

A Safe Messiah

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman's sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing Jesus as both a safe and powerful Messiah, urging believers to embrace His full identity and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 49:49

Scripture: Luke 1:26

Topics: "Empowerment by the Holy Spirit", "The Nature of Christ"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the concept of a 'Safe Messiah,' warning against the cultural tendency to sanitize Jesus and make Him palatable, rather than acknowledging His true nature as both a gentle lamb and a powerful lion. He reflects on C.S. Lewis's insights about the demonic realm's efforts to distract believers from the true meaning of Christmas, urging the congregation to embrace the unsanitized reality of Christ. Idleman encourages believers to confront their fears about meeting Jesus, highlighting that true safety is found in a relationship with Him, who holds all authority and power. He calls for a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in empowering believers to live boldly and proclaim the Gospel. Ultimately, he invites listeners to run to the 'very safe Messiah' who offers salvation and hope amidst a world filled with darkness.

Transcript

The title this morning is, A Safe Messiah. A Safe Messiah. And I'm actually going to start by reading something from C.S. Lewis, and then I'm going to get into the scriptures.

Many of you know, in his classic work, The Screwtape Letters, he actually gives, it's fictional about how the demonic realm, it's one demon riding to another demon, on how to pull Christians away from their walk with the Lord. And he was talking about this time of Christmas, and he said this, we have grown quite fond of how the humans celebrate this horrid anniversary. We love caroling with them, this is demons speaking, feasting with them, exchanging presents, decorating and watching movies.

While you would have us to take the holiday through the shadows of licking our wounds, we have regained lost ground. Can you not observe our influence, the pine trees and the presents, mistletoes and twinkling lights, Santa and snowmen, sugar cookies and family cheer? We've hidden the child beneath many straws of hay, swapping their gifts with one another, they never notice the bright star that leads to Bethlehem. We need not scrooge at such festivities, let us bring visions of sugar plum fairies dancing in their heads, buy tiny Tim a turkey, invite them near to roast chestnuts over the open fire.

The infant escaped 2,000 years ago, but we have found other ways to dispose of him. Sing about Rudolph and Santa and jingle bells, encourage them to attend their annual church service, but check the registry for safe services. Focus their attention to not look upon the child, look at them, look at their bursting schedules, anything but humble adoration for Christ.

Never let them worship the unsanitized Messiah, do not let them pray together and read scripture together, keep them good-humored, keep it shallow, keep it safe. Your festive uncle Wormwood talking about a safe Messiah, sanitizing Jesus. And as we know, safe means protected from danger or risk, not likely to harm or lose anything.

And sanitized can be a good thing, right? We sanitize our bathrooms, our homes, and that means to alter something regarded as less acceptable, to make it more palatable, to make it taste better. You know that's why they put sugar in things? To taste better. Try dipping broccoli in sugar, give it to your kids, they're gonna like it better.

We make things palatable. And here's what's happening, if the culture can't get rid of Jesus, they're gonna make him safe. A safe Messiah.

If we can't remove him, let's keep him safe. So what we do is we avoid dangerous or risky statements. Don't talk about being harmed or lost.

And I like what he said here, check the registry for safe services. Safe church services. Do you know demons don't mind if you go to church? As long as you don't talk about the things that are spiritually unsettling.

As long as you don't rattle cages. But if you can go and hear just a motivational sermon. And I believe churches should be welcoming, loving, gracious, forgiving, long-suffering, and patient.

But we cannot be safe from sin. We can't avoid sin. We can't try to make it not taste bad.

We have to just let it speak for what the Bible says. Because the biblical imagery of Jesus is this. He's a lamb, correct? But he's also what? A lion.

He's an ointment that heals, but also a sword that pierces. He's an advocate, but he's also a judge. So question this morning is do you feel safe meeting him? This is a really good test even for those in church.

Do you feel safe meeting Jesus? That speaks a lot. Because if we say, you know what Shane, I don't feel safe. I don't want to meet him.

I'm dreading that day. Then we really need to check where our heart is at. Is it fear and trepidation for meeting the judge? Or a joy to stand before the King of Kings who set you free? So now I'm going to read from Luke.

