

If It Is of God, You Cannot Overthrow It

by Shane Idleman

If something is of God, you cannot overthrow it, and the key to understanding this is to seek truth and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

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Scripture: Acts 5:28

Topics: "God's Sovereignty", "Faith and Trust"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes that if something is truly of God, it cannot be overthrown, drawing from Acts 5:28. He discusses the historical reality of Jesus and the unwavering strength of Christianity despite opposition, asserting that God's sovereign will prevails. Idleman encourages believers to trust in God's plan and to recognize the importance of a genuine relationship with Christ over mere religiosity. He also addresses the struggles of seekers and believers, urging them to seek truth and remain steadfast in their faith amidst challenges. Ultimately, he reminds the congregation that resisting God is futile, and they must choose to embrace His love and truth.

Transcript

Acts chapter five, I'm gonna start in verse 28, even though I was there last week, I'm gonna pick up at verse five, Acts five, verse 28. And as you're finding that spot, the introduction is a little lengthy. And to be honest with you, I wanted to really fully exhaust this text, but with the children's ministry and performance and different things, I wanna just get to the bullet points and then hopefully I can pick up in the weeks to come.

The message is, if it's of God, if it's of God, you cannot overthrow it. If something is of God, you cannot overthrow it. It's impossible.

And we've been in the book of Acts for quite a while, I think since September, and we've seen God working through his people. God is going to build his church. There's nothing that the devil can do.

There's nothing that the world can do. God's will, his sovereign will, will prevail. And Christianity would have never survived without God.

I don't think people realize this. But their hero, Jesus, was defeated and crucified, so it seemed. What kind of movement is going to spark out of their main leader being crucified and defeated? And they're thinking,

what was that all about? I thought he was gonna restore the kingdom, this mighty Messiah.

What would have come out of that? Surely not this. And this is gonna be tricky during this message as well, because I'm gonna say some things that I've said before, but there's a lot of new faces. And I don't wanna miss something in talking about this.

But with Jesus, if he was truly, which we know historians say he was crucified, he was put into a tomb. Now, if they hid the body and they knew all this was a lie, who's going to die for a lie? As soon as the disciples were faced with execution, they would have said, okay, we'll confess. Here's where we hid the body.

We don't wanna die. But all of his disciples, tradition holds that all of them were martyred except for John, who was exiled on the island of Patmos. All of them, horrific deaths for a lie.

Nobody's gonna die for a lie. They'll die for a lie that they perceive as truth. We see that in terrorism.

That's the difference. They are dying because they believe that this is true, but nobody is going to die for something they know is a lie. So when you argue, it's called apologetics.

When you defend the Christian faith, one of the things you can defend is that Jesus was a historical figure. Josephus, a historian, wrote about him. Early historians wrote about him.

He lived. There is no question about that. It's not a fable tale.

This is not pixie dust. He lived. This is truth.

So then you have to look at the people who died for the message. They would not die for a lie. And as C.S. Lewis said, Jesus Christ is either a liar, he's a lunatic, or he's the Lord.

And those are really the options. Well, he's a good teacher, Shane. No, if that's all he was, he was a terrible teacher, even though we believe that he was the best teacher that ever walked.

But if all he was was a teacher and not a Lord, then he was a terrible teacher because he taught things that did not come true. He said things that were false. I am God.

I am the Son of God. I am the way, the truth, the life. Nobody can even come through the Father except through me.

So he could not just be a good teacher. So you have to settle that in your mind. He's a liar, a lunatic, or he is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's why we're here. That's why Christianity has prevailed because he said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. He will build it.

If God is in something, and it's interesting, I don't know if this will be a benefit at all, but one of the scariest things you can do is give up everything and say, okay, I'm gonna plant a church. That's risky because you will look like an utter failure if God is not in it. And it was a struggle for months.

My wife can tell you. She had to take a drive with the kids and I fought with God for three hours. I'm not gonna do, this is ridiculous.

I'm not gonna, God, what? Pastors are nice and smiling and just so fun to be around and they're never challenging and they're good-hearted and they're always just, but this boldness you've given me, that's not, you know what? But then the more I read scripture, the more I realized that boldness is definitely a good characteristic to have. So once the struggle is over and I submitted, then you hear all the voices, you know, Saturday nights, who starts a church? Are you Seventh-day Adventist? Who starts a church on Saturday? That chain that won't work. It's never been done.

