

I. Introduction

- A. There is a quiet epidemic spreading across our culture. It's not a virus, but a feeling—a deep and paralyzing sense of being fundamentally broken.
- B. In Japan, they have a name for its most extreme form: Hiki-komori. It describes over a million people, mostly young men, who feel so overwhelmed by the pressure to succeed that they give up entirely. They hide in their bedrooms for months, sometimes years, convinced they are unworthy of the outside world.
- C. We see another version of this online in communities like the Incel movement, where people bond over a shared, desperate belief that they are too flawed, too rejected—too messed up—to ever be loved or have a meaningful life.
- D. But for most people, it's not that extreme. It's more personal. It's the quiet voice of the internal critic that never sleeps.
 1. It's the feeling of being inferior, just one mistake away from everyone finding out you don't really have it all together.
 2. It's the heavy blanket of shame that tells you your past mistakes have disqualified you from a happy future.
 3. It's the suspicion that you're basically stupid and anybody who gets close to you will find it out.
 4. It's the awareness that you have desires and thoughts that are pretty nasty and you spend a lot of energy keeping a lid on that stuff.
 5. It's the whisper that life's not worth it, just end it all.
 6. It's the tug to do right overpowered by the tug to do wrong.
- E. The Apostle Paul knew this feeling well. He called himself the "chief of sinners." But he also discovered a truth so powerful it shatters the lie of being "too messed up."
- F. He learned that God's message isn't a pep talk to try harder; it's a declaration of a new identity that changes everything.

II. Series Intro

- A. Welcome to Pathway Church, and welcome to our series on the book of Philippians called:
 1. **Quit Telling Yourself "I Can't"**
- B. My message today is part 6 in the series. And here's my title:
 1. **Quit Telling Yourself, "I'm Too Messed Up."**
- C. Today we're going to look at a passage where Paul doesn't just tell you to feel better about yourself. He puts your brokenness on trial and presents God's irrefutable evidence for why, in Christ, you are no longer defined by your mess.
- D. So how does God speak into this feeling? How does He dismantle the lie that you are too messed up?
- E. He doesn't start with a list of things you need to do. He starts by showing you a reality you need to see.
- F. In Philippians 2, Paul is writing to friends he loves in a church he loves, but he sees the cracks of insecurity and rivalry forming. And he knows the only cure is to remind them—and you—of who you truly are in Christ.
- G. Listen to his passionate appeal. I'm going to read all four verses, from 1 to 4, so you can hear the full force of his argument.
 1. *"Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."* (Philippians 2:1-2)

III. God's Case Against Your Lie (Philippians 2:1-2)

- A. So how does God break down the walls of that prison? He doesn't just shout encouragement from a distance. He meets you right where you are.
- B. To understand Paul's message here, you have to see where it starts. Chapter 2 begins with the word "Therefore." That word is a bridge, and it connects directly back to what Paul just said at the end of chapter 1—that you are in a "struggle."
 1. Paul knows your life is not easy. He knows you're in a fight. The struggle against sin, the pressure from the world, the pain of living in a broken place—all of it amplifies that inner voice that says, "You're messed up. You're failing."
 2. Paul is saying, "I know you're in a struggle. Therefore... because you are in this fight, I need you to listen with everything you have. I am about to present God's evidence against the lie that you're too messed up to handle life, too messed up to live and to love, too messed up to make a difference, too messed up to ever get better."
- C. He then lays out four pieces of evidence. And he does it in a brilliant pattern: two pairs.
 1. In each pair, he starts with an unshakeable, objective fact of your faith, and then he immediately shows you the personal, subjective feeling that flows from that fact.
 2. He appeals to your head and then directly to your heart.
 3. So here are four reasons why you can quit telling yourself you're too messed up.
- D. I want to make a quick mention here that every time you see the word "if" in this verse, the Greek Grammar tells you that it means "since." There's no question that these things are true; they are true... and since they are true...

