

What Does Empty Mean to Me?

by Shane Idleman

The empty tomb is a powerful reminder of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the truth of the Bible, and it calls us to trust in God and seek Him in the right places.

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Scripture: Luke 24:1

Topics: "The Empty Tomb", "Truth and Repentance"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the significance of the empty tomb, arguing that it confirms the truth of the Gospel and the necessity of repentance. He warns against the dangers of a society drifting away from God, where people believe in anything rather than the truth of Christ. Idleman calls for the church to reclaim its role in speaking truth and love, reminding believers that true hope and salvation come only through Jesus. He highlights the importance of remembering God's promises and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

Transcript

And so I'm gonna talk to you this morning about the empty tomb. The title is, What Does Empty Mean to Me? And it actually means a lot of things. G.K. Chesterton is famous for saying, when people stop believing in God, they don't believe in nothing, they believe in anything.

When they stop believing in God, it's not like they don't believe in anything, like a black hole in their mind. They start to believe in anything. And so what you're seeing is our society drifts further and further from God, and we see all these things that we just can't understand.

We can't fathom. How is this happening? Well, you begin to believe in anything. That men can become women.

That women can become men. Oh, Shane, why are you talking about that on Easter? Well, why not? Because this is affecting our children and our society, and the pulpits need to get back to speaking the truth. And all of this, I don't know if you just saw, but Colorado just stopped another shooting.

Transgender was gonna shoot at the schools. It's in Brett Bart, I believe, News Today. And see, but there's a call for the church to be the church again.

Yes, we are to love people, but we're also called to speak the truth in love, and call out things that are just completely off. And what society is doing, they're suppressing the truth. They're rejecting God, and God gives them over to a depraved and corrupted mind.

And when you're given over to that mind, it doesn't just stop at a certain spot. It gets more depraved, more depraved, more depraved, until they're making some very foolish and unwise decisions. I don't know if you saw Nike's new sponsor, or Budweiser's.

Not that that matters, I guess, in church, but it just shows you the belligerent, the belligerent boldness to just, to me, here's why it's a big deal. God said, I will create the male and female. I will design this gift of marriage, and it is a perversion of the truth of God's word.

Straight up, you don't like that, I don't know what to tell you, but that's the truth. God didn't call me to be popular, he called me to be confrontational. And our nation has drifted so far from the truth, that it's gonna take a massive wake-up call to get us back.

And that's why I'll be opening up the book of Revelation next weekend. And we're gonna go through the book of Revelation, so be prepared. And we're gonna talk about a lot of the different things going on with, of course, China and Taiwan and the cryptocurrency and One World Leadership and the World Health Organization and things that are going.

There's only one hope. And I think God is showing us that. Are you counting in your 401k? I'm sure not.

Are you counting in Social Security? Come on, let's be real. Are you hoping for 2024? Hmm. Salvation is not coming on Air Force One, it's coming only through the precious blood of Jesus Christ and the church need to be reminded of that again.

But I wanna show you a picture from New York in the 1950s. Don't tell me we haven't drifted. You try pulling that today, I mean, you couldn't even get as far as saying, contacting the corporation saying, hey, I'd like to take out a permit to do this.

You wouldn't even be, they would just laugh you out of their boardroom. How dare you put up the offensive cross. But it's okay to put up all these other things that are a perversion and a stench in the nostrils of God.

But what does empty mean to me? For me, it means empty confirms the truth of the message of the gospel. And Dr. William Lane Craig, how many of you have ever followed him? Very intellectual. In his article, The Resurrection of Jesus, he says three pieces of evidence for the empty tomb.

He talks about three, obviously there's more, but number one, if the tomb had not been empty, someone would have produced Jesus's body. And this is profound. I'm sure you've heard of Lee Strobel and there's countless other people out there that actually when they look at the evidence, they look at, I mean, there's no way if the body was taken at night and it just really didn't happen, Christianity wouldn't have got past day one.

Because then how do you explain the disciples later on dying for a lie? Hey, I know we hid the body, but go ahead and chop off my head. Hey, it's all a joke, go ahead and hang me upside down. It's not possible.

Number two, there are well-documented appearances of Jesus appearing after his resurrection in all four Gospels, as well as 1 Corinthians, I believe around 500 eyewitness testimonies. And you can't prove the Bible wrong in one area, so let's not start there. Number three, it best describes the belief of the early disciples that he had risen, a belief that would have been foreign to first-century Jews.

And again, it goes back to what I said earlier. They would have never just made all this up and given their lives for a lie. It would have never got the momentum.

And you could say other religions have momentum, right, but they don't really change the heart. That's the big difference. Religion is me doing all these things to try to reach up to God.

I'm praying a certain time each day. I'm going through the motions, and that's why people say such and such religion, they're very nice. Yeah, they have to be.

They have to be. It's part of their salvation is to do good work, so you better believe they're doing good works. But I wonder what they do in the darkness, where Christianity is God coming down and changing the heart of man.

And so, yes, other religions have conformed people to do certain things, but they've never changed, it can't change the human heart, the depravity of the human heart from light, I'm sorry, from darkness to light. And over the years, there have been many skeptics who have sought to explain away the empty tomb. And again, empty to me means that the Bible is true.

I mean, if you think about it, everything hinges on that. We wouldn't be here. I mean, people say that's one of the most important moments of all of history.

No, it is the most important moments of history. There's nothing even comparable to that, even glimpses of certain things. And I just, I don't know why I remembered it, I thought I'd share it with you, but I remember, I don't remember the year, it was 1994, and I was on the 405 freeway, and heading to Cheesecake Factory.

