

Proverbs 19- Lord, Why Is This Happening?

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman explores the theme of God's sovereignty in relation to our personal plans and the challenges we face in life.

Duration: 54:33

Scripture: Psalm 139:23-24, Proverbs 19:21, Isaiah 55:9, Matthew 16:24, Romans 8:28, James 1:2-4

Topics: "Gods Sovereignty", "Heart Surrender"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God, acknowledging the struggles and unknown hindrances that hold us back. It highlights the need for God to reveal and search our hearts for full surrender, compassion, and love. The speaker delves into the concept of God's sovereignty, explaining how our plans are subject to His purposes prevailing. The sermon also touches on the significance of repentance, obedience, and trust in God's control, even in the midst of confusion and unforeseen blessings.

Transcript

Lord, with a heavy heart, Lord, for one, I want to pray for that pastor in Iran, your Heavenly Father, that's been imprisoned. Lord, would you work behind the scenes for his release as his wife and children are here in America as a citizen of this nation. Lord, I pray for him, give him peace and comfort.

Lord, in the midst of this storm, would you work behind the scenes and open doors that seem impossible on behalf of this man. Lord, but I also pray for our nation, Lord, as we drift off course, nobody seems to know how to get back on track, but your word offers us hope and direction. I pray for our leaders, Lord, convict them to turn back to you, Lord, turn back to righteousness and let your word prevail in this nation again, Lord.

We're going to contend until the day we die. Lord, we also pray for your church. Lord, that she does battle on the front lines, that you would equip her.

Lord, just bring a mighty spirit of revival to this nation, Lord. Revive your churches, revive your people, Lord, beginning in this service tonight, Lord. I pray for direction, encouragement, Lord, but I also pray for precision.

Lord, as we look at your sovereignty and your control and your goodness, that you would bless these people here tonight, and we pray this in Jesus' name, amen, amen. Well I heard we ran out of bulletins tonight, so hallelujah, yes. If you need bulletin, or if you need some of the notes that you're hearing tonight, let me know, email us, and we can email those out to you, and we can send you the notes, but obviously you'll have to just follow along with us, and if you have your Bibles, we're in, as you know, Proverbs 19.

If you're new here, we've been going through the book of Proverbs, chapter by chapter, each week, so you can catch all the videos online of the messages you might have missed, but to be honest with you, I'm not getting very far in Proverbs 19. I'm gonna be stuck on one verse, right here, Proverbs 19, verse 21, and the reason is, I couldn't go any further, God just held me right there. And a lot of what we've already talked about, Proverbs 1 through Proverbs 18, was also in Proverbs 19, so a lot of it was repetitive, so I just want to focus on this one verse, verse 21, many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purposes that will prevail.

Let me say that again, there are many plans in our heart, but it's going to be the Lord's purposes, or purpose, that prevails. Now, some of you that have been coming consistently, you might say, well, this is a little bit like the last couple messages, maybe a month ago. Remember those messages, help, my life isn't working, or help, my plan isn't working, and we talked about what's going on, my plan isn't working, my life isn't working.

Well, on those messages, I focus primarily on personal application and obedience on our part, and what we can do. But on this message, I want to venture into a different direction, and that's God's sovereignty. Because a lot of it, how many of us can say, like the title of this message, Lord, why is this happening? Why is this happening in my life? Just me? Okay, everybody here in the room, pretty much.

So the last message is on why isn't my life working, why isn't my plan working, focused on our motives, and our heart, and obedience to God's word, all those things that are vitally important, but when I only have one message, it's hard to get everything in there. So this message, I want to focus a little bit more on God's sovereignty, and how our plans are made by us, but it's his purposes that will prevail. And that's what's gonna be the focus here.

And really, the premise of the whole message is right here. We have plans, we have plans for our kids, our work, our marriage, retirement, ministry, but we really don't know how they're going to turn out. We can only speculate, right? Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it's the Lord's purposes that will prevail.

And I want to take special note here, where the Bible says, many are the plans, but, and anytime you see that word but there, or that word therefore there, you want to look, okay, what's God saying? What is he trying to say here? Many are the plans, but it's the Lord's purposes that's going to prevail, which tells me we make a lot of plans that don't necessarily go the direction we thought. I mean, I just look back, as I was preparing for this, I look back over my own life, and I could jot down dozens and dozens and dozens of things that, man, that didn't work out like I thought. What happened there? So I want to give a lot of peace and comfort for those who are maybe saying the same thing.

Lord, what's going on here? Because we can only speculate. We forget that we have a divine creator, God, who created us, and he has a master plan, and nobody has our best interest more than he does, not even ourselves. Because as we know, our motives are tainted by sin.

We take the course of least resistance. Our flesh prevails many times. So we think, oh, I want to do this, when we have no idea that that's going to destroy us.

And God says, hold on, my plan, my things, my purposes are going to prevail. And we have to remember that two purposes can't prevail. See, we have our plans and God's purposes.

If they're going different directions, they both can't prevail. So it's God's sovereignty, it's God's plans that will ultimately prevail. And I think what happens, at least in my life too, and I've noticed this talking to others, is really it has a lot to do with the trust issue.

