

Ready or Not Here I Come

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being ready for Jesus' return and the significance of the cross and the empty tomb in understanding God's plan of salvation.

Duration: 41:57

Scripture: Matthew 24:44, Matthew 28:6, John 3:16, Romans 6:6, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:8-9, Philippians 2:8, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:5-6, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Jesus Return", "Repentance And Forgiveness"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the significance of being prepared for Jesus' return, contrasting the fear of the guards with the joy of the disciples upon encountering the risen Christ. It delves into the profound sacrifice and atonement of Jesus on the cross, highlighting the need for repentance, embracing God's truth, and dying to self to bear spiritual fruit. The message stresses the importance of accepting God's mercy, grace, and forgiveness, and warns against pride and the consequences of rejecting salvation.

Transcript

If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Matthew 28. Matthew 28, the title of the message is, Ready or Not, Here I Come. Ready or Not, Here I Come.

And Jesus is coming whether we're ready or not, whether the world is ready or not. Can we all agree on that? And this isn't the type of Ready or Not, Here I Come when you play hide and seek with your kids. You know, I can hide and then I'll come out and they'll say, we're not ready, daddy, we're not ready.

Go back, go back. And then I'll come out and okay, I see him running in the grass. No, we're not ready.

Okay, I'll come back. Ready or not, here I come. No, we're not ready.

And that's not that kind of Ready or Not. There won't be any debates. There won't be any plan Bs.

There won't be any, I'm not ready. It's either ready or not, here I come. And the interesting thing about Easter is we're not just focused on the empty tomb.

We're focused on the cross. And that's what I talked about last week. So let's pick up Matthew 28.

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from

heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it.

His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. So here's the setting.

Mary's coming. She sees the stones rolled back. The guards.

Now these are Roman soldiers. And they don't know exactly how many, but there was a lot of soldiers there to protect this tomb. And they are shaking in fear.

They're trembling because of this mighty angel rolls back the stone, and Jesus is risen from the dead. So that's the setting. But then the angel answered and said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

That's what I like about the Bible. Keep this in mind. When the Bible says something, that's truth.

It doesn't up it a little bit and say, Now, I'm going to really tell you the truth. Or here's something to consider. It tells you.

It says, He was crucified. He is not here. He is risen.

End of story. That's the truth. And then it says, Come, see the place where the Lord lay, and go quickly, tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead.

And indeed, He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.

So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples' word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, Rejoice! So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. And Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid.

Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there I will see them. Now, I'm going to read verse 11. And this is actually still believed today in Jerusalem.

A lot of people in Jerusalem know that Jesus existed. Their secular historian Josephus wrote about Him. And they know there's a Jesus.

And they know He was crucified. But His body was stolen. That's how they get away from it.

And when you have that many soldiers fearing, they're not going to lie. They would actually lose their life if the body was stolen. So that's where we pick up at.

Now, while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. So the guards are telling the chief rulers the truth. They're telling them, We saw this angel.

The tomb was empty. The stone was rolled away. And the Pharisees, you'd think they'd say, Oh my God, let's repent.

Massive revival. No, not a chance. Not a chance.

And when they assembled the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, Tell them, His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept. And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure. So they took the money and did as they were instructed.

And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. And that's still common. They'll take some tours on there with the tour guides and the body was stolen.

You know, it's not really a fable back in the nation of Israel. But they knew there was a crucifixion. They knew a man named Jesus lived.

And they knew that the body was stolen. That's how they get away from that. So let's talk about that for a minute.

This empty tomb. But here's my dilemma on Resurrection Day, Easter, whatever you want to call it. My dilemma is this.

The empty tomb is very important. That's why we're here. But we can't forget about the cross.

And that's why I spoke last week on the message of the cross. The power of the cross. And what Isaac Watts said in his famous hymn, When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but lost, and poor contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God. So we rejoice in the empty tomb, but the cross is where it all happened. The empty tomb proves that Jesus was who He said He was.

Because if there was no empty tomb, we wouldn't be sitting here today, would we? So the empty tomb proves that it was who He said He was, but the cross is where God reconciled sinners to Himself. This is where God saved us on the cross. I'll repeat last week a few things.

