

Half Right - Almost Saved

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman explores the critical doctrines of salvation, emphasizing the importance of understanding one's relationship with Christ to avoid being 'half right' or 'almost saved.'

Duration: 47:22

Scripture: Matthew 28:1

Topics: "Full Surrender", "Salvation"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the critical doctrines of salvation in his sermon 'Half Right - Almost Saved,' exploring the concepts of propitiation, substitutionary atonement, redemption, justification, and sanctification. He warns against being 'half right' in faith, stressing that true salvation comes from fully embracing Christ's sacrifice rather than relying on personal works. Idleman encourages listeners to seek God wholeheartedly, reminding them that fear and doubt should not deter their faith. He challenges the congregation to consider their relationship with God and the urgency of sharing the Gospel, especially during the Easter season. Ultimately, he calls for a full surrender to Christ, highlighting the importance of baptism as a public declaration of faith.

Transcript

Let me tell you about my day yesterday. I spent most of it reconstructing the whole sermon. It just wasn't flowing because on Easter, Resurrection Day, right, for those who don't like the word Easter, you want to talk about, often, pulpits around America, even in Europe and different places are talking about the Resurrection story and the empty tomb and leading up to that.

And I just felt like taking a little bit different course this morning. Obviously, I'm going to tie in that. But where we're at in this church is we're in a series called Theology on Fire.

What we're doing is we're talking about theology, right, the study of God's word and the power of the Holy Spirit. Well, this week I was actually going to be, if it wasn't for today, talking about this area of salvation. They call it Sotrology, the study of salvation.

And in that, you have big words like propitiation, substitutionary atonement, and oh, Shane, what does that mean? Well, those all hit today. So I thought of why not bringing in where we're at in this series on theology and showing you how it applies to the resurrection. Because we've come to worship, we've come to remember the empty tomb, but sometimes we forget about the important doctrines that allow us to

appreciate what happened at that empty tomb.

So don't worry, it's not going to be a boring seminary class. I'm going to try to bring some of this into the message. The title of the message is Half Right.

Half Right, Almost Saved. Well, you see where I'm going with this, right? But let's I'm going to read from Matthew just to see why we are here this morning. Matthew 28, now after the Sabbath as the first day of the week began to dawn, that is Sunday, that's why we worship on Sunday.

That's why we have no problem coming to church on Sunday. There's not a month that goes by that I don't get an email from somebody who rebukes me for worshiping on Sunday, as if that's a bad thing. You guys don't keep the Sabbath.

You have to worship God on Saturday only. Right? Sunday's for Cinemark and NASCAR, but don't worship God on Sunday. But that's where we get it from.

The Bible talks about putting a day aside for the Lord. And so after the Sabbath on the first day of the week, which was a Sunday, as the day began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it.

His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here, for He has risen. As He said, Come see the place where the Lord lay, and go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him.

Behold, I have told you. So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to bring His disciples' word. Now I had a quick little message this morning at the Sunrise Service, but I thought a few points that stood out would really be important for you this morning.

One thing we see from reading this is He says, Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. That's a constant reminder that we need to look to the sovereignty of God, not to the news.

To gauge our mental stability. We look at who God is, not what North Korea is doing, or Russia is doing, or China is doing. Because God holds those nations in the palm of His hand.

So we're actually commanded not to be afraid. We don't have a spirit of fear, but of peace and of sound mind. And also He said, Come and see.

Come quickly. See that Christ is not here. He's risen.

And go and see Him in Galilee. But it reminded me as well that God has that offer to us as well. Come and taste and see that the Lord is good.

Seek Me with all of your heart. You will find Me. Maybe that's a message here for some of you this morning.

That you can't seek God with a part of your heart. That's like saying, Shane, are you married? Well, sometimes. Sometimes.

On weekdays. On weekends, I'm free. But it doesn't work that way.

Almost safe. Half right. Same thing applies to our relationship with God.

Now here's the doctrines I want to explain. I'm going to break them down for you. When we talk about the empty tomb, when we talk about the cross, you ask most people on the street, well, who is Jesus? Well, some guy that died for me, right? I think.

