

I Fell at His Feet as Dead

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the need for humility, perseverance, and the pursuit of true peace through a relationship with Jesus Christ amidst a chaotic world.

Duration: 1:02:26

Scripture: Revelation 1:17

Topics: "Revival", "Humility before God"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the urgent need for revival in the church, calling believers back to the basics of prayer, fasting, and holiness amidst the darkness of the world. He reflects on the profound humility that comes from encountering God, as illustrated in Revelation, where John fell at Jesus' feet in awe and reverence. Idleman stresses the importance of perseverance in prayer, even when results are not immediately visible, and the necessity of seeking true peace that surpasses understanding. He warns against distractions from worldly influences and encourages a focus on God's Word to cultivate a deeper relationship with Him. Ultimately, he reminds the congregation that Jesus holds the keys to life and death, urging them to embrace His truth and grace.

Transcript

There's a big push for revival. So when we see this darkness, I also see a lot of light. A lot of people have in church a lot more often, longer services, more worship, more focused on prayer and fasting and getting back to the basics.

Like Vince Lombardi said, when the Green Bay Packers were on a very big losing streak, he entered the room and he said, gentlemen, this is a football. Back to the basics. And that's what Christians have to do.

There's no new thing. It's getting back to the things that have always grounded the church and ignited the church, ignited revival prayer and fasting and holiness and desperation and perseverance and knocking down those strongholds regardless of if you see the results. Praying for that prodigal up here regardless if you see the results right now.

It's that perseverance. And God rewards those who seek Him. And so I left off last week, as you know, in Revelation 1.1.1.1. And the title this morning is I Fell at His Feet as Dead.

I fell at His feet as dead. When you experience God, that's usually the position throughout the Bible. You know, it wasn't a lot of people coming up saying, whether it's Angel or Jesus, you know, oh, hey, how's it going? Good to see you.

Yeah. They fell down in the holy presence of God because there's an awesomeness. There's something about, you know, you're standing, you're looking at them, and humility lowers yourself.

It humbles yourself. They would lay prostrate. They would humble themselves.

And last week, I mentioned in Revelation 1, we talked about the revelation. It's the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him to show His servants things which must shortly take place. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy and he who keeps those things which are written in it, for the time is near.

And that's a lot right there because he's saying blessed is the man or woman or young adult who reads the book of Revelation. There are revelations, but it's called a revelation of Jesus Christ. Singular.

And he who keeps those things that are written in it. Listen, you want to stay on track with God or you want to get back on track, this word keep is very important. It means keep the course.

And like a ship, you know, the wind blows you off course now and then, but you're keeping the course with the rudder. You're staying on that course. And so, now we can put up on the screen Revelation 1, 4-8.

John is writing to the seven churches which are in Asia. Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come. A lot of times we try to figure out what exactly he's talking about when a lot of times the authors of the Bible are just trying to paint a very vivid picture that God is awesome.

And they would use a lot of strong vocabulary. He who was, He is, and He is to come. Reminding us of the verse also, Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore.

And from the seven spirits. Oh, seven spirits. Uh-oh.

We haven't heard that very much. What's he talking about? Seven spirits who are before His throne and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. The firstborn from the dead and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

So, John is doing a really good job of saying, hey, this is who Jesus is. You better listen. As we get into the revelation or the revelations of Jesus Christ through John.

And I noticed here that true peace. He talks about grace to you and peace. Do you know that's what the world is searching for right now? That's what all this confusion is about.

I talked about Mr. Beast on YouTube last week and what's going on with one of his collaborators. And you hear a lot of the cries. They say the same thing.

I'm in the wrong body. Or I just don't have peace. I have, and a lot of that is demonic.

It absolutely is demonic. You're opening up a demonic realm in these areas. But they also, they don't have the peace.

There's no fulfillment here. And there's nothing new. For centuries, people turned to this or they turned to that or they turned to this lascivious lifestyle or they turned to partying.

They're turning to something to find that peace. How many of us love to buy a new car for this very reason? Oh, it's short-lived, but there's some joy. Ah, that new car smell.

And then we find out a couple weeks later, I took on more than I can handle with this payment. Or see, we're always looking for things. You'll see that especially with atheists.

They say they are of no religion. No, they're actually of a religion. They're worshiping something.

They're trying to find something. And so that's what this is really about. Finding true peace.

And you'll see up there, Philippians 4.7. And the peace of God, the peace of God. Do you want peace this morning? Listen up. The peace of God, here's what I love.

It surpasses all understanding. It doesn't make sense. The world is falling apart.

America is in chaos. And hey, I'm joyful. And I get that sometimes.

Do you? People say, why are you so optimistic about revival? Or you're always up sometimes, even though it doesn't maybe seem like that. But there's joy because God is on the throne. God is on the throne.

Not our government. Not some other government. And so He gives you peace that actually doesn't make sense.

And that's why we pray with people who've lost loved ones. They often say, I just have this, I'm sad, but I have this peace that doesn't make sense. And that's the peace.

Or when you're going through a difficult challenge or difficult situation, a difficult decision, and I just have peace. Where does that come from? From God who gives you that peace. It doesn't make sense.

