

# (Revelations of the Gospel) 4. a Revelation of Continuing in Love

by Jason Robinson

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*God's love is a choice that we must make, and it is conditional on our obedience to His commandments.*

**Duration:** 1:12:19

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 15:2, 2 Peter 3:8-17

**Topics:** "Gods Love", "Christian Living"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of love in the Gospel. He explains that humans have a deep need for love and often try to fill that void with human relationships. The speaker discusses the two aspects of the love of God: God's love for us and our response to choose to love Him. He warns about the dangers of allowing the love in our hearts to slowly burn out and emphasizes the need to continue in a love relationship with God. The sermon also touches on the need to overcome and how God demonstrated His love for the world by providing a sacrifice for us to know Him.

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## Transcript

Last message here. We've covered the first 14, and we're going to look at the last two today. We've been looking at the 15 different revelations of the gospel, and we'll look at 16 different revelations.

We'll look at number 15 now. Let's pray. We love you, Father.

We thank you for all that you've done. Thank you for your love for us. We're absolutely nothing.

You're everything. We worship you. And we just beg you to come now and bless us with your presence.

Fill us with your spirit in a real way, and take your word and engraft it into our souls so that we can be saved. Please, open to us the scriptures. Fathers, feed us from your word.

We ask in Jesus' name. Okay, number 15. Number 15 is a revelation of the love of God, the different ingredients of the gospel.

And this is an extremely important ingredient. Let's turn to 1 John, chapter 4. The greatest need that humankind has is a need for love. God has made us that way.

He has created us in such a way where we need love. And we oftentimes try to find that love in horizontal human relationships. And people have this hole in their heart, and they're trying to fill that emptiness with human relationships.

Let's look here at 1 John, chapter 4, and verse 19. It says, we love him because he first loved us. So as we look at the subject of the love of God, there's two aspects when I speak of a revelation of the love of God.

There's God's love to me, and then there's my response back to choose to love him. Love is a choice. It's something that I have to yield to.

And any time that we speak today about loving God, it has to flow from this verse. The only reason that we could even choose to love him or would even choose to love him is because he first loved us. And a lot of people don't understand this foundational principle.

I know it's spoken a lot. You see bumper stickers, God is love. And a lot of people talk about the love of God, but they don't experience it in a real way.

They really don't believe that the creator of this universe, this massive God, actually cares about them and really loves them. And you may say, well, how can you say that a lot of people don't believe that? Because a lot of people say, well, yeah, I know God loves me. But you can tell when somebody doesn't really experience the love of God.

You can see it by how their life is. It's manifested. See, we are so innately insecure.

And we're insecure because we don't believe that God loves us. We're not secure with who we are. Sometimes maybe you may see a picture that somebody else took of you, and you may look at it and be like, that's me.

And you just feel all nasty. And I really look that way? Or maybe you hear your voice on a video or a recording or something, and you're like, oh, I hate that. And we just kind of hate ourselves, like self-hatred.

And we grow up that way, especially in this Western culture. So much emphasis is put on so many different things to try to fit this void that people have. People are insecure, so they try to find their security in the way they look, in their clothes, in their relationships.

I mean, just look back to high school. I mean, people are just longing to be loved, and they're not receiving that love from God. So there's this massive void.

And because of that, they're totally insecure about who they are, and they're just grasping for love. And that's why there's a lot of people seek for that love through relationships. I mean, I had a girlfriend when I was in the first grade.

What was I doing? I mean, I just held her hand. But I needed love, and I wrote notes and stuff. And you look at all the cliques that you have in school growing up, the jocks.

I don't know what they're called now, but they used to be called the jocks and the dorks and the preps and the geeks and the burnouts and all these different groups. What were they all composed of? People that are insecure that need love, and then they gravitate to a group that's going to accept them. And for the most part, the groups wouldn't intermingle.

If you were a jock, you wouldn't even hang out with a burnout. It's just not the way it was. And so you kind of had to choose your crowd, and insecure people would be drawn towards different crowds.

And all this is because people, they don't understand the love of God. They're not secure in that. So some clique or some crowd is showing them some kind of a level of love.

It's a very shallow level, but some kind of a level of friendship. And so they conform to that crowd in order to be loved. So whatever fad that that crowd's in with music or movies or entertainment or sports or clothing or hobbies, whatever it may be, they kind of conform to that, and maybe they're in that crowd for a few months or maybe even a few years, and some kind of an offense happens or something, and they end up leaving that crowd and going to another crowd.

And even in churches, a lot of churches are filled with people that want love, and it's another clique, it's another crowd. And I come here, and I'll believe this and that, and I'll dress this way, and then hopefully I'll be loved. And unfortunately, this is just par for the course.

And the reason that that void's there is because we don't understand the love that God has for us. He longs for an intimate relationship with us, to have fellowship with us, like a marriage, like a husband and wife that just love each other. In fact, the Scripture talks about knowing God, and it's the same word that's used for sex, for intimacy, for consummation.

