

Does God Have a Wonderful Plan for You?

by Shane Idleman

The sermon challenges the American Church's perception of God's plan, emphasizing the importance of realistic expectations and faith in the face of trials and tribulations.

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Scripture: Matthew 10:16

Topics: "God's Plan", "Endurance in Faith"

Description

Shane Idleman addresses the misconception that God's wonderful plan for our lives equates to a life free of suffering and challenges. He emphasizes that while God does have a wonderful plan, it often involves trials and tribulations that can lead to spiritual growth and a deeper relationship with Him. Idleman warns against false conversions that arise from unrealistic expectations of a problem-free faith, urging believers to understand the cost of discipleship and the importance of enduring through hardships. He encourages the congregation to find joy and value in their relationship with God, regardless of life's difficulties, and to recognize that true faith is not based on circumstances but on the character of God.

Transcript

I kind of left off here a few weeks back, and I want to pick up with Matthew 10, chapter 10, verse 16. And this is Jesus speaking. Matthew 10, verse 16.

Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

You will be brought before governors and kings for my name's sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak, for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

And then we stopped right there for about a month and did a series on the Holy Spirit. And then we're kind of picking up there from Matthew, verse 21. Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child.

And children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

When they persecute you in the city, flee to another. For assuredly I say to you that you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. And what I want to talk to you about tonight is the title you have there in the bulletin.

I might have fooled some of you, but it's me up here. The message is God has a wonderful plan for your life. God has a wonderful plan for your life.

And believe it or not, I believe that. But I like what Ray Comfort said. The preacher promises a bed of roses for those who come to Christ.

But those who are in Christ are evidently sitting on a painful bed of thorns. And what he means by that is sometimes we paint the message of the gospel a certain way. And it gives people a false impression of what the gospel really is.

And there's books out there, there's sermons out there that God has a wonderful plan for your life. But what do you do when life falls apart? And this wonderful plan is not what we thought. And friends of ours that we don't know real well, Morgan knows them better, they lost their daughter about a decade ago.

And then I just saw on Facebook they lost their son. And it's, what do you do with that? I mean, where's this wonderful plan? You know, the Christians across the seas, that title won't fly. You know, it's in one of the countries there that, things I can't even really say up here with kids in the room, that are happening to Christians and being burned and being, you know, and losing a child and cancer and all these things.

What happened to my wonderful life? You know, if God has a wonderful plan for my life, what happened? And sometimes, do you ever catch yourself telling people that? No, God's got a wonderful plan for your life. But then you think, it doesn't equate. You know, you turn on Christian television, we hear God's got a wonderful plan for your life.

And then families are falling apart. We're going through, you know, there's medical things that people, you can't even understand. There's pain that I can't even understand.

And then we get discouraged. We get upset. We get fearful.

We get anxious. But God has a wonderful plan for my life. So I want to talk about that briefly, kind of springboarding off of what Jesus is talking about.

And actually, Ray Comfort wrote a book entitled, God Has a Wonderful Plan for Your Life. And I borrowed this from it. And he gave some pretty interesting statistics.

If you look, and what happens, if we look at life through the American lens, you know, sometimes we have different lenses here in Europe and the American church. And then you have the persecuted church. And you look through the lens of the American church.

And a very high percentage of those raised in Christian homes, kids, they leave the faith. I mean, there's estimates out there of like 80%. Eight out of ten kids in this church will leave the faith.

I mean, that's shocking. That's alarming. I mean, try those statistics with anything else, and they will not call that a success rate.

I mean, get a bunch of investors together and say, listen, there's a 10, 20% chance we'll make it. But 80% chance we won't. And many show, you know, this is where my heart's at.

Many show no evidence of faith. There's really no evidence of faith. Again, in the American lens, in the American church, there's not a lot of evidence for faith, solid faith.

And most of those in America making decisions for Christ will eventually fall away. Now, why are we seeing so many glaring inconsistencies? Why are these statistics that I'm reading? Why are we seeing, you know, somebody says they're a Christian, but then you look at their Facebook page. Or they say they're a Christian, but you would never know it.

Why is there so many glaring inconsistencies, especially here in America? I think one of the reasons, false conversions. There's a lot of false conversions based on it's a wonderful life. You know, this is God's going to get me out of debt.

He's going to be my go-to guy. He's going to fix everything. I'm going to have this wonderful life.

I'm going to drive the car I've always wanted. Get the home I've always wanted. And we go into it with this perception of God has a wonderful plan for me.

And let's just be honest. Many live the Christian life, or they'll say they're Christian. They'll mark Christian on a voter guide or on a survey.

Because it's not difficult. Right? Yeah, I'm a Christian. Life's not difficult.

It's not challenging. And that's why most people do it. So many promise a problem-free faith or a faith with minimal problems.

Yet we deal with a plethora of problems on a weekly basis. So that's what happens a lot. Come to Jesus.

You won't have a lot of problems. God has a wonderful plan for your life. So people go in expecting a certain thing.

And when the expectations aren't met, well, this isn't what I signed up for. This isn't what I was told. And I would think that unrealistic expectations can lead to depression.

They can lead to anger. And it can lead to confusion with God. Talk to people that go into marriage with unrealistic expectations.

They had all these, you know, we thought this. And so people, so what happens, we paint, you know, we have youth rallies. And we say all these things.

God loves you. And He does. Thank God for that.

He has a wonderful plan for your life. You just need to give it over to Him. But we don't help to fill in the blanks.

Because there's a cost. Jesus says there's a cost of following Me. And that's what He says here.

You will be hated for My namesake. A brother will deliver a brother to death and a father his child. And if people can go into faith.

If they can go into it with realistic expectations. Then they're prepared for the battle. Because I believe God has a wonderful plan for your life and eternity.

And God will use your life. He will use your life to glorify God. And I believe in the blessings of God.

I pray for the blessings of God all the time. Lord, help my children. Help me and my spouse in our marriage.

Keep the church together. Lord, bless us, please. There's nothing wrong with that.

But if I go into this thinking, God's going to bless me. Guess what? He's not blessing me. Actually, this is hurting.

What's going on here? And then we fall away. We drift away. So if we can just, even when you present the gospel to kids or whoever.

You say, listen. God might have a wonderful plan for your life. According to what some people think.

But He might not. I mean, life might be challenging. It might be difficult.

But we look to the rock. We look to the foundation. We don't look to what's happening to me.

And that's really that word happy. You know, it comes from happenstance. It's what's happening to me.