Why doesn't it make sense? Because we often think peace and happiness are the same thing. Happiness actually comes from the word happenstance. And it's measured by what's happening to you.

So, things are going good, I'm happy. And we think that's peace. But then when things aren't going good, I'm sad.

Where peace transcends all of that. And it said, because of that, He will guard your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus. And it dawned on me, I didn't put the beginning up here, but any time you see the word and, or therefore in the Bible, or but, I mean, you have to, okay, what do you mean, and the peace? Well, before that, Paul is talking about finally brethren, whatever things are pure and noble and upright, and it's of a good report, it's good news.

You're not critical, you're optimistic. You're putting things in your mind to honor God. And because of that, the peace of God will rule and reign in your heart.

So if you look at that, conversely, does that mean if I'm putting in junk, if I'm getting built up by CNN and Fox News and MSNBC and all these things, and I'm just feeding, I'm watching these YouTube videos that are not edifying, and I'm fearful now? I mean, I get sent videos three, four, five times a day on social

media. From the banks are collapsing, to digital currency, to Bill Gates buying all this farmland, and all these, you have to ask, where are all these fires coming from? Train derailments, 18,000 cows are dead, and this food plant, and this food plant, and this food, I'm like, hello? Yeah, there's stuff going on, for sure. But if that's what I'm focusing on, then I'm not gonna have the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.

And then, a couple this week, Shane, have you heard that they're gonna inject the COVID vaccine into our food? I haven't even researched that right now. I've got enough on my plate, but I will tell you this, the peace of God which rules and reigns in our hearts is what we need right now. Because there is so much craziness.

So much craziness. And that's what we need, to get our minds focused. And I can always, without a shadow of a doubt, when we deal with, we pray with people who are fearful, or anxious, and it comes, I mean, sometimes it happens regardless.

So I'm not saying this is always the case. But nine times out of 10, if you say, hey, tell me about your mental diet, and you find out, oh, there's not a lot of time in God's Word. I've never seen you at morning worship and prayer.

I've never seen you on Wednesday nights, and at the altar, and you're heartbroken before God. I see you watching all these videos. And YouTube just keeps coming, don't they? You watch this short, and this short, and this short, and this short, and by the time an hour's up, you are so messed up.

You don't know what's going on. They're coming to take our children. They're gonna force this.

They're gonna do this. The Washington state just did this, and the UK just lowered the age of sexual consent. It's like, oh my goodness, what's happening? Chicken little.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are, pure, and honest, and noble, and upright, know what's going on, but don't spend your time there. Don't camp out there. Camp out in worship, and in God's Word.

And then the peace, see, there's a promise. And then the peace will surpass this, because peace is a byproduct of being filled with the Spirit. So if I'm filling my mind with things that are not productive, I'm actually going against Scripture.

I hate to drop a big sin bomb, but Bible says do not let these things dwell in your mind. Take your thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. So, well, it's not that bad, is it, pastor? Well, why are you asking that question? Anytime you ask, it's okay if I watch this? Well, hello.

There's conviction. It's like the person who comes, is it okay if I drink now and then, because the Bible says, hello, you have a problem, and you want justification. Same thing with the media.

Same thing with the media. Too much. And I haven't mastered this area.

Trust me. Okay, now we need to talk about the seven spirits. Because I've seen people get a little out there.

I don't remember the Bible teacher's name, but years ago, I just was back with the Lord, and watching TV, and he said there's nine aspects of the Trinity. You know, Jesus has three, the Holy Spirit has three, and the Father has three. It's like, why do you go there when Scripture doesn't? It's like, I don't understand.

And so same thing with the seven spirits. It means this, it means this, it means this. All we know from Scripture is there is one spirit, the Holy Spirit.

But we also know that seven represents completeness. And the Bible would often use seven as a number of completeness. Seven, seven, seven.

Oh, that sounds good. Better than six, six, six. Somebody just told me to write a check recently, and I made it for six, six, seven.

Because it was six, six, six. Just don't want, I don't know, I don't want to go there. You just got to be careful.

You got to be careful. So seven spirits, gotquestions.org. I look to them from time to time. Not all the time.

Sometimes I don't necessarily agree. I don't know where they're at on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But they said, once we identify the seven spirits as the Holy Spirit, the question remains, why are there seven? The Bible, and especially the book of Revelation, uses the number seven to refer to perfection and completeness.

John's vision includes a picture of the perfect and complete Holy Spirit. All references to the Holy Spirit using a seven-fold description. Oh, Isaiah, I'm sorry, also uses that.

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him. And Isaiah says He will give Him the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and the Spirit of power, and the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. There's a new worship song with all those in it as well.

I'd like to rewind on that one. The prophecy is that the Messiah would be empowered not by seven individual spirits, but by one Spirit described in seven ways. And then another interesting portion of this verse, the firstborn from the dead.

Jesus was the firstborn from the dead, basically meaning the first to be resurrected. And He is the ruler over the kings of the earth, to Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And that's where we get that term washed in the blood or many famous old hymns would springboard off of this.

Powerful songs. One thing you can't say about the old hymns is they didn't lack depth and theological pounding and education and just washed in the blood. Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. And that is studying hymenology. I've got books on it and where these hymns came from.

