The Battle for Faithfulness

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Date: 21 June 2026

Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[0:00] Somebody told me it was Father's Day.

! Yeah. Dad's rain. So happy Father's Day to you men who have been blessed and privileged to be such.
And to you dear brothers who have mentored children and men and girls. You've been spiritual fathers. We are grateful to all of you for your faithful service to the King and his kingdom.
And to our families and to our community. This one's for you fellas. This message is my Father's Day message.
It's my men's day message. So if you are male. This is for you. Now guys I gotta warn you. I gotta be honest. I gotta tell you. The women were upset with me.
[1:11] My message for Mother's Day was very challenging. So I have to reciprocate. I have to. I wanted to talk about how much you're loved and you're beautiful and wonderful.

But now I gotta tell you you're sinners. So I'm sorry. I pray the gospel was heard for Mother's Day. And I pray the gospel will be heard today.
But this one is a bit challenging. Father thank you. You are worthy of all grace. Your word says you are the one from whom all fatherhood comes.
You are the ultimate father. The great father. The prototype for fathers. You are above our heads. Thank you for Jesus.
Whom you sent to save us and to equip us. To empower us. So that we can begin to even demonstrate a little of your glory as fathers and mentors.
[2:22] Father we pray that you would bless everyone who hears this message. But in particular speak to the men of this church. No matter how old they are. Speak to them. Equip them.

Strengthen them. Do all your holy will. Give us ears to hear what the spirit is saying to the church. And give your servant grace to preach this message with your grace.
According to your word. According to truth. So we surrender ourselves to you now. Hear our cry. In Jesus name.
Amen. First Samuel 15. Another strange passage for such an occasion. And I was trying to figure out if I could not read all of it.
But. And I want to. But time is. I'm always my enemy. And we have communion. But I can't see getting around it. Too much. Listen. Page 230.
[3:23] If you don't have a Bible with you. Page 237. And the Pew Bible is where you will find it. And you're going to need that. Okay. Because you're going to need to follow along through the message.

But I'm going to read. The text will be on the screen for a little. For a few minutes. Hear now the word of the living God. Samuel said to Saul. The Lord sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel.
And now therefore listen to the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts. Hosts is the army of heaven. I have noted. What Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way.
When they came up out of Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek. And devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them. But kill both man and woman.
Child and infant. Ox and oxen. Camel and donkey. This is striking. So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in. And Talaim.
[4:27] Two hundred thousand men on foot. And ten thousand men of Judah. I'm going to jump down a little bit. Verse seven. And Saul defeated the Amalekites. From Havala.

As far as Shur. Which is east of Egypt. And he took Agag. The king of the Amalekites. Alive. And devoted to destruction.

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All the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag. And the best of the sheep. And of the oxen. And of the fatted calves. And lambs.
And all that was good. And would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised. And worthless. They devoted to destruction. Then the word of the Lord.
Came to Samuel. I regret that I may saw a king. For he has turned back from following me. And has not performed my commandments. And Samuel was angry.
[5:22] And cried to the Lord. All night. Samuel rose early to meet Saul. In the morning. And it was told Samuel. Saul came to Carmel. And behold. He set up a monument.

For himself. And turned. And passed on. And went down to Giga. And Samuel came to Saul. And Saul said to him. Blessed be you to the Lord.
I have performed the commandment of the Lord. And Samuel said. What then is this bleeding of sheep in my ears? And the lolling of the oxen that I hear?
Saul said. They have brought. They have brought them. From the Amalekites. For the people. Spare the best of the sheep. And of the oxen.
To sacrifice to the Lord your God. And the rest we have devoted to destruction. And then Samuel said. Stop. I will tell you what the Lord said to me this night.
[6:20] Because he couldn't sleep all night. God was talking to him. And he said to him. Speak. The Lord said you're on a mission. God said. Go devote to destruction.

