

Persecution, Purity and Power

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual richness over financial status and warns against false teachings and blasphemy within the church.

Duration: 49:49

Scripture: Romans 2:29, Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, James 1:12, Revelation 2:8, Revelation 2:10

Topics: "Persecution And Suffering", "Spiritual Overcoming"

Description

This sermon delves into the themes of persecution, purity, and power as seen through the lens of the message to the church in Smyrna in Revelation 2. It emphasizes the importance of being open and teachable to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, highlighting the need for Christians to be ready to face trials and tribulations. The sermon also touches on the significance of poverty not equating to spiritual poverty, the impact of false believers in the church, and the necessity of overcoming in Christ to avoid the second death and judgment.

Transcript

The title of the message is persecution purity and power and we are doing a survey of the seven churches and it's ironic here Jesus would often say and we'll probably see this again he says what the Spirit says to the churches he who has ears to hear let him hear and it's it's interesting because we all have ears but not everybody wants to hear so he's giving a message to churches to Christians this is what the Spirit of God is saying to the churches he who has ears to hear let him hear basically it's this saying Lord I want to hear I'm open I'm teachable speak to me you want to be careful if you pray that because he will show you areas he will speak to you he will bring out things in your life that possibly he wants you to work on maybe he wants to encourage but let's let's even

acknowledge that this morning Lord I want to hear you I want I'm open I'm teachable speak to me this morning so Revelation 2 8 and to the angel of the church in Smyrna now remember God sent a messenger to each of these churches in Asia Minor probably 700 miles above Israel up in Asia Minor north of Israel this message though is to all the churches then and we believe that this message still applies to the churches today and to the messenger to the angel of the church in Smyrna I write these things these things says the first and the last remember Jesus is speaking who was dead and came to life I know your works your tribulation your poverty but you are rich and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not but but they are of a synagogue of Satan what Jesus doesn't mince

words does he he's not this you know just comfortable little things it's it's right to the heart of the matter but it's interesting let's just break this apart a little bit I am he said I am the first and the last I was dead and I came to life this is a wonderful reminder of the resurrection we need to be reminded of that often because that's actually if you look at because Christianity you know people think well it's do's and don'ts or it's the Bible or really the heartbeat of Christianity if that heart could be is a is the resurrection of Jesus Christ without that we have nothing because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God he said he would rise again he did the authority of Scripture coming over overcoming hell death in the grave so it's it's the foundation it's the heartbeat of

Christianity and I just read this week there's a headline on a news page online it said cream cremated cremated yeah cremated remains unearthed in China for the Buddha for Buddha's basically boat at Buddha's remains they think they found them they've been they were cremated many many years ago and it reminded me that Jesus's body is was never found it was it was raised again on the third day and the distinction from Buddha from all the different religions the distinction is God reaching down to man Jesus rising again on the third day the resurrection it's the heartbeat of the faith so I thought it was interesting that he was saying I was the one who was dead and I came to life again also another interesting fact Jesus says I know your works what did he say to the church we talked about

last week I know your works but this church is a praise report this church last week was a was a rebuke what's the difference I know your works he said the same thing but this church their heart was right it was it was works out of love for Christ so let's talk about this for a minute impoverished these people were impoverished financially they were poor financially but not spiritually that's he's praising them for this they were poor spiritual they're poor financially but not spiritually and this might be a good reminder poverty is not a gauge for spirituality okay we there was a movement in church that the poor you were the less you had the more spiritual you were remember you follow church history you would know that and then we came into an age which I think we're still in to

some degree is the more you have the more money the more the more blessed you are the more spiritual you are so we've went from the monks you ever heard of monasteries we've got one out on the east side way out there Valley Irma I believe it is and there's there's monasteries where you just got rid of everything and that was you're so spiritual but then the more you have see God is blessing me God is blessing me God is blessing me the problem is both of those have issues because we know that poverty does not equal spirituality and we know the wealth is not necessarily a sign of God's blessing or God would be very happy with Hollywood or San Francisco or New York or we know that it's not a blessing to be to I'm sorry it's spiritual health is not always contingent upon our wealth however I

