

A Deal with the Devil—When Truth is Compromised

by Shane Idleman

This sermon delves into the importance of being prepared for Jesus' return by exploring different views on the Antichrist and the number of the beast. It emphasizes the need to focus on evangelism and readiness for the return of Christ, rather than worrying about the specific details of end-time events. The speaker discusses the dangers of compromising the truth and the significance of standing firm in the Gospel without watering it down.

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Description

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Transcript

Antichrist, the number of the beast. And I want to just educate all of us on the different views. And my view is always to be prepared, because we want to be prepared for Jesus' return.

When it's coming, how it's coming, how it's going to unfold. I think sometimes we worry about these things that we can't really change, but what we can do is we can evangelize and have the church ready. And as you've heard me say many times, the one concern I have with always focusing on the rapture is what about if we have to go through difficulty? And we think we're out of here when we might see some tribulation.

And so, I'm going to teach on all those different views. I don't hold to one view per se, because great men of God are divided on that. You've heard me, I did the podcast with theologian Sam Storms.

And he's all millennial. I'm going to do a podcast in June with Dr. Michael Brown, who is what they call the raptures after the tribulation. And then there's of course, the rapture view before the tribulation.

They all have great points. And I'm just a simple country preacher, so I'm not going to get dogmatic on exactly how it's going to work with Daniel and Ezekiel 38, and then the number of the beasts, and then the one world system, and then if you take these 70 weeks, but one week hasn't been fulfilled yet, and then in the middle, the Antichrist is going to come and make a peace treaty and divide that. It's like, wow, there's a lot of pieces to this puzzle.

So what do you believe? I believe, are you ready? Are you ready? Let's not worry about how it's going to unfold, but let's worry about what Jesus wants us to worry about. Do business until He returns. So the title is A Deal with the Devil When Truth is Compromised.

A Deal with the Devil When Truth is Compromised. And a lot of people don't realize, especially Christians, you don't have to fully go apostate to be on the devil's side. All you have to do is water down the truth.

Compromise the truth. And the truth, as I've taught many times before, is not flexible. You can't really bend it.

You can't distort it. You can't, hey, why don't you take this, I take this, and let's come and kind of meet in the middle. No, truth stands as a lighthouse.

It's a beacon of light pointing us in the right direction. And I've been holding back for a few years, I think, and I want to tell you one of my favorite stories. The first service didn't hear it, so this is special.

I just thought of it, actually. I think my mom told me this when I just came back to the Lord on this topic of truth. And it's that story of this massive, massive battleship the U.S. Navy had up by Alaska.

They were doing deep water exercises. Midnight, it was dark out. And there was a light coming at them like another boat, you know, kind of challenging them.

And hey, we're a warship, you better not play around. And the Navy actually has rules of engagement. I don't know how much you've studied that, but they can't let anything get too close or else it's going to have to disappear.

And so there was a warning went out. And the ship sent out this warning to this vessel coming and said, hey, turn 10 degrees, starboard, or whatever it is, you sailors might know, turn 10 degrees. And the message came back and said, no, you turn 10 degrees.

And the captain said, okay, signal back. I'm the highest ranking officer in the United States Navy, and if you don't turn course 10 degrees, we're going to have to take a different course of action. And the signal came back, no, you need to turn 10 degrees.

We're going to have to blow this ship out of the water. Set the guns and get ready. And he said, we're a battleship.

And if you don't turn 10 degrees, we're going to have to fire on you. And the signal came back, sir, with all due respect, we are a lighthouse. You need to change your course.

But guys, the lighthouse is there, it can't change. Truth can't change. Truth changes us.

We don't change truth. So the church comes in and they want to be likable. They want more likes and followers.

We want to reach the unsaved, and so do we. But God has a way of doing it. It does not involve compromise.

We begin to compromise the Gospel, compromise the truth. It actually, the best way to take away the power of the Gospel is to dumb it down. Because the power of the Gospel comes from all its fullness.

You can't compromise. There was a church, I remember, before we planted this church, and one of the reasons we planted this church, and think of all the things, and I knew this pastor, and they told the worship team, and I double checked, and it just blew my mind. He said, listen, we need to go through our worship lyrics and take out all the songs about the blood of Jesus.

It's too controversial. I'm like, what songs are those? Can we add them? I mean, see, compromise, when it gets in the heart, it's deceptive. It's a deal with the devil.

