

Walking with Jesus in a Weird World

Finding Truth You Can Trust

Unedited Transcript

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Good morning, men. It's great to be with you again this morning. It's always a joy. Hope everybody is doing well. Got some coffee, a donut and ready to go. I wanted to share an email we received. I love to give you kind of an encouraging update about some of what God's doing. We hear stories from all around the country. I was just in Philadelphia this week with one of our field staff there and seeing what God's doing – some of what God's doing – in his ministry and the churches he's connected with. We were able to go by and have consultations with two major churches in his region and it's just very, very exciting.

But we got this email this week from a gentleman he said ""I heard of you guys through a book God lead me to buy called *How God Makes Men*. This is what I needed. I have battled drug addiction, was molested once when I was young, I'm violence prone, I've been in jail/prison and have low self-esteem. I HAD TO TURN TO GOD. I am now in a confident walk with Christ daily and this book and your mission for men is giving me the perfect perspective I was looking for: the Bible and a Christian lifestyle by men and for men. I will be including you guys in my tithes and offerings. I am at ground zero so I will start with small book purchases. Keep doing what you are doing because this book and your program are cornerstones for all men both now and in the future. For real!! Thanks again. I feel like saying thanks like a thousand times but I will keep this email under control. Thanks tho."

So that's just a very, a little sample – an encouraging sample – of the kinds of things that we get to hear from men and how God's at work in their lives. So I wanted to say "Thank You" to you guys for being a part of that with your prayers and your involvement here on Friday mornings. Thank you to everyone watching by video and the groups you're engaged in and the men you're reaching out to. And to everyone who partners with us financially. You're a part of this ministry and you're a part of seeing men's lives changed like in that email.

So we are today in this series on walking with Christ in a weird world and today we're going to be talking about finding truth you can trust. Finding Truth You Can Trust. Before we get started, we're going to have a little game at your tables here. It's short. It's brief. No moaning. No complaining. Man up this morning. Cowboy up.

Here's what we're going to do. It's very simple, actually. I just want you to close your eyes and I want you to think about the guys at your table. Everybody close your eyes. I want you to think about the guys at your table and I want you to see how many of them you know what they're wearing. Some of you are like, "I don't even know who's at my table." We're going to start with that. You need to first figure out who's at your table. I want you to just try in your mind's eye, try to see what the guys around you are wearing today. What color shirt? Is it a golf shirt? Is it a t-shirt? Long sleeves, short sleeves? Just kind of

in your mind's eye, go around the table and think about if you know anything that anybody is wearing. Now open your eyes and see if you were right.

All right. Here's what I want you to do. If you knew what at least one guy was wearing besides yourself ... I realize some of you don't know what you're wearing. That's all right. I'm with you. I'm like, "Oh, look at that." If you got at least one other guy, raise your hand. Okay, that's pretty good. How about two more guys? All right. How about three more guys? Look at this. Four? Wow. That's great. Okay, I'm just going to leave it at that because you guys should all be private detectives or something. You probably are. These are the guys that secretly work for the CIA or something. Watch out for them.

It's interesting, isn't it? It's interesting how much of what's going on right around us we don't really notice. We don't really take in, it doesn't really register for us. It's just the way that our brains work. We filter all kinds of things out so that we can deal with what's going on in reality. The problem with that, of course, is that when we live in a world that's confusing, when we live in a world that's not based on the truth, that's not based on the reality of God's word, but instead is trying to present all kinds of other signals, all kinds of other truths to us, then how do we deal with that? How do we sort through those things?

It's a little bit like have you ever been to one of these fun house mirror places where you're trying to walk your way through and they've got all the mirrors everywhere and you can't tell what's a hallway and what's a door and what's a mirror and it's very, very confusing? Or you go to one of these things and they'll have the mirrors that stretch you out and make you short and fat and all that kind of stuff. As I've gotten older, somehow somebody replaced all the mirrors in my house with the ones that make me short and fat. I don't know why they would do such a thing.

It's interesting because this is sort of the perspective that the world is giving us. It's throwing all this information at us, it's throwing all these ideas at us, everybody's got a voice, everybody's got something they want to say, and we're having to sort through and figure out what's real, what's not real. How do I find my way through this so that I can stand up as the kind of man that God wants me to be? You know, if you want to be on a side today, you don't even know how to be on a side. If you want to stand up for a truth, if you want to support somebody, you can't even do that today.