You know, and they don't understand the truth behind what they're saying. And that's what I wanted to share with you briefly. The first doctrine is propitiation.

It's a big word. And they're going to put a verse up there. Propitiation.

That basically means that the wrath of God was satisfied on the cross. I don't know why they just don't say that, but it's this big word that justice, you see, justice has to fall on someone to be justice. Does it not? Can you imagine our judicial system without justice? We wouldn't have anything.

Because when justice is required, justice has to fall on someone. That's why Jesus absorbed the wrath of God on the cross. It had to fall on someone.

The penalty of sin had to go somewhere in order for justice to be true. So that's what propitiation is. 1 John 2:2. And he himself is a propitiation for our sins.

And not for our sins only, but for those in the whole world. But also for those of the whole world. And Romans 3 reminds us that all men are sinners.

The penalty is death. Now, this isn't a popular sermon topic, right? But it has to be told. We have to speak the truth and love.

And this is a good reminder, since it's in the news a lot, I might get in trouble for saying this, but I'm going to say it anyway. Are you ready? We don't have a gun problem. We have a sin problem.

We don't have nothing. Now, don't misunderstand. Don't misunderstand, right? There's things we need to do to make people safer.

I got it. But that's not the problem. The first person that was ever killed was killed with a rock.

So let's go through Courtzill and get rid of all the big boulders. Here's my concern, is we take our focus off of the real reason and add some superficial reason and you never get to the heart of the reason. Man is sinful.

Man is depraved. You keep allowing these kids to watch these sick video games where they shoot people and they have sex with a prostitute and they take back the money and they set her on fire and you wonder why this is happening? Shane, kids watch that? Yeah, it's called Grand Theft Auto. Wake up.

What they see, they become. You want to curb the violence, bring the Word of God back into schools. Bring the Word of God back into all areas of life and you will quench the violence.

See, it's the deceitfulness of man's heart that is the problem. We always want to remove, well, if we would just take away this and take away this, that would fix it, then we can live in utopia. No, that's not the case.

The Bible says it's clear that the wages of sin is death. All men are sinners. The penalty is death.

And I hear people saying, Shane, no, no, no. Not today. I just want to hear about Easter bunnies and lilies.

Why aren't there lilies on the stage? I want to hear about chocolate. That's what I want to hear about on Easter, but the truth is that we are under the judgment of God. That's the whole point of the cross.

That's why the tomb is empty. So how can we avoid these controversial topics? See, we live in a society that loves Coors Light, so we want the cross light. But think about this.

I'm not trying to be funny this morning. This is a serious day. But we always hear, oh, you're just narrow-minded.

That's so narrow. So we embrace the broad road that leads to destruction. We've been conditioned in our culture by the world, and it begins to shape the way we view God.

So as hard as this might be to hear for some people, it's actually what you need to hear. That's why I've said for many years, every time I preach, I often say, if you don't like what I'm saying, it's because you need to hear what I'm saying. And that's true.

If you don't like what God's Word says, that means you need to hear it. God's speaking to you through His Word. And the whole point of propitiation, why did I bring this up? Well, here's why I brought it up.

Most believe that works satisfy God's justice. If you take a survey, you go down to Venice Beach, you go to the East Coast, how do you know you're going to see God? What's the majority of people say? Because I'm a good person. Well, they're half right.

Almost saved, right? Because works do save us. Before you get up and leave, let me clarify. Jesus' finished work on the cross is what saves us.

So you can be half right, but it's not your works. It's what Christ did on the cross. So that's that big term propitiation.

It means that Jesus absorbed the wrath of God on that cross by paying that price. And then we have another big word. It's actually two words.

Substitutionary atonement. I'm hoping you can put those words together and know what it means. Substitutionary atonement.

2 Corinthians 5.21. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us. This is just amazing. The more I studied this week, it's these deep truths that often just bring you to your knees.

So God made Him, Christ, who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. This is interesting. A perfect sacrifice satisfied a perfect God.