The sinners. The Amalekites. And fight against them. Until they are consumed. Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil? And do what is evil in the sight of the Lord?
But Saul said to Samuel. I have obeyed the voice of the Lord. I have gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek.
And I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. I can't pronounce it. But the people took of the spoil. Sheep and oxen. The best of things devoted to destruction.
To sacrifice to the Lord your God. Aren't you listening Samuel? And then Samuel said. Has the Lord great as great delight.
[7:24] In burnt offerings and sacrifices. As in obeying the voice of the Lord. Behold to obey. Is better than sacrifice.

And to listen. Than the fat of rams. For rebellion. Is as a sin of divination. And presumption. Is as iniquity and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the Lord. He has also rejected you. From being king. Verse 32.
Then Samuel said. Bring here to me Agag. The king of the Amalekites. And Agag came to him cheerfully. Surely the bitterness of death has passed.
And Samuel said. As your sword has made women childless. So shall your mother be childless among women. And Samuel hacked Agag. To pieces.
[8:25] Before the Lord. In Gilgal. That is the word of the Lord. You may be seated. Thank you guys.

Thank you Pracine. Thank you beautiful. Thank you. Thank you for that great tribute. One of the great traits. Of biblical masculinity.
Brothers. Is so well said. By Christopher Wright. In the book. Men of Virtue. Faithfulness. Faithfulness means.
Exercising trustworthy behavior. Over a long period of time. Faithfulness. Faithfulness can be seen in your work.
Doing a good job. Showing up on time. In school. And finishing assignments on time. And going to class. Yeah. Going to class is part of that. Yeah. Faithfulness can be seen in family.
[9:24] Keeping. Keeping our marriage vows sacred. Being a continual engaged presence in the home.

Someone once said being a father is just showing up. No it's not. Amen. Right. It is that. But how you show up.
Right. Faithfulness is just as important as showing up. Faithfulness can be seen in friendships. Being counted on. To keep promises. And be there for those who call you friend.
When these things happen over time. We say a man is faithful. But the most important and fundamental aspect of faithfulness. Must be to God. Amen.

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What does faithfulness to God look like? Maybe even more importantly. Knowing. How flawed we are. How does God make a man faithful?
[10:27] He's got to do it. There are two men in this passage. We always talk about one.

But there are two men in this passage. One's named Saul. But the other's named Samuel. Two men.
One God. What is faithfulness? Okay. Now keep in mind something. When we come to the Old Testament. We see a lot of battles. Right. A lot of battles.
Battles in the Old Testament. Picture realities of the New Testament. Okay. The New Testament shines light. Backwards.
So we can understand what's happening in the Old Testament. In particular. I think there's some things about these battles we must understand. First of all. One. God is a divine warrior who fights for his glory and his people.
[11:25] Jesus comes as the embodiment of this great warrior who defeats his enemies on our behalf. That's first. You got to get that.

The great warrior is not the people. Not the men. Not Joshua or Samuel or Jonathan or whoever. Gideon. They're not the great warrior. The great warrior. The great warrior is the living God. Who's doing battle. The second thing. Understand that Israel's wars in the Old Testament display or illustrate the greater spiritual war.
Because behind the nations are spiritual forces of evil. There were real wars. I'm not saying there weren't real wars. But the New Testament shines light and we see more.
Three. Israel's wars were a depiction of God's judgment to come. Which will be worse. Why was Israel sent into Canaan?
[12:33] Not just to get a home. But it was the judgment of God. God promised that he would judge the Canaanites for their sin. Which included infanticide.

All kinds of evil. And four. It is the New Testament once again that makes these things clear. With that background.
You got to have that background or you don't get this. Saul is Israel's first human king. God was their king. And when they said they wanted the king.
Because they wanted to be like all the other nations in 1 Samuel. Samuel was upset. The prophet was upset. He didn't want to do it. And God said no, no, no. Don't understand. They have not rejected you.
They rejected me as king. Because Samuel was the last judge of Israel. Before the king. We call him the king maker. And so Saul is a very impressive man.
[13:32] They choose someone who is very impressive. In chapter 9 you find out that Saul was very handsome. And he was the tallest among all the people. Maybe he was 6'7 or something.