It says Mary never knew Joseph. It doesn't mean she never knew who he was. She had never been to the marriage bed with him.

And so God wants us to know him, to be so intimate with him, and to have such a close fellowship with him. And that's the message of the Gospel. Look at John 17 here.

We'll go through a lot of Scriptures today, and I really want to... The Bible says, preach the word. So I don't want to sit up here and give my opinions about things. I'm a total loser.

I'm nothing. I just want to show what the Scripture says over and over again. So if you have a Bible, turn with me.

John 17, verse 2, it says, As you have given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you sent. And look at verse 23.

I in them, and you in me, that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that you have sent me, and hath loved them as you have loved me. So God, if we... And the context here, he's speaking about his disciples. If you're a disciple of Jesus, God loves you as much as he loved Jesus.

And I say that, and it kind of just is like a statement. But we need to come to the point where we really believe that. God loves me as much as he loves Jesus.

And as you study, I'm not into the Greek and all that, but as you study the original language, there's different ways that the word love is used. And sometimes, to kind of relate it to our language, sometimes we say, I love ice cream. So that's kind of like one type of love.

I love football. And then a more deeper type of love would be, like, Grady, I love you, man. Like a deep friendship.

And then an even deeper type of love would be my wife. Honey, I love you. I want to marry you.

I want to be with you the rest of my life. And so there are different types of love, and it's the same way with God. He loves the world, okay? But how does he love the world? The most famous Bible verse ever, John 3.16. God so loved the world, he gave his son.

His only begotten son. So the way that God loves the world isn't a sugar daddy up there, just kind of disappointed that people are sinning. He loves the world, so what he did is he demonstrated his love by providing a sacrifice, a means to which the world could get to know him.

But he's not in an intimate relationship with the vast majority of people in the world. So there's different types of love as you look in Scripture, and it's really important, the context of what we're talking about here, is presenting the Gospel, making sure that we first believe it properly ourselves, and then presenting it in a way that's in accordance with the Scripture. And you'll hear a lot about, you know, God loves everybody.

And to some extent that's true. Yes, he loves the world in that he provided a way for them to come to him. But let's look at Psalm chapter 11.

There's two sides of the coin, and we can believe them both, and they can both be right. We don't necessarily have to reconcile them in our minds. Psalm chapter 11, verse 5. I don't know how this is worded in other versions, but out of the King James it says, The Lord tries the righteous, but the wicked and him that loves violence, God's soul hateth.

So this is one of the ingredients that's kind of lacking in the Gospel today. The Gospel today is kind of presented, you know, like God loves you, and he wants you to be with him forever. And that's a one-sided truth.

God hates the soul of him that loves violence. Look at Psalm chapter 7 there. Psalm 7, verse 11.

God judges the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. So he's not just this sugar daddy up in heaven, you know, just kind of looking down. He is angry.

In fact, if you read in Romans 5, it says now that we have been saved, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, what's the opposite of peace? War. So that means before we come to Christ, we are actually at war with God.

Look while we're in Psalms there, look at chapter 2. Psalm chapter 2, verse 12. And it's kind of an interesting verse. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. So, you know, God is angry at his creation because they're arrogant, we're self-righteous, we're arrogant, we're stubborn, and we've sinned against him, and he's angry. And we need to see this as we're understanding this aspect of the love of God.

Look at James chapter 4. As I was talking about earlier, the different words for love, they're translated into English different ways. But if you look at the Greek word for love, it's used here in James chapter 4 whenever it says friendship, the word is actually love. Phileo is the Greek word.

James chapter 4, verse 4. You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whosoever will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God. So he's saying here, if you love the world, you're God's enemy. So we have this choice.

We can love, and when it's talking about the world here, it's not talking about gross sin or Hollywood or something. It's talking about this time period that we're in, like we were talking about yesterday, this kingdom. He's saying if you love this time period, this age, this kingdom, then you don't love God.

You're actually His enemy. And this has to be presented in the gospel that we are presented with a choice. We can love Him, or we can love this.

And I know so many people that claim to be following Jesus and they just love the world. They're so into the world. They're so involved and connected to everything that's going on, and they're just so excited about this new thing and that new thing and this new movie and this new thing and who's going to win American Idol? Just everything that's constantly going on in the world.

They're friends with the world, not as far as people, but as far as their sustenance, their life, their enjoyment, their peace comes from this age. And God says you're an enemy. You're an enemy then.

If I said to my wife, I love you and I love this other woman, that's not going to fly too well. I'm going to be with her half the time. I'm going to be with you half the time.

I really love you, but I also love her. I have to make a choice. And God is saying that to us.

That's the gospel. You have a choice. You can live for the now and now, or you can live and love me and enjoy me.

It's the choice. Love the thing that's been created or love the Creator. And this is the essence of the gospel.

