

2-8-2026 Listen to what they say **James 3: 5-6, Matthew 5: 13-16**

I would like to start with this short prayer. Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be **filled**." We are in a darkness that is growing. Fill us with a hunger and thirst for righteousness lest we be left empty.

My message today was difficult to write. I struggled with whether I should say anything at all. Maybe I will offend some people's political sensibilities? Am I being led by the Light or is it just me? My powers of discernment are poor. I started drafting this 3 weeks ago and since then a lot has changed. People are starting to see the undeniable truth. In a roundabout way this month's newsletter addresses the issue. I am probably preaching to the choir. For people here or people that you know that are strong supporters of the administration's Border Patrol/ICE tactics, maybe what I say will encourage you and them to take another look.

In January 2026, footage was released of the final moments before **Renee Nicole Good** was fatally shot by an ICE agent in Minneapolis. According to the video recorded by the agent, Good spoke calmly through her open car window.

Her final words to the agent were:

- **"That's fine, dude. I'm not mad at you."**

Other interactions recorded during the incident included:

- Good also stated, **"That's fine. U.S. citizen"**.
- **Witness Comments:** Her wife, Becca, who was standing outside the vehicle filming, was heard saying, "Show your face" and "You want to come at us? I say go get yourself some lunch, Big Boy".
- **Agent's Reaction:** Moments after Good began to move the vehicle and was shot, a voice—believed to be the agent's—was heard saying, **"Fing btch"***** as her SUV rolled away.

Within hours the administration labeled Good a domestic terrorist, radical left wing nut job and violent protester. How can you do a thorough character investigation of a person with no criminal record just a few hours after the incident? Would a domestic terrorist, violent protestor say, "That's fine dude. I'm not mad at you"? Would a domestic terrorist have stuffed animals in their glove box?

The administration's rapid defense of the agent led to the resignation of an FBI agent. Six federal prosecutors in Minnesota who disagreed with the direction of the investigation also resigned. The administration made sure that the agent was quickly exonerated of any wrongdoing. No in-depth investigation. No trial. Zip. Nada. Whatever happened to "The

responsible officers are on administrative leave. The investigation is in its early stages and as we continue to gather evidence we will keep you informed.” Is the administration afraid of the truth?

Less than 3 weeks later Alexi Pretti is shot. Who was at fault? They are horrific to watch but if you want to get at the truth watch several of the videos made by bystanders and decide. You do not have to be a video forensics expert to figure it out. Nefarious folks have already generated fake AI versions so pick wisely. Then after watching listen to what the administration has to say about Alex. Compare that to the many descriptions of the kind of person Alex Pretti, ICU nurse at the VA was.

At this point you may be wondering, John, so far this sounds like a journalist’s investigative report. How is this appropriate as a message? Please bear with me.

My son Joseph and his fiancée Steph live in Minneapolis 10 blocks from where Renee Good was shot. Go in a different direction and the memorial to George Floyd is nearby. Erin and I have been there many times. Joseph lives in a wonderful neighborhood. It has a good vibe. Joseph’s house was built in 1910 as were many of the houses in the area. They are not cookie cutter houses. The architecture is very interesting. Many of the houses have enclosed porches, lots of stucco. All the houses are well maintained. It hit me that in 1910 materials were hauled to the site in horse drawn wagons. The carpenters must have been buff as heck. No skills saws or nail guns, just hammers and hand saws. Amazing.

Erin and I have talked to Joseph and Steph several times. He said that they had gone to Legal Observer training. The Legal Observer training goes over what you can and can’t do to keep you from breaking any laws. People are afraid. He mentioned how the large neighborhood has come together. If an ICE activity is taking place the word goes out and people gather to act as witnesses to what is happening.

Joseph and Steph said that ICE seems very disorganized. If you are brown, they pick you up. Wasn’t this whole ICE endeavor supposed to be about rounding up the drug dealers, rapists, violent criminal illegal immigrants? Wasn’t ICE supposed to make communities safer? Joseph and Steph condemn ICE’s tactics. ICE is not making their neighborhood safer. My son and his fiancée’s first-hand observations directly contradict the line the administration is trying to sell. So, who is telling the truth? Are Joseph and Steph left wing radicalized nut jobs? Are they overtly biased? Are they liars? To answer that you need to know more about Joseph and Steph.

Joseph got his PhD in physics at the University of Minnesota. He works at Sky Water. They make computer chips. There is the “factory” where they are cranking out thousands of chips

that will go in cars and other devices. They also have what they call the “foundry”. It provokes images of blacksmiths with forges and hammers. Not quite. Joseph works in the foundry. Companies that need a device made that will require chips come to the foundry and employees like Joseph design the chips and figure out how the chip manufacturing process will be structured.

There is a high school close to where Joseph lives. In evenings they had classes to help people studying to pass the GED. Prior to covid, one day a week, Joseph volunteered and helped students struggling with the math portion.