My happiness is measured by what's happening to me. Where joy is found in the rock. In my relationship with God.

And you want to see the difference? How many of you were here last Saturday? And you saw the video of John Washington paraplegic in bed. Couldn't get up. And he's got more joy than most people I know.

Tell him God has a wonderful plan for your life. You see how this doesn't work sometimes? But I want to be careful. Because I don't want to make God out to be this mean.

You know, like nobody's going to have fun. And nobody's going to be blessed. I think God will bless His children.

He'll bring prosperity at times. If He wants to do that. And we've been good stewards of that.

And the blessings. Lord, give me shelter. And give my children safety and protect us.

The blessings of God. Thank God for them. But I can't serve God based on that.

Because my relationship with God will be like this. Ups and downs. And peaks and valleys.

And highs and lows. And I think that's what's happening to a lot of people. Maybe even a lot of you.

That's why there's ups and downs. Man, I'm doing good. My job.

My money. We're getting \$4,000 back. And our taxes.

We're taking a cruise. This and everything's good. And then everything starts falling apart.

Now God's got it out for me. So now we're down. And now we're depressed.

And now we can't be utilized. And now we're missing church. And now I don't study my Bible anymore.

My prayer life went to. And then God starts to open some doors. And then here we are again.

And we ride this roller coaster that I don't think we're meant to ride. Is there ups and downs? Of course. But our faith shouldn't be measured by what's happening to me.

I mean, I can tell you right now. If my faith was measured by what's happening to me, it would be difficult. It would be very challenging.

Because we have God in this. But I know, God, you're taking me through certain things. I've created certain problems.

And, God, you're going to be there to get me through these things. Our relationship with God does not hinge on unanswered prayers. It doesn't hinge on trials.

It doesn't hinge on difficulties. And it doesn't hinge on persecution. It hinges on who He is.

He is my foundation. He is your foundation through the difficulties. And I think some of you needed to hear that tonight.

There might be unanswered prayers. There are trials. There are difficulties.

But our relationship with Him doesn't hinge on those things. Here's the key, really. Yes, God blesses.

And He loves to bless His children. But don't judge Him based on blessings and comfort alone. Remember Paul's motto.

What did Paul say? I've learned to be content in all things. And I think if we can learn that, to be content in all things, when a lot of money is coming in and when we don't know how we're going to pay the bills. When our kids are walking with the Lord and when they're not walking with the Lord.

It was hard today. We told our daughter, Aubrey, who's been excited to go to church, don't anybody say anything. But today she was like, I don't want to go.

It's just boring and I just want to stay home. It's like, where did this... Somebody wanted to go to church so much and now you don't. You know, it's like, well, you're going to have to do it.

I don't want to do that. Of course, she's coming. But, you know, it's like, what happened to that... Is it church day? I can't wait to go.

We're going to do this. So somebody now doesn't want to go. It's like, I left there going, oh boy, this is a new one.

I mean, can you imagine your kids not wanting to go to church? A lot of people can relate, right? So I'm going to have to go through that too. I pray not, though. I pray God fill them with... What's wrong with the John the Baptist prayer? He was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb.

You don't think I prayed that? You better believe I prayed that. So it's hard. You know, I drove to church a little down.

Like, what happens when the kids start to walk away? But if we raise them up in the fear of the Lord, if we paint a realistic picture, and I tell them, listen, you've got to have your own relationship with God. Don't follow my coattails. Just because of me, you're going to have to... And He might take them through hell to experience heaven.

Granted, I don't want them to go through what I went through. But if it leads to a deeper relationship with God, I'll take that over lukewarm living any day. And so we can't measure our faith by what you're going through.

Can we? Because then we're going to be upset at God. And when we're upset at God, guess what happens? We take it out on others. Have you ever noticed that? When there's a thankful heart, and we're in right relationship with God, everybody's blessed around us.

But when we're upset at God, upset at the circumstances, upset at different things, upset, we're like, Lord, what's going on? What's going on? We start to get upset. And we wonder, where's this coming from? I know I remember carpal tunnel syndromes in my wrist, and recently it's hard to write more than three or four sentences. Like, how am I going to start doing this? And then my eyesight now is not as good as it used to be, and things are blurry.

It's like, Lord, what's... You start getting... What's going on? And then you start to worry and get fearful and anxious. But God says, listen, you've got to rest in who I am. Rest in Me.

I never said life was going to be... I never said I'd have a wonderful plan for your life according to you. Because we want comfort and convenience. And there's nothing wrong with that.

I think sometimes you should kick your feet up on the couch and enjoy a good movie with your family. Get some healthy popcorn. You know? Do it.

Relax. There's nothing wrong with these things. You knew I had to throw that in there, right? Okay? Alright.

Oh, yeah. I should have put that in the announcement. There's a health seminar coming up, too.

Right around January 1st. New Year's Resolutions. We want to help people physically as well as spiritually.

But here's how we often promote the gospel. And sometimes I'll listen, even on radio. You know, we have to be careful.

Because we want people to like the messages. And on TV. But here's... I've often thought of this.

It's almost like if the Navy SEALs... I told you I have a family member in the Navy SEALs. It's like, wow. You guys... I mean, I couldn't make it, I don't think, a day.

Just tell me I don't get eight hours of sleep. And you've got to stay up for two days. And they get you as close to death as possible.

I mean, it's incredible what happens. But what about if they promoted the Navy SEALs like this? You'll be stationed in Hawaii. There'll be luau's every week.

Free snorkeling. Cruises to the islands. And this is what... How many people would sign up for that? I'm there.

But then when they get there, what happens? I'm out of here. Except for the very few people who actually knew what they were getting into. But if that's how we present the gospel.

All you have to do is say a little prayer. And Jesus will be your best friend. You're a king's kid now.

He's going to bless you beyond anything you've ever... You think you're doing good financially now. You haven't seen nothing yet. You just have to give your life to him.

And say, Jesus, I'm going to follow you. And really, you're not saying I'm going to follow you. You're telling him to follow you.

So he can bless your plans. And we don't present the correct gospel. So they go into this going, uh-oh.

Have you ever experienced satanic attack when you're doing something for God? It's not pretty. It's a nightmare. And we go into these things unprepared, unarmed, and untrained for battle.

Nowhere throughout scripture will you see this bed of roses. You'll see warfare. The weapons of our warfare.

Paul talks about a soldier engaging in battle. Spiritual battle. The heavenly hosts are against us.

