

The American Gospel vs. the True Gospel

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman contrasts the American Gospel, which caters to cultural norms, with the True Gospel that demands repentance and transformation through Christ.

Duration: 48:46

Topics: "American Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preaching the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, rather than catering to the desires of the world. He highlights the danger of leading people astray by dismissing difficult doctrines and watering down the message of repentance and redemption. The American Gospel, as portrayed in popular culture, promotes the idea that life will be easy for believers, but the speaker reminds us that the Bible teaches that life is difficult for everyone. He urges Christians to be prepared for tribulations and to embrace the entirety of God's Word in proclaiming the true Gospel.

Transcript

Because we have dumbed down the gospel, because we're not preaching the true gospel, and we are using carnal means to attract people. If you use carnal means to attract men, you're going to attract carnal men, and you're going to have to keep using greater carnal means to keep them in the church. So what has happened is this.

We have these large churches filled with many unconverted carnal people. But in those churches, we also have this small group of people that honestly want Christ, and they honestly want His Word, and they honestly want to be transformed. They don't need anything else.

All they need is true worship of the true God, and Scripture being preached to them and lived out before them. That's what they want. Now, I want to tell you the great sin of the American pastor.

And this has got me in a lot of trouble, but it's true. This small group of converted people in that local church, all they want is Jesus, and all they want to do is the right thing. They want purity, they want truth, they want Christ.

But the pastor, in order to keep this larger group of unconverted people, he caters to them. So while he is feeding these carnal men and women with carnal things, he is letting the sheep of God starve to death, and he is going to stand before God one day in judgment. Listen, brother, if my wife was going grocery

shopping, and when she was going out to her car, some men assailed her, attacked her, brutally.

And you walked by, and you did not want to get involved because you didn't want to cause trouble, you didn't want to put yourself in harm's way, you just wanted everything to go smooth. After all that was done, I would look for those men to deal with them. But I want you to know this, I'd look for you too.

Because you had a chance to stand for my wife, my bride. And out of self-preservation or wrong ideas, you did not do it. You are just as much responsible as those men who attacked her.

And that is what is happening all throughout America with pastors. It is the bride of Christ. There are sheep in all these churches, many of them, even churches that seem somewhat heretical in places, you usually find a group of people who truly want Christ.

But the leadership is catering to the carnal and letting the bride of Christ starve to death, impoverished. And that is wrong. And there is going to be judgment for it.

And the same thing is happening to the youth. I know young people that say, you know, Brother Paul, I listen to you all the time. And I said, well, what about your church? He goes, well, they don't preach this.

It's not what the other young people want. And so they give them what they want. I'm starving to death.

A little child of God, it would be better than a millstone be tied around your neck. Then you cause this little one to stumble. Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, I just pray right now.

Your spirit is welcome here, Lord. We need revival. Lord, our nation needs you.

Lord, this church needs you. Lord, I pray that you would come and visit this valley, Lord, from all the different churches, Central Christian, the Vineyard, Lancaster Baptist, Grace Chapel, Calvary Chapel, Lord, that we would just be united in the cause of Christ. Lord, I pray that you would just remove the spirit of division and competition, Lord, and let us just serve Jesus Christ.

Lord, I pray that you would not only speak through me with boldness, Lord, but with clarity and direction. Lord, your Holy Spirit is welcome here. Lord, begin to rebuild marriages.

Lord, rebuild families. Lord, we pray for this nation in our distress. We call out to you.

As your word says, Lord, if your people who are called by your name will seek your face, turn from their wicked ways. Lord, repent, humble themselves, and pray you will heal their land and hear their prayers and forgive their sins. Lord, we pray tonight we need you more than ever before.

We give you this service. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

You know, I'm often asked if I get butterflies anymore. You know, I come up and speak and I thought about it, and you know what? I really don't. What I get is just the burden of responsibility, the burden of preaching God's Word and the need for this in our culture today.

It's never been greater. And as Paul Washer was saying, that's what our cultures face with today. And what I want to talk to you guys about tonight is the American Gospel versus the true Gospel.

The American Gospel versus the true Gospel. Do you know there's a big difference? Nowhere in the totality of Scripture, nowhere in this entire book will you find that the church is supposed to conform to the

world. We're supposed to transform the world, not be conformed by it.

The problem is the church in an attempt to build a mass audience is adapting the things of the world. We're not challenging the things of the world. We're a mile wide but an inch deep.

The true blood-bought church of Jesus Christ is not called to conform to the world, it's called to transform it. And what's happening though is we're allowing the culture to shape us. We allow the culture to tell us what to watch, what to view, what to do, how to spend our money, how to spend our time.