I don't know if y'all saw this, but the other night, there was an award show. One of the gentlemen apparently made a moving speech, I've not seen the speech. I probably wouldn't have heard of the speech except Justin Timberlake tweeted one word of support. Justin Timberlake tweeted one word of support for this gentleman that made this speech, African American gentleman, and oh my goodness, the internet Twitter universe just came down like an avalanche on Justin Timberlake's head. "You're not supportive enough. You don't really mean this. You don't understand what he said." It was just apparently this firestorm on Justin Timberlake.

The other day I read an article about a young man who is a person who's trying to do what he believes is right related to the homosexual issue in the church and some other things that he's an activist towards. He tweeted some things and a person starts giving him some push back and turns out it's a transgender Latina woman who believes that this gentleman's support is not good enough. They go back and forth and he is just apologetic and falling over himself and she is just hammering him into the ground so that you can't even see his body at the end of this thing.

I saw another guy post on Facebook. He said a simple thing which seems like an innocent little thing to me. Basically he said, "It's interesting to see how many Christians apparently believe that supporting capitalism is more important than supporting the gospel." Oh my goodness. You would have thought that he said that he was a follower of Karl Marx. I mean, the people came out of the woodwork after him. "What do you think is better than capitalism?" And all this stuff. You can't even try to be supportive of anything because somebody is going to attack you and tell you that whatever you're doing is not good enough, it's not right, there's another way of looking at it, and everybody feels free to give their opinion.

How do you live in a world like that? Do you just shut up and keep your head down? That seems like the easiest thing to do. How do you keep from being influenced in a world where everyone feels like they can just say whatever they want and attack anybody else about whatever opinion that they have. How do you live in a world like that? Well, that's what Peter is going to talk to us about in this passage today. The Big Idea that we're going to see today is that **you only have two choices: live in the word or die in the world.**

Let's look at 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 22, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart. Since you've been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. For all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls but the word of the Lord remains forever. This word is the good news that was preached to you. Put away all malice and all the seeds of hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, yearn for the pure spiritual milks that, by it, you may grow up into salvation if indeed you have tasted the the Lord is good." May God have understanding to the reading of his holy word.

There's four points that we're going to see about the Bible, about the word of God in this passage. The emphasis is on the word of God and what the word of God does for us as men. We talked about the first week when Pat spoke, he talked about how we needed to be a thermostat and not a thermometer. We're living in this weird world. We can't let the world shape us. We've got to maintain our own temperature. Brett talked about living a life of integrity that's built on hope in God, holiness like God, and reverence for God.

This passage is going to, today, talk about the importance of staying anchored in the word of God. The first thing we see in the chapter 22 is that the word leads to obedience. It says, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth." What is this truth? This truth is the message, he goes on to say, that you have heard, the good news of the gospel, the word of God. By anchoring ourselves in the word of God, God transforms our heart and it leads us to obedience.

One of the problems that we all deal with is that we're swimming in this world that is giving us all kinds of other information about where happiness comes from, what it means to be a man, what success looks like, where we can find significance, how we can have fun. It's kind of like this experiment. Anybody ever done this experiment with your kids? You take celery and you put it in water with food coloring in it. Has anybody ever seen your kids do that? You remember this? Grandkids, whatever. We did this experiment several times, it seems like, over the years. You put it in there and within 24, 48 hours, what ends up happening is that you end up seeing all of that food coloring drawn up into the leaves of the celery stalks.

This is what happens to us as men. You swim around in this world, you find yourself hanging out with people that have certain perspectives, you get into hobbies where you are giving all of your time and

attention to something, you're researching it on the internet all the time, you're reading about it because it's the thing that's most interesting to you and on and on and on. Then you wonder why you don't see fruit of obedience in your life. It's because we've absorbed these things from the world around us. We have soaked in the lies of the world rather than sitting in and soaking in the truth of the gospel. The only way to prevent this is to have the celery in pure water. That's how you keep it from getting the food coloring in the stalks. For us, that means that we need to be anchored in the word of God. What Peter says is that results in transformation in our lives.

