm not a theatre expert. If you know of one, tell me, and I'll use it.

But that's what happens. If bad things start to happen, what do you start to say? You say, "Am I not living right? Am I being punished for something?" It's instinctive. It's out of your mouth or it's in your head before you know. And so the first view of falling towers is the religious view, and that is...Who's to blame? Obviously the people on whom the tower is falling. They must have done something wrong.

Secondly, the other approach that is very common in the world when you see towers fall I'm going to call the irreligious, skeptical approach. And rather than blame the people on whom the tower falls, this approach blames life, the universe, or God. The religious view looks at what's *under* the tower, and the irreligious view looks at what's *above* the tower.

And the irreligious view says, "Hey, most people are good. Most people work very hard. Most people deserve a decent life, and so many people don't get a good life..." Why? "...because the universe is unfair, because *life* is absurd, because life stinks, because *God* is unfair, because God is doing something wrong." Those are your two alternatives...blame the people *under* the tower, blame the people *over* the tower.

And Jesus will have none of it. Jesus says both of these approaches, which are just about the only two approaches you're going to find – unless of course, there are always people who just do not want to think about it. An awful lot of people just decided to live in denial and distraction and not even think about the great questions of life – but those who do generally wind up on one of these answers.

And Jesus says they're both wrong; they're both inadequate. *Neither* of them is the right way to go. *Both* of them are dysfunctional. *Neither* of them will work in your life. One of them will make you *incredibly* smug and proud; the other will make you *unbelievably* despondent, or you'll ping-pong back and forth from one to the other.

And the way Jesus knocks them both down is by basically bringing out the gospel. It's because when Jesus says, "Is that what you think? Do you think they're worse sinners? Do you think they're worse people?" what does he say? "No, *but* repent." Unbelievably paradoxical. "No." But he doesn't just say, "No," he also says, "Repent." And he doesn't just say, "Repent," he says, "No." Let me show you how they *look* paradoxical, but they're not. They look like they're in tension with each other – and I suppose on the surface they are - but they actually support each other.

The first thing he says - and this is so clear and it's fascinating - Jesus Christ says, "Do you think when people suffer that they are being paid for their sins? Do you think when the tower falls...?" Are you one of those Christians who, when the hurricane struck New Orleans for instance, said, "The judgement waters of God washing away Bourbon street!" By the way, Katrina didn't even hit the tourist district, it hit the areas where poor black families live...and the vast majority of them are church-going Christians!

And so Jesus is actually saying, "When these terrible things happen, do you think that is retribution for sin? Do you think that is God punishing?" He says, "No. Flat-out no." There's a place where Jesus comes upon a blind man and in **John 9:2** it says, "*His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'*" And Jesus says, "No. Neither. None of the above." The book of Job is all about three guys - Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar - who were supposedly friends of Job, who come and say, "Look at all these bad things that are happening to you, Job. You must be doing something bad." And God gets very angry at *them*, not Job.

Therefore, Jesus comes right out, and he's saying very, very flat-out, "No. When you see people suffer, that is not retribution for sin." Good news...so far at least. Because *then* he turns around and he says, "But repent, lest you perish too." *What?* And this is where he's saying, "But there is another side to this." See, if he had only said, "No." Everybody would say, "Oh, that's great. That's nice to know, but what does that mean?" It'd mean God is unfair then. Do you see?

If he just simply says, "No, no, no. God doesn't treat people like that. It's not punishment for sin." If he'd stopped there, then we'd have to say, "But wait a minute. Life does stink then, huh? Because that means the Pontious Putins of the world, just get away with it. The shady builders are not held to account." But Jesus isn't so simplistic because he turns around and says, "But no, repent lest ye likewise perish."

And what he is saying here...I'll just say it flat-out, and then I'll try to mop up. Jesus Christ is saying, "On the one hand, don't you ever think those people are worse because they suffered. On the other hand, I want you to realize that every person on the face of the earth deserves to have a tower fall on them. Don't you dare feel smug. *You* deserve to have a tower fall on you." If God gave you - and He's not - but if God gave you what you deserve, you'd have a tower fall on you too.

Now what's going on here? Right away you say, "Wow! What a harsh thing." No, I'm asking you to bear with me. Jesus is trying to show us something we do not want to believe. We want to believe that if God is a God of grace and love, that, therefore, we're not that bad. Or if we're really, really, really that sinful, if we're really that flawed, if we're really that selfish, we're really that proud, then God can't love us. We just will not take these together. We refuse.

I mean, over the years I have become convinced that nobody likes grace - not within the church or without. It's like their hearts won't take it. "If I'm *really* loved, then I can't be that bad; if I'm *really* that bad, then there's absolutely no way you're going to console me with being loved" because these two things seem to be in impossible tension, yet Jesus Christ *absolutely* holds them together and says, "On the one hand, no, God is such a God of grace that God *never* deals with people that way. He's not possibly paying you back for your sin."