I don't know. Good looking. I know. That's pretty tall. He was taller than Uncle Rev Kev. I mean he was handsome.
He was good looking. I mean he was tall like Freeman. And cut like Willie. And I hate him. Put a shirt on.
But here's the thing. He was also very humble. If you were to go back to chapter 10 verse 22. When they were looking for him to make him king. He was hiding. They said where is he? He said he's hiding among the baggage.
Chapter 10 verse 22. So Saul was this impressive specimen of a man who had humility. And God's spirit came upon him and anointed him. He became a prophet as well.
[14:35] He prophesied. And he was a good king for a while. And he began to slide. This last thing. This chapter right here is not even the worst.

He goes on later and gets even worse than what we see here. But this was kind of the last word about him and the kingdom. So this is chapter 15.
This is when Saul, he hits a very low point in his life. Yet God still allowed him to be king. God still worked with him.
But he had missed something. Keep in mind again, the Old Testament is written for our instruction. Right? So even the tough stories are written for our instruction.
Do not skip the hard stuff. The hard stuff is there to instruct us too. In one of the hardest times in Israel's history, Paul comments on this in 1 Corinthians 10, 6, and verse 11 to 13.

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[15:44] He comments on this. He says, Now these things took place as examples for us that we might not desire evil as they did. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction on whom the end of the ages has come.

Therefore, that anyone who thinks that he stands, take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. So whatever you're going through, other brothers are going through it too.
But he says, God is faithful and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability. I will say, Paul's man, God's ability in you, by the way. But with the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it.
So I want you to hear that guys, because we're facing some temptations there. Saul faced temptations there, but God had resources to help him and us.
Amen. God always provides help if we are willing to take it. Two men.
[16:54] Let's do this quickly. First of all, there's the test, what I call the test for faithfulness, verses 1 through 7. So if you have your Bible, just look at it. If you were at the men's breakfast last Saturday, then you remember I talked about Amalek.

Remember, Joshua fought them. That was the first battle that Israel really had as they came into the promised land, came near the promised land, heading into the promised land.
They fought Amalek. And Joshua led the battle while Moses held the rod of God above, and God blessed them. Remember that? Well, I don't know if you noticed at the end of that section there, God promised, therefore, to wipe out Amalek.
Amalek. Here in our passage, the check has come due. God's about to keep his word. Because Amalek had, there was a sneak attack and a cowardly attack upon God's people.
Exodus 17, 14. The Lord said to Moses, write this as a memorial and a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.
[18:08] Then Moses repeats this down in Deuteronomy before he goes to be with the Lord himself. In Deuteronomy 25, 17 through 19, he says it again. He adds something. Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came up out of Egypt, how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary and cut off your tail.

That meaning those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. Therefore, when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you in the land that the Lord your God has given you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.
You shall not forget. It's kind of funny. He sounded almost like a Klingon warrior. We do not forgive nor forget.
God said, don't forget this. Remember I told you about the judgment of God? This is God. This is God defending his people.
You don't mess with God's people. He said, you mess with them, I'm going to mess with you. So here he is, keeping his word, defending his church.
[19:28] Making sure that they are at peace. So now, he sends Saul. Devote to destruction, meaning no survivors, not even animals.

No one escapes. It's harsh to our modern ears. And it is harsh. But understand, the judgment of God is falling on sinners.
It's only a small picture of the judgment to come. Which is even more mind-boggling and scary. God is holy. You cannot affront his holiness. But he gives us space to repent.
He gave the Amalekites 300 years to repent before he sent Saul. That's a long time to be given a chance.
[20:38] To turn away from evil. But they would not. They continued that kind of behavior. They were known for this behavior. God would judge those who harm his people.

