

# Your Labor Is Not in Vain

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman encourages believers to trust in God's timing and the significance of their labor in faith, emphasizing the power of prayer and perseverance through adversity.*

**Duration:** 44:23

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:7, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Galatians 6:9, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Hebrews 11:1, James 1:12

**Topics:** "Faithfulness", "Perseverance"

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## Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes that our labor for God is never in vain, drawing inspiration from the perseverance of historical figures like Abraham Lincoln, who faced numerous failures before achieving greatness. He encourages believers to trust in God's timing and to remain steadfast in faith, even when results are not immediately visible. Idleman highlights the importance of prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit in sustaining our efforts, reminding us that our struggles and prayers contribute to a greater purpose. He concludes with a call to remain immovable and committed to the work of the Lord, assuring that our efforts will bear fruit in due time.

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## Transcript

Your labor is not in vain. Your labor is not in vain. And I don't know why, but I've been reading biographies of our presidents.

I finished Jackson, Andrew Jackson, in August, September, then I went and read Ulysses S. Grant, and now I'm Abraham Lincoln. Big, thick biographies. I guess it's a good way to fall asleep at night.

But one thing I noticed, I could not believe, I had to look it up this morning, is Lincoln kept failing in politics. Did you know that? He ran for office, I think it was a half-dozen times. Didn't get into Illinois.

He just kept, they don't want this guy. Then finally, he becomes the President of the United States. And what a president he was.

And I mean, the pictures, they show pictures of how much he aged over 10 years, and the stress of a divided nation. And we think we're divided now, it was really divided then. When he gave his famous speech, a house divided against itself will not stand.

Many friends actually encouraged him, remove that, the nation is not ready for this. You're calling for a civil war. And he fought, and he spoke against, obviously, the incredible, horrific practice of slavery.

He spoke against the Dred Scott decision, which, that was where a slave was brought into free country, and he thought he should be free, which of course he should be, but the U.S. Supreme Court saw that differently. And he fought for that, and so many people fought for that, that were good men, and good women. You have to remember that America should not be marked by her past only, but also by those who did good in the midst of evil.

America wasn't evil. Men and women became evil and did evil things. Actually, a nation isn't evil, politics isn't evil, it depends on the character of the people pushing the buttons.

That's what we have to remember going into this coming election as well. So I'm going to be in 1 Corinthians 15, and I actually, I'm in a praying mood, so we might as well keep going. I want to pray for some families that are actually, their kids are pretty sick, including my kids too.

My kids are home with a bad case of the flu. So let's just lift up, I want to lift up the Ames family, Garza family, the Livingston family, Lord, and even our family, those maybe watching, even listening. Lord, we come against any type of demonic attacks in our homes.

If these are due to demonic attacks against our families, we come against it. In Jesus' name, we plead the blood, we ask for healing, even if it's the body, Lord, just breaking down and becoming sick. Would you start to heal those children tonight, Lord, as they sleep? I pray that they would wake up feeling good.

You are the same God today, yesterday, and forevermore. You heal, you set free, and we pray, we ask, according to your will, Lord, that you would do this. The people listening that are sick, even with cancer, pancreatic cancer, liver cancer, bone cancer, Lord, we ask you begin to heal in Jesus' name.

Touch them where they're at, bring comfort in those homes. Thank you, Lord. Amen, amen.

And I got a report that we had an incredible Wednesday morning prayer meeting, right? A couple of you were there, amen. And I always miss the good ones. And so Wednesday mornings in Cortsill, West Lancaster, they meet at 6 a.m., and it might go till 8 a.m. It's interceding for our nation.

Revival starts in the prayer meeting. If you want to see God move in your homes, move in this church, move in our community, move in our nation, it always begins in the prayer meetings. It doesn't begin by me preaching a sermon, here comes revival.

It's usually the prayer meetings of people looking and seeking God. So with that said, 1 Corinthians 15, what I mean by your labor is not in vain, we're going to get to that in a minute, but you have to remember a very important principle in God's kingdom, and I want you to leave here encouraged with this, because if anyone has lived this out, it's me. Have you ever planted and not saw any produce? Have you ever did things, I remember we launched the church, it's 200 people on the first night, and we're at 50 within a few months, you know, and everything's just falling apart, and Bible studies, and you're down to two people, and trying to do things for God, and just there's no fruit.

