

Blessed Is He Who Reads & Keeps His Word

by Shane Idleman

The book of Revelation is a revelation of Jesus Christ, revealing things to come and warning the churches of the end times, and it is essential to approach this topic with humility and teachability.

Duration: 56:42

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Amos 3:7, Matthew 18:20, John 14:26, Romans 12:2, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:22, 1 Peter 5:6-7, Revelation 1:3

Topics: "The Importance of Scripture", "Humility in Understanding"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of reading and keeping God's Word, particularly focusing on the book of Revelation, which promises a blessing to those who engage with it. He discusses the various interpretations of Revelation and the necessity of humility in understanding scripture, urging believers to apply the Word in their lives rather than merely knowing it. Idleman highlights the struggle against the flesh and the need for a vibrant relationship with God, which can be cultivated through worship and obedience to His Word. He encourages the congregation to seek God's presence and power in their lives, reminding them that true understanding comes from a heart transformed by the Word.

Transcript

Special announcement, the first 20 people next Sunday at 6 a.m., we've got a \$500 Costco card for you. Are you honestly telling me there would not be a line? A line! Man, for that, I might sleep here. Right, you're going to get right by that door.

For food that perishes, a lot of it's not good food, and then we eat too much of it, but we'll give that without that time for God. And the only reason I tell you is because that has really changed my life, and we know how much it's changed. That morning worship, now we're on fire for the rest of the day, and the services just come alive.

And it's hard though, you're battling the flesh. It's a battle of the flesh. Title this morning, Blessed is he who reads and keeps his word.

Revelation is the only book of the Bible that promises a blessing. To those who read it and keep it. Very interesting.

Very interesting. One of the most challenging books. Probably that's why.

Hey, if you read this and keep it, you'll be blessed. And so I just want to give you a few things. I actually took 20 minutes out of the sermon.

And I just took it out completely, and I put it in the description of a YouTube podcast I just did this week on the introduction to Revelation. So make sure to go on the YouTube channel, watch the introduction to Revelation. I spent 20 minutes of just giving you the background, how the book was written, what allegory is, and similes, and metaphors, and you've got division in the Christian community.

No, we take the Bible literally. And okay, but not everything is literal. When Jesus comes back, out of His mouth will go a sword that He will strike the nation.

So an actual 20 foot Excalibur? I mean, what is this? And He will tread the wine press? An actual wine press? Of course not. The devil is chained with an actual, you know, those big chains holding down battleships. You ever see those come off? That wouldn't even hold Him because He's a spirit being.

So you see throughout Scripture that the Bible does use imagery sometimes to get a point across. It doesn't change the truth, and that doesn't become our truth. But God actually uses it to better convey truth, if that makes sense.

So I spent 20 minutes on that podcast, and wanted to just get that out there. Make sure you watch that because that will help you understand a little bit the book of Revelation, and why there are different views. And as I go through Revelation, verse by verse is a blessing, but it's going to be a little challenging because sometimes we have to wait for something.

Like the millennial reign isn't until chapter 20 or so. Don't quote me, I should have checked. And so Jesus is the millennial reign in actual thousand years, and that's why I interviewed Sam Storm.

Storms, make sure to watch that podcast as well. He is all millennial. He presents the case to where we're actually in the millennial now, and how he breaks it down is pretty amazing.

But then you have pre-millennialism, which I was raised in, many of you were, that Jesus comes back before the millennium starts, and He rules and reigns. And personally, I've always had questions, like, so now there's death even though Jesus is back? And so I have a hard time with some of these concepts, and then also post-millennial, Jesus comes back after the millennium. Oh my goodness! And that group tends to think the world is getting better, and Jesus is ushering in His kingdom eventually.

That's why they're like, plan a church, we're going to be here for 50 years. Get involved in government. Get involved in the school districts.

And at first we say, what? Have you lost your mind? But if you look at the research on how they used to live in the 12th century, and just throwing your kids to the lions, and letting them die in the streets, and throwing them in rivers, so you can see to some degree, there's been a lot of... we have progressed in many areas, but then you see all hell breaking loose, and evil to me is just running rampant. So I can't quite gravitate towards that view. But I want to show you what the different views are, because here's why it's been 23 years since I went through this book.

Number one is I wanted a lot more time to read through it. Read through it 25-30 times already. Memorize a lot of things.

Understand. Getting the different views. And I saw, and again, I just want to be transparent, but I came from the Calvary Chapel movement.

It's not a Calvary Chapel church. I love some of my friends, you know, Rob McCoy and Jack Hibbs, and the people I mentioned, and David Jeremiah we listened to on the radio. And I love this group.

I mean, that's my heart's there, but it was almost like if you weren't pre-mill, dispensational, you know, you're not part of the camp. That was like a hard line thing there. Even though I had questions, I didn't want to bring up my questions because, Shane, you're causing division.

I just have some questions. It's okay. But see, when we're raised in something, and we're taught something, it's hard to change from that, because humility comes in.

And one area I've changed is, I was raised and I believed that you could lose your salvation. And then after reading, I'm like, well, I think God's got me. I think the Holy Spirit seals me.

