

Failure Is Not Final

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance, renewal, and remembering the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It highlights the equality of all believers before God, the need for the fear of the Lord, and the triumph through tragedy. The message stresses that failure is not final and encourages a lifestyle of commitment to God.

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Scripture: Acts 3:19, Psalm 51:10, Proverbs 9:10, Romans 8:37, Ephesians 2:8, 1 Corinthians 11:26

Topics: "Repentance", "Triumph through Tragedy"

Description

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Transcript

Something begins today, do you know what it's called? Advent, and anytime it's kind of, maybe I should share this, anytime I talk about Advent, or I mention, what's at Easter? Lent? I always get the pushback, that's a Catholic thing. Let's rewind a little bit. That actually started, both of those started earlier than the Roman Catholic Church.

And here's where you have to make the distinction, around fourth century or so, Augustine and Constantine, and all of us were part of the Catholic Church. Before you shoot me, hold on. Catholic just means universal.

So every Christian was part of the Catholic Church. It's interesting to read Polycarp, and Ignatius, and Irenius, and the different, Justin Martyr. And some of them had some interesting beliefs, but, you know, and just to, they would talk about a lot of the things that we talk about, and what this time of year was, I think around, I mean, don't quote me on any of this, nobody's solid on it, but, you know, fifth century, sixth century.

What they would do is, and I know why they did it, is they would set aside, I think, the three weeks prior Advent, they would call it to get your heart ready for the coming of the Messiah. And to get your heart ready, because you know what happens normally during the holidays, we don't get our heart ready, we get King's Stomach nice and full. And we really come in on Christmas Eve services, and we're dragging, and

gain five pounds in December, you know, and so it was a time to really get our hearts right before the Lord.

And then just a quick history lesson for some of you around 1000 AD or so, 1100, the Roman, they begin to merge, Rome began to actually merge with the Catholic Church, and they would buy the papacy, that's where the popes came from, and then, of course, the Eastern Western break off the great schism, so if you learn church history, you'll see that the Roman Catholic Church came out of that and began to follow these different things that are not biblical, and so that's why we don't tie our roots to something that happened in 1517 Protestant Reformation, we tie our roots back to the early church, and we just keep going. It's they that split off into this perpetual virginity of Mary, immaculate conception, purgatory, going to a priest, and the papacy has a higher authority, or if not equal with scripture, really, Mary is co-redeemer, and I was an altar boy, and so I know what they teach, trust me, and love Roman Catholics, have friends that are Roman Catholics, but it's important to know there's a distinction in how this works, because you'll always get the pushback, well, we're the oldest religion, we're the true church, you know, we go back to the apostles, we just kept exactly what they taught, you went off in a little silly direction there, folks, you gotta come back, and I would, I hate, I wanna be careful, but a lot of the popes weren't even Christians, they would buy the papacy, and with money, and then they would merge the church and the state, and that's just historical history, historical biblical accuracy on how the churches split up, and there's a lot of different resources you can look into that, so what I was trying to say is Lent and what we're celebrating today is thoroughly early church history, it's not something tied to the Roman Catholic Church, so how would you get your heart ready? Well, normally, here we go again, I'm gonna have to talk about this word, starts with an F, and it's four letters, I know what some of you are thinking, fast, they would get their hearts ready by starving King's stomach and focusing on King Jesus, so when that day came, oh, by the way, if you wanna join, we have a fasting group right now, about 240 people are already hooked up to this, we're gonna start January 1st, for those who can do that, if you just fasted in October, I know Dave, we were talking, he did a long fast, I said, don't even think about fasting for six months, you gotta let your body restore the nutrients and things, but for those of us who haven't, January 1st is, we're calling it a corporate-wide church fast, and so we'll be texting out information, so just respond with the word fasting, and you'll get motivation, things like that, you can push stop at any time, and then there's something on Facebook called roaring, roaring like a lion, roaring 20s, just like you spelled out, roaring 20s fast, a friend of mine put that together, there's over 6,000 people following that page, and they want me to post a lot of things on there as well, and I'm putting my fasting book on Audible this month, so we're gonna release a podcast on that, and again, it goes with part of my calling, God has put on my heart revival, fasting, prayer, not everyone shares that, that's okay, but I have to be faithful to what I'm called to do, and it's rallying the troops, not just you, throughout America, praying and fasting, and there's a lot of people who are joining in on that January 1st, so we'll prepare you beforehand, if you wanna sign up to that, I'll give you a little tip, begin weaning off the stuff you know you need to wean off of makes fasting a lot easier, the reason fasting that first day, that second day you quit is because really, it's like a drug addict going back to their favorite addiction, so if you wean off of sugar, processed foods, all the chemicals that are in that, and of course, alcohol, caffeine, fasting is not too difficult, because the body switches from carbohydrates, glucose, stored to ketone bodies as fuel, it's a switch that happens, so it's not that difficult, it's like when we're withdrawing from all the other stuff that makes it difficult, so you guys wanna go cold turkey, that's good for you, but be prepared, unless God calls you to that, of course, and I need to say this, because it does come up, people are asking about, of course, we're going into cold and flu season, and you see what's going on in China, if you're following the news, or the big uptick in pneumonia in children, and so we just encourage people, hey, if you don't feel good, stay home, if you have sniffles and coughing, stay home, we don't need