Innocent blood was shed for the guilty, and the sinless life was exchanged for the life of a sinner. That's substitutionary atonement. I mean, maybe it's just me, but I get a little bit excited when I think, the wrath should have fallen on me.

Jesus says, hold on, get out of the way. Let me absorb the wrath of God. All the sin from the fall to all the sin that is coming, everything Jesus, at that one point in history, on the cross when He was crying out, Father, Father, do not forsake me.

Where are you? You've forsaken me. Because at that point in history, the sin of humanity had to fall on that substitutionary atonement. He took the price.

And I looked all over the internet, and I could not find a better example than what I've said many times before. And many of you haven't heard this, so I think it's okay, but some of you will remember, it's that story of the man who took, I even heard D. James Kennedy, many of you might remember him, 25 years ago, talking about this. Obviously, it's a story.

I don't think it's true. But it's a man who brought his son to work with him. And his job was lowering this big bridge in order for the train to pass.

And as he was going to work, he went into the area there, he was working, he could see the train is coming, it's way down the tracks there, and as it's getting closer, he's like, okay, son, it's getting close, let me show you how to operate this, so that one day maybe you can do this. And he's looking around, and his 10-year-old son, he couldn't find him anywhere. Next thing he knows, he looks down, and he sees him playing in the gearbox of this massive drawbridge.

So he had to choose. Either he goes down and grabs his son, and hundreds of people perish in the train, or else he allows that bridge to come down, crush, and kill his son, in order for those to be saved. And as he made that decision, pulled that lever, and saw the train go by, and the people were waving at the man, and thanking him, not even knowing what he just gave up.

And that's exactly what substitutionary atonement is. Let that sink in for a minute, that that's why we're here, that's why we worship. And then also another part of theology in this area of salvation is redemption.

This is one I don't quite understand. Colossians 1.13 For he has rescued me from the dominion of darkness. He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness.

He has rescued you as a believer from the dominion of darkness, and brought us into the kingdom of his Son that he loves. Redemption is to regain something that was lost. Correct? It's to go in and regain I'm coming, and I'm taking back what I lost.

This is beautiful because in this area of theology God is actually rescuing people out of the dominion of darkness. When a person doesn't know Jesus, and they're living in sin, and they are actually enslaved to that sin, they're living in darkness, their eyes are blinded, but when they repent and believe, Christ comes and he removes them from that darkness, from that dominion. Satan used to have his grip, right? He used to have his grip, and then he takes them away.

Jesus comes and takes them back. He regains that. He redeems that.

He pays the price, and he redeems that person. And again, on this area, most think that they can rescue themselves. Can they not? When I talk with God, I'll present my sight.

No, you won't. That's not going to be the time to do that. Well, he'll see my good works.

He'll see I'm a good Christian person. My favorite one is I've been a Christian all of my life. Well, what does that mean? It's the one thing, one thing only, he will see what Christ did.

Half right, almost saved. And this is the point where Jesus made a spectacle out of the devil. Because they thought, Paul actually talks about how did demonic realm, how did Satan know what he was doing by crucifying the Lord of glory? He would have never went through with that.

So Jesus, it's almost as if he's being led to the slaughter. We've got him. We finally got him.

We're going to kill this man who's doing wonderful things. And let's get rid of him. Satan's throwing a party, right? They're drinking beer in hell and all those things.

And wait a minute, then on the third day, probably before that, I think Satan knew as soon as Jesus gave up his spirit, went down and there's a whole different theology on that, went and preached to those who need to hear the message. And he was defeated. He pulled.

It's like he made a spectacle, right? He just kind of joked around and then finally let the hammer down. I've been thinking of this analogy. I hope it's okay to use it.

You know, Henry who plays drums. Right? A few months ago, he wanted to arm wrestle me. And I said, are you sure you want to go there? Are you sure? Okay.

You're left-handed. I'll go left-handed. So I just made a spectacle for a little bit.

Just a little struggle and then okay. Finally, told you. Right? But it's the same type of analogy.

Now as I'm getting older and he's getting older, I'm not going to be able to do that anymore probably. I might lose at some point. But that's kind of what Satan, you know, a little taunting and he goes and he conquers and Jesus brings back what was driven away.