Think about your life. Think of all the lies you've told that you've never gotten the consequences for. Think of all the stupid choices you've made that you've never gotten the consequences for. Think of every time you've betrayed a friend. Did you lose that friend? Every time you turned you back on God, did He turn His back on you? There is nobody who has ever received even 1 percent of the consequences for the stupid things and the wrong things and the proud things and the selfish things they've done.

God is graciously again and again and again, day in and day out, *not* giving us what we deserve. But on the other hand, Jesus is saying, if you had the right perspective, if you had the right understanding, if you really saw the pride in your heart - instead of filling it with denial and excuses - if you really saw what was wrong with your heart, which is the cause of all the misery in the human race – “the line between good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being” - it’s what’s going on in your heart that you shrug off, that’s the reason why the human race is so miserable.

It’s the self-centeredness and the pride and the anger and the deception and the denial. If you *really* saw your heart, you would know that God does not owe you a comfortable life at all. On the one hand, God owes you nothing. On the other hand, God is yearning to be gracious. In other words, the gospel is you are much more flawed and much more lost than your heart dares believe, but at the same time, you are much more loved and much more cared for than your heart will allow to believe.

And I know those two things are contradictions, but they are also in incredible harmony. And here’s why. Only if you see the depth of what’s wrong with you can you really appreciate the unbelievable patience and grace of God...but only if you see the infinite grace and patience of God will you have the psychological ability to be honest about what’s wrong with you.

If you cannot *bear* to really look at all the stupidity of your life, if you cannot bear to see what’s wrong with you, if you cannot bear to really see your flaws, if you just can’t take criticism, you just go to pieces because you know it’s true, it’s because you really don’t have the *strength* from knowing the grace of God. It’s the grace of God that helps you feel, *not*, “Oh, I must be okay,” but gives you the freedom to admit what’s wrong with you without being devastated.

And therefore, Jesus Christ is saying, “Unless you see the depth of your sin and the height of God’s grace, when things go well, you’re going to be smug instead of happy and grateful, *or* when things go poorly, you’re going to be devastated instead of hopeful and enduring.” Unless you see both of those, you’re going to go back and forth between being a proud Pharisee or being a cynical skeptic, and you’re not going to be able to handle the suffering and troubles of life.

So Jesus says, “Don’t get mad at the people under the tower. Don’t get mad at the God above the tower. Get mad at the evil and the sin that’s in the world. That’s the reason towers are falling on people. Evil and sin have broken this world.” Look back at Genesis 1. Take a look and see when God built the world.

When God created the world, did He create disease? Did God create death? Did God create war? Did God create poverty? *No*. These are the results of a world that has turned away from God and the brokenness that comes from that. So Jesus says, “Hate evil. Hate brokenness. Get on my side, because what I have come to do is to wipe this out, to deal with it.”

So on the one hand, Jesus says how not to respond to falling towers...not with pride or despondency; not, on the one hand, blaming the people, saying, “Oh, those must be bad people,” or on the other hand, blaming God, “That must be a bad god.” *Neither!* Okay, well, then, what do we do?

Secondly ... How we *should* respond to falling towers? Now this is the interesting part, and this is the practical part. In some ways, it’s not profound, but it’s very practical. This is one of the few passages I know that Jesus is really threading the needle and talking to a certain kind of person who is not often addressed. What I mean is if you this morning are in a condition or if you’ve recently gone through a time in which a tower has fallen on you, some terrible things have happened to you - bad things in relationships, bad things financially, bad things in your body, *bad* things - if you’ve been through some terrible suffering, there are many places in the Bible that speak directly to you...words of comfort, words of hope, words of encouragement, words of insight. And this is not one of them.

What’s intriguing here is he’s *not* talking to people on whom the towers have fallen, is he? Nuh-uh. There are a lot of places to go. Keep coming to church if you’re hurting, and we’ll get to them, but I want you to know what’s intriguing here...*Who* is Jesus talking to? *Who* was he giving spiritual counsel to?

He is giving counsel to people whose lives are right now in a trouble-free stretch. He’s talking to people who right now are *not* having towers fall. They’re *seeing* towers fall, but it’s not happening to them. And they’re the people he’s addressing and saying, “When you go into a period of time in which *basically* your life is going smoothly, I have some advice for you. When you see towers falling, but not on you...”

There are not too many passages like this, but here’s what it has to show us. What does Jesus say? What he’s doing first of all is he’s warning , v.5 “...*But unless you repent, you too will all perish.*”. The first thing we learn is when you go through a period of life in which your life is going smoothly, you’re in **very dangerous territory spiritually.** That’s the first thing I want you to see. The first bit of advice is just this.