will say this poverty tends to remove when a person is is happy with little they tend to rely on God a lot more that God becomes their everything God became becomes their provision not Kaiser he becomes their provision not Chevron not the charge cards not you know he's their provision and we are blessed in this nation many things that we have now they didn't have back then health insurance that's a pretty new concept everything I mentioned credit cards new concept so there is something to being being poor sometimes God will use that to draw us closer to him Paul said I know how to be thankful in all things Paul said I know how to be thankful when I'm a based and when I am abound and when I'm have it much and when I have little and that's why I also believe personal thought here that God

sometimes will bring people through seasons have you ever been there seasons of poverty and seasons of abundance seasons of lack and seasons of almost too much sometimes to see how we handle those

things and it's through the difficult times often especially financially that God will speak to us God blesses and I also believe on the poverty side but on this I believe that God does bless it's clear throughout scripture that God will often bless his people with things and and maybe more to give away more it's often not to hoard more is it God gives a person in the Old Testament sheep cows goats to be a blessing to others and in the New Testament same thing to be a blessing to others so I just see it in the church sometimes we we judge people you know if they're gosh they're poor and

they're going fight for through financial struggle well they must have sin in their life boy oh boy I wonder what that is I'm gonna play detective this week see if I can find out you know they must be something must be bad in their life that to be almost homeless and losing things or is it a season is it a season for that person is a season for us to reach out and to test our own hearts so you see this this area of poverty throughout scripture throughout some of our lives some of us have been blessed so where we haven't had to experience this however poverty can be the result of sin and bad choices I got to make that clear too that's why you can see it's like a teetering have your kids ever made those teeter-totters and when they hop off this side springs up and when they sit down this

side and and and this issue of money is it's kind of like a teeter-totter because you can make statements that a person might say yeah you're right pastor Shane you know I don't have any sin in my life I'm just going the devil is a liar he's taking everything I got no you just gamble you don't give you don't work hard you don't work at all actually you allow people you see that's wrong too the devil is coming after my finances no you just you just spend a lot more than you earn that's not the devil that's in here so we have to be careful in this area and I believe I've seen this to the majority of people that are hurting financially not all of them of poverty many times they don't give back to God they don't give they're not givers they tend to hoard I can't give to God because I don't

have much but often the reason they don't have much is because they don't have a giving heart now this isn't a church that we press people on offerings we pass around the plate but it's a biblical principle that if I ignored it all the time I think I would be doing people damage and doing harm that God blesses those who bless others he Paul says the Lord loves a cheerful heart those who give back and one thing about giving it shows that it's not idolatry the best way to get rid of the idol of finances and and money and looking to that is to give some of it away you get you get some you give some away you get some you get you don't have me in this area devil but when we start to and I used to you know before I became really on fire for God in my night in my when I was in my 20s made a lot

of money and I couldn't it was it was so hard to give because I need this I need that that new Dodge truck with the v10 out in the garage and that I never drive I'll get a different car so I keep that in the garage and keep it nice for when I need I can't I can't dare what about if I need that and then when God changed my heart then obviously you realize how foolish these things are so just keep that in mind I don't know where a person is and I know where people are that I you know personally they're struggling financially and it's just a season for the church to come alongside help or others to come alongside help but I know others who are in this area of financial poverty because of financial irresponsibility they are irresponsible in this area so well Shane what's the answer then take

it to the Lord he will show you if you are what we said here earlier Lord I want to hear I'm open I'm teachable speak to me he will show you in this area and then he talks about a synagogue of Satan anybody curious what that is well synagogue is a gathering of people it's a group of people so there is a group of people who were saying that they were Jews but we're not now we could take this a little step

further and look at Romans 229 Paul said but he who is a Jew is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart so he probably wasn't talking about what we think the Jewish people the Jewish nation Israelites that he was saying there's a synagogue there's assembly of false believers in your midst and they are blaspheming the name of God and I know who they are so Jesus is telling him

don't worry I know who they are because there I don't know if things irritate you but there's something that irritates me quite a bit and it's false profession professors of faith who come in and they mingle in whether it's here or other churches and they go unnoticed and they can bring this heretical doctrine you can tell the fruits not there look at some of these guys on TV I can't even watch I mean some are legitimate you get Charles Stanley's on there dr.

