



Message Transcript

Certainty for our Sanity

Jeff Schwarzentraub

- Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, honor, and praise and Lord we thank you for being able to gather here today, as your people, to hear your word. And Lord, we pray that, as we look into your word this morning, that you would have your way with us. Lord, that through your living and active word that you would speak directly to us and that we be changed and transformed into your image because of all that you're going to do. And Lord, for all that you're gonna do in advance. We love you. And we thank you. And so for all of God's people who have gathered here today, who desire to hear what God says to you personally, who will, by faith, believe it and then put it into practice. Would you very loudly agree with me this morning by saying the word amen?

- [Congregation] Amen!

- Amen. When you go through difficult times, where do you go? When you go through difficulties in your life, to whom do you turn? Now just because we're in church, don't say Jesus. Because I even find that for Christians, that's not necessarily the first place that we go. You know, sometimes it can be a movie. Sometimes it could be a sporting event. Sometimes it can be hanging out with friends. Sometimes it's taking a hike or going biking, reading a book, just going somewhere. But even when we do those things, it usually doesn't soothe us. It just puts off the pain that we're going through or the confusion that we're in at that time. Sometimes God uses people in our life. And all of you probably have experiences where there was some person during a difficult time in your life that spoke an encouraging word to you or was there for you or showed love to you. And you remember that word of encouragement. They may know it. They may not know it. They may not even realize, but sometimes when those things

happen, we say, oh, you're like an angel to me. Thank you so much, right?

But I wanna talk to you about how do you go to God? Because sometimes even as Christians, where we would, in our heart and in our mind and in our soul, believe that God's on His throne, that He's good and all these different things. Sometimes when we go through difficult times, sometimes when we go through challenging circumstances, even deep down in our soul, we can begin to blame God. And we begin to ask questions. Even if we don't say them out loud, like, God, if you're so good, then why am I going through that? Or God, why does this have to happen now? Or this doesn't make any sense to me or this is not the way that I would have taken things. If you've ever wondered, you know, where's God during a time of difficulty or how would God like you to respond during a time of difficulty then I believe that God has a word for you today.

I wanna encourage you to open your Bible up to the Book of Revelation. We're gonna be in chapter 10 today. There's only 11 verses. So I'm gonna read through that. And as I do, then we're going to unpack or take a look at four ways to respond to God during times of difficulty. And as you're opening to Revelation chapter 10 it's important for you to be brought up to speed because we've just been coming out of the day of the Lord's wrath and all that God is pouring out on the earth because of His great holiness and because of who He is. It's been so intense as we've been going through this book that I know for some of you, it's good to see so many faces come back because you know, for some of you, it's like, man, this has been two really, really hard

weeks. And is there any levity? Are we gonna get a break? Today is your day because God's gonna send a strong, powerful messenger to teach us how we can respond to God during times of difficulty.

So lemme read through Revelation chapter 10. As you're reading through it with me, and then we'll take a look at this together. Here's what John writes. "I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, "clothed with a cloud and the rainbow was upon his head. "And his face was like the sun "and his feet like pillars of fire. "And he had in his hand, a little book, "which was opened. "He placed his right foot "on the sea and his left on the land. "And he cried out with a loud voice "as when a lion roars and when he had cried out, "the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices. "When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, "I was about to write and I heard a voice "from heaven saying seal up the things "which the seven peals of thunder have spoken "and do not write them. "Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea "and on the land lifted his right hand to heaven "and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, "who created heaven and the things in it, "and the earth and the things in it, "and the sea and the things in it. "And there will be delayed no longer. "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, "when he is about to sound, "then the mystery of God is finished "as he preached to his servants, the prophets. "Then the voice which I heard from heaven, "I heard again, speaking with me and saying, "go take the book, which is open in the hand "of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land. "So I went to the angel, "telling him to give me the little book. "And he said to me, take it and eat it. "It will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth, "it will be as sweet as honey. "I took the

little book out of the angel's hand and ate it. "And in my mouth, it was sweet as honey. "And when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. "And they said to me, you must prophesy again "concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

When we go through challenging times, often we wonder, like, what do I do? And where do I go? And you know, I read my Bible or I pray. It just doesn't seem to be working right now. Life has a way of dealing us different circumstances from time to time that we just can't handle. In this season here in the Book of Revelation, the day of the Lord's wrath is going on. God is pouring out His punishment for sin because of His holiness. And you would be thinking like, is there any end to this? We're gonna hear today from this strong, powerful messenger, there's an end, but He's gonna also let us know how we can respond to Him when we go through times of difficulty.

How does God want us to respond? And here's the first way that you should respond to God. Number one is this, reverence Him. The splendor of God is majestic. Reverence him. Notice what verse one says. He says, "I saw another strong angel, "coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud. "And the rainbow was upon his head. "And his face was like the sun "and his feet like pillars of fire."