IV. Four Reasons

- A. Reason #1: Because your position in Christ is more real than your feelings.
 1. **First, Paul establishes your new position as the objective and defining fact of your identity.**
 - a) **"...since there is encouragement in Christ..."**
 - (1) "In Christ" is your new spiritual address. It is a fact. You are located "in Christ." You are linked to Christ. One with Christ. If anybody's looking for you, they can find you in Christ.
 - (a) You are not "in your mess" you're in Christ.
 - (b) Not "in your failure" but in Christ.
 - (2) The lie of our culture, the lie of your judgmental parents, the lie of the bullies and mean girls tells you that your address is Loser, USA. Your address is poverty. Your address is victim. Your address is misery. Your address is scaredy-cat, nervous Nelly, worry wart, panic disorder.
 - (a) I just want to remind you that on the day you got saved, God has issued a change of address.
 - (b) Your new spiritual address is not "In Your Mess."

- i) It is "In Christ."
- (c) Your new spiritual address is not "In Your Shame."
 - i) It is "In Christ."
- (d) Your new spiritual address is not "In Your Anxiety," "In Your Past," or "In Your Inadequacy."
 - i) It is, and always will be, "In Christ."
- (e) This is not a temporary location.
 - i) This is your permanent home.
- (f) This is not based on your performance.
 - i) This is based on His promise.
- (g) This is not a feeling that comes and goes.
 - i) This is a fact that stands forever.
- (h) So when the mail from your old address shows up—the bills of guilt, the notices of condemnation, the junk mail of shame—you can write across the front in bold letters:
 - i) "RETURN TO SENDER. DOES NOT LIVE HERE ANYMORE."
- (3) Your permanent, unchangeable position is one with Jesus Christ himself.
- (4) This truth doesn't change based on how you feel on Monday morning. It is a solid, objective reality, bought with blood, sealed in resurrection, anchored in heaven.

2. The Subjective Feeling:

- a) But God knows that an objective truth can make you mentally healthy, but you still have emotional damage to undo.
- b) You can have your name on the deed to a mansion and still be running the homelessness programming in your heart.
- c) And so, He doesn't just give you a new truth for your mind, HE guarantees, re-guarantees, and over-guarantees the one force that lets your emotional health catch up to your mental health: that force is love.

B. Reason #2: Because His love tells a better story than your shame.

1. "...since there is comfort from love..."

2. I want you to notice the word-pair Scripture uses here; it's absolutely beautiful.

- a) **In phrase 1:** consolation/encouragement... that's the Greek word *paraklesis*, and it means a rallying cry for war, or a stadium's cheering or victory.
- b) **In phrase 2:** a comfort of love... that's the Greek word *paramythion*.
- c) While *paraklesis* (encouragement) can be a rallying cry to strengthen you for a battle, *paramythion* is the gentle whisper that soothes you after you've been wounded. It's the difference between a coach and a mother.
 - (1) The coach gives you a speech to get you back in the game (*paraklesis*).
 - (2) The mother sits with you, holds you, and tells you a story to ease your pain (*paramythion*).
- d) Looking at how this word was used outside the Bible makes its meaning even clearer. It was consistently used to describe a soft, gentle, and personal form of consolation.
 - (1) In Philosophy (Plato): The philosopher Plato, writing centuries before Paul, used *paramythion* to describe the kind of "soothing words" or "story" one would use to persuade a child to overcome a fear. It's not a logical argument; it's a gentle narrative used to calm an irrational emotion.
 - (2) In History (Josephus): The Jewish historian Josephus, a contemporary of Paul, used *paramythion* to describe the words of consolation offered to mourners at a funeral.
- e) When Paul says you have the "comfort (*paramythion*) of love," he is painting a breathtakingly intimate picture of God.
- f) The lie in your head, the voice of shame, tells you a story about yourself: a story of failure, rejection, and inadequacy. It's a harsh, ugly story that it plays on repeat.
- g) God's response is not to shout at you to stop listening. Instead, He pulls up a chair, sits by your bedside, and gently whispers a better story over you. It is the *paramythion* of His love.
 - (1) It's the story of a Royal Son who left heaven for you.
 - (2) It's the story of a Searching Father who ran to meet you when you were still a long way off.
 - (3) It's the story of a love so strong it conquered death itself.
- h) This is not a lecture. It is a love story, spoken gently to the most wounded parts of your soul. It is God Himself coming alongside you to soothe your shame with the ultimate true story: the story of His love for you in Christ... to tell you again and again and as many times as you need to hear it, that you (just as you are right here right now) are richly blessed, highly favored, and deeply loved.

C. But the lie that you're "too messed up" doesn't just attack your sense of being loved; it also attacks your sense of belonging. It isolates you. It whispers that you are a spiritual freak, all alone in your specific brand of brokenness, an outsider forever looking in.