David Jeremiah think John MacArthur still on there's some good teachers on TV don't get me wrong but some of these guys I'm like oh did he just say that is he really I mean is that a \$8,000 suit and the watch and the rings and it's just this flamboyancy you know you you send in that \$100 see if I bet by next week that thousand will be returned and if you send it today I'm going to kiss this book and I'm gonna sign this book for you that abundance just roll in like Malachi when I will pour out the windows of heaven and and you have and they just sell thousands of things and in and so Jesus say I know I see these types of people but it's also we I think we need to be careful in this area of blasphemy blasphemy what is that to blasphemy God is to speak with contempt about him or to be

defiantly irreverent toward him to disregard him he is beneath our consideration that's blasphemous and I'm concerned for our nation right now as well that God is beneath our consideration we don't care what he says about morality unless it lines up with what I want to do when I want to do it to who I want to do it to then that's a God I can believe in but other than that he's an inconvenience what about agnostics or atheists who say there's no God we don't even they don't even consider him can you imagine living your entire life never considering God never what we people believe that's that's a form of blasphemy and blasphemy we read about the New Testament of the Holy Spirit there's I know there's there's different arguments on this but I'll just lay out both the blasphemy of the Holy

Spirit is number one is to attribute God's work to the work of Satan that's blasphemy the Holy Spirit for example if the Holy Spirit were to move in a powerful way and this church would just be hit with the power of God and people would be healed I couldn't even get through a sermon I couldn't even finish because I'm just broken and weeping and God's hitting this group there would be people who would leave and they would mock that that's emotionalism that's I don't know what happened to pastor Shane I would happen pastor James he experienced God at a deep revival type level but they attribute those works of the Holy Spirit to Satan now we have to be careful right we don't just allow crazy things to go on you use discernment but if a true and I've noticed when a true work of God hits when

a true work of God hits a person a place or thing those who are not close to God those who don't want to get emotional experience God often refer to that as Satan satanic that's the work of the devil now this isn't even in my notes I hope this is beneficial because it's gonna be a long rabbit trail maybe I just thought of this every single every single revival book I read I read I can go back to probably the 1700s I think it was in Wells people like Hal Harris Griffin Jones Daniel Rollins now we just we love them we read their by their volumes it's called the Calvinistic Methodist Fathers of Wells these two big volumes and talk about God moving I mean just it not weird it's just going into a town and people begin to weep before even getting to church bars are closed down got God's moving

but in every single case I read there were those in established churches that were against these people that's F Satan anytime it that's of the devil then you go into the first Great Awakening George Whitefield was having a trouble with what was happening at his services these people are fault I don't know what to do I don't remember this this it was actually a woman who gave him advice and she said George five minutes with God with with God like that is going to do more than a year's worth of your sermons so George Whitfield cocksuck got criticism John Wesley cut criticism because of God moving powerful you get into the second Great Awakening Charles Finney he's called a heretic to many people who don't agree with those types of revival things and and even Azusa Street you know there I I

don't know I wasn't there 1904 1905 in LA you have the Welsh revivals of 1950s you have Duncan Campbell on some islands and and just huge moves of God you always had those coming against it that were in biblically sound strong churches and there are some some today it's interesting that would call what I'm talking about heretical or they would mock it from churches close to here in LA they would mock it but yet they quote George Whitefield in their sermon they'll quote Jonathan Edwards in their sermon but had they lived when that revival broke out in Massachusetts under Jonathan Edwards they would have called him a heretic or they were said the devil is moving but see now they quote him see there's always the always attributing the works because here's why because they themselves have not

experienced revival of the heart they are hard they are rigid and they're arrogant so when God breaks a church breaks a group of people revive you know what revival is God reviving his people and when it hits it's it's like Christmas times 10 it's just a people are just broken before God and people do get upset because they're not comfortable with that so it's interesting any any book I read people now they say oh man man amen that was great but back then if they lived in that time they would attribute often the works of God to the works of Satan I mean I remember I spoke somewhere and there was it was about 300 men 320 men and 150 I think I mentioned like half of the whole whole thing was was at the altar and down the sides and it was like an hour I just spent an hour down here

