



Resurrection Credentials

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Pastor Mike Fabarez

Well, imagine with me that you've been a long-time resident of South Orange County and you're familiar with all the Farmer's markets that pop up here and there. We got our own here in Aliso around the corner in the parking lot of the movie theater. And let's just say you never gave it much thought until your retired father said I want to get in on that. I want to do that, that's a cool little business. And so he starts doing all the research, finds some suppliers for stuff that he likes, and he goes and he gets the permits and pays the slip fee and does everything and starts setting up out the back of his van every week, a table. And it's got his juices, organic juices, and cashews and pistachios and he sells some fruit and bananas and strawberries. He's got all that out there and he really likes it, does it for years. And then he says to you, you know, I'm too old for this. I'd like to give you this business. I know you got a job and you're busy in life but this is really fun and I think you'll like it. And so you say, okay, and you give it a try. You start dealing with all the suppliers and you start paying all the fees and doing everything you have to do to set up your table every week. And sure enough you like it. It's a lot of fun. It's giving you some extra income on the weekend and you're doing well. You like meeting new people. You like dealing with repeat customers catching up on their lives. It just becomes a great thing for you to do on Saturdays and you love it.

And one day you're out there and you're doing what you do every Saturday. And all sudden this truck, this beat-up old pickup truck comes and some guy gets out and you see him, you look at him. The guy looks familiar. I'm not sure where I know him from. But he gets out and he reaches behind the seat of his truck. He pulls out an aluminum baseball bat and he starts pounding it on the ground and he starts screaming. You lean forward and think, hey, what's this guy screaming about? He starts screaming about the fact that this is a parking lot for movie theater patrons and he's really angry, and he starts moving down the aisle that you're in. He starts tipping over the tables. He's taking everybody's stuff and spreading it around, and he gets to your table and he flips it up. Your cash box is there, it's open, and cash goes all over the ground. And you know your strawberries are going one direction and your pistachios are going another direction. It's like, this is crazy. Now, if you can feel that illustration with me, I just wonder what you're feeling at that particular moment. I know there are probably lots of things depending on how vindictive you are, you might be reaching for your own baseball bat. But I know all of you at one point are going to angrily think to yourself, who do you think you are? When you look at this guy tipping over your table of your legitimate business here in the parking lot of the theater. You're going to say, who do you think you are? That's the right question to ask when someone comes into the middle of your little business and wrecks it all.

Which is exactly what's happening in John Chapter 2, and it'd be a good passage for us to look at this morning, and maybe a passage you wouldn't expect to look at on a Resurrection Sunday morning. But I want you to look at this because it all relates to the risen Christ. Take a look at this passage with me. John Chapter 2 verses 13 through 22. If you don't have a Bible hopefully you have a Bible app on your phone. If not, we've got free Wi-Fi here. That's for



when the sermon gets boring you can always check out sports scores and stuff like that. But, we hope you download a Bible app. If you don't have a Bible app just go to esv.org which stands for English Standard Version, esv.org, punch in John 2:13. And that's the text that we're going to be dealing with this morning, verses 13 through 22. It says in verse 13 it was the Passover, the time the Passover was coming up. Passover is the season where we celebrate Good Friday, we commemorate Good Friday, and we celebrate the Resurrection Sunday. It's always attached to the lunar calendar and the Jewish calendar. That's why we always have a moving target here when it comes to Easter every year, because it's all about the Passover. Christ was crucified on the Friday of the Passover and raised on the following Sunday. That all takes place in accordance to this Passover, this annual feast and festival that the Jews remember them coming out of Egypt.

And this was the first of four, perhaps three, there's some debate about the fourth that's mentioned in the gospel of John. But, at least three Passovers are mentioned. This is the first one. So we're early in the ministry of Christ. And, he comes on the scene here and here's what he sees. Look at the text with me, verse 13, "The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus," it says, "went up to Jerusalem." And he did that because the Passover was one of three festivals where all the Jews, no matter where you lived in Israel, or even if you lived outside of the nation of Israel, you were to travel to the place where the temple was built with a special place where the Lord had set his name. That's how he poetically puts it. And the temple was going to be functioning there as a special representation and a presence of God. Of course, God is omnipresent, but this is a place where we remember and recognize the God who is. And you were supposed to go there to celebrate these very important festivals, the most important of which was to remember the Passover, the Passover of God releasing his people out from slavery in Egypt.

And so he goes up dutifully as you should. And he gets there, verse 14 says, "In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords." Now think about this. This is gentle Jesus, meek and mild, the guy who stands on the hillsides with butterflies on his knee and a sparrow on his shoulder and saying nice things, high cheekbones, flowing brown hair, saying, "blessed are the poor," this guy making a whip out of some cords. "And he drove them all out of the temple, with sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables." Right? This is an image of Christ that is shocking for a lot of people. "And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things away; and do not make my Father's house a house of trade.' His disciples remembered that it was written," they recalled this passage from Psalm 69 verse 9, "'Zeal for your house,'" which means a passion for your house, a guarded, jealous passion for your house "'will consume me.'" So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" In other words, who in the world do you think you are? Right? We paid our slip fee. We have all the permits. We've dealt with the farmers and gotten their goats and their sheep and their oxen. We've done all this legitimately and you're coming over here and you're dumping our money out on the ground? You're driving our goods out. What are you doing? "And Jesus said, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'"



That's a strange thing to say in the shadow of Herod's temple here that's over your shoulders, this giant edifice that later the disciples would sit across the Kidron Valley on the Mount of Olives and sit there with Jesus and say, well, look at this remarkable edifice, this amazing, this temple. It's shining with gold. It's gilded with gold. It's got all these stones, it's got all this regalia all around it. This is an amazing building. I mean, this was a phenomenal building. It was the jewel of Jerusalem, this temple. And Herod had come in decades before Christ. He had set up his rule there. He was supposed to rule on behalf of Rome in this area of Judea, the southern part of Israel. And he wanted to ingratiate himself to the Jews. So he poured all of this money into refurbishing Zerubbabel's Temple. If you know your Old Testament, in 586 B.C., the Babylonians came in with Nebuchadnezzar. They wiped out and destroyed the temple. God sent back 70 years later a man named Zerubbabel to rebuild it. It wasn't as great as Solomon's Temple, but it sat there and served its purpose until Herod comes along and makes it even greater than Solomon's Temple. So an amazing edifice and Jesus says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." That's just a weird thing to say as you have a remarkable building, you're in some downtown area, "Tear this building down and I'll build it up in three days." It hardly made sense to them. And they respond with the literal thinking about the context of this statement. With the building over his shoulder, "The Jews said, 'It's taken 46 years to build this temple, and you'll raise it up in three days?'" For 46 years, by the way, extra-biblical history affirms this fact that Herod had started a building project 18 years into his reign to put all this money into it and to change it completely. I mean, almost the whole thing was just completely redone. The square footage was all expanded and this temple ends up being this phenomenal building for 46 years they'd been working on it by the time Jesus was sitting here in 28 A.D.