But more, the honor of the Lord was affronted when they attacked his people. You remember in the New Testament, when Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul, remember when God cut him off and saved him?
This guy was a hit man for the Jewish establishment. He was going out, wiping out Christians. Your forbearers. And he says, Jesus, the resurrected and ascended Christ, appears to Saul in glory.
A bright light shining. Like lightning went off around him. And Saul falls off his donkey. He's like blinded. What? And he's like, and what does Jesus say?

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Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? God identifies with his people. And then he, so he will protect his people.
[21:53] It's personal for him. It's personal. But it wasn't just, but it wasn't, it's about God. This is why we're not, this is why we're forbidden, brothers, to take revenge.

We can get a chance to read Romans 12, 18 and 21. We're not, we're told vengeance is mine, says the Lord, I will repay. You're forbidden to take revenge because, because when people go after you, God says, I take it personal.
I will revenge. I will handle it. I got your back. I'll fight the battle. I don't trust you to handle it. He says, instead, I want you to do good to you.
See, this is New Testament now. Don't kill your enemies, do good to them. You see, Christ comes, a better covenant, Christ will say, okay, there's more going on here than you understand.
So we don't, we don't, we don't kill our enemies, we do good to them. In the name of Jesus. We don't render evil for evil. We do good to them. See, the new covenant moves us forward and reminds us that the real enemy, as Ephesians 6, 12 says, is that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
[23:14] The reason we should not take revenge is because the real enemy is behind them. Someone does something wrong to you brothers. That's why God says, no, you don't touch, don't you get revenge because the truth of the matter is our anger ain't always righteous.

We're not fighting, we don't always fight the Lord's battles here, we're fighting our battles. So God says, don't you touch them, leave them alone. I know they hurt you, I know they did something bad, but don't, no, you let me handle it.
Because behind them are spiritual forces of wickedness and I will help you deal with them. They're the bigger problem. Some of the devil's attacks sneak up on us, especially when we're weak like the Amarokites did Israel.
Some sensations are right in our face, challenging our devotion to God, like what's happening in our passage. Saul was being met with a challenge.
A challenge that would challenge his devotion to God. Let me ask you a question, are you facing something like that yourself? Is something challenging your devotion to God right now?
[24:32] Is something saying to you right now, I'm more important to you, I'm your everything, I'm your life, I will give you purpose, I will give you hope, I will give you joy.

Is something saying that to you right now, but it's not God. Maybe you're facing a battle for faithfulness too, right now.
God's got help for you. But first of all, we got to admit, Saul failed the test of faithfulness. He failed the test. Lack of faithfulness here.
And why did he fail this test? Here's the thing, why did he fail? The fear of man. The fear of people. You'll see that really, and he says it a couple times in the text.
The people took it. The oxen. The people did it. And then he actually admit later on that he was afraid of the people. So in this test, so Paul admits it, I did it, well, I really didn't do it, they did it, but I let them do it because I was afraid.
[25:48] I mean, it's amazing how fear of people will keep us from following God in the way that he has called us. And that's not just for, you know, we talk about peer pressure, right?

And we always talk about children. And that's true. But hello, adult men, you are dealing with peer pressure all the time too.
It's not a child thing. Who are you trying to please? Who is it, do you fear displeasing? Who is it that you, that you think about when you, when you go into work or wherever you go during the day, school, class, whatever, you go into work, who are you thinking about pleasing and who are you worried about displeasing more than God?
You see, whoever you fear, you will follow. Whoever you fear, you will follow. Saul followed the people.
Now again, he's the leader here, so I'm doing quotes here, air quotes, because I'm wondering, you know, keep in mind what he did. Livestock is wealth to them, to them, to that people.
[27:12] So what Saul did was save the money. All the good looking animals, that's Kashinka, mu'ala, do re mi.