praying with the guys and and and in a couple of the older gentlemen you know like well later that's just and that's just emotionalism I mean that's it really man all tatted up out of prison crying at the altar wanting to go home being better fathers that's better um that's emotionalism we got to watch that what are we allowing change well I don't know but this is called God this is God God move because you you when when an earthquake shakes your home you're gonna run outside right if you see there's a fire kids there's a fire in the house let's get outside so when you experience God how is that any different tell the blind man to be quiet who cried out Jesus Oh son of David would you heal my eyes yes you're healed now be quiet just don't don't get carried away do or the demoniac who was

was freed of a legion worth of demons now you just sit down sir Jesus is here be quiet no no no no don't get excited that's not correct see it's okay to get excited about all other things the reason often is God has not penetrated their heart to such a degree that they cannot rejoice in that same experience because they themselves have not or are not experiencing it so I often say I'm not a fan of just experience but when you experience the birth of a child you get excited when you experience the new birth you will get excited when you experience God that you God gave us those emotions thank God thank God for that people get up that's just emotional worship but what other kind of worship is there boring worship what's the end what is that that's just emotional worship shame because people

will critique this kind of worship that you're hearing this morning and groups that play this that that's just emotional worship okay what's the opposite to that dead dying worship where we just stand and sing a few

hymns and sit down and I'm all for him so I'm to me it doesn't matter what it is the heart is engaged so I told you that be a long rabbit trail but that's one aspect of blaspheme the Holy Spirit is attributing to God's work to the work of Satan and this is a big passion for me because I see it a lot any church that is alive alive and on fire for God worship any time you get somebody who's not feeling that they might know their Bible they might have sound doctrine but they walk in there like oh that's just too emotional that's just that's not of God these people are lunatics

they're out of their mind wait a minute we're fasting we're praying we're loving our spouse we're loving our kids we're changing our hearts are changing we're becoming united we want more of God that's not of the devil sir you might have the wrong spirit in you yourself or blasphemy the Holy Spirit is failing to heed his convictions remember Jesus said all sins will be forgiven every sin will be forgiven except blasphemy of the Holy Spirit so if the Holy Spirit because his work is to convict and draw men to Christ and if we're if we reject that if a person rejects that that sin cannot be forgiven once you leave this planet once you die and you've rejected you blaspheme the Holy Spirit there's no way that there can be forgiveness for that sin and I should throw this in here as well

synagogue of Satan how do you know well 2nd Corinthians tells us that they are false apostles false teachers deceitful workers they transform themselves into apostles of Christ so what a false leader a false teacher or a false believer will do is they'll tell you all the right things they transform themselves hey amen brother can I pray with you you know what I'm out of cash this week can you borrow \$1,000 oh it's quite out of you're really out of cash aren't you or they'll come in isn't it right saying all the right things but they're deceitful workers you know you ever ever met somebody like something just doesn't feel right it doesn't line up with Scripture it doesn't line up with the truth they're they're they're they're deceitful they're they're not telling the truth and that's how

you spot a false prophet in the synagogue of Satan verse 10 do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer how would you like Jesus tell you that no no no change that let's change that enjoy all the blessings that you are about to receive that that's what we would want to hear but he says do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer indeed the devil is about to throw some of you into prison that you may be tested and you will have tribulation 10 days now I don't want to get into a lot of this is that really 10 days is it symbolizing something we just at this point don't know exactly what that 10 days refers to but there will be a period I believe that the readers knew at this time there will be a period of tribulation to come upon these believers and they

will be thrown into prison and they will be tested be faithful until the end Jesus says and I will give you the crown of life he who has ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches he who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death now there's a lot here we could talk about the crown of life for a while or we could talk about different things but let me just pull a few things from here verse 10 do not fear any of those things which are about to suffer and he tells them what is going to happen and Jesus actually offers a prophetic word as a word of comfort oh there's controversial topic again did he just say what I thought he said a prophetic word well the Bible Paul says some he's given the gift to speak into people's lives and tell them something that will edify