Because the enemy knows, when you proclaim the truth, that's where lives are changed. But if you can dumb it down, it loses its power. And it is offensive.

We don't have to apologize for the offense of the Gospel. Oswald Chambers in his devotional said, the message of Jesus hurts and it offends, until there's nothing left to hurt and to offend. Isn't that great? It breaks you down to your lowest common denominator, and then God can build you back up.

I wasn't good at math, but I remember that. Break it down to its lowest common denominator, and then build it back up. And direction matters.

Direction matters. The direction we are going matters. From freeways, and roads, and to reaching a destination.

Could it be that God is wanting to get you back on the right path? The direction matters that you're on. And God often doesn't move until we move. We're waiting on God, but could it be that He is waiting on you? Lord, I want to get out of this compromise.

I don't want to have a deal with the devil. Lord, take this from me. We pray, take this from me.

And God often will, but sometimes it requires repentance, and humility, and brokenness. And God's seeing our heart too before He moves on His side. So we are in Revelation.

Revelation 2, Jesus is speaking to the churches. Verse 12, and He said to this church, and to the angel of the church in Pergamos, I write these things. And He often identifies Himself.

Jesus identifies Himself as the Alpha, the Omega, the One who was resurrected. He told another church, but this church, He said, by the way, I'm the one with the sharp, two-edged sword. And that would be like today our equivalent to the deadliest type of military weapon was that double-edged sword, sharp on both sides.

And the whole point was to kill the enemy. And we have to remember that Jesus, I love what A.W. Tozer said, oh, I love Him because He is my Savior. But I fear Him because He is my judge.

This view of Jesus as just this kind of carefree, grace-giving person, just live however you want, is not biblical. Yes, we love grace and mercy. Thank God for it.

But we also have to remember that He's not returning as a lamb. He's returning as a lion from the tribe of Judah. John says He saw heaven open.

We're gonna read in chapter 20, I believe, He saw heaven open. And out of heaven He saw, here comes Christ. Here He comes with the angels of the armies of heaven, actually.

And on His head were many crowns, and His eyes were like flames of fire. And out of His mouth goes a sword that He will strike the nations. And He will rule those nations with a rod of iron.

And He will tread the winepress and the fierceness and the wrath of Almighty God. You don't hear about that Jesus too often, do you? But that's a great balance. Lord, I love You because You're my Savior.

You're gracious and You're loving and You're enduring. Thank You for that. But I also have reverence and respect for You.

And because I do, I'm not gonna have sloppy agape and weak grace and just take advantage of Your grace. I'm gonna follow You even more and not compromise the Gospel. Not compromise by how I live.

Now let me encourage you, nobody's ever mastered this topic perfectly. If you never compromise, if you haven't compromised all month, I would love to talk to you. I will be in the prayer room after the service and let me know how you master that one.

Be careful, I might point out some pride. And He said, I'm the one speaking. I'm the sharp, two-edged sword.

And Jesus is full of grace, but He's also full of truth, is He not? Remember, John, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. The Word was God. And we beheld the only glory of the Father, full of grace and truth.

That's who He is. That incredible balance. I love what Leonard Ravenhill said.

I could have wrote this quote myself. He said this, many pastors, many pastors criticize me for taking the Gospel so seriously. But do they really think that on judgment day, Christ will chastise me saying, Leonard, you took me too seriously.

Now, we can get arrogant and bombastic and angry. You know, that's where that term Bible thumping or pulpit pounding comes from. But I don't think God's going to ever say, Shane, you're a little too zealous.

You know, you back it down a little bit. You're a little too passionate for the truth. You know, you should have just kind of backed off a little bit, been more seeker sensitive, been more user friendly.

And how it works, God has different callings in our lives. God calls some people, He calls with that message that pierces the heart. Others, He gives the call that has the balm of Gilead.

And when they just speak, it's smooth and it rebuilds and it heals the heart. And others, they've got incredible teaching skills. Me and Avery were just talking about this.

Tony Evans, we hear on the radio, I'm like, that guy, I mean, teaching wise is one of the best I've ever heard. I mean, just the amount of knowledge. And then sometimes we compare, I wish I could teach like that.

Shane, I didn't call you to be a teacher. I called you to be a preacher. To convict, and of course, in preaching you teach.

I mean, don't get me wrong. But there's different giftings and different callings. What is the goal? What is the purpose? Why have I created you? And you walk in that calling and in that gifting.

