

What Hinders You?

by Shane Idleman

The sermon explores the various hindrances to our faith and emphasizes the importance of a personal relationship with God through the Holy Spirit and Scripture study.

Duration: 50:20

Scripture: Isaiah 53:7, Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 8:26, Hebrews 10:22

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Obedience"

Description

This sermon delves into the hindrances that can prevent individuals from fully surrendering to God, focusing on resistance, delay, and obstruction in one's walk with God. It emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's calling, the distinction between religion and relationship with God, and the significance of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The sermon also highlights the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, illustrating the readiness to believe, be baptized, and make a public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ.

Transcript

What hinders you? What hinders you? I'll be in the book of Acts, Acts 8, chapter 8, verse 26. What hinders you? That word hinder is interesting. It means resistance, delay, or obstruction.

There's a resistance sometimes, there's a delay, there's an obstruction in our walk with God. Do you ever have that hindrance? I know I do and it can be frustrating at times. And next week I'm actually talking about how God can use your hindrances or your past to propel you into the future.

So a lot of times we we let our past beat us up. We get down on our past, we get upset about our hindrances, but God can often use that. So that'll be next week.

And also we've been talking about over the last few weeks, for those of you who are new, that we've been talking about the filling of the Holy Spirit, how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And the number one hindrance to our Christian faith is not being filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is a wonderful thing that takes place in our lives and there are hindrances that actually come and they stop us from walking fully in the blessings of God.

So go online, listen to the last few weeks sermons. I don't want to preach that again. But as I was thinking about this this topic of the Holy Spirit and getting into this message, I was reminded of a story that I knew many years ago and I haven't told it in a while and I thought it fit perfectly with this topic of being

filled with the Spirit.

And it's a story about a church who was having a, they're having a contest, I guess, of two speakers to come up and quote the 23rd Psalm. It seems a little selfish, right? Or a little prideful for a church to have that kind of contest. And I'm not sure why they were, but they were.

So you have this person over here just graduated from seminary. He was polished, he was a wonderful speaker, articulate, and he quoted the 23rd Psalm beautifully. You know the 23rd Psalm, right? The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, makes me lie down in green pastures, restores my soul.

It was beautiful. Oh, that was wonderful. It was a good job.

But this guy didn't show up over here. He missed his flight. So they had to grab the old janitor in the back who was cleaning toilets.

Do you know the 23rd Psalm? I think so. Yeah, I can barely get through it, you know. He said, OK, we'll come up there and do something.

So he came up here and he started and just thought about God moving in his life and everything that God has taken him through and began to weep a little bit and just started, the Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want and cracked voice and he just messed up a little bit. And though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. And he just remembered how God touched his life and in his brokenness.

And it was it was it was moving and there was not a dry eye in the room and he got a standing ovation. And this guy, though, was upset. I do this for a living.

I'm a speaker. I had a perfect down to the last nuance. You guys are crazy in this place.

This was a rigged. This was a rigged debate or rigged whatever you call a contest. And as he was leaving upset, an old elder stopped him and he said, young man, you must understand something.

You knew the 23rd Psalm. But that old man knew the shepherd. That's the difference.

And that's that stories like that are meant to move us and say, I want to know the shepherd, because do you truly know the shepherd or do you only know the 23rd? Do you know the Bible? But the Bible doesn't know you. Is it just religion and not a relationship? There's a big difference there. So being filled with the Holy Spirit is knowing the shepherd abiding in that love and and having an overflow from our lives.

So with that said, we left out there last week. We're coming into Acts 8:26. It says now the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.

This is desert. So he arose and went and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, the queen of Ethiopians, who had charge of all of her treasuries. He had charge of all of her treasuries and had come to Jerusalem to worship.

He was returning from that worship and sitting in his chariot. He was reading Isaiah, the prophet. Then the spirit said to Philip, go near and overtake this chariot.

So Philip ran to him and heard him reading from the prophet Isaiah. And he said to him, do you understand what you are reading? And he said, how can I unless someone guides me? How can I unless someone guides me? What a wonderful opportunity. He comes up upon this chariot.

The person says, what are I don't understand what I'm reading? He's reading the Bible. It was actually a parchment. It was a scroll.

And he didn't understand it. So he said, Philip, come up and teach me here what I'm reading. But let's stop here.

I pulled out a few things. What hinders us from following God? Well, I noticed a few things from Philip. Disobedience hinders us from following God.

Philip heard God say and he did it. What many of us do is we hear God say something. We're like, I don't want to do that.

That's inconvenient. That's not that's not relaxing. That's not fun.

And we're hindered often by disobedience. I did speak about that a lot over the last few weeks, but I wanted to bring it up again because Philip heard from God and he responded. When you hear from God on something, respond.

