

Nothing Is Impossible For God

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the theme that nothing is impossible with God, focusing on the foretelling of Christ's coming, His birth, ascension, and eventual return. It delves into the importance of aligning our hearts with God, seeking Him, and submitting to His sovereignty, even when prayers are not answered as expected. The sermon also highlights the need for conviction, repentance, and a deep reverence for God's power and authority.

Scripture: Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, Micah 5:2, Luke 1:26, Luke 2:1, Acts 1:9, Revelation 19:11

Topics: "God's Sovereignty", "Faith in the Impossible"

Description

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Transcript

The title this morning is nothing is impossible with God. Nothing is impossible with God. Boy, that could preach a sermon on its own, not even Christmas related, right? Number one, foretold.

Christ was foretold. We know, or we don't know, but they knew He was coming. There was prophets and prophecy saying that He was coming.

And then He came. He was here on Earth. And that's why we celebrate this time of year.

And then what happened after that? The Ascension. He ascended. And at some point, though, He is returning.

And those are really, I think, it's not just about His birth, although that's important, it's about why He came, the prophetic words, why He's here. He ascended and coming back. So let's talk about each of these briefly.

And when I say briefly, it's not going to be too brief, right? You know me. I could talk for a couple hours on the Bible. It's so interesting.

But it was foretold, foretold that Jesus was coming. A lot of people don't realize that. But Isaiah 7.14, Isaiah 14.

And it's ironic. I wasn't even thinking about this. But just a couple days ago, I read a little bit more about the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Have you heard about that finding? They say it was one of the most historically relevant findings, biblically speaking, where they actually found in the caves, I think 1940s or so, a shepherd boy threw a little pebble down and it hit this clay vase and they opened it and there was these scrolls that were actually dated, some of them before Jesus. Before Jesus. Well, okay, what's the significance? Well, it had the same book of Isaiah that we read today.

Now, obviously different language. They wrote in Aramaic and Hebrew and then of course they translated into Greek and that's where you get like Septuagint and words like that. It was an incredible discovery.

And they would read in Isaiah, they would write in Isaiah about Jesus coming. Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and we will call him Emmanuel.

And then in 9.6, to us a child is born. This is a favorite verse at Christmastime. A child is born, a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulders.

Not just our government. All government, the ruling authorities of the world will be upon his shoulder. And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Those are the names given him. And then Micah, but you Bethlehem, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times. So you have all these different prophetic promises.

And I could have stayed here for the whole service. I mean, we get into no bones will be broken in the Psalms, and no bones will be broken. He'll be buried among the type of tomb, among the thieves, and all these things that happen.

It's amazing how many prophecies actually were fulfilled. And then Zechariah, Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion, shout. See your king comes to you righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

And we say, okay, what's the big deal? But if you fast forward, Zechariah wrote this, who knows, 500, 600 years, 700 years, don't quote me exactly, before Jesus. And now Jesus, you ever hear of Palm Sunday? He takes this donkey and he starts riding through the streets, and even the children are crying out, Hosanna, Hosanna. And the Pharisees want to stop them because they know Scripture.

They know Scripture. That He's actually going to come that way. And so, again, many Scriptures.

If you ever want to take time and just put it online, how many Scriptures talk about Jesus is coming? It's amazing to see all of them. And then now, of course, why we're here, and I'm going to read some Scripture at length just so you can see the magnitude of why we're here. The next phase of Christmas is He came.

He came, that's why we're here. The heavens cannot contain Him, yet He was born in a womb. How cool is that? And, of course, we look to Luke, Luke chapter 1. Now, in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was

sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph out of the house of David.

And there's so much, I mean, I like to stop almost on every sentence because it's just God's sovereignty and nothing is impossible. He took Joseph from the line of David, and He took Mary from another lineage of what was important, the messianic reign, and He brought them together to bring forth Jesus. You can read about the lineage in Matthew, and it's just amazing what God did.

And to a virgin, which would be absolutely impossible. And, of course, that's why they didn't believe Him. Even the Pharisees said, You were born from fornication, and you're going to lecture us? And that is still thought of today.

Even today, they think they stole His body. Because you can't get away from the fact that Jesus existed. I mean, there's just no way.

Historians, even Jewish historians, Roman historians, people who were Christians, and in the Dead Sea Scrolls, they found a book. It's not canonical, it's not something we use, but it talks about even Jesus and prophesying of things. It's just amazing.