Let's look at John 14. And it's really important in the context of understanding the gospel because a lot of people... How many of you... Let's just take a quick survey. How many people... Raise your hand if you've heard this phrase.

God's love is unconditional. Anybody ever heard that phrase? Okay, like everybody. Okay.

It's not anywhere in the Bible. It's just not in the scriptures. It sounds good.

God's love is unconditional. But that's what I'm talking about as far as the gospel. We've gotten so far away that we just believe things that aren't in the scriptures.

And we haven't really thought them through. Look at John 14 verse 21 here. It says, He that has my commandments and keeps them, He it is that loves me.

And he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. See the condition there right in the middle of that verse? If I have his commandments and I keep them, then that proves that I love Jesus. And then it says, If I love Jesus, then I will be loved by the Father.

But what if I don't love Jesus? Now, as I said before, the Father loves me to the point that He gave His Son for me. But we just saw several verses that said He's also angry and hates. And so there's a condition

there.

So let me take this a step further. Another phrase, God loves everyone the same. We've heard that phrase.

It's not in the Bible. Look at James, I'm sorry, Revelation chapter 3. Revelation chapter 3 verse 19. It's an interesting phrase right at the beginning of the verse.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Well, then God, you're going to be rebuking everybody, right? Because you love everybody, right? No. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Look at John chapter 13. John chapter 13 verse 23. Now, there was one.

There was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved. Didn't Jesus love all of His disciples? Doesn't Jesus love everybody? There was this one, and we know it's John. Jesus loved him and that word is that deep intimacy.

Jesus had this phileo, this deep intimacy with the apostle John, so much so that John felt comfortable enough to just lay on Him like, I love you. And that'd be kind of corny to some of us, like, huh? But he just loved Jesus. But some of the others weren't that intimate with Jesus.

So, this is important when understanding the love of God. Look at John 16. John chapter 16 verse 25.

These things have I spoken unto you in Proverbs, but the time comes when I shall no more speak unto you in Proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day you shall ask in my name, and I say unto you that I will pray the Father for you. For the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came out from God.

And look at verse 27 there again. For the Father himself loves you because you have loved me. You see? There's a condition there.

And so as we look here at that love, it's not only conditional. It's something that once we've entered into it, we have to abide in it and continue in it. I've been married now for ten years, and there's a possibility that I could lose love for my wife.

Half of the marriages in America end in divorce. Why? People lose that love. That love grows cold, and it's the same thing with God.

Once you've legitimately entered into salvation, you've went through this process that we've spoken about this whole weekend, and you truly love God, you can actually lose that love. Look at John 15. So love is not only conditional, but it's something that has to be continued.

In John 15 verse 9, as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Continue in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love.

What if we don't keep his commandments? Do we still abide in his love? Let's read on. Even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love, these things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. So all this love, this continuing in love, it's not like a drag commandment that sucks.

It's so that your joy might be full. I love you. Love me.

And continue in that love, and you'll have joy. That's where your life will be. And look at verse 12.

This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you.

See that? I mean, it's so clear. There's a conditional aspect of God's love. That word friend, you're my friend if you do whatsoever I command you.

It's conditional. Continue in my love. Look at Matthew 24.

You know, I just found out yesterday someone that I know really well, the person that's actually responsible for leading me to Christ, I just found out yesterday that they became a Buddhist, and it's really disturbed me. This person was a missionary, and like I said, the one that witnessed to me 20 years ago, and they went down a progression and had a major offense happen to them in a church about 10 years ago, and then bounced around from church to church, and eventually now they're a Buddhist. I just found that out, and it's just ironic that I found it out yesterday and that I'm talking about this today because I see it almost every month.

People that I know are falling away, and Jesus talks about it here. It's about the end times. Matthew 24 verse 10, and it says, And then shall many be offended and shall betray one another and shall hate one another.

And when it's talking here about, if you look at it in the Greek, it's the many. It's not talking about lost people, people that never knew Jesus. People that never knew Jesus hated people and betrayed people in the first century.

So for him to say, in the last days, people are going to hate people, they'd be like, hey, people hate people right now. What he's saying is, it's going to get so bad that those that are my children are going to get to that point. And they're going to get offended.

There's offenses. There's bitterness. There's hurts.

They begin to hate. They begin to backbite. And then notice in verse 11, Many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of, and it should say the many, meaning the remaining of God's people there, the love of the many shall wax cold. I mean, it can't be referring to lost people because lost people, there's no phileo. That word there is phileo in the Greek.

It speaks of someone that's entered into intimacy with God. Someone that has never known Jesus has never had that love. So it can't wax cold if it's never been there.

This is referring to God's people. Offenses come. Bitternesses come.

False prophets come. And iniquity is around. And it's just abounding.

It's just constant. You drive down the road and you're bombarded with wicked images, sensuality. You go on the internet, TV, movies, music.