Like every other place in the Book of Revelation, people wanna interpret like, who is this? Who is this strong and powerful angel? Can we identify the strong, powerful angel? And I can tell you great scholars have a hard time identifying exactly who the strong, powerful angel is. So we may not land that today. And you may hear what I'm thinking about this and think differently. We are not gonna split the church over who the strong, powerful angel is in Revelation chapter 10. Because it's not even so

much who it is. It's what he represents and what he's doing. Some people say strong angel. Clearly, that just means it's a strong angel. There was a strong angel in Revelation 5:2 that was not Jesus. There's a strong angel in Revelation 18:21 that's likely not Jesus. So why would this be any different? And why would they refer to Jesus as an angel. Everywhere we read about Jesus in the Book of Revelation, He's the faithful witness, the strong, powerful one, the head of His church. So why would he be talking that way? So there can be arguments that say, hey, I just believe it's a strong angel that came from heaven to earth. But as you study this too, it also tells us this could be Christ as well because notice how he's described. He says another strong angel. Strong means powerful. Strong means majestic. And angel simply means this, messenger. That's what an angel is.

Remember in Revelation chapter one, we talked about the angel of each church that we were gonna write to. The angels weren't angels of the churches. They were the pastors or the elders. Angel simply means messenger. In the Old Testament, we read about the angel of the Lord who is the pre-incarnate Jesus. You'll remember all the way back in the Book of Genesis chapter 22 and in verse 11 where Abraham is gonna slay his son, Isaac, and the angel of the Lord shows up and says, don't lay a hand on that boy. Well, who is that? That's Jesus. That's the pre-incarnate Christ telling him what to do. We see in Exodus chapter three where Moses goes over to a burning bush. And he's curious, 'cause it's not just that it's a burning bush in the desert but this bush wasn't being consumed. And the bush begins to speak to him. And what do we see? The angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Christ there. So we see Jesus

referred to as an angel in other places in scripture. So it's not prohibitive that this wouldn't be him. And look at how he's seen, this strong, powerful messenger. He's coming down out of heaven. So whoever this is, is leaving heaven to come to earth. And how's he clothed? He's clothed with a cloud. Clouds, in the Bible, represent power and majesty and glory. He's wearing a drapery of the sky. Whoever this strong, powerful being is, they have a lot of power and majesty and glory.

And notice how else he is clad. Says there was a rainbow upon his head. Now, when you hear the word rainbow, what do you think of? I mean, and we think back to chapters four and five as we studied the throne of God and what did we see in the throne room of God? We saw a rainbow. Remember that? And why do we see a rainbow around the throne of God? If we go all the way back to the Book of Genesis, you will remember that God destroyed the world with a flood. He didn't destroy the earth. The earth is still here. The earth was repopulated afterwards. But nobody lived except for the animals that were on the ark and Noah and his family, eight human beings in all, survived that global flood.

And after the flood, God made a promise. God not only made a promise he wouldn't flood the earth, but what did he do? He gave a sign of the covenant promise. In Genesis chapter nine, you can read about this. I was rereading it this week just because it was refreshing my mind as to who this powerful messenger may be. Notice what it says in Genesis chapter nine, starting in verse 11, God says, "I establish my covenant with you." This is after the flood. "And all flesh shall never again be cut off "by the water of the flood. "Neither shall there be a flood to destroy the earth again "God

said, this is a sign of the covenant "which I am making between me and you "and every living creature that is "with you for all successive generations." Notice what he says. "I set my bow in the cloud and it shall be "for a sign of covenant between me and the earth." Where's the bow set? In a cloud. Bow's set in the cloud. "It shall come about when I bring a cloud over the earth "that the bow will be seen in the cloud. "And I will remember my covenant, "which is between me and you "and every living creature and all flesh "and never again shall the water become a flood "to destroy all the earth. "When the bow is in the cloud, "then I will look upon it to remember "the everlasting covenant between God "and every living creature of flesh that is on the earth."

So God makes a covenant with the world that He'll never destroy the world again in a flood. And the sign of that is a rainbow. Where's the rainbow gonna be? In a cloud. What do we see oftentimes when it rains? We look up and we see a rainbow. It's a reminder to us that God's not gonna flood the world again, but it's bigger than that. It's a reminder to God. When He looks out on the earth, through the clouds and sees the rainbow, I will never flood you again. I made my promise to you. I authenticated that to you.

What do you see in this strong messenger? What do you see in this powerful messenger? The rainbow's like a crown on his head. As if to say, coming right out of heaven, God is faithful to His promises. And then we see this. As we keep studying this being, whoever this being is, his face was like the sun and his feet like pillars of fire.

If you turn back in your Bible to Revelation chapter one, you'll remember we

talked about this. In describing Christ in Revelation 1:16. It says, "His face was like the sun, "shining in its strength." And in verse 15 it says, "His feet were like burnished bronze "when it has been made to glow in the furnace." And then it says, "And his voice was like the sound of many waters." I mean, it is possible to interpret this that this is describing deity, that this is indeed Jesus leaving heaven and coming down to earth, which would make perfect sense in the context of what we're talking about. Because the sixth trumpet has blown.

You would expect the seventh trumpet to blow now. But instead, there's a pause and the strong, powerful being, this messenger that's gonna deliver a word is coming down out of heaven before the seventh trumpet is blown. And when the seventh trumpet is blown, seven bowl judgments are gonna be poured out chronologically very quickly. But when the seventh trumpet is blown, Jesus Christ takes his rightful place as king of kings and lord of lords on the planet.