Actually, the Old Testament talks about that often. That God will bring back what was driven away. He will bind up the broken.

He will strengthen the sick. But the fat, the proud, the arrogant, he will feed in judgment. So redemption is a wonderful thing.

Jesus is going and buying back. He's rescuing, basically. He's rescuing them.

They're in the hands of Satan. They're on the broad road to destruction and Jesus regains and redeems them. So it does beg the question this morning, has he rescued you? Has he rescued you? And then one more word before we get to the last one.

Justification. Justification. I love this one as well.

Romans 5.1. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So we've been justified. What does that mean? Just as if I've never sinned.

That's an easy way to remember that. Because of Jesus you can go and stand before a holy, righteous God someday because you've been justified. You've been made right because of what Christ did.

But again, here's where many people think works can save them. Right? If I can do certain works, no. Again, half right, almost saved.

You see where I'm going with this now, right? I hope. You don't want to be half right. Because a lot of people are half right.

They know who Jesus is. They know what he did. But they don't accept and embrace that so they're half right, almost saved.

Now, we get to the final word of theology in this area. It's sanctification. I love this word as well because this is where God cleans us up.

Here's the big mistake in Christianity or in church today. We say we'll come to God when I get my life together. I hear this all the time on baptisms.

You ready to get baptized? Oh, not yet. What do you mean not yet? Oh, I've got to make some changes. I've got to get my life back on track.

Or are you ready to come to God? Not yet. And people, when we invite them to church, they say, there's no way I'm coming to church. God will strike me dead in that place.

I've got to clean myself up first. I've got to get myself right before I go to church. Before I go to church.

So sanctification, 1 Corinthians 6.11. And such were some of you but you are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. So I want to encourage you with this word. Be encouraged because God cleans us up through the work of His Spirit.

Anybody not feeling quite clean or worthy? I mean, Lord, I could do better. I could pray more. I could lead a better life.

It's okay to have that desire but sanctification is when you submit your life to the work of the Holy Spirit. You submit your life to the work of the Holy Spirit. See, so you don't clean yourself up.

You submit to the work of God cleaning you up. It's almost like I can tell my 5 year old, listen, you're coming with me kicking or screaming or willingly. What are you doing? You can kick and scream, you're still coming.

Or you can willingly surrender yourself and allow. How much easier is it to carry a 5 year old who wants to go in that direction? Right? Okay, you want to go. I'm going to take you here.

I'm going to take you to the safe spot. I'm going to take you into the house. I'm going to take you.

I'm going to watch you. I'm going to care for you. And you have versus kicking and screaming and running the other direction and that's the difference.

That's what many people think. I've got to change myself. You can't change yourself.

You submit. You surrender to the work of God in your heart and allow Him to change you. Him to grow you.

Him to make you holy. Now there is, I believe, a partnership there. What's the old saying? That you work as if it's all up to you and you pray as if it's all up to God.

You know, there has to be a cooperation on our part. I've never seen anybody become spiritual by doing nothing. Like, you know, I'm just going to lay on my bed all week and Lord, when I wake up, I want to be patient.

I want to be loving. I want to have a zeal for your word. I really want to worship.

I just don't feel like it. I mean, you can put on what's, who's on the new bands now? Country Music, help me, is Tim McGraw still popular? Right? And his wife, something, whatever her name is. Right? And so you have, see, I can listen to that all day long.

I can listen to that all day long. People say, but when it comes to worship, I don't want to worship. See, that's a heart issue.

It's not a preference issue. It's a heart issue. If we don't want to come in and we're bored of worship, something has to change in our hearts.

Sanctification. The closer you come to Christ and knowing God, the deeper that relationship is and the more you want to worship. When the relationship isn't there, we're more drawn to the things of the world.

Right? I'd rather sit down and listen to Gaga and Miley Cyrus. Gaga, right? Instead of worship. Because why? Who's got your heart? Who's got your heart? That's what's happening.

See, it's not about chocolate and Easter bunnies, I told you. This is true. We need to hear these things.