And verse 13, Jesus says, I know your works. I know your works where you dwell, near Hollywood. It's funny, when I was in Texas or wherever, people are like, you live in Los Angeles County? Like, how is that possible? Like, I'm not of it.

I mean, like, they don't understand. You know, there's some separation there and you don't have to concede to all of that. They just can't, mention California in another state.

Man, don't go into Idaho or Texas with California plates on, let me tell you. They will drive you out. I know your works and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is.

Where Satan's throne is. In this area, they would worship Zeus. They were worshipping Zeus.

And last week, we talked about the synagogue of Satan. Now we're talking about the throne of Satan. And commentaries are divided on it.

And that's all a commentary is, really somebody's opinion. But I believe that the synagogue of Satan has to do with the religious system. And the throne of Satan has to do with the political system.

I didn't read that anywhere. It's just my own thoughts. And I have thoughts for that, because you see, last church, he was working in the religious system.

The synagogue of Satan, the Jews who were against the church. And now we're living in a city with the throne of Satan, the political system. And let me tell you, the enemy wants both of those areas of influence.

Those people say the church needs to stay out of politics. You need to rethink what you're saying. Now, we don't get political and endorsed.

We're not called to be a political movement. But we are called to be a spiritual influence. And so you see all these things that are happening in our nation that are mind-blowing.

Like, how is this even legal? Like, this didn't even enter my mind 20 years ago. How is it happening? Elections have ramifications. They have consequences.

And God's Word technically should govern a group of people. God designed the government for that very reason, to be a sword to those who do evil. Actually, Romans 13 says, if you do evil, be afraid, for the government officials do not bear the sword in vain.

And so that's God's way of administering justice. Now, of course, is it messed up? Absolutely. But the enemy wants that area of influence, and he wants the church to be impotent and powerless.

Can you imagine the church of the living God doing nothing? But I remember a large denomination said like 80% of their churches in one year turned in records where they didn't lead anybody to the Lord in a year. Or no baptisms. And it's like the frozen chosen.

It's like a cemetery. And we can all go there, right? You go to church a couple times a month. You check it off.

Nothing changes. Go to the store. Go run errands all week long.

And nothing changes. You do nothing for God. I've been there.

I can fall. I'm preaching it myself here. You know this church, we're never pointing fingers because there's always a lot pointing back at me.

Right? I'm pointing at you. Got a lot pointing back at me. We can all fall prey to this because of compromise.

Because of compromise. And that's where we get the phrase from this is in the world but not of it. Have you heard of that? So we can't, as much as we'd like to go live in a monastery somewhere and avoid all this wickedness, we're called to be in the world, but not of the world.

In other words, we live here. This is where we're at. I don't know, God might have me until the day I die in this area.

In some of you. Close to Hollywood, yes. In California, yes.

In it, but not of it. So here's the test. In some way, are you affecting the world? Or is the world infecting you? Love not the world, the cosmos, the world's way of thinking, the mindset of the world, nor the things in the world in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life is not of the father, it's of the enemy.

So yes, we live in the world, we have houses, vehicles, but we're not of it. In other words, you're gonna look a little bit different than your neighbor who's up all night playing loud music. Or who's getting toasted and drunk and high and watching these things.

You live with them and you minister to them, but you're not of them. Does that make sense? So God put Paul in some very difficult situations. He was there, in it, but not of it.

And that really is the difference. We are called to be in all these different areas of influence and live in certain geographical areas that are difficult. As much as I would like to live in Montana by where they filmed a River Runs Through It on those two big rivers of means, it's not gonna happen.

I'm here and I have to be in it, but not of it. It can't influence me. Now, nobody's perfect, so from time to time, a little bit of that water will come in from the world, and what do you have to do? Take a spiritual shower.

Clean that stuff out of your heart. And I remember I shared this with you last year, I think, that little poem, it says, all the water in the world, no matter how hard it tries, will never sink a ship unless it gets inside. All the evil in the world, no matter how hard it tries, will never sink your soul unless it gets inside.

See, it's not that it gets inside, although that's bad, it's what we do with it when it's there. Do we quickly repent and get back on track and humble ourselves? See, sin can't grow when it's brought to the light. It's those dark, hidden recesses of our heart when we don't repent.

I got this, God. I kind of like this little sin. Do I have to let this one go? I cuddle it.