Look at chapter 2 verse 1. "Put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander." What he's saying is that if we're anchored in the word of God, it's going to lead to change. Notice the list here. He does not say "those drug users". He doesn't say "those prostitutes". He doesn't say "those bad homosexuals, those people who commit murder". What is he concerned about? He's concerned about our sins, all malice, being angry towards somebody, wanting something other than the best for someone else.

Do you understand that? It's not that you just actively want someone to be destroyed or you want something bad to happen to somebody. If you find out somebody doesn't get a deal and you're kind of like, "You know what, the way they run their business, probably a good thing they didn't get that deal." Guess what. Malice. That's malice. You're wanting something other than the best for them. Deceit, shading things a little bit, managing people's understandings so that, "I know that what I communicated wasn't the complete truth but I'm pretty sure they sort of understand mostly." No. That's deceit. Hypocrisy, being one thing in one place, another thing in another place. I was talking with a couple last night, sharing about a person who's in danger of losing their ministry because of hypocrisy. They present themselves one way in one situation and another way in another situation. Envy, wanting to have what somebody else has, not being content with what God has given us, but instead thinking we know better than he does. What I really need is what this guy has. Slander, being willing to say things about people, towards people, that aren't true. Gossiping, those kinds of things.

These are the things that Peter says if we anchor ourselves in the word that these kinds of things will be, over time, rooted out of our lives. He commands us to put them away. How about that? How are you doing? Are you more obedient now than you were a year ago? When I go over a list like that, can you say, "God's dealt with some of that in my life."

If we're just standing still in our Christian faith, we're not really standing still. The food coloring is making its way up the stalk. I can confidently tell you that if you're not progressing in holiness, then either you are not in the word or you're not letting the word get into you because the word transforms us from the inside out.

The second thing we see in this passage is that the word leads to love. What is it that God's trying to do? Is he trying to make us these holy, self-righteous examples of purity that people can look at and say, "Man, I wish I was like him. He's so great. He's so perfect. I'm such a bad person. I wish I was like that guy." Is that the goal? That's not the goal. What does Peter say? Peter says here in chapter 1 verse 22, "Purify your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love. Love one another earnestly from a pure heart." Peter says the goal of this is not for me to somehow attain some kind of standard of righteousness or something that makes me feel so wonderful about who I am as a man. The goal is for me to love. For some of us, that sounds a little surprising because we still have this kind of scorecard Christianity in our minds where we're going to check off a list and when we check off enough check marks, then that means we're doing good and God's really happy with us.

You know, Christianity is about a relationship and it's about a relationship in two ways. This is what Jesus says in the great commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself." He even says that when we do this, it fulfills all the law and the prophets. We probably shouldn't be surprised when Peter says, "Listen, when you purify yourselves by the word, when you become obedient by the word, when you become holy through the word what's going to happen is you're going to love your brother because Jesus says this fulfills the whole law of the prophets."

Another measurement for us of how we are doing at being anchored in the word is how are we doing at really loving our brothers. I was convicted of this about ago month or so. There was a young man that I've mentioned before here. He's 27 now, I think. He comes by our house, now it's down to about once a month or so. He comes by and sometimes it just seems like he aims at some of the least convenient times.

I forget exactly what had happened but it had been a long little stretch. I had actually taped one of the NBA finals games. It was one of the good ones or playoff games. I wasn't able to see it live. I finally gotten this little window of time and I was like, "I'm going to watch this game." I sat down, I turned on the game. I had just gotten six or eight ... I mean, just far enough into it to really start getting into the game and knock, knock, knock on the door. Ruthy's not there. I get up and it's, I'll call him Tony. I invite Tony in and I'm thinking, "You've got to be kidding me."

For the first five minutes, I'm basically wishing he would go away so I could sit back down and watch this game. After about five minutes, I realize he's actually going through one of the most devastating things he's ever gone through in his life and he's starting to reveal his heart to me about it. I tell you what. I felt about this big because here I'm more concerned about watching a replay of a game that I already knew the outcome to than I am about loving this young man who so desperately needs Jesus Christ. I wonder how many of us manage our lives, structure our lives, so that we don't really have to be bothered to love anybody. I mean, we write a check, happy to write a check. Man, supporting those missionaries that work with refugees or whatever, all into that, but personally, I don't want to have to deal with that kind of stuff. That's not what Peter's talking about. He's calling us to love. If we're not loving our neighbor more now than we did a year ago, then something's wrong. Either we're not in the word or we're not letting the word get into us.