The Holy Spirit's given to me as a guarantee. And so I kind of changed a little bit. Sam Storm, if you listen to his podcast, actually repented to his congregation for teaching them a certain view over so many years.

And my point was, I think we just need a lot more humility on topics that are not crystal clear. I can fellowship with you, and you can fellowship with me, because sometimes we see things a little bit differently. Our life experience might shape things differently.

And then you have Dallas Theological Seminary, where a lot of David, Jeremiah, and different people came through that, and that's what they'll teach. And then I reached out to, you know, we air Alistair Begg, one of my favorite teachers, on our radio network. And I reached out to his office, and they said, you know, he really doesn't have much on Revelation.

Doesn't go there. But I've heard things to where he's almost like the reformed, all-millennial position. Like he's definitely not dispensational.

I'll explain all these terms later. Let me try to talk to just those who might not understand. So he's kind of... And then the reformed faith.

The reformed. You know, Calvinism, and let's say R.C. Sproul, Gary DeMar, Doug Wilson, they've got great podcasts on their view. It's like, man, these guys have strong cases.

And what I've always feared, and I've made this clear too, I think with my kids, is I don't want to tell you something that is not true based on my opinion. I honestly, I've never been able to tell people, hey, don't worry, you're not going to see the beast. You're not going to have to be challenged with the mark of the beast.

Don't worry, you're out of here. Just go watch Left Behind series. Like I can't literally, I can't tell them that.

Because how do we? We don't know. You don't know. We don't know.

The Bible doesn't say exactly how this is all going to transpire. The main reason why we are out of here, in the view of most people, is because of the wrath of God. The bold judgments.

The trumpet. The seals. And God's people are not going to absorb His wrath.

Completely agree. But what about if those things mean maybe something a little bit different? Or what about if God secures His people? Did you know He killed the entire firstborn in the land of Egypt? Except the children of Israel. Whoever put the blood on it.

He rained down certain things, except on the children of Israel. So the question is, could God preserve Christians even in the midst of His judgment? So if that's the only reason we embrace that view, is because we want to be out of here. I sure do.

And there are scriptural support, but there's not a Scripture that says exactly how this is going to unfold. So what we do is we grab some of Daniel. We grab some of Matthew 24.

We get some Ezekiel with Magog and Gog. We grab some of Revelation. And let's put this puzzle together.

And what they should say, I wish what these people would say, because they say this is going to happen. I wish they would say, you know what, here's what I think. After the nation of Israel was reborn in 1948, and we see so much, and here's what could possibly happen.

But there's some pitfalls to all views. I can like, oh, I don't know about that. For example, the biggest one for me, I'm a new believer six months into this.

And I remember it was Calvary Satellite Network maybe, and Chuck Smith is teaching. And I've listened to all of his tapes. I love his teaching.

I think we should be able to talk about these things. And he actually predicted we'll be out of here in 1980 or so. 81.

So I think he retracted. I'm not sure. But he's going through and he said, see, Revelation 3. 1, 2, 3. You know, the church is in chapter 3, which we'll get to.

And then chapter 4, now John's up in heaven. Right? So he said there's no more church mentioned now. And so now that's a proof text for the rapture.

I don't think so. Like that would have never even entered my mind. That's an interesting thought.

You could say, hey, the church isn't mentioned anymore in my opinion, so it could be. But to actually say that, see, that's where I've had challenges with this end times scenarios. And I just don't say much because for some reason, it draws a lot of criticism.

Like my one with Sam Storms, people are tweeting or email whatever. Oh, you're changing your view. And I'm like, I've never had it.

You don't know what my view is. Like how are you pushing that false doctrine? That's not false doctrine. Did you listen to it? Scripture is used throughout.

It's just the way they use it and apply it seems to be a little bit different. So bear with us. The Bible begins in paradise and ends in paradise.

Isn't that so awesome? The Bible begins in paradise and ends in paradise. So as I get through Revelation, we're actually going to talk about Heaven. What to expect? What does that look like? Also, why is

Revelation challenging, intriguing, and confusing? Because it does use a lot of imagery.

So John is exiled. The beloved John was exiled on the island of Patmos. And he is getting these visions from God of the end times.

Or actually, he says, write the things that are now. They're going to happen and things to come. And so he's writing these things down.

You have to go back 2,000 years ago without Google and cars and airplanes. You can't divorce what the author... We can't just say, okay, here's how I would read it. You actually have to read the Bible based on the contextual usage of it, the historical usage.

What is the author trying to convey? And if not, we'll get in trouble. Because they'll say, oh, here are those scorpions in Revelation. That must be a Black Hawk helicopter.

Maybe, but don't say it is. My goodness. And so, that's why it's confusing.

I think he quotes the Old Testament 500 and sometimes. So he shows the Old Testament. And if you study the Old Testament, it's called Old Testament imagery, and how clouds are not actual clouds a lot of times.

It would be darkness and gloom and dark clouds, and that would be the wrath of God. How else are you going to say the wrath of God if we don't know exactly what he's talking about? And so sometimes they would use this imagery. The stars will be shaken.