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He was putting, he was filling up the coffers. I saved the best to sacrifice, let me say that twice, to sacrifice to who? The Lord, your God.
Hold it. I thought he was your God. You see, he's all confused. His heart's in the wrong place. He's thinking about the moolah. He's trying to build the coffers of the kingdom.
And he thought he could lie to Samuel. The man, we say back in the day in the Pentecostal church, you can't lie to the man of God.
The man of God. And so he tries to blame, shift, he tries to rationalize his disobedience. Hey guys, nah, that's, that's, that's a death.
[28:11] That's death. Don't make excuses. If you blow it, you blow it. Own it. It ain't your wife's fault.

It ain't your kid's fault. It ain't them. You did it. It's okay. Admit it. He's doing all this shenanigans. So let me shift over real quick.
The other guy. Let me show you the heart of faithfulness. First of all, what God says, and then I'll show you more about Samuel. What, what did God want when he sent Samuel on his mission? What he wanted was his heart. Don't miss these words here. Back in verse 22, has the Lord as great delight and burnt offerings and sacrifices as, as in obeying the voice of the Lord.
Notice the first phrase, has the Lord as great delight. The word delight can also be translated as pleasure.
[29:12] What is it that God is pleased with? What does he delight in brothers? Well, he tells him. Obedience.

He wants you to obey him. But hold it now. Why does God so hot and heavy about obedience? Isn't that legalism? Wouldn't, is Samuel being, Saul being saved by his obedience?
Come on, people. You know that's not true. But Jesus, the new covenant, opens our understanding to this, doesn't it? And, and, and John 14, 21, whoever has my commandments and keep them, he it is who loves me.
And who loves me will be loved by my father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him. What is obedience, guys? It is displaying love to God.
It is responding to the love that God has shown. Listen, God tells, he told Saul, did not, you were small in your own eyes, and I made you king.
[30:21] Why did he make him king? Because of the grace of God. He chose him. He made, he took him from behind the baggage, and made him king.

Poured a spirit on him. God did that without Saul even asking for it. He was chosen by the love of God. And so, that, that love is supposed to then, when we understand it, and we really see it, that love pulls out, our love for him.
And that love for God must be demonstrated in obedience. Because you can't say, you love the Lord, if you do not do what he calls you to do.
Our love, our love, our love for God, is consuming us. Because his love, consumes you.
His love, was so magnificent, that he set his love upon us, before the foundation of the world, and sent his son, that he might give his life, for sinners like you and me, and set us free, and make us sons of the kingdom, sons of the living God.
[31:39] And yet, in our practice, we still mess up, but he still loves you, and will not let you go. See, that's the kind of love, that sets us, on the path, of giving ourselves to God, and obeying him.

Why? Because he's the greatest treasure. That's why obedience is so important to God. It demonstrates, that you love the Lord your God, with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, and all your strength.
And that empowers you, to love your neighbor as yourself. It's huge. It's huge. What does it say about Saul?
He took advantage, and misused the blessings of God, for his own purposes.
His own sense of self-worth. His own sense of honor and glory. He made a monument to himself. Remember the text said that? Not to God, to himself. He saw the blessings of God, as a means of promoting himself.
[32:54] He demonstrated, he did not love the Lord. He was unfaithful. Faithfulness, springs out of love.

Not fear of death. Not fear of hell. Not fear of not being blessed. Faithfulness, to God, comes out of a heart, in love with God.

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Which brings us to Samuel. Samuel, Samuel, the last Old Testament judge, shows us that the practice of faithfulness is not fueled by the fear of man, but it's fueled by the fear of God.
God tells Samuel, here's your mission. Go, tell Saul what I said. I want you to wipe out them Alakites. Got it? Samuel goes.
Then God says, come here. I got another message for you. Now here's where it gets tricky. Here's where faithfulness comes in, guys.
[34:05] He sends them back to a sovereign king who had absolute, those monarchs of those days, absolute authority. He sends them back to him to tell him, you screwed up.