And I see all these police cars coming, the freeway's closed down, and here comes a white Bronco. OJ's in the back seat, down, I'm looking, is that AC, or whatever his name is, and I just drove right by me on the 405. So I'm going this way, it's just these moments that remind you, I mean, I even had him up in my room, and my football star, and all these other stars and people I look to, and you find out they fall.

Pete Rose, one of my heroes in gambling, and even Michael Jordan had captivated me in the 80s and 1990s, and if you, you know, you look at his background, he's a heavy dude, man, he's not a nice guy. You can't be that good and be nice to everyone. You've gotta dominate.

Mike Tyson, and you look at all these people that when we're growing up, and I know I'm dating myself, but you can date, just think, they'll let you down. There's no one perfect but Jesus Christ. And that's why I encourage people, too, don't look to men.

Men, they will let you down. Every chance they get, they will let you down. The closer you draw to getting to know someone, and that's what, you know, sometimes it's a concern of mine, people come in the church and like, hey, let's get to know you, and I'm like, okay, you know.

My history tells me that the closer you get to know someone, the more you judge them. Pastor, I didn't know you'd do this. I didn't know you celebrate Christmas.

Haven't you read about the Christmas tree in Jeremiah? You better not be coloring eggs today. I mean, can you color potatoes and then it's not a big deal, right? I don't know our plans, but I told my wife, if you do that, don't post that worship of S star on social media, that's the last thing I need right now. And I have strong feelings about these things, but there's also, oh, the grace of God, and when you live for Christ, these other things aren't really pulling your heart away.

And so the closer, you know, you draw to someone, you begin to see their frailty, their brokenness. The closer you get to know me or Pastor Abram or anyone, come on, you know, the closer you get to know you, you kind of get to know people like, boy, they have an attitude. They got a chip on their shoulder.

Oh, they're all high and mighty and righteous here, but oh man, but no, Jesus will never let you down. And that's another reason why kids are looking and then their hero falls and then they're lost because my faith, I trusted in this pastor or this leader. Don't trust in them, they are a sinner on a broken road leading us and helping us, pointing us to the cross.

Now we should have a life that reflects qualifications and things like that. I'm not saying that, absolutely. But we put so much hope and faith in other people and only God is gonna see you through.

Again, empty means the Bible is true. And so let's look at some scriptures. Luke 24, Luke 24, chapter 24.

Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they and certain other women with them came to the tomb, bringing spices which they had prepared, but they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. It's just a good moment to pause and remind ourselves if death can't stop him, nothing can. If death can't stop him, nothing can.

Not China, not Russia, not cryptocurrency, not the banks failing. God's like, oh, what happens if this happens with Chase and Wells Fargo, I'm in trouble, what are we gonna do? Nothing can stop God Almighty. And a lot of these things concern us, of course, but we have to refocus, take your thoughts captive and point them back to the cross.

And what it's been showing me, maybe is my treasure has been in the wrong spot. Thank you, is that Matias again? Okay, good, thank you. No, he helps me, I like, he helps me.

And so, but it does show, okay, what about if what I was hoping for, you know, and wanting to, you know, the big term retirement now, and there's nothing wrong with it, I mean, I will never, I'll probably preach until the day, you know, bury me like George Whitfield, I preached and went up the stairs and died. You know, and so, that's a hard word for a Christian sometimes because I believe we're always, even if you retire from work, you should be doing Christian work. But so, okay, what about if the social security's not there? And I'm gonna lose sleep over it and worry about it the next whatever, and what about if I start putting some away and this crashes and it's not there anymore? What happened to, and it really reveals what we're trusting in.

And so, you have to take those thoughts captive and point them back to Jesus. Because when it's all said and done, everything might crumble. We are very spoiled in our nation.

All of church history, go talk to the Christians in third world countries. Dirt floors, refrigeration. What? You have refrigerators that keep things cool, cold? You have ice in your water? And sometimes we are so blessed that we become kind of like crybabies.

Wish I could find a better word for you, but that's, and sometimes God will begin to strip those things away from us. And yes, there is a big move. We've talked about this for a while.

I did a message, The Great Reset, a few years ago on cryptocurrency and digital currency. We wanna talk about revelation coming to pass. You know, everything lines up, but why is there fear when we trust in God? Now, I don't like it, of course.

I've got kids and grandkids. Like many of you, or not grandkids yet, okay. I hope, oh Lord.

I should say we have kids, and many of you have grandkids. And so it is, it is okay to be a watchman, a watchman and have concerns, but at the end of the day, these concerns can't, can't dictate how you feel and how you act. And I know this is a little bit different sermon than Easter, but I ask God to speak to people where they're at, to the marriage falling apart, to the prodigal son drifting, to the person hooked on this or that.

If death can't stop him, nothing can. Your sin, your addiction is not greater than God. We need to take it to the throne room of grace.

And then Luke 24 continues, and then they went in and they did not find the body of the Lord, and it happened as they were greatly perplexed about this, I'm sure they were, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then as they were afraid, they bowed their faces to the earth and they said to the women, why do you seek the living among the dead? Wow, why do you seek the living among the dead? And it reminded me that God's will can be perplexing and confusing at times. They were greatly, this is God's will.

And he even told them, I will rise again. So you'd think they'd be like, oh yeah, he talked about this. But of course, you're like, okay, sure, Jesus, you know, we love you, but you're drifting out there to never never land.

But they're perplexed and confused, where's his body, what happened? And we have to remember that God's will can be perplexing and confusing from time to time. Because we have this plan for our ship to go this way, and this wind blows this way. No, no, no, get me back on course, turn the rudder, and then now it blows this way.

God, this is so confusing, it's so perplexing. I don't understand this, I don't understand that. But it's okay, you're in good company.