You're praying for, you pray, and actually things like, it seems like things are getting worse. But in God's kingdom, the way God does things, your labor is never in vain. If I know anything now, it's God is always working behind the scenes.

God is always doing something in His timing, and just because we don't see the fruit, doesn't mean the seed hasn't been planted, and that it's being watered, and nourished, and so what we do then as Christians, we walk in something called faith, and without faith, it's impossible to please God. So I believe that many times when our prayers aren't answered, or when things aren't happening, it's to stretch and test our faith. God isn't concerned with the timetable.

He's not out of money. He's not worried about this, or that, and kind of wringing His hands. It's all about God's timing, and building, and encouraging our faith.

For example, you're praying for a loved one. God, would they please come to you? I'm begging you, Lord. I'm praying over your word, and I just don't see it, so I'm gonna get frustrated, and I'm gonna forget about it.

Or do you just keep pressing in, saying, God, I trust you, even though I don't see it. That's faith, that without faith, it's impossible to please God. Faith is the evidence of things not yet seen.

How ridiculous is that? It's believing in something that is not yet seen, because that's true trust. Do you trust God for a thousand dollars if it's already in your bank account? Or do you trust, no, and I'm not a name-it-and-claim-it, you know, prosperity guy, but I think financially, God does bless financially, and God can open doors, and we can trust in God. If we're, if we're stewarding our money well, and using our time wisely, and doing all the things we know to do, so your labor is not in vain.

Be encouraged tonight. If you're praying for somebody, if you're waiting on God, if you're waiting for a situation, it might not happen, but you will be, you will come out of that stronger and better. I've talked to people who maybe have went through a hard divorce 20 years ago, and they were praying, and they were praying, and they were praying, and it never worked out.

The marriage was never restored, but looking back, they thanked God for that time where they sought Him with all their heart, with all their strength, and God used that to draw them back to Him. So here now, Paul is writing 1 Corinthians. He's writing to the church in Corinth.

We talked about 1 Corinthians 12, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, not to be ignorant and be open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, not gullible. Does it line up with Scripture? And then 1 Corinthians 13 is the famous love chapter. Paul talks about you can do wonderful things for God, but if you have not love, it profits you nothing.

And then 1 Corinthians 14 is on tongues and prophecy, and I taught on that for over an hour, so you can find that sermon on our website. If you just put in tongues, it should come up, and that's a controversial topic in and of itself, amen? So we just look at what the Bible says. That's where I find a lot of peace in looking what the Bible says, not a lot of opinions.

Well, yeah, but I've seen weird stuff, but this, well, Paul said this, and we take God at His word. So 1 Corinthians, now we're in 15, and I had to paraphrase some of this because there's so much here, but Paul says, moreover, brethren, in other words, okay, because of everything we talked about in 1 Corinthians 14, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. In other words, if you believed in vain, this is pointless, but if you believed in the steadfast, immovable love of God and you repented and you believed in God, this is for you.

But it's interesting here, he said, you received it. So I don't know where you're at, I don't know who's listening, I don't recognize everyone every night, but the gospel has to be received. Is that interesting? Jesus dies for the world, but it has to be received.

That gift of salvation has to be laid hold of, the heart has to be open, and you have to receive that wonderful gift from God. That's why it's called a gift. The good news has to be received.

I think so many people forget about that. They think that belief is just intellectual knowledge. Well, they know about God, but the gospel, the good news has to be received and taken into the heart.

I'm going to get through this one. Amen. And then he said, in which you stand.

So once you receive the gospel and you're saved by God's grace, you stand in that. That's your strength. Having done all, stand.

Stand here with your loins girt about, your waist girt about with what? Truth. So that's part of the Christian faith, is standing and fighting and standing and fighting and resting and standing and fighting. It's not comfortable Christianity, what I talked about Sunday.

There's no such thing. We need to just get that out of our mind. Microwave comfortable Christianity has to go bye-bye.

And you have to realize you have to stand. And then you're saved. You're saved by believing in the gospel.

And then you hold fast to that word that was given to you. What is hold fast? It's like holding on to in a way, such a way that where no one is going to take that out of your hand. You're holding on to the preciousness of the gospel.

And if maybe you're doubting God today, it could be that you're following the wrong crowd. It could be you're listening to the wrong voices, the wrong influences that might be pulling you away from God. So persevering through adversity is the model of the Christian faith.

It's the norm. It's what we should expect. Now that can be a little encouraging because we get discouraged, don't we? When we have to persevere.

