

We Have Come to worship...have You?

by Shane Idleman

We must remember why Jesus came and worship God with a strong desire, recognizing the power of God in our lives.

Duration: 1:00:17

Scripture: Matthew 2:1

Topics: "Worship", "Expectation in God"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of true worship during the Christmas season, urging the congregation to reflect on their own desire to worship Jesus, just as the wise men and shepherds did. He highlights how the miraculous story of Christ's birth is often taken for granted, and challenges listeners to seek a genuine relationship with God, which requires a strong desire and active searching. Idleman warns against the distractions and anxieties of the world that can hinder worship, and encourages believers to expect God to move in their lives. Ultimately, he calls for a heartfelt response to Jesus, who was born to die for humanity's sins, and reminds the congregation that worship is a gift that builds and restores us.

Transcript

The title is, We Have Come to Worship. We have come to worship, have you? We have come to worship, have you? And we're going to go off of the wise men, of course, and the shepherds who came to worship Jesus. And the song we just sang, Noel, Noel, come and see what God has done.

I looked up that word and whether it's French or Latin or the English version, they all kind of mean the same thing, a joyous celebration of a new birth. Noel, Noel, come and see what God has done. And that's why many of us are here this morning.

The problem is Christmas has become so commonplace that we don't realize how glorious and miraculous this season is. Billions have never heard of the amazing story that we often take for granted. And that really, this time of year, I'm often reminded that we kind of take this for granted, don't we? But if you tell this story to someone who's never heard it, their eyes light up.

They sometimes begin weeping and they want to know more about this Jesus who was born to die, born for the sins of the world. And of course, we find ourself in the book of Matthew again from last week, Matthew chapter two. If you have your Bibles, you can turn there.

There's a Bible in front of you. If you're in a pew, Matthew chapter two, or you can, we're going to put it up on the screen. Now, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, and we've been talking about the last few weeks, Jesus being born, the prophecies that were being fulfilled.

And if you haven't, weren't here for those messages, make sure you get those CDs on your way out because these, the messages all kind of go together. So now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod, the king behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem saying, where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and we have come to worship him. And that's the title of the message.

We have come to worship him. And it's really a time for reflection. Have all of us come to worship him? Well, not necessarily.

There are many people searching for God. There's some people that just lack fulfillment. Some people are spiritually dead.

Or some of you are here because your family made you. Amen. A few of you here for that.

Or it's what good people do. Don't good people go to church? Or some people say I made time this week. I kind of fit God into my schedule.

But for some people, the reason why a majority of us are here, like the wise men, we have come to worship God. And on this point, we have to remember that worship, worship begins with a strong desire toward God. If a person doesn't have a strong desire toward God, they can't worship.

Can they? There has to be a strong desire. Lord, I want to worship you. I want to come among God's people.

And I want to worship you and remember the goodness and the grace of God. But I want to encourage you this morning, if you don't have that strong desire, which I didn't in my 20s, I would run from God. I didn't want anything to do with God.

You began singing these songs. I was checking out. I was, oh, what's going on later today? I'm not going to worship God.

But once you, back to the question, if you don't have a strong desire this morning, pray for a strong desire. Pray and say, Lord, I want a strong desire to worship you. God, if you're real, if you're there, I want to know you.

I want to worship you. And I believe in a God who still answers prayers. Amen.

I believe in a God, like that's why I love that song. I still believe in the God who can raise people from the dead. I still believe in the God who can overcome giants.

And I know that I believe in the same God who can break strongholds. The same God today, yesterday, and forevermore is the same God we worship today. The Old Testament, the New Testament aren't different gods.

It's God's history through the redemption of civilization to where we are today. So we worship him with a desire. And then verse three, when Herod the king heard this, when Herod the king heard this, he was

troubled in all of Jerusalem with him.

That word troubled means anxious. There was stress. There's, uh-oh, the king of the Jews is here, and all of Jerusalem with him.

But isn't this interesting? When we read that, we don't feel that way. Do you? Some of you? Maybe some of you do. But when I read that, where is king Jesus, all hail king Jesus? He's been born to save his people from their sins.

We rejoice in that. We want to worship in that. But some people are troubled, are they not? Some people are anxious.

Just walk down Hollywood, the Hollywood strip saying, I love Jesus on the back say, repent. You watch how loved you will be if you make it out of there alive. They just hate the word Jesus.

They want to pray in our city council meetings. You can pray in any other name, but don't pray Jesus. Get the nativity scenes out of here.

Remove Christmas, remove the 10 commandment monuments, get rid of God's word. He troubles us. And here's why, when people know him, they love him, they're saved, they're set free, they have to worship.

But those who are worried about the judgment that is to come are anxious. They're troubled. They're troubled by what I'm saying.

And this is a hard calling that I have. Many of you don't know this. Some of you do, but through the doors of this church over the last 10 years, we're celebrating 10 years this September.

I can't even believe it. But we've had thousands of people come, thousands of people come, and many do not want to hear a message that convicts. I like Jesus, the turn the other cheek Jesus.

I like the nice Jesus. But when we preach the Jesus of the Bible, that he came as a lamb, but he's returning as a lion, that he said, I've not come into the world to judge the world. I've come to save the world.

But when he comes again, he's coming as a judge. See, the New Testament model of Jesus is turn the other cheek and preach repentance and lead people to the kingdom of God. But when Christ returns again, he will come with the armies of heaven.