You didn't do it. Now, if you're not trembling yet, you don't get it. Samuel took his life in his hands by going back to tell Saul, you're wrong.
How do I know? How do I know? Because in the very next chapter, in 16.2, when God tells Samuel, I want you to go anoint another king, Saul is out.
I'm going to find somebody after my own heart. In 16.2, Samuel said, how can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me. See, Saul, Samuel knew the score.
He was the prophet of God and he was, he was Samuel's, Saul's mentor and that kind of stuff, but he also knew the score. If Saul did not like this, his head was going to roll.
[35:20] Faithfulness says, whatever, God, I trust you, I will step out and do what you've called me to do, even if I must risk it all. Right, right, right.

How can you, who, how can you give that kind of devotion to God, the king you have not seen? Because you have seen Jesus.
In the spirit, in the mind of God, in your, in your spiritual mind, in the word of God, you have seen Jesus and you've seen he is worth it. He is worth the sacrifice.
I have to go to General Assembly. I always enjoy it. I'm nervous about going, I'm never, I'm only, very few times I've been nervous about going to General Assembly, very few.
One when I preached. But this time, I have to say something to my African American brothers, my path, brother, fellow pastors, there's about 70 of us, I guess.
[36:30] I don't know if I'll speak, I won't be able to speak to everybody. But I got an unpopular message for them. We have seen the PCA, in the PCA, there are racist individuals.

It's not a racist denomination. There are racist individuals within the PCA. There's a difference. And there are men who think principle is more important than love. They don't care what your color is. And it's not easy. We've seen, we've seen men get hurt. African American brothers get hurt badly. Irwin's one of them. And my brothers want to withdraw.
They want to step back and not be involved in any, and I got to go tell them to say, don't do it. Don't withdraw. be faithful while we're here.
If we're here, be faithful to him. To him. That's not, that's going to be unpopular. I'm going to, might be invited back to the cookout. I'm sure, I don't know.
[37:40] Sometimes, brothers, you've got to say something that's not popular, but it's true, and it's from the Lord, and you've got to say it in love. You can't walk in arrogant, like tough, and like, God told me to, no, go home.

Stay home. Please, stay home. You've got to walk in with humility and kindness in your heart, but you've got to speak the truth. You've got to mess it. Sometimes fathers are speaking to your children, especially your adult children.
Don't send your wife. Man up, in the name of Jesus, and go say the hard truth.
Amen. In love. Sometimes you, it's another man, even within the church, you've got to say a hard truth to a brother. You see a brother on the wrong path.
He's making, he's doing some stuff that he shouldn't be doing. He's heading in the wrong direction. What do you say? Well, God will take care of it. Hallelujah. Thank you, Jesus. No, if you see it, God's sending you.
[38:42] But remember what the Bible says, you who are spiritual, restore. So, you go in the power of the spirit. You better get on your knees first. Call upon God. And then you get up and go. In the spirit of meekness and kindness.

But it's a hard truth that he's calling you to speak. Speak it. Speak it. Trust God to handle the fallout. God, Samuel feared the Lord more than he feared man.
Do you? Do you understand? The fear of God is all over the Bible. It is the, it is the, it is the, it is the motive of our piety.

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It is the, the motive of our devotion. Without the fear of the Lord, guys, if you don't understand what that means, if you're not living in that, you're not walking with the Lord very carefully. The fear of the Lord means that you are captivated by his glory and his majesty and his awe.
You recognize you are in the presence of someone far superior to you. I experienced a little bit at one time with a human being.
[39:55] I was, J.I. Packer, some of you know that name, J.I. Packer, pastor went to be with Jesus. He was an Anglican theologian, taught in Vancouver at Regent College for many years.