But they hated Him. You were born of fornication. And I often wonder, didn't they read the Bible? Couldn't they see all of this happening? But spiritual blindness has set in.

And that's what's happening in the case of many people in our nation today. Spiritual blindness has set in. And Jesus, well, He existed, but they stole the body, and of course, I'm not going to teach about that, maybe at Easter or Resurrection Sunday, but we know that that is impossible because all of the people who supposedly died, I'm sorry, stole His body, died and were martyred and killed brutally because they saw Him.

He rose again. And that's why even if you listen to, have you heard Dennis Prager or Ben Shapiro? That's their argument. Well, He was a figure, but He wasn't who He said He was.

And that's dangerous. That's damning. And we need to speak the truth in love.

And it does unsettle me many times if I mention things like that, and people say, well, but they're good guys, they're teaching this great stuff, and you shouldn't say anything. Well, they're on their way to not a good place. Silence speaks volumes.

You can't be vague. The problem is many people are vague, and as a result, we don't know what is happening. And so the angel came to her.

He said, Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women. And again, she's highly favored.

Mary is, but she's not a co-redeemer. You don't pray to Mary to get to Jesus. And then Luke continues in verse 29, but when he saw Him, I'm sorry, when she saw Him, the angel, she was troubled, I bet.

And she said, how are you greeting me? I'm not familiar with this type of greeting. And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son, and she'll call His name Jesus.

He will be great, and they will call Him the Son of the Highest, and the Lord will give Him the throne of His father, David. And that's why we see, and that's why a lot of people, when they talk about the millennial reign or Jesus coming again, because a lot of these promises haven't been fulfilled yet, where He comes back and He rules on that throne. And then Mary said, well, how can this be? Since I do not know, and I did not know a man.

I won't get too graphic, but you guys can fill in the blanks. She's going to become pregnant, and she's not yet married. And they did nothing that would have sparked this.

So the angel said the Holy Spirit will come upon you. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you. Think about that for a minute.

Did you know, not in the same way, of course, and the Bible, I don't have time, but I'd love to, and I have many times. The Bible actually says that the Holy Spirit can come upon a believer. Did you know that? You can have the Holy Spirit inside of you as a believer.

That's what the Bible says. But you can quench and grieve the Spirit to where there's no activity. There's no fire.

There's no zeal. Church is boring. It's irrelevant.

Anybody ever relate? It's a struggle. All of us face it. You think I walk around on clouds all the time? Life is challenging.

Life is hell. Life is difficult. But in the book of Acts, or in other times, when they were ministering, their disciples were ministering at a home in the book of Acts, or in the upper room in the book of Acts, and it says, and the Holy Spirit came upon them.

Jesus even said the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and you'll be witnesses. It's interesting. He said don't go out and do anything just yet.

Wait in an upper room for 40 days, and the Holy Spirit will come upon you. It's a preposition, epi, epi. It's an overwhelming power of the Holy Spirit in a person's life.

And that, I will submit to you, is what most Christians are lacking. Because we quench and grieve the Spirit. Shane, I don't want to hear about all this.

I just came to hear about a baby born in a manger. Well, too bad. I got you.

I got you here, and now you've got to listen, right? So the Holy Spirit's going to come upon her and overshadow her. And that one born will be called the Son of God. In Luke 1.36, now indeed, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived.

So now her relative has conceived. John the Baptist is going to be the forerunner of Christ. And she's in her old age.

Again, with God, nothing is impossible. With God, nothing is impossible. And now in the sixth month, she was called barren, but now she is bringing forth her son.

For with God... So think about it. He brought John the Baptist from an old womb that was no longer active. And then he brought Jesus in to marry.

And that's why the Scripture says nothing is impossible with God. And maybe some of you need to hear that this morning. Nothing is impossible with God.

And then Mary said, behold, the maidservant of the Lord, let it be according to Your Word. And the angel departed from her. There's so much there.

If we would just submit to what God wants to do, we would avoid a lot of problems. Can you imagine her just arguing and saying, no, no, no, I'm not ready. I'm only 16.

We've got to get our finances in order first. No, Lord. So when God wants us to do something, it's vitally important that we do it.

And then Luke 2. Christ is born. Christ is born. It says that they went from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea.

And if I had a map, I could show you, but they're up really high in the area of Israel and they're coming down the nation of Israel. So Jezreel Valley was there. They had to cross through that with Jezebel where all that took place hundreds of years ago and keep going down, down, down, down, down to this point where God called them to go.

Rejoice. The baby is about ready to be born. And she brought forth her firstborn son.