Sometimes they actually weren't shaken. And all the stars didn't fall. Actually, it would be just this cataclysmic spiritual event and they use very strong language.

And so you look at Joel, and you look at other prophets, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and you look at how they used the law first mentioned. You look at how they used this imagery. And now you see John probably knows a little bit about the Old Testament.

So he's bringing the Old Testament in to show a lot of what it meant then is probably what it's going to mean now. And so, I do believe though also now we have more information, not more truth. But okay, Israel's been reborn.

We see Magog and Gog is the area of Russia. You know, a hundred man-million army? Is it a hundred million? Yeah, a hundred million man-million army. Now China boasts of that? If you've watched any videos, you know Euphrates River is not as full as it used to be.

And it says it will dry up the kings. And wow, so we will have, I believe, clear insight, but not different truth. Not better truth, if that makes sense.

And I just wish people would be humble and gracious on this topic because it's not the only way. It's not the dispensational pre-millennial view. There are other views out there that are worth noting.

And if you read the end, or listen, at least go to the last half of the interview with Sam Storm. I talk about, and he agrees and others agree, wherein Daniel, when it talks about he will bring an end to the sacrifice, he will this, he will this, he will this, that word he, the pre-millennial dispensationalists have turned that word he, lowercase he, even in the Hebrew language, it's a preposition, it's he. They made that become

the antichrist.

And the word antichrist isn't even used in Revelation. So they use, okay, that's the antichrist. He's gonna make a covenant for seven years.

Hold on, hold on. How did that word become an antichrist? See, that's why I was like, those are some pretty big jumps. Now you can say this is possible.

Here's what I've been taught, but to say this is exactly how it's going to pan out, I can't live my life like that. Because how many people have had to apologize for calling and name-dating? Remember how Lindsay in his books, you old-timers with me? And Chuck Smith, and men we look to, love, but there's some different views out there that we need to understand and respect. And that's why it's challenging.

That's why it's intriguing, because John uses this language to really get his point across. Scripture is not in error, but our understanding is marred. Here's what we forget.

Scripture is not in error, but our understanding, isn't our understanding a little bit damaged here? Paul said right now we look through a glass kind of dimly like the glass is broken, but when that which is perfect comes, Jesus will be able to see clearly. We won't need the gifts of the Spirit at that point either. And so we can understand the truth is right on.

Thank God I don't understand everything. Sometimes God says, you know what? You're not going to understand everything. I want to see if you guys get along.

How important is unity in the New Testament? And one thing, man, I'm glad I didn't pastor in 2005, because I could let you have it. You know, you had that walk, that arrogant walk that got a big Bible. What translation do you have? Sin sniffing.

And that's what happens. We can push our views on others because of arrogance. We read a little Greek and a little Hebrew and we listen to this and now we think we know everything.

But when God begins to continue to break you and humble you, and break you and humble you, now it really changes. Think about it. No pastor, no leader, that you're listening to, podcast, teacher, has perfect theology.

So your favorite person you want to follow, I know a man of God just as equally as mature, they're going to differ on the non-essentials. R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, different views. John Piper, Sam Storms, Alistair Baye.

I hear them teach and I'm like, ooh, that's not what your friend believes. So who has the perfect non-essentials? We have perfect theology on the essentials. That's a good thing to clarify.

Perfect theology on the essentials. You have to know these. But on the non-essentials, maybe there's a person out there that completely lines up exactly with exactly how things are going to pan out.

That's why if the truth be told, I'm a pan-trib waiting to see how it all plans out. Is that right, Penny? Oh, how it all pans out. So I want to give you a monthly reminder.

I don't know how often I'll do this. God is wiser than all theologians past, present, and future. So we don't look to man, we look to God's Word.

And we allow man to maybe add commentaries on things, but ultimately, God is wiser. He knows what He's doing. Maybe we're not supposed to understand everything completely.

I think that's part of the problem. We want to know exactly, don't you? Oh, I'd love to know. What's the date? When are you coming back so I can get my house in order? When are you coming back? Who's the Antichrist going to be? Who's this one world leader? How's it all going to go down? There's a mystery there.

He is more loving than all the soft hearts and ministries who have ever existed. So when we don't understand things about God, or how could God do this, or I don't understand about hell, or things, we have to understand He is more loving than all the soft hearts and ministries who have ever existed. When God preaches, the very foundation of this building will shake as the human heart crumbles under the weight of His conviction.

When He speaks a word, all the nations must submit and obey. Thank God, right? When God speaks, all the nations must submit and obey. Xi Jinping, China must submit and obey.

Putin must submit and obey. What's the little guy's name in North Korea? The Rocket Man. Yeah, he must.

Kim Jong, he must submit and obey. God is just mock. God laughs at our fear.

Who sits on the throne? Who is wiser? These guys can't even touch God's plans. We have to remember that. We have to be reminded of that on a daily basis, right? Who sits on the throne? Now, it doesn't mean we're not to be watchmen.

It doesn't mean we're not to have a strong military and things, but at the end of the day, we need to trust in God. And so, I'm going to give a disclaimer. You're going to see from time to time.

I don't have all the answers. I'm not the final authority. Search the Scriptures and let humility and truth guide you.