I mean, if we truly trusted, God, you know what's best, we could get through life a lot easier. But a lot of times we think, God, you do not know what you're doing in this case. I'm putting you in the pocket today, and I'm taking control, because you don't know what's best, I know what's best.

And I would encourage you, if you were not here, get those last couple messages a few weeks back, help, my plan isn't working, or help, my life isn't working. And it talked about our motives and the condition of our heart and how that can sometimes sway off course, or actually take us off course. But here's when it comes to God's sovereignty, we have a problem with this issue, because we want to know why, don't we? We want to know why, why is this happening, why did this occur? And really a lot of that, when I was thinking about, that's a control issue.

I want to know why, so I can control it in the future, or control it now. A lot of times God says, you're not gonna know why, just trust me. And I put there in your bulletin, Isaiah 55, nine, a verse many of us know, as the heavens are higher than the earth, which is enormous, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.

So a lot of times I think we think that God is kind of like us, just a little bit better, you know, we kind of think along the same, he's not even, it's not even comparable. His thoughts are so far above our thoughts, his ways are so far above his ways, that's why when you can rest in God's sovereignty, that's true rest. That is true rest, you can rest in that sovereign control of God, if we truly believe that he's sovereign and in control.

See, that's where the problem is, fear comes in, who's really in control? I mean, we see, you know, we're all alarmed at the direction our nation is going, I mean, my Lord, but who's in control? The president works for my boss and your boss, he holds nations in his palm of his hands, he can raise one king up and he can pull another king down, this is all, he works all of this according to his sovereign plan. And what happens is we don't really understand how that works, and we get into trouble because we go to one extreme or the other, and I put down Dr.

Wayne Grudem is helpful at this point, and if any of you, if you don't know who this man is, I would encourage you to get his stuff, he's got a big book on systematic theology, about 1200 pages, if you want to know all about the faith, about God, and his work is very well respected in the Christian community, but he says exactly how God combines his providential control over our choices, scripture does not explain to us, but rather than deny one aspect or the other, simply because we cannot explain both, how both can be true, we should accept both in an attempt to be faithful to the teaching of all scripture.

So we don't understand, how can I make these choices, that many call free agency, free will, you know, how can I make these choices yet still be under the sovereign control of God, that doesn't make sense,

does it? Because God's, oh shoot, why did he choose that, now I got to move this, I got to do that, so how can we have choices yet be under his sovereign control? And a lot of people throughout church history, when they've embraced one extreme or the other, you can kind of get off tilt, I mean, if it's all about my choices, and God really doesn't know, he's waiting to see how we choose, we're in trouble, but if it's all about God and the sovereignty, then we're just puppets, why do anything?

Now, if I'm not mistaken, I think this quote is coming from, when he's talking about salvation, and many of you have heard me talk before, on Calvinism and Arminianism and free will and God's sovereignty, and the five points of Calvinism, and they're different things, and what I try to do is get right in the middle, we're commanded to repent and believe, and God is sovereign, no man comes to the father, or to the son actually, unless the father draws him, so how do you reconcile these two tensions?

You don't, you command man to repent and believe, and you trust in God's sovereignty, if not, you become a very arrogant, mean Calvinist, or a very arrogant, mean Arminian, you see what I mean? Because my way's right, both are clearly taught in scripture, Charles Spurgeon said that God's sovereignty and our choices run like parallel lines, we don't even know where they cross until eternity, so we have to understand that we are able to make certain choices, yet we are not under, or beyond his sovereign control, and actually, that gives me a lot of peace, and comfort, because he's ultimately in control, Romans 8, 20, wait, he works all things for good, according to his perfect will, but what?

For those who love him, to those who are called, according to his purposes, and what I was thinking about this week, man, how can you really explain this? And I thought of something, I don't know if my wife was making something, I can't recall, but it's like a spiritual cake mix, he takes, you get the salt, you can't eat salt by itself, and you got sugar, it's too sweet, you got the flour and all, he takes everything, and he just mixes it all together, and here comes the cake, you take salvation, our salvation, he has to deal with salvation, it's part of his sovereign will, those who are called, according to his purposes, those who love him, tells me those are believers, but then we're in a sinful state, so my choices are tainted by sin, so he takes sin and salvation, believers, and then his sovereignty, and he mixes all this together, and that's his sovereign plan, and that's how it unfolds, and it'll blow your mind if you think about it too long, because you say, well, how, what about this, and what about, what about on my way home if I don't go my normal route, and I go some other route, and I get hit, and now I'm in the hospital, and the baby's born later, and I don't get this, well, how's that gonna happen?

What would God do, what would he do right now if I said, I'm done here, I'm turning off this mic, I'm throwing in the towel, I'm done, I'm out of here, guys, good luck, but wait a minute, if he's called me to pastor and plant a church, why couldn't I do that? I could do that, I guess, and somehow he would work all that out for good, probably humble me, and I would return next Saturday, I'm so sorry, how did that happen? You see how that works? When you can rest in God's sovereignty, you can get through life, because you don't care how much is in your checking account, you don't care if you have a job this week or not, you don't care if somebody just left and isn't returning, although they affect you, don't get me wrong, it affects us, there are circumstances, but you can trust in God's sovereign plan, so what I'm gonna do is try to unpack this a little bit.