He will judge with righteous judgment. People are offended. They are shocked.

So here's my question. If he's a fable, if he's not true, why are you upset? If you tell me Mickey Mouse is coming to judge me, I forgot about it the moment you said it. But there's something that agitates that Jesus, when you stand up for God's word, when you stand up for things that are right and righteous and godly, people get upset that you are mocked, you're ridiculed.

So that's what happened. The Herod heard, here comes King Jesus, and he's troubled with all of Jerusalem. Now, this is what's interesting.

This to me, at least, is interesting. As a student of love Old Testament theology, and the Jewish people were expecting their Messiah. So why would they be troubled? Wouldn't they be excited? Isaiah wrote

about the suffering servant.

Micah said he will be born in Bethlehem of Judea. The prophets foretold of a soon coming king. But they were not ready for their Messiah.

They were troubled because they're not ready for him to meet their maker. So Herod, he heard this. He was troubled.

And when he gathered all the... Well, let me tell you about Herod for a minute. He killed his wife. He killed, I think, two of his sons.

Anybody that was a threat to his throne, he would remove. And so here comes Jesus, king of the Jews. And he is very distressed, very anxious.

So he gathered all the chief priests and the scribes. What he did, he gathered the Pharisees and the Sadducees and their religious leaders, the scribes of the day. And who knew the Old Testament? They knew the Old Testament.

The Tanakh or the Septuagint was in Greek. The Old Testament was written in Greek then. They knew.

They knew. And so Herod sent for them. And he thought, I believe, he thought he could stop the fulfillment of Scripture.

He thought he could stop the fulfillment because when God says it, that's been set. The course of history has been set. You can't stop God any more than you can stop Niagara Falls.

When God says, I'm going to do something, I'm going to make it alive and you shall not kill. I'm going to birth a nation. I'm going to raise a king up.

I'm going to pull another king. Who's going to stop the plans of God? Who can stop God Almighty? I love that song. Who can stop God Almighty? But Herod thought he would stop the fulfillment of Scripture.

Where's he to be born? When was he born? And now I'll just go slaughter all the children, two and under. So the reason for the season why we're here is based on the question, who was Jesus? Is that not the big question? Who was Jesus? And you've heard me talk about C.S. Lewis before, how he said Jesus was either a lunatic, he was a liar, or he's the Lord Jesus Christ. And let me submit to you this morning that those are the only options.

He was a good teacher. No, he was, if that's all he was, he was not a good teacher. He was a liar and a fraud if that's all he was.

Because he said, kill this body on the third day I will rise again for I am God before Abraham was I am. I am the Son of God. I am the fulfillment of Scripture.

That's not a good teacher. Lunatic, liar, the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are the options.

But there's a fourth option. Did you know this? Here's what we hear often. Well, it's a good legend.

Well, I guess it could be right. A legend, a myth. And I noticed this this week I was shopping and I saw at the counter of the register, Time Magazine.

Guess what they're naming for the year? The 100 most influential people who changed the world. And there's Jesus Christ on the cover. Wait a minute.

Hold on. A myth? You're going to put a myth and a legend on the cover of Time Magazine? Because majority of people know, have ever studied this, that Jesus Christ was a historical figure. Read Rome, historians from Rome, read historians from Jewish culture, Josephus.

You can read early church fathers. Of course, just people who did not believe they say that Jesus was a man. Many, many miracles were attested to him and he was crucified.

So that's our challenge. And that's what the challenge is for people. And they say, but he, but he stole, they stole his body.

Okay. Okay. He was here.

He was real. But Shane, they, they, they take, they took his body and got rid of it. The only problem with that is those who took his body were killed because of it.

They're killed because of a lie. In other words, John, let's say John, for example, or not John, he didn't die. He was in revelation in the book of Revelation, but his, his disciples, if they stole the body and hid it, as soon as they were going to be killed, they would have confessed.

They said, no, no, hold on. It's all a lie. We made it up.

You got us. Don't kill me. Please don't take my head off.

But all of these people went to their death as martyrs because of the truth of the gospel that they believe Jesus. They saw him afterwards that the resurrection took place that the thing that he prophesied about. And we have to remember a fable could not stand the test of time.

If this was a fable, it would have never lasted. A legend could not change millions of lives. How does Jesus change millions of lives? If it's a lie, a myth could not overcome banishment, ridicule, and scorn.

Do you know how many people have tried to stop, stop Christianity from Voltaire to atheists to agnostics? They try to stop who Jesus Christ is all religious, all religious leaders in the new Testament from Rome to Nero to Diocletian from Byzantine empire to modern day. Tyrants have all tried to stop God. It's happening right now in China.

It's happening right now in the middle East. It's happening right now in the Sudan. It's people being persecuted.

Why? If this is a fable, why are people dying for a fable? Why are Muslims coming to Christ in huge numbers wanting to die for their faith, for a fable, for a myth? No, it's a power of God. It's a foolishness of the cross to those who are perishing, but it's to us who are being saved. It's a wonderful, glorious, good news.

That's what good news is. Noel, Noel, come and see what God has done. Noel, Noel, look at what God took me, a sinner saved by grace, pulled me up out of the gutter of despair, and he said, I will save you and redeem you.