And a funny thing happened this week as I was going to get through the whole story. I stopped Luke, just Luke 1 26 through 34 and I couldn't get any further. Or 35.

There's just so much there. And I hate to rush through scripture just to rush through it. Let's get through the whole Christmas story.

But what about if God is speaking to us in one point? So Christ's birth is announced to Mary. Luke 1 26. It should be up on the screen, I believe.

Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel is sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth. So keep this in mind. To a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph.

She was supposed to get married. They're supposed to get married like an engagement of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

And having come in, the angel said to her, rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women. Can you imagine an angel telling you that? She's like, what is this? What kind of greeting is this? And that's what she says.

But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, do not be afraid, Mary, for you have favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth the Son and call his name Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the Son of the highest. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever.

And of his kingdom there will be no end. This is a very safe kingdom that no enemy can enter. Very safe kingdom that no enemy can enter.

Then Mary said to the angel, how can this be since I do not know a man? And the angel answered and said to her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the highest will overshadow you. Therefore, also that Holy One who is born will be called the Son of God. Now let's stop there for a minute.

That's a lot for a young girl to process. I'm sure she would begin to doubt certain things, but there's a lot I want to pick up from this. Number one, obviously we talk about this a lot, but the reason for the season is actually this, to rejoice.

The Lord is with you. Rejoice Mary, the Lord is with you. And it could be the same point of application for us.

Rejoice, the Lord is with you. What does that mean? You are safe. You are safe.

A very safe Messiah, if you know him. A very safe Messiah. And then she said here, the scripture says he will be called Jesus.

That name is Savior, Rescuer, Redeemer. And then a kingdom with no end. The government will be upon his shoulders.

This part here where it says a kingdom with no end. And we're going to reference Isaiah 9.6. The government will be upon his shoulders. Now he's not talking about the United States of America or Russia.

They're talking about, or China, the governmental authorities. All authority is given to the Son. All authority rests on Jesus Christ.

So let's pull from Isaiah 9.6. I don't think it's up there, but let me just read it. It might be actually. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulders.

So think about this, 700 years before Jesus's birth, Isaiah is writing about Christ. He said the government will be upon his shoulders. And he will be called what? Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

So let's talk about this first one. All authority. I came across an inscription of Sennacherib.

Do you know who that was? Some of you know, study the Bible, Sennacherib. He was the Assyrian king, and he was going to conquer Jerusalem, conquer Hezekiah. He came up to the gates of Jerusalem.

He mocked Hezekiah. He mocked the children of God. He said, we're going to devour you.

We're going to kill you. And this is an inscription of him in Assyria. It reads this, the great king, the king unrivaled, the protector of the just, the noble warrior.

That's what they ascribe to an earthly king. And how much more to Christ himself? Because we all know what happened to this Assyrian army outside of Jerusalem. One angel, one death angel slew 185,000 of the Assyrian army.

So whose authority is really there? Whose authority? This man or Christ? So all authority is given to the Son. And then we see wonderful counselor. What does this mean? Indescribable.

All wisdom and knowledge flow from him. So there's a vision that Isaiah is casting for us. A wonderful counselor, all authority.

I mean, think about this. I was thinking about this this morning. All authority.

What army can come against God? The Egyptians? What happened to them? The Babylonians? What happened to them? The Assyrians? What happened to them? What army can come against God? Gravity has to listen to the Savior. The laws of thermodynamics, first and second law, have to listen to the Savior. The Son, when Joshua prayed, God said, Son, stand still.

He breaks all types of physical laws. What army? What physical law? What can come against this God? That should cause some excitement, not Christmas gloom. All authority is given to the Son.

So no matter what you're dealing with, no matter what family challenges are going to happen in two days, all authority is given to the Son. You have to remember that because the enemy will plant seeds of doubt, seeds of discouragement, seeds of failure, and you have to remember that greater is he that is in you than he that's in the world. That the same authority that rose Christ from the dead, the same power of the Holy Spirit, that authority, and it's not in you, it's in Jesus' name.