It's my little pet sin. Have you ever heard that? Oh man, if I had \$10 for every time I heard this in the last 12 years in the prayer room. Pastor, I know, but it's my one little vice.

I know, I know, but it's my one little vice. Man, you should see where that little vice takes him in a year. We've got to deal with this sin issue.

And I mentioned right when I opened the service, I think it's kind of ironic, I want to tell everyone here too, it's kind of funny, but you guys see Alex up here up front, right? He's got his camera on. And six months, eight months ago, he goes, hey, Pastor, if I start a Westside Christian Fellowship page on TikTok and we get a thousand followers, can I do a live stream? I'm like, yeah, okay, sure. Like, that's not going to happen.

Well, guess what? So, I'll never forget that email. Hey, we have over a thousand followers. When can I start live streaming? I'm like, oh, okay, well.

But that's incredible, thank you. I mean, reaching that area of TikTok and we hear from people on TikTok watching the videos and being changed and stuff. It's really encouraging on that.

So again, my point was in the world, but not of it. And then I mean, I even had people when we started that TikTok, like, wow, why are you doing that? That's an evil platform. China's watching you.

I'm like, well, hopefully China is watching. I mean, you know. I did download the app a long time ago and it lasted about two days.

I'm like, this stuff is just junk for personal stuff, but for ministry, I think it's important to reach those dark areas however we can. Be in all areas, all areas. And he said, and he goes on, and you hold fast to my name.

You are a church that holds fast to my name and you did not deny my faith even in the days of which Antipas, my faithful servant, was martyred. We don't know about that much today, but back then, they saw it. Did you know people would be killed because of their faith in Jesus? I get a little worried sometimes.

I don't think people understand what this relationship can cost us. We've got connections. I've talked about it before in the underground church in China.

We've got a lot of thousands of Bibles we paid to get into there. And I'm gonna have Victor Marks on my podcast hopefully in a few months and what he talks about is going on in the Middle East. And here's what blows my mind.

When they come to faith in Christ, they know this could cost them their life. And they'll parallel that to people get upset when they can't get a parking spot. Like, Lord, are we ready? Man, help us.

You want to be encouraged in this era, read Fox's Book of Martyrs. Just not before you go to bed. But for the first, probably since Constantine, the first 300 years of church history was massive persecution.

Massive persecution. Throwing their little babies to the animals if they didn't deny Jesus. Lighting them.

I think it was one of the Roman officials would light the Christians on fire to light up his roadways. It was terrible, but they understand there is a cost. There is a cost.

And you hold fast. You do hold fast. And they killed Antipas right there where Satan dwells.

It's a great reminder for us this morning. Faith that is not tested cannot be trusted. Are anybody going through anything? Just me? My family? Yes.

Well, guess what? That can be a good thing. Faith that has not been tested cannot be trusted. Faith, the way you grow in faith is you're challenged by things.

You go through difficult things. And that's how your faith grows. And you become stronger.

And they saw someone killed in front of them for their faith. They held to the faith. And so if you're here this morning and you're barely holding on, make sure it's to the hymn of His garment.

Amen. Anybody barely holding on this morning? Oh, come on, let's be honest. Balcony.

Alright. Barely holding on, grab on to the hymn of His garment. He will never leave you.

He will never forsake you. Jesus will lift you up. He will pull you out of the miry clay.

He will set you back up on solid ground. But sometimes we have to go through that storm. Often He doesn't take us around the storm.

He takes us through the storm. So we can understand with the writer of the Bibles when they say, though the waters may come up, I will not drown for the Lord holds me. Though I walk through the fires, I will not be scorched.

I will not be burned because the Lord Himself will guide me. He will guide me. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because the Lord is on my side.

He is my helper. He is my shelter. He is my soon coming King.

He is my Redeemer. He is my Sabbath rest. When I get into Christ, I rest for my labors.

He is that strong tower. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

Thank God for Christ. Strengthen the faith. So those that go through challenges, their faith is strengthened.

They come out and they feel the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. Faith that is not tested cannot be trusted. Thank You, Lord.

I hope this is okay to tell you guys this. Ten days ago, I'm at my doctor's office. I'm about ready to leave.

And I just said, the door's locked. And this lady, I see her and she's crying. And she goes, oh, I recognize your voice.

I listened to you on the radio. I'm like, oh, and I'm praying for her and her husband has stage four cancer. And so she asked if I would go to the hospital and I just went over within an hour and met her and Ashley

and went there four times and just found out he passed on Tuesday.