So be encouraged. God cleans us up through the work of the Holy Spirit. We submit to His leading.

So that's the doctrines of the cross. The doctrines of the empty tomb and different things is propitiation, substitutionary atonement, everything we just talked about. God and Jesus paying that price for us.

And then we get to the story obviously of why we're here the week the doctrines were applied. I'm going to talk about that for just a minute as well. That was the introduction.

Now here comes the hour sermon. You ready? If I fooled you, I fooled you all. We got ushers.

Did we lock the doors? The back doors are locked? Of course I'm joking. I know it's Easter. It's the Super Bowl of Christian holidays, of course.

Resurrection Day. The week the doctrines were applied. I just want to take us back just for a little bit.

Jesus went around and went about doing good, but He was betrayed. And as we read the story, to me it's hard to fathom that somebody who actually did no sin, shouldn't have upset anybody. His whole motive was godly and He went around serving people and healing people, setting people free.

If somebody casts a demon out of your son, you're probably going to respect that person and want to follow that person and just went around doing nothing but good, but was betrayed. Religious people put Him on the cross. Even those He trusted in, left Him.

At the end of the day, in the Garden of Gethsemane, very few were left to follow Him. He was by Himself. And it was a good reminder for us that people will turn on you.

But God doesn't. Here's what happens. This is not really an Easter type message, but I just want to encourage you in this as well.

People will turn on you. If it hasn't, many are shaking your head, you know if it hasn't yet, just wait. People will turn on you, God never does.

But here's where we get where we make a mistake, a big mistake, is people turn on us and we get upset at God. We go through something difficult and we get bitter at God. Thank God that didn't happen with Jesus.

Everybody's betrayed Him, everybody's gone, forget this, let's start over. You used a flood with Noah, let's throw down hellfire and brimstone on the world and let's just start over. So He didn't do that.

He went around doing good, He was betrayed. And then we see that fear gripped His disciples. Can you imagine following a person who you think is the Messiah? You just gave up everything, you're following Him, and now this is happening.

The Roman soldiers take Him, He's going to be crucified. Fear gripped His disciples. It made me wonder if they said the same thing that John the Baptist said three years prior.

Art thou the Christ or shall we look for another? It's King James. NIV would probably be, are you Jesus or do we look for someone else? Are you the coming Messiah? What happened? This is why when people say that the body was taken from the empty tomb that was stolen, that Jesus never rose from the dead, they still say that today in Israel and people believe that. That doesn't make any sense.

Because these disciples, these followers were so distraught. Talk about depression. Their king was just killed and they're probably next on the list.

They're not going to go steal a body and then make up some religion. And then be killed years later for the religion they made up. It makes no sense.

That's why we often ask that question here. Jesus is either a lunatic, He's a liar, or He's the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are the options.

So you have the disciples here, fear gripped their hearts. And it's a good encouragement for us to not let our present circumstance knock us off course as well. Because whatever you're going through, some of you maybe not much others of you might be going through tremendous difficulties but God says don't let that knock you off course.

Stay the course. Fight the good fight of faith. And then the third point here, He gave people a final opportunity to hear the truth.

Jesus always endeavored to give people a final opportunity to hear the truth. Religious leaders, Roman soldiers, citizens, He gave them the opportunity to hear the truth. Even Pilate, as I was reading over this story a couple times this week, this was so interesting.

Can you imagine being Pontius Pilate? You're the person going to sentence Jesus to death. You don't see anything wrong in Him. Your wife warned you, says don't have anything to do with this just man.

You've questioned this person who isn't asking and begging for his life. Instead, he's questioning you. What do you do with this? And he wanted to, and sometimes it's funny, I feel for Pilate.

I know that might not make sense, but sometimes I read it and I don't like him necessarily, but I feel for him. It's almost like he's saying, hey, let this guy go. I don't find any fault in him.

Let him go. How about I just let him go and they said, give us Barabbas. Give us Barabbas.

Give us a thief and a robber. Give us a thief and a robber back. We don't want Christ.