The principalities are against us. Demonic forces are against us. You think it's going to be easy raising kids in a Christian home? Putting them in the public school system? It's going to be easy.

A bed of roses? What happened? This guy promised me that God would fix all my problems. Sometimes it creates problems. But now as the good shepherd is holding me, as he's taking me through them, that's the difference.

Because, oh, this is what I read about. No wonder all hell's breaking loose in my house right before we planted this church. Wow.

Unbelievable. But you learn to rely on God. Okay, Lord, you're taking me through this.

The call, hey, we just found cancer. Oh, there must not be a God. No, I'll go with it through you.

I'll go with it. Go with you through this. Or the slips that are coming out now.

Navy Hospital, Northrop, and all these things. And you're no longer employed. Here's a nice wristwatch.

30 years of service. God, what happened? God, you're not. No, I'm there.

I will be with you. I'll take you through this. Rely on me.

I created the universe. You don't think I can sustain you? Or we get bad reports from something medically is going on with our kids or our spouse. And we're like, Lord, you didn't promise.

Oh, no, I'll be with you. You see the difference there? We want to avoid all these things. Me too.

I want to avoid sickness. I want to not have to worry about certain things. But there's no trust there.

And there's no faith in God when we have to, you know, if everything was a bed of roses. If life was simple, how would you know God in all these different areas if He didn't hold you through? If He didn't bring you through? Then it goes on to say in verse 32. I'm going to skip ahead to verse 32.

And you'll notice something interesting. The truth divides even families. The truth of God's Word divides even families.

I know that's not popular. But Jesus said the truth will divide. Because allegiance to God is stronger than allegiance to family.

And this is interesting. Before I read verse 32, I didn't put this down. I just thought of this.

But we have to, a lot of times we're struggling for unity, right? We want unity in our homes. We want unity in the church. But remember, unity is never unity for the sake of unity.

Can't we all just get along? No, not all the time. Not all the time. There's unity with the Father, unity with the Son, unity with truth, unity with faith.

And from that, I'm united with other people. But sometimes when we stand for God, we're going to be divided with other people. And a lot of times, sometimes, where can I have this harmony in my home? And we should want that.

Or family members. Like I've explained before, I have family members who are not Christians. And it's hard to find unity.

But the truth sometimes will lead to disunity. The key is not to try to foster that. And you've heard me talk about this before.

It's okay if the truth offends, but your attitude shouldn't. See the difference there? The truth will offend, but your attitude shouldn't. Arrogance, pride, condescending.

Those things shouldn't offend people. We should be loving and gracious and merciful and forgiving. But the truth will offend.

That you can't prevent. Nor should you. And then Jesus goes in verse 32, Therefore, whoever confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven.

Short side note, that's one of the points of baptism. And that's why I put that article in the bulletin. Does getting baptized save me? Obviously the answer is no.

For those hearing this later. But whoever confesses me before men, that's what baptism, baptism was a form of confessing before others. Especially in Jesus' day.

If you went and got baptized in the name of Jesus, now we do it like, oh yeah, family showed up, great. Well, there family wouldn't show up. Family would disown you.

And they're making a public profession of their faith. And then Jesus says, and I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven. And I've noticed that's really one way to find, to really know somebody's serious about their faith.

Or if they're a false convert. Or if they're not really serious about their faith. Because are they embarrassed of God? Think about that.

A lot of people, especially young adults, oh man, I don't know God too much. That's my parents' thing. And then they come here and they're crying like babies.

But then they get out and, no, no, no, no, no. Whoever confesses, I mean, that's genuine faith. You will confess him before others.

Somehow, some way people know that you are Christ's follower. That's a Christian, that's the whole point of that word Christian. Christ's follower.

They're first called Christians in Antioch because they follow Christ. So we have to resemble our master, we resemble our teacher. If there's no resemblance there, if we don't want to... And I remember when I was in my early 20s, I didn't want people to know I was a Christian.

If you asked me, I would tell you. It's the last thing I wanted. You know, kind of that closet Christianity.

And it really has to look at your heart. What's going on there? Verse 33, But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth.

Isn't this interesting? This is Jesus. I wish people would just read the Bible. Peace, coming, wonderful counselor, everlasting father, prince of peace.

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. People say, well, Jesus is saying one thing and doing another. No, Jesus was born to die.

He came to save sinners from God's judgment. He came to be that propitiation to absorb the wrath of God. He came to take our place.

That's why He came, born to die. And then in that, who He is does not bring peace. That brings a sword.

Because it divides. Now you upset the whole satanic realm. Now you've got light and darkness at odds.

So Jesus said, by My coming, by the way, that's not going to bring peace to this world. It's not going to bring peace. In the end it will, but right now it's not bringing peace.

I did not come to bring peace. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

And a man's enemies will be those of his own household. Wow, God help us. Do you know, if you've been following anything, what's going on in Iran, Iraq, and ISIS, and those different things, do you know who's often the one turning in? The Christian? Family members.

Family members. Or dads beating their daughters half to death because they converted to Christianity. It brings a sword.

It's not peace right now. But that relationship with Christ will bring a sword to our own families. And that's hard to absorb, is it not? Children screaming, saying, I hate your God, I never loved Him.

As they storm out their parents' house. In America, we deal with this a lot. The more the light shines in the house, the darkness wants to flee.

Think about that. The more the light of the Gospel will come into your house, when you start to being selective, saying, we're not allowing that garbage in on direct TV. We're not allowing that garbage in on whatever.

And there's all kinds of pornography and satanic things. We're not allowing that in our homes anymore. We're going to worship God.

We're going to pick movies and programs that glorify Him. No, not perfect. I make mistakes a lot, too.

I rent things from Redbox and go, why did somebody tell me to rent that? Man. So anyway, once you stand for that, though, family members who are not in alignment aren't going to like that. Happens a lot of times at the Super Bowl.

Right when the commercials come on, that's time for me to go to the bathroom and, you know, kind of run out to my truck, get some things. I mean, it's like all this stuff. And family members are like, what's wrong? Look at that.

Carl's Jr. commercial on girls in lingerie. How far have we drifted in 25 years? Remember, I've often said, love it, leave it to Beaver. And I love Lucy.

I mean, just in my lifetime. It's amazing. But when you begin to stand for that truth, that's when you're called fanatical.

That's when you're called weird. That's when you call extreme. That's when you say, no, I just want purity of heart.

