

7 Characteristics of a Faithful Christian

by Shane Idleman

The sermon outlines seven key characteristics of a faithful Christian, emphasizing the importance of holiness, reliance on God's authority, and the need for spiritual transformation.

Duration: 49:56

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, Revelation 3:7

Topics: "Christian Living", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon focuses on the seven characteristics of a faithful Christian as outlined in Revelation 3:7-13. The message emphasizes the importance of holiness as a priority, the need to come out from the world and draw closer to God. It highlights the significance of humility, happiness, and holiness in a believer's life. The sermon also stresses the urgency of listening to the Holy Spirit, obeying God's Word, and persevering through adversity while holding fast to one's faith.

Transcript

The title of the message is seven characteristics of a faithful Christian. Seven characteristics of a faithful Christian from Revelation 3, 7. So chapter 3, verse 7. If you don't have a Bible, there's one in front of you in the pew. Page 780.

I made it easy. How's that? Page 780, Revelation 3. We've been going through the book of Revelation, taking a survey of each of the churches. The first church, the second church, the third church, the fourth, fifth, now we're at the sixth church.

And the reason it's important is because God has a message for us today as well. It's not just churches way back then, it's us today as well. So here's what Jesus is saying to the church in Philadelphia and what He's saying to many of us today.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, right? These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts and shuts and no one opens. So I'm just going to stop there for a minute because He's telling the messenger of the church in Philadelphia, these things says He who is holy and is true. Jesus identifies Himself as holy and as true.

And the first characteristic of a faithful Christian is this. Are you ready for it? I don't know if you are on this one, but it's true. Holiness is a priority.

Holiness is a priority. It's a characteristic of a faithful Christian. I need to clarify this because holiness is not some guy in a gown, wearing a big hat with a cross on his necklace, and walking around, oh so holy, holy.

It's not appearance, it's something of the heart. The Bible reminds us that we need to come out from among them, be separate, be holy. What holiness is, it's coming out from the world.

It's the world's mindset, the world's culture. You're coming out from among them and you're separating yourself to draw closer to God. It's a holiness, a holy standard that God has.

Charles Spurgeon rightly noted, there will be three effects of nearness to Jesus. When a person is close to Christ, when they have that abiding relationship, when they're full of the Spirit, they have humility, happiness, and holiness. Humility, happiness, and holiness.

The enemy of holiness, are you ready for this, is a rebellious spirit. What is a rebellious spirit? Well, a rebellious spirit says, I want to do what I want, when I want, how I want, to who I want. So God says, come out from among them, be separate, be distinct, be different.

The reason is, because when God says to come out from something, there's sin that tarnishes. When we're caught in sin, when we're in a spirit of rebellion, we're not close to God, we don't know anything of holiness. We've quenched and grieved this Holy Spirit within us.

So the enemy of holiness is a rebellious spirit. But Jesus said here that He is holy. It's interesting, we all think of God as love, right? That's the big thing now, I hear it all the time.

Well, Shane, God is love. Let's not talk about sin. God is love.

Don't judge anybody. God is love, let them do what they want, just God is love. But the number one attribute, far more than any other attribute, that ascends above the rest of them, is holiness.

God is holy. The angels cry, love, love, love. You read your Bible, you know that's not right, right? The angels cry, holy, holy, holy is our God.

They go before Him, they worship, holy, holy, holy is our God. Anytime somebody has an encounter with God, they say, oh my God, You are holy. I'm not prepared.

Isaiah said, I saw the Lord high and lifted up. The train of His robe filled the entire temple. And I said, man, I'm unworthy, I'm a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips.

I'm unworthy, I'm unholy. John saw Christ, he said, I'm unworthy, I'm unholy. So it's holiness that is the heartbeat of a Christian.

The opposite of holiness is carnality. Have you ever heard that word carnal? Or the carnal nature? Or the carnal mind? The carnal mind, the Bible says, is at enmity with God. And enmity is a very strong word because it's not the same as enemy.

You can reconcile with an enemy. But enmity is there's a warfare against God. So something in me, I don't like this part about the Christian walk, but it's true.

Something in me and something in you is at war with God. Carnality. There's a struggle, right? Do you ever feel that struggle? I want to do good, but evil is present.

Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin and death? Paul said. There's this going back and forth. I've told this maybe a year or two ago, but it's a good reminder of a story Billy Graham told many years ago.

Many of you know who that is. He said there was a man that came to him and said, Mr. Graham, I can't beat this demonic element that's inside of me, this evil that I feel. I feel this evil and this darkness.