She brought forth her firstborn son. Why this is so important is because it goes against the doctrine of perpetual virginity. Do you know there's a doctrine out there that says Mary was always a virgin because they want to make her godlike? The Immaculate Conception, perpetual virginity.

It's not in the Bible. It's not true. Councils have decreed those things.

It's her firstborn of many. The Bible will teach you a great deal if you listen. And she wrapped him in the swaddling clothes and they laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

Boy, that would preach a sermon. There was no room for Jesus. Same thing happens today.

Correct? No, I don't have time for that. No, that's for women. That's for weak people.

Now there was in the same country shepherds living out in the fields keeping watch over their flocks by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were greatly afraid.

Then the angel said, Do not be afraid. Do you know the Bible says that 365 times? Do not be afraid. 365 times.

One for every... Alright, you guys are with me. You've got to wake up. I'm going to make you do jumping jacks and have everyone have an espresso.

Do not be afraid. I bring you great tidings of great joy for all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, Christ the Lord.

It's interesting, they would often say Christ the Lord. Christ, Christos, the Messiah who we've been waiting for. But not just that, the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ. And there's a big debate in the 80's and 90's about Lordship salvation. I'm not going to get into all that.

But an A.W. Tozer said, if He's not Lord of all, He's not Lord at all. And so, again, I don't want to get into that. And I see what people are trying to say, but the bottom line is, He is the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's not wiggle room. You don't say, okay, save me, and then I'm not going to submit under your Lordship. It's all the same.

If a person doesn't submit to the Lordship, you have to wonder, is He their Savior? They go together. There's no way around that. And I want to challenge maybe some of you this morning, if you've never been baptized, or you're baptized as an infant, or as a kid and it didn't mean anything, do that today.

What a wonderful holiday to do that on. We've got the water, we've got clothes you can change into, and you can leave here making that commitment. After the angel told them this, suddenly, suddenly, there was with this angel a multitude of heavenly hosts.

And what were they praising God and saying? Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace, good will toward men. They were worshiping. You'll see that throughout Scripture.

There was always worship. Because when something dramatic and impactful takes place, most people just didn't stand around. Oh boy.

Isn't it? Some of you know it. There's no other response sometimes. There's no other response but to worship.

You don't feel like, well, let me go home and read my Bible. That's good, but you don't feel like doing that. Oh, let me put on Air One and listen.

We need to change it to 91.9, but that's okay. It's a joke. When I hop in my wife's van, I'm like, why are you listening to Air One? You know we have a radio station.

But sometimes we want more worship. I understand that. That was a rabbit trail.

But the response is often worship when you understand the glory of God, the magnitude of God, the awesomeness of God. It compels the heart to worship that word worthy. He is worthy of our worship, of our adoration, of our time, of our affections, and how we worship God.

It's not just here on Sunday, but it's also throughout our life. Did you know that your lifestyle is a form of worship? I would submit to you, I don't want to tick anyone off, but I would submit to you that it's more important than coming here on Sunday morning and singing some songs. Because who we are on Sunday is who we are Monday through Friday, Monday through Saturday.

It's the outflow of what's already going on inside of us. And so as we're leaving our life and obeying God's Word and falling forward and worshiping, and then Sunday is just an expression of what's already been going on. We can't live like hell on Monday and come and expect God to really worship God on Sunday.

That's what they call going through the motions. That's what they call half-hearted in the Bible. That's what they call carnal.

It's going through the motions. Like Jesus rebuked the Pharisees. He said, you draw nigh unto me, King James.

And he would say, you draw close to me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me. Always an issue of the heart. And so the angels were singing, and the angels had gone away, and they went up to heaven, and the shepherds said, now let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.

And they came with haste. They hurried up. See, when they want to meet Jesus, they hurried up.

He became the priority. And that's why I try to tell people, is He your priority? Is Christ your priority? And they found Him lying in the manger. And when they had seen Him, they made it widely known, saying, this child has been born.

And all those who heard it, they marveled. But Mary kept all of these things and pondered them in her heart. So I often reference this and say, it's okay not to tell people everything.

You ever get in trouble by telling people too much? Or just me? I know my pastors are kind of quiet because you get in a lot of trouble. In the multitude of words, sin is not lacking. And I don't know, that always just kind of sticks out.

Mary just, she didn't go around telling everybody, guess what? I have the Messiah. Look at it. Because not everyone would be supportive.

I'm pretty sure not everyone would believe her. And so He was foretold. Then He came, and then He ascended.

