

# UNTOLD BLESSING: THREE PATHS TO HOLINESS

## EPISODE 4

### KNOWING YOU ARE A SINNER: PART II

#### QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12. How does the Servant of God described in Isaiah conquer? How does this contrast with the way in which we normally think of conquest?

Read Ephesians 6:10-18 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. With whom are we truly at war? What is our spiritual armor? How are we to fight?

Read Matthew 5:38-48 and 26:48-54. How does Jesus respond to the threat of violence against Him? How does He teach us to respond? How does this contrast with the way in which the world teaches us to respond?

Read John 8:31-59. When Jesus tells his listeners that they are slaves to sin, some of them declare that this is impossible because of their ethnic heritage, or special knowledge, or pious deeds, or some other reason. Do these people believe they need Savior? What kind of Savior do they want, and what kind of Savior is Jesus? How does this attitude relate to the contemporary view of sin and the need for a Savior?

Read Philippians 2:5-11. How does Jesus live out His life as God Incarnate here on earth? How are we to imitate Him?

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Read Romans 8:38-39. Is it easy or hard to believe that nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ? Why is it easy or hard? How can you embrace more deeply what Paul says here?

Read Hebrews 2:14-15. Have you or has anyone you know lived in bondage to the fear of death? What were the effects of living this way? Have you ever experienced liberation from such bondage or known somebody who has? What were the effects of that liberations?

Have you ever had a "Romans 7 Moment" like St. Paul, where you realized that you are "sold as a slave under sin" and simply have no power to overcome it by yourself? What did you do? Similarly, have you ever had an experience in which you knew yourself to be empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit to overcome sin and begin forming new habits of virtue in imitation of Christ? How did you put that grace into action?

Fr. Barron describes the crucifix as a taunt against powers and principalities of this world. St. Paul underscores this with his mocking remark, "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" The sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). When have you ever experienced the sense that God has really conquered sin and death? Do you struggle with fear of death and intimidation by the powers of sin, death and hell? What do you do to fight on in the struggle?