

3 Cleansed by the Word Sermon Transcript

By Adrian Ebens, Passover 2015, Ocala, Florida.

Well, I had the joy over the last day, I had a couple of people come to me, I've just got to put this up here and say, you know, I've wanted to repent for a long time, but I didn't know how to repent.

And when you told me that Jesus has repented on my behalf, He took upon Himself, our nature and in our nature He repented for us so that we could repent. We can inherit the repentance of Jesus. Isn't that a beautiful thing? You don't have to make yourself you just have to accept His gift of repentance on your behalf. I had a few people come to me and say, "Oh, I never knew that. I never understood that." So that was that was a really beautiful thing.

And this is part three of a... I guess you would say now a series, we're walking through Passover, unleavened bread. And I did have another topic slated for tonight. But as I prayed and I listened to my heavenly Father, the impression was you need to now speak to the subject of first fruits and follow along on that theme.

And so that is what I intend to do, trusting in His grace that He will guide me on this particular topic. And I also just want to reiterate, last night we talked about baptism. We are going to have a baptism, the Sabbath. If you have been thinking about this subject, if you have a question about the subject, come and talk to Pedro or myself or Paul and we can discuss how you can be included in that baptism on the Sabbath.

Are we going to that? We decide we're going to just logistically, the pull is the best option, particularly for some of our most senior people.

It would be easier at this stage. That's the way we're going to do it. So I would just like before we begin, I know we had a prayer. I'd just like to pray once more, if I may, if you would like to bow your heads and I will pray.

Father, I thank You for this assembly. I thank you that You've brought us together. I thank You for the prayers of Your people. I thank You that together, collectively, we are desiring to know Your will. We thank You for Your great love for us. And as we have remembered, the Passover that you gave Your only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. We know that you love us, that you are for us, that you desired for us to dwell with You, and that if we listen to Your voice, that You will show us the path to life. And so I pray that You would speak through me the words that You wish and that we all will receive what we need this evening. And I thank You, father, in the name of Yeshua. Amen.

Well, on the first night we spoke about the Passover, how that when the Spirit of God came close to His people at the time of the Passover, as the Spirit of Christ came close, we saw the reaction of humanity. We saw the priests. We saw Judas. We saw humanity responding to the Son of God in its natural way because the law work its wrath and the Spirit of Jesus is the transcription of the law of God, isn't it?

And when the law comes close to humanity, it works rough in those who have not recognized the great need. It is going to produce wrath. It's going to produce a reaction. And this is why those who then begin to manifest this reaction, those who begin to realize that I'm not where I should be and why am I reacting this way? This is how it was for Peter when he when he said, "I know not the man." Then the law convicted him and he went out and wept bitterly and then he was converted. And this is what the process of conversion is about. The process of conversion, the process of repentance is simply coming to the decision of realizing, "Not my will, but Thy will." That's what it's about. It's the conversion of who has control. It's the conversion of who makes the final decision.

And when we look at the human experience, you only have to look from this beautiful child that you hold in your arms that's so small. And when they become two years of age or two and a half years of age and you say, "Come here, darling. "No." Is that ever happened? You've ever seen that happen? "Not your will. My will."

This is the nature of man. God allows us to see this manifestation, particularly in what we called the terrible twos. Do you have that term here? And it manifests itself again in the teen years, the terrible tweens or teens. It's become tweens now for many, hasn't it? This manifestation.

No, no, no, not your will, but my will and the process of repentance. The key part of this is, "Not my will, but Thy will." A recognition of the sovereignty of God, a recognition that we have a responsibility to someone outside of ourselves, someone who has given us life, and that we should live according to their agenda, the law, as it were. And so, this is what repentance, the first step of repentance is to place within us a realization that we need to give up on ourselves. We need to stop trying to control the agenda, as it were.

And then, of course, once we realize that the spirit, as it says in John 16:8, the Spirit of God, not only then convicts us of sin, but then convicts us of righteousness. And this is what we spoke about last night in the invitation into the most holy place that we might be considered part of the bride of Christ. We are invited not because we are beautiful, not because we are attractive to Him because of something we possess. We become His bride because He loves us. This is why we are invited. And for us to come to terms with the thought that we are actually being invited to be in a close and intimate relationship with the Prince of Heaven. It's a challenge. It's faith.

So, faith begins to step. Step one of faith is that we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. It takes faith to believe that, doesn't it? To accept the word of God. "For all, have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." If you accept that statement, you accept by faith that you are a sinner. And I guess many could say, "Well, I didn't need faith to understand that. I can tell by my works that I am a sinner." But not everybody is in that category, are they? There are some of them, "I don't need a savior." I've heard someone say, "I am my own savior, the humanist agenda. I'm doing good work. So, I'm not killing anyone. I'm I don't need any savior. Thank you very much." And this is quite a prevalent understanding.