The cross heals us and it restores. The cross offers hope to a dying world. The cross sets us free.

The cross brings peace to an anxious heart. The cross brings eternal life. So it's interesting.

The point of death brings life. See, the cross is where everything meets. It's the sin of man, God's perfect sacrifice on the cross.

That's where restoration took place. That's where wholeness took place. That's why the song we just sang, I love it, O death, where is your sting? O death, where is your sting? My resurrected King has rendered you defeated.

So because of the cross, the empty tomb, Jesus rising from the dead, hell, death, and the grave have all been defeated. All of it. But something's been slipping in, and I think it's been longer than 50 or 60 years, it's been a while, where people will try to minimize the cross.

They'll try to make it more palatable, taste good, more marketable. If we're doing a survey on Christianity trying to get the message out, we're not going to talk about an old rugged cross, bloodstained, shame, that's not marketable. No, but it's powerful.

There's a big difference. A.W. Tozer wrote this about 70 years ago. There has come in modern times a new cross into popular evangelical circles.

The old cross slew men. The new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned.

The new cross amuses. The old cross destroys confidence in the flesh. The new cross encourages it.

The old cross brought tears and blood. The new cross brings laughter. And this is why I often say many want a crossless Christianity that bears no resemblance to Jesus' sobering call to repentance.

Devaluing sin devalues the death of God's Son. Devaluing sin devalues the death of God's Son. So when you devalue the cross, you are devaluing the price that was paid.

So once we start to minimize it or devalue it or make it pleasant, we begin to devalue the price that was paid. And I remember not so long ago, there was a church in our valley that instructed the worship team to remove all songs about the blood of Christ. Really, why? Because it offends people.

Yeah, that's right. It offends people. And it should.

The church isn't supposed to cater to the world. The church is supposed to cater to what God's truth says, what His Word says. And then the world comes in and they're convicted by their hearts.

They're convicted by the blood of Christ. They see their need for a Savior and hopefully fall down on their knees and worship Him. We can't tailor the worship and clean it all up so nobody's offended.

That's offensive. It's very offensive. It costs God His Son.

And I sometimes say this, you might not believe me, but if it was my son, that 6 billion people perishing? Yep, yep, yep. But that's not God. And as much as we talk about hell and the cross and condemnation and different things, the difficult things, let's not forget the other side of the coin, mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

Because that's really what it's about. People think, oh, the cross and hell and you Christians. No, it's really about, if you get to the core, it's about mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

And then when the mercy, grace, and forgiveness is rejected, then the end result is condemnation. So you don't start with the end result. Now let me read what these definitions are.

Mercy, God's mercy to feel sympathy and act upon it to relieve suffering. So that's what mercy is. It's to feel sympathy and act upon it.

So God fills sympathy for us and He acts upon it to relieve our suffering. That's merciful. Go on Google and look at the map, the image of the universe and find the earth on there.

And you'll feel real small, really quick. And God in His infinite mercy, what's the definition? He felt sympathy for fallen man, acted upon it to relieve the suffering. That's mercy.

And then what about grace? Grace is a free gift that I don't deserve or you don't deserve. Nobody deserves it. And that's the whole thing people go, I deserve this.

No you don't. No I don't. Based on the DNA of Adam that's still in here, we deserve condemnation.

If you want to get biblical and technical, that's what we deserve. But because of God's mercy and grace, and grace is really a free gift that removes guilt. That's what it is.

It's a free gift that removes guilt. And then forgiveness. He paid a debt He did not owe and I owed a debt I could not pay.

Many of you have been around a while. I've heard that many times. And it must be repeated on Easter or Resurrection Day for those who don't like the word Easter because of the goddess Esther.

Right? Pagan holiday and all that stuff. That's a whole other sermon I could get into. But let's just talk about forgiveness.

He paid a debt for me that I did not, or He paid a debt He did not owe and I owed a debt I could not pay. So when I look at God, I don't just see some mean God. I see mercy and grace and forgiveness at the cross.

I mean, who's going to give up His Son, allow Him to go through all that for nothing? Well, that's just fairytale. This is not fairytale. This is truth.

And you have to come to a realization that this is God's truth. And I love that part of the Scripture too. I didn't read it.

Where Jesus is dying on the cross. They just put the crown of thorns on Him. They beat Him.