It's just abounding and abounding and abounding. It says in the last days, this is all going to happen. I'm getting offended at relationships, hatred, false prophets, iniquity.

And it's like a candle. And that candle is burning. And it's just burning.

It's just burning out, slowly burning out. The love in our hearts is just slowly burning out. And when it eventually gets gone, then people just depart from the faith.

And that's why we see this with many people that we know. Rules and regulation isn't going to keep people following Jesus. This social pressure and commandments and having a community where we all try to encourage each other all the time, that's not the end-all solution.

The goal and the solution to what we're talking about is continuing in that love relationship with God. That's the solution. Keeping that love there.

Because that's the choice that we have. You know, the famous verse, 1 John chapter 2, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

So it's that choice. You can love this world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, or you can love the Father. And notice that it's pretty dogmatic.

It says, if you love this world, the love of the Father is not in you. Either it never has been in you, or at one time it was in you, and it's waxed cold, and it's gone. The love of the Father is gone.

And so that's the message of the gospel. It's the root of all things. Let's look at 1 John chapter 2. Because as we are in the last days, and we see many people falling away, and there's a lot of carnality in the churches, a lot of sin, a lot of youth leaving churches and just completely going into a secular lifestyle.

Churches are trying so many different ways to keep people. They're trying legalism. They're trying psychology.

We've got to keep people following God. But ultimately, the root of all of it is love. In 1 John chapter 2 verse 3, it says, And hereby we do know, hereby we do know that we love him, if we keep his commandments.

He that says, I know him, and doesn't keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keeps his word in him is the love of God perfected. Notice it says the love of God perfected.

Hereby know we that we are in him. So if somebody says, I know Jesus, but they're not keeping his commandments, they're a liar. And that's the standard that we have to reconcile our lives to.

I have to reconcile my life to that verse, and it's convicting, and it's challenging, and I have to cry out for grace and for love. Just, God, help me. I don't want to be a liar.

I don't want to say that I know you and just be lying. A lot of people, you know, you go out on the streets and you talk to people, and everybody's a Christian. Everybody loves Jesus.

But, I mean, I know it sounds judgmental, but John said, no, they're liars. If you say you love Jesus and you don't keep his commands, you're a liar. And, I mean, that's a sobering verse.

Look at Matthew 22. This area of love is what it all boils down to. This is the whole scripture in a nutshell.

You look at the whole Old Testament, and you look at Leviticus and all of these books on the law. You have to realize the context of the situation that God loved the people of Israel, and he was giving laws to them because he loved them. I have four kids.

I give each of my kids, you know, there's rules in my house. You're not allowed to drink Drano. You're not allowed to just eat cookies for dinner every night.

I don't give those rules because I'm a jerk. I give them because I know what's best for them. They're just kids.

They don't know, and they need rules, okay? And God was the same way with Israel. You have to build a fence around the roof of your house. Why do I have to do that? Well, because if you love your kids, you'll do that because they had flat roofs back then, and kids would get up on the roof and fall off and die.

So out of love, a law was created. The motive was love to protect the kids. You know, speed limit laws, the motive is love, and you look at all of the laws in America, most of them, some of them are kind of ridiculous, but most of them are motivated by love.

And if everybody walked in love, you wouldn't need any of the laws. And that's what we're looking at here in Matthew 22, verse 36. Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, all of thy soul, all of thy mind, and the second is like unto it.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Take the whole Old Testament and wrap it up, the goal of it, if man could walk in love, and you know, I don't need a law that says you have to feed your kids.

I love my kids, and I just do it. And when someone has entered into the true gospel, they no longer need rules. They no longer need regulations.

They no longer need standards because they're in love with Jesus. And if he is grieved by it, they say, Well, I love you, Lord, so I won't do that anymore. So there's no need for this.

So this is the root, the root problem as we look out in the midst of this apostate Christianity is people don't, not as a whole, you know, there are a lot of awesome people out there in every type of church, but a lot of people that profess Christianity don't love Jesus. And so sincere people that do that are maybe in leadership in churches, they're trying to help these people. So they make rules and laws and think that that's going to help out, but ultimately it's not.

So let's look at First Timothy chapter one. First Timothy chapter one speaks right along with the same, same verse that we just read. First Timothy chapter one, verse five, it says, Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, out of a good conscience and out of faith unfeigned.

So that's the end. That's the goal. If we can get to that point of passionately loving Jesus and then loving other people, that's the end of the commandment.

That's it. That's the gospel. And once we've gotten there, continuing in that.

An interesting verse here. Look at First Corinthians chapter 16. So if the end of the whole Scripture, the end of all the commandments is to love, then what we'll see here is the root sin is to not love.

That's the root sin. First Corinthians chapter 16, verse 22, If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. That's what it boils down to.

And that word accursed means separated from God. It doesn't say if any man goes and gets drunk or commits adultery. I mean, yes, those are sins.