And so, we have framed it this way, the straight gate of accepting repentance and then the straight gate of believing that we are invited to be part of the bride of Christ. And the next step. And we have talked about Passover: passing over our transgressions through the blood of the lamb, entering into the unleavened experience of being invited to be the bride of Christ, to allow His seed to dwell in us, and I like the way that brother Christian drew out that point this morning about in the commandments of God. How about the hijab, which is the same as the I am. It's His signature in the front. "You will have no other gods before Me. You will. Now that you know that you are an intimate relationship with Me, you will not be tied down to any idols. You will not take My name in vain because I have placed My seed within you. I have placed My Spirit within you. You will remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." So, all the commandments of God become promises.

And then of course, the next step is the first fruit, isn't it? The first fruit, the death to self. Unless the corn of wheat falls into the ground and die, it doesn't bring forth. So, the unleavened experience, the being buried with Him in baptism into His death that we might bring forth to newness of life. And so, this is the process that we are entering into. And as John pointed out, that unleavened experience, it's complete in the seed. It's a complete... All of the sanctification, all that we would desire to possess is already in that seed. We just have to let it grow. It's unleavened from the beginning, isn't it? It's unleavened, but it grows and it grows.

And this is where I want to focus on tonight about first fruits, first fruits and how we allow the seed to grow. What is the Bible called the word of God? It's the seed, isn't it? It's the seed. And this is a place where many people find it difficult. And I want to speak to this issue because Jesus said... And we can turn in Matthew, chapter four. In verse four and this, of course, in Matthew, chapter four, Jesus is being of the Spirit into the wilderness. He's being tempted by the devil. He's in combat with Satan. And when He is asked, "If You be the Son of God, commanded these stones be made bread."

His response is, "It is written man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that preceded it out of the mouth of God." The process of repentance causes you to shift from "man shall live by every word that proceeds out of his own mouth", to "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God". And in that shift, knowing that you've been called to the wedding feast, you've been called to be part of the bride of Christ,

you have a spirit of gratitude. You know you do not deserve it. And the more you realize you don't deserve it and the more you believe that you do possess it, the greater will be your gratitude. Does that make sense?

And the greater your sense of gratitude, the bigger your ear will be to hear the word of God and the smaller your ear will be to hear the voice coming from within that is tempting you to do evil.

And so, this process is important to shift from my will to thy will. As it says in Proverbs chapter 3, what does it say? Proverbs 3:5. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths." This is the transformation process because when we come to God, when we give ourselves to Him, Satan does not stop talking to us, does he? He still talking to us. And we have to then discern the voices. How do we discern the voices? The Word of God. Believe not every spirit that has gone out into the world. Test the spirits to see whether they are of God. If they do not speak according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them to the law and to the testimony. This is how we test. We test which radio station, the dial we've moved on to because sometimes Satan will try and fiddle with that dial. And so, we dial back into his voice. And his voice, as I found in my own experience, he makes his voice sound like my voice.

And when I'm listening to his voice, I'm thinking it's my voice. And then I have to go to the word of God and say, hang on. Well, whether it's my voice or whether it's Satan's voice, both of those voices are condemned by this word. They come onto the sentence of condemnation. I have to believe this Word. I have to follow this Word. And so the Christian part, the Christian walk is one of learning to say consistently, Not my will, but Thine be done. And where did we hear that expressed more fully than at any other place? In Gethsemane. Jesus has purchased for us that capacity under the most extreme circumstances, "Not my will, but Thy will be done. "

You know, when we struggle with sin and we wrestle and we're looking at a particular temptation and we know we shouldn't be engaged in it. And we're struggling and it's getting hard. Christ's victory is ours: Not my will, but Thy will. You can never do it. And this is the part where so many, all of us, begin this difficult process of how do we overcome, why does my flesh keep tempting me? And many people give up in frustration because their flesh keeps tempting them. Well, I need to tell you, your flesh is going to continue to tempt you. It's going to continue to come at you.

And what are you going to do when it comes at you? What are you going to say when after five hundred times you've prayed and asked for that thought to leave your mind and it just keeps coming? What are you going to do? Well, thus say the Lord. Is it too hard?

These are testing things. Why does God allow me to continue to think these thoughts? Why do these thoughts keep going through my mind? Why am I being put in this situation? Then you're being tempted to shift. Not Thy will, but my will. My will says, You shouldn't put me in this situation. You shouldn't make it that difficult for me. I shouldn't be in this place. Satan's tempting you to shift the dial back to my will. If you are a loving God, you wouldn't put me through this situation. If you were a loving God, this wouldn't be happening in my life. These are the things that begin to happen.