In Jesus' name we pray these things. In Jesus' name. They would say, demon, you are removed from this lady in Jesus' name.

The authority. And I try to get Christians to realize that all the time. It's not the devil and God, right, like this.

It's not Jesus and the angels battling it out. They've been defeated. He has, all authority has been given to the Son.

And then mighty God, might, power, and strength. So Isaiah summed it up, this God will be a mighty God. I even look for words to describe that.

There's no, there's no words. How do you describe unfathomable might, unsearchable riches, unsearchable knowledge, wisdom, magnificent, awesome. Do you know that God, that word was actually originally supposed to be in the framework of describing God? Awesome.

Just an awe. I, I, I don't know what to say. It's just too awesome.

And trying to describe it. And then everlasting Father, which of course equals Prince of Peace. And something we saw here too, the virgin birth.

The virgin birth. Now this is a stumbling block for many people. Have you ever talked to people? This is a stumbling block for atheists, for agnostics, for whoever.

The virgin birth. But with God, nothing is impossible. Nothing is impossible.

Did you hear that? Balcony. Nothing is impossible. Come on, Sunday morning, Christmas.

We got to wake up. I'm going to, I'm going to have to, I'm going to have to go sit down and put worship back up if we don't wake up a little bit here. Is Scrooge in here? I'm going to cast out that spirit of, of Scrooge.

There's not a spirit, don't worry. But there is, I think sometimes the demonic will just press people and take our joy, rob us of the joy that is God given. Do you know a fruit of the Spirit is frumpiness? Is that a word? No.

Frumpy. Discouraged. No, fruit of the Spirit is joy.

Thankfulness. And I think we need to take a minute just to remember what God has done for us. If you are a believer, what, what, what has God done for you? There should be tremendous joy.

The virgin birth. I love that God takes, takes nothing and makes something. And with him, nothing is impossible.

He takes a least likely. This poor teenager. How do you know she was poor? Well, because they offered, I think it was turtle doves and doves for the sacrifice.

That was what the poorest people had to offer. So you take a young girl, poor, and the Holy Spirit comes upon and here's the Messiah. The Messiah then has come from Bethlehem.

No good thing comes from Bethlehem. Born in a manger with, or in an inn with animals. And then God would, would take Saul, become king.

Saul said, I'm the, I'm the smallest of the Benjamites. David, he said, I'm going to put my anointing on you. Samuel said, not this guy.

Look at, look at this guy, God. Look at his brother. And God said, no, he has, he has my heart.

Go and anoint David. David said, who am I? I'm the least in my father's home. And then God pulls and grabs tax collectors and sinners and harlots.

Did you know that in the line of Christ is a harlot by the name of Rahab? He takes the least likely. That's a lot to get excited about. Because, because people say, how can this be? How can that be, Shane? Because man looks at the outward appearance.

God, no, he doesn't care what you look like. He wants to see your heart. I can do, give me the heart.

Give me the heart and I'll take it. Give me the heart and I'll take it. And I will do something amazing in that person.

Why? Because he wants to confound the wise. And then people say, man, Shane, can you believe if God, think about this. If we could just get Matt Damon, Alec Baldwin, and George Clooney to become Christians, can you imagine? God says, no, I'm going to go to North Carolina, possibly.

I'm going to grab a farm boy and I'm going to exalt him to the position that has ever been the highest pastor in our nation and preach the gospel. I'm going to take an uneducated whatever and have them write books and speak to the masses. I'm going to take somebody who is a nothing and I'm going to showcase them.

Why? Because you look and say, God gets all the glory, every ounce of glory, and you bow to God, not yourself. Oh my Lord. Can you imagine if I came up here and said, you know, I'm going to preach to you this morning.

I just recently got my PhD at Westminster Theological Seminary. I've got an undergrad at Harvard. I've written 14 periodicals this week.

I'm studying Greek and Hebrew in my spare time. I've got my bachelor's here and my this here, and I'm not against any of that, but you better not go up in that strength. God does foolish things.

People look, how is that possible? Right, because you're gauging it. You're gauging it by appearance, by pedigree, by education, by status. You look at that.