and encourage or maybe rebuke see I don't have a problem with that when people are filled the Spirit of God and God put something on somebody's heart and go they go and they tell them something that helps them or rebukes them in love because it's a genuine word from the Lord there's nothing wrong with that it's in the Bible it's in the New Testament you have to actually see if I have some scissors you have to go if

you don't believe that anymore you have to go to Corinthians and cut out a whole chapter that doesn't work it doesn't apply anymore now we have to be careful but there are people that will speak into your life something that God has put on their heart that you're not gonna find in John or Matthew you'll find the truth there and it doesn't go against the truth it actually helps

in a certain area I'll just give you an example I've given many times before but many times many years ago think 14 15 years ago me and Morgan were at an event and this guy called me out of 300 people or 250 I remember was nope he didn't the same thing else and he began to tell me things that me and Morgan prayed about that week that God's calling you it's not arrogance it's boldness God is giving you boldness and you're to proclaim and like wow which is so that helped kind of okay I can read the Bible I know boldness is good but is it me Lord what's we're going here help me process this I'm reading another book by Leonard Ravenhill son David Ravenhill I've got some copies out there he talks about another guy who was given a word from the Lord and I'm careful on this right because I know

this side a word from the Lord every week and you can get really weird with this and people go to church you hear from okay can I get a word from the Lord every week every no just read the Bible here what Jesus is saying to you if God needs to speak to you a year he gave Abraham one word that lasted ten years go to a land that I will show you so so you don't have to get these things every week but I'm open but cautious if God wants to you know I've had a couple people now confirm a half dozen can help can confirm the Wednesday night study because I've been praying for that a lot longer than you think probably for six months Lord you got to show me this and people are just out of the blue and I run into people and what have you are you gonna start a win and just so you can call it

coincidence I may be called God helping me because I see in Scripture Wednesday night service would be good I am convinced in Scripture it's good I know it's your heart but is it your will show me you ever fight against the flesh and is that the God voice or is that just a good thing because I don't want to do a good thing if it's not a God thing so anyway I'm reading this book and I've heard things like this many times before but this guy who David Ravenhill knew man of character would never weird or anything you they were actually having a dinner for a missionary girl who was a missionary and she's about ready to go out into the mission field and this guy was praying for the dinner and God put something in his heart and he's like there's no way I'm saying this no no no this isn't you

this isn't you because the Lord was impressing on him to say I also hate mommies and daddies see that doesn't line up with Scripture right that's just we're not gonna go there it's a wrong voice so he's ignoring it ignoring it and he said you know what for what it's ever worth he said they said the Lord wants it to stay to you he also hates mommies and daddies and the girl lost it because she was abused by her uncles and they would say let's play mommies and daddies she was set free she was completely set free from an abuse that she's been carrying for 20 years see that's how God works when a church is open and teachable when they're open to the things of God not weird Lord would you want to speak to can you imagine that type of gifting on a person who is solid and on they could speak

life into people and actually a form of a form of preaching some some preaching is prophetic in that element there are teachers and there are preachers where God will go deeper into the heart and he will convict and draw and speak these kinds of things I can give you a list of many other examples of this where God would speak through others can you imagine hearing that but we but we at first and that's what this guy did he didn't initially say something and I've noticed with God if it's on your heart if it's on your heart and you just keep nope nope nope God will keep this lovingly knocking answer the door no answer

don't know okay so you know I don't know if this is of God but and then here you go now in this church I've been in churches where this is more common but in this church sad

to say this isn't very common we don't have this happening very often that I'm aware of but we don't also disrupt services we'd have it usually would probably look like somebody in the prayer room over there praying with people or I've been seeing this person for the last couple weeks and I just feel God wants me to talk to them and I remember one lady she doesn't attend here anymore it was in Lancaster this this person used to play for Dallas Cowboys didn't play very long there he's a friend of mine and got injured I believe and he was going through some marriages marriage trials tough guy like six three tough guy and she went and God was speaking to her all service I don't remember what maybe you can tell me later for the second service but she went and said something to him and he just