And Pilate's, what has he done? What evil has he done? And they stood up and in a loud voice they said, he made himself out to be the Son of God. And I can imagine Pilate's probably what did Jesus say? Hold on, rewind. He made himself out to be the Son of God and then Pilate brings him back in.

Tell me who you are. What is this? And like a lamb that was led to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth. And Pilate was questioning him and questioning him and said, answer me.

Answer me. Who are you? Don't you know? Don't you know I have the power? I have the power over you to release you or to condemn you? And Jesus said you have no power over me at all unless it was given to you from my Father above. You're telling your executioner that? That's boldness.

We've got to get rid of this vision or this view of Christianity of some meek, pathetic just weak religion that has no backbone and just as a crutch they need to lean on Christ. This is a strong Savior. This is meekness not weakness.

Weakness is the absence of strength and meekness is strength under control. So he was set there and he questioned Pilate. And it may have been the last opportunity for Pilate.

That's what I think about often. Can you imagine the person who was able, obviously we know it was God's ordained plan, God's sovereign plan, but Pilate rejecting the Savior and then spending eternity in hell. He had an opportunity.

He had a final opportunity and that's the question I wanted to throw out this morning. Could it be the final opportunity for some of you? Could it be the final opportunity for some of you? And I don't use, it's funny when we talk, I guess not funny, but it's true, when we talk or when pastors talk about things like this people say, oh that's what they always say. But isn't that true? A lot of you I won't see again.

Many of you. Could this be the final opportunity for you? You see God is gracious. God is so gracious.

We sang this song, it's about a God who pursues you. We have this image of God just sitting up in heaven crossing arms and saying no, no, you're going to have to really please me. But it's actually a pursuing God.

A pursuing God. You have the DNA, the image, you're made in the image of God even though that image has been, in the fall of humanity it's been damaged. So God in creating us there's the image.

In the conviction the Holy Spirit convicts us. We hear sermons. We hear the creation story.

We see creation. We see new birth in a child. We see, it's everywhere.

God's pursuing. He's pursuing. He's gracious.

But see His justice cannot sleep forever. It was actually, I think it was Thomas Jefferson who said that at the beginning of our nation, Declaration of Independence and different things. He said, indeed I tremble for my country when I see that God is just and that His justice cannot sleep forever.

It's the same thing with us. It's such a dichotomy because we're called to embrace the gospel quickly. We're called to.

There's always urgency. You listen to Jesus preach. Listen to Jesus preach.

Was there not urgency? He would come into the entire city and He would say, Oh Jerusalem! Oh Jerusalem! Weeping. Jesus weeping? Yeah, Jesus cried. He's crying for Jerusalem saying, Oh daughter of Zion, why don't you turn to your Messiah? I am here.

I am here. Look at the miracles it attests to me. Look at the bodies being raised from the dead.

Look at the blind eyes. Look at the deaf ears. Look at all these things.

The demonic realm has to flee. They actually have to ask me for permission on where they should go. Pigs or the abyss.

And He's crying over Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Why don't you turn to me? But you were not willing. You don't think Paul preached with urgency? King Agrippa.

Governors. Whoever they put Paul in, it was always the gospel. Always the urgency of the gospel.

Because when the gospel becomes secondary and complacency sets in, we'll rarely talk about it. It becomes something instead of something that is so important, it becomes something that is put on the back burner. And well, I'll get to it when I get around to it.

And that doesn't work. We have to seriously think where are we at this morning? Are you part of the mocking crowd? Are you part of the mocking crowd? You know who the mocking crowd was? Those who say, Come down. If you're the Son of God, come down off that cross.

Can you imagine they're standing? You don't know how high it is, but they're saying, Oh, so you're the Son of God? Well, come down off that cross. Come down off that cross if you're the Son of God. And if I was there, I would go and I would shut that mouth.

No, He has to stay on that cross. Because that's the only plan for redemption. There's no plan B. There's no plan C. There's no backup plan.

Jesus is the only way, the only truth, the only life. The nails didn't keep Him on the cross. The nails didn't keep Him on the cross.