But, verse 21, they weren't going to destroy the temple and Jesus wasn't going to rebuild it in three days. "He was speaking," verse 21, John here writes, "about the temple of his body." This is a great little parallel here because the temple was supposed to be this place that represented this special presence of God in Israel. And of course, Jesus was the Emmanuel, "God with us," the special presence of God, the "fullness of deity dwelling in a body." And Jesus was the temple, the ultimate temple of the Triune God. In this case, he is an embodiment of the second person of the eternal Godhead. And he says, I'm talking about this. And John knew that, they got this because in verse 22 it says, after he was physically "raised from the dead," when the story was all told, four years later, "his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken." An amazing passage but it starts with something quite shocking and that is Jesus, an itinerant preacher, coming in and saying, hey, this is my Father's house, get out of here. It's like you saying, I recognize that guy in the truck and you realize like, he's the YouTube movie reviewer or something. It's like, okay, the guy's passionate about movie theaters and the parking spaces should be for, you know, something else than selling strawberries. And it's like this guy, he's preaching all the time about his Father. He's talking about God. He's speaking as though he knows God and he and God are one. And he comes on the scene and he's claiming this for himself. It's an amazing thing for him to come in and start bossing people around about their business.



And that is the hard thing that all of us struggle with. When you encounter the teaching of Christ in the Bible and you learn about what the Bible says about who Jesus is, the hard thing is not really meshing the facts with the reason of your mind, even though some people struggle with someone who was dead in a grave and on the third day rises again. We can deal with that. But the real problem most people have is not that God can break the rules of life and death. The real problem we have is that he's claiming to be someone who has usurping authority over us, that he is the person who doesn't somehow take this position that he doesn't rightly have. He's not a usurper, he's actually the one who has the rights over our lives. And that's a struggle for us. It really is a struggle. But that's exactly who Jesus is. Jesus is a being who is from the very beginning presenting himself as the leader. And the word in the Bible is the word L-O-R-D, the word Lord. The New Testament word, if you look this up in ancient Greek dictionaries, it will make it clear that the person who's the Lord is the boss of something and he's the boss by virtue of owning it. That's the picture in the Bible, the Lord of his manner, or the Lord of his house. He owns it. He runs it.

It would be like in a business and you have a boss. Perhaps you work in a company of some kind and there's a boss. But he may be the CEO who took over from some other CEO. But if you think about the resident founder and builder of an organization, you'd say, well, he's the boss. He built this from the ground up and he's the boss. He's the leader of this. And at some point he may be the nicest boss that you know. He may be the good boss, the good shepherd. But at some point when you do something that he doesn't want you to do, he'll remind you that he's the boss by making it very clear that you should do what he says and he gets a little bossy, at least that's how it feels. And if you come here today and you think about Jesus and you consider him afresh on this Easter morning, I would want you just to remember this. Number one, you need to realize Jesus can be bossy. Number one, write it down. "Jesus Can Be Bossy." He can be bossy and here's why he can be bossy because he's the boss. That's what the Bible says.

And I want you to go back. If you have this text open on your device or you got a Bible in your hand, go back up to John Chapter 1 and look at how he's presented here by John the Baptist. John the Baptist was fulfilling a very important role in God's prophetic history. In the book of Malachi and the book of Isaiah, the promises were that God himself was going to come to his people. There would be a child born and he will be Emmanuel, "God with us." And that picture of God taking on flesh is there embedded in the prophecies of the Old Testament. But there's a prophecy that says that there's one who is going to come before him to prepare the people, and he's going to "prepare the way" for the Lord to show up. Which is a hard concept in the Old Testament to figure out that this God, who is not existing in a human form, is somehow going to appear in a human form. He's going to have a body. God is going to dwell with fingernails and toenails and eyelashes and kneecaps and elbows. This is going to be a person living with flesh on. This is the picture of the incarnation. But he's yet called the Lord.

Look at how it's put here in Chapter 1, up in John Chapter 1. Let's start in verse 19, "This is the testimony of John," John the Baptist, "when the Jews sent priests and Levites to Jerusalem to say, 'Who are you?' And he confessed, he did not deny, but he confessed, 'I am not the Christ.'" The Christ was this one who was going to be the fulfillment of all that God had

said was coming, the ultimate one, God, who is called the Lord in the Bible. No, I'm not. I'm not the Lord. "I'm not the Christ. And they ask him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?'" Because that passage in the book of Malachi talks about the fact that this person is going to come, this Elijah who is going to come and prepare hearts before God shows up. And that picture is repeated in our New Testament prophecies about the future and yet Jesus says, John the Baptist did come. He wasn't the incarnate Elijah, but "he came in the spirit and the power of Elijah to prepare people to turn" them to the Lord when he shows up. And he did that by calling people to repentance, because that's the real issue. "Are you Elijah? And he says, well, I'm not" Elijah. I'm not literally Elijah. I'm not Elijah reincarnated. Then "Are you the Prophet?" Well, if they knew the theology well, they'd know that the prophet of the book of Deuteronomy that Moses talked about was the Christ, one in the same. John the Baptist says, "No," I'm not the prophet. "So then they said, 'Who are you?' We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" And John the Baptist said, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

So I'm calling people to get their hearts ready to meet the Lord. Why? Drop down to verse 29. Because the "day that John the Baptist sees Jesus coming, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world!'" Sin is the problem. And if Jesus shows up to deal with the sin problem and people aren't even aware of their sin, they're not thinking about their sin, John the Baptist came to preach about sin. He would say to the Roman soldiers, hey, you need to repent. Repent of what? Repent of sin. And then he says, "Don't do things like extort money from people." Don't use your power for your own selfish gain. The tax collectors "don't collect more than you're authorized to collect." To the people, you need to be honest, you need to be truthful, you need to do what's right. And the problem is the measure of God's law made people see that they were sinners and then they were ready to meet the Christ, because the Christ came to lay down his life as a ransom for many people. And so John the Baptist played that role. But he quotes the book of Isaiah in Chapter 40 and he says, I'm "preparing the way for the Lord," the Lord, the King, the one in charge. And he's in charge because just like the word used in ancient Greek is because he is the owner of all things, not by the virtue of just assuming the position, he just bought the ownership, but he's the owner because he's the creator of it all.