coughing in the pew, or especially in children's ministry, we don't want the kids coming sick, just practical, wise advice, it's always good to remind people of that, amen, Jamie? Okay, good, I saw you go thumbs up, and of course, that applies for me and Abram, too, if we're not feeling that well, we touch hands with the most amount of people, and we wanna steward that and use wisdom, not live in fear, but also not be reckless, and next Saturday at 10 a.m., children's ministry is doing a special event, next Saturday at 10 a.m., make sure you ask Kim if she needs any help, and then on Christmas Eve, three services we have, I'll be preaching the two Sunday morning, and then Pastor Abram's Sunday evening, okay, on the 24th, and then I'm gonna, Pastor Abram's preaching on December 31st, that's normally when I take off a few days, two or three days, go into a cabin with some water, and just prepare for 2024 sermons, maybe thoughts ahead of time, pray, and I've been trying to keep that up for quite a while, it seems to work really well, so that's all coming up, and then we do have, I don't know if we have the list up there, Laina looked like she jumped on it, for all the things coming up in the first quarter of the year, we're gonna be sharing this as we get closer, it'll have things to just get really put on your calendar, because what happens is we forget to put it on our calendar, or we forget that it's coming up, and January 3rd, you want to be here, our elder David Theis is gonna teach on finances, and I can't really tell you what he does on his off time, because I don't know if I have permission to do that, but he knows what he's talking about when it comes to investments, financing, the gold standard and silver, where things are going with the market, and stocks, and it'll be incredible, on that Wednesday, and of course you can go through, Ronnie Floyd will be back on the 14th, many of you remember Ronnie Floyd, you can Google him, you can look him up, actually just confirmed with R.T. Kendall, have you heard of that name, R.T. Kendall, an older gentleman, but I love when these older gentlemen pour into us, because that's what we need, so he emailed me, he's coming out, Al Whittingill, if you remember he'll be coming out as well, and then Reptile Man for the kids, they love him bringing the snakes, and all the other things, and then Seth Gruber, Seth Gruber on February 4th, that's what I wanna get to, how many of you have heard of Seth? Just a couple years ago, I met him at Rob McCoy's church, and then his ministry just really took off, and he's fighting against the abortion industry, probably I would say, remember Lila Rose, is kind of that same, now as a man, really smart, witty on it, so he's gonna be here on that 4th of February, and that's when we're gonna celebrate Sanctity of Life Sunday, I thought this is perfect timing, he's coming out, we'll miss it by two Sundays, but that's when we'll do that, and of course you can keep reading the other things, Revive Us Again, I'll be preaching, I think John Stratton and his wife will be here, on that February 10th, Men's Breakfast coming up, Meet and Greet, put that one, if you're new, put that on your calendar, you have free food, and you can ask me any question you want, free food and any question you want about the church, so that's coming up as well, and then we're gonna have a third Easter service, just not sure on the date, now again, all this is at the office, you can get all this information there, or we will be texting it and emailing it out, how's that for announcements, okay, so now the message, Revelation 11, failure is not final, praise God, praise God, I mean that to me is enough right there, where I can say, okay worship team, come back up, let's just worship, I mean really, that preaches, that preaches, with God, failure is not final, and you can encourage people, to strengthen themselves in the Lord, to get back up and fight again, and to keep moving forward, well I've done too much damage, God can't use me now, well I hope that's not the case, or I wouldn't be up here, it's never final, when God is on the throne, last week, we talked about the first opening chapter, verses of 11, so make sure you look at that, I talked about calling down fire, and there was 12 witnesses, whether they're actual witnesses, can be debated, whether it's actual fire, or the words coming out of their mouth, God said your words will be fire, and it will devour the people, and consume them, not physically in Jeremiah, but it was, you know that fiery preaching, it just consumes our sin, and it convicts us, and so that was last week, and of course, I want to put this a little bit later in, to make sure it gets out into the

radio, and people listening in post production, is if you could move over to Rumble, move over to Rumble, hello, YouTube is sneaky little stinkers, we're averaging one a week now, they keep pulling down videos, you went against our standard, how? And then stuff from Facebook, if I want to say, if I said what I really want to say, it's like, and you think that's offensive, the problem is it's the, I'm not going to get into, you guys know, the woke ideology, you can't convict us, you can't challenge us, you can't say anything about anything that we don't agree with, or we'll silence you, that's totalitarianism, you can see where this is completely dangerous, and I just thank God that he exposed it, with Twitter, and what's Elon Musk going through now? He was everybody's best friend two years ago, oh, not anymore, oh, you see that line in the sand is being drawn, all these big corporations are pulling, he's losing billions, and he's still holding the line, you can say whatever you want about him, I don't know, I'm just saying, thank God for that, thank God to show, people should be in jail, for what happened, altering election information, on Facebook, silencing this, don't let all these people cancel their tweets, if you saw what was on the back end of it, there should be a lot of people going to prison, and that is why a certain political party fears, absolutely fears 2024, because a lot of things will be exposed, if it goes against what they want, if it goes with what they want, then buckle up, hold on, either way, buckle up, hold on, you see a lot of what's going on, with Hezbollah, and the other group there, yeah, Hamas, Hamas just actually means violence, according to a Hebrew word in Genesis, and we got the Saturday people, now we're coming for the Sunday people, that's their MO, now do we live in fear? No, but we are wise, as serpents, we let people know, I would like to let people know, hey, you might wanna just be more cautious, and careful, and just take it to prayer, that's what a watchman does, it's hard for me not to say anything, and there's a lot more I could go into, the things that are going on, but I try to check myself, often, like is that really needed, you know, so let's get into the word of God, in Revelation 11, Revelation 11, beginning in verse seven, so now, these witnesses, were giving their testimony, fire coming out of their mouths, whether it's literal fire, whether they're calling down fire, it wasn't like a dragon, if it is a literal fire, they were just able to call down judgment, on the people, and they are just, nobody can stop them, isn't that cool, nobody can stop them, nothing can stop them, but when they finish their testimony, defeat, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit, will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them, now, something to be true to scripture, the word Antichrist, is not in Revelation, did you know that, it's actually never, nowhere in the Bible, a person called the Antichrist, John talks about an Antichrist spirit, and then what we pull in though, the beast, the false prophet, you pull in different things, and you give that person the title, so I don't have a problem with that, the word Trinity is not in the Bible, heck the word Bible is not in the Bible, so you know, it's used to describe a person, at the end of the age, and many attribute this to him, rising up, making war against them, and it's intriguing, to read all the different commentaries, I mean it's like, these guys have them, they have an imagination, on all different spectrums, of who this is, and what is Babylon, in Revelation that we'll get to, and is it was it this, is it this, because God says, come out of her my people, come out of her my people, lest you share in her sins, and receive of her plagues, wait a minute, I thought his people were out of here, well no that has to do with, it's like just, it's just very very interesting, but this has got to be a hard season, because they had finished their testimony, and this beast overcame them, and killed them, and so it's a good reminder for us, that there are seasons, when it appears that evil wins, and here's the encouragement this morning, during that season don't let go, don't give up, and that's what we tell people, who want to take their life sometimes, oh don't worry, it gets easier, there's light at the end of the tunnel, get through this difficult season, now it seems like all hell is breaking loose, hold on to the anchor, hold on to the hymn of his garment, because that season will come to the end, oh all the weeping endure for the night, joy cometh in the morning, even Jesus said this, he was taken in the garden, and they're going to kill him, very fascinating words, depending on what translation you're reading, I believe it's the NIV, this is