How? And then God says, no, I'm going to take nobody and lift them up, put my spirit upon them and have them do great things, so when they get to the end of their life, they can say, if it wasn't for the grace of God, there go I. Everything that God has ever done through me or through you that is powerful is because of the direct result of the Holy Spirit of God in his favor. So he loves to take the least likely, and what the enemy wants to do is use that against you. You'll never do that.

That dream you have, that dream in ministry or that call that you think, who do you think you are? Who do you think you are? And actually that's the person God uses. Funny story, I've told you this before, but it fits, I just thought of it. There was a position open for a pastor of a young adults area of a church here locally, big church, and I went in and inquired about it 10 years ago, or more than that now, maybe 10-12 years ago, and they didn't even want to look at the application.

They didn't want to talk to me. We were looking for someone with a degree. So I couldn't wait to plant this church.

Of course, the flesh, but it just broke for the whole week. I was like, okay, understand, I'm not stupid. Can we at least talk? No, we have to have, why? Because pedigree.

The pastors at this church have a degree, and you don't wonder the Spirit of God is not moving mightily in that place, or in many churches, because that's what they're trusting in. These people should have the common sense to say, is God on that person? Is God working in their life? Has God anointed that? Because that's what I want. That's what I want.

Anytime we pray about future deacons, future elders, you think I'm at the door asking for their business card to see where they went to school? I'm looking to see who's right here at 6 30 in the morning. That's how I'm picking leadership teams. That's how we have been.

Watch who God's Spirit is on. Watch who God is calling. He could call somebody who's done time in prison.

If the truth be told, most of us should have done time in prison. We just didn't get caught. Doesn't that one always crack you up? You know, you know, that DUI you should have been pulled over on 10 times.

But there's a key here that I just could not, I want to let it go. And I tried to erase it out of my sermon notes. And because I talk about it a lot, but it just really leaped out.

Luke 1 35. God said this, the Holy Spirit, Mary, will come upon you. The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

So the Holy One to be born will be called upon you. The Son of God. And many people just read that and move on.

But this to me just jumped out because God says the Holy Spirit is going to come upon you. And the power of God is going to come upon you. I'm gonna let you in a little secret.

That's one of my biggest prayers for all of you at this church. Not to bless financially, not to get that job, but the Spirit of the Lord come upon you. If the Spirit of the Lord was upon every person in this building, we would not be able to end before the second service gets here.

We'd be worshipping. Time would stand still because that Spirit of God is upon a person. And the power, he said the power of the Most High.

Do you know where that word comes from? You ever heard the word dynamite? In the Greek it's dunamis. Dunamis power. Dynamite, dynamic, all these words.

And the Spirit of God will come upon you. That's why the Word of God is not powerful in your life. That's why there's not this dynamic, vibrant, powerful relationship where you can't get more of God because that Holy Spirit has been quenched and grieved.

And like Mary, many of us, the Holy Spirit needs to come upon us, not to save us. As believers are saved, but there's a quenching and grieving that can go on. It's the most important part of the Christian walk.

I believe second only to salvation is this mighty empowerment, this mighty endowment of the Holy Spirit. You know why I know this? Because all the people you read, all the books you read, all the sermons you like, all the podcasts you listen to, nine times out of ten, the Holy Spirit has come upon those people. People say, oh I love reading, you fill in the blank.

Oswald Chambers, you ever read his book, My Utmost for His Highest? I better get off that topic because I want to stay there a little while. But here's why she was filled with the Spirit, or the Spirit came upon her. Maybe I should clarify that, I have before, but some of you weren't there.

The Holy Spirit is in a believer, in a believer. But the Bible, and I don't think it's an accident of language here, the Holy Spirit later came upon Jesus. Then he began his ministry.

The Holy Spirit came upon Peter, then he preached. The Holy Spirit came upon Paul. The Holy Spirit comes upon someone.

So you go from boring Christianity to dynamite dynamic. That's the difference. Boring Christianity where I'll barely get to church, I'll come if it's on my schedule, I'll put on air one so I feel like I'm getting a little bit of worship in.