Because I found, if I know, here's what I would do, I don't know about you, but if I knew what God's will was, I would go ahead and rush ahead and get there for him. I got this, you want me to do this and here and this can happen, this, and see, I would try to plan ahead, I would try to make changes, I would try to circumvent some things and I would make them happen. So sometimes he keeps me perplexed and confused, so I just seek him.

It's like this, I'm blind and I don't know what to do. God, let me just hold your hand and you lead me. That's a true definition, actually, of submission.

You have this definition of I gotta submit like a door. No, it's submission, Lord, I don't know what your will is. Will you lead me, Father, I'm blind, and I need you to direct me spiritually and relationally into marriage, into business deals, into everything, even my finances, God, I'm letting you lead me.

I'm confused and perplexed, but thank God the one who's holding my hand isn't. And this, I don't know why this week, but this really stood out. Why do you seek the living among the dead? And it does beg the question to many people, why are you seeking the living among the dead? They're seeking for God in all the wrong things.

And let me remind you that where you search determines what you'll find. Dead things, dead music, dead entertainment, dead friendships, just things that are dark. Why are you seeking God that is living among dead things? And the principle is pretty profound.

If I wanna seek God, I need to start seeking the right things, living water, and drink deeply of fountains that will never dry up. The things that build me up, and Paul writing his letter to the church to Philippi, finally brethren, finally brethren, whatever things are pure and honest and noble and upright, there goes half of our news channels, meditate on these things, why? Because as a man thinketh so he is, what he becomes, what we put in. Really, people say, well Shane, what's the big deal about entertainment? The difference is, it's entertaining you, it's causing your mind to program certain things.

And this whole movement now that society is so, I almost can't understand how people can think a man can become a woman, and they get mad at you if you say the opposite. Or even our Supreme Court justice can't name what a, how is that possible, one step at a time? 50 years ago, no. Let's start to bring it in 30 years ago.

Because if you tell a lie long enough, people will begin to believe it. And I don't think they really believe it, I think because you have to go woke or you go broke, right? You have to wake, okay, I don't know if anybody, they think they're this, okay, let me. And again, we have compassion for those who struggle with all types of things.

But as a pastor, I must come against the agenda. Do you understand there's a big difference there? You can love the person struggling deeply with sexual sin, right? I love you, but you're not gonna go work with children. You see? And when you draw the line, you're a hater.

No, I'm a lover. I actually love the person enough to tell them the truth, and I love the little ones who God has entrusted us. If you lead one of these little ones astray, why don't we put this verse up more often? If you lead one of these little ones astray, it'd be better for you to have a millstone hung around your neck and cast into the sea than to lead one of these little ones astray.

Oh my goodness. On that note, remember to subscribe to Rumble because YouTube, I'm in YouTube jail. Isn't it ironic how many people are not waking up? Like we are, this is censorship.

Like they don't like what you say. I mean, just propose this, what would happen if Twitter was bought by the wrong person? And there was no Rumble. See, YouTube feels threatened, so they've gotta, you know, chill out a little bit.

But what about there's no alternative voice? They're silencing the news, right? And did you know that major news corporations are just owned by like six billionaires or six corporate, most of the news outlets? And there's a certain template that you can only say there's an agenda being pushed on all of us. And so

many people are drinking the Kool-Aid. If you don't know what that means, a cult leader had a lot of people commit suicide and drink the Kool-Aid.

And that's what a lot of people are doing today. Get our truth from God's word. And then Luke continues, Jesus is not here.

He's not here. He's risen. I love this part, remember.

Remember, He told you. Remember, He spoke to you when He was in Galilee, saying the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day will rise again. And the power of remembrance, the power of remembrance.

See, I've seen, maybe just as a pastor, I've seen remembrance heal so many things. When you get a couple together and you go, and they're fighting, they're about ready to head to divorce court, and you say, okay, remember when you first fell in love. Love didn't leave you, you left love.

And so they remember that intimacy. They remember that first love. They remember, and then you remind people, even the prodigals, remember that first love you had for Jesus Christ.

The Bible talks about in Revelation, when you fall from that, remember your first love and return. And you remind the prodigal, you're living in sin now like the pigs. You're eating that swine food.

Yes, it feels good for a season. You're addicted to that. But remember when tears flowed and the Word of God came alive, and you couldn't stop worshipping.

You wanted to know how often could you come to church, not get me away from church. Remember the power of God to bring you back. And they start remembering, and tears start falling.

Oh, the power of remembrance. It's important. And God will say to us too, remember what I did before.

Remember what I did before in your life. Remember what I promised you. Oh, if we could just get back to remembering.

Remembering God's Word in these difficult times. If you seek Me, you will find Me. If you drink of this water, you will never thirst again.

His Word will be in your heart like a burning fire. God will make you more than the tail in the head. He'll make you a conqueror in Christ Jesus.

You start to take, you can take God to the bank. Did you know that? They used that phrase, you can take that to the bank. You can't say that anymore, because.

But when God doesn't let us down, God has never failed, and we've gotta remind ourself of that important truth. So maybe some of you need to hear that this morning. You need to remember and return.

Remember and return. Remember how God brought you through all of that. Remember how He touched your life.

Remember how He saved you and set you free. And something has come in your life where you've drifted from God, and although you might not be deep into what they call bad sin, you've drifted. You have no desire for the Word of God.

You don't wanna really come to church, and there's no passion, desire for God. The simple thing is to return and remember and repent. Repent of that apathy.

Apathy has to be repented of, does it not? I mean, I thank God often, even though it's hard, I say, thank you for calling me to be a pastor, because I have to do what I'm telling you. I can't just not show up for a couple months. I don't wanna read the Bible for a while.