So it wouldn't be out of order for this to be Christ. Now who is it? Study it for the rest of your life. Land it wherever you want. We're still good friends. Okay? The point I'm trying to make is, if this is Christ, He's worthy of worship. If this is one of his angelic beings, how powerful is our God? When you go through times of difficulty, what does God want you to do? Reverence Him. In other words, however big your picture of God is, it's not big enough.

We live in a world that, when crisis hits us, we begin to think, how can I deal with this? How am I going to handle this? This is too big for me. Sometimes we can see things in other people's life. And we think, well, that's not that big of a deal but other

times, we even see it in other people's life. And we say, how are we gonna make it through that? How are they gonna help? I don't even know what to say to them. That's such a big deal. When we see things that are a big deal to God, they're not that big of a deal. Whatever you're going through, God is bigger than what you're going through. If you have a big God, you will have little challenge. If you have big challenges, it's because you have a view of God that is very, very small.

Now picture this, this angelic being, this messenger, this strong, powerful messenger comes out. We see who he is. And then look at verse two. "And he had in his hand a little book "which was open and he placed his right foot "on the sea and his left on the land." Now we don't know what book this was. This is a little book. We read about this scroll. This is a little scroll. We read about a scroll in chapter five that no one was worthy to open. The strong angel asked who's worthy to open the book? We couldn't find anybody. So John began to cry, began to weep, saying nobody can bring this thing to the end. Nobody can run the earth. Until we saw one that was standing as if slain, the Lord Jesus Christ who took the scroll and began to open up all the seals. And he was the only one that had authority to open the scroll.

This is a little scroll. Is it the same one? I don't know. Could be. May not be. If it is, it certainly would point that this is Christ 'cause He's the one that opened the scroll. If it's not, the scroll had to be opened by Jesus in heaven because the angel wouldn't have been able to open it himself. So wherever this angel or strong being is coming from, God is authoritative over all. And here's the point. The whole point is this. As you see this, not only do you see this little book which is gonna be in his left hand 'cause

we're gonna see him raise his right hand. He comes and he sets his foot. His right foot is set on the sea. He kinda plants it there like that. And his left foot is planted on the land. Now what sea and what land? I don't know. Does it matter? Does it really matter? Is it because he stepped his foot on the Mediterranean and put his foot over Israel? Did he put his foot in the Pacific Ocean and put his left foot all over North and South America? I don't know. What it's showing is total dominion over the whole earth. Here's what I'm telling you. Jesus Christ is worthy of being worshiped.

- [Congregation] Amen!

- The earth is the Lord's and all that it contains. When we go through difficulty, sometimes our knee jerk is not to worship God. Sometimes our knee jerk is to question God. Here's what God wants. Just worship me. I'm worthy of all your praise. I'm worthy of all your worship and I'm worthy of it right now.

One thing I love about BRAVE Church, among many, is that we're a worshiping community. People come here and they give worship to God. They sing to God. They pray to God. They seek the Lord. They don't just come here and watch a performance of people on a platform and then go home. And this just begins worship. Like this just begins worship. Worship is done in such a way that you would do this to build your heart so that during the week, guess what you can continue to do? Worship Him.

Well, how do you worship Him? Do you know you can sing to God, even without music? Do you know you can read His word back to Him? Do you know you can pray to Him? Do you know you can thank Him? Do you know you can tell Him how wonderful

and awesome He is? Do you know you can ask God to give you a bigger picture of who He is? The more you revere God, the more you worship God, the more you reverence God, the more you'll see how His splendor is majestic. There's no way of describing how awesome He is.

You may have believed this lie like I used to. Some of you have heard this. All Christians hear this. So pastor, like tell me like this, like we get to heaven. Like, all we're gonna do is like sit around and like worship, like? Like what else are we gonna do? That's 'cause your view of God's way too small. Your view of worship is somebody's gonna come, sing some songs, and we're gonna decide whether we like them or not. Then let's get onto the real thing.

See, worship is when you see God in the beauty of all of His holiness and righteousness and truth, and that that God that would have nothing to do with you wants to have relationship with you and send His son who died for you and rose for you. So you could have life with Him. I'm telling you, they won't be able to turn the worship off. 'Cause all you'll want to do is spend time with the Lord, glorifying His name. And, friends, I wanna tell you something. There's nothing in the world that's more satisfying than that. Nothing. Nothing. Your marriage isn't more satisfying than that. Your kids are not more satisfying than that. Your career's not more satisfying than that. Your money's not more satisfying than that. The things you're gonna buy in the future, your dreams, your goals, your vision. Nothing's more satisfying than worshiping the Lord Jesus Christ. If I didn't believe that, I would have been a motivational speaker. I'm telling you about Jesus 'cause He's the only one that can fulfill

you in the depth of your heart. And when you're going through difficult times.

And when you're going through hard times it's okay to question things. It's okay to ask God things. It's okay to be hurt by things. But while those things are going on, continue to give Him praise and worship. You can worship God saying, God, I don't get it but I know you're good. And so I'm still gonna worship you no matter what. That's what Job said, right? "Though He slay me, still worship him." That's what the heart is. When you go through difficulty, God wants you to worship His name.