Go back up in Chapter 1 as long as we're there and look at how this book starts. It starts by talking about the Word. "In the beginning was the Word." Now, before we read any further, drop your eyes down to verse 14. We need to know who we're talking about here. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." So "Word" is like the communication of God. God is going to speak to human beings in a language they can understand. So he's going to send his Son and he "becomes flesh and dwells among us, and we've seen" his greatness, "his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." So we know the Word is the one who's going to take on human form, live among us, and deal with the problem of sin. Okay? It says in verse 1, "In the beginning was that Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." As strange as that is, and as hard as it is for the Jehovah's Witnesses to figure this one out, let me just make this clear. God is a complex triune being, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all God equal, co-equal, eternally of equal value for all eternity in eternal



fellowship. And the second person of this Godhead comes and takes on human form and dwells among us. And it says that that God "was with God in the beginning" verse 3, "and all things were made through" the Word, "through him," through Christ, "and without him," without Christ, without Jesus, "was not anything made that was made."

Everything that was made, you, me, every tree, every rock, every mountain, the whole planet, every celestial body, all of it that exists, the Bible says Christ was the agency of that creation. God planned it, the Holy Spirit might have effectuated the actual creation of it, but the Son was the agency of it. And that picture of Jesus being the Lord is that he owns the rights to everything. He owns everything. And so here he comes on the Temple Mount, he calls it "my Father's house," right? Well, he is the only Son of the Father, "full of glory, full of grace, full of truth." And he comes in and basically says, this is "my Father's house," but in essence I'm the Son, it's my house as well. I can tell you what to do in my house. Not only that, when you look at me with those eyeballs, with the lens and the cornea and the rods and the cones and the optic nerves that connect to your brain and you decode all of that, I designed all of that. And your mouth, it starts flapping at me about why I'm doing this and what credentials do I have. I created all that. I created your vocal cords, I created your nervous system, I created your respiratory system, I created everything. I'm the creator of all things. I own you because I made you. I own the world because I made it. I own this piece of real estate that I'm telling you what to do in it because I am the creator of it all. I mean, he is Lord, and that's the picture. And the Lord can at any time step in and say to you, to me, to the people in the first century who are selling pigeons, don't do it or do it. Do this, don't do that. Think this, don't think that, approve of this or disapprove of that. He has the right to be bossy because he's the boss. And that's the reality of the Jesus that we're presenting to people on Easter morning. And every day we open the Bible we're preaching Jesus as Lord. We call him the Lord Jesus Christ, the boss, the King, the one in charge. We need to take that seriously if we're ever going to consider Christ because we need to know he has the right to tell us what to do.

Now, in this case, I set you up with an illustration that some of you Sunday school grads thought, "I don't like that illustration. I don't think it's fair because I think I know why he drove them out, because they're greedy and they're becoming these commercialized, capitalistic like cronies with all their, you know, wares they're selling and they're just making a killing." Listen, I just want to say the problem with what's going on here is not "what" they're doing. The problem? Look at it again. Let's start in verse 14. How does it start? The first three words: "In the temple he found those who were selling oxen ... and the money changers," middle of verse 14, "were sitting there." That demonstrative pronoun points back to the noun "temple," they're in the temple. And so he "makes a whip of cords, and he drove them out of the temple." Drop down to verse 16. "Those who sold pigeons, 'Take them away; and do not make my Father's house a house of trade." Okay.

The problem is with "where" they are, not "what" they're doing. Because I tell you what, all the Jews coming from all over the ancient world or all the environs of southern Judea were coming... They're not getting ripped off by these guys. These guys were full-blown capitalists. And the whole issue of supply and demand was at work. And if you want to know whether God's a capitalist or a socialist or communist, let me just assure you can read the Bible from



beginning to end, he's a full-blown capitalist. Let me just tell you that. He's all about personal property rights. He's all about the quid pro quo of commerce and economics. All of that is all embedded in Scripture. You think, "Well, I need some proof." Here, I'll give you some proof. Just jot this down. You can look later or look it up now if you want. Deuteronomy Chapter 14. In Deuteronomy Chapter 14 verses 24 through 26 he makes very clear, if you look at the context, when you go to Jerusalem for the three pilgrimage feasts every year, you're supposed to come and bring an offering. But he says in verse 24, if you're coming from a long distance you don't have to bring your sheep or your oxen or your goats or your pigeons, right? You can liquidate that in your home town or village. Then you can come to Jerusalem and then you can buy what you need for the sacrifice there. You know what you're going to need. You going to need people selling those things around Jerusalem.

Historians say before the time of Christ they used to sell these wares, they used to sell these animals, they used to exchange whatever money they needed to exchange across the Kidron Valley on the upper slope of the Mount of Olives. And that's where the money changing, because you needed money from wherever you're from to be changed into the currency of the temple. And you had to pay the drachma tax, it was called, the Herod's tax. Of course, when I say he put all the money into rebuilding, of course he's going to tax the people to get it back. You had to pay the temple tax for all the refurbishments that went into this 46-year project on the temple, all of that. The Bible's very clear. It needed to happen, and it needed to happen as a convenience for you if you're traveling 100 miles by donkey to get to Jerusalem and now you need your sacrifice. Well, you got your pocket full of money that you liquidated your stuff back in your hometown, and there had to be this happening. The problem is it was happening in the temple. And historians tell us where this took place in the first century was not in the Holy of Holies. No one could go in there except the high priest once a year. And it wasn't in the place where they had the showbread and the candelabra. That's where the Levites could go, the priests could go to exercise their service. And it wasn't in the court of the Jewish men or the Jewish women. Right? That was the first concentric circle around the building. It was in the court of the Gentiles.

And in the court of the Gentiles they had set up all of these things to go on instead of a place to invite the Gentiles in to worship the true and living God. All the way back to the book of Exodus, God was all about laying out the welcome mat to anyone who wanted to worship the true and living God. Were the Jewish people God's covenant people? Absolutely. But even if you read carefully the story of them leaving Egypt, they left with a mixed multitude of people from all different groups. A lot of Egyptians went with them. A lot of other foreigners went with them. God was all about the proselytes who would learn about the true and living God by being invited in by the Jews to learn about him. Well, they had taken that space that was used to make not only good relations with the Gentiles, but to teach them and introduce them to a God who has rules that if we break them we need to be penitent about. We need to search our hearts and confess them. We need to learn and worship the true and living God. They took all of that space and they used it to sell their wares. The problem with what was going on here was not "what" they were doing, it was "where" they were doing it.