Jesus Christ when he says, “You’re going to perish. Watch out! Look out!” what he’s saying is there is no greater spiritual crisis than to have no crises in your life. There is no greater spiritual trial than to have no trials in your life. There is no more spiritually dangerous place than to have a trouble-free stretch where you see towers falling on other people but not you.

I know people say, “Well, wait a minute. I thought it’s when towers fall, when bad things happen to me, *that’s* the time in which my faith is terribly tested.” Yeah. Of course. Absolutely. And there are plenty of Bible passages that talk about that, but what Jesus is trying to show us right here is there is *no* greater test, there is no greater assault on your spirituality, there is no greater spiritual danger, than to have everything going quite nicely. He’s saying, “Beware.” That’s the first thing.

Now the second thing is he’s telling us *what to do* during these dangerous times of trouble-free living, these dangerous times of safety, security, and relative comfort in our lives. Do you know what you’re supposed to do? What does he say you should do? What does he say to these people? We just read it. “Repent.”

Jesus says there is no more important time to **repent** than when things are going well. There is no more important time to repent than when you’re basically reaching your goals. There is no more important time to repent than when blessings are coming down on your head. When things are going well and things are going smoothly, you must take hold of that and repent.

Now this is where our series title comes in...“Say what? Anthony, *what* are you talking about?” And what’s interesting here is it gives me an illustration of something I often try to get across but very often I’m not sure you all believe me. Repentance is not *primarily* about breaking rules. You’ve heard me say that before.

When you see Jesus calling *these* people to repent... people who are obeying the law of God, because some of them are disciples, some of them are Pharisees, but they *all* believe the Bible. They *all* are trusting in the law of God. They’re all trusting and seeking the will of God. They’re all going to worship. They’re all praying. They’re all *doing things right*. They’re obeying the religious rules. They’re obeying the biblical rules and so on, and their lives are going very well.

And when Jesus calls *them* to repent, he's showing us something. That of course, if you do bad things - if you lie, if you cheat, if you steal, if you rob a bank, yes, repent - but that's not the essence of repentance. Because it's not the essence of *sin*. Because the essence of sin is not breaking the rules; the essence of sin is to substitute yourself for God. The essence of sin is putting yourself or something else in the place that **only God** should have. The essence of sin is being your own savior or lord or creating another one - an idol. The essence of sin is not looking to God for your salvation but doing it yourself.

And it's in good times, in trouble-free times, in which you're *most* likely to do that. Listen, when things go badly, when towers are falling on you, yeah, there's a tendency to medicate yourself, there's a tendency to drink too much, or to try to drown your troubles in pleasure, or maybe you get filled with self-pity and all that sort of thing. Yeah, I mean, there are temptations along those lines.

It's when things are going well, though, you have the most central *core* kind of temptation. And that's this. Who is Jesus talking to? Who is he rebuking? He is rebuking *self-righteous* people. He's rebuking self-justification. He's rebuking people who feel *superior* to sufferers, and he's saying, "Repent."

It is during trouble-free times that you inevitably start to shift the real hope of your heart to **the good things** in your life, and away from God... make *them* your joy, make *them* your significance, make *them* your worth. That is inevitably happening, subtly. That's the reason why it's such a dangerous time.

Can I confess that this is especially dangerous for me. You see, I'm in a helping profession - people seek me out in times of trouble. So for instance I will often meet with people who are having trouble in their marriage - the marriage is just coming apart. And sometimes I will just say to Deanna, "Boy am I glad we're not going through that!"

But then God will often speak to me - almost an audible voice sometimes - "Do you think they're worse people because their marriage is coming apart and yours isn't? Repent, lest you too perish!" See, what that voice of the Holy Spirit is constantly convicting me of is it's during the good times that my heart's self-justification - which is the heart of sin - being your own savior, your heart's self-righteousness, inevitably grows, and you very subtly and very slowly put the roots of your heart down into those things.

“Hey, I’m doing pretty well in my profession. Hey, somebody is falling in love with me. Hey, my family is doing very well.” And what are you doing? *Automatically*, always, you look at other people whose lives *aren’t* going as well, and you’re just getting a little bit self-righteous about it. You don’t want to admit it. I certainly don’t act in any way self-righteous when I talk to those couples. I’m not that arrogant on the outside. But this passage comes along as the Holy Spirit’s way of saying, “Don’t you *dare* look at any good thing in your life as anything other than a sheer act of undeserved grace.”

And then as you meditate on the good thing as a sheer act of undeserved grace, then turn to Jesus and say, “Lord, I can’t believe your grace. Your grace is so great that I want to adore *you*, not these things. *Your* smile, *your* honor, *your* pleasure should be my joy and my crown and my worth and my significance, because if I put my heart down into *anything* else, when the trouble-free stretch is over - and inevitably it will be over - I will perish.”