He ascended, Acts 1, 9-11, approximately 33 years later. It says, Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward Heaven, as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, and said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into Heaven, here's the key.

Don't miss this. What's going to happen? This is the next thing. He will come in like manner, so the way He went up, with authority, with power, in that same manner, He is going to come back.

That's what we're waiting on. He was taken up, and He will come back. And that's why I ask the question, Are you ready for His descent? Are you truly ready for His descent? Well, how can I be ready? Well, do you know Him? That's clear throughout Scripture.

Do you know Him? And it's not that you check things off. I do this, and I do this. It has nothing to do with that.

If you ever talk to someone, and they say, you know, I'm a good person, or I do this, or I've always been a Christian, you might want to talk to them a little bit longer. Do you truly know Him? Have that relationship with Him? And so that's what we are waiting for. The ascension to come, He descended, then He's going to ascend and come back.

And it's ironic, I don't want to get into the weeds on this, but when He died on the cross, He was resurrected, He stuck around for a little while. Did you know that? Any guess on how long He stuck around? Just saying. That's a number there.

He fasted for 40 days, He stuck around for 40 days, the flood waters 40 days, Elijah 40 days, Moses 40 days. Maybe God is talking to some of you. I'll leave that between you and Him.

And so now, what we are doing in Revelation, I'm teaching through Revelation, we are talking about His return. And I think it's so important during this time of year. Because it's not just about He was born.

Did you know He was born to die? And if you really think about that, here's this baby, and Mary, and what Mary had to go through at the foot of the cross, and He was actually born to die, to live in the womb, to be born of a virgin, because it's fully God, not man. But He was fully God and fully man. We can't quite understand that union.

And then He was raised, and we didn't even hear about Him. Maybe one time at 12 years old? For 30 years, nothing. Until it's time to begin His ministry, and pay the sin debt of the world.

And I get this question sometimes, maybe I'll take a quick rabbit trail. And I know what they're saying, and a lot of times, it's because maybe they're not a Christian, or the relationship maybe isn't where it needs to be. They'll say, Shane, you talk like so, it's not arrogant, it's just so confident.

Like, I mean, the Bible is written by men. It's like, how is it set apart from any other book? I mean, you just, you kind of get dogmatic about it. Now that would take a sermon, right, to unpack, because there's a lot there.

But the difference is, and they are correct, it comes alive in my heart. I don't believe it is fairy tales. I don't believe it was written by men.

I believe that holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit, and that God put this together. And you can look at the, it was even interesting looking at the map of all the places in Israel. You can still identify scientifically, prophetically, archaeologically, all the confirmations of Scripture.

It's not just some kind of book thrown together. It has life, and you know as a believer it speaks to you, it comes alive, and it has changed your heart, and changed your life. There's so much to that.

People think it's like, well, some guys do it together. Well, you try. Try putting, look at the Hebrew language, and look at even the word, each sentence begins in the Hebrew, it spells a certain thing, and what Genesis, and Exodus, and Leviticus, and Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and Joshua, all flowing together, written over 1500 years by 40 different authors saying the same thing, pointing in the same direction.

No inconsistency. I've told atheists, show me the scientific inconsistency where the Bible just completely missed it. And you'll find 9.9.999 times they're just repeating what they heard.

They have no clue. Because if they would dig in with an open heart, they would see the truth and the validity of Scripture. And so now we have His returning, and you'll often hear me say, the Lamb is returning as a lion, and the servant is returning as a king.

I love this part about the return, because He came as a lamb, right? And He's coming back as a lion. Big difference. Big difference.

No smile, He turned the other cheek. I'll wash your feet, Jesus. That one came.

Now He's coming back. And we can't truly appreciate, we can't truly appreciate the good news without knowing about the bad news. That's why I know a lot of people, they try to make the Gospel very soft and very appealing.

And what's the word? Appalatable? Taste well? Let's just show them all the good stuff. And that's why you'll see a lot of these churches that are exploding. Some of the mega churches, and a million dollars in cameras.

It's all about building the audience and motivating, and this great news. But if you don't understand the bad news, the good news doesn't really make a lot of sense, does it? I mean, what about, for example, if I came and told Morgan, hey, I've got this, I met this guy, he's going to pay off our debt. Oh, okay, that's cool.

Well, no, actually, it's a lot more than that. I'm a million dollars in debt, and I'm going to prison for the rest of my life. Oh, the good news makes a lot more sense, doesn't it? Night and day.

