

God Said It, I Believe It, That Settles It?

By Trentell Gordon

Well, good morning Horizons.

Growing up, my mom always kind of gave me like a list of rules to follow, especially when I was going to somebody else's house. And a few of those rules will do's and don'ts. And one of those was Don't break anything, be respectful. And if they offer you food, just eat it. And so that's usually not a problem for me.

I love to eat. And so, at this time in my high school years, I had a girlfriend who invited me over to her house to have dinner with her family and it was great. And I was like, All right, fine. So like, don't break anything, be respectful. And so we were going to have dinner, eat the food, and everything was going great.

It's going perfectly to plan. My mom would be proud and then it came time for dinner and they said, We're having burgers and salad. And I was like, okay, like, I love burgers and salad. Like, this is this can't go wrong. It went wrong. And so they bring out the burgers and I notice raw onions and mustard—the two things I hate and so I was like, okay.

And like, are there other toppings like ketchup? No, nothing. Everyone had the same thing. And I was like, All right, all right. My mom said, I got to eat it, so I'm going to eat it. I'm going to eat it. And I was like, Oh, but they're salad and they bring out the salad, in my opinion, jello and fruit do not go together.

Okay? That's not a salad. I don't care what you say. Fruit and jello don't get together and that's not a salad. I'll die on that hill. But so I have this food in front of me and I'm like, preparing myself and I just start eating for the next hour. I'm, like, choking this stuff down, telling them it's good, it's great.

We're having a grand old time. And this whole time, like, don't throw up, don't throw up, don't throw it. And so in that moment, like, I was like, what do I do? But I was just like, okay, my mom said, I need to do it. That settles it. I just got to eat it. And so finally my mom comes and picks me up and I'm like, Thank you, God.

And I'm and I tell her what happened and she's like, well Trentell, like, you could have said, like, you didn't like it or you were full and need to have to finish it. And I was like, thinks that doesn't help me now like and so but like that moment changed my life literally changed my life. And so when Mackenzie and I started dating in high school, I didn't eat at her parent's house for the first eight months.

And so sitting out of your back there, but like I would sit at the dinner table and I'd talk and they'd be like, Hey, do you want something? I'm like, No, I'm good. And like, it was like tacos and pasta, all the things I love, but I refuse to eat. I would not eat for like the first eight months of us being together.

And I was like, Can't do it, won't do it. But in a weird way, this is kind of like life right there. It's kind of, We live at this crossroads. We live in this gray area and things just aren't black and white. It isn't just do's and don'ts and it's just eat it or not eat it like we are in this area of like, what do we do in this moment?

Right? And if life were black and white, if it were do's and don'ts, then we would have a series called Half Truths. The series would be non-existent. But as we all know, life is hard and it's rough. And I get

students who ask me all the time like, Hey, how am I supposed to live? How am I actually supposed to, like, do this?

And I was like, Well, there's one person to look after, and there's one person, a model whose name is Jesus. And this morning we're going to look at Jesus and we'll look at how he lived and what he said and what he did and how we can model after that. And so reading our scripture today and John, Chapter eight, but before we hop into there, I want to set the scene a little bit.

Jesus loved I don't know if you loved it, but you probably found some enjoyment of it. Like he ruffled a lot of feathers. He made a lot of people mad. He was healing on the Sabbath. He was eating with sinners and the Pharisees. At this point are looking for reasons to kill him, literally kill him. Like that's their goal.

Like their goal is like, how can we find a way to kill this man? And so this brings us to John, Chapter Eight, the woman who is caught in adultery. Jesus returned to the Mount, the Mount of Olives early the next morning. He was back again at the temple. The crowd soon gathered and he sat down and taught them as he was speaking.

The teachers, the religious law, the Pharisees, a.k.a. his Ops, brought a woman who brought who brought a woman, caught in adultery. And they put her in front of the crowd. The teacher said, Teacher. They said to Jesus, this woman was committing adultery. The law of Moses says, We stone her. What do we what do you say? So I think it's fair to say the Pharisees in this moment had a God said it, I believe it.

