

## 241 Transcript

### 241 Keith Giles: How the Gospel of Thomas Helps Us Follow Jesus

00:00:01 - James Early

Hey there, and welcome again to the Bible Speaks to You Podcast. I'm so grateful you've tuned in to listen today. I've got a really great guest for you today, someone who's been on the show before. In fact, Keith Giles was the very first person I ever interviewed on the show, and I'm really grateful to have him back today. Keith, welcome to the Bible speaks to you.

00:00:21 - Keith Giles

James, thank you so much for having me back. And I'd forgotten that I was your first interview, and I'm honored.

00:00:26 - James Early

Yeah, so I really enjoyed our previous conversation. And by the way, if you didn't hear that interview with Keith, I'll have that link in the show notes. It was way back, episode 76, and we talked about one of his books in the Jesus Un series called Jesus Unforsaken, Substituting Divine Wrath with Unrelenting Love. It was about the various atonement theories throughout history, and Keith explained why they're different from the teachings of the early church. Anyway, that's a really cool episode, and if you haven't listened, I hope you'll go back and check that out. Let me tell you a little bit about Keith. Keith writes a new book about every week, I think. Keith has written many, many books. He's appeared on CNN and USA Today, on BuzzFeed. He was on John Fugelsang's, Tell Me Everything. And he hosts The Second Cup with Keith podcast. He also co-hosts the Apostates Anonymous podcast and the Heretic Happy Hour podcast. Keith is one of these people who is a totally outside of the box thinker, which is one of the reasons I love you so much, Keith.

00:01:39 - Keith Giles

Thank you.

00:01:40 - James Early

And he is, as I said, he's a prolific writer. How many books have you written now with Quoir?

00:01:48 - Keith Giles

I've published eleven books, but I had four books I self-published before that one, but I don't count those. So let's just say eleven.

00:01:55 - James Early

You mentioned Quoir publishing. He is now the co-owner of Quoir Publishing. And I'll have that link in the show notes. They have a quite an interesting array of some classics that you're reintroducing as well as current thinkers. And he has a blog on Patheos. And again, I'll have the link for that in the show notes. Keith and his wife Wendy live in El Paso. You're still in El Paso?

00:02:19 - Keith Giles

Yes, we are. Yeah. El Paso.

00:02:20 - James Early

Okay. I met Wendy at a conference a couple of years ago. She's delightful, and so is Keith. So that's why I've got him back here. Hey, Keith. I would love to, before we really get started, and by the way, we're going to be talking about the Gospel of Thomas today. Keith has written a book called the Quantum Sayings of Jesus: Decoding the Lost Gospel of Thomas. And so that's going to be our focus for today's conversation. But Keith, before we get started, I would love to hear, you know, what's going on in your life. What is God doing in your life right now?

00:02:56 - Keith Giles

Oh, my gosh. So many things. Well, what can I say? What is God doing in my life? Well, I'm really busy having just published this book on Thomas, but I'm also relaunching the heretic Happy Hour podcast with Matthew Di Stefano. And as we're recording this today, today is our, the first episode of our relaunch. We used to publish the podcast every other week. Sorry, every, yeah, every other week. So twice a month, we're now going to three times a week. And we have already prerecorded the first seven episodes. And they're phenomenal. We're switching to a panel format where we're inviting guests to come on and talk about a certain topic. And, and we have guests like Rainn Wilson, the guy that played Dwight on The Office, David Bentley Hart, Jon Fugelsang, April Joy. We have like, I think, 18 or 19 different panelists, Shane Claiborne, Lisa Sherwin Harper, Jim Wallace, some amazing people. And we've had some amazing conversations. And so I'm really excited about that, about that relaunch. And on my blog, I have an article that I just published, but I worked on really hard this past weekend, and I would invite people to go check that out. It's, my blog is [keithgiles.com](http://keithgiles.com). The short version of what that post is about is how there's a woman, a local woman here in El Paso, Texas, that I got in contact with, a local pastor, had basically exploited her personal information that he had received from the He Gets Us campaign. You know, that super bowl ad thing.