You have to speak the truth that you've been set free. If you have, who's going to argue against a changed life? But many people say, well, Shane, such and such are good people. Yeah, they're good people because they have to be.

Your religion says, okay, you have to be a good people. You have to be good. It's an outward change.

It's an outward conformity. But Christianity is God redeeming man, filling man with the Holy Spirit, and you are changed from the inside out. See, the heart's been changed.

Those things I used to do, I don't want to do. Those things that were evil and wicked that drew me now are repulsive. See, there's a change, and it's exactly what the Bible talks about, a changed life, being born again.

And that's what that really means, being born again, born of the Spirit of God. Nicodemus was a religious leader. He came to Jesus by night.

They said, nobody could do good miracles or nobody could do these types of miracles unless God is with him. And Jesus said, you have to be born again. You're a teacher of Israel, and you don't know this.

Well, can I go back into my mother's womb? No, you have to be born of the Spirit, spiritual rebirth, the Spirit of man is dead through depravity and sin. At the fall with Adam and Eve, we fell into sin. And how do you redeem that? How do you fix that disconnect from God? It's because of the cross of Calvary.

It's amazing, this time of year, there's tremendous celebration, but there's also, if we remember why Jesus came, it is a stark reminder of our sinfulness and our need for him. A baby that was born to die. Is that interesting? Mary, raising this child, born to die.

And we talked about the lineage of Christ last week and different things. I don't want to get into that. But verse five, so they said to him, what did they say to him? Well, Herod is asking, where is Jesus going to be born? In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet.

Thus it is written by the prophet. Now this prophet didn't write a dozen, 12, 15 years earlier, a hundred years early. He wrote 700 years earlier.

The prophet Micah talking, speaking to a backslidden nation of Israel. He spoke and he said, but you Bethlehem in the land of Judah out are not the least among the rulers of Judah. In other words, you are least among all the tribes of Israel, but out of you, out of you, I'm going to, what's it say here? Out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people, Israel.

And what I love about this is God takes the least likely and he makes him the greatest name ever known. God takes, and that's a good lesson for you. If you need encouragement this morning, God will often take the least likely.

Don't you ever see people that you take the least likely and God raises them up and people say, how did that happen? Because now I can't count on my PhD. I just have to count on the power of God in my life. How did, how did, how did you do this? God, God gets up.

Noel, Noel, come and see what God has done. He has taken a broken, shattered life and out of the ashes, he has rebuilt that life and set that person back up so they can proclaim the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Look at what God has done.

So God takes the least likely. Listen, guys, I'm not a motivational speaker. I'm not just making this up.

I'm not acting. I'm not leaving here going, ha, didn't I get him wife? I'm here because God has radically changed my life. I should have been dead 10 times over.

I should not be preaching the good news of God. I should have blown my brains out, but God reached down and saved a sinner from the pit of hell. So when I sing amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me, I know exactly what he's talking about.

The redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross that can only come from a changed life. It's impossible otherwise. Thank you, Lord.

I know I say this a lot, but I can't say it enough. What God has just done in my own life. He took just, I feel like a dumb country boy, barely graduated high school.

1.8. My mom, my mom, remember she's here. We had a speech tutor, a teacher on my S's and marriage or on therapy and dyslexia still can't spell well. I knew three editors and people say, how has God, do you know your, your church is known throughout the world? Thousands and thousands and thousands of listeners every week.

Noel, Noel, come and see what God has done. That's it. I'm, I'm, I'm just, I'm just the voice.

There's other people that are feet. There are people that are hands, the heart of Christ. It's all one united effort.

Look at what God has done. God's going to say, I'm going to take the least likely that guy is least likely to succeed. I'll tell you that right now.

I should be digging ditches for the rest of my life. He's I'm going to take the least likely. And when I, when I put my spirit upon him and he writing books, that's ridiculous.

You should see my first book. You would laugh at it. You think a five-year-old wrote it and I give it to my mom for a year and just tore it apart.

And it's all good now because it's been edited, edited, edited, but God takes the least likely. And he says, this is my showpiece. You are my workmanship, my point Nima, my workmanship in Christ Jesus for good works.

So no matter if you're sitting here going, God can't use me. I don't know anything. I don't have a degree in theology.

He, I believe I guarantee he's looking for those who do not have a degree in theologies. So they don't write what they don't, they don't put all their weight. Look at my degree.

I have a master's in divinity. I have a PhD in church history. Listen to me.

You don't listen to anyone like that. You listen to somebody who's been touched by the living God, filled with the spirit of God, who's changed their life. That's who you look to.

And when God, God exalts a man, he exalts a woman. You point people to the cross in Christ. If it wasn't for the grace of God, where would I be? Where would you be? So that should be encouragement.

No matter where you're at, you're just, maybe you're at home saying I can't do anything for God. Yes, you can. If he gets ahold of you, I think, I think he's looking for the least likely.

I think he's looking, many churches actually, when they fulfill board members or pastors, they're looking for those with a degree. That's, that might be great bonus, but I'm looking for those filled with the spirit of God. Those who God has touched.

So he takes the humble, he exalts them, he takes the broken and he builds them. And then verse 7, then Herod, when he had secretly called for the wise men, he determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, go and search carefully for the young child.

And when you have found him, when you have found him, bring back word to me that I can come and worship him too. Oh, no, he's a liar. And you have to remember this, the enemy always lies.