You'll know it's not the enemy. When God says, go witness to somebody, that's not the devil. When God says, go help somebody, that's not the enemy.

When God says, lay down yourself, humble yourself, guide yourself and go and serve, that's not your flesh. So there are ways to know that if we are in God's will or not. So the first thing I believe here, God said, do this.

Philip said, I will do that. He listened to God. And then we see here that he came.

This Ethiopian came to Jerusalem to worship, but he wasn't a Christian. Is that interesting? He came to worship, but he didn't know Jesus. And this is a good reminder that we can have religion, but not relationship.

Well, Shane, how do I know the difference? Well, it's very easy. Religion is about following a bunch of rules. I went to church.

I own a Bible. I was baptized a long time ago, and I'm a pretty good person. I live in America, right? So I'm a Christian.

And we have these rules, and it's a religion. We go through things methodically. There's really no passion in it.

It's just something I do because that's what good people do. That's religion. But relationship is knowing who God is.

He's everything to you. You've repented. You've believed.

You're filled with the Spirit. You have this life-changing relationship with God. You have relationship, not religion.

And that's one of my concerns is a lot of people have religion. They go to church. I was raised a Baptist.

I was raised a Pentecostal. I was raised Catholic. I was raised all these things, and they follow that type of religious structure, and that's not relationship.

That's why Jesus said, I think that the road is broad that leads to destruction, and the gate is narrow, which leads to eternal life. It's narrow. That relationship is very narrow.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, the life. No man comes to the Father except through me. Through what? Relationship, not religion.

Religion will never get a person into the gates of heaven. Are there gates in heaven, Shane? Probably not. Maybe in the new city, Jerusalem, that's a whole other sermon.

Don't get me off track here. But it doesn't, and a serious note, religion, when you stand before God, you don't say, well, I did this, I did this, I did this. It doesn't matter.

He just looks. Have you repented and embraced Christ's sacrifice on the cross? That's it. An all-sufficient Savior, faith through Christ, and faith alone.

These wonderful sayings we have are true. It's not religion. It's relationship, and I say that because it is challenging.

If you're saying, gosh, you're trying to challenge me, Shane, I am. I'm trying to challenge you, and look at your heart. Jesus did.

He would often challenge people, do you truly know the Father? Because you draw near to me in your words, but your heart is far from me, and it's always an issue of the heart. And then I also glean from here, what hinders others from following God? We talked about us, but what hinders others from following God? Because this eunuch said, how can I know what I'm reading unless someone guides me? And Jesus said, great is the harvest. The harvest is plentiful, but the labors are what? 11 a.m. did much better than 9 a.m. I am happy.

You guys are good. Who says 11 a.m. isn't spiritual? They just like to sleep in and get to, I mean, I'm not buying that anymore. Of course, it's all, I know people get here when it's convenient.

So all kidding aside though, the labors are few. Why is that? Because it's hard, isn't it? It's difficult. When I say things about going to the hospital homes or the college, inside we're like, yes, I have to do that.

And then we leave here, we're like, not today though. And I have plans tomorrow, Tuesday, Wednesday don't look good either. Boy, this week's not gonna work.

And we just put things off because it's one thing, that's why the labors are few. We need more people to do, I mean, think about what we're saying. We have hospital homes we administer at the college.

These wonderful opportunities. I mean, you couldn't get into a college like that if you paid a million dollars sometimes. I mean, but they're allowing us to go in and do these things.

Open doors. Open doors, but the labors are few. Another problem is the labors often don't know what they are saying or doing.

Could you please explain what the prophet Isaiah is writing to me? How many of you could answer? How many could say, oh, here's what he's talking about? Or is Isaiah, is that New Testament or Old Testament? Who's Isaiah? What did he, what was, what is, but that's, and I only say it to, because I've been convicted in this area many years ago. And one reason why I studied apologetics is because I couldn't answer a lot of questions. It was embarrassing on the spot.

I don't know, 15, 16 years ago. So that's another thing. The labors, us, often don't know what we're saying.

People can tell us about Dancing with the Stars. They can say the current plot of Games and Thrones, or Game of Thrones, and all the details of American crime. But when it comes to telling people about God, they say, ask my pastor.

Isn't that true though? I mean, the amazing, the people know so much about baseball now, the stats, the football, or NASCAR, or their favorite star, their favorite movie. They know everything. But when it comes to God, the things of God, I'm not sure.

I know a Jesus and a cross in heaven, but that's, there's no, here's why. You have to study God like you study sports and entertainment. And don't let that word study fool you.