And I'm a Christian but I don't have this connection, I'm kind of just going through the motions, it's not really exciting. I don't talk to people about Christ, I don't, it's just, it's who I am, but it's boring. You go from that to dynamite, to dynamic.

And it's not you, it's the Holy Spirit coming upon a person. Well Shane, how does that happen? Empty yourself of self. Empty yourself of self, of pride, of arrogance, of thinking that, oh that's going to be too extreme, that's too crazy, I don't want to be like that, I don't want to be like those people I see on TBN.

Well me neither. I mean, is that still around? It's been a long time, I don't know. But you know, we see things like, oh I don't want to be like that, but God wants you to be like who he's created you to be.

So here's Mary, this is interesting, the Holy Spirit came upon Mary, why? Why? Go back and do housework in a loving, joyful way? I'm doing the dishes, I'm doing the dishes. No, no, no. Came upon her to proclaim.

Anytime the Holy Spirit comes upon you, it's not to go home and watch TV. It's to proclaim, it's to witness with boldness, with power, with authority. That's the whole point.

She said this, my soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. That's exactly what a spirit-filled believer would say, overcome by the power of God. For he has regarded the lowly state of his maidservant.

She's saying the humble estate, she's humbling herself. She didn't go, I have the Messiah, look at me. And it goes around town, I have the Messiah, look at me.

He says no, he comes upon this humble, broken maidservant. And then she said, and holy is his name and his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. So the Holy Spirit comes upon you to witness, to be bold.

The Word of God becomes authoritative, not debatable. It becomes solid, not shaky. Because if the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible and the Holy Spirit comes upon a believer in a powerful way, you don't think there's dynamite when those two hit? There's no wavering, there's no wavering, you're stable, you're committed.

And that's my prayer, that people would pray, Holy Spirit come upon me. You might say, Shane, that's not biblical, it's absolutely biblical. Because you have all the Holy Spirit, but does he have all of you? The Bible teaches being filled with the Spirit, emptied of self.

This is so important that this could end most of the marriage issues in the church. Marriage gobbles, problems with children, problems with kids, financial matters, addictions, all this could be handled with a mighty endowment of God's Spirit, his power. Now interesting though, sandwiched in between this is a story of Zacharias.

Do you know who that was? The father of John the Baptist. And it's interesting, they weren't expecting God miraculously brought John the Baptist into Elizabeth's womb through Zacharias, it wasn't a virgin birth, but just out of this barrenness and out of this deadness of the womb, brought John the Baptist forth and Zacharias, the father, undoubted God. He couldn't believe it.

And an angel shut his mouth for the whole pregnancy. And I thought, how often does unbelief rob us of God's gifts, God's blessings, and walking around that state of unbelief. No God, you're not going to do that.

You could never do that. And I found out that he actually gives you dreams, not weird dreams, but like desires to do things for God, and dreams, I want God, I want to do this. Sometimes they're so big, there's no way, no way, this is Lord, you're dreaming.

But see, it's him, not you. He'll do things that are, he'll put plants, thoughts or ideas into you that are so outlandish that he has to get all the credit. There's no way certain things can happen unless he does it.

And then what happens, unbelief comes in. And it begins to rob you of spiritual life. Those who went through difficult seasons in their life, they start to doubt that God's ever going to move again, that God's ever going to bless them again.

God begins to give them a gift or blessing and unbelief begins to come in. Do you know what a sure sign of unbelief is? Negativity. Disgruntled.

Disgruntled. Negative. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Sound like Charlie Brown. Oh yeah, but this, oh yeah, it's always negative. Always fault finding.

Always critical. There's, unbelief is set in. Because belief, the end result of belief is joy.

I believe God. I believe he might do things. Now sometimes, I'm believing God for some things I might share in the future if it ever happened.

But sometimes he might not actually give me that prayer request because he knows what's best. So my belief is not based upon what I get, it's based upon who he is. Because I don't know about you, but I don't trust my feelings all the time.

I'm just saying, you might be different, but I do not trust my feelings all the time. So right in between this is Zacharias' unbelief, but then guess what? He believed and the angel opened up his mouth and he said, he shall be called John. His belief turned that back around.