You can't start a church on Saturdays with \$100 with no support, with no core group. Well, God told us to do it. And we're just gonna follow him and tremendous doors open.

I don't wanna share that story again. Many of you have heard it before. And also I've noticed, I've seen about six or seven church plants in my time here of people I knew that have not succeeded.

They have failed at least. And I think they have the number between 50 to 80% of church plants actually fail. Now, I don't, that's a whole nother sermon, but a lot of times I see people want to plant a church because they say, I'm gonna do things right.

And they're disgruntled and they leave their other church and they go with a wrong attitude, with the wrong spirit. God's not going to bless that. It's not this renegade spirit of rebellion that God blesses.

It's broken men surrender to him that God blesses. Now, the enemy is going to come up after that. Every chance he gets, that's why you have to live so close to the Savior that he is the only hope.

He's the foundation. So if it's of God, if it's of God, nobody can overthrow it. H.G. Wells is an historian.

He said, I am a historian and I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all of history. You cannot overthrow him.

Napoleon, I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires, but on what did we rest the creation of our genius upon force? Jesus Christ found his entire empire upon love, and at this hour, millions of men would die for him.

You cannot overthrow him. And that's so true. Love would never prevail on its own, but because it's the love of God, and that's what we forget about God.

We have this image sometimes of God as this tyrant, angry, hellfire and brimstones, lightning bolts, and all these things. I love the judgment of God and the righteousness of God. I preach on that, but we forget about the love of God.

It's the love of God that compels me to share the truth. It's the love of God that sent his only son. It's the love of God who will warn sinners and edify saints.

It's the love of God. You cannot overthrow it. So I'll just throw this question out there now that I threw at the end.

How long will you keep fighting God in your own life? How long will you keep fighting God? Because you will not, you cannot prevail. God's not gonna eventually say, uncle, you got me. You got me.

He never will. He'll warn, he'll call, he'll orchestrate situations, he'll bring the conviction of the Holy Spirit, he'll bring the word of God, he'll bring others in your life. You just look outside and say, there's a creator.

There's a well-known physicist, and I don't wanna get this wrong, just hit the news recently. He's actually picking up where Einstein left off. And he came out and said, these mathematical equations in the universe, and all the, there has to be a creator.

There has to be. And they said, he said, God is a mathematician. There's so many variables of all these things.

But one thing that gets in the way is pride. Pride, and you cannot fight against God. Voltaire, French skeptic, talking about Jesus, said, curse the wretch.

In 20 years, Christianity will be no more. My single hand will destroy the edifice that it took 12 disciples to build. Can you believe he said that? Two years after the American Revolution, 1778, he said, I will destroy Christianity.

And you look, oh, he was just tongue-in-cheek. I don't know if that's tongue-in-cheek, but I would never even come close to saying something like that. And I don't know, you know, there's different things, but I think a Bible society actually began printing Bibles in his home once he died.

See, you can't, you can't. You cannot overthrow him. See, that's what people, you cannot overthrow God.

You better just get on his side. If God is moving in a church, you might as well just get on God's side. If God is moving in something, you better just get on God's side.

If God is moving in your life, just get on his side. You will not prevail, you will not win, because God has a sovereign plan, and his plans will prevail. But then the question comes up often, but Shane, how do cults flourish? How do cults flourish? If they're not, if God's not in it, how do cults flourish? Well, good reminder here, just because something flourishes does not make it right.

I have lots of weeds in my grass that I try, I've almost given up, forget it. I don't know where these things come from. Just because something flourishes does not make it right, because you can market things, and people will be drawn to you.

What you, how, well, how do we know, Shane, does it line up with truth? And is the fruit of the Holy Spirit present? I'm really, and now that I've pastored, I've seen how important this part of it is, because there's a lot of people with truth. I mean, I just got cussed out on Facebook about the recent article this week, big time, about everything, you know, we talked about last week. I don't wanna go into that this week.

But people are so upset at different things, and cursing, and upset, and you're going to hell, and you're misleading people, why? Why? Because it's the truth. But you need the truth with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Because if you don't have love, and gentleness, and kindness, and understanding, and compassion, you're not filled with the Spirit, you're just filled with truth, you will hurt people.

You will hurt people. Guilty as charged. Every time I wanna reply, I have to go and erase it.