And so, we need to be hearing the word of our Father. And how are you going to hear the word of your Father if you don't know what the word says? "Thy word of I hid in my heart that," Word? "That I might not sin against Thee."

And the words John, not 6, not John. 6:66. There's another one, John 6:63. What does that say? "The words that I speak on to you, they are spirit and life." Life because they are seed. When you plant a seed, it doesn't look like very much, does it? But it has life in the seed when it is watered by the spirit placed within the earth, in the heart of man. When that seed is placed in there, there is life in that seed.

So, when we read the promises of God, when we read the word of God and we say, "Not my will, but thy will," we lay our will upon the altar of God's word. It springs to life. But when the seed springs to life and it's within the earth, can you see evidence when its first sprouting, when it's that first little piece comes out

and it's in the earth, it's in your heart. Can you see any evidence that it's there? You can't see any evidence that it's there, but it's there to the eye of faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And this is the way that God designs things, that when life begins and it opens up and it starts to move up through the soil and then it comes out for the fruit of the spirit, then to be displayed for others to see.

There is a period of time in which you cannot tell that there's been any change in your life. But it's there by faith. And this is what God is wanting to teach us, because if as soon as we claim the word there was an instantaneous victory, every time you wouldn't need faith, it would just be delivered every time and you would be victorious.

And so, this is what we are asked to do once we have repented. And that work of repentance, of course, continues as we study the word of God. But once we have entered into that pathway, we have accepted the invitation you have put on your wedding gown and you have the assurance. And I might just say at this particular point, let's go to 1 John 5. Verse 13. "These things have I written on to you that believe on the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have," What? "That you may know that you have eternal life." No doubt.

Do you have that assurance? I could ask you another question. Do you feel that assurance? You may do, but you may not. There'll be times when you don't feel it. But do you know it? When you lock onto that word that you may know that you have eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." If you have given your heart to your Savior, you take hold of that word. The seed ignites within your soul and it begins to manifest itself. But you don't see it at first, but it's there. And then Satan tries to make you feel like it's not true. And so that's when you say, Well, the word of God says it and I believe it, not based on what I've done, but on what the Word of God says.

And so we see, Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. We are cleansed by the washing of the word, the word, the word. And again, this is coming back to: Not my will, but thy will. How do we know thy will?

Thy will is in the word, sanctify them through the truth. Thy word is truth. If you want to be sanctified, you need to read the Word. Where is your motivation to read the Word? Where is your motivation to pick up the word of God rather than turn on the television and watch cable TV? Where does that motivation come from? From the gratitude that you know comes from your assurance of salvation. If you have that assurance, you will have gratitude. If you have that gratitude, you're going to pick up this book. You're going to read this book because you have assurance.

And brothers and sisters, do you do you ever think in your heart, let not your heart be troubled? You who believe in God, believe also in me, in my Father's house are many rooms. I like the word rooms. I don't want to live in my own mansion. I want to live in my Father's house. I want to be one of those rooms where I can run out to my daddy so that I can hug Him. We can have a country house. But I just really want to be with Him all the time. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you, etc.

Do you do you imagine... Do you allow yourself to think about what is going to be like in heaven with sanctified imagination? Do you imagine singing with the heavenly host? You allow yourself to think about all the wonderful things that we're going to do in heaven, and you believe it to be a fact. You know that this is what's going to happen. Do you allow yourself to do that? You should, because the Word of God says it. And even if you can't see it, if you believe it, it's already beginning. It's already beginning to take place if you believe the word of God.

And so, this is the word casting down imagination's in every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ through the Word of God, whereby He has given onto us succeeding great and precious promises. By these we might become partakers of the divine nature, because the word is spirit and truth in life. Spirit in life, which is the truth. Amen.

So, when I began my journey, I want to put a bit of a story into this for you in terms of my own experience and in sharing some of my experience in dealing with the word of God. I hope that will help us in this journey, help some of us, all of us. When I first gave my heart to Christ and it was a wonderful experience. I've shared this a number of times, how when I looked - I was reading about Christ's death on the cross - as I looked in my mind, I pictured Him dying on the cross. I saw in His face as, I imagine, no condemnation. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. It pierced my heart to think, I've done all these terrible things against You and You don't condemn me.

And then I begin to devour the word of God. I couldn't get enough of the word of God. I used to as a young person, I would have an illness. And it was called Saturday Night Fever. Ever had that illness? Saturday Night Fever, where if you're left at home with all of your friends are out having a good time, it's a bad night. The lip begins to droop and life's tough because I can't go out. So, I used to suffer from that disease, Saturday Night Fever.