And it's like I have two dogs fighting inside of me. This evil, wicked dog. And this dog that's consuming this darkness.

And then I have this good dog. But the evil dog keeps winning. It keeps prevailing.

What's going on? What's happening? And he said, young man, you need to starve that dog to death. Because that battle, we either feed the carnal mind, or we feed the Holy Spirit within us. And on that note, I'm going to throw it out there throughout the first service.

About 25 of us met here at 6 in the morning. This morning. I'm going to do it next Sunday and the following Sunday as well.

We just put on worship for almost an hour and a half. Hour and 15 minutes, just worship. On the screen, just worshipping and praying and worshipping and praying.

And we want to throw it out there at 6 a.m. if you guys want to make that on a Sunday. We're just going to try it for a few weeks. But that really gets the heart receptive.

It fills your mind with the things of God. You begin to worship. And it takes some time to get the junk out, right? And this sermon, this part here of holiness, I'm going to stay camped here for a while.

It steps on toes. And it's meant to step on toes. It's meant to pierce.

It's meant to hurt. Because the only way we really change is when we're confronted, aren't we? When we see God, is it me? Am I the man? And I've noticed that those who allow the carnal mind to take over are not worshipers. You won't find them at a prayer night or a worship morning, but you will find them at Cinemark in the mall.

The carnal mind. The carnal mind. Carnality gives God His due a few hours on Sunday, but they forget His call to come out from among them and be separate.

Now, the reason this is supposed to hurt is because, like I said earlier, we rarely change unless we're confronted. For example, I've yet to see a man, maybe if that's you, tell me after the service, who says, you know what? I'm pretty prideful and arrogant. I think I'm going to change today.

No, what usually happens, his wife leaves him a letter stating, I'm never coming back. Your children don't want to talk to you. You're arrogant, you're hard, you're mean.

Then he changes, hopefully. Or the spouse says, you know what? I'm going to stop my addiction to pornography or adultery or whatever it is. I think I'll just stop that today.

But usually it's when the spouse leaves, or if somebody's confronted about their character, about their attitude. Because we rarely change if we're always praised. If it's always the good things and the

highlights, and why are we going to change? David didn't change for a year.

He committed murder and adultery. He didn't change for a year. Until the prophet came to him and said, can I come in? Sure.

We have a man in our village that has a little ewe lamb, a little tiny lamb, it's a family pet. And this rich man came and stole that lamb and killed it for dinner. And David said, that man ought to die.

And Nathan said, you're the man. You're the man. You stole another man's wife.

You're that man. And after a year, that brought David to brokenness and repentance in some of the best Psalms that we've ever read. Oh, that the bones you have broken may rejoice.

Create in me a clean heart. Renew a right spirit within me. Return, return, Lord.

Return the year of your salvation, the days of your salvation. Return that, Lord. Do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

Now you know how he can write, the Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil.

It's that relationship. So the Word of God must confront, and in this area of holiness, we must be confronted or we will not change. That's why I wanted, just as much as I love all of you, if you're not a worshiper, you have to wonder what you're feeding.

If worshiping is boring, but Star Wars tonight is exciting, there's something wrong. Now, maybe Star Wars can be exciting and worship exciting. Okay, I'm not saying that.

But you can't serve two masters. You love the one and hate the other. There has to be a heartbeat for worship, a heartbeat for God, a heartbeat for holiness to come out from among them and be separate.

What holiness is, it's a fire burning deep within. See, there's a fire that burns deep within. Remember John the Baptist, very important words.

He's baptizing people. He said, I baptize you unto repentance. But there's one coming after me I'm not even worthy to take off his shoes.

He's going to baptize you in the Holy Spirit and cold water. Holy Spirit and fire. God is a consuming fire.

His eyes were like flames of fire. So holiness is a burning deep within. We stoke those flames.

You ever poke and stoke and whatever you need to do, you put a little gas on that flames, and you keep that Holy Spirit burning and burning. You want more of God, more of holiness, more separation. And you remember people saying this, probably when you were younger, when they'd say, I'm so stoked.

What does that mean? I'm so stoked. Pumped, that's a good word. I'm so excited.

I'm so excited. It's the same thing. You stoke the Holy Spirit or you quench and grieve Him.

No wonder people don't want to go to church unless it fits on their schedule. No wonder they wish there was one worship song and a two minute message and then free lunch. Because the Holy Spirit has been

quenched in grief.

