

CgiKawartha-2026-StephanWillshaw-WhatTurnsYourCrank?

Good afternoon, everybody.

How does very about like January? It's a cold January, and February doesn't get too much better, usually, and sometimes March doesn't either.

April usually starts to break, but I'm always looking forward to spring in March. Never seems to happen.

Anyhow, welcome this afternoon and it's been a while since I've spoke at this particular venue. This is the original venue I suppose we could say and it does bring back a lot of good memories and I will say this that this lectern's a little bit bigger But it's not tilted, so it's a little harder to use. We'll carry on here. So in thinking about this physical life that we're living, we come to realize that we very seldomly are in the same place for very long. To go along with that, we seldom remain in the very same way of thinking and understanding for very long either. The scenery and landscape seems to be constantly on the move. At

least that's the way I see and I think everybody could relate to that. Now each time I get to thinking about what I might speak about to this congregation, it always boils down to I start to pray to God and Father Jesus Christ so I go to the Godhead and I ask him what do you think I should speak about what does this congregation need and as I speak to the congregation I'm also speaking to myself so I'm included in all this now most of the time when I get pondering that

An idea to speak about doesn't just jump out of me. It doesn't.

And it doesn't always, when it does jump out of me, or when I do get something, it doesn't always come the same way either. I remember a few times crafting a message, writing a message, and it was about halfway through or three quarters away through and I wasn't sure what the title was going to be yet. Got a little confusing. And I never had an SPS written either. So what am I really talking about here? So that leads me to the next idea that I would call, and you can relate to it on a day like today or day like last night, is what I would call a dead battery. A dead battery where I couldn't even crank over the engine of my mind to come up with anything so he can get my engine my spiritual engine running and going forward I couldn't even come to it so it's called the dead battery you can relate to what I'm saying there now the experience is

when it seems to come it doesn't always come from the same similar angle It comes from different experiences that I might be having in my life at that point in time. And I think you can understand that. The surroundings affect us, the effect the way we think, and we think something, guess what happens? We're talking about it, right? So that's what I'm getting at here. So some of you know already that I have a joy for the outdoors. I enjoy hiking. I enjoy a, how can I put it, a woodsy experience. I like that kind of thing.

And when I get into these types of things, it does happen for me at least three

or four times a week, even in the winter time. I'm either hiking by foot. In the summer, it's mostly mountain biking. And if I'm not doing it that way, the thought in my mind is It's canoeing. And I didn't do it last year at all because Sandy wasn't seeing too well, so we didn't do the canoeing part. So it's more or less the bike and the walking. But this year, I'm warning my wife of this. Get ready for the paddling.

So all this stuff affects you. It kind of comes with the course of life, doesn't it? So with this in mind, what I want to speak about today is about this specific scenery and this landscape that we all experience as we journey towards this narrow gate that we're always talk about that's just up ahead of us I hope a short distance so the title for this message I picked out and I pick this particular title out, Sandy will agree and tell you that I give her that title before I even began my first keystroke on my computer. I told her what the title was.

I said, here's what I want to speak about. So the title for today's message is a vernacular saying, there's no swear words built into it, but here it is. What turns your crank? Do you catch that vernacular?

And it's also a spiritual journey, so those things are combined.

And perhaps in your life you've gotten involved with things that you had zeal for. I know a few of you here like to do certain things, and you've got to, oh, I can't wait to do that. It's called a zeal that you have for those things.

And what it does, it gets your, if it's not your spiritual engine, it gets your physical nature, and sometimes both up and running. And these varying interests or activities we have, we like to do it with zeal. Like,

why would you do something if you didn't like it? It doesn't make any sense. So what really turned your crank fits the title of this particular sermon and I picked out the title before I did the message I was kind of a new coming at me from a different angle in that regard

now as an example Sandy and I are really both lead to like being out in the quiet of nature taking part in a nature hike on a wooded trail where the wind is blowing through the trees and you can hear it right wind is blowing to the trees

And this almost always happens as the day is drawing to a close.

Even at nighttime, when it's dark out, you can hear the birds out there and they're talking back and forth. Where are you? They're saying to each other, I suppose. I don't know the language, so it's just interesting. So the nature sounds that we hear are part of whose creation. Yours and mine? No. They're God's creation and we're drawn to that. We like that kind of stuff. That turns our crank.