Or is it just me? Please don't leave me hanging. When I have to persevere, that can get discouraging. Anyone get tired of fighting? What is going on? But just remember where the battle rages there, the loyalty of the soldier is tested.

We always have to persevere. It's part of who we are. If you are a Christian, you are called to persevere.

Persevere in the midst of adversity. Persevere in the midst of not everyone agreeing with you. Perseverity in standing on the truth of God's word and seeing through to the end.

And then he said in verse three, for I deliver to you first of all which I also received, that Christ died for our sins. Now check this out. This is the gospel in one sentence.

Everything is going to be summed up in what we believe right here. Christ died for our sins according to the scripture and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scripture and

that he was seen by Cephas, which is Peter, and by the twelve. Well, Shane, how is that the gospel? Well, that's what it is.

Jesus died for our sins and he rose again. I don't think people realize how important the resurrection is. Without the resurrection, we have nothing.

Your faith is in vain. Jesus died. He never rose again.

It all falls apart. And I find it interesting that eyewitness accounts still continue. Now, you might say, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute.

Now, there are, of course, many, many people, Muslims primarily, who have had dreams and have seen Jesus and Jesus saves them in those dreams. There's too many, too numerous. But what I'm talking about is something a little bit different.

I'm talking about the eyewitness account, meaning that deep calls into deep. My spirit cries out, Abba, Father. That's the one thing as a believer in Jesus Christ you have that's different, that separates you from every person on the planet.

The Holy Spirit of God is residing in your heart. So when the Jehovah Witness sat in my house for two hours, they didn't have what I had. The witness of the Holy Spirit crying out, Abba, Father, not get away from me, Father.

And we have that eyewitness account, so to speak, the witness of the Spirit. And that's deep. Sometimes that's deeper than what my eye sees, but what my heart believes, what your heart knows.

Do you know that you know that you know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and He is coming again? How do you know that? Because it's deep calling unto deep. It's the Holy Spirit of God crying out, Abba, I love you, Father. There's something there.

The Holy Spirit's given to you as a guarantee until the day of redemption. There's something there that you know. But even without that, there's many testimonies that Peter saw Jesus who rose again.

And they talk about 500 witnesses seeing that Jesus rose again. Now, why is this so important? Well, many of you have been Christians for some time. You know what I'm about to tell you, but some people don't.

Maybe young adults don't know this. But the first, the majority of the disciples, of course, the first 11 of 12, who said they saw Jesus again after He was crucified, that He rose again, they believed it so much that they actually gave their life for that. See, that's, they're not going to die for a lie.

As soon as you go get Peter, he's going to say, okay, hold on. He's under that rock. Don't cut my head off.

But these guys were hung upside down. Beheaded or speared because they would not deny that they saw Jesus again. Hundreds and hundreds of witnesses.

See, that's what led Lee Strobel, the famous atheist, to finally, finally commit his life to the Lord. That's what leads many people, they have to realize, okay, Jesus was not a fable. He's a real historical figure.

He lived. Hmm. People died horrific deaths because they said that they saw Him and He lived.

So, what am I going to do with that? What am I going to do with these facts? And that's why we don't just, Christians don't check their brains at the door. You ever hear that? Oh, you guys are just, I don't know, CNN was making fun of all of you recently saying that you're just a bunch of immature idiots. You don't know anything if you're conservative and different things.

But they think you just check your brains at the door. Actually, you know, you don't. You use your brains.

And you say, hmm, I know I just didn't get here. I know the, how does order come out of chaos? How does something come out of nothing? It just, you use your brain, actually. That's why the Bible says the fool has said in his heart, there is no God.

It's foolish. So, don't ever think that you are stupid and that you're just naive. Actually, those who deny that there is a God are, well, I won't say stupid, naive, but you get the picture, right? Foolish.

Foolish. And that's what, that's what is so true. Because who is going to think that all of this just happened, that we're here? What about the moral code that we have within us? No matter where you go, people know the difference between right and wrong.

That was given by a moral law giver. You have a moral law giver. You have a creation.

You have all these things shouting, there is a God. There is a God. It's very clear.

So, he's talking here about the witnesses that saw Jesus after the resurrection. And then verse 9, we can put that up on the screen. Paul is saying here, for I am the least of the apostles who am not worthy to be called an apostle.

Why is he saying that? Because I persecuted the church of God. This is interesting. When Judas Iscariot was obviously removed, they found out he was not truly a follower of Christ.