your hour, this is your hour when darkness reigns, Jesus said that, hey enjoy it guys, this is your hour, darkness is reigning right now, but just give it a few days, just give it a few days, I think it even didn't take a few days, I mean whatever you think of the scripture, he went down and preached to those souls captive, and let captive captivity, and did Jesus go to hell, you know let's wait until we get to that part, but he did something, he did something, I think he said hey, guess who's on the throne now, your kingdom, hell, death and grave has been defeated, and he could have led those who are in a holding, you know Abram's bosom waiting, he could have led them, you know there's a lot of speculation, but we do know that it appeared, even the disciples wept, his mom was, can you imagine his mom, seeing the innocent son up there, horrific, this is your hour when darkness reigns, but when that hour is over, you'll feel the pain, of God's judgment, so there are seasons when it appears that evil is winning, so hold on, you got that diagnosis from the doctor, a marriage issue, your son, your daughter who you raised in church, and is now living like there's no God, you've got to hold on to those promises, and again this beast is either a one world leader, or it's a wicked system, but I do want to encourage some people with this next point, sometimes we fail, and a lot of people are going to be listening to this, especially when we go on YouTube, just because of the title, just because failure is not final, I mean how many people are watching, go on social media, are living in a very depressing state, they've just blown, actually many people go online to get encouragement, and so they need to know as believers, that sometimes we fail, because of circumstances, like this happened here, or sometimes a person fails, appears to fail because of sovereignty, again what God allowed, but sometimes we fail because of sin, remember we are always engaged in battle, if you remember this, not you church locally, because we do really good at this, but others, if they would remember that a Christian is in battle, every day of their life, and when they fall, why do we beat them up? They're battling, I'm battling, so are you, every single day of my life, until I die, and we see a lot, somebody's doing good, and they happen to fall, back into something, instead we should be doing, come on, let's get back up, that's why failure is not final, and you'd be surprised, you hear my preaching, but I treat individuals a lot different than I preach, we're always engaged in the battle, and sometimes we slip, or run out of ammunition, you ever feel like that, just stop fighting, giving up, or we are injured, hurt, hurt, oh personal offense, is so destructive in the church, and for Christians, so destructive, the book we've recommended many times, the bait of Satan, and you see how God uses, well he can use it for our good of course, but the enemy uses offense, meaning you hurt me, and I can relate, trust me, I know it's hard to take those thoughts captive, and to forgive, and move forward, a lot of people have hurt us, and we've hurt people, but working through that, because what happens is you actually become stronger, you become stronger when you work through it, and you stick with it, but when you hold on to that root of bitterness, and you go to different churches, and you take that with you, pastor friend of mine, pastor's a large church in town, and I just spoke with him this week, and we mentioned obviously some of our people go there, and some of his go here, and it's funny, but he said the same thing, he said if they come with that spirit, it's gonna flow right into their church as well, they have not dealt with that unforgiveness, that offense, pastor Shane said something I don't like, well you'll be saying the same thing in six months here, because there's that offense it's not dealt with, and that's a root of bitterness that will come out, deal with it this morning, don't allow discouragement, don't allow discouragement to be a detour to your destiny, it will, it will, discouragement will detour you from your destiny, I'm gonna date myself, you guys recognize that name at the end, my opinion the best running back ever to play the game, because what he did was on a bad team even, and if you watch the newest documentary, I kind of wouldn't recommend it, because Slim Shady cusses, you know who that is Eminem, but other than that I think Barry, he seemed like he's a Christian or something, but eventually the lines were not going anywhere, he faxes his resignation at the height of it, he's about ready to break all the rushing records, and quits and

never comes back again, discouragement, and he didn't open up, but I bet if you could, would you have traded to the Cowboys? And let's remember who was in Emmett Smith, think they did okay back then, yeah, discouragement, how many did, how much of, and it can knock us off track, how much more important is spiritual life than sports, and if you're new, you've not heard this, but if you're coming in a while you have, I love one of Vince Lombardi's quotes, he said about football, he said, it's any man's finest hour when he lies exhausted on the field of battle victorious, and many times they don't know where it's going, and same with us, but it's that pressing forward, it's that getting back up, it's that Lord, I know darkness seems to be raining right now, but it will not finish me off, it will not come to completion, it will not win, and that's why we tell people even that struggle often with mental challenges, to help them stay focused on Christ, and taking those thoughts captive, and verse eight, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was crucified, now it is interesting that I don't know why they just didn't say, and their dead bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem, but he is showing here, I believe, Sodom's moral depravity, and Egypt's idolatry, those things took down the greatest city on earth, and so don't think for a moment that it can't taint you and me as well, so last bullet point up there, but I wanna go back to the first one here, there was humiliation and open shame, there was humiliation, can you imagine these great prophets of God, now their dead bodies are in the street, the humiliation of open shame, have you ever been shamed, have you ever done something, and it's shameful, open shame, and again this is why so many people need encouragement, if you look at the research behind bullying, and kids taking their lives because of it, it's because of the shame, hey we got a picture of you in your underwear, we're gonna post it on social media, the shame, and that's what the enemy wants to use, shame, but remember if you look to God, he can rebuild, he can restore, he can clothe you again, and sometimes it's a powerful testimony to walk out of that shame, say yeah I've fallen, that's my past, but let me tell you about God, and he can strengthen you, he can strengthen you in that shame, sometimes I think he allows it to humble us, doesn't he? Humble us, and humble us, I was just listening, I think it was focused on the family where, and I can relate, I'm sure many of you can too, but sometimes as our kids are growing up, and as Christian parents, we think, and they are, they're a reflection of us, and what we taught them, and when they begin to do things that are shameful, we begin to take that upon us, and it really affects us as well, and engaging our parenting by how they're acting, and of course there's a little truth to that right, obviously parents shape, but sometimes that shame in our kids lives, we felt in our own lives, and at the root of that sometimes is pride, is it not? I don't want people thinking, my kids do that, or your kids do that, I remember something that me and Morgan worked through, she might remember it better, but when we first started the church, our kids would like to come in, and run on the chair sometimes, you know, we'd, oh no don't do that, they're kids, you know, people say, why don't you, you need to stop them, yeah you try, it reminds me of that good luck Charlie Christmas movie, when he's got that, grandma's got all these little ornaments out, and he's, don't let the two year old touch these, just tell her no, right, like give me a break, that doesn't work, you gotta stand like a hawk, so anyway, you know it's embarrassing, and our kids are running on the chairs, and don't do that, and then I think it was later that week, or the next week, we visited in Simi Valley, it was a church, Francis Chan was just leaving, and Todd, not a nice wonger, was taking over, he preached for me a few times after that, and we get to church, and these kids are running on the chairs, and it's his, I'm like oh okay, I feel a little bit better right, but there's just, and the shame, or maybe just wanting the opinions of others, and reflecting on what will people think of me, if we allow that, and you've gotta make sure, you don't allow that to come into your heart, you need to battle through bullying, young adults, teenagers, battle through bullying, don't let others determine your future, here's what you need to think, this will help, when you think of the people bullying you, they often have really deep self esteem issues, they're taking out on you, how they feel themselves,