If you're, if you're going in the wrong direction, the first step began with a lie. I guarantee it. The enemy always begins to, maybe he's lying to some of you this morning.

I don't know where you're at. I don't know where direction your marriage is going. I don't know if you've made some bad choices.

If you're, I don't know where you're at, but I know it always begins with a lie, with a lie. The enemy will begin to plant thoughts, the fiery darts. You ever, you ever get those fiery darts? He's telling young adults right now, don't do what that guy says.

Go have fun. Now, when you get old, now, when you get old, you can follow God. Or he's telling those that are seeking, those that are searching, planting fiery darts.

Oh, they don't know what they're talking about. The Bible's not real. They're foolishness.

They're all fools. Just look at the direction of our nation. That's a foolish direction.

We've lost our moral compass. We're out of control because we've rejected God. So Herod said, let me worship him.

And then verse nine, when they heard the king, they departed and behold the star, which they had seen in the east, went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. Now, sometimes the nativity scenes will say, will show, you know, the wise men and the little tiny baby Jesus, a few days old or weeks old.

Well, this could have been months and months. By the time the wise men actually arrived, the star pointed direction over the manger and the, the, the inn where they were, there was no room. It really means the place that they were, they were staying had no room.

So there was a manger where the animals are at and they, they laid Jesus there. So, but by this time, by this time, all we have is what scripture says. It says that they came and stood over where the child was.

And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly, exceedingly with great joy. So the star pointed to the savior. And I want to remind you this morning, God will always point you in the right direction.

If you're willing to follow, did you catch that? Let's wake up from our slumber. God will lead you in the right direction. If you're willing to follow, it's called humility.

God says, I resist the proud, but I'll give grace to the humble. I'll guide those who are humble and broken of spirit. I will build them up.

I will lift them. I will encourage them. But if you are proud, you're strong, you're arrogant.

God says, thus say the Lord, I will feed you in judgment. The old Testament is full of that imagery of God saying, I will bring back what was driven away. I will bind up the broken.

I will strengthen the sick, but the fat, the proud, the arrogant, I will feed in judgment. Thus sayeth the Lord. There's something about humility that is a sweet smelling aroma to Christ being humble and broken before him.

So the star pointed to the savior. God will always point you in the right direction. You need to know that this morning.

Some of you need to be encouraged in your walk, but Shane, I don't see any fruit right now. Just keep walking. Just keep walking.

Every time I plant a bush, I never put a fruit tree. I never see any fruit for a year, but the seeds growing. It's maturing.

God is working behind the scene. We see, we want to microwave Christianity. Push one minute.

Can I get five minute worship? Can I get this guy, Shane, to shut up and get down to 15 minutes? I want to get out. I'm hungry. It's already, it's lunchtime.

Microwave, microwave Christianity. I'm going to get to that in a minute. And when they come to the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.

They fell down and worshiped him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to him, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. So actually there wasn't three wise men in many of the nativity scenes.

This is where they get the idea from frankincense and myrrh and gold and three gifts. But we don't know how many wise men there were. But I want to rewind for a little bit back to where the shepherds came and visited Jesus in the manger.

The shepherds were right there that night. They came, and it's interesting, they said they saw the baby, what, laying in swaddling cloth, in a swaddling cloth. And I'm imagining those same shepherds, if they're tending sheep, many of the sheep that they're tending are for the sacrifice in the temple.

And when a new lamb was born, they would wrap that lamb, guess what, in swaddling cloth. They would wrap this little lamb in swaddling cloth to keep it free from blemishes, and it was just born. And so now we see the Savior, the King of the world being born in a manger with swaddling cloth.

In the imagery we have of the Old Testament, for when the death angel passed over the children of Israel, they said whoever puts the blood on it, if you put the blood of the animal sacrifice, the death angel will pass over. And we see Christ as the foreshadowing of the Passover lamb. That's why he's called the lamb

that was slain before the foundation of the world.

The lamb that was slain in the Old Testament was a temporary recovering looking for the fulfillment of Jesus Christ. So here comes the lamb of God, the lamb of God coming and being put in swaddling cloth, the lamb, the final sacrifice. There's no need for other sacrifice.

Once and for all, hell, death, grave, and sin have been conquered. You don't need to keep putting the blood on it. When Jesus Christ said, it is finished on the cross, he said to Telestai, it is finished.

I've come what I came to do. And you remember the nails didn't keep him on that cross. Did the nails keep Christ on the cross? His love for humanity kept Christ on the cross.

He said, it is finished. It is done. That's why we are here.

We are here to worship him, a baby born to die. It's a remarkable thing. And they fell down and they worshiped him.

The wise men worshiped him. The angel. Do you know anybody that truly comes in to contact with Jesus Christ, with God Almighty, will worship him? When the power and presence of God hits a place, if God, let's say if Jesus were to walk in, am I going to say, hey, how's it going? You want to take over? Is that what you're going to just high five, do selfies? You fall down on your face before God.

Anytime throughout the Bible, Isaiah said, well, I'm a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people with unclean lips. And he fell down in the holy presence of God. Priests, prophets, and Kings fell down in the holy presence of God.

Even John in Revelation, he fell down as a dead man in the presence of Christ. There was something about him that was so powerful. Even it was 300 plus trained men of war that went to go and get Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.

They went to conquer and where's Jesus? This man who's causing all this trouble. And he said, I am he. And they fell back.