Many are plans, but it's God's purposes that will prevail. Well, how does that work? Well, trust me, we're going somewhere with this, and it's gonna be good, it's gonna be an encouraging message for those who are open to God's sovereignty. So with that said, what is sovereignty? Does everybody know? I'm just gonna read a definition from the Bible dictionary, just so you know.

God possesses all power and is the ruler of all things, period. God rules and works according to his eternal purpose, even through events that seem to contradict or oppose his rule. Scripture emphasizes God's rule in three areas, creation, human history, and redemption.

That's where scripture seems to really focus, creation, how God created and orchestrated, and then human history, how he's been involved in human history, and then, of course, redemption. I mean, you could see redemption in Adam and Eve. What? What happened when they sinned? He had to cover their nakedness with the skins of animals, the first sacrifice.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. Covered them. And then he's calling Abraham, come out from among them, from your people.

I'm going to make you a great name. I'm gonna make you a nation. I'm gonna bring the Messiah through you.

Oh, God, you're not, there's no way. I'm too old. My wife's too old.

This is not gonna happening. I'm gonna have to take charge now, God, because I don't think you know what you're doing. So he has intimacy, has relationship with his handmaiden.

He's kind of his wife's assistant, thinking he could get the job done that way. Not a good idea. If I had time to go through Ishmael and all the different things, but God is bringing redemption down through Calvary, through Christ, through the nation of Israel, and then now through the church, how we bring the message of the cross.

So he's working all this according to a sovereign plan. So he is sovereign. He is in control.

So hold on. Here we go. Buckle up.

Seat belts, phones off. Restroom breaks. Go now or forever hold your peace.

I'm gonna have the ushers close the doors. Just kidding. I wouldn't do that.

Okay, Lord, why is this happening? And I can say this is a message that I can relate to big time because I've been in many of those challenges. Why is this happening? And what I'm gonna do is I'm just gonna from scripture pull apart different areas of why this is happening to help us better understand God's sovereignty of what we're going through. Number one, a lot of times why we don't understand something and why is something happening that we don't understand is because God is either directing or redirecting.

Why is this happening? Because a lot of times we won't change our course unless we hit a block wall. I would have never took certain jobs unless I was financially in a bind. I would have never done that.

I would have never spent hours in the prayer closet unless he was wounding me and breaking me. He's directing me. He's redirecting me.

And I remember, I was trying to remember back as far as I could remember. Actually, Ryan, I remember when you were born. I was three years old and I was looking over the seat.

But that's just a whole nother point. That point doesn't go with this message. So I could remember back when I was three years old.

We were in the bank parking lot over on 50th Street West when it used to be, it is a bank now, but it used to be a different kind of bank and my mom was driving. And back when you didn't have to wear seatbelts. And I was looking over, I could see him.

He was just born. So that was my oldest memory. But then I'm trying to remember, when did I start thinking, getting depressed? Why isn't this working? And I remember it was when 12 years old when I was doing well in baseball and excelling in sports.

And, you know, there was, of course, you're talking about scouting in college and high school. And, you know, we're going to play. We're practicing.

We own a batting machine. You know, back then it was not very common. My dad pitched with us.

And so sports and baseball, he was doing very well in all stars. And then one day I can remember my elbow was hurting really bad. So come to find out, bone chips, bone spurs.

That's the end of that. That's all she wrote. I could never throw good again.

The arm, I can't straighten this arm. So that was it. Surgery, done, no more baseball.

And I remember my room just like, what in the world is that all about? Well, looking back, he was directing and redirecting. Thank God I'm not a professional athlete. Because what is hard, it's a lot of those guys you don't see really become Christians.

I'm just telling you the truth because money, success, how many Hollywood stars do you see turning to Christ? Really turning to him? Why is that? It's hard for a rich man to enter heaven because those riches contend for a relationship with God. Jesus said that it's hard for a rich man to enter heaven because of those riches. So I could see he was redirecting me.

And a lot of times we don't, he's directing us. Looking back, I thank God. Then I was very depressed.

So you see how he does that. Proverbs 16, nine, the mind of man plans his ways, but it's the Lord who directs his steps. 16, nine, we talked about that a few weeks ago.

I plan my way, but it's actually the Lord who directs my steps. And that's very interesting because there's, we don't understand how both can be true, but it is because I am planning my way, but he's directing the ship. He is directing, he's moving things, situations, friendships that should end, different things.

He's directing those steps. That's what Proverbs said. We talked about a few weeks back.

I plan my way, but the Lord directs me. And what about 1921? We just read, many are my plans, but the Lord's purposes are going to prevail. So number one, you have to look at a lot of times, why is this happening? Well, do you trust God or do I trust God or not? He's directing or redirecting us.