Had the privilege of doing the memorial that's coming up. But they're always, thank you for coming. I'm like, thank you.

John has strengthened my faith so much. Strengthened my faith to go and just, the faith, see, faith is contagious, is it not? Faith is contagious. Contagious.

When you see the strength of someone's faith and they say, you can get through this and now my faith is encouraged and sometimes we don't like what we're seeing, but out of that comes a strong sense of God and His sovereignty. Faith is contagious. Parents, give that faith to your children.

Don't let them see you cowering down and what's happening? The central currency and the cryptocurrency. Here comes Russia and here comes China and Biden can't even tie his shoes. Oh gosh, and the kids see you.

The kids see you. Look at my parents. No, you've got to share them that faith.

And you've got to say, come hell or high water, we will not walk away from God. Even if it means not things going our way, we will follow God and God alone. So, and thank you guys so much for introducing me to your family and John.

They were living in an area of tremendous resistance. They said here, where Satan dwells. And I looked at different spots and no one really, I mean, there's different views, but obviously it was a place, it was, I would say, demonic, where Satan dwells.

And you can tell there's a difference from, you know, Atmosphere Matters. You know, just after you leave here, drive down to Sunset and walk it and you tell me if atmosphere doesn't matter. It matters big time.

There's a place where Satan dwells. I remember many years ago, I don't think we were even up here before, and this lady came to me, I knew fairly well, and she said, my brother, he's really sick and can you go visit him in North Hollywood? And he's a gay model. And I'm like, absolutely.

So we went down there, a couple of us, and just went into the apartment. I mean, I was like, you can tell when there's demonic presence there. I mean, the smell, the darkness, the damp, these things.

And long story short, it was a great conversation. Left him one of my books and he passed away a couple months later. I was surprised, I mean, he was 35 and a male model, and he's gone.

But I heard from his grandma that he was passing around the book and talking about it, and God was changing his heart and changing his life. Ended up doing his memorial. Actually, it was right here, I remember now, we just moved in the building, I think.

But I'll never forget that presence in that area. And coming into this, there's something about where Satan dwells. Maybe some of you need to walk into your kids' rooms and pray over them.

I do get this question, should I anoint oil over their doors? I mean, there's nothing, why not? Why not? The elders actually call to have the oil representing the Holy Spirit and asking the Holy Spirit's help and we're to pray for the sick with the oil. Why not? I'd rather err on the side of Lord. I'm a little too, I just need you to move.

I'm not gonna put little fingerprints. I'm gonna pour the whole, I'm gonna get it on their carpet. I'm gonna get it on their walls.

Lord, I want the power and the Holy Spirit to come into this place. Lord, change my church. Do you know you have the authority to take dominion over the demonic realm? Do you know that? He that's in you is greater than he that's in the world.

Jesus said, I give you the power to cast out the demonic realm, to take authority. Now, I know some churches get really weird and crazy, but it's still biblical. Just because they ruin it, doesn't mean you have to.

Satan's gonna come and cause havoc in my home. And I'm just gonna, oh, it's Satan. I don't know what to do.

Come on, grow a backbone, get into the word of God. Put on worship and begin to take authority in your home and say, devil, you will not have my child. Your lives are from the pit of hell.

I claim victory over this child. God, give me a heart of brokenness and surrender. Oh God, I might even, hold on.

Hold on. You wanna take this up a notch? Don't eat for the day. Oh, that's when the rubber meets the road.

Because your flesh starts negotiating. Come on, a little won't hurt. I won't get into that.

You've got my teachings on fasting. But it's hard, isn't it? Man, contending is hard. I planned on fasting this morning.

And somehow, the guys come up to me and go, hey, from the men's breakfast yesterday, do you know there's still... What? Why do you guys tell me this? Last night, they told me, hey, there's 20 breakfast burritos still in the refrigerator and a dozen donuts we had left. Like, why plant that seed in my mind? Do you know what I've wanted since four this morning? Holy smokes. You don't realize how strong the flesh is until you tell it no.

I'm not gonna tell you what happened. It's embarrassing. And then Laina made these yellow lemon square puddings and leave them on the desk in there.

Man. Thank God He doesn't ask for perfection. You know what He asks for? Direction.

What direction are you going? I'm not even halfway through the sermon, so let's get going. But I have a few things against you. So He built them up.