So when you show the bad news as the backdrop and then bring in the good news, now there's a better understanding of actually what this good news is and how important it is. And you have heard me quote this Scripture, but I want to show you it on the screen with His returning. Revelation 19 that we'll get to in the months ahead.

So John saw heaven open and behold, I just want you to just read this and just look at the language here. John saw heaven open, a white horse, and he who sat on that white horse was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he had a name written that no one else knew except himself.

And he was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean. They follow him on white horses.

Now out of his mouth goes a sharp sword. What's he going to do? He's going to rule the nations, strike the nations, and rule them with the rod of iron. He himself treads the winepress and the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Did you know that's in the Bible? You're not going to hear that very much on Sundays because it's not too popular. You're trying to build a big church, you better not read this verse. And he has on his robe and on his right thigh, meaning a place of position and strength, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

That is his name. He is not a part of my life. He is my life.

How many of you can say the same thing? How many of you can truly say that? He is not part of my life. He is my life. And I hear that a lot.

He's a part of my life. Kind of when I can get to it and make it work. But Paul said, in him I live and move and have my being.

It's everything. And again, it doesn't mean you're a perfect person. Actually, a lot of times Christians have more attacks.

Amen? Man, my life was a lot easier when I was in the world. Things just seemed to go smooth. There's a spiritual attack.

And wise men still seek Him. Wise men still seek Him. So I want to end with this point about a response.

A response. All things are possible. That's what the sermon is about.

All things are possible. The Bible just said all things are possible. So what are you believing God for today? What are you believing Him for? Your health issues? Healing? Financial doors? Prodigal sons to come home? Wayward daughters? What do you believe in God for? That breakthrough? That ministry? God, I need for you to move in this area.

What are you believing Him for? But with a sermon title like that, I have to give you a disclaimer. And I called it the heresy alert. Because what I just said, everything I just said is absolutely true.

But some people will take that, and have you heard the term name it and claim it? Grab it, blab it and grab it? And it's almost like whatever the soul of your foot touches, whatever you, and you become God, and you tell God what to do. Rub the genie in the bottle. Here's what I want.

Because with Scripture, what many people do is if you stay balanced, you stay biblical. You stay balanced, you stay biblical. If you get off into trying to pigeonhole God or make it into a doctrine you want, that's when heresy comes in.

Have you heard that word, heresy? Heresy just means a self-willed opinion that opposes the truth of God's Word. Heresy. Or apostate.

Apostate is something that maybe you thought was genuine and you figure out later they are an apostate. They are not true. They are not biblical.

Heretical. Apostasy. That's where these words come from.

They're actually words that can and should be used with the right framework. And what the Pope just did this week with same-sex marriage is called apostasy. It's called heresy.

It's called heretical. Very unbiblical. And that's what these terms are.

That's what they mean. But here's the heresy alert. And I want to spend just a minute here.

All things are possible does not mean that all things are absolute. This will make your walk with the Lord so much easier if you understand this. And I've had to learn it the hard way, like many of you have, because we do read Scriptures that Jesus couldn't do many good works there because of their unbelief.

And if you would just have faith like a mustard seed, you could see that mountain move. Not the physical mountain get up and go into the ocean, but huge things in your life. So there's a lot to faith and belief.

A lot. But my faith and my belief never outweighs or circumvents or comes before God's sovereignty. Correct? And that's where the difficulty comes.

All things are possible does not mean all things are certain. I was just talking to a young man this week whose friend actually used to have a pretty prolific ministry here in the valley. It was a young ministry and they were doing a lot of great things and they could sing and worship, but he walked away.

Apostasy. Doesn't even believe in the faith anymore. I saw him at a memorial service once.

And it could be because he was hurt. That didn't happen. Wait a minute.

If there's a God and I was praying this and there is no God. This makes me upset. This makes me angry.

And if you talk to some atheists, right? You get to the core of it. They are angry at God. But wait a minute.

I thought there's no God. So why are you angry at God if there's no God? Why? Because they've been hurt. Often.

Listen to their stories. A lot of the famous atheists. Maybe God took their mom when they were a boy and they prayed.

I can't love a God like that. I can't follow a God like that. The Bible says this in prayer.

And they get out of shape. Bent out of shape. How many people do you know or maybe yourself I've been there where you're not real happy with what God is doing or not doing? Amen? Lord, all things are possible.

Does not mean that all things are absolute. Possible does not mean certain. I don't know why it keeps coming up a lot, but I remember this.