And the one thing they weren't afraid of, whether it was Wesley or many others, they just spoke the truth. Because the hymns weren't going to be put on Christian television and winning Dove Awards and things like that. Now, they just were writing these hymns for the church.

Passing out for Christians to sing. But what's wrong sometimes with contemporary worship, not all for sure, but is they want to be non-offensive. And you look at the most popular songs.

You know, from Lauren Daigle to when Hill sung a lot of their newer ones or other groups. It's like, yeah, but there's no theological depth. And they're trying to reach a broader audience as well.

And Christian music at its core should be Christian. Should be God-honoring. Anytime you do something, you don't want to dumb it down or candy-coat it to reach more people.

You want to just do what God's placed on your heart and let God worry about the results. Isn't that true? It's just because it can be, the enemy will use that to really have us soften up our message. And that's why with churches now, you're saying, why aren't more churches speaking out? Because kind of worried about offending and we want to reach a broader audience.

And I've heard a lot of these huge pastors that many of us have seen on TV. I've watched them on interviews and things and say, well, I just don't talk about those things. I'm trying to reach a really broad audience.

Well, could it be that your broad audience really needs to hear those things? That's God's job. Let God convict them. And I've shared this before, but many of you are new, so I will share it again.

But I was praying for motivation. I think you can pick it up from the ushers. Just ask them for a copy of Desperate for More of God.

God had this book on my heart for a year. I'm like, I can't, Lord, I'm not motivated. I'm just being honest with you, I'm not motivated.

And then I got an email from a major publisher, like HarperCollins or one of the major, major ones, the guy who looks for authors. And he said he'd like to talk to me. And he's watching the sermons, wants me to write a book.

And so I presented it two months later. The kind of rough draft, it's almost done. And it wasn't well-received.

He started right on chapter one. The title of chapter one is The Desperate Need for Absolute Truth. And he said, but Shane, it doesn't address a felt need.

It's just a little too, it's a little too Bible. You know, we're trying to reach our broad Christian audience. And it really doesn't, you know, tickle the ear, basically.

And I said, well, okay, well, thank you. I'll do it myself then. And that was the motivation, though, that God used.

And looking back, I've turned down a few different well-known publishers that I've always wondered, what is that about? Lord, I don't understand. But now we can put all the books for free on our church website as download. You could never do that with a publisher, trust me.

You've got to market up there high. And so we've had thousands and thousands of downloads for free on the church website. And God did that because, but it was hard at first.

You know, they want you to rewrite it, restructure it, and just the terminology. It sounded like, it's not me, if that makes sense. Like they wanted me to write, this isn't me, though.

This is like, I don't know. I'm not going to go down that trail. But it just wasn't, it wasn't pointed.

It wasn't like to the heart. It wasn't like truth. Like, hey guys, we are drifting from the truth.

We have drifted from the truth of God's Word. But washed in the blood, what does it mean? Because some people have, I mean, just at face value, yeah, that seems, oh, that's a little, that's a little hardcore. You Christians, man.

But once you explain, we're not getting washed in the blood. It's explaining that Jesus dying on the cross, washing away, as it were, our sins before God. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.

There's no removal of sin. So that sin that is not dealt with, but is then dealt with on the cross, we are cleansed from it, and then we can stand before God with our sins washed away. Again, back to the song.

What can wash away our sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. And he also says here that Jesus is king, meaning He has all authority. And they name Him as priest as well.

That means He is an intercessor. And Jesus fulfilled, He was a prophet, He was a priest, He was a king. He fulfilled all of those roles.

Behold, He is coming with clouds. He is coming with clouds. And this is one of the important things, and I haven't mastered this, so please don't misunderstand, but a lot of times if we read, and I read the Bible literally.

I think anytime, like I remember Bill Riley a long time ago, he'd get people on, you don't take the Bible literally, do you? You know, well, of course. But in taking it literally, you have to allow the Bible to also use allegory or imagery or typology. And all you have to do is look at other, like the book of Revelation quotes and uses the Old Testament about 500 some times.

Because they understood, is Jesus coming back actually riding a cloud like a horse? Clouds were used as God's judgment upon a nation, upon a people. Now maybe He will, okay, hey, that'd be pretty cool. But that's what I believe He's talking about.

He's coming again with clouds. Dark clouds, judgment clouds, and every eye will see Him. Even they who pierced Him.

Even those, can you imagine the Roman soldier who pierced Him now? Where He's at now? Those who mocked Him. You realize Jesus battled 1,000% on that day. Every knee will bow.

Everyone that mocked, everyone that discarded Him, everyone that came against Him, everyone that said, Barabbas, Barabbas, Barabbas, now they know the truth. And in many cases, it was too late. That's why there's always an urgency.

All the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, amen. Consider it so, is what He's saying.

I am the Alpha. I am the Omega. I am the beginning and I am the end, says the Lord Jesus Christ, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Again, talking about clouds of judgment, Joel 2. Blow the trumpet in Zion. Sound the alarm on the holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming.

It is close at hand, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. The Old Testament will present this type of, how else do you explain something so vivid? Because they could just say, hey, it's a day of judgment and okay, our mind could kind of go somewhere. But when you think of, especially back

then, they didn't understand the thunder and lightning like we do.