It simply means this, devotion of time and attention to acquire knowledge. Wouldn't you want to know more about God? Listen, a lot of it's not going to come through osmosis. You don't just wake up and go, I know all about God.

No, it doesn't happen that way. Yes, he teaches us through circumstances. He teaches us through difficulties to draw close to him, through family challenges to draw close to him.

But you have to study God, the nature of God, the character of God, as outlined in his scripture. You look at the Bible, you have the whole nature of God. How can he allow this? Here's why.

Why did he do this? Here's why. Why do I feel this way? Here's why. You see the entire nature of God.

And I think we get in this mindset, well, that's a good book, but it's not really God's word. I mean, come on, Jay. I mean, we do, we believe it, but we don't really believe it.

Well, how do you know? Because if we believe that you would chew that thing up like living food, you would devour it like a nice steak at Claim Jumper. I mean, this is God's word. This is his character.

This is his nature. This is his plan for me. We would devour it.

But you must study God. You have to. It becomes a passion.

Do you know what theology is? You heard this, oh, what is that word? It must be something for you kind of guy, Shane. No. Theology is the study of God.

Broken down theology, something like that. Study of God. We study, we spend our time, our devotion, and that's been, well, I don't know if I should go here, but I will.

I apologize later. That's one of my concerns when I do different sides, right? We have the side that's all Bible. You know, they study, study, study, study, study, but they lack that spiritual power of God.

They lack that love and grace and forgiveness, but they have the knowledge of God, but they lack the power. And then you have this side, which I would call the hyper charismatic Pentecostal camp, and I don't mind using those words because I would be considered a charismatic if you're talking about the Bible. The word charisma just means bestowing spiritual gifts, and the Holy Spirit is still active in the church today.

I would believe that he's still active today and bestowing spiritual gifts. So that's what that term comes from, but it's good sometimes to back away from terms and just stick with the Bible. But this group, I've noticed a lot of them, it's just all about experience.

I've been fasting, I've been praying, and it's good things to definitely do those things, but no time for God's word. The problem with that is you can be led by many different things and not know if you're not grounded in his word, because having experience isn't necessarily good unless it's grounded in God's word. You can't just say, well, I'm going focus mainly on the experiential and feelings, which are good, right? I want to make sure that feelings aren't a bad thing necessarily if they line up with scripture, but you have to come back to the middle and have the counsel of God and the word of God grounding you and shaping you and molding you.

This group can get caught in sin just as easy as this group, and I've seen this group get caught in a lot of sin and excuse it because they're not in the word. They don't know who wrote this book. They don't know who wrote, they don't know who this, Elisha.

They don't know this. They don't know anything. They really don't know anything.

So when you hit them with the hard questions or things about God, here's why it's so important. When you're reading the New Testament, the Old Testament makes sense and it brings in a backdrop and you understand everything a lot better by having, because you get to the New Testament and you're probably like, Jesus, he died. He's the lamb.

What is that? I don't understand, Shane. I thought he was this mighty Savior. He is, but he's also a lamb.

I'm missing it here. A lamb? Are you talking about those white little fuzzy cute things? How is he a lamb? Well, you go back to the Old Testament and God says without the shedding of blood, there's no remission of sin. So it requires the life of the animal, the blood was shed, put on the altar to make atonement for the people for that year.

And they would shed the blood and cover the sin. So here comes Christ, the lamb of the world, without spot, without blemish, the perfect sacrifice, only need to be sacrificed once to cover the sins of the world. One was a foreshadowing of what was to come.

I can show you Christ in Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy and Joshua and Judges and Ruth. Wait a minute, Ruth. Wait a minute, Shane.

You cannot show me Christ in the book of Ruth. What was Boaz to Ruth? Kingsman redeemer. He redeemed her.

It's throughout all the scripture. And you begin to appreciate the heart of the prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah, writing to Israel when it was broken up in northern and southern kingdoms after King David, Solomon, Saul started Solomon, Saul, David, Solomon.

Then the kingdom was broken apart to northern and southern kingdoms. And the prophets were writing to the people. And it makes sense now in light of New Testament theology.

It's all one book. And I just study God. You begin to see his nature, his character.

Some people say, how can a loving God do this? You don't say, I don't know. I don't know. How can this? I don't know.

I don't know. I don't talk to my pastor. I don't know any.

I don't know. Jesus loves me. This I know for the Bible told me so.

That's all I know. But I don't know what the Bible told me. I just know I'm singing a song.

So make time. That's God. That's the nature of God, the character of God, the heart of God.

That's who he is in the scripture. It's revealed. It comes alive.

Let the Psalms come into your heart and sing to you, literally worship in the Psalms. Let the Proverbs teach you their ways. Let the prophets get you back on track.