he just was on his knees or got in a seat and just began weeping because God used her to go and speak to him but see you can get this get carried away though right I mean you could just Oh Lord saying you know to sell your car give it to me you know I think God wants you to move no no if it's not already so you it but I'm but when God's really moving in a person or people where he that's why I'm not worried about these types of things that are biblical Paul said that God has given these gifts to what to edify the church to build the church up so when somebody and I remember he walked right over during worship and that guy just lost it and it was exactly I think it had to do with I want to get in details but his marriage and was not going in good direction he's about ready to make a huge

mistake and God used her to go over and warn him and speak she didn't even know who he was I think she asked me to she goes do you mind if I go over and go what are you going to please because I knew I knew who him and I knew where it was going and forgot to tell her who doesn't know him to go and tell him but you see you see things like that in a healthy vibrant church is growing for the Lord you see things that where God will work in this area you know it's interesting too I thought of this church Smyrna last week we talked about Ephesus this this church Smyrna is only 35 miles above it why is there going to be tremendous persecution here but not here that would that's like saying these churches are fine here but in 30 miles from here in Santa Clarita Valencia you're gonna experience

extreme persecution the devil's gonna throw you into prison and he's going to test you well here's why I believe dead Orthodox dead teaching dead services and dead worship lacks spiritual life so this church we talked about in Ephesus that was dead right I know your works but you're dead you're going through the motions dead churches do not stir up spiritual conflicts they're dead spiritually I want to be careful here but let me hear my heart there are church for example a church close to us I'll just leave it like that there's no there's little persecution there's little emails going out there's little calling them heretical there's little there's no persecution because the enemy likes churches that are not fighting his kingdom so if a church is dead Ephesus you're dead you're just going

through the motions but 30 miles away here's a church that's on fire for the Lord loves God doing things for him he said watch out persecutions coming to you I believe that's why it's not doesn't say that in the Bible but we can speculate why there's persecution I mean we're not talking 300 miles away we're talking one church is being persecuted one will not and that's why there was not much persecution Ephesus because dead Orthodox dead teaching dead preaching dead services dead worship lack spiritual life you get that right there if there's just death in the sermon if there's just death in the worship if there's just death with the people you there's no spiritual life because you're not leaving here going let's let's like John Wesley said give me a hundred men I don't care if they're

laity or clergy but as long as they hate sin and love God we will storm the gates of hell see that's going to cause a little upheaval that's going to cause the devil knows that the name of those people that's going to cause warfare that's going to cause testing that's going to cause persecution but if we just leave here in a dead church and a dead service what's for lunch we're not going to witness to the waitress we're not going to witness to anybody actually I won't even talk about Jesus Christ until next Sunday devil doesn't care there's no persecution you're on his side being lulled to sleep so those be careful because those are who are the most passionate for God are often on the devil's hit list there's a target and I don't like getting emails people say brother we're in the

Netherlands listen to you you got a big target on your head thank you very much I know but same with you when you go out but that doesn't really worry me because greater is he that it's in that's in me than he that's in the world now we're cautious right we're not take heed lest you fall we're not prideful in that but we're like I know who's got my back as long as I stay abiding in him anchor to the vine he's my front guard he's my rear guard he puts that hedge of protection that we all pray about right don't put a hedge put a concrete barrier that can withstand a nuclear blast you know that that's who's got us if we stay within that protection but you walk outside that protection and you become easy an easy target for the enemy that's how it works so that's why I believe there's

persecution just 30 minutes away well they walked right so it wasn't 30 minutes away horseback 35 miles away the calling of God and his anointing are a magnet for spiritual trouble okay the calling of God on your life and his anointing I should clarify what these because these terms can get a little weird too I guess anointing again a biblical term but you watch you guys on TV they mess up the term right it's like a hundred years ago a gay party was a good thing now and I remember when I could put a rainbow my car is no big deal but now that's been changed right so these things we have the anointing of God is when God anoints something Saul I've called you I've anointed you to be King David I am Samuel go and anoint David to be King I'm anointing Elisha I'm a no I'm putting my it's almost