The third thing that Peter talks about in this passage is that the word endures. You know, everything is changing so fast today. You know, the trends, what's popular in fashion, the causes that people rally around, the things that science believes are important or valuable, popular opinions about different subjects. I mean, it is crazy how quickly the winds change today. The things that people are protesting about today, in five years likely not many people are going to care about it anymore. I mean, it just seems like we're just moving so fast today on all these different areas of our lives. How can we find something that lasts? That's what Peter says here. He says, "You've been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God." The word of God endures. It's living. It's active. It's powerful.

If you go back to Genesis chapter 1, how did God create the world? He spoke. He said, "Let there be light." He spoke. It's the word of God that has the power. That idea comes all the way through to John chapter 1 where the scriptures say, "In the beginning there was the word and the word was with God and the word was God," speaking of Jesus. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us." That's the word of power. That's the word of creation. Colossians says, "All things were created through him, Jesus,

and all things hold together in him." Why? Because he is the word. He is the creative force of God. This same word is what Peter is talking about here. This creative force, this life-giving force that abides and endures and he says, "All flesh is like grass, all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever."

If we are looking for something that will have real power in our lives and something that we can anchor ourselves to for the long term, the only place that we're going to find that is in the word of God. We've got to find ways to build our lives around the word of God so that it becomes a vital part of who we are and of what we do. It has never been easier than it is today to do that. I can open up the Bible app on my phone and have it read to me. In about three and a half seconds, it will start reading the scriptures to me. Think about that. I can find hundreds of reading plans. I've got several church apps on my phone where everybody in the church can read along in the scriptures together in the same passages. Obviously, printed Bibles are more accessible than they've ever been. Devotional magazines, devotional apps, podcasts where guys are explaining the scripture, sermons. I mean, on and on and on. There's absolutely no excuse for us not to be living in the word of God and allowing the word of God to be the life-giving power for us.

Again, I just ask you: Are you making the word of God your foundation? Are you letting it be that enduring power in your life? Is there a hobby that you spend a lot more time on than the word of God? You know, I'm convicted about that. I'm one of these guys that loves to learn weird stuff. I know all kinds of weird things. I'll track something down. Somebody will mention something. I'll be like, "I wonder about that." I started listening to the Alexander Hamilton soundtrack from the Broadway thing. I'm reading about him. I'm reading about what his widow did after he died and I'm chasing all these Wikipedia things and all this stuff. You may be into fishing or you may be into golf or maybe it's restoring cars or whatever it is. Are you spending so much more time on some of that than you are in really ingesting and living in the word of God? The word of God is our life.

The last thing we see is that the word of God is our spiritual food. It's our spiritual food. He says in chapter 2 verse 2, "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk that, by it, you may grow up into salvation." You see, if we want to grow up into our salvation, if we want to see that salvation come to full fruition so that we can be men and not just boys with beards, that we can be men with power in our lives, men who can take responsibility, men who can lead, men who can have influence in the lives around us. How is that going to happen? It's going to happen when we have this pure spiritual milk that is being built into our lives. We have to long for it. We have to crave it Peter says.

You know, if you have a newborn infant, it reflexively seeks that milk. Some of you have newborn babies. Maybe you have little grandchildren, little grandbabies. You know, when that baby starts to cry for food, nothing else is going to satisfy it. You can sing. You can dance. You can carry that baby around. You can do anything you want but until that baby gets to eat, nothing else is going to satisfy. That's how it ought to be for us with the word of God. That passion, that craving has to dominate our lives because we're so desperate to hold onto us.

You know, it's possible, as men, to sit around eating doughnuts. I love doughnuts. Man, that chocolate glazed, chocolate iced. I've told people I'd be perfectly happy if you just lined my casket with those bad boys and lay me down on it. I mean, those things are delicious. You could sit around eating those all day. We could have a buffet over here of beautiful fish, grilled and all kinds of lovely vegetables and maybe some steak and all that. You could sit over there and you could just shove doughnuts in your mouth one after another and just ignore all that. That would be stupid but you could do it. That's what happens

when we give ourselves to all these little things happening in our culture today and we ignore the word of God. We're like men jamming doughnuts in our mouths and ignoring the beautiful buffet that God has provided for us.