or what's happening in their home life, is not good, and so they're bullying you, they're making fun of you, because they are often jealous, of what is happening to them, isn't that, bullying is a reaction often, a 12 year old, 13 year old, making fun, making fun of your parents, look at you, you have this, you do this, but they're hurting inside, and if you can remember that, that will really help you push through, but they dealt with a lot of shame, I mean obviously they're dead, you know their dead bodies are in the street, but for the, even for the message of the gospel, I imagine, let's assume there's believers there, watching them, yay, yay, yay, and then now, now where's our rescue here? And then verse nine, then those, let's see, let's see if the world, the world was upset that they were dead, what do you think? Now it's interesting that all the world can see this, and so that's why, obviously we think a lot of, the end of revelation, some of revelation obviously is for the future, because how else are you gonna see all these people? Hundreds of years ago, if you read commentaries, they wouldn't even come up, because there's no, they couldn't grasp, how can you see this happening? But now with the internet, even, I mean even tribes in Africa, you see they got their little smartphone, a dirt floor and no running water, but they have their smartphone. So then those peoples, tribes, and tongues, and nations, that to me encompasses, a very broad reach of people, will see their dead bodies three and a half days.

God is a God of numbers, isn't he? And they will not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, and they will make merry, and they will send gifts to one another, because the two prophets are dead. The two prophets who what? Tormented. So they either tormented, again with literally something happened in the heavenlies, or their words were tormenting.

Isn't that true? When you speak the truth, what happens, let me just get a little practical here, or tell you what's going on. When you speak the truth of God's word, there's either, you're either on the devil's side or God's side. So when I say something like, that's just demonic in the school districts.

You know people say, well how can you say that? You're saying these people have a demon? I just know they're either on God's sides, or the Satan's side. There's no, if there's a middle side, there's no middle side. You're not fighting for God, you're fighting for the enemy.

So yes, a lot of things are demonically inspired. Absolutely. And so when you speak the truth of God's word, you torment the demon, the demonic, whatever, let me choose my language carefully here.

That demonic stronghold, I believe a lot of people have demons that they're not aware of. The Bible teaches that. And so you're tormenting with the word of God that demonic element.

Rewind to the New Testament. We know who you are, Son of God. Are you here to torment us before our time? And so, they were tormented.

This is why you can, if you watch Ray Comfort, or even Charlie Kirk at colleges, you know, they'll spit on them. They'll want to hit them. They'll get violent.

Wait a minute, you were just fine a few minutes ago. What happened? Nobody gets triggered that easily. Come on.

We can talk about Buddha, and God is everywhere, and God loves you, and flowers from heaven, and rain from heaven, and Hare Krishna. Everyone can have a great conversation. But when you go after that, light goes after the darkness.

People are tormented. And that's why we are often careful and cautious. Because you can see somebody go from very civil to veins in their neck.

And I truly believe what's going on in our nation. If some of these people could get away with murder, they would. They hate the message.

They're calling Christians worse than Nazis. Are you seeing this stuff? Are you seeing where the homeland of security was watching mama bears that went to school districts more than terrorists? Folks, this is not made up stuff. This is happening.

How is a mama bear going to a school district meeting worse than a terrorist? Because they're stirring up. They're tormenting. These people are not on God's side.

That's why. And you see, and now they're calling out all these women groups. Why don't you come against Hamas for all the rape and what they did to women? Michelle, Obama, your voice is silent.

Where are you guys? Demonic spirits. Kingdoms are colliding. So you can see by who's your enemy and who's your friend, what side of the aisle they are on.

So that's why a lot of this is happening. That's why it shouldn't be surprising. How can they allow this in our schools? This demonic agenda.

Same demon working that agenda is the same demon influencing them. Of course they're not going to say anything. A kingdom is united.

If it is divided, it will fall. And so all these people are rejoicing. Rejoicing these prophets are dead.

These tormentors, thank God. As I just said in these bullet points, the fiery words definitely torment people. That word torment is to vex in the mind.

And the image, and if you look at the Greek word, there's different images of, not images, but different definitions. One is struggling against a strong wind. Have you ever done that before? Bike riding or you're struggling against a strong wind.

So these voices, these prophetic people that were preaching, they were, these people were wanting to go this direction and they were pushing them back with God's Word. They were struggling. They were vexed.

It's not fun. This is not helpful. I like my sin and I want you to be quiet.

They celebrate when the messenger is shot or fails or falls. They celebrate when the messenger is shot or falls. Here's why.

They think it discredits our message. In other words, when you see Christian leaders, they fall, right, or they go back. They're like, yeah, I like, and they're trying all over.

There was a report of people looking at Billy Graham's trash. You ever hear about that? And they're just looking for every little, they're looking because it discredits your message. Now, let me clarify that.

It definitely doesn't help, nor does it send the right message, but our actions never, ever, ever change the truth. Never change the truth. Oh, look at that pastor who fell.

Or look at that leader. Look at my, look at what my, and I hear this a lot. I can't follow Jesus.