So go through chapter 1 with your family, with your kids. Go through chapter 2. Go through and study and learn, but make sure you're open and teachable because I think that's where we miss it. So, Revelation, it starts with chapter 1. And I think I'll get to it in a little bit, but I mentioned it earlier that John, the disciple John, actually the only one that wasn't martyred.

The only follower of Jesus who wasn't martyred. He was exiled onto the island of Patmos. He wrote the book of Revelation.

And then, of course, it comes up, when was it written? Oh, oh boy, oh boy. Another debate. Here's why.

If it was written before 70 A.D., a lot of people think that what he was talking about in Revelation had to do with Titus from Rome coming in and conquering Jerusalem and killing a million Jews. And the blood ran down the streets like the height of a horse's bridle. Josephus would say that bread and wheat were sold for a certain amount.

It's like there's a lot of things there. You could see that John is warning his church. Warning his people.

But as I presented to Sam Storm and even you, that's kind of hard for me because if he's talking about what's happening in Israel, around the nation of Israel, Jesus is going to write to the seven churches which are about 700 miles away up in Asia Minor. And so that catastrophic event did not really affect them. Or was it written more like 95 A.D.? And then obviously, that had already surpassed, that had ran its course, and now he's speaking more to the churches then, the churches now, and we can glean a lot of insight from it.

So John is writing this, but it's the revelation of Jesus Christ. Jesus is revealing things. That's profound.

What other book in the Bible says, hey, I'm going to reveal some things to you? This is Jesus revealing things to you. Now, things are in the Gospels of course that He talks about and reveals, but this is where it's a revelation of things past, present, and to come. Which God gave to Jesus to show His servants, to show us things which must shortly take place.

That's an interesting word too, right? What does shortly mean 2,000 years ago? So some things obviously, and honestly, that's one of the key reasons why there are different views. Because people say, hey, all this is not going to happen 2,000 years in the future. He's saying right now, shortly.

But is He talking about the whole book? Or just what He's going to reveal shortly to the churches? You know, there's different thoughts on that. But we do see an important glimpse into the Trinity. So you see God revealing things to Jesus' servant.

But we also understand that the three are one. The Godhead they call it. Theologians say there is one God.

And actually, the Bible says there is one God Here, O Israel, your God is one. But He reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

He reveals Himself that way. But some people have a problem with that because they think they're worshipping three gods. I don't know if you guys ever follow Marcus Rogers on YouTube, but we've texted back and forth.

I don't remember if it was an email or something, but I want to talk to him about this because that's what his position is. It's Jesus only. You can only baptize in Jesus' name.

And often these guys are trying to be what they call heretical and things. They just can't... Like, hey, there's just one God. We can't worship Jesus and then here's the Father and here's the Holy Spirit.

But I honestly don't see it as three separate whatever. I see it as God. The presence, the power of God revealing Himself because His Word says it.

And the word Trinity is not in the Bible. Well, the word Bible's not in the Bible. There's a lot of words in the Bible that we use to explain the Bible.

The concept of the Bible. The word rapture isn't in the Bible. It comes from a Greek word and a Latin word.

Harpasso and different things. But there's a catching up. There's a catching away.

But we do see that God, even in Genesis, Elohim, let us make man in our image and throughout Scripture. So there's a way that God reveals Himself. The best way to say it so you're not getting away from

historical Christianity is there's one God revealing Himself in three Persons of the Godhead.

And then if you want to try to understand that better, good luck. Because I just like to believe... I'm just simple with what the Bible says. God knows I'm frail in my understanding.

He knows I'm limited. I don't need to figure everything out. I don't need to understand completely how God is sovereign and will save some, but also people consider it a free will to choose or accept God.

Well, Shane, you've got one or the other. Bible teaches both. It says God's sovereign.

Hey, John the Baptist, you're on my team. Isaiah, Jeremiah, some of the prophets before they were even born, God, I called you. And I called you to be a prophet.

Paul, that's nice. You're going to Damascus, but I'm going to knock you off your beast and you're going to serve Me. You're going to be a voice of the Gentiles.

See, He does whatever He wants to do. But also, we can't ignore the fact that we have responsibilities. We're actually judged based on how we respond to God.

And so I'll just let God sort that out. I'm not going to get all worried and debating this topic. Because I've also found that if you go too far and try to explain something, you get into dangerous waters.

You start to teach things that aren't really biblical sometimes because you have to try to explain this. For example, if you have to try to explain God's sovereignty, and you keep going, you keep going, you keep going, eventually, you will get to the point to where God created billions of people just to send them to hell. If they're not elect, there's nothing they can do about that.

I mean, that's where it takes you. That's eventually where it takes you. And for the life of me, I can't see that one.

I can't see that one. I do not desire that any should perish, but all that come to the knowledge of God. And so we see this point of truth to just grasp what the Bible says and let God deal with the difficulties.

Why does God often show us things in advance? So He's going to show John things in advance. And think about it. The book of Revelation could have never been written.

We'd still be kind of plugging along. I bet we wouldn't really know how the things are going to end. But God chose to reveal some things.