And then when Christ came into my life and my friends rang up and said, "We're going out to see the latest movie. Do you want to come with us?" I said, "No, it's all right. I want to stay home." "What's wrong with you?" "That's all right. I don't want to go." I didn't want to tell them I was wanting to read the Bible. I couldn't get enough of this Book. I want to read the Bible. I didn't tell them that.

They said, "We're coming around to pick you up." Satan was wanting to drag me away. So, they came around. "So come on, we're going." I didn't want to go so I had to tell them. I said, "Look, I want to read the Bible." They disappeared before I left. It's like, that was easy. They just disappeared. "Reading the Bible on Saturday night? You are sick."

So, I went from one sickness to another, but that sickness brought me to life. So I praise the Lord for that. And I began to read I began to study the word of God. And the first thing that happened to me, because being in my teenage years experience, I was quite fond of a lot of the latest music that was going on. This is in the 1980's. So that's the era that I was in with as a teenager. And so when I became a Christian, I did the Constantine thing. I baptized all of my music and I got Christian rock rather than worldly rock. I did the Constantine thing, you see? And so, I was listening to my Christian rock music, but I wanted to read the Bible because this shift of the will, the gratitude produced a desire in the word of God.

And I wanted to read the Bible and I'm sitting down and I'm reading in the Book of Psalms. I remember I was reading in in the Book of Psalms and then, of course, another voice dialed in and I heard the music. I could hear it in my head. And I was going to go over and turn it on. And just as I was about to turn it on, I heard a voice. And it says, "If you turn that music on, you're going to find it difficult to read this book."

And I stopped for a minute and then another voice said, "Don't be such a killjoy. You can turn this on and you can listen to this. And it's got Christian words in it. So it's all right. You're getting a little bit legalistic." And so, I jammed it on, put the music on, go back and sit down.

And my Savior is saying to me, "Adrian, that spirit in that music and the Spirit in this book at war with each other. And you're going to have to choose." How I'm going to have to choose? It's like, "Really? Seriously?"

There's the spirit was warring against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit so that they were contrary one to the other, so that I could not do that, which I wanted to do. And that's in that hellish experience that I could not turn the music off and I could not stop reading the Bible and I couldn't do the two. I was trying to Babylonianise, the two and bring the two together. But the two spirits were not talking to each other. They were not harmonizing with each other and they were unreconciled to each other.

So, I had a problem. I had to make a choice. And so, I got up to turn that music off and I turned it off and I left the cassette in there. No, not amen. And I sat down, the voice came again: "You need to put that music on." And I turned it on again back sitting down. And then I realized I'm not in control here. There's something in that music that has a hold on me and I can't break it.

And here it is, at that particular point, if the sense of gratitude from the shift of not my will, but thy will, if that does not take place and the gratitude is not deep within your soul, it's at that point that you rationalize what you were doing. You justify your sinful behavior because he that is forgiven little, loveth little. And so, there is not that will to follow God's will. The will is weak. It's that the seed goes in, but it doesn't go deep into the heart. It goes shallow and then it springs up. But then when the sun comes down, it withers the plants because it's not deep within the soul. But the word had gone deep into my soul and I made a decision to do the will of God.

But I was wrestling. And so, I knelt down and I said, Lord Jesus, please help me. I can't do this. That's all he wanted me to say. But I had to wrestle there. I wrestled there for nearly half an hour on my knees because I was feeling this tearing, this pulling apart this tension inside of me. I began to almost shake, but I determined I am not going to surrender to this thing. And after a period of time, I got to that point in my will where: "You said that You would deliver me. You promised in Your Word that you would help me. And I choose to believe." And it was at that moment, it was like these shackle these chains whet: Pop, Pop, Pop. And I stood straight up, I reached in for that cassette, I threw it on the ground (stamps foot on the ground) and it was gone. And then I went into my collection, my music collection. I'm pulling everything out and it's going in the bin. I'm smashing everything and destroying it. And I'm feeling good. I'm glad that none of my friends were around to observe what I was doing. They would have thought I was crazy. All that good music, all that money I'd spent. Well, I'd spent some money, some of it I'd recorded off the radio. But thank God I was broken free of that experience.

But it came to a critical point where I had to make this decision. Was I going to follow my will? Was that voice that was telling me that this book is incompatible. Was that the voice of God, or was that me just trying to be legalistic? I had to discern, but I knew because looking into the face of Him who had died on the cross, for me, knowing that He had forgiven me, I knew it was His voice because: "My sheep hear My voice." They hear my voice. I knew it was Him. I knew that music. I could sense. I knew it was wrong and my flesh was trying to justify it and there was no justifying it. And I, having the kingly power of my own will, had to lean it on the side of righteousness and make a decision.