And if you want a little bit of modernized feeling to get to where Jesus was, you might want to think about some of us that have been at Compass Bible Church since 2019 when we started to raise money for Compass 2020, and we were going to buy facilities to train people across the street. We were going to use the money to take this building across the way and gut it and turn it into classrooms for our kids to teach them the Word of God. We were going to continue to refurbish the building where we have our high schoolers who meet and get taught the Word of God in a big building over here. And then down the way two buildings over where our junior hi-ers meet to learn the Word of God every Sunday and throughout the week down there. And if we did that and spent all this money we raised and sacrificed our vacations and our lattes to say we want to build these places to teach our children, the next generation, the Word of God. And then we got in a time machine and went forward ten years and you come into this place and you realize what's going on in all those buildings. We're still doing worship in here but all those surrounding buildings, right? Do you know what's going on there? People are selling their organic juices and we had almonds and cashews and we had the Farmer's market going on and all that. I guarantee you'd be upset.

If you had a zeal for the church and the church is not only a place for adults to come into the main auditorium to learn the Word of God. We want our teenagers and our kids to learn the Word of God. But instead of learning the Word of God they're kicked out to the playground and to the donut table and all they're doing is running around when they should be being taught the Word. You'd get angry. You'd be upset. It's exactly what Jesus was upset about. Not that he wasn't into capitalism, not that he wasn't into money changing. Not that he didn't think these guys had the right to do it. You're in the wrong place to do it. Do it across the Kidron Valley. Do it outside the walls of the temple compound. Don't do it here. And the boss has the right to make the rules. He makes the rules and he makes them because he knows they're the right rules. And when they're the right rules, here's an important newsflash, it's always best for you.

Turn to one more passage, Luke Chapter 6. Go to Luke Chapter 6. Drop all the way down to verse 46. I want to remind you that when God makes rules, the rules that you and I are chafe against, we don't like some of his rules. We think he's being bossy when he says here's how you should define things. Here's what you should believe. Here's what you should do. We struggle with that but we need to remember this, right? He is the Lord, and if he's the Lord, we should do what he says. And if he is the Lord and he's a good Lord, if he's a good boss, his directives will always be for our good. And you need to remember that. Look at verse 46. This passage really says it all when you think about it. Why do you call me boss, boss and not do what I tell you? "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" I own you, I'm in charge of you and you don't do what I say. "Everyone," verse 47, "who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he's like." He's just a dutiful, obedient little boy and I'm really happy with you. No no no no. Verse 46 through 48, "He's like a man building a house," his life, "and he dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock." He built his life on what was stable. "And then when" hard times come, "a flood comes, and a stream breaks against the house, it could not shake it, because it had been well built."



So you need to understand our lives every time we make decisions, moral, ethical decisions, how to raise our kids, how to run our business, how to function in marriage, we're making decisions about the stability of our lives. And the Lord says, hey, I made you, I'm telling you how you should live life. And when we say, "Ahh, I don't like that," we just need to remember this: the Lord is the boss, and he's not just the boss then we do it because, you know, he's the boss and he's got a big ego and we better please him. No, we're doing it because we know not only is he the boss and deserves to be obeyed but his rules are always good. They're for our own good. Let's go to this historic event of them putting the Gentile nation's courts and instead of using it to train the Gentiles, instead of the Roman soldiers taking off their helmets and kneeling down and learning about the law of God and praying to the God who is, they're often pushed to the perimeter. They're not even allowed to be a part of it because we're selling our wares in the temple at the court of the Gentiles.

I'm just saying how did that go for them? How would it have been different if perhaps they really made the mission that God had intended for them to have to reach people by having the Gentiles realize that God loves them as well, and they can be right with the living God, but instead excluded. And, you know, it'd be four decades later that those Romans who weren't welcomed into the temple, right? Guess what? They were the people who were destroying the temple in 70 A.D. Titus would come through and they would wipe them out. God knew that when times get hard it'd be good if you kept my instructions, if you keep my commandments. If not, by the way, you want to do it your way. "You hear my words but you don't do them," verse 49, "you're like a man who built his house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of the house was great." Here's the thing about God being the boss. He's the boss and he's in charge. He makes the rules. He's not capricious. He's not just making rules out of thin air, doing whatever he wants. He knows what's best. He's the manufacturer of your life, your marriage, your family, your business. He's in charge of it. And we should listen to him. He's in charge. Can he be bossy? Does it feel like he's being bossy? Sometimes it feels that way. And sometimes when he's had enough of us going our wayward path he's going to say get on the right path. And I just want us to remember the Lord is right, he's in charge and his rules are good.

Verse 18, back to our passage here, John Chapter 2. Why wouldn't they comply? Why did they struggle? Why did they pause? Because they're going to ask the question we'd all ask, "Who do you think you are? What sign? What authority? What credentials do you show us for doing these things? You're going to tell us we can't do what we've been doing and everybody else seems to think we're okay with it. Why? We think we're doing just fine without your direction here. I know you're really excited about the temple being used for prayer but we're just telling you we should be able to make our own decisions." Why do people do that? Because we like to be our own boss. Number two, please just put it down that way. You need to "Admit You Prefer to Be the Boss." The problem is the reason I'm ever going to say Jesus is getting bossy in my life is because I like to be in charge of my life, just like you like to be in charge of your life. Just like Eve wanted to be in charge of her life. You need to understand how our penchant for doing what we want is usually the default superior motive of our hearts. We want to do what we think is right and we make a lot of decisions about what we think is right based on a lot of factors that surround us. And we need to know that we need to just



look at ourselves and be honest about the fact that the problem of human beings is from the very beginning in Genesis Chapter 3 is we prefer to do it our way.

Just like Frank Sinatra or whoever sang that old song, "I did it my way!" We want to do it our way, my way. I did it my way. We like to be the master of our own fate. The captain of our own destiny. We want to be in charge. And the problem with that is, jot this one down if you would, Proverbs Chapter 14 verse 12. Proverbs Chapter 14 verse 12. Here's what the Bible warns us of, just like Jesus did in Luke 6, it says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." The reality is that most of us think this is a good path and I like it. And we make that decision a lot of times for a lot of different reasons. Sometimes it's to fit in, sometimes it's because it's going to be more pleasurable for us. Sometimes it's because it seems like a shortcut to satisfaction. Right? Just like Eve was told. You know what? I don't think you should have this taken away from you as an option, this fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God is probably trying to keep something from you. You see it, you like it, it's good for food, it's going to make you smart in some areas of good and wrong, right and wrong, good and evil. I mean, just go ahead and do it. And Satan tempts Eve to do that. And Adam for the sake of his relationship with his wife decides to follow right along with it. And all of those decisions were made... They thought they were right. Adam thought he was right. Eve thought she was right. And all of that was taking place and the Bible says all of that ended clearly in death.