And here's why. To prepare and to plan. To be forewarned and to be forearmed.

God will often, even that's why I believe He might give people a dream or a vision or the gifts of the Spirit, because it's to forewarn you. And if I'm forewarned, I'm forearmed. I'm prepared.

I mean, think about this. If we didn't have any of this information, we see a one-world system. You know, you can't buy or sell without the new cryptocurrency probably coming out.

You know, if you didn't get the jab, you still might not be able to get a job in the future. And we see how all this could be. Can you imagine not having any forewarning of that? Many people would be like, God, what's going on here? We can't understand.

Oh, okay, You forewarned us. You warned us about things to come. Amos 3.7, Surely the Lord does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. Now, I'm a context guy. The context is God is getting ready to judge and He's going to pour out His wrath on the disobedient people.

And He says, but I'm warning you. I'm going to do things. And I believe it's still principled today that God will reveal things to, and this isn't some prophets, these weird people on YouTube with colored hair and things like that.

No, it's not that. It's not that. He reveals it to those who are close to Him.

He reveals it to those who are holding up the truth. Those who have prophetic voices, prophetic eyes to see actually what God is doing to be discerners of their times. God will speak to those who are seeking Him.

He doesn't do things without revealing them. And I can tell you so many times in the history of this church when God has basically showed us things that are to come. And it's amazing that He does these things.

I remember one thing I'll never forget. Trust me, I went into this praying, because I'm like, Lord, don't have me say too much, because a lot of things come to my mind. But about four and a half years ago, many of you remember Eva Marie, she moved.

And it was a strong warning that some are going to come against your leadership, Shane. And it's going to be over the Holy Spirit. Well, guess what? About a year and a half after that, April actually is three years, because we had some worship that's too controversial.

Right at the altar, talking about the Holy Spirit. There's a couple families came together. And it's forewarned.

It's forearmed. So you prepare yourself for what is going to happen. And that's why He does that, to prepare you for these things.

Failing to recognize, we have an elder board, and we run a lot of things by the deacons too. Okay, is this biblical? Is this something God honoring? Is this something God is doing? If I've learned anything over the years, it's you cannot keep God in a box. When you try to say, okay, this is exactly how we're going to do church.

Well, that's probably exactly how you're going to do church, and the Holy Spirit's going to say, okay, off to the next church. Well, God's everywhere. Yeah, but there's something unique when His manifest presence is there, and the atmosphere is God honoring.

You're like, Holy Spirit, whatever you want to do. Whatever you want to do in this place. And He sent, we'll continue in Revelation, and He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John.

So now we have angels coming to the picture. And people can get weird on that, right? Where angel? Oh, come on. But then you can get to where it's, no angels, no demons.

We don't go there. Well, the Bible does. I just want to go where the Bible goes, folks.

I mean, there's a church, I won't say, but they would say, you know, you'd saw a big angel in the back, or one of the ladies said they prayed angels. You know, wakey, wakey. Time to get up.

And it's almost like there's not a regard for God's Word. A reverence or respect. But understanding that there are angels, ministering spirits, angels.

The word guardian angel comes from the Bible. Daniel fought in the spiritual realm. And it's very real.

And maybe we'll get into that a little bit more. And so, when He sent the angel to John who bore witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. So what you're going to see throughout Revelation is something they call dual fulfillment.

Dual fulfillment. God is good at doing this. Things that happen now, and they parallel later.

Now and later. Prophecy has long-term and short-term fulfillment. It's one way the Bible speaks to all generations.

God's Word is God's witness. It bears witness. That's the one thing you have to remember about God's Word.

It bears witness. Without that, we have nothing. Look at our society right now.

Why is it crumbling? What is going on? From Anheuser-Busch to Nike to drag shows at A.V. College. Think it already happened or it's coming up? What is going on? The gauge of truth is no longer there. So that's why you get into debates.

Who are you to tell that this is right or wrong? Well, who are you to tell? Without God's Word, without the gauge of truth, how do you evaluate something? That's what I also want to tell the other side. Well, how do you know you're right? Hello? You say, I'm not right. How do you know you're right? And here's where it comes.

Because I just feel right. Do you know all this is based on feelings? I feel this way, therefore it is right. Actually, if you feel a certain way, it could be sin.

Often it is. And so God's Word has to be the gauge in our culture. Without that, we have nothing because it's just opinion.

When God speaks, it says that God spoke. John recorded what he saw. When God speaks, John recorded what he saw.

I mentioned here fundamentals versus fanatics. When God speaks, what an interesting topic. Because you do have the two sides in that, don't you? You have the fundamentalist side.

You know, just the Word. Just the Word. Don't you dare go on that Holy Spirit stuff.

Don't you say God spoke to you. Oh, my Lord. The Word, the Word, the Word, the Word is all we need.

It's all we have. You get outside of that. And there's a lot of good points to that, isn't there? Some good true points to that.

You know, the Word is the guide. The Word is the gauge. The Word is the standard.

Everything must line up according to the Word. But that's why God also gave us the Holy Spirit, the Helper. The gifts of the Holy Spirit.