And as soon as I made that decision, the chains came off. As soon as the paralytic made the decision to hear the call he stood up and walked, as soon as he made the decision to stand up, life came into his person and he stood straight up. But he had to make the decision. He was not moving from that couch until he made the decision. Then he was given life. Then he was given strength. Then he was given power.

And so we must cling to the word of God. And it was not long after that that I was deeply convicted to memorize passages of Scripture because of what it says, "Thy word have I hid in my heart." Come to Psalms Chapter one, the beginning of the song book of God's People. What does it say that God's people will be doing? "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sit it in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of God; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." Are you serious? Day and night? Meditating in the Law of the Lord? Wasn't that thing nailed to the cross? Let's not go there.

Meditate day and night. I like the progression. You know, when you memorize these things, you can see the progression of walketh not, standeth, sitteth. You know, you're going to walk towards sin, you're going to stand in sin and you're going to sit in it like a sail, like a pig in mud.

And so, I began to memorize. One of my friends, he put a suggestion to me. He said, "Adrian, I'm going to memorize the book of Romans. Do you want to join me?" Romans? That's a big book. I looked it up, that's 435 verses. Well, we've got time. And so, he challenged me, says, "Come on, let's memorize the book of Romans." Okay. So, we started out and at first, you know, memorizing scripture is like bench pressing. If you try and memorize a lot all at once, you're going to drop that bar on yourself and you're going to say, I'm not doing this anymore. But you just do a little bit every day, just a little bit commit the word into your mind. I started to enjoy it. I started to really appreciate memorizing the word of God.

And my friend and I, we got into this routine where we would do 10 verses a day because, you know, we were also doing the bench press. So, you do three sets of ten. So, I go through ten verses three times. I do it once, go right through, have a break, then do it again and then do it again.

And when I was when I was young and I wasn't married and my time was my own, I had plenty of time to do it. So, I'm so glad that I did. I was able to memorize right through the book of Romans. And I don't say that to boast because I didn't want to do it. I was like, "This is crazy. I can't do this." But the Lord impressed me, "Do this. You've got the time to do it. You're young. Invest your time in the word of God. Listen to the word of God." And I'm so glad that I listened again to that voice, because when I did theological training, knowing the word of God, particularly in the book of Romans and in terms of issues of justification by faith, I knew what the word of God said. And I could go, "No, actually, the Bible says this. No, actually, the Bible says this." And so it took about eight months. But, boy, that was a great time. Could you think of something better to do? Took eight months memorizing the book of Romans.

Now, I can't quote it to you now, but when I need it, the Spirit brings it to me, brings it to me, brings it back to my mind, because I put the effort in. I listen to the word of God and He brings it to me when I need it. And so, I'm just giving you an example of commitment to memorizing the word of God. And particularly remember now your creator in the days of your youth, when you've got a mind that's flexible and sharp and you can retain things, that's the time to study. That's the time to memorize the word of God that, "Wherewithal shall young man claims his way? By taking heed there unto according to thy word." And I'm thankful that these words are able to come out, because that's what I was able to do. That's what the Spirit of God impressed me to do when I was younger. And I'm very, very grateful. Does that mean that when we're all we can't do it?

No, its good exercise memorizing the word of God. And as inspiration tells us, it's good for us to commit the promises of God to memory so that when we are deprived of our Bibles, we may still be in possession of the word of God. And that passage can have two applications where you simply don't have your Bible with you or when the powers that be come after us and said you will no longer be able to possess this book. And are we on the precipice of something like that? So we need to commit these books to memory.

And if you want core message for tonight, memorize this book. Make a decision. Put your will on the side of God and say, "I'm going to find a book to memorize." You know, when people ask me, "Well, where should I start?" The book that I love the most out of all the books is First John, the book of First John. It's only got five chapters in it. It's an easy book. And the first chapter only has ten verses and they're very short. So, you can get the sense that you're sort of getting somewhere, you know, sort of moving along pretty quickly. And then and I already knew verse nine because I'd heard it quoted many times, where it says, if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I already knew verse nine so I only had nine verses to learn and then I memorized a whole chapter of the Bible.

It's a good feeling. Putting it to music like you guys are going to share some more. Yeah, putting it to music. And that's something that my wife and I certainly did. We did some scripture songs. Sorry? There is some of the back there. Good. Yeah. Putting Scripture to music. And this is what Moses did, isn't it? Moses put the words of the Lord to music so they can memorize them.