Use the whole counsel of God. I'm going to give you a simple plan right now. It'll help in a big way.

Structure your entire life and your entire and structure your day around God. Well, that's easier for you to say, Shane. Look what you do.

No, it's not easy. It's challenging because we're always going here and there. But you need to structure your day around God.

And then everything else is supplemental. The problem is we make certain things. The focus, work, money, family is the focus.

And then God is a supplemental. And then what happens? We get home. I'm tired.

I'll put God first tomorrow. Then what happens tomorrow? Long day, long week. And then he's on the back burner.

See, if you can put him first, then work is better. You have direction at work. You have direction in your home.

Make him the priority. We schedule every other kind of appointment, but we don't schedule time with God. So make sure everything is structured around him, getting time in his word.

Do you know it just takes 20 minutes a day to read the Bible through the entire year? And a month, if you get rid of all that, if you get rid of like just news and meaningless garbage, I'll just say it, garbage, get rid of the meaningless garbage that we're putting in our minds, you would have an extra 120 hours a month. You could read Wayne Grudem's book on systematic theology, 1200 pages in one month. The attributes of God, the character of God, all the church functions of communion, baptism, the Holy Spirit, who is he? The depravity of man, the nature of man, the sin of man, limited atonement, depravity, all these things.

You can learn everything in a month if we would just cut out those things. So you see how important this is? I don't think we realize the pull that certain things has on our life that keep us away from God. Structure your life around him.

20 minutes in the morning, prayer, worship, serving, doing things with others. Use your downtime to your advantage. Does anybody have any downtime? If you don't have any downtime, we're not being honest.

We all have downtime. Do you know what downtime is? Time is down. You're not doing much.

It's downtime. When you're driving, you can listen to the whole Bible in a month. There's downtime that you utilize that time.

Also, you can remove the meaningless time zappers. Take those things out of your life that are robbing you from that precious time. Now, I haven't mastered this area.

Nobody has, but you can definitely, because what do we normally do when we have downtime? We're bored. We're busy. We're bored.

You all know, so let me show you, right? And two hours goes by and we didn't accomplish anything. We're jealous. They're on vacation again.

I'm envious. They lost 20 pounds and I've gained five. Iran's coming.

China's rigging everything. The Illuminati, the one world system, it's all falling apart. I don't know what to do.

I'll tell you what you should have been doing. Spend time with the king of kings and the lord of lords. That's who you spend your time with.

So watch it. I'm real tempted to go back to old school phones. Just remember those little, the heart.

I love you. How do you do that? And then you don't want to text when it's like that. Now, voice texting, you can sit there and have a conversation.

I'll be there at five and I'll see you then. And just this long text and you send it and you just get caught up in all these things. So be careful in this area because you've got to guard your time like you guard a fortress, like you guard gold, like you guard precious things.

You've got to guard your time. You have to. You have to put God first because everything's coming in to take you away from that priority.

It's that important. But here's what does come up. And I talked to a person last week who had tons of time, tons of time.

I better not say what he does because you might be listening. But they worked somewhere where they just had to be there early in the morning and hook something up for the day to go. And then all day they just sit there and tell that everything's over and then pick up their stuff and just sit in your car and look at Facebook and read all day long.

Look at how much time we have. Listen, there's so much valuable time. But people say this, but Shane, that's boring.

That's boring. How many are saying boring? Don't raise your hand, but I know it's going through your mind. Here's why.

Here's why. You've been feeding on the things of the world so long that now they taste good. Just like my analogy last week or two weeks.

The more you eat broccoli and bell peppers and carrots and hummus, the more you develop the taste for it. You do. You really do.

Everybody thinks I'm lying. I want to go home and eat a fresh, huge salad with all kinds of stuff on it because the body wants that. Now in and out sounds good too, so I have a big struggle that happens.

But the more you feed that, the more you desire that, the more you feed on God, the more you think about. You read God in the morning. You get up and you worship.

He's changing your heart. He's changing your life. This makes sense.

That's how I need to love my children and that's how I need to do that. Oh God, thank you. You've opened up this incredible door.

You spent time with him. Now you go out into the world ready. That's how it works, but that's why it's boring because you're feeding on the wrong things and you're starved for the things of God.

And I know because if I get on a sugar kick, it's not easy to get off of that. It tastes good in the morning, right? Big cup of coffee, big donut. Who can buy a dozen donuts and have one? Not me.

And then lunchtime, you're coming down. So now you got to get the chocolate or the shake or this. And then here comes right before dinner, you get the craving.

I got to stop and get some more whatever that sugar is. I can't believe people drink like 32 ounce sodas all day long and just tons. And then you get to dinner and try to have a healthy dinner, right? And then after that, you have these cravings.