Remember, I also talked about it on my testimony. One of the most difficult times I've ever went through was late in the 1990s when got married, thought it was going to work out. It didn't work out.

And what happened there? Lord, why is this happening? Well, without that, I was a rebellious, arrogant prodigal son who probably never would have returned. I'd be on my fourth marriage or buried in Lancaster Cemetery. Just telling you straight.

So looking back, thank God for that. Do I believe He caused it? No, He allowed it. You see the difference? My sinful, arrogant choices caused it.

He used that to break me. And then from that breaking point, now I can use you. Now I can mold you.

Now you're mine. Very depressing time, but you see how that works? So He's redirecting and He's directing us. The next point I have to talk about also is training and shaping and preparing us.

Think about that. What we're going through a lot of times is training and preparation. Of course, for eternally as well.

But if you're a young adult, I'll tell you right now, if you're a young adult, a lot of what you're going through is training for later. And I remember during the same time, I don't mean to bring in some of my own examples, but I was trying to bring in with each step how it related to my own life. My wife said, yeah, you should share that.

People want to know. And you always struggle over being too transparent or not transparent enough. You know what I mean? You want to be a pastor.

I've never went through anything. I don't know what you're going through. I'm just perfect.

And God just speaks to me every day. Why are you? You shouldn't be depressed. You shouldn't have financial challenges.

Or you're too transparent. You're just a basket case up here. And you're like, why is that guy preaching to me? He doesn't have his life together.

So trying to find that balance is hard. I have my life together because of him. He's rebuilt it.

But during this time, I worked hard all through my 20s, had 401k stock options, everything with, as you know, 24 hour fitness. I helped to open a lot of these. I was in corporate America then.

We're the fastest growing fitness company in the world. You know, six figures, custom home in my 20s. And God was doing all this.

And then when he broke me and now my whole mindset changes. I don't want any of that. I just want you, Lord.

Now I've got to give up all of that. I walked and told the president, you can have my stock options. You can have my everything.

I'm out of here. I'm done. So I said, what was that about? Eight years? I can't believe that.

I just wasted eight years of my life. But did I really? See, during that time, I was overseeing 140, 150, 160 employees at one time. Hiring, firing, EEO, sexual harassment, paper trails, job description, all these things that, well, it's very important when you're planning a church.

A lot of these still roll into that as well. Speaking, I had to speak to groups of people. I'm trying to find the first time I ever spoke when I was in my early 20s.

I was like this, just reading a letter, like, oh, I can't believe this. So he used all of that. He used all of that.

I also, some of you know, I had spreadsheets every month. I had to generate \$300,000 in revenue every single month. I had to answer to a board of directors who said, your job's on the line every quarter if you don't hit these numbers.

So crunching numbers, reviewing all these item lines of profit and loss statements and working payroll and all these things. So looking back, well, that was very important training ground. But what was I focused on? Man, when they take this company public, I was a managing partner.

They still haven't taken the company public. So God knows what he's doing. He rebuilt other doors and opened other doors.

But you see, we don't see that right then. All we concentrate on. So that's why I'm saying it's so important to trust in his sovereignty because then, you know, he's in control.

Come hell or high water, he's in control. Though I'll walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because the Lord is with me. He holds me.

So that's why some things are happening. He's training and he's shaping us. And one of the scriptures all of us hate is found in James 1. Count it all joy when you fall into various trials.

No, I don't like that scripture. It should say count it all joy when you avoid trials. But he's saying be happy when you fall into trials.

Why? Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. See, without, I won't have patience. I won't grow spiritually if I'm not being challenged in this area.

Do you know if you pray for patience, you will not wake up and be a patient person. It never happens. Never happens.

You pray for patience, you'll have four kids under the age of eight like me. You'll be always in traffic, always working with difficult people. Not here, I mean outside the church, outside the church.

But that's how patience comes. It tests you and it tries you. And you want to send that email back.

You want to send that call back. I'm just actually, I'm going to ignore them for the next week because they upset me. That's, he's testing that patience.

Because you know what really a Christian is? You walk around and I walk around as if we're in warfare. We are with the battle scars. We walk, that's how we live.

Christian soldiers. Paul would say be a good soldier. Fight the fight.

So a lot of times when we're going through something, we have to submit to what we're going through and let the hammer of God shape us. Let me remind everybody again, 11 day journey in the wilderness took the children of Israel how many years? 11 day journey to the promised land took them 40 years. And they actually didn't even, most of them couldn't even go into it.

Actually all but two because of their hardness of hearts, their stiff neck, these people that were just so upset at God. So see how attitude changes everything? How we look at, I mean, really it's not what you're going through, it's how you're going through it. It's not what you're going through, it's how you're going through it.

And sometimes I think God hits rewind and rewind and rewind until you get this right. Listen, you're going to keep dealing with difficult people Shane until the day you die. Get this right.

Learn how to forgive and forgive. I spent some time up on the cross, Jesus says, surely you can forgive others. Surely.

You see how important this issue of sovereignty is. So he's preparing us. The next thing, I can't avoid this and I tried, I'll be honest with you.