Morgan, I remember too, we were out on our front porch three years ago and I got a text from my mom and she said, you know, I'm not feeling real well. The ambulance is on the way. Like, okay.

We're praying for you and we prayed and all things are possible, Lord. Just heal her. Just have this happen.

Get her to the doctor. Whatever they need to do. And all things are possible.

And I never, ever, ever got a text back after that. That was it. Now that can really get you a little angry, maybe.

Anybody ever been upset at God? You know it's okay. As long as you don't stay there. To vent your frustrations, Lord help me.

Read the Psalms. We're going through the Psalms on Wednesdays when I'm teaching. And they vented.

But it brought them back to brokenness. Maybe we should start a motto. It's okay to vent if you come back broken.

But it's not if you come back angry and stay there and stay bitter and angry. Because all you're doing is working through human emotions. How many of us have prayed for things? Lord, I know it's possible.

I know it's possible. There's no shadow of doubt in my mind. I mean, you can make the sun come up.

Really it doesn't. We're rotating right. But you know what I'm saying.

If you hung these planets out there, I'm pretty certain you can accomplish this. All things are possible. But they cannot outrule God's sovereignty.

And I'm not teaching on that now, but it would be good at some point. We can talk about God's permissive will and God's perfect will. There are some things in God's will that for a lack of a better way to word it, it doesn't matter what we pray for.

We're to pray, but it's going to happen. Correct? I mean, we could get this whole church here on our face and say, Jesus, don't come back as a lion. Come back as a lamb.

Let America, just 330 million, be filled with your spirit and born again. And those are great prayers, right? And some people pray universalism prayers. Let everyone be saved.

But God's sovereign plans will prevail. But then there are permissive plans. And we see where a king was going to die and God gave him 15 more years.

Which now looking back, God's plan of taking him early might have been better because someone by the name of Manasseh was born. Manasseh should send shivers down your spine for any Old Testament reader or historian of Manasseh. God even said, because of Manasseh I'm going to judge Israel.

And it was brutal. So be careful what you ask for. Sometimes God knows best.

Or should we say, all the time, God knows best. Yeah, I caught myself on that one. Glad I did, because sometimes I get home and go, why did I say that? But just, I think it's really healthy.

Yes, all things are possible. But, I'm not God. He's not my butler.

I have to submit what He wants to do. God's sovereignty outweighs and overrules my wants and my desires. However, the Bible does say ask, knock, and seek.

Ask, knock, and seek. Let's try that, right? Ask, knock, and seek. There's a pursuit.

So God wants, here's what it looks like. God wants me to pursue. Let's say, praying for my mom or praying for anybody else who was sick, or any, just, you put your scenario in there.

And we're praying for that, and praying for that, and praying for that, and asking Him, knocking Him, and weeks go by sometimes, and Lord, and it gets difficult, it gets challenging, and sometimes my faith is, I feel like the man who said, I believe but help my unbelief. That's just honest. I love when that guy said that.

Thank God he said that. I believe, Lord, I believe, I know, but help my unbelief because in my belief, something is rising up inside of me called our Adamic nature. The old man that still wants what it wants, and it will fight the Spirit of God.

And so you're asking, you're knocking, you're seeking, but when God makes His will clear and you see that it's not what I'm praying for, then that's where a submission to His sovereignty is so important. Like David did with his first child with Bathsheba. The baby was sick and he prayed, he fasted, but then he got up, he ate, and his servants were so confused.

Why did you, the baby died, why did you get up and eat and not fast then? And David said, while he was sick, I contended with God because I didn't know what God was going to do. But now I know what His plans are, and I'm going to get up and I'm going to worship God. You have to worship God even when it doesn't make sense.

Look at what Job went through, though He slayed me, yet will I trust Him. His wife said, why don't you curse God and die? And guys, this is so important because I've seen it derail Christians, I've seen it sidetrack Christians, I've seen it get people so bitter and upset that they don't come back to church, they don't seek God, and they live all of their life upset and mad at God. When we used to visit the hospital homes, I saw hundreds of patients, literally, in the 8-year period or whatever it was, and how many people would be there on their deathbed crying, crying, coming back to the Lord.

Oh, I wish I could have been a better father. Oh, I ran from God. And just hearing these stories, and it started with a point in time where they became bitter and upset at God, and it set in.

That bitter root is deadly. Because that bitter root cannot live with a thankful heart. It will push out thankfulness, it will push out gratitude, it will push out love.