Because that's not gonna help, is it, Shane? That's gonna hurt. That's gonna hurt. So to know something, how do I know if it's of God? Is it true? Does it line up with His absolute truth? Is it true? Oh, Shane, that's just passe, that's not really for us anymore.

Oh, it is for us today. And we can show you, if we have the time, that the authority of God's Word, the inerrancy of Scripture, that's what all of Christianity was built on. The Pauline epistles, the letters of James, and Peter, and the disciples who wrote, wrote authoritative, being with Jesus, they wrote what God's will is, they wrote the heart of God.

So something lines up with truth, and you have to be full of the Holy Spirit. Is the Holy Spirit present there? Here's why, we were created to worship God. This is why this is so important.

We were, everywhere across the planet, people are created to worship God. Every person, six billion, I don't know what the numbers are now, they have this something in them that has to worship. So that's why they end up worshipping all different kinds of things instead of God, because they're not pointed in the right direction.

And people ask me often, what about the little boy in Afghanistan who's never heard about the gospel? Well, I trust God. I trust that God will reveal Himself. The Bible says His invisible attributes are clearly seen so that mankind is without excuse, because we can either suppress the truth or we can embrace it.

It's knowledge that God has given us. But people are so hungry for spiritual things. They're so hungry spiritually that they'll consume anything.

Have you ever thought about that? People are so hungry. We want a God. There has to be a, what's that old saying? There's a God-sized hole in my heart.

I don't know if it's theologically correct, but it sounds really good. There's something that God, how God created us, and in the fall, God's image in us was damaged. Norman Geisler would say that it was effaced, not erased, meaning it was damaged, it was marred, that God created us in His image.

Can you imagine that? That should give you self-worth unlike anything you've ever known before. You don't need to hear self-esteem from your therapist. You need to hear that you are worthy through God, because we are created in His image and His likeness.

Come, let us make man the plural nature of God, Elohim, the trinity there, we see the trinity, let us make man in our image. And so people are so spiritually hungry, they'll consume anything. In the city of Karnataka, I believe it's in India, the lower class people there, they actually take a bath by rolling over the leftovers of food from the upper class, thinking that that will cleanse them spiritually.

According to members of the Church of Scientology, an E-meter can be used to determine whether or not someone is carrying spiritual baggage. In Kali temples of South Kerala, I don't even know where these places are, they promote hook hanging. You actually put hooks in the back of your skin.

And you hang from those things. The ritual is performed to pacify the god Kali, K-A-L-I. In Western India, some parents volunteer to have their infants dropped 50 feet from a roof off a mosque and caught on a bed sheet in the belief that it will ensure their family's good health and prosperity.

I mean, I could just go for the next hour. If you go to India, the most sacred temple, Shiva, when people get in there, the things they do and grabbing the gold and pouring oil on it and acting crazy and putting all this stuff on them and covering themselves and worshipping, all these things, they're searching for the god. And we can be so spiritually hungry that we grab anything.

So the thing I wanna throw out there on that is be careful where you search for truth. Be careful where you search for truth. All religions can be wrong, but they cannot all be right.

Every single religion on the planet can be wrong. They can all be wrong, but they cannot all be right because they contradict each other on every term, on every truth, that is. And that's when you look at other religions out there.

What do they teach? What does the word of God teach? You see the differences. Jesus can't say, I am the way, the truth, and life. No man comes to the Father except through me.

And then this other religion says, but if you go through this person and belong to our society and do these rituals and do this, that's how you'll be saved. Well, who's right? Who's right? Well, Shane, both paths lead to heaven. Really? Well, one or the other, do you see how you can't have both? That means Jesus is a liar.

What I said earlier, a lunatic liar of the Lord. So you have to take God at his word. You can't have multiple truths.

You can't say go through this and go through that. You have to choose. So be careful where you search for truth.

So that's the foundation of this whole message. If it's of God, you cannot overthrow it. Acts 5 28, here's the context of what I'm gonna read in just a little bit.

Did we not strictly command you not to teach in his name? So the disciples are teaching in the name of Jesus. They get arrested and they say, don't teach in his name again. Well, we have to obey God rather than man.

So they keep teaching. Didn't we tell you to stop teaching in his name and look, you have filled all of Jerusalem with your doctrine and you intend to bring this man's blood on us. But Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him, God has exalted to his right hand to be prince and savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.

Look at last week's message if you want more on that, but I'm just gonna pull out one thing. What was the doctrine that was so upsetting to these people? You killed the Messiah. Jesus is the way to the father.