The verse right in front of the passage I just quoted for you, Proverbs Chapter 14 verse 12 is verse 11 when it says, "The house of the wicked, sadly, is going to be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish." This is what we call Hebrew parallelism. We take two lines, stack them on top of each other, and there's a parallelism. In this case, it's a contrasting parallelism. And notice the words that are contrasted in the top line. It says you need to know "the HOUSE of the wicked," it will perish, "but the TENT of the" righteous. Now if I said, you can live in a tent or you can live in a house, which are you going to choose? Unless you're crazy you want to live in a house, right? Sometimes to go along with the crowd, to get advanced in the world, you can build things up to a place where it's like, this is an advantage to me. And the problem is it seems right to a man to go, I want to fit in, I would like to be the employee of the month. I'd like to have the norms and the mores and the ethics of the people around me. I'd like to fit in. That's a very common reason for us to abandon the path of God. But even if you're in the minority and you have to live in a tent, right? You're ostracized by the culture. It says the tent of the righteous (wicked/righteous) is going to flourish, it won't be destroyed. "There's a way that seems right to a man, but it ends in death." We need to say we're going to do what's right even if it costs us.

You know today is Resurrection Sunday. It's March the 31st. We're celebrating the resurrection of Christ. If you go to whitehouse.gov and look at what the president says it is, this is the fifth year now. It's been the Transgender Day of Visibility and he's put a brand-new proclamation out this year refreshed the whole commitment to saying what we really need to be celebrating today is people being transgender, right? We should be having this be our celebratory fact. And you can read it. You should go read it. You should read what the president says or his writers say or his advisers say about what we ought to be celebrating



today. This is the fifth year that it's gone on in our culture. Matter of fact, you can see the whole calendar is littered with things that we ought to celebrate, including this that your biological sex should not be attached to your gender preference.

Matthew 19. The boss says, you know what? I've created the male and female so that they can come together in a covenant relationship of marriage and procreate and have children. That's the picture. That's a paraphrase of Matthew 19 and Malachi Chapter 2 and that's what the Bible says. Now the boss says that and the president says the other and he says it, like most politicians, because we find our way to a place where we think we're going to get the votes and the applause and the affirmation of culture. And the culture right now, for you to go to your workplace and say you know what? Whatever the next holiday is to celebrate something that the Bible says is wrong, I'm going to tell you it's wrong and here's what the boss says is right. I'm going to follow Jesus. Well, you're going to be living in a tent, probably, if you keep that up at your job, because the reality is you're not going to be applauded by the world. But the Bible's very clear that we cannot seek to figure out what's right based on what people around us will affirm, because the end is death. And I assure you of this, everything that is a departure from what Jesus taught, from what God has affirmed in his Word, is going to end poorly. You watch what's happening already and people are already starting to see it particularly with the transgender movement. That's one part of the alphabet soup that we have that people have started to say, wait a minute, I'm starting to see a lot of bad things in our culture come from our affirmation of this. And in reality, you give it enough time and you'll watch this like in any empire and any civilization in the past, a lot of these perversions were exactly what brought these things down. It was part of the grease that slid them right into the trash bin of history. And you're going to start to recognize that's the problem. "The house of the wicked will be destroyed." It may seem right to a person, but you need to be willing to fight to say if the boss is the boss, I need to realize I cannot choose to be the boss. Because if I choose to be the boss I'm going to listen to the serpent in the Garden or I'm going to listen to the crowd around me and I'm going to make the wrong decision. I have to defer to the only boss that there is, the boss who made me, and the boss who has the right to make the rules.

King Saul, the first King of Israel, was head and shoulders above the rest. He was handsome. He was successful because God gave him some victory on the battlefield early on and everyone thought he was great. And he loved the popularity just like you would if you were made the king of the world or the king of the nation. And in reality, it looked like things were going well for a while. But he departed from his commitment to the Word of God and what God had said through Samuel the prophet and he started saying, well, I'm really concerned about the adulation of the people. And eventually in First Samuel Chapter 13, he gets to the place where in this stressful time of war, he was told to do certain things and told to avoid certain things. In this case, he couldn't have the function of the priest or the prophet in doing sacrifices to the Lord. Samuel was going to come and oversee that. Saul was a king and kings weren't supposed to act as priests or prophets. That's not how it worked in the Old Testament. Only Jesus was going to be qualified to be a prophet, priest and king. So here he is on the battlefield and he was told by Samuel to wait and that he would come and he would bless this battle and would give him a victory. And so Samuel is on his way but Saul's watching his troops start to scatter and it feels like he's losing his popularity, he's losing his



leadership, he's losing his oversight of these people. And so he gets really frustrated. And you can see him pacing in the passage in your mind as you read it and he's just stressed out and finally says, I'm done with it. I know what God says, but I think this is right. I'm going to choose to be my own boss because if I keep on this I will be living in a tent. I won't be living in the king's palace.

And that's precisely what he does. He goes and he does the sacrifice that he's not allowed to do. It happens a few times in Israel's history where the king does the sacerdotal work of the priesthood and they're always punished. And when he finished, when he was just done with the ceremony, guess who walks up on the very day he said he would show up? Samuel. And Samuel shows up and this is a great line from that whole scene right there in First Samuel Chapter 13. Samuel says to Saul, "You have done foolishly." Why? Because "You have not kept the command of the L-O-R-D." The Lord. You haven't kept the command of the Lord, who was supposed to be your God, "with which he commanded you." For when the Lord commanded you to do this, if you had kept it, "he would have established your kingdom over Israel forever." You know how much you forfeited just by giving in to the pressure of the crowd kind of scurrying away from you? If you were the last man standing here, Saul, you should have stayed faithful to the Lord because in the end the Lord would have established you generation after generation. "But now," verse 14 says in First Samuel 13, "but now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart."