Why is this happening? We can't overlook the wages of sin. The consequences of sin. Anytime something is happening, it's very healthy to say, Lord, is it I? You have a better plan, but I am disrupting that, am I Lord? It's okay to ask that because the Bible says the wages of sin is death.

So if somebody is outside of a relationship with God, they don't accept Christ, believe on the only name that saves, the penalty, the wages, the penalty of that sin is death. But as a believer, the penalty of sin disobedience is hard. Hard is the way of the transgressor.

We'll go through divorce. We'll go through difficulties. A lot of times because of our own choices.

And as much as I want to avoid that tonight and just talk about sovereignty, we can't because within his sovereign control, he gives us the ability to make choices. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. Blessed is the man who stands not in the seat of the, or sits not in the seat of the scornful or stands in the path of sin.

Blessed is he. I have some, actually I have some verses on that one. Disobedience often knocks us off course.

Proverbs 27 of the same chapter. Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge. 19, a hot-tempered man must pay the penalty.

If you rescue him, he will have to do it again. You know, one of the best ways that people can finally get over anger and repent of it is to pay the penalty for it. When we become enablers and we remove people from the situation, a lot of times the work of God is not quite done because we keep enabling them financially, relationally.

Oh, it's okay. It's okay. I mean, many men that abuse spouses, the wife says, this is my fault.

I'm a jerk. I can't cook and I this, and he's, you know, it's just my fault. He's like, yeah, that's right, it's your fault.

No, sir, it's your fault. There's no excuse for that anger and you need to feel the consequences of her saying, I'm not coming home until that changes. Shane, you're advocating divorce? I didn't say, I didn't use the word divorce whatsoever.

But can you leave that environment and say you need to get that check? Absolutely. Absolutely. Because a lot of times people don't change until that happens because there's an enabler at home saying, it's okay.

It's my fault. It's okay. It's my fault.

Until you take a stand, say that's not going to be allowed. I'm not going to be married to a man who abuses me physically, mentally, and my children. I'm not going to return to that environment and then let the hammer of God fall on that because that's what the scripture is basically saying.

A hot tempered man must pay the penalty. If you rescue him, you will have to do it again. Another verse on disobedience.

Verse three of the same chapter. A man's own folly. Hold on.

A man's own folly ruins his life? What happened to God's sovereignty, Shane? Yeah. God's sovereignty. You might make it to heaven by the skin of your teeth just holding on, just barely getting in.

But you miss the abundant Christian life because of a man's own folly will ruin his life and he rages against the Lord. See, we forget this. The danger is to make this message all about sovereignty and minimize obedience.

Do you realize that? We can make the danger of just, it's all about God's sovereignty and God's in control. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen, amen, amen.

And he's saying over here, repent. Change this way. And you're like, no, no, no, Lord.

No, no, I'm not listening to that. And that's one of the things you'll find with this church is I feel we have so much of this in the Church of America. Everybody's saying, blessed be the name of the Lord.

They're jumping up and down, but they're looking at porn tomorrow morning. They're leaving, cussing out their spouse, yet they're coming in here saying worthy is the lamb. Who are they got? They're not fooling God.

So one of the emphasis I feel that God has called us to is in love, but to preach repentance and obedience to his word. Because look throughout the entire New Testament. Do not be conformed to this.

Do not obey that. Do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Flee these things.

Make no provision for them. So the pulpit should be warning people in love. That's half of our responsibility.

Yes, to encourage and motivate, but to also call that man to repentance who's doing those things. And that's why sometimes, amen, little ones too, perfect praise from the mouth of babes. Actually, I'm very excited you brought your kids in.

It's encouragement for me to see that. Thank you. I wish I could, but mine won't act good.

And my daughter says, dad, he's too boring. I need to go in the kid's area. But anyway, all joking aside, just so you guys know, that is why I feel Westside sometimes takes a pretty hard stance.

You know, we get, you know, out in the community. It's like, oh, that church. I mean, that's, oh boy, that's, yeah.

All we're doing is calling people to repentance when it deserves, when the Bible calls for it. We'll build up when it calls for building up and we'll tear down when it calls for tearing down because sinful man will not change until he's confronted. Until you tell somebody that's wrong, that is wrong on God's side.

I love you enough to tell you that is wrong. You need to turn from that and you need to change. Some of you got that text I sent out.

I put it on Facebook and I had to pull over and write it down. If you're listening, Janet Parshall this week, they're talking about, I didn't get the full story, but they interviewed an African pastor that was here and they said, why is there so much counseling in the American church? Why is there so much therapy in the American church? We don't, you don't see that in Africa or China, the third world country or the difficult countries where the gospel, the underground church, the house church, you don't see a lot of counseling and you definitely don't see it in some parts of Africa where the church is exploding. So they asked, why is there so much counseling in the American church and not in Africa? You know what he said? He said, in America, you guys counsel.

In Africa, we repent. Wow. Wow.

Now, do I put down counseling? Of course not. I meet with people every single week and that's actually what my mom does. But we both understand that the power is in the repentance, not in a bunch of this.