It gets our motors, especially our spiritual motors and our physical motors at the same time, up and running. This is the scenery, this is the landscape that we long for usually in this lifetime. It's not the sound of noisy cars, transports, and all this stuff, is it? We yearn for the physical stuff.

We really like it.

So that's on one side of the coin. When you flip the coin, that might be the tail side of it. Now on the other hand, it is so easy also to get swept up in the stresses of life.

And those stresses of life, where are they coming from? Usually, not from anything God created. They're coming usually from, I'm going to use the phrase of fallen world. It's coming from that position. And at the end of each day, you may find yourself in wonderment And saying to yourself, did any of this actually matter, one iota? Did it really matter? All this stuff that's the screeching of tires and just the negatives that come through the physical. Think about this. What if you, what if I could live differently. What if in the middle of dealing with all our daily responsibilities and challenges that you or I could actually make the most out of every day? What if we could do that? Let's see something in the book of Colossians. It's a good place to turn on this. Book of Colossians. The Apostle Paul chapter 3. Good place for us to consider. I'm going to use two verses. Colossians 3, 1, and 2. God invited you and I to live every day with what sort of a mindset. He's inviting you, God the Father, to an eternal mindset. And this invitation involves seeing each part of the day from the work of the people you relate to, from the work of what? That's what we're doing here. The work of your relationships. Through the lens of God's eternal plan. That's the lens. That's the window. The Bible encourages us here in Collage of 3 to have this eternal mindset. And I quote, verse 1, therefore, if you have a race together with Christ, seek the things that are above. And you've heard this before lots of times, but it's worth repeating. Seek the things that are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Verse 2, set your affection on the things that are above, Not on the things that are on the earth. That is a difficult call, brothers and sisters. Why? Because we're physical. And the physical gives in the ways of the spiritual, a lot of the times. Setting our minds on the things above, what will that do If we do that, if we do that, well, it could do this, it could transform every part of our day. For the better or for the worse? My guess would be for the better if we could focus on that because it keeps us focused or would it help to keep us focused on what the eternal has and what his values are. It helps us to invest what is so valuable. And that is time, that is energy, and also the resources we have, fitting them in to what matters most. From whose perspective? Not the perspective of the dark side. Just exactly the opposite. God's perspective. That which comes from the light. And this will help us to enjoy life. That's a whole deal, right? To enjoy life. Do you like feeling bad? As an aside, two weeks now Sandy's gone through a position of feeling bad. We've got all kinds of telephone calls and texts and this sort of thing. Guess what? On her part, it wasn't fun. Guess what? On my part, I was suffering along with her. Yeah, it takes place. So, to focus on God,

to focus on his mindset and try to think like him in Christ, we would be able to more so enjoy life much more fully.

And also on top of that, we'd have the right space in our brains, in our mindset to have the ways of God that would want to contribute to each other when we come together through our friendships, through our congregation here, and also to the ones that were involved with out in the world. It's about relationships most of the time. Remember that movie? Tom Hanks was in it. He was on an island. He fell in love with the ball. That's all he had. I don't think anybody wanted to go through that. So here we are. We can't erase time. We can't tell the clock to stop.

But time is escaping us. It's flying by.

It's amazingly, how quick a second leads into an hour, how quick an hour leads into a day, how quick a day leads into a day. My next thing you know, the year's gone. And I've been retired 14 years.

Where did that go to?

I don't want to make any worse than that.

Time is flying. Soon after we wake up.

for the rest of the day. You wake up in a negative, ever woke up with a headache?

It sets the tone. We can make our own headaches by thinking the wrong way.

So,

if we have this wrong start, we'll likely spend the day reacting on all these temporary pressures. They're temporary. If we begin by connecting with the eternal God,

we can move perhaps into the rest of the day with the awareness that God's presence is with you, is with me.

But we've got to put it into play.

Does this turn our crank?

It's the best way. You get the best gas mileage out of that,

right? And a much better focus for living and to God's purpose for our lives.

David shows this quite nicely. Let's go to Psalms this time. Psalms 143,

just one verse here. Psalms 143 in verse 8. Now after we shake ourselves awake in the morning, why not start it off with the morning prayer? That would be going in the right direction. This will set the stage for the insights that God will give us for the coming day.

The goal is to orient our heart and our mind focused toward God,

before the noise of the world gets too loud,

and it can be loud. David's prayer here, Psalm 143,

verse 8, a beautiful model for this morning, this time with God. And I quote, let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love.

For I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go. For to you,

I entrust my life. That's pretty simple, isn't it? Powerful.