And all you do is become a bitter, bitter person. How many of you have ever watched, what's that old movie that's real famous? He has a Clarence the Angel Comes. It's a wonderful life.

Yeah, me and my daughter just watched it. And I'm like, that's what I'm talking about. Bitter Potter.

That old man in the wheelchair, he's just so bitter and bitter, and that reminded me of somebody kind of bitter at God. Can you imagine living life that way? But Shane, I know, I understand. Why it's hard for me sometimes is I can't relate to everything that someone has gone through.

Losing a child, one of the most, I can't even imagine. So I understand telling a parent these very things is very difficult. Actually, I never have.

You usually just listen. But I've seen this derail more Christians than anything else. Two things that have put Christians on the sidelines, or as I like to talk about, a certificate of non-operation from the DMV.

We get that as Christians. You just park that old thing in the driveway and it just stays there the rest of your life. It is this.

It is God did not answer my prayers. God did not do things the way I wanted them done. And sometimes they are some pretty big things and people get bitter and upset and they're done with God.

The second thing, which I talk about often, is personal offenses. You offended me. You offended me.

You did this. Can anybody relate? I'm hoping so. I know you don't want your spouse to see you, but go like this.

Or blink. Wink at me. With the opposite eye.

Right? Personal offenses knock people off track. This person did such and such. They didn't treat me a certain way.

The list is endless. Those two things. Those two things.

If you can deal with those two things, you will live the victorious Christian life, I am convinced. Absolutely. I know this isn't a typical Christmas Day message, but I thought it was important.

And many of us know those people we really look up to, and I've heard many of you say it too, such and such is a solid Christian believer, a saint that's really helped me. And boy, they've walked through the valley of shadow death. And you look at these people and they are just solid pillars.

You know who I'm talking about? I can guarantee they've dealt with both of these issues and they've come out on top. They've handled personal hurt where God didn't do what they thought He would do, and they've handled personal hurt that others have brought them. And out of that they've become a very strong, mature believer.

Guys, it's so important. I sometimes run into people that I knew 25 years ago when I was coming back to the Lord. And they haven't changed at all.

You'd think you'd kind of grow a little bit spiritually, wouldn't you? It's usually one of these two. A close third is carnality. You stay carnal, lukewarm, don't care about holiness, you're going to look just like the world, you will not grow, you cannot grow.

That's why Paul says, come out from among them and be separate. In that separation you grow. Come out from among them and be separate.

And your lifestyle is going to look different because you want to honor God. So nothing is impossible. I don't know if I wrote these down there, but it's good.

Yeah, here we go. Nothing is impossible for you if you align your heart with His. Nothing is impossible if you seek Him and find the wellsprings of living water pouring out of you.

Nothing is impossible if you allow the Word to direct you, the Spirit to convict you, worship to transform you, and prayer to break you. See, what you do is when you align up, when you align up with God and His Word and His will, things seem to fall into place a lot better. You begin to understand God's will.

Life isn't as challenging because now you're going with God, not against Him. So all things are possible as you begin to seek Him. Early will I seek Him, the Bible says.

Unconditionally will I trust Him. Absolutely will I follow Him. I said this, I think, about a year ago.

There is life and death, there is purpose and pain, there is destiny in your disappointment, there is faith in failure, there is clarity in your confusion, and there is hope in hopelessness, there is worship in waiting for God. And it's so important this time of year to encourage ourselves. Though I struggle with doubt, anybody relate? Paul said, what can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus? Nothing can separate us from that.

Though Goliath stands against me, God stands before me. Think about that. Who is Jesus to you? Who is Jesus to you? Did you know that no one, well very few people have a problem with Him as long as you don't define who He is.

Did you see in the news today Mark Zuckerman, or this week Mark Zuckerman is building a hundred million dollar bunker in Hawaii. And he is putting on the bunker missile proof doors. And I'm like, if somebody is firing at you with missiles, you've got some big problems, okay.

The bunker is not going to save you. Missiles, you know, from an F-16, why are they going after you Mark? You've got to begin to fear God more than man because you start to make silly, stupid decisions when you fear man and you do not fear God. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

The fear of God is the beginning of understanding. Fear God and live, the Bible says. Oh, come back to the fear.

Can we imagine if we got the fear of God back in this place? If the Supreme Court would say, we fear God. If the Senate and the Congress said, we fear God. If the President would say, we fear God more than man.

You would see a nation on their knees again crying out to God. Let me tell you about the God who commands the seas and hangs the sun. He laughs at armies and He commands the kings.