They said, well, what should we do? Let's cast lots to find the twelfth apostle. They should have went to God, because God already had him picked out. I believe it was the apostle Paul.

Jesus appeared to him. He called him. I believe that was the twelfth apostle.

I believe that's who Jesus called. And Jesus met him face to face. And he was shocked, because he actually persecuted the church.

He was going to harass and imprison Christians. He was on the road to Damascus. And God met him.

Boy, did he ever. When God meets you, and God wants to change your course, you will not win. Don't fight it.

And God knocked him off his beast, redirect him. He said, I've called you to be a minister to the Gentiles. That's why he says, but by the grace of God, I am what I am.

And his grace toward me was not in vain. In other words, when God gave me his grace, it was not in vain. I got up and I fought the good fight of faith.

I've persevered. I held steadfast. I was not perfect.

I was not, I didn't make, I made mistakes, but by the grace of God, when he saved me and he called me, his work was not in vain. And you need to know that no matter how insignificant you think you are, God is doing a work in you somehow through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not in vain.

But I labored more abundantly than they all. Now it might seem like Paul is boasting, but he's not. Let me get to that in a minute.

He said, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was in me. See, I believe those who have been forgiven much, love much. I believe because of Paul's past of persecuting Christians, when God saved him, he had a fervency and a fire to serve God.

And that should be an encourage to some of you who have a checkered past, as they would say. Are you proud of your past? Have you messed up? Use that as a propellant, a fuel, nitrous oxide. You ever been in one of those vehicles? I have.

I was in a Ford Mustang, almost killed myself. On Avenue I, after I left schooners in the 1990s, I borrowed my friend's Mustang and I hit that nitrous oxide switch, and I'm 120 miles an hour down Avenue I. No, that's not good. My point is, that drives me to God even more, because I look at my past, but if it wasn't for the grace of God.

So some of you need to stop beating yourself up about your past and thank God that he saved you and set you free and get back on the right path and get off the wrong one. Isn't that so true? The enemy of our soul will use our past, but those who've been forgiven much, love much. And it's funny, early in the morning, 6 a.m. worship on Sundays, I see, I don't know, sometimes a dozen people at the altar.

It's an incredible experience. You'd be amazed at what some of those people used to be. A couple felons, hardcore bikers, thieves, robbery, women that were giving themselves up to anybody that would date them, and just the brokenness on the altar, but because of that past, they're worshiping.

Oh, it's hard to get the Pharisee to worship. It's hard to get those who have never had to pick themselves up out of the mire clay and that song we sing, the resurrection, he is resurrecting me. So I don't encourage you to have a past, but if you do, it's something you're not proud of, you can use that to drive you more to Jesus and hold on tightly because of what he brought you through.

If it wasn't for the grace of God, there go I. Just wondering if I should edit the schooner story out of the sermon. Oh, I'll never forget that. I woke up the next morning going, when you crash going that fast, you are not going home.

But Paul seems to be here boasting what the Lord has done. Did you know that's okay if your heart's right? You don't go around boasting about what you have done, but you boast in what God has done. And I've been accused sometimes, Shane, that sounds arrogant.

Oh, you're past. You did this. No, but look what God has done.

There's boasting and look at what God has done. It's okay to tell people what he's done in your life. And then verse 12.

Now, if Christ is preached that he has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? Now he was probably talking obviously to a portion of these people were

the Sadducees. And it's easier to remember that because as they say many times that they were sad, you see, because they didn't believe in the resurrection. So you can always, you can always, you guys haven't heard that before.

I've heard it like, I've heard it like 50 times. And I thought, I don't want to, I don't want to say that mainly in the Calvary Chapel movement. Chuck Smith used to say that and John Corson and Greg Laurie and that group of people.

But they would say, well, there's no resurrection. Well, Christ was raised from the dead. But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty. And your faith is also empty. But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

What he's saying there is no one could be raised from the dead first before Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ had to be risen from the dead. He had to conquer.

That's why the verse says he conquered hell, death, and the grave. He rose from the dead as the first fruits. Now he can come and bring others with him because he was the first fruits of the resurrection.

God raised him from the dead and he will raise others up when the trumpet sounds at that last call, when Christ returns again. I don't care what your view is on eschatology, meaning the end times, Christ is coming again. And he's going to call his church up, whether the rapture, the pre-mill, the post-mill, the pre-wrath, all these different views.