Look at my dad. It never changes the truth of God's Word. It would be nice if we could follow that perfectly, but it never changes the truth.

It's alarming. It's depressing when we see these things happen, is it not? But the truth is still the truth. And of course, there's a big thing in the news right now, or at least Christian news, is what happened with, you know, that's coming out with IHOP or Mike Bickle.

And I just talked to him on email a week prior before that all happened. And it's just alarming. It's very depressing.

It's like, it knocked the wind out of your cells as an understatement. And we're hoping, you know, that things will come out in the future. And who followed Ravi Zacharias? I was quoting him in my books.

I'm like, how is this even possible? But you know, without the boundaries, without accountability, without brokenness and humility in the daily devotion with the Lord and staying broken before Him, staying full of the Spirit, that is in all of us. The propensity to sin is in all of us if we don't stay anchored to the Savior. And I've shared with the men, and I think some of you maybe before, there's a book out there written by Steve Farrar.

I think it's called Finishing Strong or something else. But they interviewed 280 Christian leaders who fell. And at the top of their list, top of their list, I'll never forget this, was I'm too busy.

I'm God's man. I'm flying here and I'm flying there. I'm traveling.

I'm just God's man. Look at my TV ministry. Woo! Oh, now you're easy.

Praise what you are. Don't be too busy. If you're too busy to put God first, you're too busy, something needs to go.

Something has to go. I do that in my own life. I'm supposed to be in Arizona to pastor dinner with Charlie Kirk.

I'll be here. I don't have any desire to do that. Two days, three days, on the road, gone.

That Manifest, great thing, I think. But I need to be here. And you make decisions.

Are you getting that time with the Lord? Are you making wise decisions? Because 80% of those men counseled women of the opposite sex. 80%. What happens, it starts out innocent, but then the attraction begins to build.

Attraction begins to build, and that connection, that intimacy, things you're sharing you shouldn't be sharing, time you shouldn't be, and that builds together. And also at the top of the list, and I always remember this one too, they said, all of them said, that would never happen to me. That will never happen to me.

People come in, Pastor Cain, I hope that never happens to you. How dare I ever say, that will never happen to me. Now you can say, by God's grace, by God's grace, I'm gonna follow Him.

I'm gonna do everything I just talked about. I'm gonna stay broken, humble, accountable, and by God's grace, that will never happen to me if He holds me. But to arrogantly, arrogantly, and that's why, because there's something in us, call it kryptonite, or magnet, how about a magnet towards, and there's something in us drawing us away from God.

So all of these guys, or women too, I can name lots of women, especially in our area, I knew, living here all my life, left their husband and left with whoever. I mean, it's just, that doesn't happen one day. Like everything's fine, next day, hey, next day, I think I'll do this.

It's a slow pull away, and you begin to make excuses. Well, it's not a big deal. I mean, really, it's not a big deal, I'm helping them.

I'm in ministry, I'm really helping them, they need me. I hear that conviction, but I think that's just, no, I don't know if that's God. Me and my spouse got in an argument.

This person, boy, maybe this person who I should have married, maybe God wanted me to meet them. I've heard all this stuff, trust me. And the more you keep going, and not repenting, not being accountable, you know, there's time I'll go, Pastor, hey, I'm struggling with this, or hey, let's pray for each other, bring this in the open.

My wife, of course, and you let people know, because sin can't grow in the light, because you've exposed it. What you've done is you've exposed the lie, but you keep following that lie, and what happens? Shane's gone. See you later, guys.

What happened to our pastor? Where's our pastor? Where did he go? He listened to the wrong voice. He's walking out the back door. He's never coming back.

Do you guys still hear me? Is it working? Oh, that's good to know. That's good to know. I tested the limits.

So what you do is, that's the wrong voice. God, I'm repenting. I'm cutting off that relationship.

Doing this, doing that, I'm instantly back to God, back, falling forward. Leave your phone out, and your wife can check your Twitter and Instagram whenever she wants. Hello? There's people, I know these, no, no, I don't wanna touch my phone.

She can't use my car. Who do you think you are, Caesar? And so you open. And we've done this both times on Facebook.

Hey, this person contacted me from my past, and I don't know what their goals are, but I don't need to get lunch. And we let each other know. As soon as you, because if you start dwelling on it, maybe I can minister to them.

Hey, we dated 30 years ago. It's not a big deal. Right? Can we be real in church? Well, let me go and minister.

And here's when you know, when you're starting to be secretive, you know. Where are you going? Oh, I gotta run and get your tires changed. Right, you're being secretive.

You're not telling the whole truth. I haven't the foggiest idea where I was at. So, but isn't that true? I'm trying to help you.

I'm trying to help me. It's the same things I go through is what everyone goes through. People sometimes think, well, pastors, they must just walk on clouds and do everything right.

No, it's the same, same, same story. We're just broken men called of God to feed the people, to shepherd the people. And every single thing that people deal with is somewhere in the pulpit throughout the United States of America.

Not all on the same thing. Thank God, right? But it is there and we need to, that's a key, maybe the key takeaway is to acknowledge that's a lie from the enemy. Look and that's not going in a good direction.

Expose it, repent and get back on the right track. It really, and then here's what's interesting. Joy comes.

Joy follows. What used to be kind of secretive and because when you're living like that, you're kind of depressed. Anybody, any witnesses on that? No, a lot more hands should go up, but that's okay.

But when you're sneaking around and you haven't really been that bad yet, it's the joy of the Lord is not your strength at that point. Church attendance, nine times out of 10, any time, Pastor Abraham and I over the last three years, I haven't seen such and such in a while. Nine times out of 10, guess what? They've fallen.

They went out that door and they're not coming back. And so we reach out and just encourage, hey, don't even, just get back on track. Love to see you.

But that's how the enemy works in the life of a believer. But now the witnesses are resurrected. See, I told you.

I told you failure is not final. There's always hope when God is on the throne. I just, I don't know.

This just, maybe I'm like, it's like a kid sometimes. I get excited like about Christmas, people do. But I get excited knowing that God is on the throne.

There is not, can you imagine? Can you imagine if we're reading a Bible, if we're reading a Bible that talks about God and the enemy being equal and we don't know how it's going to end up? Oh, can you imagine? But we know who sits on the throne. We know who is sovereign. There's nothing to worry about.