Why? Because you're having more and more. You're feeding this thing. You're feeding it.

So whatever you feed grows and what grows becomes a dominating force in your life. You've got to break a cut off, get back into the word of God, get worship until your flesh be quiet. Be quiet this morning.

I don't care how hungry you are. We're going to worship God. And you start to create that hunger.

The palate of your spirit changes and you're hungry for the things of God. It just works that way. Listen, I would much rather be in a worship service where worship is just coming from the portals of heaven.

God is moving. Then sit and watch the best movie at Cinemark. I'll tell you that right now.

Isn't that true? Because, well, you know what comes with the best movie, right? It's a huge popcorn and the big soda. And then, oh, I'm so guilty. You know what I'm talking about, right? You're feeding that appetite.

You're feeding. Well, that could apply to other areas. Maybe just make this comment.

If you're struggling with a certain area, I'm sure it's because it's what you're feeding. What you're feeding will grow and grow and grow until you crucify and cut it out. So back on track, verse 31 again.

And he said, how can I unless someone guides me? And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the scripture which he read was this. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.

Do you all know what he's talking about there? If not, that's OK. That's why we read the Bible and study. And as a lamb before it shears is silent, so we open not his mouth.

It's a picture here of Jesus being like a sheep is led to the slaughter. They don't even know it. They're quiet.

They're silent. And as that lamb is before it shears and a shearer would sit there. Have you seen him shear a sheep? That kind of all that wool when it's a razor, right? Now they don't cut.

They don't cut like this anymore, I don't think. But the sheep is just sitting there. I don't know what's happening.

He's just just standing there. And that's and that's Jesus, like a lamb that was led to the slaughter. So we open not his mouth.

He didn't say a word. And in his humiliation, his justice was taken away. And who will declare his generation for his life is taken from the earth? So the eunuch answered Philip and said, I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this of himself or some other man? Then Philip opened up his mouth and beginning at the scriptures, he preached Jesus to him.

I'm going to get to that in a minute, but I want to keep reading now as they went down the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, see, here's some water. What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, if you believe with all your heart, you may. Now, this is interesting.

He heard about Jesus, saw some water, wanted to be baptized. So I have a feeling that Philip told him about baptism. Right.

I mean, how is this guy going to come up with that on his own? So it was believing. I understand the gospel. Philip showed him the importance of baptism.

And he said, I want to get baptized. And that's what it should work in our lives. We believe and we should want to get baptized.

But often a lot of people don't want to get baptized. Well, I'll do that later. And really, it's believe, repent and be baptized is the scriptural model we have.

But he also says, if you believe with all your heart, all your heart, you will be saved. You can be baptized. It's almost like he didn't say, sure, we can baptize you right now.

It was like, do you understand what you're saying? Do you understand what you're committing to? In a nutshell for us today, that means there is no plan B. There's no plan B. If you believe with all your heart that Jesus is who he said he is, you can be baptized. And this area of baptism is interesting because there are different groups. And let me just keep reading.

I'm going to get to that in the next page. I don't want to get off-centered here. But let me read the next scripture.

And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God. He professed it. That's what you need to do.

I don't know where you're at a room this large. I don't know where you're at. But you have to acknowledge, is Jesus the son of God? Did he die for my sins? I'm acknowledging that, I'm repenting, and I'm believing.

That's what he did. So he commanded the chariot to stand still. They're going by the water.

It's like, OK, they're going south, right? They see the aqueduct. And he says, what prevents me from being baptized right here? I'm ready to do it right now. Now, we can't do it at the aqueduct, right? AVEC, Steve was here with AVEC this morning, so I made that clear.

You guys cannot go jump in the aqueduct. It's not for baptizing. There's other areas for baptizing.

But he believed, he was excited, he wanted to be baptized. You can be baptized and not know Christ. Did you catch that? You can be baptized and not know Christ, but you cannot know Christ and not be baptized.

Let me say it again. You can be baptized and not know Christ, but you cannot know Christ and not want to be baptized. In other words, we're a Christian who's now a believer, loves the Lord, and then they don't want to be baptized.

They don't go together, those two statements don't go together. So you really have to ask yourself, why don't I want to get baptized? Because I've heard of a lot of different reasons why. And a lot of those aren't valid.

I'm going to go through just a few in a minute. But this first point, you can be baptized and not know God. Many churches, many churches baptize people that don't know God.

They do it, well, it's part of membership, it's part of formality. I was baptized, I've heard people say, I was baptized, I'm going to heaven, I was baptized. It has nothing to do with salvation.

It doesn't save you. A person believes and repents, they are saved. Then they want to be baptized to show that the change in their heart has taken place.