That is a good direction, brothers and sisters.

So when we start our day like this, we are essentially telling the father that we will make it a priority to follow his guidance and let his eternal perspective shape

and mold our thoughts and actions during this day that's coming on towards us.

And by the way, it's not wrong to have coffee in the morning.

I'd use it at least one a day. It's an addiction. But it's a good addiction.

Well, I don't you use it right. Jesus says, remember this, you've got this etched in your mind.

Matthew 633.

When we what? Seek first the kingdom and the things that are right just.

Right. The key word there is right. Things that are right. It's called righteousness for the full word. So seek first the kingdom and their righteousness of God and all other details will find their proper place in our lives.

That's how it works.

It's simple,

but it can be complicated if we don't start out that way or we don't do it.

Let's think of the right perspective when it comes to what our focus should be in regards to how we see each other. Now I don't have that in my note.

We know, this is not rocket science, it's very simple. We know that every human has been created in the image of God. And through these people, the Godhead, the two of the Godhead, are creating a family, right? I'm not showing you a scripture on that. You know that.

And you and I have something special. We've been giving this godly insight, and many out there don't likely even consider that due to the overarching idea that they don't really think along these lines. Now, their thoughts can be deep. I'm not saying I don't think deep. Their thoughts can be deep,

but they just don't think of this on this subject very often.

And a most important stance when I say this is that we have to control our thinking.

I spoke of that at Tabernacles this year. Think about what you think about.

Now, every day, remind yourself that everyone you interact with is someone that God has created and God loves. We can't love to that degree, but the Godhead said, say they do it.

Let's take a look at 1 John this time. 1 John the 4th chapter.

We know that 1st John, all these books of John are about love. So let's turn there. First John 4 and I read 7 and 8. Seeing people with an eternal mindset can motivate you to choose to love them. We see it with an eternal mindset. No matter what. No way of Sandra Butch's. But by being kind and showing them grace and mercy is a good thing. Because why? Because God does it for you and I as well.

And we try to indoctrinate that into our thinking. This perspective could help us live out God's two greatest commandments. To love God and do love other people.

Remember that? The Bible points out 1 John 4, 7 and 8, and I quote, be loved. We should love one another because love is from God.

And everyone who loves has been begotten by God and knows God.

What he does not love does not know God. Why?

Because God is love.

Ever tried to paint a picture of God on a canvas? How do you paint love? to be eternally, right? And hopefully they're going to come in to the God family as well. Now, Maria read that. Maria Schlesz read that Matthew, or was it Matthew, or Malachi. Malachi is 4, 1 to 6. Showed at the beginning of that that not all people are going to come into the family.

That's what it says in Malachi. But we can't look at that. We have to look at it because we're hoping they'll come into the family. So here we are. Where did I say turn to? 1 John 4? I read that already. So we make this effort to see other people the way God does. So recorded in Matthew 25, well-known chapter, in verse 40, Jesus tells us that when we care for others we are also serving them right and I quote there verse 40 of Matthew 25 truly I say to you in as much as you have done it to one of the least of my brethren you've also done it for me

we all recognize those words of Christ. Those are built right into your cranium. You really don't have to even look that up. When I read those, yes, that's true. God has given you your own very distinctive blends and gifts. And he wants you, he wants me, to use them to contribute to the world in a way that only you can do so. Only you can do that.

Only I can do that. Let's remind yourselves in Ephesians 2 in verse 10. Let's turn there, Ephesians 2 and verse 10. Now, the abilities God has given you naturally can point you in the direction of opportunities that God has for you to do good works in this world. The question is, do we believe what the scriptures are telling us? Because it's very clear here in Ephesians 2, verse 10. And I quote, for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto the good works that Christ ordained beforehand in order that we, In other words,

you and I might walk in them, end of quote. So all these different places we hang our hats on in this physical life. All these different situations that are in our lives. And first of all, it might be our marital situation if you're married still. Our hobbies, Or even if you've been married, let's put it that way. Our hobbies. And sometimes in hobbies, other people are involved, right?