That settles it moment they found this woman, don't know where the guy is, but they found this woman, brought her and said, Hey, we need to stone her right now, because that's what the law says. And I could just imagine what the disciples were thinking, what the crowd was thinking. Like they were probably like, Oh, man, Jesus has two options.

He can either pick up the closest brick and stoner or he disobey God. Those are the two options. But Jesus being who Jesus is and what we know about Him, we know that He fulfilled the law so he never broke. We knew that he was sinless, so he never disobeyed God. So what does he do? Because everyone else here is like, there's only two options, but that's actually not true.

Let's read on and see what happens. They were trying to trap him. Like I said, they're trying to kill him, so they're trying to trap and see if they can find something use against him. But Jesus stooped down, wrote in the dust with this finger, but they kept on demanding answer. So he stood up and said, All right, let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone.

They stoop down again, wrote in the dust. Then all the accusers heard this. It's slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest. And so Jesus was the only one left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. And Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you? No, Lord.

She said to Jesus. Then Jesus said, Neither do I go and sin no more. I want to point out something here. Jesus demonstrated an act of mercy and grace before he said, Go and say no more. As Christians and as followers of Christ, people who want to be like Jesus, This is what we should be modeling. And when we throw phrases out there like God said it, I believe it.

That settles it. You're only offering condemnation. It's like shame and guilt and shackling them to their sin. That's all that statement offers. But Jesus offered grace and mercy and forgiveness first. And I'm not

saying that in grace and mercy. Is it saying sins? Okay, that's not what grace and mercy is. But grace and mercy offers us a chance to enter a relationship with God that's like none other.

It gives us a chance to obey out of love in grace and forgiveness, then out of fear and shame and worrying that God's going to turn his back on us. That's what grace and mercy offers, and that is the heart of God. You see it play out time and time again throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament that he cares and he loves Jesus said it best in Matthew 22.

You must love your God, your Lord, your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. So with everything you have, you love him with absolutely everything. Every fiber within you says this is the first and greatest commandment, and second is as equally as important. So as much as you love, you are also called to love your neighbor as yourself.

That's challenging for me because as much as I love God, I need to be caring for the others around me. And I'll be honest with you. Church I was extremely nervous preaching this sermon this Sunday. The second I found out what the topic was before I even knew we were doing half truths. Before I knew this is the one I pulled out of the hat like I was nervous and I was scared.

But as pushing into this and digging through it, God was revealing himself to me, revealing His heart, because the statements were heavy. It carries a lot of weight. When I think about this statement, I feel like it's a knockout blow in an argument, and that's not good to use that type of statement in an argument or at all, in my opinion.

And then I was reminded of the grace and mercy that I was given. I remember being my 17-year-old self sitting in my youth pastor's office in tears, confessing that I had been sexually impure with my girlfriend and addicted to pornography and just crying. And my youth pastor had an option. He could have said, Well Trentell, God said it, I believe it.

That settles it. You're wrong and you got to figure it out and you got to stop doing it. And I would have left there in more shame and more guilt and just more shackled to what I was struggling with. But instead, Brian offered me grace and mercy. He looked at me, passed me a box of tissues and said, Oh, you are loved, you are forgiven.

And Jesus died on the cross for you. And there's nothing you can do to separate your love, his love from you. Nothing in my relationship with God is stronger and more vibrant because of that moment. I think about that moment almost daily because that was a turning point. That was a turning point of me knowing and trusting that God will care for me and love me for all my achievements and faults.

And that same thing is true for you this morning. Church: If you have the app, there are a couple of small group questions in there. I love small group questions. I'm a youth pastor, so the things that I have in there are. Where in your life are you quickly cast the first stone? When have you been offered grace and mercy?

And what does that say about our God?

God, thank you so much for who you are—your continuous pursuit of us, your continuous love for us.

God, I pray that as we go out into the world that we can know that and believe that, but also offer that same grace, that same love, and bring the good news that Jesus Christ. In Your Name I pray Amen.