There are frightened families that have not left their homes, afraid to go to their jobs. These families have pending asylum applications with either USCIS or the immigration court. This status prevents you from being deported, but the government could still detain you. ICE does not comply with that law. Deportation happens. In a program developed by the local high school, Joseph and Steph are sponsoring a family in dire need of financial aid. Sometimes they drop off groceries but have to be very careful for fear that ICE will track them. They avoid using phone guidance and find their way the old-fashioned way, by paper map. **Joseph and Steph are not liars. They are not left-wing radicals. They are telling the truth. My dearest Joseph and Steph give me hope.**

Nick Shirley, a 23-year-old independent YouTuber and conservative social media influencer, posted a 42-minute video in late December 2025 alleging over \$110 million in fraud at Minneapolis-area daycare centers. The video, which went viral, claimed Somali-owned facilities were receiving public funds without serving children. Shirley used a technique called rage baiting. Rage baiting is the deliberate creation of online content—such as videos, posts, or articles—designed to provoke anger, frustration, or outrage. According to the Oxford Word this manipulative tactic aims to hijack user emotions to maximize engagement, such as comments, shares, and views. Nefarious people use it because it works. There are so many angry people in our country. Anger sells. If you can get a person angry about something **then the rational part of their brain starts to shut down.** You can actually become addicted to anger. I teach at Selkirk High School. It was posted on the school website that the senior class quilts, made for veterans will be on display Monday at 5:00 pm. A few folks attended. If someone falsely posted on face book that contraceptive dispensing machines are going to be installed in the high school cafeteria, would people stop and think maybe that is a lie, make some inquiries? Some might but my bet would be the next school board meeting would be attended by a mob with pitch forks and clubs.

Back to the Nick Shirley video.

Key details about the video and its aftermath:

- **Content:** Shirley, accompanied by an associate named "David," visited several daycares, claiming they were empty and questioning employees.
- **Impact:** The video gained over 100 million views, prompted an FBI investigation, and led to federal agents probing the allegations.
- **Response:** While some cited facilities had safety or administrative issues, state records and visits did not verify the widespread fraud claims, and many centers reported being operational despite allegations.
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Joseph's fiancée Steph is a psychologist. Steph works at Partners in Excellence, an agency that helps children who are autistic. Steph's agency receives funding from the federal government administered by the state. As a consequence of the posting of the largely discredited video, her agency and many others are being audited and 100% of their funding has been suspended awaiting the result of the audit. Steph said that so far, her agency has been able to weather the storm, but many small agencies have closed, unable to meet payroll, not having enough cash reserve to carry them over until the audit findings are complete. Where will the children go to get help? As an aside, the Department of Defense has failed its annual audit for eight consecutive years. Their records are so convoluted that **billions** of dollars are unaccounted for. The Department of Defense' budget is \$970 billion dollars. Would you invest in a corporation that had failed its previous eight years of auditing? Surely not! But you do. You pay your taxes, don't you?

Sometimes it is difficult to determine if an official or blogger is lying. First do this one thing. Listen to them talk. That is it. This is from the letter of James, chapter 3, verses 5-6 about what the tongue can reveal. In several places I have added the word can.

Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it CAN make great boasts. Consider that a great forest CAN be set on fire by a small spark. ⁶ The tongue also CAN be a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It CAN corrupt the whole body, set the whole course of one's life on fire, and itself CAN be set on fire by hell.

If you have a potential liar in mind start first by putting opinions expressed by supporters and critics aside. Just listen to the person talk. Listen for the following: constant spewing of anger, blame, threats, calls for vengeance and retribution, character assassination, narcissism on steroids, fragile ego, glorification of military power, scapegoating of outsiders, immigrants, political opponents, journalists and ethnic minorities, a demand for absolute loyalty and an insatiable need for praise.

“But I’m doing fine. None of this is my problem. I’m white. I am a citizen. They would never ever come after me?”

There is a famous quote by Martin Niemoller. He was a Lutheran pastor, opposed the Nazis and was imprisoned. A positive version of it was cited in the monthly newsletter. Here is the original.

First, they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

The frog analogy is appropriate. If you have a pot of boiling water and toss in a frog, the frog will immediately jump out. If you put the frog in a pot of warm water and gradually keep raising the temperature the frog will be boiled.

Now John you are being an alarmist. Really? Really? A mother of three was shot in her car. An ICU VA nurse was shot in the street. **Wake up.**

We must keep this in mind. We are only seeing the tip of an iceberg. Submerged is a massive corrupt, rotten “system”. We are all part of the system. The administration officials themselves are victims of the system. Hurt people, hurt people and they need prayer.

Desmond Tutu said, “Those who have been oppressed need to be free from oppression, and those who have done the oppressing need to be freed from being the oppressors.

None of us are blameless. Imagine if millions of us had been a bit kinder, better listeners, more sympathetic to those left out. Pushed back sooner. Maybe we wouldn’t be where we are now.

You may say that my message is too political. I disagree. We no longer have a difference in political opinion. **We have a difference in morality.**

Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others.”

We are not supposed to be the meat and potatoes. We are called to be the remnant. The voice crying out. If any denomination, any denomination has been salt and light it has been the

Quakers. Quaker abolitionists were at the forefront speaking out against slavery. Quaker WW1 conscientious objectors were jailed, tortured and killed. The Quaker Bayard Rustin was a pivotal civil rights activist. Quakers participated in the 1961 Freedom Rides to desegregate interstate travel in the American South, driven by their commitment to nonviolent direct action.

Shouldn't the Light be shining forth from us? Where we see darkness, shouldn't it be named and we push back? When individuals are unjustly treated, rights are trampled and people are murdered hasn't the time to be passive passed? Isn't it time to walk the talk, be the light, be the salt? If it is and we don't then this whole Christianity deal is a sham and should be chucked. If it is time to act and we do nothing then we are like the salt that has lost its flavor. No longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

I tried to provide factual information that can be backed up, including firsthand accounts from people I trust, Joseph and Steph. I included relevant scripture passages to show that what I said has spiritual and moral implications that cannot be ignored and needed to be mentioned. If you are a believer in the administration's characterizations and claims, I wanted you to think again.

I tried to be neutral, objective and avoid giving my opinions as much as possible. It was hard and I failed. I just couldn't do it.

Now comes the most important part, silent unguided worship. This is where the Light will help you think about what I said and judge whether it was appropriate or not. Whether it has merit or not. Or guide you to something else.

Thank you.