Sunday school grads you know who the man after his own heart is, right? Who? David. I'm glad he was so much more righteous than Saul. So glad. So great. He came on the scene, he was righteous from beginning to end. Is that true? No, I mean, he had a little problem leaning over the edge of his palace, right? Peeping Tom looking through the windows seeing a girl bathing. And then he can't control his passions and he's got all this power and he says, go get her for me. I got to have her. He brings them into the palace and has sex with her. She gets pregnant and Bathsheba says to David, "I'm pregnant." He goes "Oh, no scandal. Horrible scandal. I know what I'll do. I'll get your husband Uriah back from the battlefield because he's out in the battle. And I'll have him come back and hopefully, you know, they'll have sex and then, you know, he'll think it's his." Now, remember, David was this runt out in the fields, ruddy he was called, red of appearance, right? And he was not Saul. Saul was head and shoulders tall, a typical, you know, strong, successful Jewish man. And here's David this runt shepherd, the youngest of his own family. He becomes the king, not because of his external prowess. Right? Because God had blessed him and given him success starting with killing Goliath. And now here he is hoping that this kid, this illegitimate child, doesn't have red hair and that Uriah will come and have sex with his wife and he will cover up the scandal. And of course, you know the story, Uriah comes back and he's more committed to the battle on the battlefield than David was because David wasn't even there with his troops. Uriah comes back and says, "I can't possibly go in and sleep with my wife even though the King has called me back to my house because the troops are out there sleeping in tents on the battlefield." So he sleeps on the porch. So David can't get out of this mess and God keeps pressing in his conscience, continues to press him down.



And Nathan finally is alerted to this by God and he goes to David and confronts him, and he says, David, "You're the man. You're the man." By the way, if you were to go back to Saul when he was confronted with his sin, do you know what happened every time he was confronted with his sin? "No, I didn't do that. I did this for..." Every single time he's confronted he sits there and he says, his initial reaction is, "You know what? I'm right. You can't tell me that. I made a good decision." He justified and rationalized his decisions. That was his default position. The minute that Nathan pointed his finger at David and said, "David, you know you're sinning. You're the man. You're the sinner here." David didn't fight him. He didn't justify it. He didn't rationalize it. He said, you're right. He confessed it. He repented. The difference between Saul and David wasn't that one was a sinner and one was righteous. Right? The difference was one was not honest and one was. And when confronted with the boss and his rules, he said, "You're right, I blew it. I should have followed the boss' instructions." When Saul was confronted by Samuel he said, "No, I made the right decision. I should be able to retain my position as boss of my life." See, God is not trying to find a man after his own heart that means he's going to be perfect. Because there's not a perfect person in this room, right? What he's looking for is honest people. And honest people it begins with you're not the boss, God is the boss, he makes the rules and when you fall short of those rules you have to confess that. You have to say, I know I like to be boss. David wanted to be the boss of his own passions and be able to do what he wanted to do but when he did he was struck with his guilt. He tried to cover his sin. God convicted him of his sin and being a man after God's own heart was simply saying you know what I realized? God is God and I'm not. He confessed it and repented.

It's so important that we realize, like David, that we understand our sin and we confess it. I know we prefer to be boss, but when we realize we have been boss when we shouldn't have been boss in our own decisions we need to confess it. Psalm 119, which I believe David wrote, though it's not explicit in the text. There are a lot of clues in this passage, the longest chapter in all of the Bible. He says in the very last verse, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." I've gone astray like a lost sheep. And then he says this to God: "Seek your servant," find me, get me back on the path. I love that. The verse right in front of it, "Let my soul live and praise you and let your rules help me." Let the rules bring me right back on path. That's the difference between Saul and David. And the difference, I hope, between people who are not submissive to God, who recognize they come in to, whether the court of the Gentiles or Compass Bible Church and say, "I know I'm a sinner, I fall short." And they recognize that. And they say, God, I need your rules, and I need to get back on the path. I'm a lost sheep. I'm wayward. I have the tendency to go off the path, I know it. God bring me back on the path. I confess when I hit the walls on this narrow path that I'm going to commit myself to you. It's super important that we admit that we prefer to be the boss but when we are and we shouldn't be that we confess it. The homework assignment is to read very carefully Psalm 32, the psalm that David wrote when he was under conviction about his sin. It's important for us to echo that because that's what it means to realize we've been boss when we shouldn't.

Well, Jesus is the boss. He comes on the scene of the Temple Mount. He drives them out of the court of the Gentiles and they say, who in the world do you think you are and his answer is "Destroy the temple." Look back at it with me here in John Chapter 2 verse 19, "Destroy the



temple, and in three days I'll raise it up." Well they thought he was talking about the building, which is, as a matter of fact, the other gospel writers, John is the only one who records this conversation. But Matthew and Mark both say, and I believe Luke as well, even brings up the fact that they were accusing him at his trial before Pilate that he was one who claimed that he was going to destroy the temple. Well, he never says that here. He says destroy the temple. If you destroy the temple, I build up in three days. He's not talking about the building, of course. But they turn that into one of the false accusations against Christ to get him crucified. Well, this particular picture as the Sanhedrin was all in a tizzy over all of that, the disciples looking back on it go he was talking about his body. I mean, 46 years to build this temple. We're not talking about construction projects although God could have done that. "Jesus was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered what he said and they believed the Scriptures," because the Bible predicted this, Isaiah 53, for instance, "and the word that Jesus had spoken" that he called his own resurrection in this passage, among others.

It's important for us to recognize that we "See His Resurrection as His Credentials," number three, just jot that down. You need to see the fact that he rose from the dead as his credentials to tell you what to do. God can tell you that transgenderism is wrong because Christ has risen from the dead. God can tell you that you can't cheat on your taxes because God has risen from the dead. God can tell you how to raise your children and how to discipline them because Christ has risen from the dead. That may seem like a stretch but let me just try to put this all together for you. Go back to John Chapter 1. The prologue starts with "The Word was with God and the Word was God." "Nothing was made, verse 3, "that has been made if it wasn't made through him," Christ. So Christ is the maker of all things and the king of all things. Look at verse 4 now, in John Chapter 1 verse 4. In this passage it's important for us to recognize it speaks about him as the giver of life. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Let's think that through. "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." Drop down to verse 9, "The true light, which gives light to everyone," this life was light, the light gives life to everyone, "it was coming into the world. He was there in the world made through him, but the world didn't know him," verse 10. He is life. This is the picture and he says it elsewhere, "I am life." I give life to whom I choose, including himself, because he's not "derivative life." Every person in this room right now who's able to even understand what I'm saying, you understand that you are derivative life. God has given you life. You didn't choose when to be born. And when you die you can't say three days later, well, I want to be alive again so I'm going to put my spirit back in my body. You can't do that. Your derivative.