Tell me culture, tell me. Instead of God's Word allowing it to guide us and direct us, we are being swept away right now by the American Gospel. By the American Gospel.

Jesus Christ is not Lord, I'm Lord when it comes to the American Gospel. And we are not prepared. If you think what we see on TV is bad, we haven't seen anything yet.

When God begins to judge a nation that rejects Him and has been rejecting Him, the need for true repentance and reconciliation with God I believe has never been greater. And we are literally as a church, as a pastor, we can lead people astray or we can lead them back to the Savior. The church has a mandate.

We cannot take this lightly. We are called to defend the Gospel, to proclaim the truth, and allow God's Word to change people. We're not called to cater to the world, to not upset the world.

As a matter of fact, when you start talking about the blood of Christ, redemption, the cross, repentance, people want to leave. They want to get out. Don't talk about those things.

If you look at all the great awakenings, starting back from the Welsh revivals of the 18th century, Whitefield, Wesley, all those guys that came before, all the great revivals, all the great awakenings, I have their journals, I have their books. Every time I read that jumps out from the pages, it was not until the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith were proclaimed that lives were changed. See, I don't believe we really want revival here.

You know what true revival will do? Those who aren't praying and worshiping will be on their hands and knees weeping like children when God's power comes upon a church. That's real revival. The time will go by until it's midnight.

We'll be here weeping. We don't want revival. We've got God in a nice, tight little box that fits my schedule.

And the American Gospel is leading us a nation astray. And that's what I want to start with. If you have your notes, it's the very first point.

The American Gospel, let me show you the difference. It demisses, it actually demisses the difficult doctrines, what I just talked about. The American Gospel does not talk about the difficult things.

But the real Gospel embraces them. Second Timothy 3.16, all Scripture is given by God, by inspiration of God. Note that word, all.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That's the true Gospel, is to proclaim the totality of God's Word. But the American Gospel says, we don't want to talk about all these difficult things.

We have this emergent leader now on the news every day, right? Rob Bell with his new book and on NBC and CNN, all these different things. But there's no hell. There's really no hell.

We can't talk about these things. It upsets people. That's what's turning people off.

No, what's turning people off is there's not a lot of genuine disciples of Jesus Christ. There's a lot of hypocrisy. That's what's turning people off.

And it's okay to talk about the difficult doctrines of the Christian faith. Jesus said, He said, you fear Him. He said, actually, don't fear Him who can kill your body, but fear Him who can cast both body and soul in hell.

Jesus told the disciples to go and preach repentance. The difficult truths, the blood of Christ, look at Galatians, look at Ephesians, the blood of Christ, the cross. But see, when we avoid these things, the power of the Gospel loses its force, loses its impact, loses its ability to change lives.

Now, I love grace and mercy and forgiveness, as you've heard me say before. But we have to also talk about the difficult truths. And the American Gospel avoids these truths.

It's almost like, it reminds me last week of, you guys ever try Ezekiel bread? It's very healthy, but nobody likes it. My kids tell me, don't get that bread again. But that's the most nutritious bread on the planet.

Organic, sprouted beans, lentil, millet, spelt, all these different things. But why? We want to remove those things that are the most nutritious so it tastes better. Give me enriched white flour, just wonder bread.

The problem is there's no nutritional value. That'll kill the body. You can't live off it.

It's dead food. You can't feed a living body dead things. The same thing with the Gospel.

To make it more palatable, to make it taste better, we want to remove all the nutritious stuff, all the things that are vitally important. And that's the American Gospel. We don't want to talk about, and trust me, I'd love to not come up here and talk about things that upset people.

But we have a biblical mandate, and I feel like the prophet, his word is in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones. I'm weary of holding him back, but I cannot. It's once you tell people, yes, we're sinners, but there's a Savior.

Yes, the blood of Christ. Leviticus says, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. We have to talk about these difficult truths.

And we avoid them. People have a false sense of who Jesus is. They just think he's some nice guy, a good teacher.

Yeah, I'll try him out someday. So that's why it's vitally important that we talk about the difficult truths and not avoid them. We cannot remove something just to make it taste better.

The next part or the next point, the American Gospel says to enjoy your sin. It says, enjoy it, have fun, eat, drink, for tomorrow we die. The Bible says, turn from sin.

Romans 6.6 says, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. See, that's where we don't want to talk about

much our culture today. Again, do we? Sin? What are you talking about? Yeah, the Bible talks a great deal about it.