I don't deny that. But all sin is rooted down to a lack of love. If you love me, keep my commandments.

Well, if I break his commandments, that's just showing at that moment I chose the thing created over the creator. I wasn't choosing to love him. So if any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed.

And this is what must be presented in the gospel. And it's so important. I just, I cringe when I meet believers and they're so content with a church that teaches a shallow gospel.

And it's just so shallow and powerless. And people are so content to follow something that is actually either leading people to hell or at best, keeping them at the substandard level. Because this is what it's about.

It's not about all these doctrines and all these other issues. It's about passionately loving Jesus and knowing him. And to kind of turn this and make it practical, if you're here and you know that you know Jesus, that this is the battle even after you're born again.

This is the battle for your soul. That the enemy is constantly trying to get you to lose your love for other people and for him. If he can get you in this one area, your heart, if he can get your heart to yield to offenses, to yield to bitterness, to yield to not loving God, getting bitter at God, getting offended at God, if he can get you in that one area, he can get you to actually depart from the faith.

So it's so vital that we maintain that passionate love for Jesus. You know, the verse in Revelation, he says, okay, you guys got this great church, you're doing all this great stuff, you got all the doctrines right, but you've lost that first love. And, you know, that first love, like when you first came to Jesus and you got up in the morning and his presence was real and you just loved him.

And you were just like, you had the permagrin, you know, and you're just like, Jesus, I love Jesus. And you just wanted to tell other people that's the love that we need to maintain. It's in the same way as when I first married my wife and I'm just writing her notes all the time and giving her things and going on dates.

And it's hard to maintain that love with my wife at the same level as it was when we first got married. And it's hard to maintain that level of love with Jesus. I've been a believer now for almost 20 years.

And I'll tell you, it's hard to maintain that same passion that I had when I first came to Jesus because I'm married now, I have four kids, I have a job. The world has changed a lot in the last 20 years and sin is abounding and it's this constant war for my soul to try to not love God. And as we saw that last verse, if any man does not love the Lord Jesus, let him be a curse.

I could be separated from God if I let my heart wax cold and I lose my love for Jesus. I could be separated from God and that scares me. I'll tell you, it scares me.

I don't judge this person that led me to the Lord that's now a Buddhist. I don't judge them at all because I know that could happen to me. I know I could get discouraged, get offended.

I could fall into sin and then maybe try to turn to Buddhism or some kind of religion that suppresses my desires or at least I think it will. And I know I could be there a week from now. So I don't judge them.

I just fall before the Father and say, please help me fill my heart with love. It says in Romans that the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of Jesus in our heart. Father, give me the Holy Spirit.

I don't want to not walk in love. I'm in a business where people buy cars off of me on eBay and it's a very stressful thing. It's a major purchase and there are oftentimes jerks.

Just mean. It's so easy to not love people and then I say a cutting statement and I go home and it's like, Lord, help me to love people. I want to love people.

I get a cell phone bill and it's \$500 more than it's supposed to be. Hey, you guys made a mistake. Please help me to love this person.

I'm a Verizon wireless company. But we can just get moving and chugging along and then just get to where we don't have love in our hearts. And that's a dangerous thing.

And it brings us to our last point, our last revelation, number 16. Number 16, a revelation of the need to overcome. Number 16, a revelation of the need to overcome.

So once we've come to Christ and we've entered in a real way to his salvation, we've been born from above and once we're walking and even continuing in the love that I just spoke of, the gospel doesn't end there. And unfortunately, this next ingredient is one of the ones that's been chucked in Western Christianity. Because to many, the gospel kind of ends there.

Signed, sealed, and delivered. You're saved. You're going to heaven.

You're in God's hands. You'll never be plucked out. You have everlasting life.

You're going to heaven. And they kind of end it there. But if you're here and you know you've been born from above, you know you're entering into this intimate relationship with Jesus, I'm here to tell you, by the authority of the Word of God, the gospel does not end for you.

Okay? It continues with this last one. Because as you look at the New Testament, this is a great emphasis in the New Testament. This need to overcome, to continue in the faith, and if not continued in, it would all be vain.

We see it all over the place. And unfortunately, many churches, like I was saying, Friday night, you know, they take the bulk of these scriptures, and there's so many of them, for the sake of time, we'll just look at a few, but there's so many of them, and they take them and they get the three peanuts, you know, and then they get the little thing underneath, and, you know, well, this word in the Greek says this, and da-da-da-da-da, so it doesn't mean what you're saying it means. And you go to the next verse, well, this word in the Greek means this, and da-da-da-da-da-da, so that verse isn't really saying that.

And in many cases, they make it opposite, you know. But I'm just begging us today, let's go back to the simplicity of His word. Let's look at these verses with a sober heart, and just, you know, see how clear they

are.