So we don't want the things of God, we want the things of the world. What do you crave? What are you hungry for? More of God? Or more of the world? Carnality means that the fire is almost out and the rivers of living water are dried up. And I'm only telling you this because I care for where you're at.

I wish, my biggest prayer for this church, for many years, when I'm up early praying about, for many years, is for God to fill you mightily with His Holy Spirit. Let the truth be told. The cat's out of the bag, whatever that means.

Who put him in there, I don't know. But isn't that the most important thing? Shane, what about sound doctrine? Oh, I love theology. But theology without the Spirit is dead theology.

What about potlucks and fellowship groups? Wonderful, but if you're not filled with the Holy Spirit, those become gossip centers. Being filled with the Holy Spirit. That's my prayer for this church.

My prayer for this church for many years has been revival. To wake us up. I didn't do this at the first service.

I don't know if I can find it. It's a note I wrote many years ago. Probably when the church first started.

And I felt that God spoke this to me. I don't say that too often, but He put something deep in my spirit. I could not stop writing this.

And it's so true, talking about our church way back then. You could say they don't, they or you, whatever you want to put in there, but I wrote this down. You don't want revival.

It will ruin your schedule. Your dignity, your image, and your reputation. Men will weep throughout the congregation.

Women will wail because of the travail of their own souls. Young adults will cry like children at the magnitude of their sin. My presence will be so strong that the worship team will cease playing.

Time will seem to stand still. You won't be able to preach because of the flood of the emotions entering your own soul. You'll struggle to find words, but only find tears.

Even the most dignified and reserved among you will be broken and humbled as children. The proud and self-righteous will not be able to stand in My presence. The doubter and the unbeliever will either run for fear or fall on their knees and worship Me.

There can be no middle ground. The church will never be the same again. You don't want revival.

The very thing we need is the very thing we are afraid of. And then Leonard Ravenhill wrote, The church must first repent, then the world will break. The church must first weep, then our altars will be filled with weeping sinners.

See, folks, that's a hard truth. That's a hard truth to swallow is most people do not want more of God. Most people are not filled with the Spirit.

They don't seek after holiness. They don't seek after... They think, well, that'll be weird. That'll be weird.

And what happens is that fire, that deep fire of the Holy Spirit is quenched. The river of living water is run dry. And carnality crushes the Spirit-filled life.

Let me give you a few examples in people's lives I've seen recently. For example, let's just say somebody in ministry, in any area, whatever, they get drunk last night. And they're going to get to church.

They think they're going to minister. They just want to get out of there and go eat lunch as quickly as they can. Others are watching ungodly entertainment, dark entertainment, and they wonder why they have no connection to Christ.

Because they're filling their mind with darkness. How in the world are you going to experience the light of the Gospel if all that's going in is darkness? And then we've got others. See, we all struggle with something.

Right? The enemy looks for opportune times. What's going to take you out is not going to take me out. And what will take me out is not going to take you out.

He knows how everyone's wired. And He'll get the gossipers and the slanders together. And they think they're going to come to church and be filled with the Spirit? With that wrong spirit? Then we have people who are hard and angry.

They're arrogant. They think they're filled with the Spirit. Well, I go to church.

I know the Bible. Wow, good for you. So do the Pharisees.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day knew the Bible better than the common people. They could quote the Torah. Right? They could break it down.

Genesis and Exodus. Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastics.

They had it down. They could break down the old prophets and the minor prophets and major prophets and Amos and Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Haggai, Malachi. They could tell you, I got it down.

No, but you don't have Christ in your heart. You're as hard as stone. See, the same Word of God that melts the wax will harden the clay, the Puritans used to say.

The same Word of God, the same preaching, the heart that melts the wax, the same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay. Same thing with preaching. You've got to open your heart to receive, and holiness is vitally important.

So that's the first characteristic of a faithful Christian is holiness is a priority. Jesus said, My name is Holy, Holy, Holy. And I don't want to beat people up either.

I don't want you to leave going, Oh my goodness, I'll never measure up. The first step to holiness is just saying, Lord, I want that. I need that.

I need to be filled with your Spirit. I need to remove these things out of my life that are detracting or distracting me and pulling you away from me. I need all the things that we're addicted to, the things we

give our affections and our emotions to, the time we don't have with God.

It's a call to a separated life of holiness. When you look throughout the entire Bible, you will not find the concept of a carnal Christian in a positive light. The problem is many churches preach and encourage carnality because they don't want to offend.

I don't want to offend my audience. Let me just tell you everything you want to hear. Just keep doing what you're doing.