That's what people don't... The gifts aren't really... They're not designed to be weird and controversial. They're designed for me or you to help others. Okay, if I need to... Man, there's a guy up in the balcony.

I can't get off my mind. God wants me to go talk. I'm not going to talk to him.

No, I'm not going to talk to him. Oh, Lord. And I'm wrestling with... But God wants me to go talk.

And this is hypothetical, so don't worry, balcony. But you need to go and confront that man about his pornography. He's about ready to ruin his marriage.

And I'm not going to turn to Matthew 6 and find that. And he's sure not going to turn to Matthew 6 because he's not even in the Word. So see, that's the Holy Spirit prompts me to go say something to someone.

That's one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Or He'll prompt a person to do something. The funny thing, I don't know if this is God or not, or just me, my background in construction, but as soon as I saw that was wet this week, I already knew let's caution this off because it's going to start flaking.

You see, with wisdom, you see something in the future so you can make plans now. And so the whole thing with the gifts of the Holy Spirit is to help. To help in these areas.

Not to be over the Word of God. So if I say, Thus saith the Lord, that doesn't take place over what the Bible says. And to date, I've never told somebody, I don't believe, God told me to tell you.

Because, I don't know, sometimes Shane might be telling me to tell you something. And just erring on the side of like, hey, I feel strongly about this. It could be the Lord leading me.

You know, what do you think? And so fundamentals, but then you have the fanatics, right? They're never in the Word. Rarely. But they're just led astray by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men.

Man, I heard this voice. I need to get up and leave and go to this church. Or this event.

Oh, I heard God wants me to do this. And you find out, oh, God's not in a lot of that. Did you know your feelings can lead you too? And inner thoughts and inner goals and ambitions.

And I can lead myself to do things that aren't really God, even though it's good. That's why I need confirmation. I need wisdom.

I need to wait upon the Lord. Could it be that you doubt that God still speaks because you've never heard His voice? And the reason I say that is we just posted a meme. Did I pronounce that right? You know, on Facebook, I think it was like John MacArthur saying, all you need is the Word.

You know, don't say God spoke to me. Like, yeah, yeah, yeah, all these people. Yeah, yeah, yeah, and other people.

No, no, no. But you see, there's a divide there. Because I know that that fundamentalist side sometimes cannot be open at all.

At all to anything other than reading God's Word and what God's Word says and obeying it, which is absolutely true. But also, the Holy Spirit is given for a reason. So I don't necessarily agree with that.

I believe God can speak to us in certain areas that complement His Word. For example, He placed it in my heart to buy the radio network. I'm not going to find that in Thessalonians.

But I find the principle. I find the principle. I take it to the elder board.

Took it to the church using wisdom. And God drops things into your heart to do something. God speaks as I'm reading His Word.

I'm not going to get into it right now. Maybe I will later. But I was reading His Word this week.

I showed Morgan. I said, look at this. Man, look at this.

This is exactly for something I'm going through right now or been praying about for a while. And it deposits that into your soul and now you can act upon that. And God's Word is living and vibrant.

So I'm not minimizing the Word of God because that's our standard. That's what we look to. That's our gauge.

And you'll never be led astray by whatever you think these Holy Spirit promptings are as long as it's grounded in the Word. You're not rushing ahead. I often say this, Lord, I know Shane Eidelman is in here too.

And that's a good idea, but I'm not going out there if it's not a God idea. And You know me, Lord. Would You show me? I need confirmation.

I need confirmation because I don't want to step out outside of Your will. Versus rushing. Every thought you get.

Every thought is dangerous. So to be clear, His Word is the primary mechanism for speaking to us, but woe be to the person who limits God. Woe be to the person who limits God.

Blessed is he who listens and obeys. The title of the message, right? Blessed is he who reads and keeps His Word. Blessed is the person who listens to God's Word and obeys His Word.

I don't obey any type of prompting that is not grounded in the Scripture. For example, have you ever read that prompting, Shane? You need to go apologize to that person. Nope.

The devil is a liar. I'm going to read the Bible and see if it's in there anywhere. Oh yeah, that one's in there.

But where do those promptings come from? I think it's beautiful. I think it's beautiful. I feel sorry, I honestly do, for those people who are so rigid, so rigid, that it's the Father, the Son, and the Holy Word, not the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

It's such a powerful doctrine. And then he goes on to say, blessed is he who reads. So Jesus is saying, blessed is he who reads.

Revelation. Boy, that's interesting. And keep those things which are written in it, for the time is... what? Did you know the time is always near? 2,000 years ago, now, time is near.

A lot of it has to do with our last breath. So you can say the time is near. Every generation, the time is near.

You need to make a decision. These things are going to happen. You're going to stand before God.

The time is near. You need to keep these things. Here's where the Christian community can make a big mistake.

Blessed is he who reads, and those who hear the Word. See, that's good. I have an obligation to talk about God's Word, to read God's Word.

Blessed is this person. But more importantly, he who keeps those things which are written in it, for the time is near. Guys, let me just tell you.

I won't remember half of what I said at the first service on this topic, but it's important. This is where the majority of Christian problems could be fixed. This is where a lot of your marriage issues could be handled.