There's blood everywhere. And He said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Father, forgive them.

Don't hold this against them, for they don't know what they're doing. So you see a merciful God. A God of grace.

A God of forgiveness. And that's why people say, well, how can a loving God send anybody to hell? He doesn't send them there. They reject His grace.

They reject His mercy. And they reject His forgiveness. Hell is putting yourself outside of His presence.

Hell is where, and there's a whole debate on God's presence. It's really not there. All I know is I don't want to go there.

It's separation from God. It's what it is. It's a separation from God because a person is rejecting.

They're rejecting from even a young child. They're rejecting the conviction of the Holy Spirit. They're rejecting probably thousands of sermons they heard.

If they live in America. They're rejecting the conviction of the Bible. They're rejecting the conviction of others talking to them.

They're rejecting the conviction of articles they read. They're rejecting the invisible attributes of God are clearly seen. I mean, anybody with common sense would say creator.

Creator. And they're rejecting all that. They're rejecting it.

So it's not a how can a loving God do this? It's how can man reject God's mercy, grace, and forgiveness? How can people reject it? I don't understand it. How can they reject it? That's probably one of the most mind-boggling things that I've come across as a pastor. People reject it.

Now, it's one thing not to believe it. But others, well, yeah, I believe there's a God out there somewhere. But, you know, I don't know.

The man upstairs. The higher being. The inner power.

And all these different things. No, you have to get it straight. It's God.

The Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father. So anytime somebody says I don't see how a loving God can send a person to hell, he doesn't send them to hell.

They choose to reject his offer of salvation. Well, why wouldn't God save everybody? Because then you'd be robots. And that's not perfect love is shown in allowing a person to choose.

If you take away the option of choice, what do you have? It's called a puppet. And I'm a puppet master. God will be the puppet.

And you take away that ability to choose. That's true love. It's giving somebody that option to truly love you.

And I told the first service, and I'll tell you as well, and I don't completely understand the concept of hell. I mean, weeping, gnashing in flames. What? God, I mean, is there a different way? But I'm not going to go to hell over a mystery.

I've said that many times. I'm not going to go to hell over a mystery. I'm not going to reject God because I don't fully understand everything.

And to be quite honest with you, I'm very glad I don't understand everything about God because then He wouldn't be God. That's the whole point. Again, ready or not, here I come.

Many were not prepared for His return, and many will not be prepared. When Jesus was born, it's interesting. The little baby is born.

The wise men came and they said, where is the King of the Jews? We've heard of Him. It's been foretold you would think that they would be excited, and they didn't. The Bible says that King Herod and all Jerusalem was troubled.

Why were they troubled? They weren't ready. They weren't prepared. And then when Jesus cried out that the cities rejected Him, O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, you've rejected your Messiah.

You've rejected Me because you were not willing. You were not prepared. You were not ready.

There's a readiness there. You have to be ready for His return. Jesus says, don't be caught up in drunkenness and carousing and all the things of this life, and that day come upon you unexpectedly, unprepared.

And as a pastor, I want to prepare people. I'd rather offend and prepare than not offend and not prepare. I mean, I could not imagine somebody standing before God and saying, why didn't that guy ever tell me? I

mean, we talked about love and grace, and we did a lot of great things in the community.

That's good. But why didn't you prepare somebody? Why didn't you warn them? Paul did. Paul warned people.

All the apostles would warn them. And here's why. In every case, just about, they were not ready because they had doubt.

And that's why a lot of people aren't prepared. They aren't ready. They doubt.

That's not really God. God's Son. That's the carpenter's son.

That's not really who... And there's doubt that comes in there. The same thing that happens today. But the resurrection is true.

The Bible that I just read says He was crucified. He is not here. He's risen.

As He said, come see the place where they laid the Lord. Now, I want to read just a few things from Ravi Zacharias. I hope you know who he is.

If not, you should follow him. Apologetics. He's an apologist and does a lot of work in apologetics.

And this might relieve some doubt about the resurrection. Number one, he said that the Gospels all testify to the resurrection. All testify to the resurrection.

But I want to take it a step further and remind us that all of the Bible testifies to the resurrection. The whole Bible testifies to Jesus. In Genesis, we see the need for Him.