They drew back. There's something about the presence of God you can't ignore. You will not stay upright.

You will stay down on your faith. You will bow your knee to Jesus Christ in utter humility and desperation because why? Because God is holy. Have you ever stood before pure holy light? No.

Before pure holy God. And you've seen that revelation. You're not going to just gaze and have a conversation.

The only answer is to fall down and worship him. So the question I asked this morning is, I'll ask it to you as well. If you have not come to worship him, do you truly know him? If you have not come to worship him, do you truly know him? Because people can walk through the doors.

They can take a seat. They can hear a message like this. But all of that doesn't matter unless they truly know him.

This isn't about going through the motions. It's about knowing who Christ is. And worship is a gift, is it not? Worshiping God is a gift.

Can you imagine not being able to worship God and having no emotions? So you're just a robot programmed? There's something about worship. It's a gift. So let me tell you what worship does according to the Bible.

Worshipping God builds you up. Does anyone need to be built up? Yes. In a society that is falling apart, in a society that is constantly anxious and fearful, worship builds you up.

Worship also strengthens you. Worship edifies. Worship sustains.

Worship defends. Worship restores. All of that.

Worshipping God, it edifies, it builds up, it sustains, it restores. Did you know that worship defends you? What kind of enemy can be taken down by a song? But the Bible says that God inhabits the praises of his people where there is worship on. God begins to move in the hearts of men and women.

But I want three lessons here to learn from the wise men. I'll close out. The wise men, number one, they came expecting God to move.

They came expecting God to move. Do you come to church expecting God to move? And that often fuels excitement and joy. When you're expecting something, aren't you joy-filled? Come on, you know when you file your IRS taxes and you're getting a return.

You're expecting something in the mail. You're going, oh look, oh it's not here. There's an expectation.

There's a joy to go buy stuff we don't need. But how much more this joy come expecting, we come expecting God to move. And I do, I try to every Sunday.

I expect God to touch people in different ways. People might be healed during worship. People might be set free of addiction.

People might be renewed in their thinking and have that passionate relationship with God again. I love to see Christians come back home. I love to see the prodigal son come back home and people come next door and pray with us and say, Shane, God has set me free.

I'm coming home. I'm filled again with God's spirit. We come expecting God to move.

This is not a social club. That's why I say that. This is the church of the living God that he built.

He sustains. He calls us. He draws us.

His truth goes out. The truth goes out and changes lives. We come expecting.

God, what are you going to say to me today? You know, it's one of the best things you can say on your way here. Lord, what are you going to say to me today? I want to hear from you. You're closed off.

Just kind of going through the motions. Hey, you know what? Sunday fits today. There's no football.

It's kind of cold out. I can't take my boat, my jet skis, my this. Come on.

I'm going to bring it home. And if it fits, then we'll come. And then we come.

It's boring and dry. And I'll just come again next month because you didn't come expecting God to move and to hear from God and to worship. And then number two, they searched.

They searched. Oh, heavens. The wise men did not find Jesus the next day or the next week.

We don't know how long exactly, but we do know something interesting that Herod ordered all males under the age of what? Two to be killed. So when I tied in Luke's example of the swaddling cloth, the possibility here, the wise men came much later than that. They came searching and nothing could stop them.

Nothing could stop them going through the desert, going through the dry heat, going through the sleepless nights sometimes. They were searching. And let me just encourage you, if you truly want to find God, if you truly want to hear from God, if you truly want to know his will and be filled with the Spirit of God, it does not come without a battle.

There is a fight. If you could see me right now, you'd see me in crutches and a head, neck brace and back surgery and my arms limp. And you get through life like this.

You get through the battle because there's a battle to sustain that relationship. It's a battle to fight on this side of Calvary. And you have to search and you have to seek God with all your heart, with all your strength, with all your mind, with all your soul.

Though I fall, I will get up again and I will fight again. Though the enemy knock me down, I will get back up and I will finish strong because it's a fight. The worship, you have to search for it, just like you search for a lost child.

I've told you that before. The word in the Hebrew there was finding something that's missing, like when Mary and Joseph lost Jesus. They lost Jesus for a few days.

That was a close call. I love his response. I wish my kids would tell me this.

If we can't find you and I find you, you say, I must be about my father's business. Don't you know I must be about my father's business? But you guys, you have to search. You don't give up.

I found in my own life, I look back and thank God I didn't give up because the miracle, the blessing was just beyond the struggle. That's why often I believe we are tempted, we are tested. The enemy comes against us to knock us off course.

He sees that blessing and he tries to get you away from that blessing, the abundant life, the healthy marriage, what God has for your ministry. The enemy is going to use discouragement. That's the only weapon he has against the believer.

Did you know that? Discouragement, defeat, and failure. That's where he wants you to live. And that's where most people live.

That's why they don't do anything for God. Can we be honest for a minute here? That's why most people, most Christians don't do much for God. They're living defeated.

They're living defeated. Whether it's addiction they just caved into. Whether it's sexual immorality.

Whether it's darkness, depression. Whether it's watching and viewing and listening to all the wrong things. That kills you.

That drains you spiritually. Does it not? These horror movies that are coming out. I'll see a two-minute trailer and I'll be shocked.

Like that just knocked the Holy Spirit wind out of me. But yet they live, they watch hours and hours and hours of darkness and depravity and lust. And you'd be amazed at how many, what your kids see.