Or can you imagine back then just seeing, what is that coming this way? And the thunder, I mean, you would think the gods were thundering as they would say in Rome. No, it's one God. Or out on the sea and it's nice and calm and then the tempest.

And so, all of these things were imagery for God's judgment, even though those who pierced Him. Every eye and every knee will bow and every eye will see Him. The Alpha and the Omega, everything always starts and ends with Him.

So I don't know what you're going through this morning or challenges, but it must start with Him. It must start with that relationship with Him. And obviously finish there as well.

When He's the front and the back, when He's the book, what do they call this? Bookends? Book supports? He keeps your life together? But so many people run to Him at the end. He's not the beginning. They all get to Jesus sometime.

And I talk to friends in high school sometimes and people and they often say that, oh yeah, I know, Shane, you got religious and maybe I will someday. Maybe I will someday. Oh my goodness.

Unbelievable. One of my friends, best friend from high school, texted me, he's like, oh man, you got to come out here this summer to have a sue. I'm like, I don't think so.

I don't think I'm going on your \$50,000 boat and do what you want to do. That's not fun. You come out here and see how that, they don't want that right now and they'll say maybe someday.

Maybe someday. Guys, the sad part is maybe someday doesn't come. If you're taken like this and no time to react.

And also, I want to, if I talk about this, I want to do a little bit more research, but they've, and I remember reading and looking at things, they've studied a lot of those who had near-death experiences. Or jailhouse conversions they call and they, I need to come to God, but then years later they find out they're not walking with the Lord. So that would be another concern at the end of your life.

Is your heart really right? Are you really doing it for the right reason? You can't just wait until the end of your life and say a little prayer and hope that works. Because actually, and that's why the sinner's prayer, I don't mind the sinner's prayer. I think it's fine.

But there are, you'll see YouTube videos and things that people are like, ah, they're against the sinner's prayer. And strong Christians are. Basically, both sides are right.

Because we have people, you know, you've got people just, hey, just say this prayer after me. And they quote this prayer, but nothing has changed in their heart. In the Bible, you don't have, they're not saying a sinner's prayer.

In the Bible, when they come to salvation, what are they doing? They're repenting and believing within. But now, if somebody wants to say a sinner's prayer and they really mean it, they're saved. But you have to be careful that you're not just doing certain things because you want to get out of hell free card.

Or because this person's forcing you. Or they're making you. Or I guess this is what I need to do now.

It has to be within the depths of your heart, brokenness and repentance and belief. I really need Jesus. That's what it comes, I really need Jesus is what it comes down to.

I'm not going to make it. I can't stand before God the way I am. And I repent.

And then continuing on in Revelation, it's the vision of the Son of Man. I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation. So at this point, there was a lot of tribulation going on in the church.

Well, how do I know that? Well, number one, 11, by this time, probably 11 of the 12 disciples had been killed already. And it wasn't pleasant. And John is exiled onto the island of Patmos.

Tradition holds, that he was boiled in oil, hot oil, and didn't die. And exiled onto the island of Patmos. And so, I would call that tribulation.

If you live in third world countries, do you know how hard it is to be a Christian in North Korea? Man, I don't know if any of you saw any of the videos of that young North Korean woman that's been on a lot of podcasts who got out of there. And just like, that's a literal nightmare hell, living there. The stuff, I mean, I couldn't believe half of it.

How they treat people. And so there's real tribulation. Ask the Christians, the ones that are still alive, what happened in Afghanistan when we pulled out? The wrong way, by the way.

Leaving a lot of people to be murdered. Going through their homes. A Christian in Iraq right now? Or Syria? Even China? There's tribulation going on.

And so John said, I'm a fellow brother and companion in the tribulation. And you know, that's really Christians who you can trust. Those who have been through hell with you.

So he says here, I was on that island of Patmos. And the reason I was there was for the Word of God and for the testimony, hello, of Jesus Christ. I was there because of the testimony of Jesus Christ.

I'm pretty sure it wasn't a seeker-sensitive message. I'm pretty sure, I guarantee you, the disciples didn't go into this and think, okay, I don't want to offend anybody. I don't want to say that, I don't want to say that.

Let them just see Jesus by my love. They would say the truth of God's Word. And it was a difficult time.

The terror of Rome, you had Nero in 60 A.D., you had Domitian in A.D. 95. Look these gentlemen up if you would like. They were ruthless to Christians.

They killed them often. It's interesting, John wrote this book on the island of Patmos. He was isolated.

Do you know where Paul wrote a lot of his letters? In jail. Could it be that when God wants to use you in profound ways, He might isolate you? He might take something away that's really important? Give you more time to focus on Him? Isolation sometimes is not the time to get depressed. It's the time to press in.

If God is isolating you, do not rush or complain. We've seen it so many times here. Maybe a marriage is temporarily breaking up and now the spouse is in isolation.

Oh, don't run to plan B. Don't run to plan B. Run to God. What's plan B, Shane? Oh, I'm glad you asked. I cannot tell you how many times I've seen this.

And it literally blows my mind. As soon as something challenging is going on, hey, let's separate, let's do this. Oh, I wonder who I can date now.

Hold on. Going clubbing. Going places they shouldn't go.