In Revelation, we see Him. We actually see Him coming again in Revelation. John sees Heaven open up, and there's this white horse, and He was set on it what's called faithful and true, and in righteousness He judges and makes wars.

Eyes are like flames of fire. And guess what? Is He Mr. Turn-the-other-cheek Jesus? Not in this case. In Revelation, He's coming with the armies of Heaven.

And the armies of Heaven. And out of His mouth goes a sword that He's going to strike the nations. And He's going to rule the nations with the rod of iron.

And He's going to tread the winepress and fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. That's what's going to happen. It's not debatable.

You're not going to have the U.S. Army go up against Him. Or all the nations coming together. It won't happen.

He's coming again, and people are not prepared. All of the Bible testifies. And Paul's letters.

Many of you know Paul. He was a historical figure. Historians recognize him.

But Paul used to persecute Christians. And then he met Jesus, and now he's one of the top spokesmen for the gospel message. So you have to validate.

These things validate the message of the gospel. What about Josephus? He was a Jewish historian. So Josephus wrote about Jesus.

Secular historians wrote about Jesus. They all wrote about Him. And that's why C.S. Lewis said, He's either a liar or he's a lunatic or he's the Lord Jesus Christ.

People are like, oh, why did you say that? Because it's true. Jesus is either a lunatic. I'm not afraid to say it because I know the third choice is true.

So he's either a lunatic. Because all the stuff he's saying, you're going to rise again, you're the Son of God. Yeah, right, buddy.

I mean, come on. So he's either a lunatic or he's a liar. Everything he says is a lie if it's not true.

Or he's the Lord Jesus Christ. So you don't have an option that he's a good teacher. He's actually, if that's all he was, he was a bad teacher.

Because he lied. He was a lunatic. If what he said didn't come true.

I'm the Son of God. Before Abraham was, I am. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And I became flesh and dwelt among people. Either he's a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are your options.

So if you're doubting, you have to reconcile this. Why am I doubting? A lot of times it's because we're putting in the world and not the Word of God. Both start with W. Never forget that.

You're either putting in the world or the Word of God. And the more you put in the world, the more you'll doubt God. The more you put in the world, you'll begin to doubt who Jesus is, who he said he was, and you'll begin to bring in.

I mean, if you just watch YouTube clips sometimes of atheists, you're just sad. Because there's no concrete evidence for what they're saying. Also, number four, women were not considered credible witnesses.

Uh-oh, that would get us in trouble today. No, I'm not advocating that. I mean, I think they're all equal.

Men and women created equal in God's eyes. But back in Jesus' time, they were not considered credible witnesses. So the Bible wouldn't say that two women, if they were just writing it up, making a story, that two women saw Jesus, or three women, because they're not credible.

The Bible said, I don't care if you don't think I'm credible. Here's the truth. Here's what happened.

Here it is. What about this? Eleven of the twelve disciples died. They were hung upside down.

They were killed. They were martyred. They were beheaded, stoned, because they hid his body? No, because they saw the risen Savior.

That's why they died for him. Nobody's going to die for something they think is a lie. Shane, that's not true.

Terrorists are dying all the time. They're blowing themselves up right because they think it's true. But nobody's going to knowingly die for a lie.

I mean, if you hide the body, let's hide the body, and then the governor gets you out in front of Pontius Pilate, and he's got it. Okay, guys, we're going to behead you. Oh, just kidding.

I'll show you where it's at. None of them. Eleven of them died painful deaths.

The twelve, John was exiled on the island of Patmos for the rest of his life for a lie. So you have to add this stuff up. And then also Ravi talked about cause and effect, which is true.

Cause and effect is why something happens and what happened. And people think, oh, that could never happen. Well, for a God who created everything, a resurrection is no big deal.

I'll just shoot you straight. That is not a big deal. For us, it is.

But a God who caused everything and put everything into motion, for Him to actually see this through, that's not a miracle. That's God doing whatever He wants to do. And the people, a lot of times they believe it's a fantasy.

Truth is a fantasy, and truth is not a fantasy. If you look into truth, like I've said before, study it archaeologically. Study it scientifically.

Study it prophetically. Study it historically. And it's truth.