It's a public profession of their faith. Now, I also believe it has a deeper meaning of death, burial, resurrection, the washing away of sins. But we don't believe that a person, at least I don't, the person is not saved until they go into that water.

In other words, Shane, I repent, I believe, I'm filled with the Spirit, I'm so happy God has set me free. Well, hold on, brother, you're not saved yet. Hold on, let's schedule baptism and then you'll be saved after that.

I just don't find that anywhere in Scripture. And you will see, though, there are different churches divided on this issue. Many, some churches believe in infant baptism where you baptize a baby.

And we just, we don't see that in Scripture either. People do it, that's fine, but it's not the saving mechanism. The saving mechanism is faith and belief in Jesus Christ.

And I've made a commitment to God that I will shoot people straight even if they get offended. And that will offend people, the statement, but you have to show biblical support of why you believe something. My concern is a lot of people, I have friends right now in a certain religion, if I say the religion, I might upset some people, so maybe I won't say this service, but they are baptized in their religion and they think they are good with God because they were baptized.

And that's, to me, that's dangerous. Is that false assurance? And it was two weeks ago, it was ironic, we had a lady visiting for the first time and she told her friend, she goes, I love the service, I love the service, I love the message, but I'll never be back. Are you guys thinking why? She said because he never elevated the blessed virgin.

That's caught in a religious system that is false. And I will not stand up here and avoid things that are leading people in the wrong direction. We love Mary, she's highly favored, she's Jesus's mom, for goodness sake, but she's not co-redeemer, she's not co-matrix, she's not perpetual virginity, she teaches she was always a virgin, and she's not to be worshipped and put on a pedestal in front of her son.

That's blasphemy. There's no scriptural support for it, zero. And people are getting baptized into something thinking they're saved and they're not.

So what's my challenge? To not upset people or not upset God? That's the difficulty with this issue of baptism, and I upset people all the time when I write articles in the paper. They'll write, oh yes, I do, you're always baptized as an infant. Well, where's your heart at? Where's your heart at? How can a baby know what they're doing? You have to make a public declaration in front of people as a believer showing that you've repented of your sin.

That's what it is, it's a public declaration. That's why people sometimes will be killed in other countries. Do you realize how many people are being killed in other countries? What did I say, it was every six minutes? So Christians, just today there's been about 20 Christians massacred around the world for their faith.

Many times they're baptized in secret, in front of their believers, in front of their friends, but not in front of their family because they could be killed or jailed. This is a big deal. So here's some hindrances why people might not be baptized.

I guess I'll stay there for a minute. People do say, they go, what about visitors are there? They might get offended. You know, I'm just talking about Roman Catholicism or Mary or any other subject we talk about.

I say, you know what, that's okay. I'd rather offend and have them think about what God wants and remain silent as not to offend men. You have to speak the truth and let it pierce the heart.

And I love people caught in all in different religions and we have to speak the truth because either they're all wrong, right? You can all, all religions can be wrong, but they cannot all be right. Not all religions can be right, they can all be wrong. We have to look to God's truth to get as our gauge.

So here's some hindrances from being baptized. Number one, fear. Going before people.

Is that fearful? Yes, I've do it twice on Sundays. I know how it feels. It's fearful.

It's fearful. And now we've got live stream going on that people are watching everywhere, Puerto Rico, Canada. It's like, oh my Lord, God help us.

There's fear there. But many times I've noticed that men, hold on men, listen, balcony, can you hear me too? I hope so. Because men would rather be seen leaving a bar than a church.

Christian men, because they've got this world over here. They've got this church world. I go to church, I say the right things.

I'm in a men's Bible study and I'm Mr. Christian here. But when I get into the world, my friends, all right, bring out the six pack and let's tell some jokes and let's do all these things that don't line up with biblical Christianity. Why? Their fear, the fear of men, they're not filled with the spirit of God.

You should not fear men, you should fear God. So many people don't want to get baptized because I'm going before men. And I don't want to, here's why, self-image.

People will think I'm getting carried away. Well, God forbid. If I get baptized, don't put it on Facebook, don't tell my friends, don't do it, please.

People have told me, don't tell anybody I'm getting baptized. Why? Because it's self-preservation. You're too worried about your image and not being filled with God's spirit.

I mean, this area cracks me up because I know, and I'm coaching Little League Baseball and the parent, oh my gosh, it's just, the world is dying and it's so sad. I mean, they think a real man, a real man jacks his truck up six inches, gets so drunk he doesn't remember the night before, drops off his little boy so I can coach him and goes around, sleeps whoever he wants and he's dying inside on his way to hell. And he thinks that's a real man.

Well, I've got news for you, sir. A real man takes care of his family and takes care of his children and loves the Lord with all of his heart, mind, and strength. That's a real man.