You killed him. Jesus is sitting on the right hand of the father means a position of power and authority. This is the Messiah that you rejected.

You killed him. That's why they are so upset. And I was reminded of Jesus's words, if the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.

Is that interesting? Because we're so busy trying to make everybody like us. People aren't liking me. Why is that? Well, because if the world hate, the world will hate you because it hated Jesus first.

Now, for the sake of those who are new here, let me clarify something. Churches should be welcoming, accepting, friendly, warm, hospitable places of worship, but they will also challenge, contend, and promote

the truth this the world will hate. Because I can be loving and caring and compassionate and quiet and gentle and say, you know what? I understand, but the Bible says that you need Christ.

He's the only way. You arrogant, narrow-minded, bigoted, how could you? No, no, that's what the Bible says. So see, Jesus was the most loving person on the planet, but because what he said offended people.

That's why the world will hate the truth is what they hate. Make sure they don't hate your attitude. We teach on that often.

We don't want the world, boy, he's arrogant and condescending and bigoted and mean and evil-spirited and all these things and the truth. You want to, boy, I don't like what that guy says, but I like him. You have to have that compassionate, understanding attitude when presenting the truth.

And if anybody's mastered that, talk to me afterwards because I have not mastered that area. It's hard to find that, it's hard to bring that boldness in and harness it and just lovingly talk to people and minister to them, but it can be done. God will bring many opportunities into your life.

I was at Sharky's yesterday and I was eating and this lady came up with her daughter and said they need money for food. Says, okay, well, instead of money, I'll buy you food. And I bought them food and I think they went their way and then I was walking out to my truck and then this other guy comes up to me and, hey, I need money for McDonald's.

I'm like, well, I won't give you money for McDonald's, but I'll buy you this. I came in and he's coming off of crystal meth and alcohol. He's in rehab and I just sit, he's sitting down waiting for no more than three minutes, four minutes.

I said, God has radically changed my life. That's your only hope. You've got to repent of your sin and ask Christ to save you and give your life to God.

And he goes, yeah, I've never heard that before. I think I really need to consider that. That's it, you present the truth.

Now, some people get upset and walk away, it doesn't matter. The idea is present the truth and all. I wonder how many opportunities we have that we just, mm-mm, too busy.

Because what the flesh wanna say, no, you go ask somebody else for McDonald's. I'm in a hurry. But we have to slow down because there's power in the truth.

So then we pick up at Acts 5.33. When they heard this, when they heard this, that they murdered Jesus, that he is the only way, they were furious and plotted to kill the disciples. Then one of them in the council stood up a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. And he said to them, men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men.

Think about this for a minute. These Pharisees, he's a Pharisee, Gamaliel, and Paul actually taught under him. And usually the Pharisees hated Jesus, hated the disciples.

But he stood up in the council being a man of great reputation said, hold on, hold on, be careful what you do with these men. For some time ago, Theodos rose up claiming to be somebody and a number of men about 400 joined him and he was slain and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. And

after this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away many people after him.

He also perished and all who obeyed him were dispersed. And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone. For if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing.

But if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it lest you find yourself fighting with God. That was wonderful advice, wonderful advice. And we see a struggle in this group because sometimes we're always against the Pharisees, right? These religious leaders, oh, they killed Christ.

These religious leaders, they never got it. These religious leaders, Jesus said, you whitewash tombs. You're dead on the inside, but you look fine on the outside.

And Jesus had scathing words for these religious leaders. But we see Gamaliel here and we see Nicodemus earlier in John chapter three, the great discourse on for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him shall have everlasting life. It starts back with a discourse with the Pharisee, Nicodemus who came by night.

And Jesus, clearly, clearly all these miracles that you're doing cannot be done by a man. Clearly God is with you. So we see this struggle even with the religious leaders.

And I wonder how many people in this room are struggling in this area of I know there's a God, but I don't know if this is the truth and I'm caught in the struggle. So another interesting thing he said here, he said, let this alone. He just said, leave it alone.

If it's of God, it will happen. If it's not, you're fighting against God. And I wonder also how many times we need to let things go.

If there are things in your life that you need to just leave alone, let God handle it. If God is in it, it's going to come to fruition. If he's not, just trust him and ask him.

There's some things you just have to let go. Stop fighting God on it. Many times at this time of year, it's family issues, correct? Christmas time, family issues, families in town, mix that with alcohol, and there's a big problem there in many families.