I'm wondering this morning, how many of you need to embrace belief again? This isn't belief that you're gonna, you know, own this and buy this and this huge house up on the mountain. No, I'm not, I'm talking about believing what God said. Believing what he's put on your heart.

Believing, Lord, I know you want me to do this. I know you've called me. I know you, I'm believing you for it.

And you get your thought back on that, Lord, I'm believing you. I think God loves it when we thank him, even when we don't see it. Isn't that faith? Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not.

Faith is the evidence of things hoped for. Isn't that weird? There's no evidence if I don't see anything. Yeah, there is.

Faith is the evidence of me hoping for what God is going to do. So I hope God is, Lord, I know you want to do something like this. And it isn't to bless you often, it's to bless others.

So that prayer, Lord, when I get home, please have that 50-inch plasma on the front porch. Oh, please let Morgan buy me a \$200,000 Lamborghini this Christmas. I'm not going there.

I know you want me to. I just feel sorry for that poor guy. A pastor's in the news for buying his wife a \$200,000 Lamborghini.

And he doesn't understand why people are upset. And I want to tell him, you can do that, but you shouldn't. There's Biggie there, he got him confused.

That was a rabbit trail. But let's get back on track. Zacharias said, you will raise up a horn of salvation spoken by the prophets.

And sometimes these words, it doesn't make sense to us, but a horn was used. It was carved out. You could use it as a what? A weapon.

It was always a sign of strength. Look at military battle. Look at flags on strong militaries.

Do you see a nice little cute bunny? Or what do you see? A bear, an eagle, or something. The horn would represent strength and might. So he's going to raise up a horn of salvation spoken by the prophets.

And I thought of Psalm 18. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, which is that weapon against sin. That's the hope.

That's what we rest in, the horn of salvation, the strength in God and God alone. Yes, your mind will tell you something else. Yes, the enemy will come in and plant doubt.

Yes, the news will tell you Russia is going to build a base by the Caribbean islands. Oh no, what are we going to do? You grab onto the rock and hold on to Almighty God. That God is a God who holds the kings in the palm of his hands.

He'll raise a kingdom up and then he'll pull the kingdom down. God is so awesome. He would raise a kingdom up.

Babylonians, he'd say, now you go and punish my people because of their disobedience. And then after they punish the people, he says, because you punish my people, I'm going to punish you, Babylonians. He wipes them out.

My Lord, that's strength. What army is going to come against him, like I said earlier? What ruler is going to mock him? Like David said, who is this uncircumcised Philistine who's going to taunt and mock the living God? Maybe it's just me, but I just feel so much strength in the scriptures. There's nothing stronger than a fortress, a stronghold, a rock.

And here's where I want to take another rabbit trail. Zacharias also spoke life into his child's life. This is John the Baptist's father.

Here's what he told his son, and you, my child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him. He spoke into his son. And I want to just throw this in here.

This is, if you didn't get a chance, listen to last week's message on parenting. But I talked about this a little bit. But the power of blessing, speaking life into others, especially as parents.

Did you know that a role that was meant to encourage, the role of parent that was meant to encourage, can be a weapon of destruction in Satan's hand? Think about this. Fathers, mothers, grandparents just speak life into the children, not death. I heard a story, I don't remember the pastor's name, but he was talking about a man who was very shy, he was unkept, meaning shirt tucked out, tucked in, unkept, his hair, he was very anti-social, would hide from people, he was just, he was beat up, would be the quiet guy in the back, and you know, if a pastor would go talk to him, he'd head out the back door, and just, just very, couldn't keep a job, never could keep a job more than a few months.

Lived, I think, with his mom. But he grew up hearing his dad call him stupid, useless, and that he'll never be anything. And the father kept beating him down, beating him down.

And one day he heard about blessing. And I'm not going to try to make this into bigger than it should be. I mean, I'm not, I don't think that, I think, despite what your parents say about you, God can do great things in you.

We're not, we're not under their curse, so to speak. But I do believe there's power in words, there's power in speaking life into our children, there's power in blessing them in many ways. But he heard about the power of blessing, and he did something remarkable.