The American Gospel, a feel good gospel doesn't talk about sin. You don't need to change. You don't need to repent.

You don't. I mean, that's just the way you're raised. It's your self-esteem.

You're building self-esteem. You feel better about yourself. But the Bible says, turn from that.

Romans 6.6, knowing that your old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. See, the problem is you will not know true forgiveness. You will not know the forgiveness of God without repenting from sin.

You can't know the true forgiveness of God. That's why there's not a lot of brokenness and humility in the church. Nobody feels the forgiveness of sin.

They just take it or leave it. It's no big deal. But when you truly understand what God has done for us and we repent of that and we turn from our sin, that freedom, that freedom in Christ brings a whole new level of spiritual understanding.

But we don't want to talk about it. We don't want to turn from sin. And the reason is the culture says if everybody's doing it, it must be okay, right? What have you heard me say numerous times? If the culture's going this direction, if the morality of the culture's going this direction, guess which way you better be going? Oh, absolutely.

This way. I hear it all the time with young adults, but everybody's doing it. If everybody's doing it, you better be going the other direction.

Everybody's sleeping together, Shane. You better be going the other direction. You better be going.

Everybody's getting divorced and no-fault divorce. You better be going the other direction. Everybody's watching these things and doing these.

You better be going the other direction. And if you're not and there's not a desire to please God, you have to wonder, where's my relationship with God at? Because a true child of God does not want to live in sin. I don't know if I gave this.

I spoke at a different church a few weeks ago and I might have given this analogy here, but I'll give it again. It's like the pig and the lamb. The sin represents mud.

The pig and the lamb both fall into the mud or both waddle in the mud. But the lamb, she hates her miserable condition and she cries out when she's stuck. But the pig wallows in the sin and enjoys it.

That's why you have to ask, what do you do? What do I do? Do you wallow in the sin and enjoy it and lead others in? Or do you cry out to God when you're stuck and want that genuine forgiveness? And that's the difference. See, a lot of people think, well, just because you're Christian, you'll never sin. No, you actually realize you sin more when you're a Christian.

Your thought life, your pride, your arrogance, our wrong attitudes, unforgiveness, bitterness, jealousy, envy, they're all there. They're all there ready to raise their ugly head at us. So when the culture's going one direction, when it comes to morality, we should be going the other direction.

But they're not going to tell you that. The church is starting to look more and more like the world. The next point.

The American Gospel says, I'm the Lord. I'm the Lord of my own life. Right? I'm the captain of my ship, the master of my own destiny.

I'm the Lord of my own life. The Bible says, no, Jesus is Lord. There's so many scriptures in there.

I actually just chose one that gives us hope that He secures us. It's Romans 8.39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. See, that's encouragement.

Nothing can separate us from that. But we have to ask, is He truly our Lord or my Lord or your Lord? Think about that. Is He truly Lord of your life? We don't really know what that means.

Let me tell you something today. What you see on the news, if you will not live for Him today, you will not die for Him tomorrow. If you will not live for Him today, if you're not living for Him today, you will not die for Him tomorrow.

See, we don't really understand the term Jesus is Lord. But back in the early church, they would behead you or throw your children to the lion's den if you would, they would say, recant. Don't say Jesus is Lord, say Caesar is Lord or we'll behead you.

Remember what they would say? Jesus is Lord. Christ is Lord. Christ is Lord.

And down will come the sword. They go to the next person, renounce Him. No, Christ is Lord.

Christ is Lord. Off with His head. That's Jesus is Lord.

Now we say some little prayer, yeah, I'll try Him out, I guess He's Lord. No, you're misapplying that scripture. When Christ is Lord, He's Lord of everything.

You've given your heart, you've given your life. And there's so many people in the church today, in our nation, playing games. They're giving God lip service.

The old prophet told the people, how long will you falter? How long will you waver between two opinions? When Elisha called fire down on Mount Carmel, he said, how long will you waver between two opinions? If God is God, follow Him. But if He's not, follow Baal. Make a choice, make a distinction.

That's a church. We love to live in the world and work in the world and enjoy the world, but we'll come and we'll worship now and then. He's not really my Lord.

I'm Lord. I'm the captain of my own ship. I'm in charge.

But the Bible says, no, crucify, you were crucified with Him. You must humble yourself. Allow Him to be Lord.

The next point that's vitally important. The American gospel says, be good and you'll go to heaven. You ever hear that? I hear that every week.