His love kept Him on the cross. But the mocking crowd, show off! Prove off! Prove yourself! Show off! If you're really the Son of God, you come down off that cross. Guess who's not mocking anymore? So you can never go by your current situation, your current circumstances.

You always have to look. Look ahead. And see the end of the road, not the beginning.

Because there will be mocking voices. If you ever want to get mocked, just do what I do. You would not believe the mocking.

I have to be careful because I don't want to respond. Right? An email. You believe we came from monkeys? Who should be mocking who? You know what I mean? Come on! All this just happened, right? A couple of cells in pre-mortal ooze, billions of years ago, decided to get together and design themselves and create themselves.

Who should be mocking who? Come on! Creation screams Creator! There's a heartbeat of God in everything. Can't you see it? Can't you feel it? If yes, then why do we continue to reject Him? Many people. And I just want to leave with this question.

If you're not part of the mocking crowd, which I know most of you aren't, some hearing this later might be, but for the most part I know that's not the case, but I often thought how many of us are part of the coward crowd? We don't come out and just deny Him, but we definitely don't talk about Him. Remember that movie we watched here on a Wednesday night a few weeks ago? I don't remember what the statistics were, but it was something like 90% of people in that denomination, that huge denomination, have never led anyone to the Lord. I've been thinking about that for a long time.

Are you telling me that 9 out of 10 people live their entire life without talking much about Jesus? And if I thought about it, I'd probably say that is pretty accurate. Because we get to work, we're around our friends, we turn into closet Christianity. Right? We're not going to say much, we're not going to live for Christ.

Shane, that's so old school. Really, it's Bible. You've got to get rid of the new school.

New school is not truth. It's just repackaged. It's repackaged heresy.

The old past, you need to follow the old past, go back to the old past, to the old truth. If it's true, it's not new, and if it's new, it's not true. But are we part of the coward crowd? Are we not witnessing for Jesus? And this is interesting because I know I can't force this.

I know I can't get louder and then it'll make a difference. This has to be a work of God in the human heart. As a person surrenders their life, they are filled with the Spirit.

A bold witness is a direct result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. So if you're not part of the mocking crowd, if you're part of the coward crowd and you really haven't been living for Jesus, we come to church as if we're doing God a favor, right? Well, it's Easter and Christmas or I'll do things because I'm a good person, but if we do that, is our heart really right? So I would encourage you to fully surrender your life this morning. That's how the gospel truly impacts your life.

That's the only way it truly impacts your life, is to fully surrender. And the enemy comes and he plants thoughts in your head just like he did to me in my twenties. That's for weak people.

That's for those crazies. That's for fanatics. That's for those, oh Jesus, holy rollers.

Right? Hyper, whatever. And he begins to plant thoughts, but no, that's biblical Christianity. A follower of Jesus Christ is filled with His Spirit.

Without that, we become carnal and lukewarm. We don't do anything for Christ. I'm not beating up at all, I'm trying to encourage you.

Because without that filling of the Holy Spirit, I would not be up here. I know many of you wouldn't be doing what you were doing. And that's one of the things I was getting at with the empty tomb.

It's interesting, Jesus said, it's good for you that I leave. Jesus told His disciples, it's good for you that I leave, for when I leave the Father will send the comforter. The Father will send the Holy Spirit.

So now the Holy Spirit that used to be not inside of a person, now in New Testament Christianity is the Holy Spirit resides inside a person. It doesn't just work outside of them. That's a wonderful thing.

The comforter comes alongside and into a believer and that person then is on fire for God. What makes a person want to read the Bible? Their flesh? What makes a person get up at ungodly hours of the morning and want to pray? The flesh? What makes a person want to fast? The flesh is all over that, right? What are these spiritual disciplines? Being a moral person, looking to holiness, looking to honor God. It's a result of the Holy Spirit as you surrender your life to Him.

You have to surrender and say, God, I'm surrendering everything this morning. I'm surrendering my life. I want to be filled with Your Spirit.

And I was reminded of the verse as I'm closing here that when Jesus said, if you deny Me before men I will deny you before My Father. So I think some people have to make a decision. They have to say, okay, I'm done.