It's like a keg ready to explode. Just leave it alone. Let God deal in their hearts.

But I want to encourage, and again, I really want to just unpack this whole text, but I feel God's put on my heart just to encourage three types of people through this. Number one, the religious person. They have religion, but not a relationship.

You have to ask yourself this question, or many people will hear this later on the radio or the internet. Ask yourself this question, do I have religion or do I have a relationship with Christ? The difference is night and day. Many people have religion.

They go through the motions, but they don't have a relationship, and here's the interesting thing. They explode when they are challenged. When religious people are challenged, they explode, they get angry.

Just this week with what I said, the differences between Roman Catholicism and Christianity, I got cussed out by Catholics. They're like, Shane, why do you do that? I'm just showing the differences. That's all I'm doing.

Here's what they teach. Here's what the Pope teaches. Here's what the Bible says.

I mean, if you have the truth, shouldn't you be okay with this comparison? Same thing with all other groups. Atheists get upset when you challenge their belief system. They're fine if you just want to listen.

Oh, okay, uh-huh, I understand. And we all came from this premortal ooze that developed and became a single cell something, and this protein became a little something else, and eventually, if you give it enough years, billions of years, then here comes your first person, and people popping up. And you're okay if you listen, but when you start to challenge that, when you challenge, they just get so upset.

I remember I was talking to some recently, and they were talking about scientists. Shane, they're embracing evolution. You're really, Christianity doesn't have a leg to stand on, and I said, well, the last time I checked, you can go on a website, it's called Darwin's Dissenters, and there's over 700 scientists with PhDs who have rejected Darwinism.

We're talking Harvard, Pepperdine, all the big schools, UCLA, all are just rejecting it, because when you look, and your mind is not, you're unbiased, you're not looking, and you're not looking through the lens of, gosh, I could be wrong here. You're looking through the lens of, I know I'm not wrong, so obviously this must fit. 700, they signed Darwin's Dissenters.

You can look at, but when you throw the facts at them, what happens? We get upset, you challenge religious people. And we just lovingly challenge them. You say, listen, for example, you don't have to pray to Mary, you don't go through the saints, you don't confess to a priest, you're not gonna spend time in purgatory for millions of years being purged from your sin.

I'm just telling you the Bible, what, what? How can you, you cursed Protestant pastor? That's what the Bible says. You can't have both be true. Jesus, you don't go to be purged in purgatory of these sins that are remaining, because what was the point of the cross? God didn't say, I'm gonna send my son, and he's gonna kind of pay a penalty there, but then I'm gonna purge you all later, and let's just all come together and save ourselves.

That's why we call Christ an all-sufficient Savior. Everything's been paid for. You don't work for, you don't work for your salvation, you work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Well, Shane, shouldn't a person have good works? Yes, but it flows out of the relationship. You don't do it just to do it, because God's gonna have a big, some people imagine this big scale, I don't know what they call them other than scales, you know, the balancing one. It's like, okay, here's my bad works.

Here's my good works. Hopefully that's gonna, oh, last week I didn't do, but this week I walked a lady across the street. And last week, oh, my goodness.

You know, it's just, and then, but I came to church. I'm a pretty good person. And I've seen people, but Shane, I'm a good person.

Okay, good compared to what? Thank God we have good people. We don't need America full of Adolf Hitler's. We need good people.

But when God sees our good works, which are filthy rags in his sight, he has to look at the finished work of Jesus Christ. So when you compare these things to the Bible, that's, and people get visibly upset. So

what's the answer for the religious person? They need to repent from their religion.

Or I say repent from religiosity. Stop trying to do this and be this and go through the traditional format of being religious and just rest in a relationship with Jesus Christ via repentance. It's very refreshing to say that the Bible says, repent and be converted.

Repent just means I see sin the way God sees it. I see that I'm a sinner in need of his savior. I'm repenting, I'm embracing his wonderful gift of salvation and I'm returning from my religiosity, my formality and I'm embracing Christ.

Now, as a result of that, we will look religious because you worship, you read the Bible, you do religious things. But we're not saved because of those things. Those things are a byproduct of having a relationship with God.

And then the second person we see here is the searcher. Gamaliel, he believed in God, but he wasn't sure about Jesus. He's like, wait a minute, can you imagine these religious leaders? Yeah, boggles my mind every time I think of this because they saw, can you imagine being with somebody in your city or walking out and the dead are raised.