He went home to his angry father, and he went to the door, and the dad said, what do you want? I told you, I don't want to see you again. He said, dad, would you let me in? So he came in, he sat down, he said, I've never been able to hold down a job. I'm socially awkward.

I've never dated really. I've become everything you've told me I would become. And he said, I came here this morning to ask if you would bless me.

And the father, he could hear the father pacing back and forth. Pacing, and pacing, and pacing. That man broke that morning, and he started, oh man, he started to pray blessing over his son.

He asked for forgiveness, he repented. He started to speak into his life financially, relationally, and that son was a changed person. I don't know exactly what it was, the dynamics, what happened, but able to carry down a job, was able to walk proudly, and that blessing, what that father imparted to the son, that blessing.

There's power there. Again, I don't think people say, well, that never happened to me. My father said I was stupid, useless, and then he died.

Well, God can still be your father. God can still build you up, but there's something when a parent begins to bless their child and say, devil, you will not have these children. You will not do this.

You will not take them down that road of addiction. I'm blessing them. Lord, I'm anointing this house.

I'm praying, I'm speaking life into them. I don't know about you, but when you look at that verse, life and death are in the power of the tongue. You can pull down, you can break down strongholds.

And I'm not into the faith movement where you can speak a Mercedes into your driveway. I'm not talking about that, or Lamborghini in this case, right? But there's power. You can beat people down with your words, or you can build them up and you can encourage them.

So again, listen to last week's message on parenting. The chance of your child becoming a famous person, did you know this? It's one in 572,000. The chance of your child becoming a professional musician are one in 300,000.

The chance of your child becoming a professional athlete is one in 120,000. The chance of your child standing before Jesus Christ is a hundred percent. Amen.

Let's clap for that one. And I wish I could take credit for it, but I can't. Somebody else said that, and I gave him credit on Facebook, and the name slipped me right now.

But that is so true. One day, our children will stand before Christ. Your grandchildren will stand before Christ.

And what really matters is what we did with this investment. But let me bring this home. The reason for the season.

It goes on to say that Jesus came to give knowledge of salvation by the removal of sin. So we go from unsafe to very safe. It isn't funny.

People who are unsafe right now think they're very safe. But by the removal of sin and removing that sin, that's why Jesus came. And I see so many people sometimes, I even talk to pastors, and they'll say, well, I don't want to talk about that.

People aren't going to like that. They want a safe service. They want a safe message.

What does safe mean? Don't ruffle my feathers. Don't stir my pot. Don't step on my toes.

Safe. There's safety there. And Jesus came to bring light to those who sit in darkness.

I don't know who's listening. I don't know who's here this morning. But he comes to be a light to those who sit in darkness.

And I talked about this before a few weeks ago. Groping, as it were, for the light. And that's what people do who sit in darkness.

You know what groping is, right? Do you ever go into a room that's completely dark? I did this morning in the garage. It's like your eyes are wide open, but I can't see. So what are you doing? You're groping.

And you feel your way around. That's how people are going through life. They're groping.

They're filling for things. So there's no direction. There's no purpose.

There's nothing. They're just getting by. I'm just getting by.

How are you doing? I'm just getting by. I'm barely holding on. I don't know what's going on.

I'm groping. I can't see. And Christ said, but I've come to bring light to that area of darkness.

And then the lights come on, and you see clearly. Actually, you see so clearly that you say, I was blind, but now I see. I was lost, but now I'm found.

Amazing grace. And that's the reason for the season. Hopeless.

Do you know this is one of the most hopeless times of year? I didn't know this, but I've been seeing stuff online and this is one of the most difficult seasons for people. They're hopeless. Because anytime the joy of Christ is turned up, so is hopelessness on the dark side.

Because people see that I don't have what people have. I'm hopeless. I don't have that hope that's in you.

I'm going back to C.S. Lewis again in his incredible work about the lion, the witch, and the wardrobe. He paints Aslan as Christ. I know some people have a problem with that, but I don't.

So he paints this picture of Aslan as Christ, but he also in this tale, that Christ is a lion. Many of you know the story, right? Aslan's this lion. There we go.