Look at 2 Chronicles. 2 Chronicles, chapter 15. And I understand this is, you know, out of the Old Testament, but it's a principle.

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And it's a pretty eye-opening verse, 2 Chronicles, chapter 15, and verse 2. I'll give you some time to turn there, because Chronicles isn't a normal book that we usually turn to. 2 Chronicles, chapter 15, verse 2. And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin.

The Lord is with you while you be with Him. And if you seek Him, He will be found of you. But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.

It's pretty clear. Look at John, chapter 15. Getting into the New Testament.

John, chapter 15, verse 1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. Every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Okay, so picture this. We have a vine. The branch is connected to the vine.

If it doesn't bear fruit, he takes it away. If it does bear fruit, he purges it, so it can bring forth more fruit. Verse 4. Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine.

No more can you except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit.

For without me you can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered. And men gather them, and they cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. So it's really clear. Our salvation is in Christ.

We can do nothing of ourselves. It's by His grace, through faith in His grace. We turn from our sin.

We become born from above. He grafts us in to this vine. And now that is where we're getting our life.

That is what's sustaining us. We're grafted into Jesus. And that life is coming through.

It's giving us grace to overcome sin. He's granting us repentance. He's giving us faith.

He is growing us up, and we're bearing fruit. But if we choose to not abide in Jesus, if we choose to get our life source from this world, this age, from sin, then He cuts us off, and all of these cut off branches are gathered together and they're put in the fire. It's really clear.

I don't know how it could be any clearer. Look at Acts chapter 14. This is the gospel that Jesus preached.

This is what you see all throughout the Old Testament. It's the gospel that the apostles preached. And notice, He's talking to Christians, to those that have been born above.

He's not telling lost people, abide in Me. They can't abide in somebody they're not in yet. So He's challenging them.

He's challenging believers. And here's Paul challenging believers. Acts 14 verse 22.

Talking to people that are already in Christ. It says, Confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith and that we, through much tribulation, enter the kingdom of God. The only way that we're going to get to the kingdom is through much tribulation.

You'll hear people say, Salvation is easy. It's easy to be saved. The four spiritual laws, look, it's easy.

You just need to be saved. And once you are, it cannot be reversed. This is easy.

And just ask Jesus to come in your heart. But Paul's pleading with people that have already turned to Him and in soberness and seriousness, he's saying, You've got to continue in the faith. And if you're ever going to get in that kingdom, it's going to be through much tribulation.

And like I said earlier, there's all of these forces. There's iniquity. There's your flesh.

There's offenses. There's false prophets. There's deception.

And it's constantly bombarding you. And the only way that we're ever going to get into that kingdom is to continue in the faith. And so many people are not continuing in it.

Now, maybe they haven't totally departed and become atheists or Buddhists or something. But maybe they've capitulated to culture. And maybe they've verse plucked verses out of the Bible to justify what they're doing.

Well, I'm just trying to be all things to all men. So I'm going to kind of be like this guy. Or maybe they're settling for something subpar, for something they know is not God's heart.

And they're just kind of in some lukewarm church or they're hanging around some people and they know it's not God's ultimate heart. And so to them, they're continuing in the faith. But as we see here, this radical Christianity, this wholeheartedness, it has to be continued in to enter into the kingdom.

It's sobering. It's serious. Look at Colossians 1. Colossians 1 has the beautiful balance of the message of the gospel in it.

And it kind of has all of these paradoxes here within two verses. And it somewhat kind of brings them together so we can understand them. Colossians 1, verse 21.

He says, And you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death to present you holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable in His sight. Whose responsibility is it to present me holy before God? Whose responsibility is it? It's God's, right? Yeah. It's His responsibility to present me holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable.

And He promises to here in verse 22. I mean, this is one of Paul's run-on sentences that he has that kind of go on for a few paragraphs. But notice the contingency here.

God is going to present you holy. God is going to present you unblameable, unreprouvable in His sight. Verse 23.

If you continue in the faith. But if you don't continue in the faith, He's still going to present you holy. No, it's not what it says.

So this is God's promise. I love you. I want to have fellowship with you.

I will, in the day of judgment, make you holy, righteous, unblameable, but if you continue in the faith. And so, this is the gospel, or what some have said, the gospel to Christians. And we can't get away from it.

We have to continue in this faith. Not letting our hearts wax cold. It says, the greatest are faith, hope, and love.

That's what it boils down to. Faith, trusting in Him, depending on Him. Hope.

When do we need to hope? We need to hope when everything that we see doesn't reconcile with what we believe. We're just seeing things that don't make any sense, and we just say, okay, I hope in you, Father. And then charity.

That love. That's what it boils down to. Okay, 2 Peter chapter 3. 2 Peter chapter 3 is maybe my most famous chapter in the whole Bible, because this chapter is ministered to me so many times in this area of the need to overcome.