If you could muster up all 8 billion people to come against God, what would they do? Let's say, okay, all 8 billion of us, we're coming against you God. No, think about all this is true. Think about it.

What about if the nations got, okay, all of our nuclear arsenal together and all at once fired it at God. But isn't the awesome, I mean, it's just like, I can get really excited. You think this, I can get excited.

Look at this God. This God. What's Russia doing? What's Ukraine and Biden economics and Trump's coming.

Oh my gosh, we're going down. I still believe in the God who sits on the throne. He commands armies.

He raises kings up and He puts another king down. I'm going to close with this verse that's probably never been used to my knowledge on Christmas. But I love it.

Job. Job. Job's complaining.

Job's this and Job's that. It's just not having a good day, right? And he's just complaining. And then it says, then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.

That's just cool. And then the Lord answered Shane. I just feel like falling down just with that statement.

Can you imagine if the Lord is going to answer you? Not what the Bible says. Not what an angel says. But God almighty says, now I will answer you.

Who is this who darkens counsel by my words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man and I will question you. Oh man. God's on fire.

Prepare yourself Job. I will question you. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Where were you when I hung the stars and they sang together? Where were you when I shut in the seas and gave the waves their boundaries? Where were you when I searched the depths of the sea? Where were you when I created light? And can I ask you where does light dwell? How does darkness know its place? Have you given a path for thunder? Does lightning know its place? Because of you Job.

Oh, he just spanked him. And he just goes on and it's like amazing. God.

And Job's like, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It's okay for God to get a little firm.

And I believe that's what's happening to our lack of masculinity in our country. We're becoming so soft. So soft.

Don't offend. Don't hurt. Let me just go sit and game all day.

Is that right? What do they do? I'm a man and I can have a baby. Who are you to tell me I can't? Golly. The reason they call it toxic masculinity and they're going after is because America needs it.

America needs soft gentlemen, yes, but also bold courageous, in your face convicting, fight for your family fight spiritual warfare and take a stand. That's what the enemy doesn't like. And so I love when God, who are you to ask me all these things? Job, answer it and prepare yourself like a man.

I'm about ready to drill you and you better hold up your end of the bargain. You better put on your big boy pants and get to war. You better go back to your family and serve them correctly.

You better get that second job if that's what it takes. You need to turn off the video games, get off your porn habits and kill it. Tell your friends to hit the road jack and don't ever come back because you are being a man of God.

We need that conviction again. Hey, I'm not gonna see some of you ever again, so I gotta just get it out. But maybe at Easter.

Maybe at Easter. Even the Gospel said, with God all things are possible. We heard it here with Mary.

Do you know where else Jesus said this? How hard it is for a rich man to enter Heaven. Here's the irony. When he talks about it's hard for a rich man to enter Heaven, do you know that applies to I'm pretty sure all of you.

Wait a minute. I'm not. Oh, who are you comparing it to? You are wealthier than how many people on the planet now? Eight billion? Or so? I guarantee you are wealthier than, I don't want to say, but more than billions of people.

Running water? Roof over your head? How hard it is for many of us to get in Heaven. Because we believe in things and not God. We trust in things and not God.

We trust in our money, our success, our finances, and not God. It's hard. It's hard to get into Heaven.

And the disciples said, well then who can even enter Heaven? If a rich man can't, because they used to allocate favor with riches. God's favor with riches. And Jesus said, with God all things are possible.

With men, it's impossible, but with God, all things are possible. And as I always say, if you're glad we're closing, you might want to consider the condition of your heart. You know why I say that? Because I remember my mom dragging me to church, teenager.

I can't wait until I turn 18. I'm not going to church. My dad didn't care, but I loved my mom.

You live in this house, I pay the bills, you're going to church. It's just the way it works. But I couldn't wait until those convicting messages were over.

How many can relate? Just wiggle in my seat. If I could just get up now. I could just get out of here.

That's conviction. You don't run from God because of conviction. You run to Him.

That's the whole point. Hello? It's a good thing. Thank God for conviction.

Thank God. I used to apologize for it when I first, oh I'm sorry you felt that way. Oh I'm sorry.

I'm sorry I upset you. Now I say praise God. He's convicting you.

He's working your heart. He loves you enough to discipline you and to pull you back to the Father. Thank God for that conviction because without the conviction I would not move.

I would not repent. It is the grace of God, the love of God that compels me to repentance by conviction.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/3g8naNGe4A8.mp4>

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