Yeah, you might get sick and die or you might get in a car, but God is sovereign. God is sovereign. We have to remind ourselves that because fear comes in, doesn't it? You guys know I don't like to fly, but I have to.

I especially don't like to fly over oceans because I think I'm crashing, the sharks can eat me. That's how I think. I'll do it if God wants me to do it, but that's how I think, I'm just telling you.

Some of you are the same way, you know. I think I tell you too much stuff, don't I? Now I have to get serious again. Now after three and a half days, man, the breath of life from God entered them.

After three and a half days, the breath of life of God entered them. And I was reminded back in Genesis when man was nothing, God just created him. And the Bible says that He blew in him the breath of life and he became a living nephesh.

What's nephesh? Soul, Hebrew word for soul. N-E-P, I don't know exactly. But, or F maybe.

But he became a, see, it's nothing until God breathes life into you. And that's what you need to tell people who are not believers. It's dead man walking until Christ blows life into you.

When you want to get into ministry, you want to be involved in something, make sure God blows life into you. And then great fear fell on those who saw them. So unless you can move the Scripture around, and some people do, it appears that witnesses, and that's why it's hard for me even to say the witnesses are like the church or the witnesses are something other than two people because it's pretty clear as you read the context that there's witnesses, they were dead.

Now you can read into this that God revived the church and you know, but we know that they are revived. So they're dead and God revives them. And God can revive physical and spiritual life.

God can revive both physical and spiritual life. That's why we do believe, we are church that believes if God wanted to, He could raise somebody from, Kenny? I don't know, it could be me, but you know, it's more impressive to know about Pluto and Mars and Saturn and the sun than to raise somebody from the dead. Like if He can do all that, I'm pretty sure He can speak life back into those cells or the heart that has died.

And so He gives life, but He also gives spiritual life. And some of you need to know this. Maybe you're on a ventilator right now, spiritually speaking.

Many Christians are on ventilators, spiritually speaking. What is a ventilator? What's it do? It helps you breathe, you're sick. You're not walking in the fullness of God.

You're not experiencing that abundant life. And that can change this morning. How? Repent.

How? Repent. Say, God, I'm sorry, I want to be renewed. I want to be revived.

I want to cut out these things that are cancer in my life. I want to restore that broken relationship with you. Breathe into me the breath of fresh life this morning.

That's why David said, he's still alive. Create in me a clean heart. Renew a right spirit within me.

Breathe life. The prophets would say, oh God, revive us again. They're not dead.

They weren't dead. He's talking about living people. Oh God, revive us again.

So that we can walk around disgruntled and bitter and worried and fearful. Revive us again so that we can rejoice in you. Rejoice in you.

That's how you get your joy back. You see, those people with bad attitudes, they just don't have the joy. They miss the joy.

And you know them, right? Oh, here comes such and such. Oh my goodness. Let me just strengthen myself.

You know, just walk like, what's that thing on Charlie Brown, that little. It's just, get the joy back. You wanna shake them, get the joy back.

Repent. Forgive someone. I don't know what's going on, but you do.

God shows us what's wrong with us. Don't you like that too? Nobody can say, you know what, it's been five years. I don't know what's going on.

God's not, I'm just, I'm dead. The things of God are dead. I have no joy.

I don't know, God's keeping a secret. No, we know. We know.

Search my heart, Lord. Let me know if there's any wicked way in me. I want that joy again.

Now, here's the key. It's up to you to follow the instructions. We don't have a problem with knowing.

We have a problem with doing. That's the key. That's the key.

I'm gonna be releasing the book I told you about on fasting and even helping people reset their lifestyle because health is being a big deal right now. I don't know if you've been following the obesity epidemic and even in our kids and the healthcare system and the disease. And I'm gonna let them know and you know that we don't have a knowledge problem.

We kind of have an idea of what to do, right? Apple or Snickers bar? Come on. Raise your hand, apple. Half of you think of Snickers bar? I didn't say what you like better.

See, that's the problem. That's the problem. The flesh is dominating.

We don't have a problem with how to. We have a problem with want to. Getting that motivation back again.

And that's one great thing about fasting. It'll reset that motivation. King's stomach has to bow to King Jesus and you begin to put those fleshly desires at bay.

It's incredible. Incredible. I'll change gears because I know that's a hard topic.

Right now, during this season. January 1st, you'll all be ready for it. New Year's resolutions.

What's the top New Year's resolution every year for years? We know. Yep, yep, yep, we know. Did you know how, let me, Robert Cho, why most New Year's resolutions fail? Yep.

And I saw this because I worked in the gym industry. We saw January, it's packed for the first two weeks. Well, yeah, I mean, there's a lot of different reasons, but just to help you in getting ready for the next year.

Number one is always, a short-term answer doesn't fix a long-term problem. Never. You see, anybody who is in shape.

Many of you are watching Gary Brecka now. He's a friend of mine. He helped Dana White.

He's got videos all the time. They're blowing up. What he does, Ben Greenfield, Peter Atiyah, Dr. Huberman on the neuroscience.

I think he's at Stanford. Talks about God. And all these guys.

No one does, is fulfilling their calling, taking care of their body, who goes on a diet. It's a lifestyle. It's not perfect.

Hello? I had some good chocolate dipped in peanut butter yesterday. Don't worry, it's natural cacao with peanut. It's okay.

It's actually fine. No, I'm not convicted, so how dare you? But see, that's the problem. That's the problem.

Oh, I'm gonna try this for two weeks. You've already failed. No, I'm gonna do this for 30 days.

You've already failed. It's a lifestyle of commitment to taking care of this trillion dollar gift that God has given you. That's what it is.

Ready for number two? Buckle up. It takes time. 30 pounds in 30 days.

Unless you're water fasting, but it takes time. Set yourself up for the year. Not, oh, by February 1st.

No. No, no, no. It takes time.

It takes time. The cells and the mitochondria and the APT, converting energy, and everything takes a lot of time. It's the long haul.

People say, Shane, it's been a month. I've been doing all this and nothing. How do you know it's not going on the inside? Oh, your inside is getting much better, much more healthier.

Detoxing. You're going in a good direction. Don't gauge it by the scale alone.

And don't look at Instagram for the love of God. Right? Rock is close to my age and I don't look like that guy. But there's a lot of, you know.