This chapter was written, this whole book was written to believers. 1 Peter 1 makes that very clear. 2 Peter isn't a book written for people that have never come to Christ.

It's clearly written to believers. And chapter 3 is about the end times, and it's God just pleading with His people. And it's a very awesome chapter, and let's just read most of it here.

But for the sake of time, maybe we'll start at verse 8. 2 Peter 3 verse 8. But be loved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that the day of the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up, seeing then that you know these things shall be dissolved. What manner of persons ought you to be in all conversation and godliness? So we see that whatever this judgment that's coming, maybe it's a nuclear holocaust some people have said, maybe it's even more than that, the whole world just disintegrates in a great explosion. It's coming, he's saying it's going to happen, and he says in verse 11, seeing then that this is going to happen, everything that you see is going to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be? Now notice he doesn't say, because everything's going to be destroyed, everything's going to be obliterated, seeing that this is going to happen, make sure you're saved.

Make sure you've been born again. Like really make sure you've been born again. He doesn't say that.

Everything's going to be dissolved. God is going to judge this universe, and because of that, he says, what manner of person ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness? He's warning his own people. He's saying I'm going to destroy everything.

You know this beforehand. I'm warning you, please, he's saying, be holy as I'm holy. Be godly.

Verse 12, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God. Looking for. That's what we're commanded to do here, to look for this coming day of God, to get our eyes off the now and now, to get our eyes off of this world and who's going to win American Idol and all this stuff, you know, like the vanity of this life, and look for this coming day of God.

It's coming. And it says wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Verse 13, nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless. I mean, verse 14, this is serious. I mean, I'm not trying to be like heavy or depressing or something, but Peter, God, the spirit of God through Peter is saying be diligent.

This is all going to burn. You're going to be standing before a holy God. He says be diligent that you may be found without a spot.

We've been given this garment of Christ. He's saying not one spot. Blameless.

Now, I don't know about you, but I'm not blameless. So this puts a fear of God in me to where I have to go to the Father at night and say, God, help me. I want to be without spot.

I want to be blameless, and I'm not there, but I know I can't do it in myself. It's not by my works. It's by your grace.

So I need your grace. I need your spirit. Help me to be blameless.

Help me to be diligent. Verse 15. It says in account for that the long suffering of God is our salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul has also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, the things that he's talking about, in which some things are hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable twist to their own discretion, as also the other scriptures.

Verse 17. You, therefore, beloved, seeing that you know these things before. He's saying, you know this stuff before.

Joe Schmo, guy on the street that doesn't read the scriptures, that doesn't know Jesus, he doesn't have a clue that this stuff's going to happen, but you know it before it's going to happen. It's like somebody that knew September 11th was going to happen that lived in the building, and they knew it beforehand. Wouldn't it be insane for them to be in the building when the planes hit? He's saying this judgment is going to come.

You know it's going to come. You know it beforehand. So what is the admonition? Since you know this before it happens, verse 17, beware.

Beware. So I'm driving down a road. I come to a bridge.

There's a sign on this bridge that says, beware. Bridge out. I would be insane to drive over that roadblock and continue to drive up on that bridge, and there's a big hole in the bridge, and I'm just going to go off the bridge and die.

And there's all these orange signs saying, beware. Bridge out. Beware.

Bridge out. The Father, out of love for us, has written to us the Scriptures. He's written to us 2 Peter 3. He's saying, all this stuff is going to be judged.

This world is wicked. It's evil. I'm going to judge it.

And He's saying, listen, you know this beforehand. Beware. Beware of what? Verse 17.

Lest you also be led away with the air of the wicked and fall from your own steadfastness. Now, I don't know about you, but that verse puts a fear of God in me. And I say, God, I'm not as steadfast as I've been at other times in my life.

Whenever I fall from my own steadfastness, whenever I begin to be led away by the air of this wicked nation, I have to beware. Because I could fall back into the same position of judgment that they're in. And I'm not going to bank my eternal soul on what some false prophet tells me.

You're just safe no matter what. Nothing will ever turn that around. No.

He's saying, please beware. You could be led away by this. And this is the message of overcoming.

It's by faith. And in closing, let's look at Revelation. And we see it in Revelation here, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. He's speaking to churches again.

He's speaking to God's people. People that have been born again. And he's warning them.

He writes to seven different churches and at the end of each church he gives this admonition. Chapter 2, Revelation 2, verse 7. He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches. To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

But if I don't overcome, do I still get the promise? You see the contingency. It's serious. Now see what some people will do with the peanut thing is they'll go to 1 John and say, he that believes in Jesus has overcome the world.

So they'll say overcoming is getting saved. It's synonymous with getting saved. But if you look at Revelation, Chapter let's see here, which one is it? Revelation, Chapter 3, verse 21.

And let's take this synonymous you know, overcoming is getting saved. And we'll read it that way. Revelation, Chapter 3, verse 21.