D. I want to set up the third reason to quit telling yourself you're too messed up. And my set up is a pretty recent discovery from science.

E. The Wonder Under Our Feet

- 1. I want to take you someplace strange, to a place of profound mystery and wonder. Because I think it's one of the best ways to illustrate what Paul is saying here.
- 2. I want to take you deep into the silent, dark soil beneath an established forest.
- 3. For centuries, scientists saw a forest as a collection of individual trees, competing for sun and water.
- 4. But they hadn't yet discovered the real miracle.
- 5. Biologists have recently uncovered a secret, silent, underground conversation in the woods.

6. This network is scientifically called a **mycorrhizal network**, but it's more popularly known by a super-cool nickname: the **"Wood Wide Web."**
7. It is a vast, intricate network of delicate, silver, fungal threads called mycelium.
 - a) A single teaspoon of forest soil contains several miles of these super-fine threads. These threads link every root of every single tree to the root of every other tree and shrub and plant
9. This network is not just there; it is alive with purpose. The trees and the fungi have an incredible relationship, like they've shake hands on a deal.
 - a) The trees create life-giving sugar from the sun and send it down to feed the network.
 - b) In return, the fungal threads go deeper into the soil than the tree roots can and bring back crucial nutrients and water the tree could never reach on its own.
10. But the wonder deepens.
11. Scientists now call the tallest trees "Mother Trees." They generate more nutrients and energy than they can use. So they send their surplus down the trunk, through the roots, and into this network.
12. The finest threads of live deliver that energy and nutrition to nurture tiny, struggling saplings in the shade, keeping them alive.
13. And most amazing of all, if one tree is attacked by a pest, it releases chemical distress signals—a silent scream—into the web. That warning is whispered through the silver threads to its neighbors, who then raise their own defenses before the attack even arrives.
14. A forest is not a collection of individuals. It is a single, interconnected superorganism, alive with a hidden glory.
 - a) Now, let me read the next phrase:
(1) if there is any fellowship of the Spirit,
15. And here is Reason 3:

F. Reason #3: Because His Spirit has connected you to a supernatural, interconnected, cosmos-encompassing network.

1. This is another unshakeable, objective fact of your new life. And it's crucial you understand what Paul means. He is not talking about having a good "team spirit." He is talking about the Holy Spirit.
2. The lie screams, "You're all alone! No one understands you! You're a freak!"
3. But God declares, "That is impossible."
 - a) The moment you received Jesus, the very Spirit of God took up residence inside you.
 - b) And it is the exact same Holy Spirit who lives in every other true believer on earth and in heaven, going all the back to the beginning and all the way forward to the new heavens and new earth.
 - c) You have been supernaturally connected in a shared life, a supernatural partnership called *koinonia*.
 - d) You are not an isolated Christian trying to survive. You are a full participant in the family of God.
 - e) This is a fact that is true even when you feel completely alone.
 - (1) The lie of Satan says you are an outsider looking in.
 - (a) But the Spirit has given you a seat of honor at the family table.
 - (2) The lie of culture says you're different and you don't belong.
 - (a) But the Spirit has made you a citizen of heaven, known, honored, and desired.
 - (3) The lie of high society says the world is a social club and we can kick you out.
 - (a) But the Spirit has birthed you into a shimmering, radiant family and once you're in, you're always in.
 - (4) This is not a temporary alliance.
 - (a) This is an eternal fellowship.
 - i) This is your family.
 - ii) This is your fellowship.
 - iii) This is your *koinonia*.
 - iv) This is the blood bought, grace-given, gift of everlasting life in Christ.
 - (5) And have Jesus, you have this life. You're in it. You're connected. You have this fellowship, this partnership, this connectivity, this supernatural interconnected interdependent reality.
 - (6) That is the objective fact... and then gives us the fourth reason to quit telling yourself you're too messed up:

G. Reason #4: Because your Father's heart is moved to compassion by your mess, not disgusted by it.

1. He might be the only one who feels this way.
2. A family can exist on paper but feel like a warzone in reality.
3. So Paul immediately tells you the emotional texture of your new home: **"...since there is affection and tender mercy..."**
4. Because you are in this family, you get to experience its native language: tenderness. And the Greek words would melt your heart.
5. The word for "affection" is *splanchna*. It literally means your inward parts—your guts.
 - a) It's a feeling in the pit of your stomach.
 - b) It is a feeling in your guts.
 - c) That's how the Father feels toward you. He is not hard hearted toward you in any way, not ever.
6. This is amplified by the word for "mercy," which is *oiktirmoi*. It's a tender-hearted feeling for someone who hurts.
 - a) That's the family, because that's the Father.
7. The lie tells you that God is disgusted by your mess.
 - a) That if He saw the true extent of your failure, He would recoil in horror.