Why don't we just make beer after the service? What? Let's all go watch Fifty Shades of Grey. Movie night out, right? Next week we have Harry Potter, all five of them. Come in and bring your Ouija boards.

I mean, right? But the Bible's call is always come out from among them and be separate. So whatever is popular in the culture, you better be going the other direction. Oh, these movies are on the top ten.

Better be going. Oh, these books are best seller, Shane. Better be going.

Right? What is glamorized and what is lifted up woe be to those who call good evil and evil good. This is going to turn into a whole message on holiness, so I better get going. So that's the first characteristic.

Holiness is a priority, but then we see the second characteristic of a faithful Christian. Their source of authority is God. He says, I am holy and true.

Who's your source of authority? Most people get marriage counseling from their local nail salon. They'll ask Merrill Lynch about wise business decisions. Stockbroker, should I give you \$50,000 to invest? Are they going to say, no, no, mm-mm.

They'll say, of course. Of course. Go ask a real estate agent if you should sell your home.

Of course. Of course. Right? I mean, you see where I'm going with this.

You go to the true source. This drives me crazy about men. I'll just be honest with you.

Men that are having struggles at home or struggles in general, most men, amen, I mean, who's not, right? Some kind of something's going on. If you have a perfect week, let me know and I'm going to follow exactly what you did. But they'll go to guys at work for advice.

I'm like, no, no. No, no, no, no, no. That's not good advice.

It's not all about football, beer, and have a soo. You'll get it later on your way home. It's about Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Where are you getting your counsel from? Where are you getting your truth? Jesus said, I'm holy and I'm true. Look to Me as not only the source of eternal life, but the source of all godliness and instruction. The Word of God is like a double-edged sword piercing even to the division of soul and spirit.

It's a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. So look to what is true. That's a characteristic of a faithful Christian is this is true.

Everything else must come under submission to it. But what we do, it happens, well, you know, the Bible says, well, you know what, my broker said this. Oh, well, boy, I better rewrite 1 John.

You know, we fail to look at this. So that is a very important characteristic. He said he has the keys of David.

It's a divinic covenant. He's fulfilling there in the role of the Messiah. And also we look here, a faithful Christian is not continually looking for advice outside of God's Word and outside of His counsel.

Who are you getting counsel from? Who are you listening to? And then verse 8, Jesus said, I know your works. So this was a working church coming out of a love for Christ. See, I have set before you an open door and no one can shut it.

For you have a little strength and have kept My Word and have not denied My name. So He's saying, I've put before you an open door. No one can shut it.

For you have a little strength and have kept My Word and have not denied My name. So the third characteristic of a faithful Christian is they work and they wait for God to open doors. They work and they wait.

Picture when you hear this phrase, waiting on God, I want you to think often now of a waiter. What is a waiter doing? Sitting down having dinner with them? No, they're waiting. They're serving God.

So a faithful Christian, they work and they wait for God to open doors. And the reason I think that's so important is because we love to force doors open, don't we? We think, okay, I think this is what God's going to lead me to do. This is what I want to do.

I'm going to force this door open. I'm going to push it open. I'm going to get a sledgehammer.

I'm going to do whatever. Because you can knock down doors if you try hard enough. I've learned the lesson the hard way.

God at some point says, you want it? You got it. You're not going to listen. I've told you.

I've convicted you. But you want it? Okay, open that door. And that's a door you don't want to go through if God's not opening that door.

So characteristics. They wait for God to open the door. And what I mean by waiting is if you're waiting on an open door, you want God to say, Lord, I need direction.

Just wait on Him. He'll show you. And I've often found that it's when it gets down to the wire that He finally answers.

He often doesn't give me a month's notice. Right? Or six months notice. Oh, okay, thank you for showing me.

It's like, Lord, I'm trusting You. Because it really stretches your faith. I remember the last three times we've moved.

Rent from renting many years ago. Every time we got like 30 day notice or less. Be out.

And we had nothing a week before it was up. And talk about the stress level, right? You know, sometimes He doesn't just open the door that day. Oh, I found a rental.

We got a month to move. No problem. We have one week.

And that stress level's increased. And every time, open tremendous doors. Other times, with what to do with church issues or friends or relationships.

Just wait on Him. Wait on Him. Let Him open the door.

Because then when He opens the door, there's peace and there's assurance. A little strength is all you need. It's interesting here.

He said, for you have a little strength. Have you ever felt that way? God, I'm just barely holding on. Well, you're in good company because it's most in this room.