And this girl who knows about Aslan as the conquering king, she finds out he's a lion. And she said, Aslan is a lion? The great lion? Oh, I thought he would be a man. And then she said something interesting.

Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion. And the response was, is he safe? Of course he's not safe. He's a lion.

But he's the king and he's good, I tell you. See, that's the king. The lamb becomes the lion.

Yes, he is very safe if you know him, if you run to him, if you commit to him, if you give him everything and you hold on to Christ and he becomes your all-consuming hope. He's very safe. But if you reject him, that lion becomes your judge.

This advocate, Shane, but I read about an advocate in the Bible, but that advocate becomes your judge. And instead of hearing, well done, thou good and faithful servant, you hear, depart from me. I don't know you.

I don't have that relationship with you. He is very safe if you run to him and embrace him. I just read also, I don't know how many of you saw this, but it depends on what statistics you look at, who you read, that they believe that witchcraft now is growing faster than Christianity, especially among the young children.

And do you know why? Most of them think it's cool. It's a cool thing it's in and it's safe. When would we ever put witchcraft and safe in the same sentence? But here's why it's safe, they say.

There's no God telling me what to do. There's no God telling me what I can do and what I can't do. It's all about self-empowerment, self-fulfillment, self-exaltation.

I can control, I can manipulate, I can chant, I can hex. Safe, it's very safe. No, it's the most damning place you can live is rejecting God and playing with darkness.

You're in a very dangerous spot. A person who does it is in a very dangerous, unsafe spot that will have spiritual ramifications. The verse I want to close with is something that does not come from the Gospels.

I was reading about the life of David this week. Many of you know the story. As he was running from Saul, who was trying to kill him, David told Jonathan, he said this, there is just a step, one step between me and death.

And I thought, how relevant for us today. Think about that. I can say that right now.

Between me and death, there's but a step. Right there, somewhere, some way, somehow, God knows. So this life that the Bible says is just a vapor and death is just a step away, we put so much value in thinking we're 10 foot tall and bulletproof.

We're safe. We're safe running from the Messiah. We're safe rejecting Christ.

We're safe denouncing that religious stuff. No, you're not. You are very unsafe.

Spiritually speaking, you are on the side of darkness. The demonic realm will take you out and will take you down. You need to run to the cross.

You need to run to salvation. How great is salvation? How great is our God? And I want to give you the opportunity this morning. If you've been convicted, if you're concerned about this area, I even want to throw this out there.

What I just read, this girl said, I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion. Do you feel rather nervous about meeting Christ? Now, I guess there's some nerves there, right? Because I'm not nervous in a bad way, but I'm a little, wow. I'm a little, holy God, see Christ.

You know, humanity comes in there, but there should not be nervousness such as fear. Like, I can't stand before Christ. I can't stand before God.

I can't. I'm nervous about meeting him. Is he safe? I'm nervous.

You know, I'm nervous. We'll end that, finish that, fix that today. The Bible's crystal clear.

Run to the lion. It's a lion of the tribe of Judah. There's just, there's so much, I don't know if safeness is a word, but there's so much safety there.

Revelation 5, I remembered it. I didn't have it written down, but I think it was a couple of days ago I read where John, writing and speaking Revelation 5, began to weep because there was no one worthy, no one worthy to open the scroll. And the angel said, hold on.

Look, the lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed. He will open the scroll. So always remember that.

When he begins to look hopeless, nothing's happening good. Look at our nation. Look what's going on.

The lion of the tribe of Judah will prevail. Actually, if you believe God's word, he's already prevailed. We live in time.

God does it. He's already said he will prevail. It's done.

It's end of story. There's not a battle going on that we're going to watch and see who wins. It's been done.

The fight has been won. The victory has been won. So let's just, let me just, if that's you and you need to know Christ, the Bible's clear.

It just says confess, confess your sins. Confess and believe that Jesus is God. God raised him from the dead.

Put him on that cross to absorb your sin, to absorb the wrath of God. So you can go from light, from darkness to light. Very safe, very safe Messiah if you run to him.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31914.mp3>
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