They see a thousand images a week of violence and sexual morality. And all these things are just being bombarded. The enemy wants to sidetrack you.

He wants to discourage. Because a discouraged Christian doesn't do anything. When I'm discouraged I'll go run my errands and I won't talk to anybody about Christ.

But when I'm filled with the Spirit of God, watch out because I'm looking. I'm looking for that person who needs encouragement. I'm looking for that person who might need to be prayed for and be healed and set free.

Lord, I'm on alert. I'm ready because I'm filled with your Spirit. There's nothing the enemy can do.

But if he sidetracks me and he defeats me and I live in fear and anxiety and I don't want to do anything for God, I'm defeated. Nothing happens. You live your whole life and nothing happens.

That's why the vast majority of the church, they've taken polls and something like 90 some percent of people never witness. Why? Because they're defeated. They're living a defeated Christian life and it has to be fought for.

Worship has to be fought for. You tell your flesh to shut up. I'm not going back to sleep.

You shut your mouth. I talked to the flesh that way. Ask my wife.

She's like, what are you saying? I said, shut up. I'm not eating this morning. I'm fasting and praying for love.

Flesh, you be quiet. Because we believe that the flesh is our master. Whatever it says, we do.

When it's actually the other way around, I will not be brought under the control of anything, Paul says. There's a fight. That wasn't meant to be discouraging.

It's meant to be encouraging, letting you know it's a fight. You need to search for worship. You need to search for God again.

Listen, there have been times I've got here in the morning. I'll pray with my daughter. I'll just be here 5.30, 5.45, 6, 6.30, 6.45, nothing.

Sometimes I just want to go home and get ready and I'll come back at nine. But then, oh man. But when that breakthrough comes, saying, God, I'm not going.

I'm laying hold of this altar until you answer. And the spirit of God, a song comes on. The spirit of God just descends in my heart.

And oh, I don't want to leave now. I don't even want to preach. Can we not even start the service? Can we just worship for a while? Because it's that fighting.

It's that spiritual battle. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. We don't wrestle with flesh and blood.

We wrestle against principalities. There is a demonic influence. There is demons set out to say, you will not worship.

You will not bow to Christ. You're going to live defeated. Sure, you can go to church as long as you don't do anything.

You know, the devil's not too concerned with some churches. They're not preaching all of God's word. Very few people are coming to Christ.

They're not talking about repentance. They're just, well, good morning, brothers. Let's turn to Leviticus for our daily reading.

And Mary's going to come up and do a closing hymn before the woman's tea. And we'll see you next week. But is that not true in many cases? There are many dead, dying churches.

Women's teas are great. Don't take me wrong. Don't take this wrong.

All of that I said is good when it's done with the spirit of God. See, here's the problem. Did you know something? Many of you know this if you're familiar with the Bible, but the letter kills.

The letter, the word of God, if you beat people up with it, if I come up here and preach without the spirit of God, I will hurt you. Or you will never want to come back because I'm so boring. The letter kills.

It's the spirit that gives life. When God created man, he made him into an image. He created man out of the dust of the earth and he blew in him the breath of life.

See, when you have the word of God with the breath of life, that's where it goes and begins to hit hearts and begins to knock people over and begins to, in a good way, and begins to convert them and draw them to the cross. Because you have the word of God on fire, those things together change lives. If you just have the word, you have a legalistic dead church that wants you to fit a whole bunch of rules and requirements before you measure up.

And it just doesn't impact people. I've also noticed that dead formality doesn't like to worship. Dead formality does not like to worship.

Have you ever noticed that? Those who just have the word, you know, those people, they love to tell you off. These people love to tell me off. I don't know what's wrong with the word.

You're a compromiser. All these funny, all these new songs, we need to get back to the old stuff. And the old stuff's great.

I love the old stuff. I love all stuff that glorifies Jesus. But we have to be careful where our heart's at.

Where our heart's at. I love the guy a few weeks ago who told me on Facebook, if I want people to really respect me, I should wear a suit and tie. But my heart breaks.

I don't say to, I mean, my heart breaks for that. I mean, are you kidding me? These people know nothing about the Spirit's power. They know nothing about the power of God.

It's dead formalism. And those who worship the word and the word only, it's the Father, the Son, and the Word, they often do not like worship. You can see because worship is just a few minutes.

Or they'll have somebody do a presentation. Here's a solo. Here's this.

And there's no worship. Because worship is where the rubber meets the road. You can't fake God.

You can't fake it. Well, you can try to fake it, but God knows your heart. God knows our heart.

Why is it? Let me answer you this question. Why is it very easy to sit through an hour sermon, but not an hour of worship? Just food for thought? Well, Shane, that's more interesting. Well, hmm.

Now, granted, I know it's difficult. You have to search. You have to fight the flesh.

And you tell the flesh, I don't care what you say. And I think God honors that. I know some of you want me to get off this topic, but I'm not going to, because this is where it needs a rub.

It needs to rub something so raw that there is change in your heart and your life about worship. So they came expecting God to move. They searched until they found.

See, that's the mark of someone on fire for God. They search until they find. Well, how long do I have to pray? Just keep seeking God, praying, seeking God, praying, and God will answer.

Those who seek me will find me. That's not microwave Christianity. That's not pushing one minute and your burrito's done.