You don't need to come and talk it through. You need to go to him and work it out. That's just straight Bible.

There's not a lot of counseling when repentance takes place because the majority, not all, hear me here. I'm not saying the counseling's bad, but most of the time, we want somebody to go and encourage me in my sin. Tell me I'm okay and I'm gonna continue down this destructive path.

Let me just, I got a vent. I got a vent that's called conviction. You don't need to vent.

You need to be on this altar weeping. That's the difference. So in counseling, we talk it through.

We internalize. We go back. We look at cognitive behavioral patterns and all these different things.

When the Bible says, get on your knees and break before Almighty God, then go and seek godly counsel for direction or for extra areas. It never should be the first resort. It should always be the last.

A lot of times when I wanna meet with people and they wanna meet and counsel, that has to be the last resort, not the first. Now, I'm not talking about getting direction and hey, I'm thinking about moving. That's normal stuff.

But when repentance is replaced by counseling, we're in trouble. And that's why you see a lot of people in the church not changing because they internalize it. They hold it in and the victim mentality slips right in.

This is the way I am because of this. And well, he did this and she did this and we just go around instead of repenting. If you call on the name of the Lord, you will be saved.

But there's something interesting in Acts chapter three, Peter's preaching. And he says, if you repent, you'll experience the rivers of living water. You'll experience these works of the spirit, this revival in your soul.

Because there's something about repentance that cleanses us. It's like confession, confessing to God and allowing that repentance to take place. The next point, and this is a vital one too, Lord, why is this happening? Why is this happening? I'll tell you why.

Much is happening because of this point right here. He needs, he wants, he desires brokenness and full surrender. And unless God, see the problem is, we will, most of us, and I'll just be honest with you, we will self-destruct if he does not redirect.

Because we think we know best, we're on the right path, I'm gonna have this and I'm gonna have that and I'm just keep going and we will self-destruct a lot of times. So why is this happening? Why is this happening? God is wanting to break us and humble us so full surrender takes place. Because it's not until a man gets to a breaking point that he finally says, here I am, Lord, use me, I'm tired, I can't do this anymore.

That's why it's hard for a rich man to enter heaven because there's no, he just can buy his way out of everything. That's his God. God's not his God.

So a lot of times I will, as a living witness, if you're going through something, break. That might not be the reason necessarily, but you can never go wrong by just breaking and surrendering and saying, Lord, I might have made a mistake, I'm not sure what happened, Lord, but I give you everything. Lord, are you using this to get me back into my prayer closet? Most people won't even pray until something as bad is happening.

Think about it. So busy, I'm making so much money, works great, you don't have any time for God. So guess what he's gonna do? You're gonna get the call.

No more employment, I'm out of work. Now I bet you'll serve me. Now I bet you'll trust in me.

But see, that doesn't happen until, a lot of times, until that takes place. Because we think God is concerned as much as we are about our money. I mean, he can just open doors and nothing, I mean, that's not even on his radar scale.

We're thinking, oh Lord, how am I gonna get out of this? He's like, oh shoot, I didn't mean for that to happen. Oh no. And he's just pacing up in heaven, like we gotta make something happen.

God's like, listen, just break and surrender and submit yourself to me. Do you know that will be your hardest struggle for the rest of your life? For some it may, for some it may not. The hardest struggle you will ever face is being God and not allowing Him to be God.

You know what most Christians say? You stay on that cross while I'm on the throne. That's what we say. You stay up on that cross.

I wanna be on the throne. What does the Bible say? He's on the throne right now, you carry your cross. So you want an example, I've got one.

It's the only thing I could find. This is our life, right? This is what we think, what we want. This is my life, I'm so proud of it.

God says, you better break. No, no, no. I love my coffee.

I can't break. So Lord, why am I going through this? Why am I going through this? Break. No, no.

I'm calling my step-aunt who has a lot of money. I'm gonna try to do this. I'm not, no, I'm not breaking, Lord.

What does He say? I want this. I want this. The hammer of God.

That's what has to happen. Wait a minute, wait a minute. Shane, I don't like that kind of God.

You just ruined everything. You just broke my life. These relationships that were so important to me.

You took everything from me. How can I trust that kind of God? How can I? Wouldn't you agree? This isn't shambles. It's done.

Because you don't see the final work. This is what He wants you to be. This is His plan.

This is His purpose. I can't drop this one. It's too much money.

Wait, wait. This is what He did. You don't understand.

This is what He did. But that has to take place. The hammer of God.

It's okay. We'll clean up later. This has to happen.

This will not happen without this. When this goes down, this comes up. That's the only way you can be built up.

That's the only way. But that's so true, people. Unless you break, you cannot fully be used of God.

Why? Because you're going the other direction. The Bible talks about us being empty vessels. Paul says, we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

An empty vessel, what's it good for? You just fill up whatever you want in it. Whatever, Lord, here I am. So a lot of times, what we're going through is He wants to break you and crush you.

Not for something bad, but for something good. When I look back, I was going through hell. I mean, I went through depression and all these things.