You just have to know he's coming again. Are you ready? And what else you need to know is it might get difficult. It might get challenging.

In America, we love this view of the rapture where we're out of here before it gets tough. Well, have you been following the news at all about the pastor beheaded in Nigeria? All the things going on in Africa, Boko Haram, I think it is, and taking Christians. And there's a lot of persecution, a lot of persecution.

Paul and Lynn, I always think of that when you tell me I need to go preach in Africa. I'm like, oh God, you got to prepare me for that one. A guy looking like me, I'm going to stick out like a sore thumb.

Now if Christ is preached again that he is raised from the dead, how do those among you say that there is no resurrection from the dead? Again, everything hinges on the resurrection. Then verse 33, I'm going to skip to verse 33. Here's some great advice for some of you tonight.

Do not be deceived, which means you can be deceived. Anytime the Bible says do not be deceived, they're assuming that many people are deceived, that they're falling away for this very reason. So do not be deceived, verse 33.

Evil company corrupts good habits. Want me to say that again? Do not be deceived, evil company corrupt good habits. No matter what translation you're reading, it says this, who you hang out with and what you enjoy will influence you.

In Romans 1, it talks about, Paul says that those exchange the truth for a lie. And it talks about men doing things with men and women doing things with women and worshipping the creation rather than the creator God. But then he goes on to say something interesting, and woe be to you who approve of such things.

Even though you don't actually do it, you approve of it. And so he's saying here, be careful, do not be deceived in this whole area of the resurrection or theology. Evil company corrupts good habits.

And now we think of the word evil. We think of the devil and red and a pitchfork and something that's terrible. And of course, that's true.

He's not wearing red or a pitchfork or anything, but evil is evil. But the word, this would be in the New Testament, in the Greek, in the Old Testament, if you look at the word evil, Hebrew, there's the same kind of meaning. It's this, or wickedness.

Anything that opposes the will and ways of God. So it's not some huge evil thing necessarily. It's anything that opposes the will and ways of God.

And let me tell you this, false teaching often comes in subtly. Nobody's going to go on TV or write blogs or preach sermons and say, hey, by the way, I'm a false teacher, or I'm a bad influence. So you have to be careful.

That's why he says, do not be deceived. Evil company corrupts good habits. So what's the answer, Paul? Awake, verse 34, awake to righteousness, awake, and do not sin.

I wish I could say that a little louder to wake some of you up. That's what he's saying there. Awake, get up, wake up.

Do not sin. For some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Now, remember, is he writing to the unbelieving pagans? Not really. He's writing to the church in Corinth, knowing that in that mixed of people, and this is interesting. You don't, many, maybe many of you don't know this, but I seem to obviously know a little bit of it because I'm talking to people, but there's a lot of people who come in here who are not saved.

They're not born again. And I'll ask, I can pray with you. Do you know Jesus? Well, I'm kind of just searching.

I'm seeking right now. Just about every Sunday, there's people, guests, or people who don't know who Jesus is. And he's saying, I speak this to your shame.

There is a God, there is a resurrection turned to him. Awake, awake to righteousness, and God puts it back on us. Wake up, church, wake up, pursue righteousness, pursue godliness, pursue salvation.

Listen, God is not a puppet master. If a person comes to salvation, they have to get to a point in their own mind to say, I want to receive that. God doesn't force you and make you.

He presents it and says, come to me, all who are weak and heavy laden, take of this, and I will give you rest. So we do see here the power of negative influence, and it's not good. Is there something in your life or someone in your life or something going on that is drawing you away from God? Wake up and remove it.

Wake up. I talk to people often, oh man, I got these friends that keep me away from church. Well, they're not friends.

Listen, with God, you have to realize something. Ask this question, how bad do you want it? Do you want it bad enough to remove those influences? Awake, get up, your labor is not in vain. And then we're going to look at verse 35.

But someone will say, how are the dead raised up? And what body do they come? Well, this might answer some questions for you. Here's what happens, verse 42. The body is sown in corruption.

In other words, when we die, we go back to the earth. I know it's gross for some people, but that's what happens. Your body starts to deteriorate, you go back into the earth, it's corrupt.

This body is corrupt, isn't it? Without Jesus. Oh, there's some corruption in here. The carnal mind, the carnal nature of the flesh.

So the body is sown in corruption in the ground, and it's raised in corruption. So when Jesus comes back and raises the resurrection, the body is raised in corruption. It is sown in dishonor, but is raised again in glory.