If you just have a little strength, that's why Paul said, God's grace is sufficient for you. My power, God's power is made perfect in weakness. See, you don't need a whole bunch of strength.

Many times, you're just barely holding on. In Jesus' acknowledgement, you have a little strength. Hold that line.

Hold tight to that. My grace is sufficient in your weakness, in your low moments. My grace is sufficient.

Because if we're always strong, always have our faith filled, we have tons of strength, the enemy can't come against me, and then pride comes in and haughtiness and arrogance. And God says, there's a little bit of strength. Hold on to that.

Also, in this area of a little bit of strength, you need to know this. God will often break you down in order to build you up. He'll take away your strength.

And He'll take away what you were trusting in. See, this is so important, folks. This is where many people either go back to their past mistakes, they go back to addictions, they go back into bondage, they reject God for a season.

This is why. God often breaks us down to build us back up. We don't like this process, but the refiner's fire.

We read about the refiner's fire. Have you read that in the Bible ever? The refiner's fire. Well, guess what? That involves fire and heat.

Oh yeah, bring the refiner's fire. You better be careful when you pray that prayer. Because the refiner's fire... How do you draw out things? See, we're not going to... Very rarely will a person just be sitting here and go, you know what? I am so prideful and arrogant.

God, would You just take that out of me? Yeah, right? But if your spouse leaves you a note and says, I'm not coming home, your boss fires you, and your daughter doesn't even want to speak to you because of your arrogance, your pride, then you'll wake up. Hopefully. What about if a person's making great money? You know what? I think I'm going to quit my job.

It's become my idolatry in my life. I'm following my job more than God. It's time to give up this huge income.

I don't know what we're going to do, but I don't know. Let's just do it. Nope.

Usually he has to begin to rip things away from you before you see that it was idolatry. If a person has character issues, right? You know what? I'm this, and I'm that, and I've got so many areas to work on. I'm just going to start working on those today.

I mean, everybody loves me, but might as well just start getting rid of this and getting rid of this and getting rid of this. It usually doesn't happen that way. We hear piercing words, or we get upset at certain things or certain circumstances begin to... It's almost like God has that big chisel that's starting on Shane's shoulders, right? And his head, and begin to chisel those things away.

So be careful. This breaking time is absolutely important. This is when you grow.

Do you know that... I believe it's... I'm not really good in math, so forgive me. One aspect of algebra and different things is they have to break something down to its lowest common denominator. They break it all the way down in order to build it back up.

That's what God does. When you look at people that you... When you see people that you really respect in the Christian faith, what you don't see is their broken leg and their bruised ribcage and their crutches that they're carrying and they're weeping at home sometimes. You don't see the refiner's fire.

But it's there. You cannot become holy and Spirit-filled and mature in the faith unless that fire comes and cleanses you. And the waves of change, when God's changed something in our lives, the waves of change involve being plummeted and tossed and turned.

You ever see somebody go into a big wave in the sea? The waves of change, when God changes us, there's this tossing around, there's this turning. And I don't like it, and I don't quite understand it fully, but I know that in order to change, in order for us to receive the most from God, that He will often break us down before He builds us up. He'll set us on fire and remove these things.

But one thing you can count on, He says when you pass through the waters, it will not overflow you. When you go through the river, it will not knock you down. When you go through the fire, when you actually go through the fire, those flames will not scorch you.

Why? Because He's the fourth man in the fire. The three Hebrew boys that were cast into the fire, the king said, why aren't they burning? Is that the fourth man? He looks like the Son of God. He kept them from those flames.

The same thing, God says, yes, you'll go through it. Yes, you'll be hard-pressed on every side, but not what? Crushed. You'll be perplexed, but not in despair.

Persecuted, but not forsaken. And you will be struck down, but you will not be destroyed. That's the Christian faith, folks.

We need to wake people up. We need to teach our sons and daughters, it's warfare. There's a battle.

There's an enemy of your soul. He's trying to destroy you. He's trying to take you out early.

He wants your children. I don't want to hear this. Well, you need to hear it.

Because I'm tired of the devil wanting too many battles because people are unprepared for spiritual assault. Everybody's talking about the rapture. We'll just be out of here when it gets tough.

Go travel to Syria where mom is watching her son be crucified and her husband shot to death. Go tell them that. See, that's one thing about this area, even on the rapture note.

