I. Untangled from Unbelief: The Web
A. Life has countless paths, of course, and sticky webs of all kinds.
   1. The sticky webs of life can catch you off guard.
   2. The sticky webs of life can leave you frantic and feeling helpless.
   3. The sticky webs of life leave you humiliated and ashamed.
B. Which ones (webs) have you tangled up?
C. Proverbs 14:12 (NASB) 12 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.
D. Being tangled in the web of sin does not happen in one day. These choices often start out as “innocent enough” and we make excuses for why we made the decision.
E. These excuses might sound familiar “nothing really happened anyway”. Yet each excuse entangles us more and more. Soon we are stuck.

II. Oh, You Mean That Sin
A. Hebrews 12:1 (NASB) 1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us…
B. What is this sin that so easily entangles?
C. The author of Hebrews does not name a singular or specific sin. Instead the author allows the reader to fill in the blank.
D. Sin is often attractive, it starts off noble and good, and it speaks to something deep in us.
E. When we look closer at the “sin” we see a theme. “When we abandon the place God has for those things (i.e. worth, pleasure or value) we can become enmeshed in an unhealthy attitude toward them.
F. Two words in the Greek New Testament which most closely define sin “hamartema” which means to “miss the mark”. Paul says in Roman 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”. The second Greek word “parabasis” means to overstep a forbidden line (deliberately or accidentally). James 2:11b says…If thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the laws.

III. Bloody Struggle
A. Hebrews 12:4 (NASB) says 4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; Verse 4 warns us that no matter the sin we are prone to commit, we should do everything in our power defeat it. Overcoming what entangles us is worth resisting to the point of shedding our own blood.
B. Being a Christian does not free us from sinning. *1 John 1:8-10 (NASB)* says If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

C. Throwing off the monstrous entanglements is difficult but always worth the sacrifice and struggle.

IV. Apathetic and I Don’t Care
A. Sometimes we find ourselves in a vicious cycle of sin. The more we sin, the less we care. Sin hardens your heart and makes you indifferent to the damage you do to yourself. We call this apathy when you can just shrug off your sin over time.

B. Over time sin makes us proud, it keeps us from asking for forgiveness and destroys our closeness to God

C. David’s sin with Bathsheba left him tangled, in denial and tired.
   1. As Christians we must avoid “hedonism” which is the belief that pleasure is the essence of life and should be achieved at all cost.
   2. *Romans 6:1 (NASB)* What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? Paul shows us that being justified by the free grace of the gospel and holiness are connected.

V. Cutting Free from the Web of Shame
A. Sin is known for its many side effects but the two most prominent is guilt and shame.

B. Guilt keeps you from moving but shame tells you this is your destiny; you are stuck.

C. Self-condemnation is powerful and always points to the conclusion that we should give up

D. It is like an invisible chain, a bad reel of highlights or mental quicksand.

VI. The Wall of Sin
A. Sin separates us from God, and then blames God for the separation. It builds a wall that cuts us off and then blames God for the wall.

B. We often try to 1) ignore the sin, 2) pretend everything is okay or 3) blame God for creating the desire or placing us in the situation.

C. Hebrews explains to us that once there was a religious system God set up for helping us to deal with sin but the system fell short. *Hebrews 10:3-4 (NASB)* But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

D. The sacrifices created a sin-and-sacrifice cycle. But sacrifices were only meant to teach us that sin can’t be avoided. We all sin.

E. Jesus did what the law could not do: He gave himself as an offering on our behalf, to make things right with God. His one sacrifice for all time broke the cycle.
   1. There was only one who could serve as a final sacrifice. Seeking in salvation in anything other than Jesus Christ is false hope and worthless.
   2. Examples of false hope include hope in: *Education* (II Timothy 3:7); *Good works* (Ephesians 2:8-9); *Baptism* (I Cor. 1:17); or *Keeping the Law* (Galatians 2:16)
3. **Hebrews 10:22 (NIV2011)** says let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

4. When Jesus Christ cleanses us we stay clean. No more cycles.

VII. **The Great Untangler**

A. Jesus untangles... How does He do it?

B. Paul said in **Romans 3:23-24 (NIV2011)** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

   1. Sin is universal. Throughout the Bible we see confessions of sin. (David, the Prodigal Son)
   
   2. We were disqualified at birth. Adam’s fall opened the door to sin and every human being is polluted with sin and the guilt and punishment that comes with it.

C. Imputation is the act of one person adding something good or bad to another person’s account.

   1. Adam added sin to humanity’s account. But Jesus added (imputed) righteousness to our account.
   
   2. Not only are we justified, we are forgiven and then righteousness is applied to our account.

D. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of His blood, to be received by faith.

E. God didn’t ignore sin. Instead He took all of humanity’s entire sin debt and paid that debt with the ultimate sacrifice—all the perfection and purity of the Son of God.

F. Christ righteousness was imputed to the worst sinner imaginable—if we accept the gift through faith.

VIII. **The Sin of Unbelief**

A. A central theme of the book of Hebrews is faith, so it is reasonable to conclude the sin the author is referring to is that of **unbelief.** The phrase "by faith" (or "through faith") is used twenty-one times in Hebrews 11, indicating that it is faith in Christ that enables us to endure.

B. Every sin we commit is rooted in “unbelief” because it is the opposite of faith

C. **Hebrews 11:1 (NIV2011)** Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

D. The Hebrew author said this to believers who had left the law of Moses to embrace faith in Christ and were suffering greatly for their faith. The writer of Hebrews urged them to keep living by faith and shows them that living by faith had been the way of life for the great saints.

E. If we want to be untangled from sin we must have faith in God’s ability to take care of us.

F. We all struggle with something. Greed, selfishness, hatred, or bitterness, pride just to name a few things.

G. These things are not our identity, we are not what we have done. When God looks upon you He sees Christ. He sees purity, righteousness and infinite possibility. You don’t have to be caught in a web.

H. Jesus, the great untangler came to set you free! You have been set free from the weight of sin and shame. There’s only question “**Do you believe it?**”