I just want holiness of mind. I just want to follow Christ and be like my teacher. That's why it brings division.

And if you don't have it, thank God for it. You should be on your faces thanking God that your family's united and their family's here with you. Because there's an opposite to that.

It's very difficult when families are at odds in this area. You know, right? It brings a sword. It brings a sword.

You've got close family members that raised a Mormon. You see them often. And I've got to sit there.

They already know how I believe. But just talking about anything. You know, if it gets on that line of Christianity and the gospel.

Why do you always talk about that? Don't talk about religion and politics. Those are the two hot buttons. Right? It brings division.

The truth brings division. And you guys don't see it a lot. I've shared this before.

But, you know, people leave here and they're like, oh, man, we love the service. Thank you. But the emails sometimes don't love the service.

I was driving on the 14th freeway and you came on. Who in the world do you think you are? You arrogant, bigoted man. Truth.

Upset. They just don't like the truth. It upsets.

It upsets. Verse 37. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

And we've talked about that before. Jesus is just saying, obviously love your father and your mother. He's rebuked people for not loving them and giving to them and helping them.

But if you prefer your family over God. Have you ever seen family worship over God? They're living vicariously through their children. It's all about their children.

It's all about this. And we put that above God. And he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it. And he who loses his life for my sake will find it.

And you might say, what is he talking about? He who finds his life will lose it. Well, in a nutshell, this is the question he's asking. Who or what are you living for? Who or what are you living for? You know, it's real easy.

Look at your calendar. Look at your checkbook. If you tell me where your money goes and where your time goes, I'll tell you who you're following.

This isn't a, you know, hit to get the offering box on the way out. I don't do that. But I can tell you, if you look at, if you want to see what you really value, what you really worship, and you might say, well, I got my car payment from my wife.

I got my house payment. We got food. We got, oh, yeah, that's providing.

You're doing provision. But if you really look at where our time and energy is focused and our money, it'll tell us. It speaks volumes as to what we worship.

Look at where it's all going. That's what we worship. Are we seeking to save? He who finds his life will lose it.

They're finding their life. If you want to know what that means, just follow Hollywood. That they're trying to find their life.

Right? Making millions. Jockeying for position. Wanting the next part.

Wanting the next role. It's all about me and promoting myself and elevating myself. It's all about this life now and whatever I can get from this life now and taking everybody to the bank and trying to get everything.

It's about my life. And Jesus said, as soon as you lose that, as soon as you lose that and you say, listen, Lord, it's all about you, I'm not going to be doing these things anymore and trying to build a name. It's all about you.

Now, do you have to still pay the bills? Of course. Those are all. But it's about you.

It's really where the heart's at. Where's your heart at? Where's my heart at? I mean, think about it. If my heart was, man, how many people can we get in here? Build a big church.

Look at putting me on TV. If that's why I'm coming here, this is going to fall apart. God says, oh, okay, you want to be glorified.

Let me just allow you to do that and you'll watch what happens. When we come in here and say, even last week, people say, you've got to get these messages on TV. I'm like, no, no.

If God does it, he'll do it. I'm not even going that direction. That's all.

He has to open the doors. He has to close the doors. He has to keep my heart tender.

He has to keep my heart humble. He has to keep my heart broken. It's all about you.

I have to have died a self every week. Lord, this is your, what do you want to do? This is your church. This is what do you, you know, what do you want to do, God? And that's what this whole issue is about, finding your life.

Are you focused on the things of the world or are you focused on the things of God? That's what this is all about. And then he said there are times to stand and there are times to flee. I think I haven't gotten to that part of scripture yet when he talks about fleeing.

I did earlier, I think. But there are times to stand for the truth. There are times to flee and avoid adversity.

We don't look for adversity. We don't go around trying to pick a fight with the truth, do we? Because that's not of God. If we're out there picking a fight, that's not of God.

There's going to be enough adversity coming on its own. And Jesus is saying endurance is a mark of genuine faith. When there's endurance to keep running the race, that reflects genuine faith.

And then I'm going to go now to 24, so we're going back to verse 24. A disciple is not above his teacher nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher and a servant like his master.

See, this is the humility aspect I talked about. A disciple is not above his teacher and a servant is not above his master. Everybody wants to be above everybody.

Everybody wants to outdo. We want to be above, above. He says, no, it's enough.

It's going to be hard enough. Life's going to be hard enough. Just be like your teacher.

Be like Christ. And there's humility there. There's humility in just saying, OK, Lord, I want to be like you.

And if they've called the master of the house Beelzebub, which is not a good name. You haven't heard any kids name that, right? Lord of Flies, I think, is what it means. It's about the devil.

How much more will they call those of his household? So Jesus is being called all these things. He's being persecuted. People are saying, we hate you.

We hate what you stand for. And Jesus saying, if I'm being called these things, what do you think they're going to call you? So don't be surprised. Everybody's so surprised.

All this persecution is coming against Christmas. You can't say Christmas in these stores. You have to say happy holidays.

You can't. All this persecution. What's going on? They hate your master.

They hate your teacher. They hate your Lord and Savior. If they hate him, you can better well assure yourself that they're going to hate you.

If you're living for him. If you're not. And nobody hates you.

You might wonder why. We don't go looking for this. It comes naturally.

And then he said in verse 26, therefore, do not fear them. Jesus said, listen, don't fear these people. Isn't that one of the hardest things? America's afraid of persecution.

I mean, I was looking a while back on how many gun safes were sold in the last 10 years. And stocking up on ammunition. Everybody, you know, just hunkering down for something.

We're so afraid of this persecution. Therefore, do not fear them. For there's nothing covered that will not be revealed and hidden that will not be known.

If they hate Christ, they will hate us. And that's what he's saying here. Listen, there's a day of judgment coming someday.

A day of reckoning. Everything that's hidden will be revealed. There's a time where God's going to put everything in order.

Don't fear them. Don't fear them. God is sovereign.

God is in control. So on this question, I think I asked this a few years ago, but I want to ask it again. Especially to churches.

And this applies to this church or any other church. Does the world love the way that we do church? Because if the world loves the way we do church, there might be a problem there. Because Christ said the world's going to hate you, not love you.

So does the world appreciate that your church never challenges or calls things into question? Do they like the fact that your church never makes them feel uncomfortable or offended? Are they grateful that you never discuss controversial issues? If so, you may want to reconsider Jesus' words that true disciples will be hated by the world. Now, let's put a big disclaimer there, right? But churches should be welcoming, loving, gracious, forgiving places of worship. We're all sinners.