Well, how are you in a right relationship with God? Me and God, me and the man upstairs are good. What does that mean? Well, I'm a good guy. I mean, God will see all these good things I do and He'll go, no, He won't see any good thing you do.

No good thing I do. That's not until the judgment seat of Christ, when your works are put through the fire to see what really held. The only way, the only way we get to heaven, let me make this point crystal clear, is because of what Christ did on the cross.

His finished work, when He said, it is finished. It is done. Man's redemption has been paid.

The penalty has been paid. Either accept it or reject it. Very simple.

It's not complex. Either we acknowledge what God has done, that we're sinners in need of a Savior, accept His sacrifice. And that's how we're in right relationship with God.

And see, heaven isn't about doing good things and doing right things. Those follow later. Heaven is about our relationship with God has been damaged.

In the fall of man, through our sinful nature, a holy, righteous God cannot dwell with iniquity. He cannot. So He sent His only Son, blameless, sacrificed, Lamb of the world, slain before the foundation of the world that will cover our sins, eradicate it.

But we must embrace that. We must believe on the only name that saves. Now I know there's a big debate between man's responsibility and God's sovereignty and Calvinism and Armenianism and all these different debates.

I like what the Bible says, whoever believes on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Believe, repent, trust. When God says to do something, it implies that you can do it.

And that's what the American gospel doesn't understand, is that we're not Lord of our own life and we can't do good things to go to heaven. Repent is the only way to go to heaven. If you want to know, Shane, I don't like what you're talking about right now.

That's a good thing. That's okay. It's called conviction.

The conviction of the Holy Spirit convicting you. Here's the key. Here's the scripture you'll want to write down or it's in your notes.

Acts 3.19. Repent. It's funny how the culture doesn't want to talk about that anymore. But throughout the entire Bible, repent.

Basically, repent means to change your mind. To change your mind about sin, about God, about everything. Change your mind and as a result, it's a change in action.

You repent. You turn from that. You put your trust in God.

You put your trust in Christ. You turn from that lifestyle. Repent, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out.

You want freedom? You want freedom of guilt and shame in your past? This is how you do it. You just repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out so the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. And if you look that up in the original language, it's almost like a revival.

He's saying repent and let your sins be blotted out that you'll experience revival. There's nothing more, I don't know what the right word is, but when somebody's truly experienced God's forgiveness and they've been cleansed of their sin, they know they're in the right relationship with God, it brings a renewing of the heart. It brings tears and weeping and it's revival.

Refreshing. Times are refreshing to come from the presence of the Lord. So the American Gospel says be good, go to heaven.

The Bible says no. Repent and go to heaven. Now granted, faith without works is dead.

You'll hear that scripture a lot. Martin Luther had a problem with it when he came out of Roman Catholicism still hanging on that scripture. Faith without works is dead because the church, the Roman Catholic Church put a lot of emphasis on works.

Works oriented, works, works, works, works. So when the reformation came, it was kind of one of those scriptures he struggled with. But basically he's saying faith without works is dead.

If you have genuine faith, you're going to have works. If you're truly converted, you don't have to work yourself way to heaven. You don't have to plan it.

You will do that. That's a byproduct of a right relationship with God. Faith without works is dead.

In other words, if you don't have any works, if you don't have a love for God and His word, you don't have sincere humility, a love for the things of God and good works, you might want to question the sincerity of your commitment. Was it genuine? Was it real? Because it's a byproduct. It's not like, well, some people have good works, some won't.

No, that's an outflowing of a right relationship with God is good works, genuine faith. Genuine faith is reflected in a transformed life, period, in everybody. There's a separation from the world.

There's a distinction. God says, come out from among them and be separate. So we have to recognize that.

So you can't be good enough. Good is never good enough. You have to repent.

The next point that's vitally important, especially right now in what we're seeing on the news today, we have to remember this. The American gospel, you turn on the TV, this sells a lot of books, they say life will be easy. Life will be easy.

That's the American gospel. Jesus will make your life easy. Life will be easy.

The problem is the rain falls on the just and the unjust alike. The Bible says life is difficult. Bottom line, life is difficult.

And the problem we're seeing in the American gospel is thinking life is easy. Well, what happens when tribulation comes or testing comes? They fall away because they're not prepared. You're not prepared for

the problem.

That's one of the biggest things I want to do as a father is prepare my children. You might go over hell and you might go through hell and back, but God has you. Life is not easy.

You're on the enemy's hit list. When you profess a faith in Christ, does hell know your name? It should. John Wesley said, give me a hundred men who care nothing but God and fear nothing but sin and we will storm the gates of hell.