like the Holy Spirit comes upon a person in a mighty way you can now you say the same thing but it has power it has weight it has authority because there's anointing of God on it so anytime you have that that's a magnet for the enemy that's a magnet for persecution and he comes in I'm gonna I'm gonna tell you three ways he comes in there's many more or how he'll test you often sometimes with sickness with health problems and issues anybody say him into that he can he can he can come up and it's it's interesting as Jesus said that woman that was bound she was bound like this and Jesus healed her it's interesting he cast out a spirit and he said why should this daughter of Abraham be bound by Satan so her ailment was actually directly related to spiritual demonic activity so sometimes

sickness can occur what about discord in your family or in a church right anytime anytime you do here comes discord and because the enemy will plant those thoughts of even in your children if you ever go through seasons like what is going on what is going on these something happened there's a devil in my home right he's in he's something but that discord he's sowing discord in testing in this area financial collapse financial issues things always going that he'll use these things often or planning thoughts in your own minds about death destruction fear and he'll come in and he'll salt those areas but I just want to mention three other things to the about persecution if we stay centered on Christ it will bring out the best in us or the worst see when persecution comes what's already inside

spills out you've heard me talk about that before when a vessel struck what's inside spills out that's where that comes from so when adversity comes when persecution comes what spills out it's interesting you can

have a believer they're going to church they've got the Bible everything's going good but you take that job from them I haven't said that cuss word in many years I haven't been this angry and many where did that come from because it that persecution will drive out those things those impurities often and one good thing about persecution God becomes the only solution the only solution you ever get to a point where God you're the only hope you're the only solution doctors lawyers but nothing you are the only solution so it gets us to that point of looking to him and also persecution

is a purifying agent of course we know that you know what let me just I don't know why but I wrote this down this early this morning on this issue of sickness many people like is it well is it my body doing something is it sin is it the devil attacking and I've come to the conclusion of this I don't know the cause but I know the answer I don't know the cause I you could speculate you know gosh I haven't been taking care of my body for me is it my own body falling apart the result of living in the sinful condition in the sinful world is it the attack of the enemy is it sin in my life because this is something the church doesn't talk too much about but James we know and Paul talking about communion that actually there is some sin disease sickness related to sin in our life that it will

cause God will use that agent or he'll use that or loss of a job or different things to get our attention no discipline feels good initially right but it has a wonderful rewards after that so don't try to always gaze at this is this is this look to the answer look to the answer God and let him show you here's what we do know when it says he who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death now this could be a whole sermon anybody want to stay an hour okay well he who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death what's the first death it's when you die what's the second death it's when there's judgment so we all experiences it's a given to a man wants to die and then the judgment so the first death is is physical death the second death is where there's judgment and spiritual death so

he who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death well here's what we do know there is a battle real soldier a real soldier fights because I could talk about this who overcomes for another 30 minutes it's okay do I overcome or does God overcome for me and I just rest in him or do I have to do some things that you have to abide in Christ like the Bible says or is God my strength and my comfort and you can go back and forth on the different theological persuasions on that but the bottom line is this there is a battle a real soldier fights we don't win every battle but you will get up and fight for example if this is the but if this is the end result and we're walking but we get knocked off course a real soldier gets back on track and gets knocked up I lost that battle you got me good

but now I'm taking you down now and you just you keep the soldier keeps fighting he overcomes perseveres keeps going in the right direction and just a side note one of the signs of a false convert is when persecution comes they will not conquer when thought when like when Jesus gets difficult they say bye bye Jesus when he gets this isn't what I signed up for what happened to my best life now what happened to wealth and health and prosperity and I would meet mrs. or mr. right or for some of you what happened to this Jesus is of the Jesus I was told about see when that comes in the true the true followers of Christ understand that he died for them understand that we're in spiritual so we're going to conquer we're going to keep moving forward though he slayed me Job said yes well I trust

him Paul said what can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus nothing either height nor death nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor any creative thing will ever be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus I will fall forward because I am a conquer that's what it is that got me fired up on another topic he actually says we are more than

conquerors I thought about that this week we are more than conquerors because we conquer right you think that'd be enough okay I got through that I conquered it no but now like I said last week right or was it two weeks ago I don't remember the enemy can run from you see okay I've conquered this battle now guess what let me let me just sharpen my knife because now coming after you