Plan B. Hey, I'm free now. Hey, this is cool. No, it's not cool.

It's destructive. And you're going to be more miserable than you are now if you go down that road. We get ourselves into more pickles.

Patmos was isolation. Again, if God is isolating you, don't rush it or complain. Thank God for alone time.

Thank God for alone time. I mean, I can take you to, anybody heard of the Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan? Did he write that in his home with his wife and the kids in a fireplace all day? Where'd he write that book? In prison. For years, wrongly accused.

Where did a lot of things come from and God moving in a person's life in the times of aloneness and isolation and God getting you sometimes by yourself so you can hear Him more clearly. Oh, me and my wife joke about it often, but it's true. And we don't want to be single again, but if we could get that single time back, how much more we would utilize that time with the Lord.

He who is married must care for the things of the world, how they might please their spouse, but he who is single can care for the things of the Lord, how they might please the Lord. And so many people with this extra time on their hands get into trouble. This is a time to pursue God.

Not get into trouble. Oh, I'm lonely. Follow God and you won't be.

There's seasons sometimes, of course, but He will give you the peace that surpasses all your understanding. And then now we're going to get a little bit controversial. You ready? This is so funny.

When people in the Bible say it, nobody has a problem with it. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, John says. Can you imagine? What would you do if I said that? I was in the Spirit last Sunday.

Taken up to the third heaven like Paul. Oh my goodness, here we go, Shane. Or, why is it okay? We read the book of Acts.

They spoke in tongues. Read Corinthians. Paul spoke in tongues.

Paul said he spoke in tongues. But today, oh, I don't know about that. I don't know about that.

Well, things in the Bible are comfortable 2,000 years ago, but when they're today, oh, it's not very comfortable. And I will tell you, I will tell you, as God is my witness, the reason many people are not comfortable with these kind of things is they've never experienced them. Of course they're uncomfortable about that.

Absolutely. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice. Can you imagine if I said that? Hey guys, this morning I was in the Spirit, and I heard something behind me.

I don't know how many of you will be back next week. And it was like a trumpet, so it wasn't quiet. It wasn't violin.

It wasn't Matias back here. Should I try this out? No, no, no, whoo-hoo. It was something behind me, a trumpet, saying I am the Alpha, I am the Omega, I'm the first and then the last.

And what you see, John, what you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia. So what we get into in the next few weeks is so important. This is Jesus Christ speaking to the churches.

Oh my goodness. We love the Gospels and so do I, but what is He saying to the churches? And the message title, I think, is going to be Five Blind Spots. Five of the seven churches did not have a good response.

So Jesus is saying, write these letters to the churches, and I believe that it's for us today. Now, there are those who believe, I remember hearing David Jeremiah teach on this years ago, that there's seven dispensations. That's why dispensationalism, that term comes from a portion of this.

Also, dispensation meaning God has a plan for Israel, God has a plan for the church. I'm going to get in different views as we keep going. And I could see that.

You could see how the first church history there resembled like Ephesus. A lot of persecution, different things, and then Smyrna, and then different things, and now we're in the Laodicean age. Which, ooh, if you know Laodicea, you lukewarm, I'm going to spear you out.

And so, what I would say to that is, that's interesting. Hmm, the Bible doesn't teach it. But that's very interesting.

If you break down church history, you can see these seven different dispensations of church history. There was a time of great persecution, then there was a time of apostasy, and there was a time where they would, the church, you have love, you have works, you have all these things, but you've left your first love. But to me, these things apply in all areas.

But I want to show you a map real quick. The irony is, you can't even see Israel. It's down here, somewhere in the wood.

And so, John is just off an island out this way, Patmos, and Jesus is saying, write to the seven churches in Asia. And so, one of the beliefs out there that I'll get into, a lot of people believe that the book of Revelation was written prior to A.D. 70. In A.D. 70, a man by the name of Titus conquered the city of Jerusalem and killed over about a million Jews.

And Josephus talks about the blood was going down the streets, and the price of wheat, and things. And things you could kind of see, you could see where they're kind of making that connection. Also in the book of Revelation, it talks about every mountain will be made low and every valley will be filled in.

Well, they record that before Rome would go into Jerusalem, they would knock down these hills and different things and fill in the valleys of the streets so the chariots and the armies could get there. So you can see, okay, I understand what they're saying. I don't necessarily agree with it because we don't know when A.D. Revelation was written.

And so, they would say Revelation has to do with A.D. 70, and a lot of these bull judgments, trumpet judgments, the seal being broken, doesn't apply to us today. And so, I might get into that in the future, but

my thought would be then, if he's writing to the seven churches, gonna warn them about this coming wrath, well, Titus is gonna be down here in the wood. Jerusalem's way down here.

That's not really gonna affect these churches way up here. 700 miles away? Really? So, that's one of the reasons I don't embrace that view. I like a lot of what, you know, they have some good points.

All millennial has good points. Post-millennial has good points. Pre-millennialism has good points.

That basically means Jesus coming before the millennial reign. Is he coming after the millennial or all millennial? We're currently in the all millennial. You can listen to my podcast with Sam Storm to find out what people believe about that.