Sometimes you got to go soak the beans. You want, I'm going to, okay, I'm going to tell you this is, no, this, this is a, this is, this is, that's not funny. But the best burritos I've ever had, you soak those black beans overnight.

You add some salt. You add some onion. You let it soak overnight, 24 hours.

Just let those beans fill up with water. You soak them. And then you put them on the oven.

You slow cook, slow cook, and you smash them. You smash them. Then you might go and get some avocado and make some homemade guacamole.

And that, when I look at that burrito, that stinker took me 30 hours. It's going to taste good. But see how much more for worship.

You can't just push one minute, come in and sing two songs and think you're going to be filled with the spirit of God. There's a searching. There's a seeking.

There's a petitioning. There's a yearning. There's a desire.

There's a fighting. There's a travailing. The old saints used to say, I'm not going to leave until God answers.

That's traveling in prayer. We don't know anything about that today. We've got a glamorized Christianity that gets our services done within an hour.

As not to offend. I love getting, I get stuff in the mail, not too often anymore, because I took them. They said, take me off your mailing list.

But it's church growth books. How to grow your church. And the big trend is one hour services.

Pastor, get your sermon to 25 minutes. Let us come in and do fundraising. Oh God, help us.

There's a yearning. There's a desire. It's not until you say, God, you are everything.

You're on my schedule today. And I tell people sometimes, I tell them, just come expecting God to move. Don't be in a hurry.

Don't be in a hurry. The potluck can wait. The little kid's birthday can wait.

I know sometimes we have to be there, but you know what I'm saying? And then finally, of course, we can learn they worshipped. They worshipped. Well, Shane, that's not profound.

Well, I think it is in this sense. That word worship is 60 times. 60 times.

Proskuneo. Proskuneo. Do you know what it means? Prostrate.

They fell down in the holy presence of God. There was a humility falling down in the presence of God. I thought about that.

What would you do if Jesus Christ walked into this room? Hmm. See what he has to say. Get the phone.

Can I do a selfie? I don't know. But if his presence were here, I think you would fall down on your face before God. Because what do we say? I'm not worthy.

Oh, God. Can you imagine if Jesus came up to you? What would you do? High five? Fall down right here. I'm telling you right now, I'd fall down right here and say, my Lord and my Savior.

I would fall down on my face. I don't care if there's a live stream. I don't care what guests will think.

Why? Because I say, I'm a man of unworthy. I'm unworthy to even behold your sight. And what does he do when we do that? He says, come on, son.

Come on. Come on. You got a job to do.

Get back up here and preach. Can you imagine? I just thought about that all week. I would be a mess.

But we forget that we can still have God's power and presence in our lives and in our hearts. Because he doesn't have walk up here physically. If you believe the teaching of the Bible, he is here.

If he inhabits the praises of his people, why are we in a hurry? Sometimes I'm thinking we're praising worship. I'm like, Lord, I don't want to preach today. Can I just not preach? Just inhabit the praises of his people.

You'd be amazed at how many people that would actually upset if I said, I'm not preaching today. We're just worshiping. You'd be amazed.

And then of course, we know this famous scripture in Luke that there was no place for them in the place where they were staying. So the question at the beginning of the sermon was, who was Jesus? Now the question has to become, who is Jesus to you? Because see, you cannot live your life with the question mark here. You cannot live your life with the question mark here.

I don't know how many of you are familiar with the founding of our nation, with the founding fathers, the pilgrims, the Puritans, and the different things that transpired. Many godly men, some were not. Many godly men set the foundation, set the course.

But one of them was Daniel Webster. Daniel Webster, not Noah Webster who wrote the dictionary. By the way, you should get Noah Webster's 1828 version of the dictionary.

You want to know why? By every word just about there is scripture reference. But to be politically correct, we have to remove that convicting stuff. That's why they're removing God from the schools.

The prayer used to be allowed in schools. Now we have the audacity to say, don't pray. Don't pray at school.

And the public schools in the 1600s were created to teach kids the Bible, to help with the illiteracy rate. Did you know that? So when people say, oh, America hasn't drifted far. We have, the Titanic has been hit.

We're taking on water. It's time for God to awaken his people and revive us again. Wilt thou not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you? From Connecticut to Virginia, even the constitution said we acknowledge the sovereign hand of God.

The Supreme Court justice, the first Supreme Court justice, John Jay, acknowledged the sovereign hand of God. He acknowledged that Jesus Christ was his savior. The rules of Harvard, the rules of Harvard said that to lay Christ at the bottom is the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.

Harvard University and Yale University, all the great universities were built on the word of God. And we have drifted from the truth because there is no more fear of God in the land. So one of the founding fathers was asked this question.

Think about this question. What was the most profound thought you have ever had? What about if I went around and asked you that? Of all the years that you've lived, what is the most profound thought you have ever had in your life? He didn't even skip a beat. He said that I will have to stand before God someday.

I will have to stand before God someday. So when the Bible says for today, a savior is born. He will save his people from their sins.

The only response we have this morning for many of us is all hail King Jesus. Herod couldn't stop him. The Pharisees can't silence him and all the world cannot stop the plans of God.

I love Voltaire. Do you ever hear me tell you about Voltaire, the angry atheist who hated Christians? He said in 20 years or so, I'll get rid of Christianity. Now they're printing Bibles in his house.