This is where a lot of your dilemmas and confusion could become much more bearable. With this tiny little word, keep. Keep.

Because we know what the Scriptures say, but it's when you keep it. Now, if you were to look up that word, keep, it's like a captain of a ship who keeps the course of the ship. Okay? So, it might drift a little.

Okay, here comes a northern wind. It might drift a little, but I'm keeping the course. So, he who keeps God's Word, if you hear His Word, but don't obey His Word, you actually live in deception, James tells us.

Did you know that? And that's why it's so powerful. So many people hear, oh, I hear what you're saying. Have you ever said that? Oh, I hear what you're saying.

Okay, well, that doesn't matter. Are you going to apply what the Word of God says? Because the power comes in the application of God's Word. Many of us, oh, I would say all of us pretty much know the Word of God.

But it's in the keeping it that really the blessing will flourish. Keep the course. Do you know we get off track often with pride? Because of pride.

Pride will knock us off track. And we think because we know the Word, I'm a Bible student of the Word, I'm a teacher of the Word, that must be good. But not keeping the Word because of pride or a wrong attitude or an arrogance.

And we think knowing. Knowing is not enough. What do you think about James' verse? Be doers of the Word and not hearers only, or life will be challenging? No, he said you will live in deception.

Now, people might think that's kind of a strong word. Actually, I think it's a perfect word. I have never seen more Christians in all of my life live in deception because of this very fact.

Very fact. They're not keeping the Word. So they make decisions that aren't godly and God-honoring even though they know the Word.

Well, I can divorce my spouse. I can do this. I can make this wrong.

I can do this because I know it, but it's keeping the Word of God that brings the power of God's Word. Did you get that? I really want you to understand that. The power of God's Word comes from the application of the Word.

Did you know even the demons believe and tremble? The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the religious leaders, they knew the Word better than many of the contemporaries back then. So keep the Word has to do with practical application. There's a lot in Revelation.

From coming out from among Hermit people to allegiance to Christ. Basically, keep means keep equals respond. If you keep something, you respond.

Blessed is he who lives expecting fulfillment of God's Word. That's one thing you can trust in these difficult times. I believe and trust in God's Word.

To set it in context, we're going to get to the seven churches, and Jesus actually says I'm in the midst. I'm in the midst of a certain type of church. Isn't that amazing? So there are churches, I guarantee there's churches, thousands upon thousands from California to Florida up to the coast, northern coast, that do not have Christ in their midst.

Now, this is not some weird ghost finders thing. Ghost finders? Whatever. Yeah, ghostbusters.

And like, you know, just, oh, look, there's a cloud up there in the midst. Jesus in the midst, that means His power, His presence is available. Have you ever been in a church service where you know it's just dead as dead gets? You don't know if you're in a cemetery? Or in a church? They haven't led anybody to the Lord in Lord knows how long.

Baptisms. People are falling asleep. Nothing is happening.

Why is that? And then, of course, you see, even if a church is alive, like, oh, they've got great music. They've got great performances on stage. But Jesus isn't doing anything there.

He's not in their midst. Even in Matthew 18, it says where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them. So here's something you have to understand about this topic.

As we know, God is everywhere. So people are like, what do you mean He's not there? What do you mean He's not? Well, okay, technically speaking, right? But there's something different when the manifold presence of God is in a place and the Word of God is coming alive. And it's piercing the heart.

It's encouraging. It's building up. People get direction.

They get discernment. Prayers are answered next door. Healings are taking place.

Christ is there as healer and redeemer. He's an ever-present help in time of need. And so there's a marked difference.

Marked difference. And you can tell atmosphere matters. Atmosphere matters.

You can tell when somebody's been in the presence of God, just in worship and prayer and reading His Word. And that's one reason why we promote 6 a.m. worship, for just to feel how you feel so much better as you come out of that. And it's like me jumping in the swimming pool and then walking in the house.

I'm just gonna say, what happened to you? You're all wet. Yeah, I jumped in the pool. Is that obvious? The atmosphere matters, folks.

The water, in that case. But in church, the atmosphere matters big time. People aren't being set free.

And they might hear God's Word, but there's no powerful draw to Jesus. There's no powerful call to worship. And I truly believe that healing is available.

Just like on the road to Emmaus, we should yearn for Christ. We should yearn for Christ. I love that passage where they said, didn't our hearts burn within us when Jesus expounded the Scriptures? Oh, I'd love to take that walk.

Oh, our hearts burn. There's a yearning. There's a desire.

And the power and presence of Christ is available to churches who stand on the truth. Truth becomes the very foundation of their existence. They don't waver on the truth.

They hold to the truth. They don't crack under the pressure. They hold up the weight because of the truth.

There's so much love and humility and brokenness in their life that Christ's presence is drawn to that. Did you know that the presence of the power of the Holy Spirit is drawn to those who are full of love and humility and brokenness? Without those three elements, my friends, you can have truth, but no power. And that's why I pray that often, Lord, I don't want to become an angry Pharisee.

Oh, I have the truth, but I want the humility and brokenness and love, Lord, to undergird it. And then there's a desperate call to holiness as well you can see. The power and presence of Christ is available.