Second is this. Here's how you should respond to God when you go through difficult times. Number two is rely on Him. The word of God is powerful. Rely on Him. The word of God is powerful. Trust Him and trust his word. Notice verse three, it says this. "And he cried out with a loud voice as when a lion roars." Now pause. How loud is that? Now I've never stood in front of a lion other than at the zoo. And I've never had one roar right in my face but I have a friend who's from South Africa and he was down there on some safari one night. He was telling me this story and it was night and it was late. They were fenced in. They knew they were safe, but there was a lion that showed up. Not yards away, but feet away, and roared. And he said, I won't tell you what he said. He was terrified. Right? 'Cause there was a lion. I mean this strong, powerful being, whoever it is. Whether it's the Lord Jesus Christ or one of His messengers. And just keep in mind, in the Old Testament, God sent an angel that slayed 185,000 Assyrians in one night. I mean God's powerful. His voice is powerful. His voice is like a lion. Right? And what happens? "He cried out with a loud voice as when a lion roars" and when he had cried out, "seven peals of thunder uttered their

voices."

Well, where are the seven peals of thunder coming from? It says in verse four, "When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, "I was about to write "and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "seal up the things which the seven peals "of thunder have spoken "and do not write them." When this voice roared like a lion from heaven, the seven peals of thunder were unearthed. Now seven we know as the number of completion, the perfect, all-powerful voice. So as this being is talking, God from heaven, God the Father, is talking back. I mean, it's powerful. We see how God's voice is like mighty waters. We see how his voice is like a lion. We see how his voice is like the seven thunders. I mean, you've heard what it's like. You know thunder when it rains. You hear thunder. It's different when it's far away than when it's right over your house.

Some of you have been in severe thunderstorms. It's scary, right? I mean, imagine the voice of a lion and seven thunders thundering. You can trust God's voice. You can trust God's word. You can rely on Him because His word is powerful. Some of us don't believe that. Now some of us would argue that the word of God is true. Like this book is true. But I don't know that it's powerful. I mean, it's like any other book, some would say. Some would say, you know, Confucius had some good sayings and Abraham Lincoln had some good sayings and the self-help bookstore has some sayings. And, you know, Hindu's got some good sayings, and then the Bible's got some good sayings too. I don't believe that.

I believe the Bible is unique to any other word ever written. And that every time you're reading this, this is the lion of Judah jumping off the page. This is the seven thunders speaking out. This is the word of God. That's powerful. Amen.

Now, one of the reasons that we have a hard time believing that is we'll read scriptures that say things like this. You know, "If you have faith, the size of a mustard seed, "you can ask this mountain to move "and it will uproot itself "and go throw itself into the sea." And so like, I'm gonna give that a test Dear Lord, I don't like Pikes Peak where it is. Bring it to Castle Rock. And it didn't work. So I mean... That's not what it means. What it means is, if you spend time with the Lord and you begin to pray and ask the way He's asking you to pray and your prayer is to let your kingdom come and let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And God, this is what you're wanting to do. And from heaven on the earth through me and I'm gonna pray that, He will move mountains to get that done. And if God wanted to move Pikes Peak to Castle Rock and wanted to do it through me. And I spoke it. It would be done. Not because of me, but because of God.

The word of God is powerful. And when you see God act based upon His word, you begin to trust him even more. Let me give you an example. When we made the decision to have Easter outdoors at Bandimere Speedway in April in Colorado, there were a lotta people saying it can be bad weather. And you know what I said? That's God's problem. He asked us to step out in faith. So we started praying. We prayed really, really hard. And the first week we prayed, what happened? We got three feet of snow. And it didn't get much better. But, on Easter Sunday, it was 75 degrees. It was

sunny. I believe God was looking down from heaven, said, I don't want you to get sunburned. So I'll put a little cloud cover over. You know, and I know Jeff's not gonna like it when he preaches if the wind's blowing really hard, but I know some of you need a cool breeze. So we'll start that. What's the weather been like since Easter in Colorado? You say, well, that's just happenstance. I say, no, that's the power of God. So at the end of the day, when we see the word and we trust the word, which is why I'm telling you, sometimes God, as believers, puts on your heart, hey, trust this, trust this. And sometimes well-meaning believers who don't wanna see you get your feelings hurt. We'll say things like, oh, don't worry. I mean, God, doesn't always heal. God, doesn't always do that. But you know in your heart that God has asked you to trust that word. Here's what I'd say. Keep trusting God's word no matter what. God will always see His word come true. And the more you see it, the more you experience it. And the more you experience it, the more you want it. You can trust His word.

You say, well, how powerful is this spoken word? Well, you go all the way back to the Book of Genesis. What we see in the Book of Genesis prior to Genesis 1:1 is nothing. There's God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, that's it. But what happens? God spoke for six days. And in six days, everything that wasn't now was. Thrones, powers, dominions, and authorities, things visible and invisible. All things were created by Him and for Him. Why? 'Cause He spoke. This book is the written word of God. Every time we read it, this is God speaking. That's why the Bible says in Psalm 1:19, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

There are so many scriptures that talk about who this God is and how He wants to speak to us. Here's one that I love in the Book of Hebrews 4:12-13 It says that, "The word of God is living and active "and sharper than any two-edged sword "and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, "of both joints and marrow, "and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. "And there's no creature hidden from His sight. "But all things are open and laid bare "to the eyes of Him to whom we have to do "or to whom we might have to give an account." It means this. When the word of God is spoken faithfully, did you know this? You can't hide.