You are subjected to the one who gives life. Well, Jesus in this passage it says is the one who IS life and GIVES life, and he is the life that gives light to everyone. And he has that ability to give life. And this is why, verse 5, "The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." That's an ultimate allusion to the resurrection. There's no possible way that the life that is underived, it is unique, it is the essence of who he is. He is life in and of himself. If you kill him, which you shouldn't even be able to kill him. As Jesus said, you don't take my life from me he says later. He says I willingly "lay it down" because if the light and the life that is not derivative doesn't want to die it can't be killed. And yet he's willing to die and then choose to be alive and he does that because he's the giver of life. So his credential in being able to

say to life forms like you and me, don't do this or do that, believe this or repudiate that, follow this or reject that, he has the right to make those rules because he is life, the giver of life. He's given you life, and he and himself can't have his life taken away. He lays it down in a crucifixion so he can absorb your sin and take the penalty upon himself. But then he can inject life back into that lifeless body in a tomb on the third day. Which is exactly what this is all about because God is the creator.

Go into the beginning here of Chapter 2. John Chapter 2, this wedding at Canaan. You might remember this story. Let's look in verse 6. "There are six stone jars of water there for Jewish rites of purification," they did their washing before they went into these places, "each holding 20 to 30 gallons. And Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water.'" And they fill them up to the brim," so 150 gallons of water. "And he said to them, 'Now draw out some, and take it to the master of the feast,'" the big feast, wedding feast going on here. Take it to the master. He took it to the master. "When the master," verse 9, "of the feast tasted the water, now become wine, and he did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water)," they knew, "the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to the bridegroom," hey, what gives here? "Everyone," who's going to have a wedding feast like this serves, "the good wine first, when people have drunk freely," they start to get a little tipsy then you can give them the subpar wine. "But you've kept the good wine until now," the perfect wine, here it tastes perfect. "This," it says, "is the first of his signs that Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples," trusted, "believed in him" Signs.

Remember they said what sign do you show us? What credentials do you have? Well here, just in the preceding passage, his credential, his first credential publicly displayed was turning H₂O, think about this, hydrogen and oxygen compound in a molecule and a bunch of them, 150 gallons of it. He turns it into wine, which is a super-duper complex beverage you understand. Right? I'm not a partaker of it, but I can tell you this, right? Super complex. I've studied enough to know you're going to need some hexos, you need some sugar, right? Which is six atoms of carbon and 12 atoms of hydrogen and six atoms of oxygen. You need that all in there. That's a complex thing, that's complex sugar and it's supposed to be there. You've got to have that. You got to have all kinds of proteins from the peptides and the proteins around the skin of those grapes. You need carbon dioxide, you need some CO₂ to make this work. And that usually takes a lot of time to figure it out the enzymes from the yeast. You need some ethanol, you need some C₂H₅OH to have this thing actually be wine. It's not going to be wine without it. That fermentation process is going to take a long time to move from grape juice to wine. All of this is going to need to happen and happen with the perfect pH balance and all the right levels of proteins and enzymes. All that has to happen for this to get into a chalice to have the master drink it and go, "Man, that's the best wine I've tasted all night. I don't understand, where has this been?" How did he do that? How did he do that just by pouring water into a jar and then saying, BAM! instantly it's going to now be wine. I mean, if you want to turn something simple, the ubiquitous element of H₂O into the complex soup and mixture of the chemistry of wine, that's an amazing thing to do with the word, a word of your power, the expression of your authority, able to make things out of nothing.



Can you make rods and cones and corneas and optic nerves and synapses in brains? Can you make nervous systems? Can you make fingerprints and fingernails? Can you do all of that? Of course you can't. You can't turn water into wine with the word of your power that has a chemical, think about this, a chemistry of a history and time and process that never took place because you spoke the word and it happened. Jesus is able to do that. He's able to do that because he's the giver of life. He's the architect of all physical life. He's the giver of all spiritual life. And he says, when I tell you to move your table and don't do it here, do it there, you got to move your table, because he's in charge of everything. And the whole point is you would do well to listen to what Jesus says. And ultimately what Jesus says is I'm the boss, you're not. And when you're the boss you can see the things that make you fall short of the pattern that I set out for human beings. You fall short of the human template. That's called sin, transgression, iniquity, sin. And here's the deal. I'll take it upon myself to die on a Friday and absorb all that penalty for you. I'll take the Father treating me like he were you, so that if you trust in me, the giver of life. It's as simple as that. I say, I know I'm a sinner, right? You are the resurrection and the life. And if I trust in you, even when I die, I'm going to live.

One last passage. Turn to Revelation Chapter 1. In Revelation Chapter 1, Jesus appears to John, the oldest living apostle at this particular time, in the 90s of the first century, he had been exiled to this island as a prisoner, and he sees this vision of Christ. Christ appears to him in glory like he did there on the Mount of Transfiguration. You can read all about it in the verses that precede verse 16. But let's start in verse 16, "In his right hand," here's what John sees, "he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword." All of this is symbolic but in this picture his words, man, they come with binding authority, like a Roman sword to back it all up. "And his face was like the sun shining in full strength." He couldn't even look in his face. The glory of God. This is a symbolic representation of the greatness and glory of God. "When I saw him," verse 17, John says, "I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me and he said, 'Fear not, I'm the first and the last.'" That's always the definition of God. He always existed. He always will exist. "Who was, who is, who is to come." This God who is eternal. "I'm the living one," giver of life. Of course he's alive. "I died," though the amazing thing, he laid down his life for us. "And behold, I'm alive forevermore." Right? The resurrection. "And I have the keys of Death and Hades." Do you want to talk about the implications of resurrection? When he says stop in the name of the law, quote, unquote, he pulls out a badge and it says, "resurrected one, dead and now alive." How is that authority to tell me how to live, to tell me what to do, to be able to say to the culture you're wrong? How can I say that? I can say it because I'm listening to the one who has the authority not only to die and be alive but because of that he now has "the keys to death and hell."