It is sown in weakness, but it is raised in power. When the resurrection comes and there's eternity, there's a powerfulness, there's a dunamis power, you're raised in that power. It is sown as a natural body, but what? It is raised as a spiritual body.

Now this, I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. In other words, you got to get rid of this in order to be in heaven. Your flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

There's a change in our body. Now how that works, what that looks like, you're gonna have to ask somebody far smarter than me. I just know that when that day comes, this body, it's actually a tent.

And what it is, I believe the body is like a tent. Paul calls it a tent. It's how we live and move and have our being.

It's our soul and our spirit. It's who we are. But this body, this flesh that we live out this life in eventually fades and dies, but who Shane Eidelman is, doesn't.

And that soul, what they call the spirit, the eternal side of life in the son, now because of that, I inherit eternal life. That's why he's saying flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. It has to be a new body.

Verse 51, turn to verse 51. So he's going to say, I tell you a mystery. Now this is interesting because this early church didn't have the Bible.

All these people have questions. They're wondering, well, what's going on? He says, right now, I tell you a mystery. And the mystery is not what we think of.

When we think of, oh, a mystery. I'm gonna reveal to you something you don't know, is what it means. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

So this is a portion of verse that people use. Let's say the rapture type of view or the Jesus coming again. We do know this, that not everyone will be asleep, meaning not everyone will be dead.

Some will, some won't. But when that moment comes, and that trumpet sounds, and a twinkling of eye, so quick, this is going to happen. The trumpet sounds and the dead will be raised incorruptible.

So those who are in Christ Jesus will be raised up to him. And we shall be changed in a twinkling of an eye, that quick. And then I love verse 54.

Oh death, where is your victory? Death, you are swallowed up in the victory of the cross. Oh death, where is your sting? Oh Hades, which is hell, where is your victory? See hell and death in the grave have no victory. Jesus overcame them.

And because of that, as believers in Jesus Christ, they have no authority over me. Christians should actually not fear death, because it has no, you're just going to transfer from this body to eternal life with Jesus Christ. There's no fear or anxiety.

Now granted, there's something inside of me, of course. It's like, I kind of want to prolong this if I can. I got stuff to do.

You know, I'm not really looking forward to how I'm going to die. And we see with the brevity of life, even on Sunday with Colby Bryant, what a sad situation. That was just so hard to hear with his daughter and the other people.

But we just realized that the brevity of life, living every day as if Christ were coming, or last day. I mean, there's no guarantee when a heart attack comes, and that's the final one, it's over. Or when an airplane crashes, or the helicopter, or different things.

But we have to remember as believers, we can say, oh death, where is your sting? Where's your sting? What that means is, where's your power? You can't hurt me. Where's your sting at? I follow Jesus Christ. He's already conquered you.

And then verse 56, therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast. Okay, here I'm going to leave you with some advice. You want to get through life? You want to live the victorious Christian life? Here we go.

Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. Now, you can't do this in your own strength. I've tried.

As a type A personality, I'll fix this. I found out that doesn't work. What does work then, Shane? How am I supposed to be steadfast and movable? Always abounding in the work of the Lord.

What you do is you surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit. As I decrease, He increases. As I humble myself, He fills me, fills me with His Spirit.

As I say, Lord, I am too weak to do this, and really mean it, He begins to strengthen me. So, because of the Holy Spirit, I am steadfast and immovable. What does that word steadfast mean? This is interesting.

It means loyal, faithful, committed, and relentless. You know what I'm preaching? I realized it this week. When I'm preaching, I'm preaching to this kind of person.

I'm preaching to the person who wants to be loyal and faithful and committed and relentless for Christ. I'm not preaching to the person who just wants to come in and casually try out church. I don't like this guy because he's too convicting.

I'm not going after that. I'm not trying to win popularity contests. I'm not trying to build a big ministry.

What I'm trying to do is get people on fire for God to be steadfast, which is loyal and faithful and committed. No matter what comes, hell or high water, I'm going to be relentless in my pursuit of Jesus Christ. That's how you finish strong.

And then what is immovable? It's fixed. It's anchored. It's braced for the storm.

We're going to put some shade in between the buildings. And there's probably water lines and gas lines and things. So, I told the guys, we're gonna have to dig this by hand, probably.