You ever been here at church where you feel like I'm looking right at you and talking only to you? That ever happen to anybody? That's God. I remember I was at a Campus Crusade conference one time back in 1993 and I didn't know how all this stuff worked. And there were thousands of people there. And I remember feeling like every speaker was talking about me before they came on the platform and after. I'm like how do they know all this stuff about me? It was the word of God. It was the word of God. And you can't escape it. It has the ability, not just to teach you things about God, but it has the ability to penetrate your soul and spirit and joints. It gets down to the deepest root of things that nobody else would know, that you may not even know about yourself. That's how powerful the word of God is. That's why sometimes you come on a weekend, you're like that was awesome. And sometimes you come on a weekend saying, I never wanna hear that again. It's the word of God. Word of God is powerful and you can't hide from it.

Now notice what happens in the Book of Revelation, 'cause he hears after the

powerful messenger or the strong angel cries out with a loud voice like a lion, then he hears the seven thunders. And notice what the seven thunders say. The seven thunders say, seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them. Wait a second. Well, what did they say? You'll never know. God's word is not only powerful, it's sufficient. So many of us wish we knew way, way, way more than what we do, but we don't apply what we do know. You know what I'm saying? Like some of you may get upset and say, well, you know, Pastor Jeff, I know who the strong angel is. And I can't believe that you're dumb enough to not believe who it is, but there's somebody in your life that you don't know how to forgive and God's shown you how to do it and you refuse. Or somebody will get really upset and say, hey, I just wanna teach the Bible. I wanna teach the Bible and that's fine, but you don't have a heart that understands generosity and contentment. You know, God gives us just enough of His word so that we can put it into practice.

I pray every single week that you would, by faith, put into practice what God shows you. Because the end game is not knowing the Bible more. It's not more Bible knowledge. It's more Bible application. It means this. You can be 10 years old and listen to a message on money and be further along than somebody who sat in church for 40 years, who can teach on it but doesn't know how to apply it. Right? Because at what point do you really get to where you know everything about a topic? I mean, when does that happen? Pastor Jeff, I've already read Ephesians five and know everything there is to know about marriage. Great. Good for you. Let me meet your spouse. Let me see if they concur. Hey, Pastor Jeff, why are we talking about money

again? I know everything there is to know about money. I say, hey, when your generosity is at the same level of Jesus and your contentment's at the same level of Jesus, then you know everything there is to know. I mean, at what point in time. I mean, how many of you know what forgiveness is? Just by show of hands. You just know it and. One, two, three. He's gonna give you opportunity. You're gonna learn. We can know what it is, but applying it's a whole different level. We can encourage someone that needs to forgive someone else. And we can bring all the Bible verses we can with us and show them what they need to do. But forgiveness is forgiving a debt of somebody that's wronged you. And they're not sorry about it. And that's okay for other people, except when it's on me. I don't wanna apply that. Right?

So the word of God is not just to come to BRAVE Church so that you can be taught and know all sorts of things about God. The word of God is being taught so that you can use application to apply it to your life. If you don't know how to pray, and you might be able to teach on prayer without knowing how to pray. I can usually tell when I'm spending time with somebody that just got done teaching on prayer I meet a pastor who teaches on prayer. I can tell you in about three minutes of spending time with them, whether they actually know how to pray or if it was just a good sermon. Because I'll start asking them, hey, what's the Lord been showing you lately? And all this stuff. And if they have no answer, I'm like, well, you don't anytime doing what you just spent your time preaching. Don't we say that a lot in church? Practice what you preach. Do you realize like every week that I'm preparing messages, I'm not sitting in my office like preparing messages for you. God's killing me on the inside half the time. Like, you

need to get better at that. And you need to grow in that. And this is something for you to become better at. Like we say, prayer is more caught than taught. I would say this, tithing's more taught than caught. Understanding the Bible's more caught than taught. It's in community that God begins to do a work because He's asking us to apply it. Like, just because I know certain things. I might be able to study golf or study football or study baseball. But that doesn't mean I'm good at it. I may know a lot about it, but I can't necessarily do it. God wants us to do it. James 4:17 says, "Anyone who knows the good he ought to do "and does not do it sins."

And in our church, you're not getting a lack of Bible knowledge here. You're getting the word taught. And what God's heart would be is when you go through a tough time, rely on Him and trust His word and put it into practice. And here's the thing. He tells him, you know what? You heard what was said, but don't write this down. Nobody needs to know that. Everything that you need, you have in His word. Everything. 2 Peter 1:3 says, "His divine power "has given us everything we need for life and godliness." Yes, there are certain passages that spell out certain areas of your life, whether it be marriage or money or friendships or whatever. But what I find is, if I have an open heart to God no matter where I'm reading, God is able to speak to me deeply about whatever He wants to speak to me about. And it doesn't matter what book I'm in, because the word of God is living and active. God didn't make me a pastor so that I would grow my head knowledge. God wants me to proclaim the word, but in what I'm doing, He wants me to grow in experiencing the word. And I can tell you more about the things in the Bible that I understand based upon how I've been obedient to

them, rather than just what I've learned from them.