It's not fantasy. This isn't pixie dust. This isn't what's frozen.

Right? Come on, don't act like you don't know what that is. I'm telling you. Frozen yogurt, yeah.

But that's fantasy. This is truth. And many people get confused.

And the two. C.S. Lewis, this is very interesting. You know who C.S. Lewis is, I hope.

If not, it's okay. He's been dead quite a while in a lot of good books. And he was actually an atheist, I believe, that came to know the Lord.

And he said, before he was saved, he once thought that we cannot know God any more than Romeo and Juliet can know Shakespeare. We can't know God any more than a character in a play can know its author. But then it occurred to him, Romeo and Juliet could know their creator if Shakespeare wrote himself into the play.

God wrote himself into the play. That's what he did. But people are worried.

They believe Shakespeare. Right? They believe Shakespeare. Who's going to doubt Shakespeare? Out, out, brief candle.

Life is but a walking shadow. A poor player that struts his hour upon the stage and is heard no more. It is the east.

And Juliet is the west. She has to rise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon who is already pale and full of grief. Well, that's Shakespeare.

Why is everybody laughing? Everybody believes in that. But nobody looks to matter. What I just said is phony.

It's fake. Yes, it's Shakespeare. Romeo and Juliet.

But that's not real. And people think that's real. But then you have the real thing.

And you neglect it. You avoid it. But you run to the false thing.

And you wonder why you're being led astray. Wondering why things aren't going the right way. Because you're looking to fantasy, not truth.

That's the difference. That's the difference. It's a big deal.

Because we live in a fantasy world, many times, that this is fantasy. And sometimes in the morning I read this and I'm thinking, if people, I mean, either we believe, most of us in here, that this is the written, inspired, inerrant word of God, only one source of truth, given to guide, direct, edify, build up, strengthen, save man. He says, here you go.

Now, if we really believe that, if you really believe that, you would disconnect Facebook and devour this. Who's not going to want to listen and spend time with God? Who? But what happens, doubt comes in sometimes. I kind of read it last year.

I read some of it last year. Well, that's like saying I ate dinner last year. Because you need ongoing spiritual.

Everybody's still wondering where I knew Shakespeare from. I can tell. I'm not going to tell you where.

I don't remember. I wanted to tell you I learned it yesterday. Kind of, you know, add to it.

But I see it a lot. I mean, you'll see. I'll talk to an atheist or agnostic and Shakespeare and all these things.

Do you want to compare how many manuscripts of Shakespeare are available compared to how many manuscripts, 6,000 manuscripts in the New Testament? And when it was written, the period it was written, the consistency of the text? The Bible puts down everything from Shakespeare to Iliad and Homer, all those things. If you know what I'm talking about, it's okay. You're probably too young.

But all those ancient things of antiquity that we call, the record is so minimal. Yet we believe it. But the Bible, the manuscripts, there's a plethora full of manuscripts.

But we always look to the fantasy many times. Now let me just read something that's not fantasy. It's what happened at the cross.

I mean, obviously not exactly what happened, but it's an excerpt I read last week by Johnny Erickson Tada. Some of you were here. Some of you weren't.

What happened was I had it actually ready for Easter for today, but I wanted to read it last week because we were talking about the cross. And I knew it would be important for Easter. But let me just read this to give you a setting of what's going on.

The guard raises a mallet to sink in the spike. What's happening right now is Jesus, they probably have the cross not up like that. They probably have it down on the ground with him laying on it.

And again, the creator submitting to his creation. He's laying on that cross. This guy who could call down a legion of angels, and he's submitting.

How come we have a problem with submission? I'm not talking about male or female. I'm just talking about God. Why do we have such a problem with submission? But the creator lays down his life laying on the cross.

And she wrote this. The guard raises a mallet to sink in the spike, but the soldier's heart must continue pumping as he readies the prisoner's wrist. Someone must sustain the soldier's life minute by minute, for no man has the power on his own.

Who supplies breath to his lungs? Who gives energy to his cells? Who holds his molecules together? Only by the Son do all these things hold together. The victim wills that the soldier live on. He grants the warrior's continued existence.

So it's Jesus Christ who's allowing the soldier. He's holding the heartbeat of the soldier together. By in him and through him, everything is created.