But they don't want because of self-image. People come up to me, is church Sunday? I don't let people know. It's like this closet Christianity, it drives me crazy.

The problem is you're too worried about the opinions of others and not what God says. You're not filled with his spirit, you're not filled with the things of God, you're filled with the things of the world. So self-image, another reason we don't get baptized like this eunuch did.

Somebody asked me, what's that mean? Ask your parents after the service. Ignorance, ignorance. Oh, shame.

I can't believe you. It's not a bad word, really. Ignorance, I can be ignorant sometimes in certain things.

It just means like when it comes to how to treat your wife, right? I'm ignorant, meaning I don't know certain, I lack knowledge that women don't operate like men operate. Do you figure that out right now, right? We don't need a whole sermon on marriage right now, correct? You've got it? Okay, good. Because I want the house real cold, she wants it real hot.

This thing of trying to understand each other, but ignorance just means lacking knowledge. So people will say, Shane, I want to get baptized, but I need to clean up my life first. No, this eunuch was an unbeliever, this Ethiopian unbeliever, repented at the gospel, believed, who knows if he had stuff going on in the side, in the treasury and embezzling money and all these different things, who knows? But you believe and you're baptized, then let God clean you up.

Now, granted, if somebody's caught in a besetting sin, they're not willing to give up and they want to just come and get baptized, if we know about it, we will probably reject the baptism until this area gets worked on in their life. Because it's almost like the church validating this lifestyle. But if a person is saying, hey, Shane, I'm struggling in this area, we want to move forward, we love God, or I love God, and I got this struggle, pray for me, then we would baptize them.

They believe and they're baptized. So don't think, well, I've got to get my life cleaned up, try me next year. Because that doesn't work.

You'll always be feeling that you're never worthy, and we're never worthy to stand before God. That's what Jesus did. He took our spot, he absorbed the wrath, he takes away the guilt and the shame, so you can stand before God, cleansed and redeemed.

So there's no problem going and getting baptized once you believe, and once you want to make that public profession of faith. And the final point is, we all know this one, uncommitted. People say, I don't want to get that serious.

And it happens a lot. People will say, they'll say, Shane, I came to know the Lord, I just, can you recommend a good Bible for me? Yeah, I can, but you want to get baptized next week? Oh no, no, no, no, no, I'm not that serious yet. I had somebody tell me, just even Lancaster, I remember back, oh no, no, I don't want to get that serious.

What does that mean? You don't want to get that serious? Well, here's what I think they're saying, they haven't told me exactly, but okay, I like this idea, I need a Savior, right? Okay, I'm repenting, but I'm not ready for that full step yet. I don't want to become some weird Christian guy. I just, I just want the benefits, but not the sacrifice.

I just want the blessings, but not the hardship. But it says, it's not about getting serious, it's about letting people know that Jesus is my Lord and Savior. And a couple wrong motives.

People get baptized, they say, I don't want to go to hell. I've had a person say, I want to get baptized, Shane, why? Because I don't want to go to hell. But see, that's, they're missing the correlation.

Baptism doesn't get you into heaven, Jesus does. Jesus does. He's the only way, the only truth, the only life.

So your baptism is representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and of your own life. I'm dying to my old self, and I'm coming up in this newness of life that Christ has given me. It's a washing, what represents a washing away of sins.

So here's a question I'm throwing out there. What hinders you from being baptized today? Uh-oh. Well, it's cold.

So was that water, but this one's 88 degrees. I don't have dry clothes, neither did the eunuch. My family's not here, neither was his.

See, you can just eliminate all the excuses and get baptized. That's why I get baptized in this. I don't get baptized, but I baptize you in this.

I don't go home, I don't get changed. Right here, I'm willing to step in, and for people to make a public profession, hey, I've been hiding this, or I haven't been doing this in a while. I did it when I was 12 years old.

I don't know what I was doing. I was baptized as a baby. I don't want to lose the opportunity.

If people are ready to do it, God is piercing your heart, let's get baptized. All you do is you walk to that side for men, this side for women, and we baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and you leave here wet but happy, right? And I think we already have about eight people so far, but we always make time for more, more want to get baptized because they realize that it's another step of commitment they need to make. It's a final step of commitment that they need to make in getting baptized.

So don't think about it, because what happens? I don't know, this, this, this. You know, you'll talk yourself out of it, but if you want to get baptized, do that, make that decision today. But let me get back to Philip, then we'll close in a minute.

Then Philip opened his mouth and beginning at the scripture, he preached Jesus to them. Now preach, this word is herald. It's like to go, go around and proclaim something.