I'm done denying. I'm going to embrace the message of the Gospel. You have to repent.

You have to believe. And others might be denying Him by cowardness. They're cowardly in their approach.

They don't want to talk about Jesus. Come on, I can relate. All throughout my 20s, if a survey came in the mail, I'd check Christian.

If you asked me, if you asked Shane, are you a Christian? Yeah, I am. Why? Why? Why? Why? Don't talk about that around my friends here. Right? I've got an image I've got to uphold.

I've got to be cool in the world and I'll get to Christ later. The Bible actually paints a reverse picture. Follow Christ with all your heart.

Pick up your cross and follow Him. It's not partial obedience. It's full surrender.

We have this view of Christianity as this weak, spineless religion that has to have God on a crutch. But when you look at Christ, you see the epitome of manhood. You see the epitome of strength.

Looking His accuser in the face and saying, you have no power over me at all. He lays down His life willingly. The lion becomes the lamb.

But be careful. Be careful. That lamb is not coming back as a lamb.

Did you know that? The Bible doesn't say He's coming back as a lamb. He's coming back as a conquering king. He's coming back as a lion of the tribe of Judah.

He's coming back to bring judgment. He's coming back to bring a day of reckoning. Every eye will see and every knee will bow and confess that Christ is Lord.

Even John saw heaven open and he said here comes a white horse. And it's not a nice white horse. This white horse has blood on His leg.

And His name is written King of Kings. And out of His mouth goes a sword that He will strike the nations and He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. It actually says He will tread the winepress and the fierceness and the wrath of Almighty God.

That's Christ. That's nothing to be embarrassed about. That's something in someone to worship and to behold.

So I'm going to ask something of you if you're interested. We're having baptisms after the second service. If you want to make that decision today, you want to follow Him, get baptized.

We've got clothes. We've got towels. And make that decision.

Even if you've been a believer but you're baptized as a child, you never knew what it really meant. And people ignore being baptized because they know that's when I got to get serious. Right? Okay, I believe I'm a Christian.

I'm going to church. But I'm not going to go in front of people and get baptized. I'm not ready for that yet.

The Bible said believe and be baptized. Believe and be baptized. Believe and be baptized.

Or if a person was baptized as an infant or a child, they had no clue what they were doing, we believe in believer's baptism. I actually was baptized Christmas time in 2000. Was that 18 years now? 17 years now? And for that first week I fought it.

I'm like, I've been a Christian. I'm not going to get this. But I knew I never did it and meant it.

And then as you're getting older you're like, well, I'm not going to do it now. That's embarrassing. So I'm stuck.

Every time I'm reading the Bible it keeps coming up. Believe and be baptized. Well, okay, let me just turn to Acts.

And they believed and were baptized. Let me go back to Matthew. No, let me go to John.

I'll be safe there. Those who are baptized will be saved. Those who believeth not will be condemned.

You just can't find it anywhere. Because it's a public declaration. If you deny me before men, I will deny you before my Father.

Now it takes 30 minutes to unpack that verse. But the bottom line is you don't want to find out exactly what that means. We should want to show people, you know what, I'm serious about this.

So if you want to get baptized, we will do it. I even have extra clothes. I'll do it after this service if we have to.

Just let us know. And it's not just for those who are coming to faith in Christ. It's those who have been avoiding this.

And I truly believe that when you stop avoiding this huge step of obedience God will bless you in many different ways. Because it's a step of obedience. When we know that we need to be doing something and we don't do it, that's called disobedience.

But we don't call it that, do we? Well, that's my flaw. I just have a flaw in that area. Pray for me.

It's my pet peeve. It's my one little vice. The Bible says disobedience.

So I would encourage you, whether if you're a young child and you've talked to your parents, you know what it means, you want to get baptized, let us know. We're going to be next door in the prayer room. And we'd love to pray with you and get you on the sign-up list for that.

And also, there comes a point where you need to make a decision. And say, I'm going to follow Christ wholeheartedly. I'm going to embrace the gospel.

The Bible just says, repent and believe. Repent and believe and you will be saved.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31964.mp3>

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