There's different beliefs and views, of course, but my big concern on this is we're not teaching perseverance. If you say, don't worry, you're out of here before it gets tough, what happens when it gets tough gets here and they're not out of here? Could it be that the great falling away that that is yet to come is because we're not prepared? We're not warriors. We're not filled with God's Spirit in order to fight.

I've talked about this before, but I think it's important again. Do you know how many flowers are crushed before you put this on? Perfume? Do you know what happens to the flower? Go online. Thousands of flowers crushed for a little ounce.

How do you think your olive on the olive trees feels about your olive oil? You know how they used to get the grape juice? And have all the juice run down. That's kind of gross, but that's kind of gross. I even attempted to make homemade almond milk.

Those poor almonds. Right? You soak them overnight. They're nice and soft.

Take advantage of that. Put them in a blender. Right? Add more water.

Highest speed possible. They don't even look like almonds anymore. It's just white.

And then you have to pour it over something with a cloth or a hard steel thing with small little holes in it. And you've just got to pound that white stuff until it becomes almond milk. But see, the same thing happens in spirituality.

See, we want the blessing, but not the price. We want revival, but not the price. God spoke to me that many years ago.

You don't want to pay the price. Do you want to get on your face before God every morning for years until I come? Is that how bad you want me? Do you want your prodigal son or wayward daughter to come back to the Lord? Are you willing to fast? Are you willing to get on your face before God even if it doesn't happen tomorrow? Because you have to fight. There is warfare.

That's a characteristic of a genuine believer. 4. They keep His Word. They kept the course regardless of the storm, regardless of the criticism, regardless of the heat.

Guys, you've got to keep His Word. I wish I could wake people up to this. You just keep it.

You just hold on to it. You just hold on no matter what comes. Oh, that hurt.

And you just keep His Word. No matter what comes. You keep the course regardless of the storm, regardless of the criticism, regardless of the heat.

You keep the course. I know a little bit about this. A little bit about this.

This preaching really upsets modern day Pharisees. Oh, they hate this. This preaching really hates the carnal Christian who doesn't want to change.

And the world would love that I would just kill over and die. Right? So I know a little bit about criticism. And I know a little bit about the heat.

But you have to keep that course. That's holding on. That's a characteristic of somebody who's genuinely saved.

Verse 9, Indeed, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not. Oh my goodness. Indeed, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews, say they are believers who are not, but they lie.

Indeed, I will make them come and worship before you, before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. So number five, their love leads others to Christ. The characteristic of a genuine believer, actually the characteristic of a faithful Christian, I went off track there, is their ability, their love leads others to Christ.

So I want to throw out this question, when was the last time your love led someone to Christ? Or is in the process of it? I'll give you that. How's that? But see, that's a faithful Christian. That love of Christ compels me, compels you to share it with others.

That's a mark of somebody who is truly on fire for God. Now, was this group forced to worship? Or were they willingly worshiping Christ? Because he said here, they will come and they will worship before your feet and to know that I have loved you. So were they forced? Like we know every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord.

Someday, everybody will acknowledge the true and the living God. But there are other groups here. This could relate to this group.

They're willingly repented. They willingly came back to the Lord. Commentaries are divided.

It's not real clear. We just know that this group came and they worshiped at their feet. They worshiped Christ.

When false teaching is exposed and a person repents, people see the light. When false teaching is exposed and a person repents, people see the light. God always gets the last word.

Do you know that, right? He's the last word in everything. Gosh, they got the final word. I don't like how that ended up.

Don't worry. What's the old saying? I get the last laugh kind of thing. But God gets the final word on all of this.

And then verse 10, because you have kept my commandment to persevere, I will also keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth. So because this church, you have kept my commandment to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth. Now, I could go on a long rabbit trail here.

It would be dispensationalism or people that believe the rapture's coming up and pre-trib, post-trib, those things we've talked about before. This hour of tribulation, He's going to keep you from this hour of tribulation is still to come, they would say. But others look at this and this letter is written to this church in Philadelphia.

Jesus is commending them. He's commending their works. So He's talking to them.

I will keep you, church in Philadelphia, up in Asia Minor, I will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole earth. So was it way back then? Is it coming up? You see how there's different views in this area. But the point of this is they persevere through adversity.

So a faithful Christian perseveres through adversity. They are faithful in the midst of the storm. Faithful in the valley and on the mountain.

So this trial that's going to come upon them, trial that is going to come upon us, trial's coming obviously. He said, I will keep you. I will keep you from the hour of trial.