And I heard somebody say, it's very true, Christians love to argue and debate about a thousand years of peace. The millennium is a thousand years of peace that we love to argue about. The reason is, it's kind of interesting, Revelation 20.

And again, I'll get to that as we go through here, but I wanted you to see where the churches are at that he's writing to. And of course, I've often thought, why isn't he writing to the churches in Jerusalem? Or in the surrounding? There's a lot of churches in that area by then. And of course, we don't know the answer.

But I would say this, Jesus is speaking to all churches and all Christians. That's how many interpreters have interpreted and commentators, and just a normal reading would make sense. Because my other kind of beef sometimes is that we take all of this from 2,000 years ago and we make everything now.

But the authors of the Bible were also writing to their contemporaries. It was writing to the Christians right then. Absolutely.

But then it also is applicable to Christians throughout all of the ages. Jesus is speaking to all the churches and all Christians. Or could it be back to seven? The number of completion? That's interesting.

Seven churches there. You have two of those churches were good, on the right path. Five were not.

I'll be talking about that in the future, but I do want to talk about this. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Charismatics are like, oh, praise God, here we go.

And conservatives are like, oh, I hope He doesn't cross the line. Right, because when you talk about the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, how the Holy Spirit works, you divide churches. I mean, you got those who don't believe in a lot of this kind of stuff, and they come and they fellowship.

And then you have others that do, and they get a little carried away sometimes. Because what I found growing up, I preached in very conservative Baptist churches before we planted this church. I've been in very hyper charismatic churches that would make us seem like we're asleep.

But we know that activity isn't necessarily of God unless the activity is inspired by God, because you can be very active and still sinning. And you can also be dead as a cemetery and missing the heart of God. And so, I also have seen that God gives people different preferences.

Like, they're just made differently. Like, I'm just not easily excitable. I try, where others are like, would you calm down? Man.

And so, God allows us that freedom and expression in worship. And I kind of like that, because that's the way it should be. We shouldn't be all like this, singing the hymns.

I mean, I remember I went to a large church down south from here, like probably a couple thousand people, and they all looked the same. All, like, I was like, whoa. And if you dare do this, you'd have an usher come.

We don't do that here, sweetie. So, for me, I couldn't go to church like that. Other people say I can't go to church like you're ashamed.

Well, that's okay. That's why God gave us different, I've got some thoughts behind that, but that's okay. I'm not gonna pop off today.

But see, experience has taught a lot of us a lot of things. And so, we have seen dangers with when you write off anything about, when you do anything in the name of the Holy Spirit. I mean, I've had people come up and say, God told me to tell you this.

I'm like, well, He didn't tell me. So, I don't know what to tell you. I don't want to burst your bubble.

And I've hurt people's feelings. Because if something doesn't register with me, then who's the gauge? Oh, God told you. Now, I have to listen to you.

And you could be wrong if God's not also leading me and also inspiring me in the same way. However, God does prompt people to tell people things. I just think we need to be careful in how we word it.

Unless you trust yourself more than I trust myself. Because I know I throw in a little hamburger helper in there sometimes. Right? Like God will tell you to maybe tell somebody something and then you add, but maybe it has to do with this and maybe, oh no, no, no, don't go.

Don't add hamburger helper. That's where you get off track. You have to stay on track.

And so, I want to encourage people, if God is putting something on your heart to tell somebody, absolutely. I think it's a gift. It's a word of wisdom.

It's a word of knowledge. We have tons of biblical support for that. We have tons of church history support for that.

You just have to be careful. When you say, thus saith the Lord, are you sure? That's why I've never said it to my knowledge. Hey, God, I've said, hey, I feel strongly about this.

I feel God might have put this on my heart for a reason. You need to sift it through and see if He's speaking to you on this as well. And that's why this topic of, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

Because obviously, John is talking about something that's beyond normal. He wouldn't say that if it was something normal that happens in every day. So, in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit we see in the Bible.

Worship in the Spirit. Did you know the Bible says worship God in Spirit? And in truth? Walk in the Spirit. Worship in the Spirit.

Oh, and test the Spirit. See if they are God or not. Do not quench or grieve the Spirit.

And so you see, there's a lot of ways and things we can do to foster the Holy Spirit in our life. And that's why Christians, theologians, and we've always thought of the Holy Spirit as a person of the Godhead. It's not a force like Star Wars.

We see that it is a person of the Godhead that can be quenched and can be grieved. So during deep times of seeking God, praying, fasting, worshiping, surrendering, and obeying God, we can more clearly hear the voice of the Spirit. And that's what, as John was submitted to the will of God, he was in the Spirit on that day.

And some of you can maybe relate. I know there's times where atmosphere matters. Where you know that the Spirit of God is just speaking through you and God is encouraging you.

And John, through the Spirit, said, I'm going to write down these things. Here's the letter to these churches. And then verse 12, then I turned to see the voice that spoke to me.

And having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands. Well, thank God verse 20 explains this. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands is this.

The seven stars are the seven angels that can be messengers of the seven churches. And the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. So he's showing him this vision.

He's saying, hey, by the way, this is seven churches and this is the seven messengers, maybe pastors to the church. This is why you're seeing these things. And in the midst of the seven lampstands, one like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to His feet, girded about His chest with a golden band.