So the soldier is actually sustaining life because Christ is allowing him to continue. It's an amazing concept and true. But these pains that Jesus is feeling is a mere warm-up to the growing dread.

He begins to feel a foreign sensation. Somewhere during this day an unearthly foul odor began to waft, not around his nose but his heart. He feels dirty.

Human wickedness starts to crawl upon his spotless being, the living excrement of our souls. The apple of his father's eye turns brown with rot. His father, his father, he must face his father like this.

From heaven the father now rouses himself like a lion disturbed. He shakes his mane. He roars against this shrilling remnant of a man hanging on a cross.

Never has the son seen the father look at him. But with the roar shakes the unseen world. In darkness the visible sky the son does not recognize the eyes of the father.

And God says, Son of man, why have you behaved so? You have cheated. You have lusted. You have stolen.

You have gossiped. You have murdered. You have envied.

You have hated. You have lied. You have cursed.

You have robbed. You have overspent. You have overeaten.

You have fornicated. You have disobeyed. You have embezzled.

You have blasphemed. Oh the duties you have shirked. The children you have abandoned.

Who has ever so ignored the poor, so played the coward, so belittled my name? Have you ever held your razor tongue? What a self-righteous pitiful drunk. You who molest, you peddle killer drugs and mock your

parents. Who gave you the boldness to rig elections, torture animals, and worship demons? Does the list never end? Relishing each morsel and bragging about it all.

I hate. I loathe this thing in you. Disgust for everything about you consumes me.

And I don't know if you're aware of this or not, but there's lots of terms in theology, propitiation, expiation, and what Christ did. But he had to absorb every sin ever committed. From the molester to the murderer to the rapist.

He had to absorb every sin ever committed. See, this is an all-sufficient Savior. Not a partial Savior.

This is an all-sufficient Savior. Of course, the Son is innocent. He is blameless.

The Father knows this. But the divine pair have an agreement. And the unthinkable must now take place.

Jesus will be treated as if He is personally responsible for every sin ever committed. Wow, that's unbelievable. The Father watches His heart's treasure, the mere image of Himself, sink into raw, liquid sin.

Jehovah's stored rage against humankind for every century explodes in a single direction. So God poured out His wrath on Christ on the cross. See, that's the point of the cross.

It's not just some little emblem or a cute little bumper sticker. Jesus took all of the sin of humanity. That's why He cried out, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? This time that Jesus knew the Father from eternity past to eternity present.

Whatever in scopes. All of time, Him and the Father are one. But at this time in history, Jesus became the perfect sacrifice.

Separated from the Father and He could feel it. He said, Father, Father, do not forsake Me. You've forsaken Me.

God, where are You? That's truth. But heaven stops its ears. The Son stares up at the one who cannot, who will not reach down.

The Trinity had planned it. The Son endured it. The Spirit enabled Him.

The Father rejected the Son whom He loved. Jesus, the man from Nazareth, perished. The Father accepted His sacrifice for sin and was satisfied.

The rescue was accomplished. Folks, that's the message of the cross. The rescue was accomplished.

See, let us never forget that you had to be rescued. I had to be rescued. We were dying.

The Bible says that we are caught up in our trespasses and our sin and God rescued us. And you have to make a decision. You have to make a decision.

Will you embrace His truth and live for Him? Will you embrace His truth? The soldiers told the religious leaders, listen, something weird happened. They rolled back a stone. This guy was 20 feet tall.

He looked like lightning. I mean, these are Roman soldiers who were trained to kill. Probably parallel with the Navy SEALs or whatever branch you're in, the top.

These guys were not gonna cower back from anything. So they went and they told the leaders everything that happened and said the leaders saying, oh, my goodness, we've been wrong. They didn't repent.

What prevented them? Pride. It's the same thing today. Not very many people can go after 40 years, everything I believe cannot be wrong.

The pride. People go to hell over pride. Many times they go to hell over pride.

I cannot be wrong. My family cannot be wrong. What about other religions? If I talk to other religions, I've mentioned before, Mormon or Jehovah Witnesses or other religions, and you tell them, oh, I can't be wrong.

Yes, you could. You could be wrong. If it goes against truth, you are wrong.

Shane, that's arrogance. No, it's not. It's confidence.