By the way, He does a great sandwich approach. It's what we teach in business. You build someone up, man, you're doing great, but you need to start showing up on time.

I got a paper trail that's about this thick and then you build them back up again. Sandwich approach. So employers know that for your employees.

But He said, I do have a few things against you and it does beg the question this morning. Are you open for constructive feedback from God? Are you open this morning? Let Him show you what's in your heart.

And He says, because, here's what I have against you.

You have there those in your midst who hold to the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. So the doctrine of Balaam, that could be a whole sermon on its own and if I don't get through it all, listen to the first service, because I spent a lot of time on this point. But the doctrine of Balaam, this has helped me a lot over the years.

The doctrine of Balaam basically is this. Balak, King Balak sees millions of Jews down in this valley and they're coming. They crossed the Red Sea.

They defeated kings. They're coming for them. And he said, okay, he's worried.

He said, go hire Balaam to come curse these children of Israel. And so Balaam was hired. He came and instead of cursing them, he blessed them.

And the king is thrown a fit. What are you doing? I'm gonna pay you to curse them. And he goes, I can't curse them.

My word cannot go beyond what God wants me to say. Nothing I can do. So here's the doctrine of Balaam.

You cannot curse what God has blessed. Oh, you guys get a little more excited over that one. You, the enemy I mean, cannot curse what God has blessed.

There's a blessing. There's a blessing in going to church. There's a blessing in your home environment.

What God has blessed, God says, when God says, I want you to go and conquer the promised land, I'm calling you to do that. You're blessed. You've got my, I've got your back.

There's nothing the enemy can do. You cannot curse what God has blessed. However, uh-oh, here we go.

So, Balak says, is there anything we can do? And Balaam, the false prophet, said, you know what? There is something we can do. The children of Israel are in this blessed place, right? Picture God's covering like an umbrella. What you can do is have them curse themselves.

Have them remove themselves from under God's protection and blessing. And that's what sin does, right? Takes you farther than you want to go. Costs you more than you want to pay.

And keeps you longer than you want to stay. So the enemy cannot really touch you. Can't undo what God has blessed, but if he gets you away from, what's that game, Patty Cake? Remember when you were little? Or am I dating myself? You know, draw you back away from God.

See, it wasn't that bad. See, it wasn't that bad. Come on.

And he's removing. Let's just go in here. Come on, it's not that bad.

And that's the doctrine of Baal. He can't do anything unless he entices them to curse themselves. Isn't that so true? When we compromise and we remove ourselves from that shelter of protection and blessing, that's where we become easy prey for the enemy.

So he basically said go ahead and get thousands of beautiful Moabites. Send them down there. And have them lead the men astray.

Sexual immorality. And also, even though we don't have meat sacrifice to idols, basically what it represents today is what they would do is they would say, hey, look, we're sacrificing say the Molech or Ashtoth or Baal. And we just sacrifice this oxen.

And they would drink the blood in many cases. They believed the meat would become a part of them. The animalistic nature.

And they partook of this. And come on, children of Israel, look. This is good.

Grass-fed. In the smoker for six hours. My father-in-law just smoked for like six hours.

Man, it just pulls off the bone. Man. So I had this in sight, right? No, so they entice them.

So it's not just eating meat or something. They're saying, they're basically complicit. They're agreeing with what they're doing.

And instead of following Yahweh and coming out from among them being different, we don't do that. They were led in to participate. And so the enemy does the same thing today.

A lot of times by what we view and listen to, our idolatry is following something more than God. It becomes an idol. Like I have to have this vehicle.

And I'm working hard for this house. And all my energy is going to do this. We don't necessarily have little six-inch statues anymore.

What we have now is 50-inch entertainment centers. Now, in and of itself, right? You know, that can be neutral. But there are things that capture our heart and captivate us and take us away from God.

Why are these big organizations trying to target kids with the sexualization of changing genders and different things? It's demonic. It's hellish. And pictures of DragCon down in LA a few weeks ago and people are taking their little kids there.

I about threw up. Why aren't those kids taken away for child abuse? Don't clap too much. I've already been in YouTube jail.

Does TikTok have TikTok jail? All right. We might be in that one too. But isn't it true? We've got to start speaking the truth in love.

And not compromising. Somebody sent me a video of a Christian pastor, fairly well-known, now three people have sent it to me, where he thinks we need to, those who want to use pronouns, we should use their pronouns and respect them and appreciate them and cherish them and show love to our neighbor and call them him, he, whatever they want. And I understand the heart behind it, but that to me is lying.