You ever try to play badminton by yourself? It doesn't work. Ever try to go bowling by yourself? They can be done, but it's not much fun. Ever go fishing by yourself? That can be done, but it's not much fun either. Same with everything. So all these hobbies we have plug into this. What about our, what about our role in our blood family members? What about that role? That's a situation. It's easy sometimes, and other times it's not so easy. We hang our hat on that hook, don't we? What about our roles like right here? What about our church roles? What about our spiritual family members? How important is that? I've told you my focus on that one what about these chosen friends we've had for 60 or 70 years if we're that old some of us have those lifetime friends that's a big hook what about the friends we we made just recently what about the neighbors around us we've got them get great neighbors on either side don't know some of the ones behind us, but the ones beside us we know quite well, and they're great neighbors. We hang our hook on that pail, don't we? These are all platforms for the good works that God has designed for us.

Let's take a look at Peter this time. 1st Peter 4. Just two scriptures here.

1 Peter 4. Let's turn there. Verse 10 and 11. 1st Peter 4, the Apostle Peter's theme here, showing that hope is built on, of course, it comes right after James, built on the foundation of faith. Peter described this hope as what, as a living hope,

manifested because in the way that a Christian lives, his or her life.

That's how it manifests it. What is it we're doing in our life?

Peter encourages here in 1. Peter 4, verses 10 and 11. And I quote,

let one, let each one according, as he has received a gift from God, be using this gift to serve others as what? As overlords? No,

as good stewards of the grace of God, which manifests itself in various ways.

If anyone speaks, let it be as the words of God. If anyone serves,

let it be from the strength which God has supplied. So when everything that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom the glory and the power into the age of eternity, let it be so. Doesn't say that, but that's what Amen means.

Okay?

So you discover your personal strength and you ask God regularly how that you can use these talents, how do you can use these skills, in your specific circumstance.

Why? To glorify God and to be a blessing to to others.

You want blessings in your own life as well. You'll be blessed in these good works.

Viewing your daily task through the lens of how God wants to contribute can give even your most ordinary work eternal significance.

It can.

Another very important aspect is we live in this fleshly existence.

think about it doesn't really encourage that it encourages something else it's called accumulation right but an eternal mindset calls for us to be generous we're called to generosity when somebody says oh Stefan

He's a real tight wad. That's not a light.

Or he's generous with whatever it is. You can say that about you. What would you rather have said about you? That you're generous. That you're giving. That you're caring, that you're loving. All godly attributes. So this world,

it's all about accumulation. So God wants to turn it around. He wants us to be generous. So rather than worrying about trying to get more and more money, more and more possessions, switch, flick the switch, and focus how we can wisely manage our resources, that God is self-trusted. I don't say throw them out the window. I don't say burn them in your fireplace tonight.

Christ himself saw something very important in regard to his very thinking. We can read his thinking at the sermon on the Mount.

I'm making reference here to Matthew, the sixth chapter. You don't need to turn up to that chapter because I'm going to read it to you and you're going to say, yep, that's exactly what it says. Matthew 6, 19 to 21, says here, do not store up treasures for yourself on earth where moth and rust spoil and where thieves break in to steal verse 20 but store up for yourselves things in heaven where neither moth or rust spoils or where thieves do not break into steel for where your treasure is

there your heart will also be you've read that a thousand times,
I'm sure. That scripture,
that's a sterling scripture.

Now, I'm sure
we try to rectify that in our minds.

And it makes that absolute sense, too, doesn't it? Because there's a lot of there.
It's called the law of thermodynamics. Do you know what that means? Everything
physical is going to break down, including us, we're breaking down day by day. It
all breaks down, all wears out. That's the way it's been designed, for the physical
life that is. Everything today on top of that is under lock and key.

If I was a betting person, I would bet right now, but your cars in the parking
lot are locked. I'm not wide open. They're all locked up.

Our car sits in the crash, guess what? It's not locked up. I even need the key.
Don't tell anybody. I need the keys in it. Just so I don't lose them.

The reason for everything, right? But everything's under locked and key. We can laugh
about that. But it's true. We only own something until what?

Somebody steals it. That is this fallen world we live in.

It's real. Don't like to say it, but it's true. So on the other hand,
every time we choose to be generous and be serving or volunteering our time,
what is actually taking place?

Well, Could it be that you and I would be making an internal investment into a
totally different bank account where mobs and rust won't be affecting that?

Nor will the thieves come in and try to steal it away on you?

Now on top of that, the mindset will free us from what? From the anxiety?

He wants to share with each other, share our friendships, share stuff. Fred,
can I borrow your car tonight? Sure. Yeah, see, there it is. But, you know,
we can talk about this stuff, but we have to plug it in,
right? We need to have it cranking our engines.