He says don't do this. "If you know," verse 3, "if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good, don't do this. Long for that pure spiritual milk, crave that pure spiritual milk." Just reverse this for a minute. Let's put verse 3 in front of verse 2. "If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good, long for the pure spiritual milk." Did you see that? Logically, that's the same meaning as this sentence here. "If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good, long for the pure spiritual milk." What is he saying? He's saying that if you do not long for the pure spiritual milk, then you've forgotten that the Lord is good. You've got to remember that the Lord is good. You've got to remember that he is our only hope. We start looking to these other things, thinking that they're going to satisfy and they never do. We forget far too easily that God is the one that we have to hold onto.

A couple of summers ago, our family got a chance to go to Glacier National Park. Some of you probably have been there. Some of you have heard about it. If you haven't been there, it's a beautiful national park. They have a road there that's called the Going to the Sun Road that kind of goes up through a pass called Logan Pass. Just incredible. At Logan Pass, there's a trail called the Highline Trail. It goes along a cliff face for, I don't know, maybe a half a mile, something like that. This is a picture of our family kind of going on that trail. You can see that what they have actually done is they anchored, it's actually a hose, it's kind of funny, they've anchored a rope there, a hose there, in the wall so that you have something to hold onto. There are places where, for a guy like me, who's a little bit afraid of heights, a lot afraid of heights, I was holding on to that bad boy. There's some places where it's wide. Here's another picture showing just the drop off there. You can see it's wide there. It's not that scary. There are a few places I grabbed that thing and I was holding on because I knew that if you go over the edge of the cliff, it's a long way down.

Here's what happens, guys. When we forget the word of God and when we start treating it as kind of a casual add-on, hey, I'll listen on Sundays, maybe I'll read a verse here or there, somebody says something, but I'm not really going to pray about it, I'm not really going to think about it, I'm not really going to ask God to use it in my heart to transform me, then basically what we're doing is we're walking in a place like this and we're just closing our eyes and saying, "Oh man. Yeah, whatever. This is great." It doesn't make any sense. What's going to happen? You're going to go over the edge. We haven't taken advantage of the anchor that God has given us. He's given us his word to keep us on track. That's how we can walk with Christ in a weird world. We stay anchored to the word of God that he has given us.

If we close our eyes, if we start going after whatever it is that we want to go after, we shouldn't be surprised when we go tumbling down a cliff. We've found ourselves maybe tumbling down a cliff before in our lives as men or perhaps we know men that have made that choice and it has devastating, devastating consequences.

Men, I want to encourage you this morning hang onto the word of God. Let God's word be the power for your life. Let it be what he always intended it to be, the thing that transforms us from the inside out, the thing that anchors us in a world that is trying to distract us and throw us in all kinds of directions. Here's the thing that allows us to be the men that God has called us to be. If you're not building your life around the word of God today, let me encourage you this weekend, today, this weekend, next week, find ways to build the word of God into your life. Get an app, get a Bible, put it on your pillow in the morning and don't go to bed til you read it, get an accountability guy in your group, join a small group at

your church, join a class at your church. Find a more mature man who will teach you how to read the Bible. Do whatever it takes. It's life or death, guys. If we don't build our lives around the Bible, then we are going to find out that our life is going to fall apart. There's only two choices: live in the word or die in the world.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank you so much for your word today and we are walking with Christ in a weird world, Jesus. It is some of the choices that people make today, some of the issues that they are fighting about, the way that they approach that, the anger that people have towards one another, the anger that they have towards us sometimes when we can't even understand necessarily what we're doing wrong, the times when we are wrong and we don't see it, the self-blindness that we deal with. I mean, it is a confusing time. It's a confusing world. Lord, we need your truth to break through all of that and show us how to walk with you.

I pray for every man in this room that you would help us to be anchored to your word, Lord, that we would find our life in the power of the word of God, the good news that you have given to us about the grace of Jesus Christ, the salvation of Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, that that would be our life, that we would love our neighbor, that we would have power to be the men that you have called us to be. Lord, we thank you that you have provided this to us, that you have not left us alone to find our own way, but that you have given us that anchor along the cliff that we can hold onto you and that in that, we can know the true hope that endures. We pray this in the strong name of Jesus Christ, amen.