Hell knows your name. You're on the enemy's hit list. When you profess a faith in Christ and you live it out, you're on his hit list.

Life's not going to be easy. Well, if I had a half hour to tell you what happened when we started this church, unbelievable. Unbelievable.

A couple weeks into it, I'm like, I can't quit now. We're too far in. I mean, it's just unbelievable what happens.

And when we live for Christ, life does not get easy. Now granted, there is a fine line because God can bless you. And God does want, I believe, what's good for us and will give us sometimes the desires of our heart.

You know, to be out of debt and to have a nice house and relaxing place. I mean, some of these things are good and God-given. The problem is many people plan on it.

You know, I'm going to have a big house, tons of cars, \$100,000 in my bank account, gold and stock is doing great. You know, he might take all that away from you so you spend time worshipping and not worshipping those things. But the American Gospel says life is easy.

Enjoy your...well, I don't want to go into that. Ron, you probably know what I was going to say. Life is challenging.

We're an enemy of Satan now. We're not prepared. And that's one of the reasons I believe, especially talking to young adults, we hear that there's a mass exodus from the church.

And there is. With young adults, there's been a culture shift in the last 20 or 30 years. But that's because they're not prepared.

They go into the universities, they get made fun of, and their faith is pulled apart. They're not prepared. They're not grounded in the Word of Truth.

They're not truly filled with the Holy Spirit of God. And they're being led astray. So you have to...if we're in a battle, you've got to be prepared for that battle.

You've got to prepare others for that battle. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against wickedness. We wrestle against these things so life will not be easy.

Now, that may seem a little uneasy and you might be, you know, gosh, that's kind of discouraging. And it can be, but if we think about who's holding us. You know, we're not holding ourselves.

It's not like trying to manipulate the circumstances. God's holding us. Christ is the solid foundation.

He's holding us. He sustains us. So there's a lot of hope and trust in that.

Even when life gets...He carries us. Jesus said, He who builds his house upon the rock. When the rain comes, the winds beat and the rain falls, it will not fall because it's founded, it's grounded on the rock.

The rock is Christ. The rock is your relationship with God. The rock is surrendering all and giving Him your entire life.

And allowing Him to direct you and guide you. The next point. This one upsets a lot of people too.

The world will love you. The American Gospel says the world will love you. If the world's not loving you, something is wrong.

You know what the Bible says? The world's going to hate you. The world hates you. You go on CNN and say, you know what, as nice as you can say it, as polite as you can say it, go on CNN when they've got the most amount of coverage, and say, you know what, I don't believe in gay marriage.

Make sure you put your phone number and address at the bottom of the screen. Your phone will explode from all the calls and texting. You'll have protesters in your front yard marching for weeks because you made one statement.

I do not believe something is right that God's Word caused an abomination. I do not believe that this is right. You put that on CNN, you'll have death threats.

You think I'm joking? I'm serious. These people sound radical, extreme. The world will hate you and hate me because of what we stand for.

They killed Christ. They killed Him. Beat Him beyond recognition.

Pulled the beard from His flesh, the hair from His beard. He was beaten. The world did that.

They hated Him. The Pharisees, the hypocrites. Luke 6.22, blessed are you when men hate you.

Man, that's strong. And when they exclude you and when they revile you and cast your name out as evil for the son of man's sake. Jesus said the world will hate you.

So it begs the question to all these postmodern leaders coming out in all these different churches, does the world love the way you do church? I'd love to ask that question across our land. Does the world like that you don't offend people? Is the world glad you don't bring up controversial issues? You're not offending anybody? You're not upsetting anybody? Because you're pleasing the world. You're not pleasing God.

When you preach, when you preach the totality of Scripture, when you preach and say that Christ is the only way, the only truth, the only life, people are going to get upset. They're going to get irritated because you're shining the light into the darkness of their life. That's just the truth.

The world will hate us. But be encouraged, Christ has overcome the world, the Bible says. You have to wonder if the world never hates you, and you look just like the world, you have to wonder, where's my relationship with God at? The world will hate you.

The next point, the American Gospel says love the world. I love the world. What does the Bible say? Do not love the world.

You see the difference here? We're teaching people, we're leading them astray. First John 2.15, do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

He's saying if you love the world, now you have to understand that word there is cosmos. It's the world's mindset. So don't get confused.

I'm not talking about cars and houses and different things. If you love the world's mindset, the world, the things that entertain the world, the way the world thinks, the way the world acts, if you love this, if you're part of that, the love of the Father is not in you. Because when the love of the Father is in us, when the Holy Spirit resides in us, we abhor those things.