Now,

ultimate security, really. It's not at our bank account. It really isn't.

It's with the two in the godhead. God of Father and his son, Jesus Christ. Now, I
want to go back in time here just a bit. Remember about the stealing part and all
that, moss and rust? Let me talk about this for a minute. Houses, back in the
days, in the ancient Middle East, were frequently made out Imagine,
think about this now, not very good insulation. Made it of sun -baked clay or loose
stones on top of one another. So because of this, thieves,
and there were thieves back then, they found it comparatively easy, comparatively easy
to dig through the wall in order to enter and steal. Yeah?

Thieves, what do they represent? The ungodly world that continually seeks to take
everything we have and in return, what are they going to give us back? Nothing but
trouble. Right? Nothing but trouble. Let me quote Jesus' word recorded in John 10:10
concerning the thief. And I quote, The thief, Jesus saying this,
the thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy.

I have come, Christ says, I have come, so they may have life. And they may have

it more, oh, Sandy's already saying it, more abundantly. Yeah.

So the mouths and the rust seek to consume the perishable things, but the Seeds look to steal these enduring treasures for themselves.

That's why when I'm cutting out in the back hair with my alarm, I'm making sure my garage is closed. I don't want anybody to steal my car. The keys are in it. So I make sure their garage is closed. The car is not locked, but the garage is cut down the visual, I suppose you could say.

So it's interesting to think about all this, these three metaphors. One is the moth, the rust, the moth, rust, thieves. They merge into one lesson, showing the futility of an earth-centered life.

What do you mean by that? I'm wondering where I'm going to with this. Taken together, these three.

sick, right? Now, if there's no other destroyers, think about this. Here's what we're getting at with the one concept. If no other destroyers come against us, no moth, no rust, no thieves. Old age is like a moth that ruins our beauty and our wholeness. Disease is like a rust that corrods our bodies. And death is like a thief that breaks in and steals everything we possess. A grim Spanish proverb. Really short one once we got, one, two, three, six words. Here it is. A grim Spanish proverb. Listen this carefully. There are no pockets in a shroud.

There are no pockets in a coffin, the word, but no pockets in a shroud.

We can take nothing with us but the character that we have developed.

The godly character is what we're trying to develop here. This echoes the writings of Solomon in Ecclesiastes. When you think about it, that's what it is.

There are no pockets in a shroud. Our human spirit can tame with God's spirit gives us the only thing we can carry with us through the narrow gate into the kingdom.

That's all we can take. It's a load. Nothing physical is going in there.

The important content is development of godly character and to be found with God's Holy Spirit. We must transition into the coming Christ-like by being the exact same way as Christ by being about our Father's business. It's really what it is.

And as we do this, developing a thankful heart by being great for the spiritual disciplines that change our focus from the temporary frustration of this world into God's goodness at last.

You know something? It's nearly impossible,

nearly impossible, to be burned out by the stress of living in this falling world when you and I develop and use and live by a thankful heart.

It won't get burned out.

Oh, I don't want to suffer from burnout. There's a way not to.

Let's go to First Thessalonians this time. First Thessalonians 5. Verse 18.

Every good part of your life, from the air you breathe to the grace of God that is in the process, by the way, of saving each and every one of us, is all a gift from God. The Bible does not say for us to do this.

Oh, give thanks for all your circumstances. But it does say this.

In 1st, Thessalonians 5,

give thanks in all circumstances. For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Exact words. Right there, 1st Thessalonians 5:18. Even when we are dealing with challenges, We can still be thankful for God's presence, for his promises, and for the fact he's working all these things together for our good. And there's trials we have. So let's develop an attitude of gratitude.

Let's do that. And it's not wrong. I've talked with this before. I'm not wrong. To keep a prayer book. I have one. Keep a prayer book. Record the things that you're for. Thank God for them. Before you go to bed each night. Thank you for the haircut, father. I look better now.

I'm making a joke out of that. God thanks for everything. Even the good things. I know a lady here that's thankful. She's still here. Sitting right there. She went through a lot of trials.

Yeah.

She's thankful for life, and she thanks God for that. I'm sure the day this was happening back in the 19, I think it was 2017, she told me.

I wasn't worried. I knew I was going to do what he was going to do. Here she is with us. Yeah, I think about that a lot.

So keep a prayer book. Pray before you go to bed about the things that God has given you that you really appreciate and be instant in prayer to God for the blessings as they come to each day. You know, as soon as we notice them, why not pray about it? We might forget about it later. Yeah. So make this a habit.