No, linguistically, them means a group of people. So I can't even call you them. You're a boy based on how God designed you.

And see, if we bring the truth back in there, yes, it's gonna hurt feelings. It's gonna offend. But remember, the truth offends, but your attitude shouldn't.

Say, I love you, man. Let me tell you the truth. But compromising, we want to reach the world so much that we water down the gospel to where it really loses its power.

Because Jesus then becomes a genie in a bottle. Or God, I love this one. God is a cosmic ball of love.

He's just a cosmic ball of love and loves everyone. Everyone will see God someday. Everyone will see God someday, but a lot of them will be told, depart from Me, I don't know you.

And all I see is the love and caring and grace of God, but people reject Him. And so He said, because you have there those, you have there those who are teaching false doctrine, and you do nothing. You're doing nothing.

And it's a good reminder for us as a church, unity for the sake of unity is not unity. Biblical unity is never like, hey, let's just all get along. The church down the street, you know, that's a whole different belief system.

Let's just be united, man. Let's get together. That's not unity.

That's actually called ecumenicalism. Very unhealthy. That's Satan's idea.

Biblical unity is we all come together, united in what? The faith, the truth of God's Word. Then we can all be united. So somebody comes in and they're bringing destructive doctrine.

I've got to call you out. Say we can't allow that. We've got a responsibility to the shepherd, as under-shepherds.

And so fighting for unity, here's the key, fighting for unity sometimes causes division. Paul in Corinthians, he told the church in Corinthians, he says, I hear that there's division among you. He said, but there must be.

Because those who are doing what is right will be approved. And those who are doing what is wrong will be pointed out. So in a healthy, living, vibrant church, there's a lot of junk going on, right? The devil's coming in.

He's bringing some of his minions. Fiery darts are coming in. People with ungodly agendas, ulterior motives.

Anybody having bad days? It's hard to come to church and have a bad day. Here comes your mood. You fly off the handle.

You text you shouldn't text. And the explosives. It's a very hard atmosphere to steward.

But we have to remember that unity is unity for the truth. And then he goes on to say, some of you hold to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. I went into that a few weeks back.

Nobody knows exactly what it is, but I just know that Jesus hates it. So I hate it too. He said, repent, repent.

This is interesting. He told the other churches, repent or I will remove your lampstand, your influence, basically maybe close down your church. But he said, repent or else I will come to you quickly and I will actually fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

God says, if you don't deal with it, I love my church so much that I'll deal with it. And I've seen that over the years. It's embarrassing.

Pastor Abram, we can probably tell you a few incidents where like, we're not gonna deal with it and then God will deal with it. God will deal with it. Because in our pursuit of wanting to just love and be gracious, sometimes we can maybe not stand up for the things we need to stand up for.

But then on the flip side, you don't want to be a rigid Pharisee, you know, sin sniffing church. Want me to go back into sin sniffing mode again for you? Right? Let me check, let me check who's sinning out there today. Did you go to the movies last night? Did you have a beer last night, just one? Two? The whole bottle? You, how dare you? I saw you smoking in the parking lot.

You throw that nicotine demon to the curb, right? But they're so controlling that that's not healthy either. There's gotta be a freedom, but also a yearning to want the truth of God's Word. And so Jesus said, I will come and deal with it.

I will come and deal with it. And then He goes on to say, whoever has an ear to hear. Verse 17, if you have an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

In other words, Jesus says, wake up. Not a physical ear, a spiritual ear. Hear what I'm saying to you.

Wake up, church, awake and rise. Get on your face again before Almighty God. Seek Him like never before.

Let the Spirit of God come and consume you. He's a consuming fire. Let Him burn for the love of God.

He is a consuming fire. Let Him burn your heart. And then when you're on fire, you set your family on fire.

You see, that's how it works. John Wesley used to tell his pastors, you light yourself on fire with the Holy Spirit and watch the pews burn. People come and watch the pulpit on fire to catch the fire of the Spirit.

And if you overcome, I will give you the hidden manna to eat. Basically, Christ is often referred to as the manna. And I will give you the white stone, which has to do with acquittal.

You've been acquitted. You've been set free by the glorious blood of Jesus Christ. And again, He who has an ear to hear, let Him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Lord, what are You saying to us this morning? Lord, what are You saying to us this morning? To some, He might be saying, repent, repent and return to Me. Repent and return. You've drifted too long.