I don't wanna do, I have to, I have to. There's that, Lord, help me in that desire to pull me back. Because that famous hymn is so true, prone to wander, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

Prone to leave the God I love. There's something where we drift away from God. I don't like it, I hate it.

I actually hate it, I hate the old Shane Idleman. Can I be honest with you? If I could kill him and get rid of his influence, trust me, I'd get the glock out. Not talking about suicide or anything, but you know what I'm saying, the old nature, that Adamic nature, if I could just get that out of me.

Prone to wander, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. So God, here's my heart, take and seal it. Seal it in thy courts above.

And so we have to also encourage ourselves. Yes, there's something in us that is prone to wander. It's almost like if you just jump into a river, you've gotta fight the current and swim against it.

If not, where are you going? Wherever it goes, you're going. And that's what so many, that's my heart for revival, to be honest with you. Why I write books on revival, why I talk about it a lot, why I feel it's part of my calling, is because so many people are jumping in the river of the world, hey, wherever it takes me, wherever it takes me.

Yeah, I'll hop out and go to church now and then, but wherever it takes me, I'll read the Bible now and then, but wherever it takes me, and they're just drifting. They have no concrete foundation or pursuit of God, and they're not swimming against the current and fighting and contending for the faith. The Bible talks about battle songs, and also battle language.

Contend for the faith, fight for the faith. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities. So you can't have a stronger language.

So put on your pajamas and fight. No, the strongest language he could use was that of a Roman soldier. Put on the whole armor of, I mean, this is warfare.

That's why masculinity is not toxic, it's biblical. Is it true? I'm just shooting you straight. That's why the enemy's going after the family, after identity, sexual identity, and after masculinity, all these things that are biblical, and how God has designed us and created.

He's called the man to put on the whole armor of God, guard, defend, expose the unfruitful works of darkness, but it must flow from a humble, gentle, broken heart as well. Putting on that whole armor of God. And then Luke 24, eight, and they remembered his words, and they returned from the tomb.

They probably said, aha moment, that's right, Jesus said. Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the 11, and all the rest. And it was Mary of Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women with them who told these things to the apostles.

And their words seemed to be like idle tales, and they did not believe them. Now, this is pretty huge. This is always a good one.

If the Bible was false or made up by men, they would have never, never said, these women found Jesus. These women reported this. It wasn't that culture, especially the culture that day.

It would be the men would be the hero, and they wouldn't talk about their failties and their fallings, and there would be David, but no Bathsheba. There would be a Samson, but no Delilah. All the heroes.

But the Bible exposes the wickedness and the victories. And this is a very strong case that if it was all phony and fake, they would have never had these four women be the heroes that brought this truth back to the disciples. And it's a very important word here, he who believes, he who believes, they did not believe them, they did not believe them.

And that word believe, we hear it a lot in church. To believe, let's say to believe in Jesus is to commit oneself. So the word believe, when we're talking about believe in Jesus, it's not just intellectual knowledge.

Because somebody goes, that's a really strong case, pastor. You make that, that makes sense. I can see that.

I believed Jesus was a historical figure. I believe possibly the Son of God. I believe he was crucified.

I believe, it sounds like he did raise from the dead. Okay, but if you don't commit your life to him, you have intellectual knowledge without heart engagement. And that's why so many people, you'll see them, the big term now is deconstructionism, right? I talked about that recently.

They are deconstructing their faith. Solid people that I used to follow, some of the worship teams and that guy who wrote that book, I Kissed Dating Goodbye, he actually kissed God goodbye, you know? And they're very astute and they're very, you know, they use a lot of big words. But at the heart of it, they had intellectual, they had intellectual knowledge and they were brought into it maybe by friends or family and they were a good person.

That's what good people do, but they miss the element of the Holy Spirit truly, truly filling them with holy fire and a relationship with God. And so if you say, I believe in Jesus, did it change your life? Because a religion that doesn't change your life is no religion at all. There's a change in your life, not perfect, not perfectionism, but I believe and I've committed myself, committing myself to Jesus Christ.

And here's the wonderful thing, it's not our will, like, okay, I believe now I've got to commit myself, oh, this is gonna be a hard journey, even though Christianity is not a walk in the park, it's a battleground, not a playground, A.W. Tozer would say. But once the Holy Spirit comes in, changes you, fills you with God, now you have a love for God, now that Holy Spirit is a guarantee, He keeps you. Now you can quench and grieve His influence, but there's that heart call that you know who God truly is.

And that's what I, with even young adults that are raised in Christian homes, that's good, but you can't get into heaven on your parents' coattails. And I remember I was at a youth event, I spoke up in the mountains somewhere, was talking about this and a kid came up and goes, what really stood out to him was, my mom and dad are not gonna be next to me when I stand before God. Wow.

And you could tell he was just wrecked. Because we do trust, as you go, you trust in your parents, you trust in your father, and you trust in your mom, right? And that's what guys are supposed to do. The dog was just barking crazy last night, 11.30. I'm like, Morgan, go check.

Go check, go, go check. But I got up, checked, and it was a neighbor across the street, and we were just coming home late, and our dog heard it, but there's that desire to protect. But you gotta fight that sometimes, right? And so once the Holy Spirit is within you, he keeps you anchored to the cross.

And I think it's important to clarify, because sometimes we think, okay, I gotta do this, I gotta do this, I gotta read the Bible, I gotta, I don't have to read the Bible, I want to read the Bible to understand the heart of God. I don't have to not commit sin, I don't want to commit sin. You see, and people think, oh, it's a bunch of rules No, it's actually, I'm so glad that little hill that you guys call a mountain, the little hill, so many people don't come to church, I can't go over that mountain, that's not a mountain.