Now what that looks like, does He just protect? Does He keep them secure in the faith? There's many different ways this could go. But interesting about the book of Revelation, it's relevant to this church He's speaking to. It's relevant to us.

And it's relevant to all believers in history. That's the interesting thing about the Bible. Who writes a book that is relevant anytime? They say this to me.

Oh, that was written 2,000 years ago. The Old Testament, that was 3,000 years ago. Oh, Shane, that is so passe.

That's old school. That's ridiculous. Right? But what book is relevant? Relevant for all times? We must teach perseverance when things get bad.

We must teach perseverance when things get bad. That's why I alluded to that earlier. If we're just telling people that the end is coming, don't worry about it.

You'll be out of here. And we're not preparing them. We're not preparing our children.

We're not preparing them and giving them perseverance. The bottom line is we know Christ is returning at some point. He's coming again.

Is the bride ready for the groom? Jesus said, is that day going to come upon you unexpectedly? He actually said it's going to come upon you unexpectedly like a thief. So be prepared. Be ready.

That's the job of the church is to get themselves ready and also the body at large. And then verse 11, Behold, I am coming quickly. Behold, I am coming quickly.

Hold fast what you have. So he says, I'm coming quickly. Hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown.

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go out no more. Basically talking about the eternal state there. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God and the new Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from my God.

And I will write on him my new name. So it appears that we're given a new name. We've talked about that before.

I don't know if my name is going to be the same, right? In heaven. There's a new name here that is given. Verse 13, He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Now, it's interesting here because behold, I am coming quickly. He said this 2,000 years ago. Right? It's relevant again.

He's coming quickly. And he's talking to the church, get your house in order. Prepare to meet thy Maker, O Israel.

I would love to say, can you put me on Fox News and CNN just for one night? And I would preach, prepare to meet your Maker, America. Prepare to meet thy Maker who created you, who birthed you. Prepare to meet your Maker.

Be ready. Be diligent. I'm coming quickly.

And we always see this throughout the entire Bible. There's always urgency. Always urgency.

Coming quickly. Do this quickly. Don't ponder.

Don't wait for the day of salvation is next week. It's today. The day of salvation is today.

Coming quickly. There's always an urgency. Even in preaching.

From D.L. Moody to the Methodist circuit riders to now. And what I mean by that is I was reading D.L. Moody's book a while back and he was preaching to a large audience there. I believe it was Chicago.

And he didn't give an invitation or didn't challenge people on their walk with the Lord. And guess what happened that evening? The great Chicago fires. And many, many people died.

He said, I will never again, never again fail to point people to their Savior. And I read about Methodist circuit riders. That's how they used to get this message out before the internet.

Did you know that? Kids, there was no internet. A while ago. I remember when there was no internet.

I love when there was no internet. No internet, no cell phones. You just go and they come back and check your voicemails.

Right? You have all day. But circuit riders would go Delaware, Virginia. They would ride on horseback.

They would go into the cities. They would bring the Word of God. They would go on different circuits and say the time is coming.

Repent and believe. And they would go from town to town to town to town. They were called Methodist circuit riders.

They were part of John Wesley's organization there. There was always a sense of urgency. Even to us today.

So just remember that. If God is prompting you to speak to someone, how often do we put it off? Or is it just me? Right? Oh, next week. Or tomorrow.

You see me at the store. You see me. No, next week.

And then next week turns into next month. The next month turns into three months from now. And there's a reason.

There's a prompting. There's a conviction. Something.

Do this quickly. Take your crown. We talked about that in past sermons.

And depending on what your theology is on that, and losing salvation or gaining it or rewards or whatever it is, the bottom line is true followers, those who are seeking God, they're abiding in the vine, will follow Him. They will hold on to that crown. They will not give up the relationship with God.

He'll never fall off the throne. Isn't that a good thing? God will never fall off the throne. And then number seven, we've talked about before, but He brought it out again.

They listen to what the Spirit says. They listen to what the Spirit says. Many problems that you are dealing with right now, I can say this by the authority of God's Word and take you to many different passages.

Many of the problems you're dealing with right now that I've dealt with in my own life is because we are not listening to the Holy Spirit. We're not listening and obeying what He's saying. I saw a great example this week.

I'm going to put my kids on the spot. My wife said, I'll be back in 15 minutes. This kitchen better be clean.

And this living room better be clean. So I'm watching. Watching the timer on the oven.

15 minutes. 10 minutes. 5 minutes.

Oh, but first I should say, oh yeah, no problem. That's enough time. We got it.