Lemme say it another way. One act of obedience is better than a lifetime of seminary. Because there's a lot of people that can teach the Bible that aren't living obedient to Christ and really don't know what they're talking about. It's not that you can teach it. It's can you live it? Can you put it into practice? Will you try? Like just giving a lecture on riding a bike doesn't teach kids how to ride a bike. You gotta go ride, right? And that's what God's telling us this.

So how are you trusting His word? What are you hanging on to in the promises of God? I'm still trusting God for different things in my life. Proverbs 21:1 says that, "The king's heart is "like channels of water in his hands. "He can turn it wherever he wishes." That's a scripture I've been hanging onto lately. In some conversations with some things I wanna go a certain way. And I've learned over time, I can either control or I can pray. If I control, I may get my way. I may not. But even if I do, it doesn't go well. Or I can pray and let God do what he wants to do and then respond to what he wants to do. It always works out the right way Right? That's what he's teaching me right now. So when I'm in a circumstance that's not going my way, I start praying that God will change them. Like God, you own their heart. You turn them. I can't turn them. I can't change them. I can't make them become Christian. I can't make them see the wisdom. I can't. I'm gonna pray for them though. You can, so Lord, you do it. It takes the pressure off, doesn't it?

So here's the question. How are you relying on Him? How are you trusting Him?

How are you believing Him? How does He need to come through for you in a way that if He doesn't, you will say, man, I wouldn't have got through that without him. God wants you to know Him. God wants you to trust Him. And the more that you trust Him, the more that you'll grow in Him. Rely on Him. His word is true. His word is faithful.

Third is this. Here's how you should respond to God when you go through difficult times and it's this. I love this part. Rest in Him. Rest in Him. The dominion of God is comforting. Rest in Him.

Sometimes when we go through difficult times, we're always trying to fix everything. We're all trying to get everything going. Rest in Him. He's got this. Notice what verse five says. "Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea "and on the land lifted up his right-hand "to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, "who created heaven and the things in it "and the earth and the things in it "and the sea and the things in it "that there will be no delay any longer. "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel "when he is about to sound, "then the mystery of God is finished. "As he preached to his servants, the prophets." Now notice verse seven. There's gonna be days of the seventh trumpet because when the seventh trumpet is blown, the seven bowls open up and they successively get poured out.

But here's what I want you to see. Rest in Him. I mean, here's an angel. He's standing his foot on the land and on the sea. He's saying I have dominion over all things. God has dominion over all things. He's in control of everything. And sometimes that doesn't even bring us comfort. Well, God controls the whole world. I get that. But what about me? Here's what I wanna tell you. Every little thing in your life, God cares

about. The things that you think are too immaterial to even bring to Him, He cares about. He cares about all things. Everything is going to be accomplished according to His will. Everything is going to get played out. God cares about every part of your life. That's why you can rest in Him. He cares about the littlest thing. He cares when you get your feelings hurt. He cares when you feel alone. He cares when you feel that life's just not working out. He cares when you've worked really, really hard and it didn't go the way you thought it was gonna go. He cares when you're confused. He cares when you're joyous and nobody else will celebrate with you. He cares about everything in your life. That's who our God is. That's awesome to know. Because sometimes when we talk about God's sovereignty and His dominion, we picture God up in heaven, pointing His finger down, like controlling the world and being angry at everybody. That's not who He is. This is the loving, merciful, kind, wonderful, awesome, forgiving father. He loves you. Rest in Him.

Some of us don't rest in Him because we got it taken care of. I'll get this figured out, God. And where I miss figuring it out, then you come through for me. That's not what He's looking for. He wants all of your heart. He says, just rest. I mean the greatest sermon that was ever told, the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew chapter six, starting in verse 25. And following he says, "For this reason, I say to you, "do not worried about your life." Anybody here ever worry about anything before? Don't worry about that. "As to what you will eat or what you will drink, "nor for your body as to what you will put on is life. "Not more than food in the body. "Not more than clothing." Don't stress. Rest in Him. I mean, it doesn't take long to read the news and to look out

in the world and get stressed about some things, right? God's got it under control. It doesn't mean don't read the news. It doesn't mean don't get involved in things that are going on. It doesn't mean just be passive. It just means, don't spend all your time, all day long worrying about all the problems in the world and how bad it's getting. Because God is not sweating. He's not stressed. You may say, well look where our country's going. Look at the things that are happening here. I think God would look down and be disappointed in a lotta things that are happening in here too. I know He is because it goes against His word. But He's not up in heaven, stressed about it. He's not worried about who all the politicians are. He may be worried that some of you that He's asked to get involved in it haven't. But He's not worried. He's gonna bring everything to pass just the way He wants.

In other words, you can watch what's going on in the world. You can even get involved as a Christian in everything that's going on in the world. But what you can't do is sit around and stress about everything that's going on in the world and talk about how bad it's gonna be. No, no, no. We have the blessed hope, Jesus Christ. For us, it's only gonna get better. It's good. Rest in Him. He's got this. Rest in what's going on in the world. Rest in what's going on in your own life. And it's counter-intuitive to do this. It's counterintuitive when you go through a difficult time just to rest. I mean, how hard is it to do this?