Guys, let me take you to Mount Whitney, about three hours here, I'll show you a mountain, or into Tioga Pass, or in these other areas. But anyway, what about the guardrails weren't there? And even Caltrans came up and said, you know what? We need some dirt, let's take off, let's go right to the edge of this, my daughter's never driving to church again if they did this, right? Right to the edge of the pavement, let's just cut it off, we'll put big retaining walls to hold it, and the road will just drop off. I think we're all gonna take another route.

So God's rules, which they call rules and regulations, it's really guardrails through the canyons of life. They don't protect, they don't keep you from having fun, they protect you from falling. And if we could really get that point across, I think it would be helpful.

And they thought this was an idle tell. Oh, you're just playing with us. Jesus did not rise again.

Well, how do you tell an idle tell from the truth? Actually, it's not too difficult. Is it factual? Is it factual? Is it consistent? Does it fit? God gave us common sense for a reason, wisdom for a reason. It changes you.

There's a change that takes place because the word of God is living and powerful and true. And then Luke continues, verse 12. But Peter, but Peter, you gotta love this guy.

But Peter, did he sit down in doubt and say, ah, this can't be? No, he arose and ran to the tomb. He arose and ran to the tomb. I don't know how far away he was, but it wasn't very close, I don't think.

And he looked down and he saw the linen clothes lying by themselves, and he departed marveling to himself what had happened. And sometimes I think we need a little bit of Peter's passion today. Amen.

That's another thing I believe missing in the church of America is the passion for God. When are we gonna run after God and seek after God and pursue God and chase after Him and track Him down and hunt Him? That's what that word means. There's a pursuit.

I've gotta track Him down. I've gotta find Him. It's amazing, I'll see so many hunting videos sometimes.

They stumble on them. But I think I got the buck. I see the blood.

Now I gotta track Him down for the next half day. Why aren't you tracking down God like that? Why don't you get your priorities straight and track down God like that? If you put as much emphasis as seeking financial success, as being a famous whoever, or on this idea of hunting I just said, or tracking down the

game, if you put that much passion into God, your life will be radically changed. Because God says, you seek me, you will find me.

And you have to do it when you don't feel like it. Hello? Every time I encourage people to come to 6 a.m. worship on Sunday, say, Shane, I just don't feel like it. I say, that's okay, you're in good company.

Nobody does. That's the point. That's the point.

It's a gauge of hunger. It's a gauge of desire. I will get up and I will track out.

I will seek God. And when the fire of God eventually falls and there's that passion and desire and God is speaking to me like never before and I was lost but now I'm found in his area. Now because I sought him, I want to keep seeking him.

Oh God, your word is true. And see, there's a reward at the end of that. People say, but Shane, I've went to the prayer line.

Well, then get a prayer life. Big difference. Big difference.

We would love to pray with you and for you. But if that's what you're relying on, that should just be a supplement to what God is already doing in your own prayer life. And then we're gonna fast forward to Luke 24, verse 36.

Jesus himself now stood and appeared in the midst of them. And he said, peace to you. But they were terrified and frightened, I bet.

And they supposed that they had seen a spirit. And this is so important, Jesus appears to his disciples and he didn't just, I don't know if it's ironic or what the right term would be, but he didn't just, the tomb's empty and now he's in heaven. He actually, for a while, went and appeared to his disciples.

It just really stuck out to me that there is relationship with God but then also there's an experience with him. Did you know you can experience God? You can experience God. And so many of these people are out there trying to tell you you can experience God.

We have the word and that's all you need, brother. You do that worship set for more than 20 minutes, you're getting too emotional. That altar's full with people weeping and that's too emotional.

You can experience God. It's just doctrine, doctrine, doctrine, doctrine. But doctrine points you to the person to have a relationship with him and experience him.

When you fear God, you don't fear anything else. They were terrified, they were frightened. When you fear God, you don't fear anything else.

Folks, let me tell you, that is so true. The more you focus on God and trust in God, you don't fear a lot of things. Now the old man will come in again, right? Here's that old guy prone to wander.

You have enough ammunition? You have enough food? Be quiet, be quiet, I'm trusting God. Oh, but you don't know, man. Illuminati, one world government.

Chemtrails, can't trust NASA. Do we really go to the moon? And you can see, right, the old man likes this, oh, conspiracy theory stuff. Are we gonna wake up on a Friday and then banks close down over the

weekend and now it's, oh, you can exchange it for crypto and oh, I'm watching too many YouTube shorts.

And see how it draws you away. And the more time I focus on God, I fear no man. I don't fear Biden or YouTube or Russia or China because what can man do to me? I'm gonna go see Jesus sooner? I'm gonna go see Jesus sooner? That scares me.

But again, the old man comes in, here comes fear. Usually when I'm spending too much time watching the breaking latest news, and I truly believe, I don't think we are designed to take in this much stuff. I don't think I need to know what's going on in Florida and Tennessee and New York and Chicago and down by Texas Panhandle and then this guy and this sergeant recently just got, he shot somebody in self-defense and now he got charged for murder and like, oh gosh, what's going on? And you just start, you're feeding your mind with all this stuff.

Is that really that productive? I don't think so. I don't think so. God's sovereignty, I said before, is my sanity.

God's sovereignty is my sanity. You should make that screenshot, put it on your computer, on your phone because that's the only way. I'm telling you, where things are going, the only way to keep your sanity is trusting God's sovereignty.

Now, I gotta tell you the bad news. You guys ready for this? No, we're not moving to Idaho. God's sovereignty isn't often what I want it to be.