And his life was so challenging because he wanted to break the prodigal son and bring him home. So see, we can't ignore this point. Brokenness and surrender is vitally important.

And I think God will use the furnace of affliction to get us to do that. And I put other notes in here that you guys can look at later. We're running, you know, of course, low on time.

But it's that image I think I gave you guys maybe last summer where sometimes if you read books on shepherding in Jesus's day, sometimes they would break the leg of the lamb that wandered from the flock. You had a lamb that kept wandering from the flock and was going to be given over to predators, wolves,

whatever it is. They would break the leg of that lamb.

Why? Then they would mend it and splint it and the shepherd would carry that lamb for weeks on end. Now the lamb understands that broken and dependent relationship on the shepherd. Now he's not going to wander anymore because the shepherd has it.

See, I had to break your leg. I had to break that area of your life. Why? For you're better.

If not, you'd be food for wolves and coyotes and lions. So God has to sometimes break us of that. You see how that works? And the shepherd carries us around because you will not know him.

Do you want to know why some people are so passionate for God? And I thank some of you guys. You say you're so passionate about it. It's not me.

He broke me and now I know him as Jehovah Jireh, my provider, Jehovah Nisi, my band. I know him as all these things. I know him as my shelter and my rock and my fortress.

How do you know him, Shane? Because you rely on him and you submit everything to him. Our relationship is built through mutual connection there. Many people go through life.

They say they know God. They don't know God. They don't know God any more than they know Billy Graham.

They know all about Billy Graham. But if you were to meet him today, he would say, I don't know you. And when Jesus says, I don't know you, he also says, depart from me.

You practice lawlessness. Matthew 7. Check it out. Many will come to me in that day and say, Lord, Lord, we did all these things in your name.

And he'll say, depart from me. I don't even know you. That's powerful.

If that verse doesn't wake you up, then something's wrong. Do you truly know the shepherd? And the only way you can know him is by allowing the hammer of God to fall. That's just truth.

The next point, growth. Why is this happening? Why is this happening? God wants us to slow down a lot of times. Do you know why people are so stressed out and anxiety and fear? And everybody's on high energy and high octane and high level.

He says, slow down. Wait on me. So a lot of times what you're going through is kind of a wake up call.

Slow down. Slow down. Stop.

Psalms 46.10. Be still and know that I am God. Isaiah 40. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. And I think a lot of times when I went through certain things, it's drove me back to the prayer closet. That had me redo my calendar and put first things first.

So a lot of times he's doing that. I love this quote I heard last Saturday. Helen actually gave it to me.

Hardy. She said, she heard it. God gives the best to those who leave the choice to him.

That should be, that should, you should, every single adult in this room should memorize this. Dating. Memorize this verse.

God gives the best to those who leave the choice to him. God gives the best to those who leave the choice to him. And impulsive decisions make us impatient.

Do you realize that? When you make impulsive decisions, you become impatient. And you will make the wrong decision. That's the power of waiting on God.

Waiting on that sovereignty and that control. I want to read something from Warren Wearsby. Another good author.

When you find yourself restless and nervous, think about this. This is great advice. When you find yourself restless and nervous, anxious to do something, you can be sure that you are not trusting God to work.

If we really trust God, then we will wait on him to accomplish what he has promised. When you find yourself impatient, you can be sure that Satan and the flesh are at work. And that you're in danger of making a wrong decision.

When circumstances of life are irritating, that is the time to beware. Do you realize most people make rash decisions, wrong decisions when life is irritating? When I'm anxious, irritated, this, then you lash out. You get out your anger.

You have to apologize later. That's a lot of times. Why is this happening? Because so you'll wait on God.

Or why is this happening? Because we made a rash decision. Impulse. And we made it, oh Lord, what have I done? But be encouraged as well.

What does the Bible say? Return to me and I'll return to you. I will rebuild. I will strengthen.

Just return to me. That's the whole point of scripture is that it calls us back. Strength comes from waiting.

And waiting is your spiritual muscle. I want to get this point across. Waiting on God is like you're developing your spiritual muscle.

You're developing patience and perseverance and long suffering. You're developing kindness and thoughtfulness and self-control. You're developing on this because you're waiting on God.

It's like your spiritual muscle. And do you guys know how muscles grow? Everybody thinks it grows at the gym. It doesn't grow at the gym.

You know what happens at the gym? It gets broken down. It breaks down. And then do you know when it grows? When you're sleeping.

When you're resting. When you're eating the nutrients. Muscle growth is simply this.

When it is being strained from an unfamiliar workload, it responds by bringing in more. You see a little baby just barely crawling. They can't even get up.

Unfamiliar workload. They're trying. These muscles are stimulated.

They're growing. Then they can stand up and walk like this while the muscles are growing. Same thing with us.

When we're pushed beyond what is a normal workload, when we're pushed beyond that, that's when the spiritual muscles are developed. There's no way around that. If not, we become flabby and out of shape because we don't wait on God.

We rush around. We do all these things. Now, some of you are saying what I was probably saying too.