The dead are raised. Every dead man that Jesus said, Lazarus, come forth, came forth. Talitha Kumai, I say, little girl, arise.

Every person he said, rise, they rose. He rose people from the dead. He casted out demons.

No demon had a chance. They didn't try to go back and forth and argue and Jesus said, maybe tomorrow. Oh, that was just too strong.

He said, out of her, out of her evil spirit. He walked and the lame were made well. The blind saw, the crippled began to throw away their crutches.

The leprous began to be clean again as a newborn. They saw all these things. Clearly, God is with this man.

They would say, no man ever spoke like this man. They would send people to silence Jesus and they would come back confused. They'd say, did you trick him? No, no man ever spoke like this man.

We can't trick him. We can't go around him. We can't do this.

He was on top of everything. So they see this perfect example. They probably are thinking, well, what about that scripture in Isaiah? What about this and what about that in the Messiah? And we're struggling through all these things because they had a religion.

No good thing comes from Bethlehem. We know Mary, his mother and his father. We know, we know, we were caught.

So Gamaliel and Nicodemus and other religious leaders are probably perplexed. Look at this. This is clearly of God, but it doesn't fit our mold for the Messiah, that he would be a conquering king.

He would conquer Rome and he would restore Jerusalem to her formal glory. This is not what we were planning on. Yeah, I know Isaiah said no bone will be broken and that they'll cast lots for his clothing.

He'll be cursed like a lamb that goes before the shears. He will answer not a word. He will say nothing.

I know that, but that must not pertain to this. So there's great confusion here in this area. So they were searching and there are searchers today.

There are searchers today who are genuine. They're genuine. People say to me, Shane, but I'm so sincere.

Yes, but you can be sincerely wrong. You can be sincerely wrong. Sincerity doesn't open the kingdom of heaven.

Faith and belief does. Acts 10, there's a wonderful story. We're gonna get to this later about Cornelius, who sought God.

And I think of so many people caught in religion. They're seeking God. This person was seeking God.

He was fasting. He was praying. But God said, okay, Cornelius, I've heard your prayers.

I'm sending Peter to you to show you the way. And when Peter talked to him, he began to tell him about the remissions of sin through Christ and Cornelius and his whole household were converted because he was a searcher. Here's the good news for searchers.

The bad news for the religious person is they're often so prideful that they will not listen. It's gonna take a mighty act of God converting a religious person. I've never argued an atheist into the kingdom, but I've prayed a few.

I've never argued with those of other religions, but they've stumbled across videos when God has directed them and they've given their lives over to God. But the searcher, there's even more hope for. Jeremiah 29, 13 says this.

When you seek me, you will find me. See, that's a promise. I spoke a few weeks ago that our God is a covenant-keeping God.

When he says something, you can take that to the bank. I'm trusting that more than I am the stock exchange. I'm trusting that more than I am the electoral college.

Okay, some of you fall in the news. Some of you aren't, right? I'm trusting God's word. He says, if you seek me.

So I often tell seekers, seek him. No, no, no, I can't. I've tried that.

What do you mean you've tried that? Seek him. Seek him. Ask God if you are out there, make yourself real.

If you are truly what this person says, and Lord, make yourself clear. I want to know who you are. If a person is truly seeking him, they will find him.

His word says that. And then the third person I want to encourage is the believer. They believe that Jesus was who he said he was.

And there's many of you even here this morning. But the hard thing about what people don't understand about being a believer is once you're a believer, now the warfare is magnified. There's a war, there's a battle.

And say, well, look at that person. I know Shane, and he does this. Yeah, welcome to the world.

We've got a love for God, but we also have the sin nature in this battle that we're waging this war. And often, we feel tired and defeated and discouraged. Right, please say amen.

Don't leave me up here hanging. Okay, good. Discouraged and defeated because it's warfare.

Ask any soldier who fought, seriously fought, was it tiring? Was it difficult? Did you, yes. Same thing with the Christian walk. It's a warfare.

It's not perfect. You will follow me around all week, and you will not see perfection. But hopefully, you see a person, Lord, I want to follow you.

I want to do what's right. I want to repent and ask for forgiveness. But I feel this war that's raging inside of me.

And that actually validates the commitment. If there's no war, if there's no difficulty, then you have to wonder what side you're on. Philippians 1.6, for us to take courage.