To him that gets saved will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I got saved and am sat down with my Father in His throne. Did Jesus have to get saved? No. So getting saved isn't overcoming.

Overcoming is overcoming. I have a will. I'm self-willed.

I'm stubborn. And I have to turn that will over to the Father. See, Jesus was in the garden.

He's in this major war going on in His soul. Remember, He was 100% man and He could have sinned. There was the capacity for Him to sin because He was born of a woman.

So He's at the greatest temptation in the garden of Gethsemane, which is to do His own will. It's so intense, He's bleeding out of His pores and He's praying to the Father, Please take this cup from Me. But nevertheless, not My will, but Yours.

And then after the third time, He yielded His will to the Father and He didn't do His will. He overcame. He continued to the end.

That's why He says here in Revelation 3, If you overcome, you can sit with Me. He's saying, I've been through this. I was wrapped in the flesh.

I went through what you went through. I was tempted in all ways that you're going to be tempted. He's not some God, a far-off, that's saying don't do this, don't do that, don't do this, don't do that.

And has never been through it Himself. He's saying, look, I've already been through it. You can do it.

I'll come in you. I'll give you grace to do it. I'll give you the power to do it.

I've already done it. You can do it. So it's more than just getting saved.

And just a couple more here, Revelation 2, 11. He says, notice He says in all of these, to Him that has ears to hear. And just statistically, I don't know, maybe there's 20 people in here.

Statistically, maybe three or four of the people in this room, statistically, will really hear these verses. And that should sober all of us up. He that has ears to hear, let Him hear, verse 11.

What the Spirit is saying to the churches, to Him He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death. Well, if you don't overcome, you'll be hurt of the second death. I mean, it's so clear.

Verse 17. He that has ears to hear, let me hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To Him that overcomes will I give the eat of the hidden manna, and I will give Him a white stone and in the stone shall be a new name written which no man knows, except Him that receives it.

I don't know what all that means, but I'm going to have some white stone with some name on it, and I don't know. But it's going to be cool. Verse 26.

Him that comes, overcomes and keeps my works unto the end. Notice that. And keeps my works unto the end.

To Him will I give power over the nations. Chapter 3, verse 5. He that overcomes the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out His name out of the book of life, but I will confess His name before my Father and the angels. And this is an eye-opening verse, because if you study throughout the scriptures, if you look at Revelation 14 and Revelation 17, it's very clear that people that end up in hell were never written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.

And if you go to Philemon, he says, I want you to greet this brother whose name is in the book of life. And it was kind of a synonymous way of saying this is a good brother. He loves Jesus.

His name is in the book of life. He's one of us. I want you to greet him.

And what some people will teach is that everybody's name is written in this book of life. And if they choose not to follow Jesus, in the day of judgment their name will be erased. But Revelation 14, Revelation 17,

Philemon would prove that to be inaccurate.

So when we come to Christ, we're written in the book of life. And he's saying here, in chapter 3, if you overcome, I won't blot your name out of the book of life. It's a promise.

But if you don't overcome, I will blot your name out. The opposite has to be true. Or else he'd be saying, if you overcome, I won't blot your name out.

But even if you don't overcome, I still won't blot your name out. It'd be silly. When you look at Revelation 22, and he's saying, if you take out of my words, if you add to my words, take from my words, I will take your name out of the book, and I will take you out of the holy city.

Well, lost people aren't in the holy city, only those that have been born again. So this is a promise, because obviously the implications are serious when you look at Revelation 20, 15. Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

It's very serious. And we have to overcome to keep in there. Okay.

Last verse here. Revelation chapter 3. Um. I'm sorry.

Yeah. Well, second to last verse. Revelation chapter 3. To him that overcomes, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God? He shall go no more out.

I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name. Um. Cool.

I mean, some interesting things there. You know, God, he's going to have some new name, and he's going to write it on me. Look at, uh, in the last verse.

Revelation chapter 21. Revelation chapter 21 and verse 7. He that overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. So, do you see? This is an ingredient of the gospel.

Without trying to be redundant, how many gospel tracts have you seen encouraging people to overcome? How many sermons? Like, you've got to overcome. You've got to overcome. It's so rare.

I'm not saying it's totally absent. It's rare. It's rare out there.

Um. And yet, it's so, it's all over. We have to continue in the faith in order to be with him.

So, um. We're going to just have a time here of self-examination, and I would just encourage you to just quiet your hearts, and like a water filter, just thoroughly repent before the Father. Ask him for that grace to overcome.

It seems like we're in the last of the last days, and Jesus is coming, and all of the things that we see are going to be destroyed. He's the only hope. His blood is the only way, and we'll have a time here of self-examination, and then to anybody that wants to, there's no compulsion, we'll pass around a cup and some bread, and we'll, you know, have some of the Lord's Supper, just to remember what he's done for us, and we'll close in some songs.

So, let's just seek the Lord for a little bit here.

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