Do this as often as you possibly can. This habit will pull your attention away from these temporary problems. and place our focus overall on God's eternal character. Each one of us, you know, can become so busy that our life can actually do this, can actually shrink down to just that to -do list that you make up.

I get a to -do list. And that's all we get accomplished for the day. What happens when that happens? It causes us to rush past the work God had for us in that particular day. We're doing this to do list. It has zero to do with God.

Generally. Yeah, God has filled the world with a lot of wonder. It's all around us. He wants us to discover it. He wants us to enjoy it. Why wouldn't he want that?

Yeah. Psalm 65, verse 8. David says this back to God. He says,

I'll quote it for you. The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders.

Or the morning dawns, or the evening fades. You call forth songs of joy.

That's amazing. David being chased all over the countryside. He made some mistakes.

Slow down a bit and take notice and enjoy God's wonders that exist around us.

We can find wonders. I've talked about it earlier around this message. In nature, which reflects God's wondrous creative work, also reflects his character.

We can find wonder, and I'm sure some of you do this quite often, some of you do this often and we can find wonder in certain musical scores and countless other ways as well especially through how God answers prayer and how God's love to work with us especially in our relationship this relationship right here is pretty special God's working with us in that but we have to do our part and in Psalms we read that we are all, brethren, none left out, all wonderfully made. You know what says that in the Word? We can even find God's wonder by looking at ourselves at the mirror. It's

amazing because we are a part of God's masterpiece.

Psalm 139 .14 says this, I will praise you for I am awesomely and wonderfully made, exact words, your words are marvelous, your, pardon me, your works are marvelous, and my soul knows it very well, David says. So this understanding we've all been given, it's so awe -inspiring, so exciting, we're meditating on what is actually happening, and how close brothers and sisters in Christ that we are to this coming kingdom. It's just up ahead. I can sense it. I'm sure you're sensing it too. In our searching, and our searching is over, by the way, we're now growing in grace of knowledge.

In our searching, though, we've discovered the wonder of this end -time work that God, the Father of Jesus Christ, our Messiah, what they're directing. It's amazing. The more we get involved, the better it will be for all of us. We'll grow when we get involved. So we are the many. Think about this. We are the many who have received this calling from God. We took it upon ourselves to answer the calling, which by the way, only few do.

Because of that, our position now, as I just said, to be continually growing in grace and knowledge, and to be continually remaining in this chosen category that we're in. We want to remain there.

We entered into that at our baptisms. And when we did that, we entered into covenant with the two of the Godhead.

So it's so easy to get swept up, different stresses of life that come about. From where? On this fallen world, we've talked about it already. The overarching position we should have is to make the most, or at least as much as we can, out of every situation that comes our way and to strive to bring God into every aspect of our life. And that takes work. That doesn't come easy sometimes. We have to work away at it. God invites us every day,

hopefully, to have this eternal mindset, which involves seeing each part of our day through the lens, through the lens of God's eternal planet.

We know that through the annual holy days, right?

We've already read the letter of Paul to Colossians chapter 3 to what? Colossians 3, we read that, to set our hearts on the things above, not on the earthly things.

And we do this, if we do it, every part of our day

It's all going to come from God's perspective. That's the best perspective there is.

This will help us all to enjoy our life in Christ to the fullest and serve in the ways we can as God wants us to serve. He wants us to serve each other.

This is about quite a lot of it. Brethren, we all had a beginning point regarding our callings. The walk toward the direction of the narrow gate is likely a path that's not found with many people on it. Remember there is a sermon on the Mount. Remember that sermon on the Mount? It says there and I quote, Matthew 7 .13, you've read this hundreds upon hundreds of times. for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and there are many who go and buy it this scenery this landscape that we're all experiencing alone and as well together here today it has its own independent differences

as well,
it's congregational similarities.

As we journey along toward the destination that we're all seeking. That's where the similarity is, isn't it? We're seeking the same end. Life of the kingdom, eternal life in God's family.

Here's a serious question. No, Always getting serious. But the serious question is this. And I, maybe we should ask ourselves in time to time this very question because it's really an independent situation. And yeah, the question is,

what turns my crank? It's a good question. But that's not really what it is.

The question is this, it gets even better than that. The question is this. Am I headed in the right direction toward the kingdom of God? You know something?