So now John sees this glimpse of Jesus. And it's the same language that the book of Daniel used when the three Hebrew boys saw someone, there's a fourth in there. There's another in the fire.

Have you guys heard that song? There's another in the fire. Always remember, sometimes God doesn't pull you out of the fire. Sometimes He walks through it with you.

There's another in the fire there. And that other in the fire is what got them through. And he said the same thing, the Son of Man, it looks like the Son of Man.

It was a term that they used in the Old Testament to identify the Son of God. And there He was in the midst, His garment. And His head and His hair were like white.

They were wool, like snow. His eyes like a flame of fire. And His feet were like fine brass.

You can see that John sees this image of Jesus. And even later on, we'll get to in Revelation, that's when he says he sees this again where Jesus is coming from heaven. And the armies of heaven are following Him.

And He's got eyes like flames of fire. And on His head are many crowns. No one knows His name except Himself.

And His name is written right here on His right thigh, representing power and strength and authority. King of kings and Lord of lords. And He treads the winepress and the fierceness and the wrath of Almighty God.

How do you explain Jesus? He just sees His eyes are like flames of fire. I bet they are. They will pierce your soul.

His mouth when He speaks is like a sword that devours. He's clothed in fine garment. He's as white as snow.

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus and the holiness and the purity. And His feet resembled the finest brass which was strength and dominion and control to put His enemies under His feet. I'm so glad He didn't say His hair was like green grass or His eyes were like a gentle dove flying away.

His feet were like Crocs with no socks on. No, He's a strong image. Strong image.

It's okay, I have Crocs. Very comfortable. My wife says, just don't wear them in public.

I do sometimes because they're comfortable. It's funny, I'll go out to try to get something real quick. I'm like, I hope I don't run into anybody from church.

And guess what? Yep, I got shorts on, Crocs, and like, oh, I've got to avoid that person. But anyway, you could not think of stronger terms. And then in His right hand, the seven stars control dominion over the churches.

He is the head of the church. Do you know the church sits below Jesus Christ? I am not, the elders are not the shepherd of this church. Who is the shepherd of this church? The great shepherd.

We are under shepherds of Jesus Christ. What does Jesus want to do in the church? How long does Jesus want the services? What type of services? It's not man controlling of movement, it's Jesus Christ moving through men and saving people and setting them free. His mouth was a sharp, two-edged sword.

Isn't that interesting? When Jesus speaks, now He speaks, don't get me wrong, He speaks love and grace and mercy, but the Bible often describes, again, later in Revelation, a sharp, two-edged sword. What does a sword do? The Word of God is living and powerful like a two-edged sword, cutting bone and marrow, discerning the thoughts and the intents of the heart. The sword of the Spirit.

We've got to get back to letting the Word of God cut before it comforts. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones is famous for saying, the Gospel condemns me before it releases me. And with our culture, the church can be that loving voice, but it has to also be the voice of truth that cuts.

And says, I love you enough to tell you there are only two genders. You cannot become a man if you're a woman. You cannot become a woman if you are a man.

Men should not be allowed to compete in women's, do I even have to say this? Do I even have to say this? Guys, what is going on? And you have a political party that is completely woke and they're promoting all this garbage. We have to go shoot like a double-edged sword, pierce, cut, cut, cut. Because when you speak the truth in love, that's where it cuts.

If you speak the truth without love, you're just a man. You're just a mean person. And if all you do is just love, that can become very cowardly.

Can it not? Hey, I'm preaching myself. How many times have I erred on the side, I'm just gonna love him. I'm just gonna love him, I'm not gonna talk to him.

There are issues in the church right now that I should deal with that I don't want to. I just wanna love him. I don't wanna say anything.

I don't wanna be that guy. But that guy doesn't help people. They might leave the church.

Oh, they're gonna get upset. But that's what the truth does. It pierces.

It pierces. It divides. Man, his head was like white wool, as white as snow.

Can I make a confession here? I wouldn't say jealous, because that's not the right word. But I long, I wish I could see what some of these prophets saw. Could you imagine going into a deep season of prayer and fasting? And seeing Christ before your bed? Shane, you're getting a little out.

Well, it's in the Bible. It's in the Bible. I think we're so afraid of the supernatural that we put God in a box.

I would love to see Jesus show up like that. Even if it's for a few brief seconds. Just to say, Son, You are mine.

You will get through these times. And let the risen Savior in all His glory stand before you. You would fall at His feet as dead.

Folks, that's why we preach so much on revival and repentance. That's what the majority of American Christians need to truly encounter God. Do you know many people come to church, they're not encountering God.

How dare you say that? They're going through the motions. Hello? Hello? We got our services down to an hour now. We've got to do this.

We don't want to really get too serious. We don't want to get serious with God. And we like the emotion.

I mean, we like going through the motions. Don't stir us up, Pastor. Don't get out there and trying to get too filled with the Holy Spirit.

I'm comfortable. Because I will tell you this, the fuller you are with the Holy Spirit, the less comfortable you will become. Because He calls you to go out and do something.

Hey, go pray with that woman in line at Vons. Oh, gosh, Holy Spirit. I am so comfortable.

Hey, turn that TV off at night and go read the Word. Read a good book. Oh, but this is so comfortable.