I remember playing a game when I was a kid it was called king of the mountain. It's probably politically incorrect game now. I don't know, but... It was a game where you'd be on a hill. And basically the end result was you throw everybody else off until

you're standing on it. And the game just keeps going until people get tired. For God, there is no king of the hill. He's always been the king of the hill. There's no fight taking place. Psalm two says he laughs at the rulers of the world that think they're all that and a bag of chips. God is in control of everything. His dominion should be comforting. Rest.

Do you even know what rest means? Do you even know what that looks like? Do you know what it means to disengage from things? Do you know what it means to have peace in your heart? How many of you have like a smartphone or something like that? Anybody? How many times does that go off a day? I mean, even when you have it on silent, it's like, well, who is that? Oh, what newsflash was that? What was the score on that? I'm going to this side 'cause my family's over there talking about me behind my back saying, amen. I have to work at this. All right, I mean, do you have peace? Do you ever just rest? Do you ever say, Lord, I'm uncomfortable with this. This is a horrible circumstance. This is a horrible situation. These people are hurting, I'm hurting, but you can just get in front of Him for a couple hours instead of watching a movie and say, Lord, I just need your peace in my life. I need your comfort in my soul. I just need you. Where you get refreshed in your rest.

God wants you to rest because He's saying I got this. I'll take care of this. That's what He's saying. Now what gives Him the opportunity to do that? He's the creator of all things. If he can create the whole world out of nothing, what is too hard for him to do in your life? He can handle your problems. He's not worried about it. There's not

one of you that would ever bring a challenge to God where He would be like, wasn't expecting that one. I mean, that's never gonna happen. He's got you. He knows you. He loves you.

Sometimes God uses those circumstances in our life that we didn't expect so that we would come to Him and say, God, I need you. I need your peace in this situation. I'm not gonna make it through without you. God loves that. God says, we'll get through together. I got you.

And then this final one. Then this final one is reveal Him. The plan of God is urgent. Reveal him. The plan of God is urgent. If you can get to a place where you're worshiping the Lord by giving reverence to Him and trusting His word and relying on Him and you're resting in Him, then here's the point. Don't keep it to yourself. Reveal Him.

Notice what He says to the apostle. "Then the voice which I heard from heaven "I heard again, speaking with me "and saying, go take the book "which is open in the hand of the angel "who stands on the sea and on the land." So the angel's standing there with his right hand up, likely holding this in his left hand. And we see the apostle. He's not afraid of this strong, powerful being at all, which is really strange to me. Because the things that we've been talking about, like demon locusts and demon hordes coming on the earth and all this. Now he sees this strong, powerful angel, this strong, powerful messenger, but he's not afraid of him. From heaven he hears he's to go get the little book from this angel. So he goes to the angel. "So I went to the angel, "telling him give me the little book. "And he said to me, take it and eat it. "It will make

your stomach bitter, "but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey."

Now, does that seem strange? If we invited you to our house for dinner and as we were serving the meal I said, as you eat this, it's gonna feel bitter in your stomach. You're gonna get sick, but it's gonna taste really good going down. Enjoy. Let's pray. I mean, who would do that? Right? What's he saying? He's saying, hey, this is a scroll. This is from the throne room. This is the word of God. This is something that I'm gonna ask you to do. So take it. And when you eat it, it's gonna make your stomach bitter, but it's gonna be sweet to your taste. So what does he do? Verse 10. "I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it. "And in my mouth it was sweet as honey. "But when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. "And they said to me." Who's the they? Well likely the strong messenger and the God in heaven, God the Father. "They said to him, you must prophesy again "concerning peoples and nations and tongues and kings." Saying proclaim Him.

Now why is the word of God sweet? Here's why the word of God is sweet. For those of us who are believers, it's so sweet. It means this, God the Father loved you so much that He sent his son to the world, that He would be willing to be the savior for all your sins. How sweet is that? It means no matter what you've done, you can be completely forgiven because Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again from the dead. It's sweet because all your shame that you take to the cross, God's willing to wipe all that away too. And oh, by the way, isn't it sweet to know you don't have to stay in sin, but God gives you victory over sin. They have the power over your sin because He put the Holy Spirit inside your life. Isn't that sweet? Isn't it sweet to know

that he walks with you every day of your life? Isn't it sweet to know, even when you screw up, His mercy chases you down and overtakes you? Isn't it sweet to know that He thinks about you all the time and His thoughts for you outnumber the grains of sand? I mean, how sweet is the word of God? For the believer, the word of God's sweet.

But, as that word comes into your life and it begins to take over who you are, it becomes bittersweet. Because you begin to realize that the truths of God's word that you love are not believed by everybody else. And that if you're gonna go share that truth with others, they may not receive what you have to say. And as he's called to continue to prophesy to all these nations and tongues and peoples and go tell them that. Don't keep it private, go make it public. It's bittersweet.

Like how many of you would feel really comfortable sharing your faith if you knew 100% of the time, not only with somebody that was lost respond to Christ but they would start crying on the spot and thank you for saving them? How many would feel comfortable doing evangelism if that was what the outcome was every time? Seriously, only seven of you. I mean... See, the problem is, what's sweet to us sometimes means I'm sharing with a family member, friend, neighbor, cohort. They didn't like what I had to say. So it put a schism in our relationship. Or they don't like me now because I happen to believe the truth of God's word and they don't. And now they're calling me names and now we're separate. It's bittersweet.