I want comfort, I want convenience, I want quiet neighbors. I don't want any problems, I don't want any issues, I don't want any challenges. Can we go a day without challenges with our kids? Just one day? His sovereignty is not what I want because I often want comfort, and His sovereignty is like sandpaper to my comfort.

But Lord, I trust in you, whatever you're doing. You're not healing such and such quick enough. Are you doing it at all? What's going on? And so that's why it's tough because we have this concept of God's sovereignty.

And often, it doesn't align with what His real sovereignty is because often, His sovereignty is not as much about me as it's about other people, correct? So things might not feel good to me, and I don't like this, but if it blesses other people. And same in your own situation. Like, gee, how can you say that? Look what's happening, look at our stocks, or look at this, and look at the price of this, and look at gasoline, look what Biden's doing, look at this, and look, and we just, I don't know.

I don't know either, but I have to trust in God because if I don't trust in God, the other end of that equation is ugly, is it not? Why is addiction skyrocketing in our nation? I've never seen it more out of control in all of my life, especially in the church. People are doing great, and then fall. People are doing great, it's like, what? It's like everywhere, everywhere you look.

Everywhere you look. And I'm talking crystal meth, heroin, alcohol, back to the big, heavy bong loads where they're just so unproductive. In our church, God help me, what is going on here? God's sovereignty is not what I thought it was.

I'm going through difficulties. My finances are not adding up, my job isn't working out. This is challenging, I can't, no, God's sovereignty, and that means whatever comes.

Now, God might be using something to wake you up. Can't say, well, you know, yeah, my sin caused this, but God's sovereignty. No, God's sovereignty is you repent of that sin and let him begin to rebuild and fix that area of your life.

So we can't just throw that in there wherever it's cute and fits. But as a personal confession, that's been my challenge with God's sovereignty is it seems like all hell is breaking loose. Luke 24, 38, and he said to them, Jesus said, why are you troubled? Why are you troubled? And why do you doubts arise in your hearts? Don't you feel that way as well? Shane, why are you troubled? Why are there doubts in your heart? And you need to be encouraged this morning because that is part of the old man.

That old, the Bible calls it the, yeah, the old man, the Adamic nature, the sinful flesh, the carnal mind is at enmity with God and there's a war inside of us. And so as I begin to seek God, sometimes we'll struggle with doubts and fears. Sometimes that's someone's stronghold.

And that's why I think we really need to be gentle with others because just because you don't struggle with what they're struggling with, let's go down your laundry list, sir. You're controlling, you're dominating, you're full of fear, and you're gonna put down the person who, this? See, we all have that challenge inside of us of the old man pulling us down, pulling us away from God. But Shane, I thought I had victory.

I thought I had victory in this. I thought I was crucified with Christ. There's no longer Christ.

But sin isn't supposed to live in me. And yes, there's victory over death and the penalty of sin, but that little stinker is still trying to pull me down. Is he not? Who can say like Paul, oh, wretched man that I am.

Oh, wretched, he wrote the Bible, most of the Bible. Paul, come on, come on now. I wanna hear about this perfect Paul.

Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin and death? For with the mind, I serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin. There's a war within me. It's constantly, it's constantly pulling me away from God.

I've got to fight. I've got a war, it's spiritual battling. And if we give people the truth, I think you set them up for success, not failure.

Tell them, yeah, it's a battle. And sometimes people don't like my advice in certain areas because I say, you might have to struggle with that a while. But can't God just take it away like he did my friend Jack? He can, and if I would understand that part of God's sovereignty, I would be a better preacher.

But for now, all I know is sometimes he'll take it away, praise God, and sometimes there's a struggle. And I haven't figured out why yet. Why are you troubled and why do doubts arise in your heart? Behold, what he's saying here is look at my hands, look at my feet.

So there must have been some type of marking, maybe the healing that took place, or maybe it was completely healed, but there was probably marks there that showed it was more of in his wrist and feet. And he said, look, look at me, look at me. If you have fear, if you have doubt, and that's a good message for us.

If you're troubled, if you're troubled, Jesus says, come and look at me, handle me and see for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have. In other words, he's saying, taste and see that the Lord is

good. Jesus is saying, yes, if you're troubled, yes, if you're weary, come to me, all are weak and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

You won't find the rest and all these other things you're searching for and buying this new thing and going shopping and doing this. I'm getting personal now, I know, but isn't it true? You're not gonna find wholeness in all of these other things but taste and see that the Lord is good. Test me, try me in this.

Just do a search in the Bible where God says, test me. Test me, try me in this. And when I spoke at the college a few years back with, I think it was the atheist, I don't know if it's the atheist debate or some other, but the title was test God.

Let's put God to the test. Now, that's not good in one sense. If you're testing him the wrong way, oh yeah, let me see, I'm gonna test your word, test your will and be disobedient.

But God says, test me, try me in this. One of the famous passages is dealing with finances. Get your heart right and will I not pour out a blessing that you don't have room enough to receive? Now, we don't wanna use that to manipulate people but there's a truth to that.

Because many times we don't give because I don't trust. I know, God, you say this but I don't think you got me, I don't think you got my back in this area. Test me in this, try me in this.

And since it's Resurrection Sunday, I do wanna say this. You'll notice we don't do an offering plate. We don't make money, a big deal at all and I'm convicted a lot of times that I don't talk about enough to really help people because of this view of the church.

Oh, they just want my money. Actually, we don't, God's got our back. God's got our back.

The office just showed me a huge check that came in today. It'll cover all of the month. See, we don't worry about your check or your giving.

It's a test of the heart, is it not? Because when things get tough, did I think about backing off, tied the little? Oh, yeah, absolutely. But who am I trusting? Test me in this, test me in this. And so my point in saying all that was we don't push giving on you.