Help. But don't compare. Long haul.

Don't compare. It takes time. And it's a lifestyle.

Is it not a lifestyle? It doesn't mean you're perfect. Doesn't mean you can't have that eggnog. Just don't have the eggnog and the Dunkin' Donut and the Starbucks Pop and the Chick-fil-A and the In-N-Out Burger and the stop by A.M. P.M. for this enchilada thing and then go by here.

It's just, I talked about it yesterday. I don't know when the podcast will come out, but actually the definition of gluttony, if you do research, they used to talk about this a lot actually in the church. The definition of it is consuming more than your body needs.

So I need a certain amount, I'm satisfied that's good, but nope, here comes gluttony. So something that was good now becomes sin. Why can't I stop at five o'clock? I have to go have more.

Right, because it's, well, yeah. You guys are getting me way off track here. This was a powerful message on the witnesses and now we're on health and fitness.

Now after three and a half days, God breathed life into them. And they stood on their feet and great fear fell on those who saw them. Do you have the fear of the Lord as well? Folks, we need to get the fear of the Lord back.

And the church I saw over the years, if you go back, many of you will understand this, but it's almost like we've apologized for the fear of the Lord. Have you seen that? I mean, back in the 50s, 60s, yeah, but

then it's like, oh no, no, God, the grace, God's grace, don't worry about that, God's not angry at you, God. Yeah, He can get angry.

Seven things I hate, thus saith the Lord. Hands that shed innocent blood, feet that are swift to running to evil, one who sows discord among the brethren. Watch out, gossipers.

We don't go all the way to that side. We have the grace and the mercy that balances us, but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of understanding.

Those who fear the Lord will do great exploits for Him. Their fear of the Lord is powerful. It's incredible.

The right kind of fear. When you leave here today, and you'll see that little dip, right? You can't really see any cars. Are you gonna drive on the other side of the road? You're gonna pass? Of course, why? I fear there might be a... That's a good fear.

Thank God for that fear. Fear of snakes when you go walking. It's a good fear, isn't it? Because you know, this might be a good illustration.

I was gonna, hopefully I remember it, and I did. A couple weeks ago I went, and it's November, right? There's no snakes out. I'm going up in the aqueduct, I'm kind of just, you know.

Oh, too late, too late. Right by like a 12-inch little baby, whatever it is, and they have a lot of venom. I'm like, I wasn't even looking.

It's November. Paul said walk circumspectly all the days of your life. Watching, because the enemy looks for opportune times.

He got, now I'm not tying this into the devil, of course, but November, there's nothing out. I don't need to watch it. I don't need to worry.

Watch out for those times when you think, I don't need to worry. The devil's on vacation this week. There's a reason that old saying says, idle hands are the devil's workshop.

And they heard a loud voice from heaven. So all these people are watching. They heard a loud voice from heaven saying, they heard it, oh, I'm sorry, the witnesses heard it.

And the witnesses heard a loud voice from heaven saying, come up here. And they ascended to heaven in a cloud and their enemies saw them. So God raised them up.

God raised them up. And I believe said, come up here. No doubt for the whole world to hear, right? God didn't have to say that.

He could just, but come up here. Showing what He's doing. He often says things for the benefits of others.

Did Jesus have to say, Lazarus, come forth? He said, I said this so you would know. Come up here. And then that same hour, there was a great earthquake and a tenth of the city fell.

And that earthquake, 7,000 people were killed. And the rest were afraid. And they gave glory to the God of heaven.

The second woe was passed. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly. Guys, don't play games with God.

Is God shaking you this morning? Is God shaking you this morning? Look to Him. And remember, triumph through tragedy. As a believer, you can triumph through tragedy.

I don't care what the tragedy is. You can triumph. What is triumph? Finish strong.

Victory. Well, Shane, you don't know what I just heard from the doctor. Well, I do know what God's Word says.

And of course, I don't say this often to people. I've just thought, for my own personal life, you get that bad news, let's say, and it's not looking good. Well, I'm gonna go be with Jesus really quick.

I don't know how that's a bad thing. Now, of course, fear from a human perspective, right? I'm leaving four daughters in California. Yeah, fear comes in, right? At least let me make it for a while, Lord.

Right, but God's a protector. God's a watchman. And a son, of course, for you who don't know.

But you can triumph no matter what the news says, because God is the one guiding you. And then there's seven trumpets, and I could stay here a while, and that's why I didn't know where to end this sermon. And I wanna hold, maybe keep going next week, because there's so much, and I don't like to just get through it, just to get through it, and then you miss a lot of the, because a lot of what I just said earlier, 20 minutes of that was not in my notes.

I know that's shocking. But I do wanna end with, and again, I'm gonna pick up right where we left off next week, so that means you need to be here to hear that. Let the fire of God be here that weekend as well.

But I wanted to show you something, and it'll tie in even better for next week. I just don't wanna leave it out. If we can put up the chart, or not a chart, but it talks about Hindu Scientology, the different religions.

Out there, it's probably towards the end, Kim. Sorry, I'm fast-forwarding through. But, and we're gonna get to why this is important next week.

But the bottom line was, all people who repent and believe have access to God. There's no hierarchy. And it's gonna tie in again with next week.

But it's so important because, did you know that the Hindus have a caste system based on ritual purity? The more pure you became, the higher up you were, closer to God. What about Scientology? Did you know you can work your way up the spiritual ladder? Even many Muslims, they'll tell you, they do divide it into two categories. Direct lineage, those who are directly descendants, and those they convert, correct? Often, how do they convert them? By conquering them.

And that's another big distinction with what Muslims believe in Christianity. We both proselytize, but it's one's in love and giving people a choice. The truth, the other, is through the sword and conquering, and you have to.

And they also have stages as well, and what they look upon people as. And then four stages of Buddhism. There's a stream, or you're entering into that stream of the divine.

And there's a once-returned, you're coming back. And then there's a non-returned, you're not coming back, you're not as holy. And then there is one who has gained true insight, true insight, and that's what they believe.

That's why I use those words I can't pronounce, so you can look them up. But with Christianity, all of us are the same. Did you know that I'm the same as every brand-new believer on the planet? God's like, well, that guy's special, he's a pastor.