So when a sinner comes in, hey, I'm a sinner. Same as you. The only difference is I've accepted God's gracious gift of forgiveness.

But we're all sinners. We should be welcoming, of course. But we shouldn't be affirming.

See, I can welcome you without affirming your lifestyle. And if the world would put this sermon out there in the media, they would hate it. They would hate this kind of message.

Why? Because the world doesn't want to hear the truth of God's word. The world says, get that away from me. The world will hate you.

Really, what they do is they hate the Christ they see in you. So it's not you per se, it's the Christ they see in you, the truth they see in you. They hate that.

So Jesus is saying, listen, don't be fooled here. Don't be mistaken. So I want to clarify that.

I think churches should be known to be welcoming. And they should be loving. That's a loving church.

We go out and we reach people. But the world ultimately is not going to like the message coming from the pulpit every Saturday or every Sunday. The world shouldn't like that.

If the world does, that means you're tickling the ear and you're pleasing the masses. You're pleasing the church and you're pleasing the world. And often if you're pleasing the world, then you're not pleasing God.

And I'm not going to name names because I do sometimes. But if you turn on Christian television, a lot of times when I'm talking to unbelievers, especially a few years ago, no matter where I was, I was talking to unbelievers in general. They would say, but you know, there's this one guy on TV I really like.

He never upsets me. He never says anything wrong. I love that guy.

But what are they preparing these people for? Are they ever showing them the other side of that? If the world loves everything we say, you might want to check everything against Scripture. Because Jesus says that the world will not like what you're saying. They will not like the truth.

It doesn't mean we go out and find fights. It doesn't mean we're to be obnoxious. And actually, if the truth be told, it will be the truth that offends, not my attitude.

My attitude shouldn't offend people. People say, I don't like what he says, but I like them. I like them.

They've got a gracious, caring, concerning heart. A humble heart. I like them, but I don't like what they're saying.

So you see what Jesus is saying there? The truth offends people. There's no way to get around that. Now I'm going to make a controversial statement.

Okay, I hope you remember this. Jesus, now the next verses we're going to pick up, verse 27. Jesus actually teaches the fear of God.

Can you believe that? Many of you in the Bible will say, yeah, I know that. But those who have not read the Bible much will not believe that Jesus actually teaches us the fear of God. He talks about hell, and he talks about fearing God.

But when we do that, like, oh, no, you're just a hater. No, no. We're just following the Master.

We're just following what He says. We don't have to defend the Bible. Charles Spurgeon said, defend the Bible.

I would just as soon defend a lion. Just turn the Bible loose. It will defend itself.

Now, we should defend the truth. It's called apologetics. Give a reason.

Give people a reason for the faith that's within you. But the funny thing is, you don't defend truth. The truth defends itself.

All apologetics is, is you're presenting the truth, and the truth defends itself. It's not like a whole bunch of attorneys sitting in a room going, oh, how are we going to defend this Bible? I don't know. You know, you just turn it loose.

You let it defend itself, and it will. Verse 27, whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. And what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.

Let's stop there for a minute, because I'm not sure everybody knows what that means. Jesus is saying, whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. And I think this has a lot to do with what people call a prayer closet, or a sanctuary, or the quiet time, or the devotional time.

This time with the Lord is invaluable. If you get anything else from this sermon, I hope you get two things. If you're not in a right relationship with God, number one, I pray that you repent and get in a right relationship with Him.

That's primary. But second thing I want you to take when you leave is that you need to have a strong devotional life. You need God to speak to you in the dark place.

You need Him to speak to you in the quiet times. He says, be still and know that I am God. This is vitally important.

This is how you can deal with issues at work. This is how you can deal with issues in your family. This is how you deal with things.

You speak in the light what you hear in the dark. The time you spend with God, then you come out well equipped. My concern is many Christians are not well equipped.

They don't know how to handle anything. They're falling apart because they don't have this time alone with God. In the scriptures, in meditation where repentance takes place, where we look to the truth and we begin to apply the truth of God's word.

And then Jesus said, verse 28, And do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. And it's funny too, in America we just kind of glance over this, but you read this in a third world country where Christians are being persecuted. This is golden.

They cherish their Bible. It says, do not fear the person who can kill your body. And they know exactly what that means.

It's been estimated there's 170,000 martyrs a year. Not 17. 170,000 people are being killed for the faith and belief in God.

Why is that? Because people hate the truth. And we are so blessed in this nation. I'm just so tired of people being unthankful and critical when we should be the most happy, blessed, thankful people on the planet.

And then we just read this and go, oh yeah, that makes sense. But you read this where it's actually happening, and it takes on a whole new meaning. Do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.

And I truly believe that the fear of God was brought back in. We would see our nation change. We would see churches change.

We would see people change. If you truly had the fear of God in your heart, if I truly had the fear of God in my heart, to His full capacity, as much as we could, it changes the way you live. Most of us have the fear of the Lord, right? That's why we're here.

But I mean looking and meditating on that, fearing God. Like gravity. You know, you don't jump off a 100-story building.

Nobody does that. Unless they want to do it on purpose. Why? Because they fear that gravity.

They fear that. And there should be a healthy fear of God again. That's how you bring the prodigal son home.

That's how you restore marriage problems. That's how you restore all these issues going on, is you bring back the fear of God. Preach the fear of God.

Teach the fear of God. And people fear God. Then they fear how their choices are made.

See, I'd rather have people on the Supreme Court, or the appeals court, or the California courts. I'd rather have men and women who fear God than anything else. Leaders who lead our country in the fear of God.

It's the fear of God that will change your life as well. And if you don't fear God, I would encourage you, look to the One who created everything. He created everything.

He holds our life. Daniel said, he mocked the king. He said, oh king, the God who holds your very breath in His hands, and He owns all your ways you have not glorified.

And there's a fear, there's a healthy respect there. But then, of course, the typical Jesus, He builds back up. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.

But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear. Therefore, you are more value.

You are more value than many sparrows. There's value. And I think people need to be told that too.

Young adult. Old person. Young person.

In the middle ground. You have value. You have value.

You have so much value that God sent His Son to die for you. I mean, it's amazing truth if you begin to open and look at it. People say, oh, God doesn't love me.

You have no value. He died. He died for you.

What do you mean no value? The problem is the enemy comes in and says, I'm worthless. I'm useless. I've done too much damage.