Back then they didn't have CNN and Fox News and the Drudge Report or what's the Huffington Post, depending on what side of the political parties you are there, right? We know Drudge Report and Huffington Post, different, different political slants. Come on, I wasn't born yesterday. No clapping, I'm just making a statement here.

So you, they didn't have that back then, did they? How would you know? The king would send out his herald, his herald, just go, hey, Artie Xerxes or King George II says this, all citizens must do this, and they'd go to the next city, and he would preach, he would proclaim the news. So that's what Philip was doing, he was preaching Jesus to him. He was preaching, I'd love to see in this sermon, how long, where did he start, where did he finish, how did he tie him in? Can you imagine the early church preaching who Christ was? And I want to read some lyrics from a sermon, there'll be, some of you will recognize it from Dr. Lockridge.

In 1976, he said this about Jesus, and I want to bring, this will bring everything in, he said, he is enduringly strong, he is entirely sincere, he is eternally steadfast, he's immortally graceful, he's imperial, imperially powerful, he's impartially merciful, he's God's son, he's a sinner savior, he's a centerpiece of civilization, he's unique, he's unparalleled, he's unprecedented, he's supreme, he's preeminent, he's the grandest idea in literature, he's the loftiest personality in philosophy, the Pharisees couldn't stand him, but they found no fault in him, Pilate couldn't find any fault in him as well, Herod couldn't kill him, death couldn't handle him, and the grave couldn't hold him, that is my king, is the lyrics to that sermon he preached, but that brings in who Jesus was. So Isaiah, written 700 years before Jesus, right, this Ethiopian is reading this parchment of Isaiah, he's reading it, and it says, he was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. In his humiliation his justice was taken away, and who will declare his generation, for his life is taken from the earth.

This is interesting, I don't know if we have the image back up that we had this morning, but I started to think about this a little bit, the innocence and the gentleness, I prayed a dangerous prayer this week, I said God take me back to Calvary, God show me the Calvary, show me, if we think, if we think about what happened, it is amazing, it will, it will just literally rock your world, because we have Jesus, the creator, his

innocence, it talks about his gentleness, there is no defense, there is no blaming, there was no excusing, can you imagine, who's really guilty here, who should be on trial, mankind should be on trial, Pilate should be on trial, Wicca King Herod should be on trial, the religious leaders should be on trial, the Roman guards should be on trial, but the creator came

down from his throne, took on sinful humanity, was beaten by his creation, the very thing he created, the very thing he could destroy with just a word, but he took like a lamb to the slaughter, and he opened not his mouth, he was silent, blameless, gentle, meek, submitting to the will of the father, that's the image we have here, it was not just, it was not fair, he humbly endured the cross, the creation slaughtering the creator, now I don't know what you want to call it, but that's what it is, yes, it's uncomfortable, let that uncomfortableness sink in, let it grip you, let it rip your heart to pieces, that the creator stepped down and saved his creation, oh that's all fairy tale, you better be sure, sir, because your soul rests on it, you can be sincere and be sincerely wrong, it also

says here, where were his advocates, who will declare it, who will declare it, this breaks my heart that he went everywhere healing thousands of people, preaching the gospel, healing the blind, curing the deaf, saying, this little girl rises up out of her sleep, gives her back to her mother, all these things, he goes around and he's doing all these things, and nobody stands in front of him, for his advocate, nobody stands, and the praise him, hosanna, turns into crucifying him, I mean this image, if God takes you back to Calvary, it will rock your world, because you realize, you're not that special, what I mean by that, is we're very special, because Christ died for us, but we get puffed up with pride and arrogance, and we come to church, as if we're doing God a favor, and we take

communion, as if we're bored, communion represents what he did, his physical life was taken, so we can live without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin, as I was studying that passage this week, there's a verse I've read many times before, but it really, it was hard to absorb, it says, it pleased the father to bruise the son, it pleased the father to bruise the son, the key is to look up the word please in the Hebrew dictionary, and look at the nuances in the sentence structure, and it's saying, it satisfied the father to bruise the son, it's satisfied, because here is, this is so hard to even put words to, it's either the death of Christ, or it's the death of all humanity, you realize that right, it's either the death of Christ, or it would have been the death of all

humanity, so it satisfied the father to bruise the son, it was, it was, it was finished, that's when Jesus said, he could have stayed there a little longer, but he said, father it is finished, I give you my, I commend my spirit into your hands, and right before that though, as you know, Eli, Eli, Lama Zabatchini, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

So that point in history, the father and the son separating, the father and the son, God separates from the son, so the son can absorb the wrath of God, the indignation, the sin of the world, he absorbed it, and became that final substitutionary atoning death, big theological words, very simple principle, he died for you, he took your place.

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