One of the great theologians of the 20th century and 21st. He preached at our church in Philly and he and my pastor were good friends and so, so I picked up my book, one of his books, I have all his books.
This is Keep Us Up with the Spirit. I picked up his book to get his autograph. J.I. Packer. So, that's right there. I got it.
So, here's Kevin Smith in his 20s. Oh. I was like, what's wrong with me?
I couldn't help it. My legs, it's never happened before ever. I trembled up the steps. I couldn't even speak. Me, can't speak.
[40:59] I just went, and he signed it. All blessings, Kevin, James Packer, Ephesians 4.30. And Dr. Boyd smiled. He saw me trembling. And he went, that's nothing compared to the fear of the Lord.

I wasn't afraid Packer was going to hurt me. I was so impressed with him. How much more do I stand before the living God and be impressed with him?
How much more the fear of the Lord is the beginning of what? Wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of what? Knowledge. Both is both.
You don't know anything until you fear God. You have no wisdom until you fear the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the soul of our devotion.
If you don't fear God, brothers and sisters, you don't understand. He's not your homeboy. He's Holy Father. Father.
[42:10] And because he feared the Lord, he didn't fear Saul. Or better yet, because he feared the Lord, he was able to be courageous.

Courage is not the absence of fear, it's going forward in spite of the fear. He knew he had a word to say, but he said it because he feared the Lord.
And then that fear led to zeal for the Lord. He was zealous for his God. How do I know? When he got finished talking to Saul, Saul with his crocodile tears and false repentance and that kind of stuff, you read it for yourself.
He says, bring me Agag. Agag's chilling. He's been back there eating pig feed and chitlins and whatnot and collard greens. You know I'm joking.
They were Jewish. He wasn't. They wouldn't have served him that though. He's back there chilling. He says, surely the death sentence is over.
[43:26] Surely it's all good. He comes out smiling. He's cheerful. Hey, what's going on? Saul, we playing golf today, buddy? Samuel said, nope.

That was your last tee time. Just as you've made mothers childless, so your mother will be childless. And the Bible says he hacked him to pieces.
Right. That's how we deal with sin, brothers. That's how we deal with temptation, brothers.
We don't pet it. We don't hack people. But we deal ruthlessly with temptation in our lives, brothers. Are you following me?
Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount, if your right hand offends you, what'd you do? Do you think he really meant cut it off? No. You're right. I offend you. Do what? Do you think he meant blind yourself?
[44:25] No. He's saying deal radically with sin. Whatever is drawing you, tempting you away from God, don't pet it. Don't excuse it. Don't blame shift it.

Deal with it in the name of Jesus according to his word. Face it in the, look it in the eye. You will not have me today. I belong to Jesus. And you hack it.
You cut it off. If it's porn, you tell your TV and your monitor. I'm joking. I'm joking. You may have to hack, you may have to hack your TV up.
You may have to hack up your, I don't know. All I'm saying is don't excuse or play with stuff that's taking you away from God. Amen. He loves you.

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Did someone hear me say it? Bruce, did I say it loud enough? He loves you. You are his son. He wants your devotion to him because that's the best thing for you.
[45:26] Not for him. He don't need us. But you, but we need him and he wants your heart, your life, your devotion, your faithfulness.

Why? Because you, it will glorify him certainly but he don't need you to glorify him. More importantly, it will bless you. You will be transformed.
You will be changed. And yes, you will then glorify your father who is in heaven. So what is faithfulness?
A heart of obedience to God moved by deep love for God.
A heart of obedience to God moved by deep love for God for you have seen how much he loves you in Christ.
[46:27] That produces faithfulness. So I gotta keep coming back to the gospel. I gotta keep coming back and looking once and all again and again and again. Where's the love of God? How do I see the love of God?