So comfortable. His voice, oh, if you could hear the voice. Many waters, it's like we're rivers.

You can picture, sometimes if I go up in the high Sierras, you can hear a river coming down and then a waterfall over here or something, and then it's just the sound of many waters. The power of water. The power of water coming down, cascading.

His right hand of authority. And the sharp two-edged sword. And He was like the sun shining in its strength.

I don't know about you, but I already can't look at it. And it's not the sun barely coming up or you can see it. The sun in its full strength.

That's the image of Jesus Christ. And so He didn't clap and stand up and give them a high five. He said, and then I saw Him.

I fell at His feet as if I were dead. But He put His hand on me. Do not be afraid.

I am the first and the last. I live. I was dead, but behold, I am alive forevermore.

I rose from the dead, basically. And I have the keys of Hades and of death. Basically, He's saying the power to release you from death.

Jesus Christ has the power to release you from death. Thank God for the resurrection. Thank God for that empty tomb.

Because Jesus said, I conquered. I conquered. That's why we say that sometimes.

The Bible says He conquered hell, death, sin, and the grave. It's all a combination. And that's the writer in the New Testament says, oh, death, where is your sting? Oh, death, where is your sting? It doesn't have a sting like a scorpion anymore.

Oh, we don't really look forward to it. A little worried how I'm gonna go, right? I don't want to hit by a train. Or cancer for a year.

I mean, you know, we're kind of like, I don't know. I don't know how. I'm a little worried.

That's part of our human, fallen nature, but there's an excitement to see God. The sting of death is gone. Afraid of what? The pain.

I mean, usually the pain. But afraid of what? Now I'll be with my Savior. Write these things down which you have seen and things which are and the things which will take place after.

And that's what we're gonna get into in the weeks to come. But I want to leave you with this. I talked about last week.

What does all this mean? Okay, what does all this mean? Matthew 18, Jesus said, where two or three are gathered together, I am there in the midst of them. I am there in the midst of them. The power and presence of Christ is available to churches who stand on truth.

They love others. There's humble, brokenness, holiness, and repentance. And like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, there's a yearning for Christ.

And I know there's a lot in this audience. I'm praying for you and I'm preaching my heart out because of you. There's not a yearning for Christ.

You have to say, Lord, I want that. I don't have it. I need that.

Give me that desire. Give me that passion. Because remember, the healer is in the room.

Atmosphere matters. Atmosphere matters. He fell at his feet.

Jairus, when he lost his daughter, he fell at the feet of Jesus. And Jesus rose that girl out of death, basically. Think it was Talitha Akumai, come out, get up.

Little girls, I say, come up and rise. Get up. Because the father fell at the feet of Jesus.

The Syrophenician woman, who is a Gentile, said, my daughter is severely vexed. The demon has hold. Oh, can you imagine a parent? There's nothing worse than losing your child, but second to losing your child is losing your child to the grip of the enemy, to the grip of darkness.

Oh, would you release my child from that demonic bondage? Lord, they're on a highway to hell. I need to fall at your feet and pray down heaven. Some of you parents need to get on your face before God and start contending for your families.

Stop clapping about it and do it. Find yourself here Sunday mornings. Find yourself here on Wednesdays and do business with God.

Business as usual is not gonna cut it anymore. Is that not just the truth? Is that not the gospel truth? We are lazy when it comes to being prayer warriors. And we wonder why our families are falling apart.

The demoniac, even filled with a legion of demons, fell at his feet. And worship God, set me free. God, set me free.

I don't want to leave here without dealing with this. And like John, I too think we need to say, when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. Guys, name another king like this.

Name another king like this. Oh, if we had time to go through all the names of Jesus, the healer, the redeemer, your Sabbath rest, your high tower, the sword of the Spirit and the armor of God, and being under the covering of God. But I do want to leave some of you with this thought.

He has the keys of Hades and of death. Have you allowed Him yet to release you from that judgment? Think about that. Without Jesus Christ, I'm gonna get very controversial.

I'm gonna offend people. Every time I talk about this, I lose like 300 people on Facebook. That's okay.

Without Jesus unlocking the door, you have a death sentence on your life. I can't be secret sensitive. If that's not true, I'm available afterwards, but bring a Bible verse.

Because there's a lot of verses that say just the other way. I am the only way, the only truth, the only life. Nobody comes to the Father except through me.

No backup plan. No plan B. That's why Jesus in the garden said, Father, if there is any other way, please take this cup from me. The cup represented the indignation and wrath of God was gonna be poured out on the cross.

All of our sins, past, present, future, all of the, can you imagine the stench of that cup? Poured out. There's no other way, Son. There's no other way.

And He absorbed the wrath of God. And that's why I believe there's a separation there for a second, He said, Father, why have you forsaken me? Why have you forsaken me? And at that moment on the cross, He absorbed it. And so He can say, I have the keys to release.

But this lock is not opened by Jesus choosing. That might upset my Calvinist friends, but this lock is released by you choosing, you accepting, you believing. So if you want Jesus to unlock you from judgment, it basically is a death sentence.

We see people on death row, if that person on death row is a Christian, he's in a better spot than you are. The judgment of God, Jesus said, I can unlock that, just repent and believe and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

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