And of course, we need to remember that, like I said last night, if you make a decision to not partake in leaven during the time of unleavened bread, and then you use that to judge other people who are not in that experience, then your unleavened is turned to leaven. If you memorize the Scripture in order to show that you have great knowledge and great understanding, you prove yourself to know nothing at all because knowledge puffs up. If any man thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. This is what the Scripture tells us.

So, if you're memorizing in order to compete with other people, you're wasting your time. You're perverting a good thing and turning it into something bad. Memorize it, because this book is life. In in the in the physical world this book is is a complete green smoothie. It is your carrot juice. It is your detox program. This is the book to detox your mind, to cleanse the soul temple. This is where you want to start. In the

Spirit. You want to memorize the first chapter of First John and then have your green smoothie or your carrot juice so you can keep it going.

Okay, you got the idea. But we need to be understanding the word of God. And that's the key point. If you want to grow in your experience, man shall not live by bread alone, but by... One part of the Bible? Every word of God. This is every word of God. And we know that. And again, we don't want to glorify men who memorize. That's not the object. You would want us to twist these things. But my conviction is we need to be committing this book to memory. And that's the point upon which you then are able.

There are there are reasons why there are certain passages of Scripture that I know very, very well. One of them is for God has not given us the spirit of fear, but power and of love and of a sound mind. You know why I quote that a lot? Because I don't have a sound mind. I have an unsound mind that's fearful. So, I quote that text in order to meet my need. That's why I quote that text a lot. John 6:35 or 6:37. "Him that cometh up to me I will in no wise cast out." You know why I know that verse? Because many times I have felt cast out. I felt like there's no point for me. But then I remember that verse. It says, You will not cast me out. And I take hold of that word. It begins to spring forth in my life and then I'm turned around by the word of God.

That's why I quote these verses. Casting all your cares upon Him. Why? He cares for you. You know them. Amen. It's good to quote these verses and to quote them to the enemy. Man shall not live by bread alone. It is written. Isn't that how Jesus met the tempter? It is written. This is what he said. And of course, man shall not live by bread alone, He's quoting from Deuteronomy, isn't He? And this is how Jesus met temptation by quoting the Scripture.

And so, I want to relate to you now another experience. And in terms of my journey in taking hold of the word of God, I had now been involved in memorizing the word of God for a period of time. And I was deeply enjoying the reading of the Scriptures. And I had also been studying the story of Pilgrim's Progress and that is one of the most accurate portrayals of the Christian life that I have read. And there was a point in the story and I used to listen to it on an audio, there was an audio series. I don't know if you're familiar with the audio book of Pilgrim's Progress. And it had sound effects and everything in it. And there was a part where Christian, he is in combat with a Apollyon. Do you remember the story? And it's at a point where the dragon has knocked the sword out of his hand. Do you remember the story? And one of the shining ones guides his hands to the sword. And just as the dragon is taking his dart to finish off Christian, he takes the sword and he thrusts it into the dragon. And at that particular point, at least in this story, at that particular point, I would hear on the audio the sound of wings flapping as the dragon is flying away. He's been wounded. He's received a mortal wound. And the dragon is flying away because the sword, which is the sword of the Spirit and the word of God. The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword under the sun. And so, this sword goes in.

And at this particular point in my life, I was studying and reading the word of God. And then all of a sudden these thoughts were pressing themselves hard onto my mind and our thoughts like this: "God doesn't exist. It's all a lot of nonsense, all of this stuff, you should be ashamed of yourself being involved in these things." And they were not soft thoughts. They were pressing themselves really hard upon my mind. And then and then other thoughts like, "Why are you thinking thoughts like this? You're not such a strong Christian after all. Why are you thinking like this? Why are you doing these things? You're weak. You're pathetic." And why am I...? I'm memorizing the word of God. I've been a Christian for a number of years now. And then why am I having these thoughts? I'm wrestling with... I'm trying to answer a foolish question. Why am I thinking these thoughts? Because Satan has not given up. He's trying to hit me.

And again, I was faced with a decision with this feeling like these thoughts. And I would try and fight back and I would quote the Scripture. I would quote passages, Scripture, and you would think that it's going away. And then it would go calm. Oh, thank the Lord, it's over. And then it was back on again! Hitting me again. Hard, hard. You've got to give up. There was this desperation. You could feel it in the spirit to try and break my hold on the word of God. And then I would pray and I'd ask God to help me. I didn't understand why I was being afflicted with this confrontation. Why was this going on?

And I was working with a friend of mine and the sun was shining and the birds were singing, but I couldn't hear any of that. And he's whistling and singing and he's as happy as anything. And I'm there. I'm struggling away. And I say, "Can you please pray with me?" And we're praying. And yeah, yeah, I feel better now. And then five minutes later, again. I'm being hit again. This went on for six or seven hours without a break. This intense conflict trying to understand and this is where many times in our experience, where if we go by our feelings...