There's a call to holiness. What is holiness? I want to be different. I want to look different.

I don't want to look like the world. I want to follow God. I want what goes into my mind to be different.

And then there's repentance. Deep repentance. And so we truly believe that when Christ is present, that's what all this means that we'll be getting to here next week.

I mean, the Bible says it. In Revelation, I'm not going to read it right now, but it says, there I am in your midst. And then Matthew 18, I am there in your midst.

So Jesus is saying that. This isn't somebody just coming up with a good idea. I am there in your midst where two or three are gathered.

If you pray according to My will, I will hear your prayers. I don't know. Call me silly, but that's pretty incredible.

Healing is available. Strongholds can be broken. Demons can be dethroned.

Unity is possible. Prodigal sons can come home. In a song we sang some time ago, it says this, the healer is in the room.

Break the silence. Confess the name. Sing till demons know your name.

Who can intimidate God? Let me leave you with that thought. Who can intimidate God? Who can stall His will, stop His plans, derail His train? There is no fear when you are on the winning side. That's what you have to remember as we get into this book.

There's no fear on the winning side. Did you know you're on the winning side? Here's why it's difficult. We're still in the battle.

Ugh! In battle, you become weary. You become tired. And I talked about this before.

I don't want to belabor the point, but it's important. It's like if we won this stronghold up here, we won it. God's victorious, but the enemy's coming up the steps and trying to take that ground that he lost.

And so, although we won the battle, I have to fight from a position of victory. So, I'm in the position of victory. So are you.

But we have to fight. We have to come against. We have to put on the whole armor of God.

We can't let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. He humbled Himself. And you see, that's the battleground.

Though I might fall down, I get back up. And that's what the enemy's doing in the lives of many people. Hey, I'm holding my ground.

I'm battling. But then he gets us down here, right? And then another compromise. And another compromise.

And another compromise. And the enemy pulls you down here. Oh, this is interesting, huh? I'm going to go pick on people.

Drive the camera guys crazy. But isn't that true? Now I'm down here. Now I don't want to do ministry.

I don't want to come to church. I don't want to read my Bible. I've lost my position of victory.

The enemy's got me. He took me down. What am I supposed to do? Did you know that's why many people are hopeless? That's why many people don't want to come to church.

That's why they have no relationship with God. The Bible's dead. It's boring.

Lifeless. 6 a.m. worship. Are you kidding me? I want to sleep in.

I'm so not in a good spot right now, Shane. Okay, but remember, you can get back up to that position of victory with the beautiful word called repentance. Though the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, even if he falls, the Lord will uphold him, pull him up with his right hand, and put him back up on a solid footing.

Guys, that's how we finish strong. You think I'm always up here? You don't think I've been down here? Oh, the devil would love, you know where the devil would love to put me? See how far this can go, right? He'd like me out that door in the parking lot driving home. And so that's why you feel the struggle.

You ever see those shirts? The struggle is real. Moms get the shirt. The snuggle is real.

Newborn babies. Hannah, Henry, I'm going to pick one up for you guys. But it's real.

And so, you need to be encouraged. It's part of the warfare. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

They're not. They're mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments, every thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ. Oh, he's got me today.

Wait a minute, wait a minute. I'm taking my thoughts captive. Oh no, I'm coming back, Lord.

I'm on fire again for you, Lord. I'm back on solid footing. God raised me up and he put me back on solid ground and there's beauty out of these ashes and months go by and years go by and then the enemy's pulling me back down.

God, I don't want to go back down there. And you get back up and you fight again and that's the Christian walk until you lay six feet under in the grave. Is that not true? Anybody tells you they just live up here on the top step is a liar.

Full of pride and selfish ambition and boasting. I've noticed a lot of prideful people aren't even saved. I want to be honest with you.

I know a lot of prideful people are Christians, but there's no fruit. There's no fruit. Something that blew my mind away.

I think it's in the back of MacArthur's study Bible. It talks about the characteristics of genuine faith. I don't remember all of them.

But I realize it doesn't say there's no verse for those who have a knowledge of Scripture. It says true love, sincere humility, genuine repentance. Back of your MacArthur study Bible, you'll find it.

All these signs of true repentance. But it doesn't say, and they'll have a mindset of the Word. They'll know the Word intellectually.

Why? Because knowledge by itself is nothing. It's a modern day Pharisee. Elon Musk can quote Scripture.

Andrew Tate. Let's get controversial. He can quote Scripture.

Kanye has been dropping some Scripture bombs. That's head knowledge. Just because somebody quotes the Bible and knows the Bible does not mean they know the writer of the Bible.

There has to be the fruit of the heart. Why? Because it's the heart that changes. The heart that changes.

So anyway, I'm really hoping that helped you because so many people feel beat up and defeated. Instead of getting back up the steps and saying, God help. You know it's okay to do that.

But men in our pride, we don't like to do that. I got this. I'm going to get up.

I'm going to get up myself. That's what I love. I love when a newborn, you know, they just... up, up.

They can't get up. They can't walk yet. Total dependence and joy in their face.

You pick up and you hold that child. That's what many of you need to do. Help.

God help. I need to come home.

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