He who began a good work in you will carry it out until the day of Jesus Christ. So he who began a good work in you will carry it out until the day of Jesus Christ. If God is working in you, he will carry it out.

Now, this opens up a huge theological question that I don't have time to discuss today. Will God always hold me, or can I lose my salvation with him? Well, I won't keep you hanging where I stand. I believe that God who began a good work in you will carry it out.

I believe once we repent of our sin and the Holy Spirit saves us and seals us, and we're given the Spirit as a guarantee that we are gods and God keeps us, he holds us. It is God who makes us stand firm in Christ, 1 Corinthians. I believe that God holds us.

What about this, what about that, what about that? Well, next week maybe. But I believe, and people, you know, they want to argue this point, but I also agree with Jude. To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ, the enemy cannot overthrow them.

See, don't worry, because the enemy, it's not the enemy. Paul said, I am persuaded that neither height nor depth nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor any created thing will ever be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. There's no separation there.

So you have to be encouraged, because the devil will say God can never use you, God can't use you now, you're worthless. Why do you think Christians get suicidal thoughts? You should just end it now, nobody loves you, nobody respects you, and we begin to feed those things, not to mention all the media garbage that's out there that feeds those thoughts, and we feel defeated because the enemy has gained a stronghold in our mind. So that's why, believer, you've gotta live in the word of God, you've gotta live in Psalms, and let that build you up and Proverbs give you wisdom, and look to the New Testament where Christ came in and took authority over the principalities.

There are principalities. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. Not carnal, everybody's trying to get an AR-15 before the January 1st ruling.

That's not gonna work. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they're mighty through God. For what? For the pulling down of strongholds and casting down every argument, every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and you bring every thought into obedience to the knowledge of Christ.

See, now we've become a culture, give me a pill so I don't have to take my thoughts captive. But the Bible says take your thoughts captive. You're useless, you're gonna go back into that diction.

No, I'm not, God's holding me. This is a lie. You need to get that again.

You need to get that prescription again, or you need to do that again, or you need to, and we just, nope, that's not true. That's not true, that's not true. You resist the enemy, eventually he will flee.

What do you think temptation is? Temptation is thoughts coming in that cause you to do things outside of God's will. I am tempted to do that, so I have to take this thought captive, and what? Bring it into the obedience of Christ. Just at Sharky's yesterday, when I was talking to that guy, and I told him, when you give your heart to the Lord and you repent, I said, there's still a battle.

I said, you see that corona in there sitting in ice? If I grab that, I could start addiction again. He's on me, he's just as on anybody else. Relating to that person, understanding the struggle is real, and if anybody's ever been there, they know it.

The struggle is real, but you take those thoughts captive, and you come back to the obedience of Christ. You say, Lord, what have you called me to do? Yes, you go through life lame sometimes, and limping, and hurt, and broken, but then at the end of the day, you can say, I know Christ as my Savior. I know him as my Lord.

I know him as everything. The Bible, see, the Old Testament saints, the Hebrew saints used to call him Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Rapha, Jehovah Sidkenu, all these names they had for God. My provider, my shelter, my shield, my banner.

The Lord is my comforter, the Lord is my strength. They knew him by all those names, why? Because he brought them through hell and high water. That's how you know God, is you go through life, and it hurts, and you stay close to the shepherd.

How do I know him as my good shepherd if I don't see the coyotes and the wolves? Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, tells me I'm walking through the valley of the shadow of death. It's a wonderful sermon at funerals. I've preached it many times.

But there's also valleys in our lives that God walks us through. We must rest in him as believers. You have to rest in him.

Rest means to cease working, to be refreshed and repaired and renewed. It's very healthy when you're going something, go, God, you know what? I'm giving this to you. I'm gonna make a fire and grab a good book today.

I'm giving this to you. Instead, what do we do? Oh, gotta fix it, gotta fix it. Gotta do this, gotta do this.

Oh, my kids, and I tell many, we talk to parents all the time. My kids are young still, but I know I'm probably gonna go through this. The prodigal son state or the wayward daughter state.

The best thing you can do sometimes for your kids is stop preaching to them and get on your face before God and pray and fast. Let God move and direct. Rest in him.

Rest. Train up a child in the way they go. And when they were old, they will not depart from it.

What eventually brought me back? That foundation that was laid early. And I want to just rebel. I'm free.

And then you realize that your freedom is a prison. You realize that your freedom, what we think is freedom, is actually a prison. And that the enemy is sent to kill, steal, and to destroy.