That's the God we believe in. But in these dark days, are they not? I don't get very discouraged anymore, but sometimes I do. There's a lot going on, especially if it was just me and I had no kids.

Watch out. But when you have kids and grandkids, you start to see, wow, we are leaving a mess. Leaving a mess.

But let me remind you, just like they did in the book of Revelation, do not weep for the line of the tribe of Judah has prevailed. Do not weep. You fight from a position of victory.

See, because God said it, I believe it, that settles it. When God says something, when God said absolute truth into motion, no plans of man can stop that. The Bible says he raises one king up, he'll pull another king down.

He'll pull an entire nation down, and he'll raise another nation up. Nothing will stop the plans of God. If somebody does this, he'll do this.

If somebody does this, he'll do this. He already knows the ends before the means. Romans 8, all things work to the glory of God.

God is sovereign. God rests on his throne. It's not the enemy and Jesus going back at it.

Satan has already been defeated. He's a conquered foe. He knows.

He knows his destiny. He knows his destiny. So he's trying to discourage people.

But if you feel dead this morning, dead spiritually, dead emotionally, you're just dead to the things of God. Just remember, nothing is dead to God. Nothing is dead to God.

He's the God that raises life from the dead. Isn't it interesting? Jesus went around, and the little girl who died, the Bible talks about, he went in and said, don't cry. She's not dead.

She's just sleeping. And they all ridiculed him. He said, get up, little girl, arise.

The widow who lost her only son, he stopped the funeral procession. He's not dead. He's just sleeping.

Get up. Lazarus, come forth. When God speaks life into something, nothing can stop it.

Nothing can stop it. I love the sister who said, Jesus, if you were here earlier, if you were here before my brother died, you could have saved him. He said, oh, Mary and Martha, I am the resurrection and the life.

I am the resurrection and the life. Nobody can come to the Father except through me. I am the way, the truth, the life.

Nobody comes to the Father except through me. No other religion, no other path. Well, Shane, that's pretty narrow.

Well, so is gravity. I've never heard somebody get mad at two plus two equals four. Most mathematicians, God, who did that? That's so inclusive.

Why can't two plus two be eight? You're so narrow. See, nobody has a problem with absolute truth until it comes to morality. Now, you just upset the party.

They're fine with the laws of thermodynamics. They're laws with the gravitational field. They're fine with the laws of gravitation.

They're fine with two plus two in math. No problem whatsoever. But when it comes to absolute moral truth, that's where people get upset.

And how is moral truth any different than mathematic truth? It's the same God who set the same things in motion. How can we have morality without a moral giver? Even people in Africa who don't even know anything about God know not to take their neighbor's chicken or their neighbor's wife. Who gave them this moral compass? Who gave them morality, a moral law giver? That's the only way that's possible.

So nothing is dead to God this morning. So I want to encourage you, if you need to be awakened spiritually, if you're a believer and you've just been, you've been unplugged, you've been dead to the things of the world, you don't know why you're here. I realize that many of you in this room, some of you in this room, I will never talk to again.

I will never talk to many of you in this room ever again. And so what would I say if I only had one chance? Well, you just heard it. That's what I would tell you.

That Jesus still saves, He still sets free. It's not embarrassing. Whoever denies His Son, the Father will deny Him.

We think that masculinity is a man who's strong and can drink beer and beat up people. We have all these wrong definitions of masculinity and femininity and confusion and gender confusion, all these things, but God's truth will never change. God's truth will never change.

So if you're dead this morning, dead to the things of God, spiritually, you need to be awakened again. Just confess and say, Lord, I need to be spiritually revived again. I need revival.

Do you know what revival is? Awakening that which was dead. That's the definition of revival. God awakening that which is dead.

The psalmist wrote, wilt thou not revive us again that people may rejoice in you? And if you don't like what I'm saying, could it be that you need to hear what I'm saying? Those who don't like what I'm saying without fail, they always are the ones who need to hear what I'm saying. Every time. I don't like what you had to say today.

That's because you need to hear it. You're in rebellion to God. You need to repent.

You think I like being bold? If I could do any other thing, if I could do any other thing, I would do it. But I can't. Because His word is in my heart like a burning fire.

It's shut up in my bones. I can't hold it back. If I fail to preach when I'm preaching you this morning, I would go home miserable.

And I have to answer to God. I'd rather answer to a thousand people than God. How about you? So if you're dead to the things of God, or maybe you don't know Him, you don't have that relationship with Him, the Bible is crystal clear.

Repent and believe. Repent and believe. But Shane, that's too simple.

Yeah. It's a simple gospel. Praise God for the simple gospel that a 12-year-old can understand.

Jesus said, unless you come to me like little children, what did He mean? You have to put a pacifier in your mouth and come to God? Here, give me a bottle. I fed my baby last night. That was cute.

It was cute for a seven-month-old, but if I start doing that, run for cover. Get out of here. But Jesus said, if you come to me with childlike faith, with the faith of believing and trusting in God, the creator of the universe that hangs the heavens in the palm of His hands, and He weighs the thoughts in the intents of man, every heartbeat, every lung contraction is controlled by the sovereignty of God.

A God, a just and holy and righteous God, a loving God sent His Son to die for the sins of the world. He said, just trust and believe. But Shane, I can't.

Well, we understand that we can, because we understand the depravity of the human heart. We know we're depraved, and we need God to save us and set us free.

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