Now, Billy Graham, that guy, boy, he's, boy. And people have said this, and it's funny. I bet Billy Graham's mansion in heaven is gonna be, actually, the word mansion, it actually just means a dwelling place.

Don't get too excited on 24,000 square feet with a swimming pool. Jesus said, when I go, I will create a dwelling place, that's the actual word, for you. And then Creflo Dollar, and people say mansions, and give me 1,000, and all this stuff.

But anyway, let's take that out of the edit, right, Matthias? I already see you, you're gonna remind me. So, that's good, conviction, right? And so, He's going to make a dwelling place for all of us. We're all equal.

We're all equal before God. That's why Paul said there's no Greek, and Jew, and male, and female, and slave, and bondage. There's nothing, Christ, they're all equal.

That should be encouraging to a lot of people. Encouraging that all of us are called children, children of God. I wanna read a quote.

Have any of you been following, and maybe you don't, because I grew up with these people, and they're my age. Shannon Doherty, she is on her final with cancer, and she came out just this week, and she said, I'm not afraid of death. I know where I'm going.

I think I would be afraid of death if I wasn't a good person, but I am. That just breaks my heart. Can you imagine the millions of people, and they, my final breath, and man, I'm a pretty good person.

And you're there at the judgment. He's not gonna even ask you if you're a good person. Wait, God's not even gonna ask me? He's not gonna weigh out my good, where He's not gonna, no, nothing.

We don't know how it'll go down, of course, but do you have the blood of Christ on your life? Have you repented and believed in the sacrifice that I allow to happen on the cross? Believe in that, and you will be saved, because that's the only thing that makes you good. Either you have that or you don't. Well done, thou good and faithful servant, or depart from me, I don't know you.

Nothing about good works. Does that break your heart? I mean, they think I'm a good person, and people aren't by whose standard, I guess, but there's some good people out there by their standard. I mean, you load it up against God's standard, and there's nobody good, no, not one.

Even our good works is but filthy rags in the sight of God. But failure is not final. I'm gonna end with that.

He may take you through the valley, but He won't leave you in the dirt. He may take you through the valley, but He won't leave you in the dirt. Failure is not final.

No matter what you're going through, no matter what you're going through, I was tempted to email the city of San Francisco this week, or drive up there, actually, I'm going that way, maybe. Here's why. Have you seen the proposed suicide net that they wanna put on the Bay Bridge? Is it called the Bay Bridge? That big, so, gold and gay, see, you guys know.

That's a suicide net, 20 feet long on each side. Was 170 million, now it's up to 400 million. It's been delayed, and I wanna say, I can save you 400 million.

I mean, is it possible? Can people take shifts and walk down the bridge, and can they pray for them? Can you put Bible verses? Oh, no, separation of church and state. Can you put Bible verses for God so loved? There's a lot more you can do, but no, 400 million. Here's how you fix the problem.

You put nets down, and you hit the net. Well, can they jump out of the net? That's what I thought. I mean, you're still up there.

You're still up there pretty far. So, like, they hit it, they're hoping they have a second chance. 400 million.

When the hope, the answer is free, free, free. Who takes of the son is free indeed, but the gift of salvation is free. And I don't know, can you walk on the side of the bridge? Anybody know? I mean, wouldn't that be a great thing to have people just going down and praying for people? Or, I mean, Bible verses encouraging, hey, call this number.

For God so loved the world, He loves you too. All things, all things come and go. I've been thinking about that all week, and things come and go.

Every, doesn't it? Everything comes and goes, except Jesus. Everything comes and goes. Even popular songs come and go.

Remember all the popular songs that came across the YouTube, you know how they recommend something? And it said vanilla ice. I'm like, that guy's still around? Ice Ice Baby is still around? He's my age. And I used to dress like that.

Not quite, not quite. Right, you got the parachute pants and the jacket, and it's just Ice Ice Baby. Like, that one song? All these things are gone, gone.

One hit wonders, gone. Superstars on the basketball court, gone. Gone, gone, gone, gone.

Everything is gone except the word of God and Jesus Christ. So don't go watch the vanilla ice videos. I'm just telling you.

I just, I never heard of him again. And I asked Avery, you knew, because I said, how's he a millionaire now? That song was just one. He goes, oh, he's in real estate and stuff.

I'm like, okay, that makes sense. Maybe somebody will send this to him. I love to reach out and talk to these guys.

I do not fear, Hollywood needs God more than anyone else. Or just as much. They are looking, they are searching, they're finding that fulfillment is not what they thought.

They talk a tough game, but you get them behind the scenes. It's a very depressing, very depressing industry. We still have good news in a bad world.

We still have good news in a bad world. Folks, remember, failure is not final. And so if you need to make that decision this morning, if you feel God really just convicting you, that you've been playing games with God, you've never really repented and believed, let us know.

We would love to pray with you in the prayer room. The Bible says, repent and believe in the gospel. That's it.

That's it. You don't have to go through this class. You don't have to give us money.

You don't have to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. And that's why we have this up here as well for us believers. The centrality I talked about before the service, the centrality of communion.

In the early church, communion was actually the center of the church. The pulpit came later. Did you know that? It was, they would come together and they would do this in remembrance of what Jesus did on the cross.

Then they would read the word. They would fellowship. They would sing the Psalms.

That this is a time to remember. Remember what Jesus did. And also to renew.

Renew that commitment. And if necessary, repent. Always remember those three R's when it comes to communion.

It's to remember what Jesus did. Do you ever forget things? And then when you remember, it really brings it back. Remember.

That's why the Bible says, remember the wife of your youth. Remember where you have fallen and return. The power of remembering.

The power of remembering. And then renew that relationship with the Lord. And repent if necessary.

You know, if you've been engaged in sin and you know it's sin and God's been convicting you, don't go home living in shame and guilt and failure and frustration. Repent. And take communion and say, God, I want to restore that relationship with you this morning.

I'm repenting. I don't want to do that anymore. That's why Paul said, examine yourself before you take communion.

Don't take it in an unworthy manner. And that's an unworthy manner. An unworthy manner.

But you know what? I'm going to continue with my porn addiction. I'm going to get drunk tonight, but I'm going to take communion. That's dangerous grounds.

So repent. Make that commitment. Partake again of communion.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/K2p_f6xBPoc.mp4
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