15 minutes, good. You know, and everybody's ready. And then they're still busy doing what they were doing, not cleaning.

And that timer's ticking down. Walks in the door. Nothing's done.

Nothing's done. But see, what happened? They listened. Right? They heard.

So then the Bible says, Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying. Who has an ears to hear? Let them hear what the Spirit is saying. So see, you can hear clean the dishes, but unless you do do the dishes, you are living in deception.

You are in rebellion. I'm in rebellion. So when God says, Thus saith the Lord, Do this.

The Spirit is drawing you. The Spirit is convicting you. Get rid of those bad attitudes.

Go mend that broken relationship that you've been holding on unforgiveness for years. It's hindering your walk with the Lord. Remove bitterness.

Remove the anger. Remove the pride. Would you humble yourself? Listen to what the Spirit is saying.

And we make the mistake. We say, God, I got it. You're right.

And then we don't do it. And we think that's obedience. It's funny.

God actually says, I desire obedience rather than sacrifice. I see so many people sacrificing things. I'm at church every Sunday.

I'm serving. God says, Obey Me. Obey Me.

That's better than sacrifice. That's better than sacrifice. I know people who go on fasts.

They'll fast. Wonder why there's no results. Why is heaven seen closed? I want obedience, not sacrifice.

See, they're sacrificing. They're sacrificing. But there's something here in the closet, right, that God wants them to deal with.

They know they need to deal with it. But I'm going to church and I'm serving. I'm even fasting.

I'll go to the worship morning. And God says, that's wonderful, but I desire obedience over sacrifice. Same thing in our own lives.

When we hear the work of the Spirit. James 1.22. We've mentioned it many times. But it reminds us that if we listen to God's Word without doing it, we are fooling ourselves and we live in deception.

You can think of many Christians right now that you know, I know, that are living in deception. Many of you even in this room possibly because you're hearing, you know what it says. That's in John, right Shane? Yeah.

That's where it's at, but that's not where you're at. That thing, how I'm supposed to treat my spouse, right? That's like Ephesians, right? Correct? Yeah. Yeah, you know it.

You know it, but you're not applying it so you actually live in deception. You might as well go to Disneyland and enjoy the day. Be around the fairy tales and the little make-believe things, because that's how we're living if we fail to obey.

Now listen, I don't want to bring out this big sledgehammer and make everybody feel terrible, and oh my goodness. But we have to look at our lives sometimes and say, Lord, am I truly following You? Am I truly listening to what You're saying? I don't want to live in deception. Nobody follows God's Word perfectly.

If you do, talk to me afterwards. I'd love to meet you. But you know what I'm talking about, right? There's a difference when there's a willing heart that says, Lord, I've got to work in these areas.

I want to start listening to You. And then obviously he closes off here with, hold fast. Hold fast.

Hold fast in the Bible means to hold your position or hold your gaze. So you have this position as a Christian, right? You're fighting like a soldier. You have this position.

You're fixed. Your gaze is on Christ. You can look at the cross.

I'll look this way. He just says, now hold. Like a tug-of-war if you want that analogy.

Hold your line. Hold it. Just hold it.

Look, keep your eyes fixed. Keep your eyes fixed on where you're going. Hold your gaze.

Hold your position. And you attack the enemy. Attack again.

Attack again. Attack, right? You're not only in an offensive position or defensive position, defending and holding. You're attacking.

You're moving forward. You're pulling down strongholds. You're casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

You're bringing every thought into captivity. You're holding the line. You're fighting.

You're standing strong. So he just says right here, hold it. Hold fast.

And then I realized this whole time that God is just holding me. I mean, it's not this impression where God's like, hold on. Hold on because you're going to lose me.

I'm gone. You better hold on. It's all you.

It's all you. I don't know quite how it works, but it's not all you. God says, hold on, but I'll hold you.

He says, the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Though he falls, he will not be utterly cast down because the Lord upholds him with His right hand, a position of strength and authority. It's an analogy I gave probably a month ago now when my daughter was real little, two years old.

And she would hold her and she's like, Daddy, I'm holding you. The reason you're not falling and crushing your skull is because I'm holding you. Same thing with God.

The reason you're not utterly falling is because you're falling into despair. The reason depression and anxiety hasn't consumed you. The reason I'm barely holding on.

I know, but He's holding you. He's holding you. That we should be thankful for.

That would ignite praise within our hearts. And that's a characteristic of a faithful Christian is they listen to what the Spirit says and they hold on. They hold on, but they understand that God is really doing the holding.

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