It's also bittersweet because of this. While I love God's holiness and I love who

He is and I love that He's just and I love that He's gonna punish sin, I know people that don't know Christ and that doesn't make me happy on the inside. I know the truths of God's word. It's sweet, but sometimes I just wrestle with things. I mean, I remember when our congregation was a lot smaller and we would come to difficult passages and I would tell my wife and say, this is gonna be a congregational tremor. When you have only 10 people that's tough to do, because of the half of those people go. I mean, what do you have? But even today I don't feel it anymore. It's just like, my job is to preach the truth. But I know that when I preach the truth, there'll be some people that hear the truth that say, I'm never going back to that church again. I don't want anything to do with a church like that. But they're really not mad at me. And they're really not mad at BRAVE Church. What they're really upset with is that the word of God penetrated their heart in a way that they didn't wanna respond to.

And you all have friends and family like that. People that you know if they would just trust Jesus, their life would be totally different. If they could just see that God loves them so much that He was willing to lay down his life for them. If they could just see that they could have life and they could quit trying to fill themselves with all these other things and just have Jesus. If they could just see. But it's bittersweet because you've tried and it's been really hard. Don't ever give up trying. But the word of God is bittersweet.

The word of God is also bittersweet because of this. While I love God and while I know God loves me just the way I am. He loves me enough not to keep me the way that I am. So even when it comes to me, sometimes it's bittersweet. That when I'm

reading His word, and I think I'm just gonna open up my Bible in the morning and have a sweet time with God. And God begins to show me areas of my life that need to change. That doesn't always feel good either. And I wish I could tell you, you get to a place where that goes away. It never goes away. Not if you're walking with the Lord, because He's perfectly holy and I'm not. So there's always areas that the Lord's growing us. That's why if you come to BRAVE Church and feel conviction, it doesn't mean that you're not a Christian anymore. It means God loves you just the way you are but loves you enough not to keep you there. Isn't that good news?

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- And so what He's asking us to do is reveal Him. Like the plan of God is urgent. We only have so much time and space to let other people know. And sometimes people need to hear it from us. Other times, people need to see it in us. And both are equally important. We need to demonstrate that we love the Lord, as well as declare that we love the Lord.

And the reality of the gospel is, like has often been said in church. You know, I'm just a nobody trying to tell everybody about somebody that will save anybody, right? I mean, that's all it is. And I would say this to those of you that are future preachers out there who feel the call of God on your life to pastor and preach. Preach the word. Don't be afraid to preach the word, right? It's not about. You don't preach to grow a size. You preach to grow a type of people. Preach to grow people that love God's word. And for some of you that will say, well, this doesn't really apply to me. I'm not a pastor. I'm not being called to preach. God's called every single one of us to live our

life for Christ before them and tell other people about Jesus when those situations present themselves. And when you do, there's great joy in that.

God wants you to be a conduit of His grace. Reveal Him. Share with Him and sharing with others doesn't always mean, hey, here's the truth. You need to repent. You're a sinner. You're going to hell. All those things. Sometimes it means this. Those are true. If you don't repent. But here's the truth. God's still working on my life too. God's still showing me things in my life. You know, this happened to me in my marriage this week. Do you know this happened with my kids? Do you know that I'm still trying to reflect the glory of God and I don't always do it perfect? Let them see that you're real. I mean, the A in BRAVE stands for being authentic. Be authentic. Be real. And this is what God wants for your life. It's so counterintuitive to what our world would say. That when you're going through a tough time, what the world would say is, hey, just find a way to medicate yourself. Find a way to escape. Find some other people that'll just tell you things. God says, no, no, no, no no. What I want you to do is reverence me and worship me. What I want you to do is rely on me. I want you to trust my word. I want you to completely rest in me. And I want you to reveal me to others.

And I don't know what the Lord is showing you today. But wherever He's showing you What you need to do, by faith, would you put that into practice? God wants you to be men and women and boys and girls that take steps of faith closer and closer to Him and never ever stop taking steps.

And if you're not of the Lord, why not make today the day that you give your

heart and your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, amen? Would you stand with me as we pray? Father, we just give you thanks for your son, Jesus Christ, and your Holy Spirit who dwells all of us who believe. And we come before you now asking you to do a work inside of our hearts. And Lord, here's our prayer. Our prayer is that you would change us. If you're here today and you've never trusted Jesus, here's how you can pray. Lord Jesus, I know I'm a sinner. I know I'm separated from you, but I believe that you came and died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead. Come into my life. Be the Lord of my life. I turn from my sins and I turn my life over to you. And Lord, for those of us who trust you, who know you, who love you, Lord do a inside of each and every one of us. Lord show us the areas where, instead of coming to you, we go somewhere else. Teach us how to worship. Teach us how to trust your word. Teach us how to rest. Teach us how to share you. And Lord, as we do those things, would you fill us at the deepest measure? Lord, we believe you're the eternal God. We love you and we praise you and we bless you for all you're doing. In Jesus' name, amen and amen. Can we give God praise this morning?