Because a narrow gate,

hold on it. Because narrow is the gate

and difficult is the way which leads to life and there are few who find it let me read that again because narrow am I headed in the right direction because narrow was the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life and there are few who find it do you want to know something I have read Matthew 7

I've always found myself successful. Do we realize that

the true gospel, the true gospel message, the one gospel message had been distorted very early on in the first century church? Paul talks about that in Galatians' first chapter. You can find it right around verse 6 to verse 12 don't bother turning there if you want to look that up you can it was being perverted back in that day that's a long time ago so there can only be one true gospel but there's lots of them out there

so for all scratch to be active and messing up way back in paul's day should set off all the bells and whistles of warning for us

because brethren we are a long way down the road from that time

Satan has been very active absolutely nothing has changed in this regard.

Much of what we refer to as Christianity today by their actions.

Most of Christianity today, by their actions, think about it, think they actually know better than God.

Well, they reason. Maybe they don't hear it verbally, but they reasoned because they keep doing it. So what? We borrow from paganism.

But we do it to honor Jesus. Well, what does God say about that?

Back in Deuteronomy, God says he doesn't accept any such worship like that.

God's words to Moses for the Israelites for this. And In Deuteronomy 12, verse 30, take heed, I'll think about this, would it still apply?

Take heed, quote from Deuteronomy 1230, take heed to yourself that you do not become ensnared by following them. How did these nations serve their gods that I also do likewise? That's a question. A question mark there too. Verse 32 says this, whatever thing I command you, Be careful to, oh, be careful to do it.

You shall not add to it or you shall not take away from it.

Straightforward, not a trick scripture, not a difficult scripture. Overall,

what is the real gospel message? Because it has been added to
And it's been taken from as well. Remember, there's only going to be the few who
are going to be successful to enter through the first fruit narrow gate.

Into where? The kingdom. The few enter in. I'm talking first streets here.

I'm not talking the entire world. Somebody has to be first.

The true gospel message is about Jesus, our present -day high priest,
returning to the planet at the appointed time as what? King of kings,
Lord of Lords, to usher in and set up his father's kingdom here on planet earth.
That is the big picture. It's about Christ bringing his father's kingdom to planet
earth.

The power of God's spirit leads what? Leads us all into the truth.

Into all truth it says. My spirit will lead you into, not some truth, all truth.

It's what? It's a transformational spirit. It changes people.

God is seeking those of us who are constantly in a repentant,

Holy Spirit, growth mode. That's what we have to be in.

God is seeking those. We've like you heard other people say, maybe Christian people.

Oh, God is seeking the heart. I've heard it. I heard it just last week. God is
seeking the heart.

Those who are fearing God, in other words, by hearing and obeying what the Spirit
is telling the churches. Look up Revelation 2 and 3.

You will see that there seven times.

We can talk about that later maybe. If you don't bring it up, I will.

And are making the necessary changes, what brings about what? Not just any old
heart. A repentant heart.

Constantly growing in what? Grace and knowledge. This, brothers and sisters,
is the heart. God is seeking.

We must always be loyal because we have two beings at the Godhead. And their plan,
we must be involved. And there is only one true gospel message to be involved in
100 % of the way.

Remember that message on who was his name? Robert Caneval. Evil can evil.

Jumped over all 21 buses. He had to make it all the way. Salvation was on that
jump on the other side of all those trucks. Right? Good analogy.

Revelation 22, here we are. Revelation 22, we're winding down.

It, brethren, is a difficult journey we're on in a narrow entrance way to pass
through. And not one of us can change or even begin to change that truth.

We can't change it. We have to change. We have to live and apply every word of
God.

as crystal, flowing out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And in the middle
of the street, and on this side and that side of the river, was what? The tree of
life, producing 12 manner of fruits, each month yielding its fruit,
and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. In verse 12,
and behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with me to render to each one
according as his work shall be. I am alpha and omega,
the beginning and the end, the first and the last. The last are those who keep his

commandments, that they might have the right to eat of the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city." End of quote.

That was Revelation 22, 1, 2, and 12 down to 14. Rather, we must endeavor to draw close to God in heartfelt prayer and in daily study this word so we can grow on grace and knowledge and always, overcoming.

I will end here with this hope that this word right here will be continually turning your crank and keep your motor running forward in motion towards that narrow gate. We're going to hear those words we always want to hear. What are they?

Well done. Good and faithful servant. Welcome to the joy of the Lord.

I hope that was helpful.

I'll pass it back to Eric.