And therefore, Jesus Christ says there is *no* more important time to repent than when everything is going very well. See, now we know what repentance is. You say, “How can you repent if you haven’t done anything wrong?” Oooo. Repentance is not so much for doing bad things as for **over trusting good things**.

Because breaking rules is just a *symptom* of sin, but the *disease* of sin is being your own savior by trusting in something besides Jesus Christ for your wisdom, your righteousness, your sanctification, and your redemption.

Because the default mode of the human heart is self-salvation, and there’s no more likely time for it to happen, no more time for it to go into overdrive, than during the calm times, the safe times, the comfortable times, the prosperous times. You see, what’s so great is when you find Jesus calling people to repent who are doing everything right then you begin to realize gospel repentance is a different sort of thing than the religious understanding of repentance.

Religious repentance is, “Repentance is rare for the righteous. Only when you blow it.” Right? But gospel repentance happens all the time. You respond to failure with repentance, but you respond to success with repentance. You respond to *everything* with repentance. We’re fast approaching the anniversary of Martin Luther’s nailing of the 95 theses to the Wittenberg church door – that was to the Protestant Reformation what the Boston Tea Party was to the American Revolution. But the very first one on his list was *all of life is repentance*. If you understand the gospel, repentance is everything.

Religious repentance says it's abnormal. Gospel repentance says it's natural and regular. Religious understanding of repentance is you're looking at your *bad* things. That's true, but the gospel understanding of repentance is you're seeing and transforming your understanding of your *good* things. The religious view of repentance is that it's bitter; it's basically a way of saying, "I am atoning for my sin. I'm trying to sort of punish myself until I feel like God will forgive me. I've paid a price."

But Gospel repentance is saying, "I am not living as if the price has already *been* paid. I'm trying to earn my worth and significance and salvation with my performance and with my appearance. I'm looking at them as proofs that I'm okay. And therefore I'm not living love, so I'm living anxious or I'm living proud. And I'm going to *perish* unless I make Jesus Christ my heart's functional hope."

Therefore, you see, gospel repentance is fruit. What are the fig trees? What are the figs on this tree that Jesus mentioned? What does the tree represent? It's us. And what are the figs God is looking for? Repentance. What is fruit? Fruit is a *sweet* thing. Repentance is a sweet thing. Repentance sweetens you and me.

Repentance means that when things are going very well, I'm humbled because I know it's all because of grace. And when things are going terribly, I'm affirmed because I know God is not punishing for my sin. Don't you see? Repentance creates joy in me. Repentance creates stability in me. "Well," you say. "How can it do that? How can you know all that?" Here's the reason why.

Who is talking to us? Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ is *absolute* proof that the religious understanding of falling towers is wrong, because he was the best man who ever lived...and he had the worst life. The most wonderful life ever lived, and as a result, he got the most pain and suffering anyone has ever had.

Why? I'll tell you why. The reason you can know, Jesus says, that if you repent, towers won't fall on you is that the *ultimate* tower has fallen on him. The reason the best person had the worst life is that the ultimate tower, eternal justice - what we deserve for what's wrong with us - has fallen on him. If you want to handle the inequities and injustices of this life, you have to see that Jesus got the greatest injustice of all.

The best person died on the cross for our sin. The one person who really deserved for God to listen to him was turned away from. His prayers got the silent treatment. And what that means is when my towers are falling on me, I can say, “This is only a little tower. The big tower fell on Jesus. God is not punishing me for my sin, and I can handle this. The only tower that can *really* destroy me, which is the eternal justice of God, is never going to fall onto my heart because it fell onto Jesus.”

And when towers are not falling on me and my life is going very well, I have to say, “It’s nothing but grace, and the reason God can be good to me and not give me what I deserve is because Jesus Christ got what he didn’t deserve. The reason God is never going to give me what I deserve, but something much better, is that God did not give Jesus what he deserved, but something far worse.” He got the ultimate tower. It fell on him.

The sweetness of repentance – that’s the figs - can grow in your life if you see this, *but* without repentance...See that last verse? “Cut it down!” Every thing is healable *except* an unwillingness to repent. Anything can be repaired, but *not* if you won’t admit it needs to be repaired. Don’t you see that? Any wrong can be righted, but not if you don’t admit it’s a wrong.

This was the Christian genius behind the South African commission on Truth and Reconciliation. Bishop Tutu knew that his nation needed healing after Apartheid. And to avoid bloodshed there would have to be grace. But he knew there could be no reconciliation without truth – with owning what you did.

Therefore, as the Westminster Confession says, “As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.” Let your life be filled with the sweetness of real repentance, gospel repentance, *especially* when towers are not falling on you.

Let’s pray...