Paul says to abhor what is evil and to cling to what is good. So that's what he means by do not love the world. Do not love the world's mindset, the world, the way they jock you for position, their envy, their jealousy, their gossip, their putting people down, their blaspheming God.

Do not love the things of the world. If you do, the love of the Father is not in you. And there's a prophet called Hosea.

In the Minor Prophets, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, in the Minor Prophets, he makes a powerful statement. He said that the children of Israel, the people became an abomination like the thing they loved. He said they became an abomination like the thing they loved.

So be careful what you love. Be careful what you love. You can say that with all the love I can muster.

Be careful what you love. What do you mean, Shane? Where do you spend your time? Where do you spend your money? Who do you associate with? Let me see your calendar. Let me see your checkbook.

I'll tell you who you and what you love, myself included. Hosea said the children of Israel were led astray because they became an abomination just like the thing they loved. Why is that? Because our affections, when we love something, when we love this world, our affections go to it.

We end up worshipping it. In Romans 1, he said he gave them over to a debase and corrupted mind because they began to worship the creation, not the creator. When you begin to love the things of the world, and I do, it literally pulls you away.

You cannot serve both God and this world. 1 John says, he who says they know him, he who says they know Christ and does not do his commandments are a liar, and the truth is not in him. That's strong statements.

The next point, the American gospel says you don't need to change. You don't need to change. You know what the real gospel says? You will change.

You will change. And I quoted something, I normally don't quote a thought for thought translation of the Bible other than just not for study purposes, but I quoted the NLT here because I like what it says in Galatians. Because of that cross, Paul's saying because of this cross right here, because of this cross, my interest in this world is dead, and the world's interest in me has died long ago.

Because of that cross, because of that cross, my interest in this world is dead. Has that cross changed your life? Or is it just a symbol we wear around our neck? Has that cross truly changed your life? If it hasn't, we have to wonder, are we following the American gospel or the true gospel? Because of that cross, Paul said, I've died to this world, this world, the affections of the world don't even excite me anymore. I'm not bound to the things of the world.

Because of that cross, because of what Christ did, he says his life has been and our life should be radically changed. And I want to use that word there, radically changed. Because when a person truly is converted, their life radically changes.

People who knew them back then can't believe who they are now. And people who see them now can't believe who they were back then. I mean, can you look, and I'll talk about this next week, but looking up here, can you picture me taking steroids, injecting them, snorting crystal meth later that night, drinking a six-pack of beer, smoking a joint that same night? Unbelievable.

I can't. I run into the people that's new. Oh, hey, how's it going? They always want to bring up the past.

I want to bring up the future. You need to repent, brother. You're living 20 years ago.

That's ridiculous. That lifestyle will kill you. It'll bring you down.

But we don't want to talk about these things, do we? See, the cross changes your life. It changes your life. Galatians 6.14, because of that cross, my interest in this world died long ago, and the world's interest in me is also long dead.

Genuine faith. Let me make this statement here that really helped me out. If you're not sure where you're at with God, do you know that the Bible talks about genuine faith? It's very simple.

It's very laid out in Scripture. Genuine faith is reflected in a transformed life, a love for God and His Word, sincere humility, selfless love, and a disconnect from the world. If you don't have any of that, I would pray that you reconsider what road are you on.

Have you truly given your heart to Christ? That's my job. I can't come up here and be a Mr. Motivational Speaker and everybody leave while some people are on the broad road to destruction. I have been a derelict in duty if I do that.

If I go home and lay before God and convicted that I did not preach a glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, but I tickled the ears, I will stand in judgment of God. I'd rather have this go down to 50 people who are serious about following God than 500 who are living in carnality. That's why I appreciate that video so much from Paul Washer.

Boy, that guy, if you ever want to hear a modern day prophet, who I believe that gifting, go online and listen to some of his videos. I mean, that's what the church needs to hear. Guess what, though? The church doesn't want to hear that.

The church does not want to hear that, that we are leading, the church is leading millions of people astray because we're not confronting. Do you realize that we're not confronting? We're not allowing the Word of God to convict. That's what the Word of God does.

Do you know it pierces and it divides, it condemns us before it frees us? Yeah, the Bible condemns you to death and then it frees you. What do you mean by that? You read that you are condemned. Jesus said, I did not come to bring condemnation, I came to bring salvation.

There will be a point when you will stand before God and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ Jesus is Lord. And on that day, it'll be too late. I'd rather people say Shane preached too much about heaven and hell and Christ and too little.