I'm not just conquer this I'm more than a conquer I'm now on your tail devil I'm now doing doing harm to your kingdom after I sharpen my sword and put on my helmet now I'm more than a conquer now I'm going to go in and go against his kingdom isn't that what we're doing think about not only do I try to get through life and conquer this and conquer that now I could come up with the authority of God's Word and preach it to a lost and dying nation and preach the Word of God the enemy got that family but we're coming back he's got that one hooked on this or that but now we're coming back we're coming back and we're more than conquerors because we're coming at the kingdom of darkness I believe that's what we're called to do not just conquer not just sit at home oh I got over that wasn't that

good oh what's next and we just we just stay in an offensive but we're offending or defending we're always defending we're actually to go out and conquer let me just end those are not those who are not ready for the first death are often not ready for the second death let that sink in are you ready to die I'll just tell you up front I mean I'm not in the sense that I have a church to leave for a while I think I've got kids to raise I've got a wife and think God's called us to do some things and and but not afraid knowing I mean I mean there's a part of our human nature I know what's beyond I don't but when you when you draw close to Christ and he draws close to you you're not afraid of that first death but those who are often afraid of the second death as well they're afraid of the

judgment so I would encourage you do you have peace do you have hope are you trusting in the right things are you truly trusting in the right things are you God if you say if I don't die if I die I don't know where I'll go be careful because every anybody I've ever talked to that says that from who I talked to they did not have a relationship with Christ now there might be people who are young in the faith and they're like they're uncertain and enemies bringing in doubt confusion and I got that but if you're saying I don't if I die I don't know where I'll go I'm scared of the first death then you don't want to experience the second death the judgment that's what Jesus would say I you think I'm hardcore you think I'm a you we could just sir could you take over the pulpit if he what would

he tell us with tears in his eyes I mean you can just turn to what he said to Jerusalem and it wasn't Jerusalem Jerusalem I can I can picture tears I can be Oh Jerusalem he's crying out to the people he's right there Jerusalem if you would have just come to me if you would have just come to me in the day of your visitation I want to gather you as a mother gathers her children I want to but I can't fight against your will Oh Jerusalem you just come to me how would Christ preach to the church it wouldn't be this mild meek little quiet stuff that upsets no one where the devil himself goes to sleep it's warfare and warfare is loud it is brutal it is difficult so be careful are you ready for the second death because if you're not you're not ready for the first get ready this morning it's not a

big checklist you don't have to go have to quit this I mean I give people email but I have to quit drinking I have to quit this I have to quit that'll come later just run to Christ come as you are as a wonderful song right remember the Billy Graham crusades remember the Billy Graham crusades because it goes back to what I said 30 minutes ago there's negative people all throughout Greg Laurie's crusades Billy Graham's crusades Charles Finney's crusades Moody's crusades oh they're just emotional they're just walking forward they're saying a little prayer now there's danger there I know that but God forbid when we start to

see thousands come forward and accept Christ sure they're not all saved maybe 25% how do you know that because Jesus gave a parable or 50% depending on how you view that

parable of the stony seed thrown on stone three so seed thrown into Thorne thorns and and rocks and good soil and different things but the bottom line is this if you do not have hope and peace it could be that you're trusting in the wrong thing I read a story I'm sure many of you have that I still can't quite comprehend there was a man in Texas did I read this right he lost eight eight of his family members he's burying his wife his unborn child three kids what's it that I'm done right there that's you just took Shane Idleman out right that's what most would say no not if the strength and hope is in who Christ because that's if and then he lost a few other how do you even go to that funeral how do you speak and we're worried if we can't get our Xanax prescription or this doesn't pan out

or that's that where does that real hope come from it comes from Christ in Christ alone do you have that hope that church did this church did their whole although they're about ready to go to hell and back they have that hope in Christ

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