Now here's the thing I want when I die. I want to be friends with the guy who has the keys to death and hell. Right? And he says, I got the keys to death and hell. I am the difference between your eternal destiny. You got to be right with me. If you're right with me, you can either pay for your sins or you can be trusting me to have paid for your sins for you. And I can close up hell, lock it up, and you're never going to go in it or I can open it up and shove you in it. And that's exactly what Jesus says we ought to fear. The one who has the right not only to kill us, but "to cast us into hell. Yes, I tell you," Jesus said, "fear him." And the reality is I don't

have to fear him if I would just recognize that he's the boss and as the boss he says this: trust me. You trust me like David said, I'll trust you by admitting I'm a sinner, by confessing that I fall short and knowing that your life expended on a cross with great pain was the absorption of all the penalty that I deserved and that if you trust in me in that moment, I could be the thief on the cross and trust in Christ and at that moment I'd be prepared, fully qualified, to step into Paradise. The Bible says I hold the keys to death and hell. It's simple, but it's so hard. You know why it's hard? Because of authority. This whole message has been about who's in charge. Who do you say you are? What gives you the right? It's really not about whether or not extra-biblical prophecy affirms that Herod's building project started in the 18th year of his reign and all this comes right up to the time when John claims this all happened. Yes, the Bible is true, but I find people who think I'm not sure the Bible is true. It usually comes down to the issue of authority. I don't want to stop being the boss of my life and it starts with you recognizing your sin and believing the boss and trusting him.

There was a general of the Syrian Army in the Bible, Second Kings 5. He was struck with a skin disease, leprosy, which is a word that covers a lot of different skin diseases. But it was bad. He goes to his boss, the king, direct report to the king in Damascus and he says, man, I got a bad problem with my health. And he was fearing his future. Well, his wife had been given a slave girl that he, as the general of the army, was in charge of a raid in northern Israel, he picked up a Jewish girl who became, you know, the assistant to his wife. And that girl knew about the theology of Israel. And she also knew from her family before she got taken as a slave that there was a prophet in Israel named Elisha. And Elisha was doing unique things to authenticate his message as a prophet. He did a few miracles and that word was out and she says to her mistress, the wife of this general, you know what? There's a guy in Israel who heals people and he's been known to heal some people. And so she tells her husband, Naaman goes and tells the boss, I hear there's somebody in Israel down south who can fix stuff like this. So the king of Damascus, king of Syria, sends an entourage down to Jehoram, the king of Israel, and says, hey, I got a number one guy here. My general is sick and I hear that people can be healed in Israel. And Jehoram goes nuts. He tears his clothes. What in the world is happening here? I'm going to go to war with a northern country just because he thinks that there's a healer in our land. This is crazy.

Well, Elisha hears about it and he says to the king, what are you doing? Stop! Why are you acting like that? God can do whatever he wants. And in explaining all that to the king sure enough, in time, the entourage comes from Damascus with the general and his chariots and his horses and his whole entourage. They come to Elisha's house and they get out and they knock on Elisha's door and they're coming to see if Elisha will heal him. And Elisha is up doing whatever, I don't know, he's writing something in a scroll or something and he didn't even go down to the door. He sends his messenger down. He knows what's coming. He tells his messenger to go down to the door and to talk to those guys. Just tell him this: if he wants to be healed of his skin disease have him go jump in the Jordan River and dip himself seven times and he'll be healed. What a weird thing, right? Sure enough, the messenger says that to Naaman, the general of the Syrian army and he's furious. He's furious. Not only does the prophet not come down to talk to him but he's given me this dumb thing to, you know, go jump in the water. And he responds this way. The Bible records it this way. He says, "I got rivers in



Damascus that are better than this muddy river in Israel, the Jordan River. How would I do that? That's ridiculous."

Here's the thing. It was so simple. Just go jump in the Jordan River and dunk yourself seven times. And he's mad and he lights up the chariots and starts heading north. And the guys who were around him started talking to the general. "Hey, general. Come on. I mean, think about it. He did say you can get healed if you did this. I know you want something way more dramatic. I know you wanted to talk face to face and have an audience with the prophet but the prophet did tell you this and his messenger gave it to him." Just like the stars in the right hand of Christ. Those stars are the messengers of the Church, the preachers of the seven churches of Asia Minor. "If you just listen to them you can have the keys of heaven and hell open and closed. If you just understand the messenger who came from the prophet. And Naaman, if you just listen, just go do it." And they prevailed upon him. He took a right turn as he's heading north, he heads over to the banks of the Jordan River he wades into the water and he dunks himself once, twice, three times, seven times. I love the way the Bible puts it. When he comes up the last time it says his skin was as fresh as a child's skin, right? I'm better than your dermatologist can do, right? Just BAM. He looks like a 12-year-old little kid. And he's healed. And I think to myself how close he came to dying of his skin disease. How close he came. Because he wanted something more complicated.

The other religions all over the world giving you all kinds of complicated solutions to the problem that you have with God. All kinds of schematics and all kinds of things you got to do. I'm telling you today to get right with the living God is to simply recognize his authority. He is the Lord Jesus Christ and all you need to do is put your trust in him that you're a sinner and that he paid for your sin on the cross. He has perpetual authority, being the Risen One, the one who has life in himself. We listen to him because he has all authority, believe the Scripture and believe his words and submit yourself to Christ. No aisles to walk, no cards to sign, you know, no hands to raise. We're not manipulating. We just want you to get right with the living God. And once you do it's an issue of authority. It's going to change everything about how you relate to him. You are going to start looking at what he says. You're going to start loving his Word. You're going to start loving his people. You're going to start saying, this is the best thing ever to have clarity. "It's a lamp to my feet and a light to my path," what God says. You have a newfound courage to stand up against the culture, against your coworkers, against the people in our world who say that right is wrong, and wrong is right. And you're going to stand strong with this little flock as Jesus said. It's going to be protected by God and walk through this world. He's going to build his Church and "the gates of hell won't prevail against it." They'll lob a lot of fiery, you know, bombs over the wall. But they won't prevail because we are standing with the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the giver of life, the resurrection and the life. We trust in him. Even when we die we're going to live. But trust in Christ today.

Let's pray. God, help us in a day when we get so much flak from so many people about what it means to be Christians. They're always just increasing their vitriol and frustration and angst against us. But God, we're not going to play the victim. We're not going to worry about any of that. We're going to stand strong and say here is the message. We'll give it to the generals of



the Syrian Army. We'll give it to congressmen and senators and presidents. We'll give it to coworkers and neighbors. Jesus is the Lord. He's the boss. He sets the rules and when we break them we just need to admit it. We need to come with a penitent, sorrowful heart and say, God, we've sinned. We're ready to get your forgiveness today. We know there are no perfect Christians but we want honest Christians, Christians who are honest with you and honest with themselves about the truth of who we are. Sinners who fall short and people who want to stand up and follow the Lord, the boss, and do what he says. We know that will only make our lives stronger and better like a house that's built on a strong foundation on the rock. So get us there, God, and let's think about this in a way we've never thought about it before, that we might give our hearts to you this morning in repentance and faith.

We pray all this in Jesus name. Amen.