I've prayed. I've claimed the word of God. I've begged God. I've trusted His word and it's not going away. It's not leaving me. And then you get tempted saying, "See, it doesn't work, does it? You've claimed the Scripture. It doesn't work." But why? Why does God allow this to happen? He needs to know. Do you trust in the word? Do you believe that the word will do what it says it's going to do or not? And so, after seven hours, seven hours of that conflict, I came to that point of decision. And I remember clearly in my mind that decision. I don't care what you say, the word of God is truth. And I intend to keep it no matter what. And immediately at that point, I heard that sound of the wings flapping and the retreat. And I looked up into the heavens and suddenly the sky was blue. And I began to hear the birds sing again. And it was like, "What was that? What happened there?"

And from that day. And that was that was at least 25 years ago. 28 years ago. From that time to now, I've never, ever had a doubt like that again. And it was an interesting experience. It was a very interesting experience. But we get put in situations where your will is tested. Are you going to give up?

And I share this experience because I know that many people grow discouraged because the temptations at times do not abate. They do not stop; they continue and they continue to harass us. And sometimes they may not be concentrated into a very short period of time. They come over weeks and months and years where these thoughts just keep coming. And why don't they go away? Why don't they leave me alone?

You cannot create a vacuum for the truth. You have to fill the mind with the word of God. You have to claim the word of God, speak the word of God. When you're hearing these doubts, speak the word of God, drown out that other voice, speak words of faith. This is what the word of God says. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Just keep quoting it. I've had many times where I've just quoted, quoted, quoted.

You are not going to overpower me because I'm going to keep quoting this book until you give up, because this word is living, this word is powerful. This word will defeat you every time. And I would like to say that every time I faced temptation, I was steely and determined is that. But I'm not.

Sometimes the enemy catches you off guard, he catches you in a moment, he comes at you in a way that you don't expect and you're reeling and he takes the advantage and he pushes you back and he backs you into a corner, desperate to get you to make a decision, a fateful decision to push you over a precipice, to make your Christian walk a great sorrow for you. And so, we must commit ourselves to the Lord every morning, mustn't we? Get out of bed.

If you ever heard the statement where it says, "Lord, I haven't said anything wrong to anyone today. I haven't stood on the cat. I haven't yelled at my children. But I'm about to get out of bed for the day." So that's how many people look at it and that's kind of an inevitability that you are going to do something and you're programming yourself for doing something that you ought not. And so, we want to we want to take hold of the word of God.

And I would reiterate, your ability to claim the promises of God with full assurance depends completely on your sense of gratitude for your forgiven sins and the assurance of your salvation. If you are struggling to claim the word of God, then I would ask you to look at your assurance plan. You are not insurance. Assurance. Your assurance plan of salvation based on the depth of repentance that has been granted to you, because if you have those things connected in the right way, you will be able to take hold of the word of God. Does that make sense?

And if you're struggling in that department, go back. Am I assured of my salvation? Am I confident that my Father in heaven loves me? Do I have doubts in my mind to think that He doesn't love me, that He doesn't care for me? Don't entertain those doubts because those doubts are actually at war with the word of God, which tells us that He loves us, which tells us that He cares for us. And so, we need to seek these things out and take hold of the word of God. The path to the city is full of temptation and trial. We don't want to sugarcoat this in any way. You know, it is true that once you have committed yourself to the path, there are some people that say, "It's easy to be saved, then it's hard to be lost." And there's an element of truth in that. But the truth is that the most will be lost. That's the reality.

Because Jesus says, "Strait is the gate, narrow is the way and few that be that find it." But once you go in through the strait gate, once you accept the repentance that Christ has worked out for you, and then you enter into the most holy place, those two strait gates, then it is a path that if you do not resist, you will receive eternal life. It's guaranteed you cannot be swayed. But most people will not enter into the strait gate. They will not take off. It's too inconvenient. It's inconvenient to be numbered amongst those who believe in the begotten Son of God.

For many of our brethren, it's inconvenient to believe this. It's inconvenient to be gathered at the time of the Passover and unleavened bread. It's shameful to be associated with these Judaism. It's a shameful thing for many people. And Satan sets up these barriers to prevent people from walking in the narrow path.

That's the way it's designed. It's the way Satan sets it up. But greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. This is what the word of God says. As it says, we'll quote a few more. I'll finish off in 1 John, because I love this book. The first fruit, well, let me read you a couple of verses and then we'll come down on that.