You've been lukewarm too long. Come back and experience the fire of God, the love of God. Some of you need that passion rekindled.

Maybe some of you don't even know Him. Some of you don't even know Him. As the Scriptures say, out of His belly will flow rivers of living water.

I can preach it and never experience it. It's only when the living water comes into your heart and changes you and transfers you into this area of darkness, now you're into the area of light and God's Word is crystal clear. Repent and believe in the Gospel, not in your good works.

Not because you go to a Christian school or you live in a Christian nation or you've been going to church all your life. I run into people all the time. Oh, pastor, I've been going to church all of my life.

What does that have to do with anything? So the Pharisees and they were all on the highway to hell. They were all on the broad road to destruction. From Joel, seek the Lord.

Seek the Lord, all you the meek of the earth who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility and it may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger. Seek the Lord while He may be found.

And some of you, I don't know if you received the article I just released. The title is They Will Fight for Your Children, Will You? They Will Fight for Your Children, Will You? And it's a good reminder last night that if you fell in prayer, you fell everywhere. If we fell in prayer, we fell everywhere.

So wherever this message hit your heart, if there's an area that needs to be repented of, if there's an area you need a prayer, if there's a stronghold, a demonic stronghold where you just can't stop thinking about the enemy has you, either come to this altar or come to the prayer room. Remember, God might not move until you move. You ever wonder how many times we sit in the pew and go, yeah, I gotta work on that.

Yep, gotta work on that. We've been saying that for years. Could it be that working on that means repenting? And going forward or coming to the prayer room? God often doesn't move until we move.

And of course, as always, I don't know where your heart's at this morning, but Jesus said he who believes on Him shall never, what, perish. He who believes on Him shall never perish. A deal with the devil.

If you don't know Jesus, you don't have the relationship, you've already made a deal with the devil. You need to break that commitment. You need to break that contract and repent and believe in Jesus and say, God, I need you this morning.

I'm not gonna follow my parents' coattails. You know what that means? Ride my parents' coattails into heaven. I'm not gonna just count on being a good person.

If I hear that again, I'm gonna lose my mind. Man. Hey, hey, brother, I'm okay, I'm a good person.

Like, when you get to heaven, you're gonna show God all your good. You're not even gonna have the opportunity. Did you know that? And you're not, at the judgment seat, you're not gonna have the opportunity to, oh, look at all this good stuff.

It'll say, by then it's too late. It's either well done, thy good and faithful servant, or depart from me, I never knew you. But, but, but, but, it doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter. I don't know you. I don't know you.

Harden not your heart. When you hear his voice, harden not your heart. You will not be able to negotiate God.

There is no negotiation. There is no plan B. There is no let's make a deal. God says, this is the deal.

And that deal hung on the cross 2,000 years ago. And you must believe in the Gospel and be set free. Oh, who the Son sets free is free indeed.

Look at where your heart is at this morning. Do you truly need to repent and believe? Do you truly need to repent and believe? Or maybe some of you need to just repent and seek God again like never before. Repent and seek Him like never before.

And let the Spirit of God fall upon your life. And that's why we sing a lot of those songs. And I think it's biblical to say, Holy Spirit, you're welcome here.

Because you can resist the Spirit. The Bible says you can resist, you can grieve the Holy Spirit, you can quench the Holy Spirit, or you can receive and say, Holy Spirit, you're welcome in this place. Cleanse us of our carnality.

Crush our pride and come and change me and transform me again. And God will set you free and revive that dead heart. I don't know about you, but I don't want to be a boring Christian.

How many of us are tired of going through the emotions? It's so many people, we talk about this, but they've never tasted it. We've talked about the living water, the fire of the Holy Spirit, the unction of the Spirit. And Jesus said, if you believe on Me as the Scriptures say, out of your belly is going to flow rivers of living water.

We come and say, take of the water freely. And you can work there and never have tasted water. You can hold this and never taste of water.

That's why Jesus, many of His words are against the church, against believers. Repent, or I will come quickly. Another church, repent and come back to your first love.

Stop drinking of the lukewarmness. And next week when you're hot or cold, but if you're lukewarm, I will spew you out of my mouth. There's always a call to drinking of this living water.

He told the woman at the well, come and drink of this water and you will never thirst again. That's powerful proclamation.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/8a_j-SOBd8Y.mp4

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