Now God can't use me. Foolishness. Foolishness.

Actually, it's a word of encouragement. Those who have been forgiven much love much. Those who have been through the most are often those who follow close to Christ.

Those who have been through the most follow the closest to Christ. So let that be a word of encouragement. If you're saying, man, Shane, you don't know my life.

Well, I know the God who died for you. And you do have value. That's why He died.

And as you see, Lord, you love me so much. You forgive me so much. You will be closer to God than a theologian who has a Ph.D. in church history.

You'll be more closer to God than many of our seminary professors in America. You'll be closer to God because those who have been loved much, been forgiven much, they love much. So allow that pain to draw you closer to Christ.

Allow those failures. I felt so many times good. Allow that to, not saying good do that, but allow that to draw you closer to Christ.

And it's a very funny thing I've noticed. We don't want a testimony, right? We don't want to do all these bad things. But I've noticed the people that don't do anything, that leave it to beavers, aren't very close to God.

They're modern day Pharisees. Right? They're arrogant. They have their nose up at everybody.

How could you? But then you see the people who went through addiction, who went through broken homes, who went through divorce and adultery and abortion, all these things, and they're so broken. They come bringing their brokenness to God. They are on fire for God.

They are filled with God's Spirit. Because of that. So I'd encourage you, don't, because I hear that a lot.

Oh, I have no value. God can't use me now. I'm worthless.

Look at you. You're a pastor. No.

No different. No different. The value that God places on me is the same value He places on you.

Exact same. Sinner saved by grace. I've just been called to come up here and stumble and fumble and teach His Word.

And you've been called to do something. You've got to see that value though. I think many people walk around beat up.

I've got this addiction I can't kick. I've got this thing I can't get over. I can't.

And we just allow that to beat us down and down. Instead of allowing it to propel us towards Christ. Those things, those things we struggle with should actually push us towards the cross.

Instead we run away. So remember that. Jesus says you have more value to God than even sparrows.

We kind of joked at the first service. I wish you would have said something a little bit more significant. You know, you have more value than 10 million pieces of gold.

You know, a few little sparrows. Who cares about those little birds? But what He's saying here is, listen, even God cares for the little sparrows. You wonder where all these birds get food? They have worms.

God provides for all. He goes, listen, He's saying, listen, if God provides for all these, how much more do you think He's going to provide for you? How much more value do you think you have than the sparrows? You have tremendous value. You need to see that.

So loving Jesus on one hand says, listen, fear God. There's a place called hell. But on the other hand, He says you have value.

You need to turn to God. See, that's a balanced approach even to preaching. Remember I talked about before, you share the love of God, but you share the judgment of God.

You share the grace of God, but you share the wrath of God. You share the mercy of God, and you share the holiness of God. You share all His attributes.

God isn't just this and this. He's everything. The attributes of God.

God is love. God is just. God is holy.

God is righteous. God is caring. He's everything.

He's not just a part of this and a part of that. How does that look? I don't know. But I know.

He's as much love as He is righteousness. Actually, the attribute that is spoken of the most of God throughout the entire Bible is not love. It's holiness.

The angels cry, holy, holy, holy is our God. He dwells in unapproachable light. He is a holy God.

People fell down in the holy presence of God. Priests, prophets, and kings fell down in the holy presence of God. People should walk into a service and feel the holy presence of God.

It's that holiness. Holiness is something we can't relate to. Because God is so holy and we are so sinful that it takes Christ to bridge that gap.

And then we can get a slice of heaven. That's the attribute that's spoken of most about God. If you do a study on the attributes of God, it's holiness.

And it's holy standard. But let's just talk about this for a minute. Why do most people not promote the fear of God? If I ran an ad in the Animal Valley Press this week and said, next weekend we're talking about the fear of God at Westside.

You think anybody would come? Just a few hardcore people, right? But if you said seven steps to financial success and six steps to losing weight in time for the new year, we wouldn't have enough seats. But why? Why do I want to talk about this? Look at the top ten sermons on certain sermon sites. They're not this.

This is definitely not one of them. You turn on Christian, show me. Well, I don't know who does it.

But if you're watching Christian television tomorrow, find one sermon on the fear of God. Or on hell. Or on judgment for that matter.

Or on repentance. Or on sin. Or on the cross.

Or on the blood of Christ. Why? Well, I think John 12, 43 sheds light. For they loved human praise more than the praise of God.

For they loved human praise more than the praise of God. And this is dead on. Because we all struggle with this.

This is probably the area God had to rip out of me first before pastoring. Because I used to be a motivational speaker, if you can believe that. Can't believe that? I didn't say anything, anything bad.

They used to have, I'd speak at conferences and they'd have all these cards. What did you like about the speaker? Attire this. It's like all these positive things.

All these positives. Oh, great, great. If you have one negative thing, it's like, ah, I've got to work on that.

And you know you're working on that. And God just started to rip my heart out with the word of God. I'm like, oh, oh, oh.

And I told Morgan, I said, man, I got... This is about ready to take a right turn really quick from everybody liking me to people being offended because of the gospel. She said, okay, well, that's what God's doing. And then I don't have a lot of time to explain.

I think it was 2003, we were somewhere and somebody just out of the blue kind of gave me a word saying, I think God is doing this in your heart and in your life. And it was like dead on to, I mean, it still gives me shivers to think about how... And then one of the things the guy said was, but you've got to break out of this shell before God can fully use you. And I knew what that was, this shell of people pleasing.

Because if you come up here looking for the applause of men, you cannot receive the applause of God. They don't go together. Now, spirit-filled believers like what I'm saying, of course.

Good, about time, somebody's doing it. But what they're talking about here is the applause of the world. The Bible also talks about do not be highly esteemed among men.

If you're liked by all men, you probably are not going to be liked by God because we're pleasing people. We're telling, oh no, don't worry about it, we're saying everything. You know, these interfaith movements.

You know, you see all the interfaith, you see Muslims now bowing down in our nation's National Cathedral this week. Interfaith movements, National Cathedral. Billy Graham spoke there September 11th.

Or September, what is it, September... 2001, September 11th. Now we have the Muslims bowing down in the National Cathedral. Don't get me started on that, but that's another... Trying to be interfaith, right? America needs to say ecumenical movements, we need to welcome... We love all faiths, but all faiths can't be right.

Only one can be the true way. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, the life. Think about that.