I mean, I look at what the kids are watching now, and the video games and the violence. Do you know there's video games where your son can pay for a prostitute, have sex with her, set her on fire, and take back the money? Guess I should've screened that with all the kids in here. But that's the, you see these things, and it should make you sick.

This is warfare. Every parent should say, oh, okay, enemy, you wanna play that game? We're getting this junk out of my house, and we are becoming a house filled with worship. We are fasting, we are praying as a family.

Enemy, you should've killed me 10 years ago, but now you've upset me. Now I'm so upset, I'm going to do something about it. And you tell, it's okay to tell the devil.

I say, I tell him all the time, you should've killed me 20 years ago, when I didn't know how I got home. When I should've overdosed many times. You should've got me, but now you've upset me.

And now I'm going to upset your kingdom. Because God, if God is in it, you cannot overthrow it. If God is in it, you cannot overthrow it.

But the enemy will bring in things, right? Oh, Shane, doesn't that Corona look good? Oh, Shane, doesn't that look good? Oh, wouldn't you like to do this? Wouldn't you like to get prideful and arrogant? Oh, thousands of people are now listening to you each week. And oh, and God, the enemy's coming like, no, no, no, no, no, no, keep my thoughts captive. Keep my thoughts, I played that game, it doesn't work.

But my plan doesn't work. I'm following God's plan all the way. I've got to stay so close to the shepherd.

You've got to stay so close to the shepherd that he protects you. Many people say, okay, shepherd, see you later. I'm gonna go try this valley over here.

And they walk away from God's shelter and protection. God says, stay, stay near to me, near to me. No matter if you make your bed in hell, or you try to flee to the other most parts of the world, God is there.

You stay close to the shepherd. And I'll close with this, for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing. But if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest you be found fighting against God.

Are you fighting against God? You will not prevail. Stop resisting. Romans 3.23, all have sinned to come short of the glory of God.

Romans 5.8, but God demonstrated his own love for us and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. Sometimes I, you know, the old saying, better to ask for forgiveness than permission.

But on this point, I sometimes get a little irritated because people will actually ask me, Shane, when, we're believers, when are you gonna stop talking about that stuff? And just get into just teaching us through the word. And Charles Spurgeon said, you must teach the saint, but you must warn the sinner. There's not a week that goes by that there's somebody here that doesn't need to hear the gospel.

We've get emails from people pulling over on the 14 freeway or in a different state, giving their heart to the Lord, because this is why we're here. Yes, I love the Greek and the Hebrew. I'd love to take you through an inductive, deductive, immediate approach to sermon preparation and pull out all the nuances.

I love that. But the heart of everything is Christ. Charles Spurgeon said, all sermons must come back to Christ.

And what happens is we lose that love for Christ. Every believer needs to hear this again. God demonstrated his own love toward us and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

He died for me when I was over at Schooners. Not even remember how I got home in 1990s. He died for me when I was in Vegas.

He died for me. He died for me. J.P. Phillips said, God may thunder his commands from Mount Sinai and men may fear yet remain at heart exactly as they were before.

But let a man once see his God down in the arena as a man, suffering, tempted, sweating, and agonizing, finally dying a criminal's death and it is a hard man indeed who is untouched. You hear what he said? Think for a moment about what Christ did for you. And that is a hard man indeed if you are untouched.

I mean, if it's a fairy tale and pixie dust, let's just end and let's go eat. But if God really came down Christmas, Christmas, my theology starts going, there's not three wise men. We don't know how many wise men there were.

They're wise men, you know, you get this, you start, you know, that was a rabbit trail just for some of you. Talking about my religious spirit coming out, you know, judgmental spirit and things. But that is true, it's a hard man indeed who is untouched.

If you're untouched by what God has done for you, then something is wrong. You should be very touched that he took away all the sin, all the guilt, all the shame. Yeah, we still deal with regret, but he took that all away.

If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. The bottom line is you cannot overthrow God. Well, Shane, if he wants me, he'll get me, not necessarily.

Although I believe in God can keep us, I also believe that man can reject or embrace his gift of salvation. Come to me all you're heavy laden, you stiff neck people. Why do you resist the work of the Holy Spirit?

Choose today, choose life, choose death.

Choose heaven, choose hell, choose right, choose wrong. Romans 1, you suppress the truth, you suppress the truth. And the penalty of that is being separated from God.

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