I'd rather err on that side any day of the week. It was said the great preacher Charles Spurgeon, after thousands and thousands of sermons, that he would bring people right back to Christ after every sermon, right back to Christ, right back to Christ, right back to Christ, because that's why we're here. That's why I stand up here today.

I do not have time to prepare nice motivational messages that let's see how that's and let's, I need to say, Lord, what are you saying today to the church at large? And if it offends, it offends, because that is the job of the gospel. It offends people. It got the Pharisees so upset, they want to kill Christ.

He said, you search the scriptures and think you have eternal life. You don't have anything. And they want to kill him.

And the Bible records, but no man ever spoke like this man. Nobody ever spoke with more authority and power than Jesus Christ, because he was filled with the Spirit of God and came to bring deliverance. He told the people, I came to set the captives free.

How do you set the captives free, Christ? By preaching repentance. I came to bring and restore the brokenhearted. How do you do that? By preaching repentance.

He told the disciples, don't go preach the prosperity gospel, go preach repentance. Don't go tickle the ears, challenge the heart. Christ did it.

Christ did it. We must do that as well. The problem is many leaders, many pastors, many preachers aren't spending time in the prayer closet, broken and humble at the foot of the crossing.

Lord, what do you want me to say? We're trying to build mega ministries and be CEOs. And it's not the goal of the pastor or preacher or teacher. The goal is to be faithful to the Word of God.

And I was kind of worried early on at the six month mark. I said, we'll either go down to 20 people, or we're going to start to build. I mean, because when you start to preach the Word of God, people get up and leave.

They don't want to come back. They don't want to hear it again, because conviction, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, it's called the hound of heaven. The hound of heaven will keep on you, keep on you.

The problem is why a lot of people don't change too, to be honest with you, is they don't repent of just backbiting and gossip and slander and jealousy and envy, myself included. All those things rise up in me as well. You've got to repent often.

That's why we have times of prayer afterwards, so people can come up and repent and get their life right and get their right relationship with God. But on the closing note, probably the one that's most, well, let me just say this real quick. Do you wonder why, do you see why the church or why the nation is in the

condition we're in today? Look at the difference.

It says we were to dismiss the difficult doctrines. The gospel says to embrace them. The world says to, and the church says to enjoy sin.

The church says, be Lord of your own life. Just do good works. Life will be easy.

The world will love you, and you should love the world, and you don't need to change. That has nothing to do with the gospel. And we're leading people astray.

The last and final point, try Jesus out. It's unbelievable. I'll hear people say, just try Jesus.

Come on, just try Him. Just try Him out. Like you're going to try out a realtor? Just try Him out.

No, no, He's the Lord Jesus Christ who bought you to Christ. You don't try Him out. You surrender your life and bow to Him.

As I said before, you bow to Him now, or you will bow to Him later. Either way, you will bow. You will bow in tears of weeping and rejoicing and thanking God, or you will bow and weep tears because you're lost eternity from God.

He is Lord. We are not Lord. We can't try Jesus out.

We must surrender all. Jesus said this, very famous words. Then Jesus said to His disciples, if anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.

Period. End of story. It doesn't matter if we don't like it.

It's not debatable. It's confrontational. He said, pick up your cross, follow Me, deny yourself.

You want to know the freedom from depression and anxiety and different things? Pick up your cross and follow Him. Let it go. Let Him have your problems.

He said, put your cares and burdens on Me, for My weight is light. My yoke is light. All who are heavy and weak and heavy laden, come to Me.

I will give you rest. As Jordan comes up and Brennan, they conclude. I just want to conclude with this point on this surrender all.

I'm going to kind of open up for a minute and just tell you about something that happened in my life yesterday morning. I told my wife about it. I'm a little careful.

I'm a little careful. I'm not one of those guys that God said this and God said that and God told me this. I mean, you know, you've got to be careful.

He does speak to us. I believe He speaks to us through His Word. I believe He speaks to us from times of the gifting, the prophetic gifting.

I believe He can do whatever He wants. But what happened is yesterday morning I was praying. It was about 5 in the morning.

I was just praying, Lord, I just want revival in our nation. Lord, I want revival in our nation. Lord, I want revival in this church.

I want revival in this church. You know what came back? A strong impression. I don't know if it was God or I don't know what it was, but it said, no, you don't.

No, you don't. And I began to weep a little bit. You want to know why? Because He was right.

He was right. You see, revival will cost you something. Revival will cost me something.