Did you ever realize that all religions can be wrong, but they cannot all be right? Every single religion on the planet can all be wrong, but they cannot all be right. Because they're divided on every point. And that's why when Christianity comes in here and says it, albeit not right all the time, but says, listen, Jesus is the only way, the only truth, the only life, and then we just get out of the way, that upsets people.

How dare you? That's what Jesus said. Listen, they're going to hate you. They're going to hate you because of proclaiming the truth.

And that's why sometimes it cracks me up. You guys are great here, but when this message gets on the radio or stuff, people pull over and say, I had to pull over on the 14 freeway, and you're just a narrow, arrogant, who do you think you are? And get emails from people because they hear this truth and they don't like it. So they think I'm just sitting at home going, oh no, God, darn it.

I say, oh good, there you go. That's why you didn't like it, because you didn't like what I had to say. You didn't like the truth.

It's the truth that offends. If the truth is being preached in a spirit of love and gentleness and humility and it still offends, then people have a problem with the truth. Remember, I think I told you guys this, I know I told the first service, but don't let your attitude offend people.

The truth will, but not your attitude shouldn't. The way we come across. Because sometimes we get so proud in our truth, and that comes off in pride and arrogance, and we beat people up instead of lovingly invite them in.

I mean, trust me, if people are getting louder, if you're getting quieter, it's stronger. I talk to people a lot, atheists. They're like, hold on, hold on, hold on.

So, you know, you guys, I joke a lot. Two planets here, right? And then, so how did a male get here and a female? And then the lungs just developed themselves, and the brain kind of started going on its own, and the central nervous system came in, and the skeletal system. How did all this just happen? Lovingly, they don't know.

The bottom line is they don't know. But there can't be a God. There can't be a God.

You can believe everything else. You can believe that we are planted here by aliens. You can believe anything else.

But when you say that there's a God who requires obedience, and He's Lord and you're not, uh-oh. People get upset. And that's what He's saying here.

How to understand the fear of the Lord. I don't want to leave you hanging on that. But how do you understand the fear of the Lord? Proverbs 2, 3-5 says, If you cry out for discernment.

So some of you, obviously it's hard because you've got a mixed audience. Some are like, Shane, amen. Man, preach it, brother.

We need to hear more of this. Some of you are saying, when is He over again? And some people are saying, I don't know. I'm never coming here again.

So it's a mixed crowd. But I just want to tell you this. If you cry out for discernment, and if you lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek for a silver, and you search for a hidden treasure, then you will understand what the fear of the Lord is.

Then. But you have to cry out for it. You don't just walk outside and, oh, now I've got the fear of the Lord.

You have to cry out for it, saying, Lord, I want discernment. I want to know You in a powerful way. I want You to show me.

Because that's a prideful heart breaking and opening itself up to God. And then the fear of the Lord comes in and you say, now I understand it. Now I understand it.

He's righteous. He's holy. I'm in awe of Him.

And I am nothing. I am fearful. But I'm also fearfully and wonderfully made, and I'm fearful of that person who made me in a good way.

I mean, what would be to the little child who doesn't fear their parents? That happen to your house too? I tell my kids, if I spoke to my dad the way you speak to me, there's no fear there. There's no trepidation of, I don't want to upset. But what, I guess, what Christian parent wouldn't love their child? Of course, it's love.

It's the fear. Me fearing God isn't because He's mean and going to hurt me. It's fearing who He is and what He's called me to do.

And from that fear, I make better choices. From that fear, I want to honor Him. From that fear, I want to look to His Word.

Because I fear You, I respect You. Hey, when I was in construction, I was digging with heavy equipment. I was very fearful of a 12,000 volt electrical line two feet away from me.

One little, down to that, I would not be here anymore. It would spark the whole thing and electrocute people within 20 feet. Very fearful of that.

Why? Then I moved cautiously. Then I moved carefully. Then my decisions were gauged.

Because of that fear. Fear can be a good thing. Hey kids, fear of the street, right? Bam! No, fear of the street.

That happens in our house too. Why is there always a ball? Rolls down the driveway and says, Don't you dare. Fear of the street.

Fear of the sidewalk, actually. Fear of locking the doors at night because you don't know who's out there. Remember the girl that was just in the news? We talked about this last night.

Some guy came in and took their daughter. And they could hear their daughter talking and they got up. And this guy's outside with their daughter getting ready to leave.

And the dad's like, okay, hold on, put her down. I told my wife I would not be saying that. I'd say, meet thy maker.

Dead man walking is what it is. But it's fear. You've got to fear the perverted world out there.

You've got to have a healthy fear. And I want to be careful there because we can go to fear factor mode and then we're fearful about everything. But fear should motivate us to live a life a certain way that glorifies God.

That's what I was trying to say. It took ten minutes to say that. Also, though, hell is not popular.

I was hoping I didn't have enough time to skip this section, but I don't. Just kidding. Hell is not popular, right? Here's why.

Most cannot reconcile a loving God with eternal separation, so we ignore it. Isn't that true? A loving God with hell. I can't connect the dots.

Well, think about this. As Jesus said in Matthew 25, 41, So hell was prepared. Obviously, Satan can't dwell with God forever in heaven, right? No, no, he kind of ruined that one.

So hell was created, eternal damnation, eternal darkness. Hell was created for the devil and his angels. But then when you reject the truth of God's word, just like the devil did, guess where you end up? There.

So God doesn't throw a person there. They place themselves there by rejecting God. And then the third point is Romans 1 says that we are without excuse.

I've read the scripture many times here, and I'll hopefully continue to read it from here on out. For the wrath of God, there's another phrase you don't like, can't get away from these. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven.

You know, I should interject here. I don't think we should get away from it. I think we want to let the Bible speak what it's saying.

Sometimes these things that are hard to say are the exact things we need to say. We need to read these things. People need to read the wrath of God is revealed.

What is wrong with this guy? Nothing's wrong with him. What's wrong with us? The wrath of God on sin. That's a big theological word, propitiation, that we read in the New Testament.

That Christ absorbed the wrath of God. So instead of this being a bad thing, I say for the wrath of God, thank God for Christ. Christ absorbed that wrath so I didn't have to.

And then it says that God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness who suppress the truth. For since the creation of the world, God's invisible attributes are clearly seen so that they are without excuse. In other words, God is clearly seen.

He puts worship in your heart. He puts conviction in your heart. You look around and creation screams creator.

We've taught on that before. No matter where you go, you look at the DNA of the human body. You look at the molecular structure of the human body.