We don't want people to feel that the church needs any of their money. We're not here because of the money but there's a wonderful biblical principle that talk, it's about sowing and reaping. It talks about the real God of this world and the true God and how you have to sometimes bring that God of this world into submission under the true God and give what hurts the most.

I will not give God that which costs me nothing. When we moved up to this facility, I told the office, hey, listen, listen, this is not the drop-off place anymore. We had like old couches, a big screen TV.

It's people that they don't want. Pastor, I got this 50-inch TV, I'd love for the church to have it. Oh, wow, cool, okay, when are you gonna drop it off? Pretty soon and it's, well, that's like 18 years old.

What are we supposed to, ah, you just have to fix this and get a guy, okay, and then you want, I've got this wonderful love set or love seat and couch and table and we bless the family. Okay, great, and they're like, holy smokes. It's just, I'm not giving that to anybody.

But isn't that not true? I will not give God that which costs me nothing. So it's gotta cost a little bit. It's gotta hurt a little bit.

That's the whole point. That's the whole point. And we do this, me and my wife do it every couple times a year and we just think we're so special.

We are so biblical and we're just, I went through my closet and cleaned out 45 shirts recently, oh, I'm so holy. I gave them to the homeless ministry, man, I'm so, should I post that on Facebook? Was any one of those new? A couple were, a couple were because I put, God, come on, but see, this is where the rubber meets the road. This is, it's a challenge of the heart.

And so, this is not in any of my notes whatsoever. My mind was not even on this. But maybe some of you need to hear that.

Could it be that you're in a financial crisis because you're not trusting God? Well, absolutely, biblically speaking, absolutely. And when we trust God, he begins to pour out things that we didn't even know possible. Luke 24, 46 and 47.

Then he said, thus it is written. And thus, it was necessary, it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day. And it's interesting, he didn't say go and preach love.

And I wanna be careful because God is love and we need to love people. It's the love of God in my heart that really is the, you know, I know I get bold in my messages, but praise God, a lot of people see the love. They know I'm not just some angry preacher.

You sinner, how dare you step into this place? Because if that were the case, I would not be here. So with the boldness comes a lot of love. I try hard to make sure, not perfect, but I want people to know, I love them enough to tell them the truth.

But he didn't go and say, preach God is love. Jesus sent them out saying, preach repentance. Repentance is to turn from your sin and turn to God.

Repentance is the wrath of God abides on the unbeliever. You need to let them, can you imagine if we started telling people that on all these popular podcasts and all these pastors that have 100,000 viewers? And can you imagine if they start saying, hey, by the way, you know, the wrath of God abides on you if you're an unbeliever. Whoa, their Facebook likes, they go, I just lost 30,000 people.

Yeah, but you gained the heart of God. How many did you help? How many did you help? See, sometimes we can be so worried by who we offend that we really don't help those who need the help. It happens all the time.

I don't wanna say that, I don't wanna go there, I don't wanna be that bold. I don't wanna offend people. Then you're not gonna help an array of other people.

Let God's word be true. That's what I love about God's word. If I need to be gentle on Sunday and loving, I will.

If I need to pull out the hammer and preach God's word with power, I will. Let the Holy Spirit, he knows what he's doing better than I do. He knows who needs to be comforted and who needs to be convicted.

My goodness, just like Spurgeon said, you don't have to defend the word of God just like you don't have to defend a lion. Just open the cage and let it out. The power of God's word.

This is not the Easter message I planned, but God had other plans. It's necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise again the third day and then go and preach repentance. Also for the remission of sin, basically the removal of sin.

So when we're telling people the truth, we have to tell them, hey, listen, to remit sin, you have to know that you're under the judgment of God. The wages of sin is death. You're under that condemnation.

You're under that judgment of God. I don't like to say it, I know it's gonna upset you, but it's the truth. And so how do you have the remission? How do you come out of that sin as a cancer? How do you go into remission? You repent and believe in Jesus that he saved you and set you free.

That's what we're supposed to preach. And so a lot of these guys out there, I say their names sometimes, but they don't even preach the gospel. It's a feel-good, seeker-sensitive message that is designed to make you feel good when it's supposed to be designed to make you look at your heart, look at your heart.

Remission through repentance. Empty, empty proves that the gospel is true. Empty provides the way of salvation, and empty purifies the soul.

Now close here, Luke 24. Here's a good test, by the way, I just saw this. If when I said I'm gonna close here, you said, praise God, I gotta get out of here.

You need to hear everything I'm saying. Is that not the gospel truth? But then you have others that you could have kept going. Right, what's the difference? The hunger.

The truth is feeding them versus the truth is convicting them. Big, big difference. You are witnesses of these things.

Behold, I send the promise of my, I'd love to do a whole sermon on this. Behold, I send the promise of my Father Now, I don't wanna get too technical, but I want you to see this. Jesus said this, he's gonna, I'm gonna send, that's why Jesus said, I must go.

I actually, it's better for you that I leave. What in the world? What, no, I, like, I would not, like, I would not even understand that. Jesus, you're here with me, do not leave.

How can that be better? Because if I don't leave, the Father's not gonna send the comforter. And the comforter is not outside you. Peter denied Jesus when Jesus was right next to him.

But when the Holy Spirit resided in Peter with no Jesus anywhere, he preached fire down from heaven. That's the difference, the upon. So Jesus said this, the promise of my Father is not going to be with you, although the Holy Spirit, the paraclete, his paraclete is to come alongside of you, but he's saying the Holy Spirit is gonna come upon you.

The Holy Spirit is gonna come upon you. And in your case, this is not necessarily true in our case, and I'll explain this in a minute, because I think it's important. He said, go and wait in Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.