And the pillars are like five feet deep, big, wide, and then all this concrete for a little bit of shade because the wind gets going. And it has to be something that's immovable, fixed, anchored, and braced for the storm. That's how many people, and you've seen this, they run away from God when the storm comes.

It's like, no, you're running in the wrong direction. Turn around. My marriage is on the rocks.

I'm running to Plan B. I'm running to Seagram 7. I'm running to Schooners. Right? And we run away from God instead of staying there immovable, anchored. Lord, I'm fixed.

Isn't it interesting? Jesus said, the storm is coming to everyone. An unbeliever, a believer, the storm is coming. Maybe I should change the title.

The storm is coming. Jesus said, if you build your house on my word, not just here, but you actually apply it when the wind comes and the rain comes and the flood beats against your house, it will not fall. Why? Because it's founded.

It's grounded. The anchors go deep into the solid rock of Jesus Christ. You stand there no matter what's coming against you, no matter what the culture says.

And you stand there in the power of the Holy Spirit. And that's how you get through life, immovable. And then because of that, because of that, you're always abounding.

What does that mean? Fruitful and overflowing. Is that interesting? Because you're grounded, you're steadfast, you're loyal, you're fixed. Because of that, you're going to overflow and be fruitful for God.

Are you seeing a connection here? And then he goes on to say, your labor is not in vain. In other words, when you do this, when you do this, your labor is not in vain. There's a man, I wish I would have, I was looking for the story.

It was in Australia, I believe. And for years he would hand out tracts. And he would tell people, do you know where you're going if you die today? They estimate he handed out a hundred thousand tracts in like 27, 25 years.

And he eventually had cancer, I believe, or dementia or something, maybe both. And this pastor kept hearing these people saying, oh, I was converted on this, I think it was the name of a certain street in Australia. Oh, this guy.

And he kept hearing the stories of the same guy. So he went and visited this guy and told him all these stories. And the guy began to cry because he said, in 25 years, I never heard of anyone who came to

know the Lord because of me.

And there was literally hundreds of people because later, see, we plant the seed and we want to see the plant tomorrow. We raise our kids and we're wondering what happened. Lord, I tried.

I prayed over them. I brought them to church and I tried to live it out and I tried to model who you, what happened. God, I think this word for us tonight is you're not late, your labor is not in vain.

Your labor is not in vain. Keep plowing, keep moving forward. You will see the fruit of that harvest.

Your labor is not in vain. Your praying is not in vain. Amen.

Praying is not in vain. Praying outlives us. Did you know that? Your prayers will outlive you.

Your prayer is going to the next generation, into your children. They outlive you. Your praying is not in vain.

See, here's what happens. My labor, my praying, my faith, my seeking, I run into obstacles just like you do. Some results aren't happening, but I'm trusting in God and God alone.

God, because your word says it, there will be fruit. Your faith is not in vain. Your belief in Christ is not in vain.

Your seeking God is not in vain. None of these things are in vain. So tonight, if there's something, ask him.

Ask God and he will move. He will part the Red Sea. He will move that mountain.

He will overcome Goliath. He will overcome the armies. He will see you through.

Ask and you shall receive. Have trust and hope in God. Listen, I'm not just saying this because, oh, it sounds good and I'm a good actor.

I truly believe this deep within my soul because God has taught me that often I won't see the fruit just yet. Will you still follow me when you don't see the fruit? Will you still love me when you don't see the fruit? Will you still keep praying when you don't see the answer? And we have to say yes, God, because I love you. I trust you.

I don't trust in this economy. I don't trust in the political system. I don't trust in 2020.

I trust in you and you alone. And Lord, even if I don't see the fruit I've been praying for, I'm going to keep trusting you until I breathe my last breath. That pleases God.

That person is abounding in good works, immovable, unshakable, steadfast, loyal, and faithful. Praise God. So what I want to do tonight, a little bit special, we haven't done this on a Wednesday night, is do communion.

So blessings going to come up again and just do a few songs. And what we do, we're going to remember that Jesus was steadfast, immovable, and always abounding, wasn't he? He went to the cross. He was steadfast.

He was immovable for us. And on that wonderful, faithful day, hell was celebrating, the demons were rejoicing, they killed the Messiah, it was done, he's over, but no, no, no. The Bible talks about the ground shaking, the temple being, the veil being torn, and Jesus rose from the dead.

And that's why we celebrate communion. Jesus said, when you do this, when you come together, do this in remembrance of me, remembering what I did for you on the cross.

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