1 John chapter 2. "My little children, these things right on to you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

You look at chapter 3, there's some challenging verses. I remember I sprung these verses on some people after I've been memorizing in the book of first John and it says in verse 7, "Little Children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

You need to be careful when you use these verses. You can discourage people if people have not made that process of repentance and entered into that experience of gratitude and you drop a text like this on them, you could destroy them. 1 John 3:7,8. You need the assurance. And when I was memorizing this, I started dropping this text on people. If you commit sin you are of the devil. That's when Satan goes, "Uh huh, exactly." We need to be very gentle in the way we realize that there are many people who have not made that switch, who have not experienced that gratitude. So, we need to be gentle and careful in the way before we open up some of these deeper passages.

Because when you are in Christ and the seed abides in you... And this is this is where we come to the first fruit, thank you for bringing me on track. I went wandering off. I guess the essence of the sermon is that the word of God is the seed and the seed brings forth the fruit. OK, we connect the dots, the seed.

And notice Revelation chapter 12, the woman. What is the woman? She has the seed. Okay, she's standing on the moon. The woman stands on the moon. She's clothed in the sun. The stars are the twelve stars in a hedge. She's familiar with the timing of God. The very concept of birth is a concept of timing, isn't it? That very principle of... And this is moving off onto another subject. But the principle of the reproductive cycle is a lunar experience, isn't it? This is called a monthly cycle that there is a time for the seed to come forth. There is a time of pregnancy. And if someone expressed to me that if you follow through the process of pregnancy, it actually follows the process of the feasts. You were aware of that? Something to look up, the feast process is a process that is followed by the pregnancy process of the birth of a child. You want to

check that up? Someone explain this to me. And it made sense to me at the time. I may be wrong, but it certainly sounded interesting. And this person was vigorously sharing this idea with me.

And it says in verse 5, "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all the nations." And here we come to the critical point because the woman... Who is the woman? Someone tell us that, well, this is Mary, the mother of Jesus. But the woman, it says in Jeremiah 6:2, "I've likened my people unto a comely and delicate woman." Jeremiah 6. And so, the woman is the church and we are part of the church. And so, we are the ones that bring forth Christ in you, the hope of glory. And so, when the seed manifests, there is the first fruit. And as we think about the experience that we have passed through, that we have accepted Passover, we have entered into the repentance. We acknowledge that we don't deserve to be passed over. It's only the blood that is placed upon the doorposts that allows us to be passed over. And then in gratitude, we accept the invitation. We enter into unleavened bread. And then on the next day, the first fruits begin to manifest. The seed begins to produce its fruit on the very next day, the morrow after the Sabbath.

Well, we're just about to enter it now, aren't we? We're just about to enter into the first fruits. That experience. And so, the seed is going to be produced in all of us. But if you want to have that seed. It has to be in the mind, has to be in the heart that we may possess these things.

And so, I have brought that together for you. John 15? What's in, John 15?

John 15:7,8. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." And this is why that's the perfect verse to finish on. You ask what you will. I was wondering if we could or we can sing this together. Could we sing a hymn? I would like to sing number 292. It's called Jesus, I come.

Jesus, I come. As we're singing this, I want to invite us to make the decision to follow through on these words: "Out of my bondage so one night, Jesus, I come." What allows you to come out of your bondage? The word of God to claim the word of God. "Into Thy freedom, gladness and light. Jesus, I come to Thee." If we can sing this together.

Just before we close with a prayer, it's important for us to exercise our will on the side of truth. And so, I ask everyone here if you are willing to determine to hear the word of God, to commit the word of God to memory, is that something that we can do? Christ is inviting us to do this. We are responding to His invitation. And so, because He has invited us to do this, we can do this because I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. If we can kneel, we'll close with a prayer.

Father in heaven, we thank You for Your word. We thank You that You have taken so much time and effort to preserve, to have written the word of God. You've preserved it. Men have tried to destroy it. Men have tried to take it from the earth. But we still are in possession of the word of God. I pray that we would treasure the reality that we can hold in our hands the word of God. Made alive by Your Spirit. May we treasure it. May we consider it more precious than gold to have the law, the word of God, in our position. And Father, that it will be written on the tables of our hearts, that we would commit it to memory, that we would study it. And when Satan comes in like a flood, that we would quote it. Great peace have they which love Thy law and nothing shall offend them. That is a seed. We can come to that place where nothing offends us. I believe it. And I pray my brethren here will believe it also. And so, as we go from this place, Lord, we trust that You will make a reality of the decision that we've made to commit the word of God to memory. And if we have no specific instruction to go to the book of 1 John and begin to committed to memory.

And I thank you for hearing this prayer, Father, in the name of Jesus. Amen.