Now, people have, you know, upper room revival services, and, you know, let's go wait upon God for 10 days. And there's no magic formula, like, okay, if you just wait for God for 10 days, sometimes, I mean, I received the endowment of the Spirit, the power of the Spirit on my face, on my knees, on a floor in Courts Hill, California, in a home I built that I was gonna have to sell, that I repented and turned my life back to God, and the Holy Spirit came upon, I didn't go wait for 10 days. However, there's nothing wrong with going and seeing, and there's so many stories I can tell you from Oswald Chambers to John Bunyan, Amy Carmichael, Aniah Jetson, Hudson Taylor, John Wesley, where there would be a season of waiting on God, and waiting on God, and fasting, and waiting upon God, and waiting upon God, and then the Spirit came upon them in a powerful and profound way.

And I believe it's because the Spirit moves however he wants. And God was waiting for me in that moment of history to fully surrender. And that's why I talk about fully surrender a lot.

Because without fully surrendering, if God only has this much of you, how much do you think he's gonna use you? If God's got this much of you, how much of the Bible do you think you're gonna wanna read every day? But if he's an overflowing spring, a well with inside of you, I've got this river of life flowing out of me. Remember that song? Now I'm dating myself, really, back in the old time churches, and those saints, especially when I go to the black churches, they'd say, oh my goodness, they could bring down heaven. And I just couldn't, because I just don't have that rhythm.

But, you know, it's just like, I just, I'm not. But that song is so profound and powerful. I've got a river of life flowing out of me.

Makes the lame walk and the blind to see the power of the Holy Spirit upon our lives, the power of those who want to be revived and renewed. Listen, God isn't just a convenient thought on Sunday. He's an all-consuming fire Monday through Sunday.

There's a difference, there's a distinction. Now I don't walk around on fire for God all the time. I did not want to come to church this morning.

Sometimes I struggle just like you. It's hard sometimes. I know it's difficult, but when you commit and you listen to the worship and you open your heart and you repent, the fire of God can fall upon your life.

When you open the word again afresh and say, God, speak to me, I don't want to hear about Netflix, I don't want to hear about Fox News or CNN, I want to hear from you. Watch the fire fall upon your life. So I wanted to leave you with this thought.

Empty to be filled, empty to be full, empty to be fueled. Many of you need to fully surrender your life and be filled afresh with the power of the Holy Spirit. Well, how do you know? Because you're just as dead as a doornail during worship.

You have no desire for God. You might come in a month from now, you have no desire for morning worship. You're not gonna pray again until you have to.

You might listen to some Christian music on your way home, but you're never gonna set time aside for God and worship. It's very simple. Where's your hunger lie? Oh, you're convicting me, that's my job.

Do you know that's what I'm supposed to do? Woe be to the pastor who doesn't convict. My goodness. And then finally, John 11, when Lazarus died, Jesus said, your brother will rise again, Martha.

Martha said, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. I know, but he's dead now. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. Do you believe this? Empty tomb means nothing if you don't believe it.

Empty tomb means nothing if you don't believe it. And she said, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who is coming to the world. Luke 13, someone said to him, Lord, this is an incredible question.

Can you imagine going to Jesus and saying, are there a few who are saved? Are there a few? Because this is a big question. And Jesus said to them, strive to enter, what? The broad? Strive to enter the narrow gate. Now the word strive is interesting.

It's where we get our word agonize from. I believe it's agonizo. There's a flesh doesn't want me to submit.

The flesh is fighting me. My pride gets in the way. Did you know your pride will destroy you? Pride is damning, it is deadly.

And so there's a fighting, oh, I can't, oh, I've gotta come into submission to the Lord. And there's an agonizing and there's a striving. It's not works-based, it's fighting the opposition of the flesh.

And then he said something interesting, many will seek and they will not be able to enter the kingdom of God. Well, now that doesn't make any sense unless of course you look up the word in your Greek dictionary and it makes perfect sense. It says many will ponder, they will contemplate, they will think about, but they will never make a decision.

They will die in their sins. Do we not have that today? How many people ponder, think about? And that's why a lot of times when I preach in the back of my mind, I realize that I will not see a lot of these, many of you again, maybe some of you never again, maybe some of you months from now. This is my one shot, what would I say? Are you seeking the right way? Because the Bible does say if you seek Him, you'll find Him, that's a Hebrew word though.

And that means like you lost something of value and you have to find it, nothing else matters. So that kind of seek is very good. But think about this.

Are you seeking and not striving? Are you seeking and not striving? When you surrender to the flesh, you are truly imprisoned. But when you surrender to Jesus, there is true freedom. Think about that.

We think surrendering to Jesus, ah, now I'm going to be bound. No, you're actually bound when you submit to the flesh. Amen? Anybody, I don't even have to take a survey.

I know there's people, a wide variety of people in here bound right now to sin. And it's got its shackles on you and you're doing all you can to keep your head up out of the water. Surrender, surrender this morning.

In the Old Testament, they would put the blood on the doorpost before the death angel passed over. So in the Old Testament, they would put the blood on the side of that doorpost. And then they also put the blood on the top.

They call it the lentil, the top of the door. And then they would put the blood on the other side as well. And that's where we get the word pass over from.

God said, when I see the blood, when I see the blood, I will pass over. That's rich in application because we could see the same thing on the cross when you put the blood on it, the death angel, the sentence of death will pass over you. And we see Jesus on there as well.

You have to put the blood on it. I don't fully understand it. I probably wouldn't have chose that way.

I don't fully comprehend hell. All I know is the Bible to be true. And without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.

You've got to put the blood on it. You've got to repent and believe in the only name that saves.

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