Well, how in the world do I know when to make a decision then? Because you have to remember the flesh is in there wanting to do this. So what you do, what I do is when I'm feeling impulse, impulsive decisions, impatience, irritable, I do not want to make a decision based in that emotional state. So when I feel that way, I want to wait.

Lord, just show me, show me. And most of the time when I do that, He opens some other door, or He confirms it, or He opens the door while I'm just waiting. But when I step out and make a rash decision because I'm emotionally stirred, it's usually the wrong decision.

Why? Because what's leading me? Fear and anxiety. They're wrong things. See, the enemy rushes.

God says, wait. Always. I've never seen, I'm sure it's happened, but people waiting too long where they missed.

Oh, I waited too long and now, you know, I'm in trouble. You know, God will prompt and He'll push and He'll open doors so it becomes crystal clear as long as we have peace, peace in the midst of a storm. So a lot of times why we're going something is because of that whole reason.

The next thing, I'll be out, I'll be done real quick here. Trust, you're building trust. When we rest in God's control, I'm sorry, we rest when God is in control and we worry when we are.

We rest when God is in control and when we worry when we are. So a lot of times we're going through something, it's to build trust. Do you know that you can't build trust unless you're going through something? See, it seems contradictory, doesn't it? I don't want to go through anything.

I just want to trust God. Well, you can't trust God if you're not going through anything because trust is built through that furnace of affliction. It's built through that difficulty.

So we say, oh Lord, I just want to trust you. No, we don't. We say we do, but when it comes down to actually trusting him, we don't think he's got our back.

So we make all these decisions. So when God allows us to go through things, it's okay, Lord, I'm trusting you. I'm trusting in your sovereignty and in your control.

I'm trusting in those things. The next area is unforeseen blessings. Remember, we think we can't see ahead of time, only God can.

Right? Have you ever heard that song, you country fans, Garth Brooks? Thank God for unanswered prayers. Oh Lord, thank God for unanswered prayers. Think about that.

Many of you would be married to somebody different right now. I don't want the ones that say I wish it. No, you'd be married.

But listen, you wouldn't have your children either. You wouldn't have your kids. Thank God for unanswered prayers.

There's blessings there. And I remember when we just, you know, I don't know how long it's been now, eight months, I guess, when Morgan told me we're expecting a fourth. I'm like, wow, I thought we were done at three.

What happened? I know what happened. But I'm saying, come on, these services aren't PG-13. What happened is God's sovereignty and his control.

And now it's turned out to be a huge blessing. So if she ever hears this later, when she's older, it was a huge blessing. We thank God now.

But at first, like, oh, really? I mean, some of you can relate. Not just me. Like, uh-oh.

I remember, I think, my brother's here too. Our mom had my sister. I was 15.

I was 15. And she was, oh, that's been a tremendous blessing. You see how that works? We don't see these blessings.

We get tied up on right now. Right now, we don't see how God could be using it as a blessing. The final point I'm going to close on is this.

Trust in the midst of confusion. Trust in the midst of confusion. I went through a lot of confusion this last year.

Just on things not working out like I thought. Relationships, people. You know, we almost merged with the church about a year ago.

I thought, for sure, this is looking great. All the church, you know, they want us to come in and just, you know, kind of just merge with us so we can, you know, just continue to go forward. And that fell out.

And I'm like, where am I missing it here, Lord? What's going on here? And other confusing things were, you know, we've tried to buy houses. We're in the market for buying a house. And things falling out.

This one doesn't work out. This one doesn't work out. Just raining again now.

What, what, all this confusion. What's going on? But see, that's a form of trust too, isn't it? When I don't know what's going on, that's true trust. When I know what's going on, that's not trust.

That's like, thanks, God. You got me. Great, thanks.

I can take it from here. But when I don't know what's going on, all hell's breaking loose. Your spouse says, I don't know if I want to be married to you anymore, Lord.

What's going on? Maybe he's working in their heart to finally break them. My kids are going, hey, wire, Lord, what's going on? They're, they're rebelling. They raised him in the church.

What's going on? They're probably going to be the prodigal son. So when they come home, those who have been forgiven much, love much. So God's going to put them maybe in the ministry or have them have a passion for him.

So you have to trust in the midst of confusion. Dear Heavenly Father, please, Lord, hear the pleading of your people. We can give you as a broken and contrite heart.

Lord, we ask that you do the rest. Lord, in all of our lives, the things that don't make sense. Lord, we just come to you tonight.

We humble ourselves. We break before you. We break before the throne of grace.

Lord, we just want to be empty vessels that you can use. Lord, show us and help us and guide us and strengthen us, Lord. Lord, I just pray that this service tonight would just be the precursor of what's going to happen all week in the homes of these people here as they turn off the junk and start putting on worship music and putting you first and leading their families and praying in their house and pleading the blood over these areas, Lord, and claiming victory, Lord, because greater is you, are you and us than he that's in the world.

Lord, we know you are strong. We know you're no comparison to the enemy, Lord. So we just give you everything, Lord, tonight.

I pray that you would bless these people. Lord, give them direction, even if there's a confusion. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/nuay38sZHf8.mp4>

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