Help me out brothers. How do I see the love of God? Where do I see? I gotta keep coming back to the source because here's the thing the world is always tempting. The world is always telling me I can have the good life without Jesus.
It's always telling us we can have whatever we want but don't let go of it. Okay the Bible's an old book. We're more modern people today whispering in my ear like I remind of myself all the time and the word of the Lord came to Samuel and the word of the Lord came to you has come to us not just in a book but in a person.
Jesus is the word of God. The Lagos. The eternal son has come for us. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.
Faithfulness is growing in understanding of that love that you might grow in the fear of God and devote yourself to him.
[47:53] Tough story. I didn't do all of it. I know I didn't. I ain't had time. There are questions. I know. Trust God. All I gotta say trust him.

He knows what he's doing. The world says what? Trust God. Father thank you for your word and thank you for my brothers and my my fathers my brothers and my sons.
Thank you for each one of them. Grow us in faithfulness to you. Grow us in reverence and fear of you the living God.
Grow us in love for you as we so help us bask in your love. I don't know any other way Father I don't know any other way to grow in my love for you other than basking in your love.
So help us to do it. Help us to stand in grace and rejoice in mercy coming from you and then stand on our feet and make us a mighty army men of God who fear the Lord and will stand against the very gates of hell because we are strong in the Lord and in your mighty power and in your presence and in your word being done Lord make us mighty men of God for your king and for your kingdom amen.
[49:34] Elders will you come we got to serve communion and we um what a good day did we get to bask in his love together because this table displays the faithfulness of Jesus and the love of God for us he was faithful all the way to death this demonstrating great God's great love for you and the father showed his great faithfulness and love to the son and the son did not remain dead but rose again and ascended into heaven this table is a table of God's faithfulness his faithful love the Old Testament word is chesed his faithful love this is what we see here come all of us and let's bask in his love together that's communion we're going to bask in his love and forgiveness together

I'm reminded of what the apostle Paul as he was giving going over really what it meant to serve the Lord's Supper to the Corinthian church who were a group of Christians who were behaving badly and yet he still called them brothers and sisters because they're saved by grace just like we are and so he gives them these instructions concerning the supper first he rebuked them for what they were practicing it but then he said this is what you should be doing remembering Jesus that on the night when he was betrayed he took bread when he had given thanks he broke and said this is my body which is for you do this in remembrance of me in the same manner he took the cup after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me remembrance of him and his sacrifice what he will do for us for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes he's promised to come again bodily

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physically to come again and we will end this then because he'll be with us then he warns us and it's a warning it is a warning whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord let a person examine himself are you faithful not perfect but are you faithful let him examine himself then and see and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup for anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment to himself and he said this is why many of you were weak and ill and some have died but if we judge ourselves truly we would not be judged are you in Christ is he your savior is this your family is the body of Christ your family because you can't love the head and not love the body can't do it that's where Corinth failed because they were destroying the body of Christ factions and stuff and
I'm better than him that kind of thing and more lawsuits against one another can you imagine yes you can this is America we can't imagine they weren't seeing Christ and they weren't functioning in his body as brothers and sisters as one loaf one loaf of bread one loaf are you in Christ are you in his body if so then you are welcome to this table you're welcome and you may be weak and you may say I saw myself in Saul oh my gosh amen repent now let's pray right now ask God to forgive you and come to the table father my brothers right now in particular but even my sisters may have something they need to say to you father will you hear our cry right now and forgive us for our sins forgive us lord we your children have we've messed up and we've gotten off track here and there lord and some of us have gotten the track way off track and lord help us bring us back forgive us forgive us and help us to give ourselves to you to give ourselves to jesus because he is worthy of our devotion of our faithfulness he's worthy of our lives so lord have mercy upon us as we call out to you now and father if someone doesn't know you in this way if someone doesn't know you they've never surrendered themselves to jesus father i pray that you would speak to them right now one if they will not come to you keep them from the table don't let them take anything but if they want to come to you father help them to make it known even after this service that they want to follow you please lord create a new faithful servant today by your mercy and grace hear our cries we come to this table may we see jesus may we feast upon jesus in his name we pray amen the body of the lord which is for you his people you
Thank you.

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