You look at the creation and the oxygen and nitrogen. You look at everything. If somebody didn't create that, then I don't know, I'll be nice.

But you have to really look at this. God's invisible attributes are clearly seen. Although they knew God.

He's saying they knew God. How can they know? There's a God. Look at this.

They know there's a God. They did not glorify him as God, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools.

Anytime you reject God, the Bible calls it foolish. So that's what happened. That's the deal with hell.

It was created for the devil and his angels. You're not going to spend time with God. You're going to spend time with yourself in hell.

And because you reject me and don't want to embrace my gift of salvation, to reconcile, to absorb my wrath, you have to go there. And there's no excuse because God's revealed himself everywhere. I mean, what about on this island? Or what about in this jungle? Hey, these invisible attributes are clearly seen.

You can go to the deepest, darkest tribes. I've read books in the south end of Africa, the northern end of Africa. You go in those people, I mean, they're so uncivilized that they haven't even seen helicopters and different things.

But they know that you don't take your neighbor's goat. They know you don't take your neighbor's wife. They know.

Who put that umpire in their heart? Who put that in there? No matter where you go, God did. That's why on the day of judgment, there will be no excuse. God says, listen, there's no excuse.

My invisible attributes scream, creator. Your conviction of your own heart has been knocking on your heart for the last 60 years to turn to me, and you rejected me. There's no excuse.

There's no excuse. And then finally, I'll close with this. God does have a wonderful plan for your life.

In eternity. So I believe that God has a wonderful plan for our life in eternity. And I pray that God has a wonderful life for you.

I pray that God has a wonderful life for me. You don't think I pray that I pray He has a wonderful life for my kids? Or do I pray, Lord, give one cancer and the other one have them die early and the other one take away their leg? Of course not. Of course not.

But my faith is not anchored in a wonderful life. My faith is anchored on the rock. And that's why God throughout the Old Testament primarily would come out and He would say, I am this, and I am this, and I am this, so you would know Him.

Some of the words I wrote down, they would call them in the Old Testament as El Elyon, which is the Most High God, or Jehovah Jireh, the Lord who provides, El Shaddai, all-powerful God, Jehovah Salome, the Lord of Peace, Jehovah Rapha, the Lord is my shepherd, Jehovah Nissi, the Lord is my banner, my victory banner, I've overcome sin, death, and the grave, Jehovah Tzikkenu, my righteousness, Jehovah Shammah, God is there, He's everywhere. So you see throughout the Old Testament, this is interesting, it's not just God is a rock, like Jesus said. No, He's everything.

He's my peace when I'm anxious and when I'm fearful. He's my sustenance when I have no more money, no more provision. He is my banner.

That means He's brought victory to my life. He is my shield. He is my high fortress.

He was everything. So throughout the Bible it says, listen, Moses, listen, Abraham, listen, Joshua, I'll be this, I'll be El Shaddai, I'll be Jehovah Rapha, I'll be Jehovah Nissi, I'll be Jehovah Tzikkano, I'll be all these different things when you need me. But how do I know I'm as a God of peace if I've never suffered with anxiety? And fear, dreadful fear, how do I know I'm as a God of peace? How do I know I'm as a great provider if I've never been in need? You won't know God as this unless you go through something.

So the furnace of affliction that we're wanting to avoid, God's drawn near to me in these areas. As you're going through it, I'll be with you. Think about some of the most deepest spiritual people you will ever meet have been through hell and back.

I've never met a very spiritual person. I have a silver spoon in my mouth. My dad left me with \$14 million.

Man, it's been great. I have a car collection, and I really have an experience. My kid's graduating from Pepperdine and Yale, and we've got one in UCLA.

I mean, everything's going great, and I just, man, I could have a better life. They know nothing of God. They know nothing of Him.

They've become God in their own life. And again, thank God. Pray for blessings, please.

Pray that God would guard, pray that God would provide, pray that God would bless you and bless you abundantly, and He wants to bless His children. Actually, the Bible says, Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in it he meditates day and night.

There's blessings that can follow obedience. There's blessings that can, I would love to just be in the blessing of God and the will of God, no matter what that brings. Easier said than done, right? But if you look to Him, I will guarantee you this, He will never let you down.

I'm not up here saying, oh, I don't know, flinching, you know, kind of. He will never let you down. That I know.

He will never let you down, no matter what you're going through. But Shane, why did I have to go through this? I don't know. I wish I had the answers.

I don't. I don't. You know, sometimes we view God, you know, as our view needs a reality check sometimes.

We need to come back to what the scriptures say. I didn't talk about this at the first service. I'm not going to make it long.

I told my wife about this week. I was reading a book. It was kind of hard this last week.

I was reading a book on Dave Wilkerson and his life and his biography, who started Teen Challenge and was crossing the switchblade and just read it like in four days, 300 pages, the whole book. But one thing just jumped out. It said that he always lived thinking he was never pleasing God enough.

It was often because his dad never said he loved him and his dad never hugged him and never told him those things. And I just got, I got really depressed. My wife, I remember, it was like, and I texted my mom.

I said, did dad do the same thing? And she said, yeah, he did. So I never heard from my father, I love you, or he helped me. I didn't have any of those.

So I brought that in, and now this is God. This is my view of God now. I've got to work towards him.

Daddy, am I always pleasing you? Am I pleasing you? Tell me you love me. So I've always struggled with that, but it really, when I read that, I'm like, oh, I didn't know. I didn't know.

I just started weeping and reading it. I'm like, damn, that's what happened to me. So we need to put God in the right perspective.

Not my view of my dad, now it's how I view God. I think some people, it's the same thing, how you view your dad. Or how you view, think God is, and not who he really is.

You need to live in his word and see his nature and see his character. And I know I have a loving father who says, I'm proud of you, I love you. You'll never have to measure up.

But it was hard for me to break out of that. And I just encourage you to look to who his real nature is, and you'll never find it outside of his word. You'll never find it on TV preachers.

You'll never find it. If it's on the Barnes & Noble bestseller list, it might not. Unless there's some good books, like Eric Metaxas did a biography on Bonhoeffer.

I haven't gotten through all that yet. There's some good books, but the majority of the world will want to reject what God has to say. But look to who he really is.

Your dad was abusive, your dad was mean, you're this, you have this view of God, this cosmic ball, look to his word. He's a loving father, but he also requires repentance. And he says, listen, get back in a right relationship with me.

Repent and turn to me.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32146.mp3>

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