Big difference. That's not arrogance. That's confidence, knowing what the truth of God says.

And the guards shook for fear and became like dead men. I thought that was interesting to note. Why did the guards tremble in fear, but the disciples jumped for joy? Why are the guards trembling in fear, but the disciples, when they see him, jumping for joy? Because they have a relationship with him.

That's the difference. When believers see Christ again, there might be fear for sure, but there's joy. But when an unbeliever sees God, and they die, it's fear and trembling.

That's the worst fear imaginable. You're scared of ISIS. You ain't seen nothing yet.

It's terrible English, but it's true. But we fear the wrong things. That's why Jesus said, don't fear him who can kill your body, but fear him who can cast both body and soul in hell.

Jesus talked more about hell than heaven. Jesus did. He talked more about hell than heaven, so next time you get mad at me, get mad at him.

He spoke why? Because it's truth. See, if something's true, why avoid it? Why avoid the truth? And you have the same choice today. Do you believe God, or do you believe men with ulterior motives? There are only two things in this world.

It's either God and truth, or error. There's nothing in the middle. Because if it's in the middle, it's not true, and it's error.

So do you believe God and his truth, or do you believe people with ulterior motives? Everybody that tries to get you away from God has ulterior motives. Everybody. These religious leaders did.

Just tell them that the body was stolen. We don't want to lose our positions of authority. So you have to ask that question, ready or not, here I come.

Are you ready? Are you ready for his return? If not, I would just encourage you, you can do that tonight. That's why we're here. All you have to do is you have to say, what the Bible says, I confess that Christ is Lord.

I believe in my heart that God has raised him from the dead. Everything we just talked about, I believe that God has raised him from the dead, and I want to be saved. Lord, I repent of my sin.

Because a lot of people have been playing church for a long time, but they've never repented. They've never come to know the Lord in their own personal, that's people's personal relationship. But they've never come to know him personally.

There's nothing wrong with that term if you explain it. They don't know him, they only know about him. So I would encourage you, if you've never done that, take the time tonight and do that during worship.

You don't have to come forward, you don't have to raise your hand, you just have to pray and say, Lord, I need you. God, I need you to save me. And he will do that.

Before the worship team comes up, I just want to encourage you to read John 12, 24 tonight. Truly, truly, I say to you, this is Jesus talking, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

And that was looking forward also to speaking of his death. If it remains alone, but if something dies, and there's a lot of Christians, and I feel a lot of people that I know as well, that you need to die to self. I need to die to self.

If God's become boring, and the church is boring, and the Word of God is boring, and you have this fantasy relationship with God, and there's really no relationship, you're dead to the things of God, you need to die to self. You need to die like he talked about, this grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it'll bear much fruit.

That's the only way to bear fruit in the Christian life, is die to self. Would I have came up with that idea? No, of course not. Man doesn't like that idea.

But the more you die to self, the more fruit you'll see. You want to see your marriage turned around? You want to see your kids flourishing? You want to see your walk with the Lord on fire for God? You have to die to self. You have to die to self.

And there's a song I was listening to this morning, I just kept hitting rewind. It's called I Need You More. It just talks about the more I need the Lord, more than yesterday.

I need the Lord more than the air I breathe. I need the Lord more than anything. You might say, well, Shane, that's not good theology.

Well, no, but it's wonderful truth that I need God. I need God every day. I need him.

I actually need him just as much as I need him yesterday. I need you more. God, I need you more, and I need you more.

Get me back on track. Give me that relationship back on track and on fire for you. God, fill me with your spirit.

So that would be twofold tonight. If you don't know him, you need to die to self. You need to finally, as they say, do business with God.

Really, it's dying to self and saying, God, I'm a sinner in need of a Savior. I accept your sacrifice. I'm not turning away your mercy and grace anymore.

Or if you're a believer and you're becoming, it happens to all of us sometimes. You can become rigid and cold and callous and just argumentative, and we've lost that love. We've lost that zeal.

We've lost that spiritual fire. We've lost it. You need to go back and die to self because too much self has been building up.

And it's an oxymoron to be a prideful Christian. It's not possible.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/BODFdN9gQ-g.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/ready-or-not-here-i-come/>

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