If God truly came down and came upon the service, we'd be labeled charismatic, Pentecostal, crazy, hyper-spiritual. But when the power of God comes upon a person and change, they are changed forever. And I said, Lord, help me.

I want that. I want revival. But what do you mean by, I don't want revival? And I just started to write and write and write.

I think I had 6 or 7 big old sticky pads. I just kept writing and writing. And I just shared some of this.

I just want to share it tonight. And I felt that God, and again, I don't say God said this, but definitely there's an impression upon my heart that just flooded out. It really confirmed a lot.

And I believe it was, it goes something like this. You don't want revival. When I was praying for revival, think about this in your own life.

Those of you who say, we want revival, it's almost like God's saying, you don't want revival. It'll ruin your schedule. It'll ruin your dignity.

It'll ruin your image. And it'll ruin your reputation. As a person who is well-balanced, men will weep throughout the congregation.

Women will wail because of the travail of their own souls. Young adults will cry like children at the magnitude of their sin. And my presence will be so strong that the worship team will cease playing.

Time will seem to stand still. You won't be able to preach because of the flood of emotions entering your own soul. You'll struggle to find words, but only find tears.

Even the most dignified and reserved among you will be broken and humble as little children. The proud and self-righteous will not be able to stand in my presence. The doubter and the unbeliever will either run for fear or they'll fall on their knees and worship me.

There can be no middle ground. The church will never be the same again. You don't want revival.

Think about that. Do you really want revival? You really want God to pour His Spirit down because all of you who aren't raising hands and worshiping God, you'll be on the floor crying like babies if God's Spirit were to come. No, seriously, we don't want, Kishon, I don't really want what you're talking about.

Because it'll turn this church into a place of just crying out for God. We don't really want revival. We don't want revival because it's right.

He'll mess up my image and the reputation of the church and we're not to this and we're not to that. But when God's Spirit comes, it changes you, it transforms you. He's calling you now and you can feel it.

If His Spirit came, all the revivals I've read about, they were laying prostrate for hours because the power of God was so mighty. We don't want that anymore, do we? Do we really want that? I had to take a reality check. You want to see your pastor up here weeping for two hours? I don't.

I want to get home, I'm hungry. I think dinner's ready, right? Holy cow, I write in the paper, people know me, I have a reputation, we're not charismatic and Pentecostal. But if His Spirit comes, there's not a dry eye in this room, that I guarantee you.

So I asked church, I asked, do you want revival? Do you really want it? Do you want God to really change your life? I'm not talking about now and trying to time it just right. I'm talking about overall. Do you want to be broken by sin and repent and truly have God visit you and change you and transform you? Did you know in the old awakenings and revivals, whores, prostitution rings, everything was closed down? Bars were closed down.

You go down the street hearing families that used to be cussing Christ, singing hymns. When revival comes, a nation is changed. The problem is we don't want it.

That's why I began to weep, because He's right. I don't want that. I want it, but I don't.

You know what I mean? I want it more than anything. But I've got a composure. I can't be up here weeping for hours when God's Spirit comes down.

Or can we? And as you guys hit the lights back there, burning it, we're just going to have a time of prayer as the prayer team comes up too. I don't know what to expect. I just want God to move.

And I do want revival here. I want God to be honored here. I want His Word to go forth.

I want to stand. I want to be a church that stands for the absolute truth of God's Word. We love like Christ, but we stand like Christ.

Do you know He could have called down ten legions of angels? One legion wiped out 155,000 people with the snap of His fingers. Wiped them out. What are ten legions of angels Christ could have called down? But He said, no, it's for this purpose I have come.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Because of that cross, our lives should be radically different. So I want to leave you with that question. Do you want revival? Do you truly want revival? Because blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

God will not fill a proud man. God will not fill a person with His Spirit that does not truly want Him in seeking after righteousness. As we conclude, I'll just ask the prayer team to come up and we'll conclude in worship.

Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, I pray right now, You are welcome in this place, Lord. Your Holy Spirit is welcome here. Lord, we pray that You would begin to break, Lord.

Break those strongholds and bondages and addictions, Lord. I know there's addictions to pornography tonight that are so strong people cannot break out. I pray that You would break that, Lord.

I pray that You would begin to rebuild marriages and families, Lord. I pray that You would bring the prodigal son home, Lord. Bring the wayward daughter home tonight, Lord.

We pray that Your Spirit would fall mightily in this place, Lord, that we would cry out for You, that we would want more of You. Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, You are welcome here. We do want revival, Lord.

I believe in it, Lord, but help my unbelief. Lord, help us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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