8. But God presents His final exhibit and says, "In my family, we don't recoil from brokenness; we run toward it with gut-level compassion."
 - a) This is the heart of the father in the story of the Prodigal Son. When he saw his boy a long way off, covered in the shame and stench of pig slop, his heart didn't harden with judgment. His guts twisted with love, and he broke into a run.
 - (1) He doesn't just see your sin; He feels your struggle.
 - (2) He is not disgusted by your mess; He is moved by it.
9. And there's not one person in this room squeaky clean enough in your own self to be worthy of the blessing of God.
 - a) We are all the same.
 - b) We are all one.
 - c) We are all charity cases before the throne of heaven... until...
 - d) We step into the family of faith by being saved... that's when you get your crown, your robe, your ring, and your royalty.
10. This is the miracle of grace! Christianity is in a class all by itself. It is not a religion; it is a wonder! It is a miracle! It is a fellowship! It is a world-wide, cosmos wide *koinonia*.
11. This is why Jesus said that he will build his church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.
 - a) The interconnected church is a terror to the forces of darkness!
 - b) It is an assault on the fortress of evil!
 - c) It is a triumph over the strongholds of anxiety and fear and addiction and lust.
 - d) It is a wonder to dazzle the angels!
 - e) It is the power over depression, and hope over self-destruction, and wholeness over immorality, and love over revenge.
12. This is the Church! This is the network. This is the family you can sense it sometimes and if you're saved, you belong to!
13. This is the *koinonia* of the Spirit of the Living God!

V. Conclusion

- A. Why? Why does God go to such lengths to prove this to you? Why this intricate web of fellowship? Why this overwhelming evidence?
- B. Is it just so you can feel a little less messed up?
- C. No. It is so much bigger than that.
- D. God is not just trying to get you out of your lonely room. He is trying to get you onto a throne.**
 1. He wants you to quit telling yourself *you're too messed up*... so you can finally realize that in Christ, you have been given the authority and the power to do some serious messing up to the forces of darkness.
- E. This is the secret that shatters religion and unleashes the heart of God.
- F. Go back one last time to that picture of the Prodigal Son. See him standing there, a long way off, rehearsing his speech, covered in the shame and the stench of pig slop. He is the perfect picture of "too messed up."
 1. And the Father runs.
 2. And what happens in that embrace? Does the Father say, "Okay, go get cleaned up, and then we'll talk about your future"?
 3. No.
- G. In the middle of the mess, while the filth is still clinging to him, the Father shouts, "Bring the best robe! Put a ring on his finger!"
- H. That is the robe of honor. It is the righteousness of Jesus Christ Himself, covering all your shame.
 1. And that ring? That is the symbol of authority.
 - 2. He doesn't just forgive your mess; He replaces it with your destiny.**
 3. He declares you a daughter, a son, with full rights and all authority, because he sees you are you really are, which is in Christ.
- I. The Cross is where this happened for you. Jesus became your mess so that you could wear His glory.
- J. He was humbled so you could be glorified.
- K. You are not just a forgiven mess.
 1. You are a robed, ringed, restored child of the King.
 2. You have authority over the darkness.
 3. You have an intricate interconnection with the whole body of Christ through the life-giving Spirit.
- L. This is why you can step into healthy friendships and life-giving relationships.
 1. This is why you can break generational curses.
 2. This is why you can love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you.
 - a) You are not operating from your own brokenness anymore. You are operating from a new heart and a new mind and a new interconnectedness with God and heaven and the Spirit and the whole family of faith, all interdependent on a new operating system of grace.
- M. You were not saved to stay broken. You were saved to be made whole. And you were made whole to be unleashed as a force for love in a world of hate, confusion, and pain.**
- N. And as if that is not enough... it is this wonder, this mystical, powerful, glorious fellowship, that is the very foundation of the real powerhouse of the Church of the Living God...
- O. But we'll have to save that for next week.