00:04:31 - James Early

Right.

00:04:31 - Keith Giles

And how damaging that was to her. I helped to uncover it, and I let her know that it had happened to her. And then I wrote an article about it, did some research on the he gets us campaign and glue and some other places and how this people's data are being captured, and I would say exploited. So that's pretty exciting. And I'm hoping to get some traction on that. Anyway, that's just a little sliver into what's going on with me right now.

00:04:59 - James Early

Well, that's cool. You are a real thinker and you take action. And I really appreciate that about you.

00:05:05 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:05:05 - James Early

So I want to jump in here and talk about what's called the Gospel of Thomas. Could you give us a little history of how we even have this text? Because I know it was lost for hundreds and hundreds of years, and it's recently been rediscovered and republished and translated. Tell us a little bit about what you can about the history of it.

00:05:29 - Keith Giles

Right. Well, here's what we know. We have some hints from some early church fathers, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, some other early church fathers who mentioned something called the Gospel of Thomas. Once in a while, they would even quote from it. But most of the time they were quoting from it and saying, don't read it, we don't like it, and we'll talk a little bit about why they didn't like it so much. But at any rate, it was a text that some Christians loved it. We know there were followers of a guy named Valentinus and all the Christians that were sort of Valentinian Christians around that same time period, and they preferred Thomas and the gospel of John and some others.

00:06:09 - James Early

What time period are you talking about?

00:06:12 - Keith Giles

We're talking like 170 AD.

00:06:14 - James Early

Okay.

00:06:14 - Keith Giles

And a little earlier. And again, that's early second century, late first century kind of thing.

00:06:20 - James Early

Do we know when it was actually written or do we have an idea? Is there a way to pinpoint that at all?

00:06:26 - Keith Giles

You know, again, scholars don't agree on anything. There are groups of scholars that would argue for an earlier date of Thomas, and they have reasons for that. And there are others that would say that Thomas came later. And by earlier and later, I mean some scholars would argue that Thomas predates the Gospel of Mark, which means it's even older than the gospels that are in the New Testament.

00:06:53 - James Early

Wow.

00:06:54 - Keith Giles

And I would say that's a minority of them. I don't think the majority of them think that. But I would say a larger number of them who hold to an earlier date would put it somewhere between the gospel of Mark and John. So it was written during the timeframe of the New Testament gospels, if not before. And one of the reasons for that is that whoever wrote the Gospel of John seems to be responding to specific things in the Gospel of Thomas, and he would have to have read it to do that. So that's one clue. Another clue for an even earlier date is that it seems that the apostle Paul quotes from Thomas in 1 Corinthians, and he says, as it is written, and he quotes it, and that quote appears in the Gospel of Thomas. So it seems that even Paul would have known about it. And if that's the case, Paul wrote his letters before the Gospel of Mark, right? Was written, before any of the gospels were written.

00:07:51 - James Early

Do you know that specific reference in 1 Corinthians?

00:07:54 - Keith Giles

Yeah. So I covered in my book because I just found it so fascinating. It's saying 17. In the Gospel of Thomas, saying 17, it reads like this. "Jesus said, I will give you what no eye has seen and what no ear has heard and what no hand has touched and what has not entered into the heart of man" Now, in 1 Corinthians 2:9, Paul says this. "But as it is written things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which has not entered into the human heart, all that God has prepared for those who love him." That is almost a verbatim quote of saying 17.

Now, if you have a study Bible and you go to 1 Corinthians two nine in your study Bible, it will tell you that that is a reference to Isaiah 64:4. And in my book, I put them all side by side. But if you read Isaiah 64:4, it's not. It's not word for word. It's actually, I say it's a stretch to think that that's what Paul is talking about, because Isaiah 64:4 says, for from days of old, they have not heard or perceived by ear, nor has the eye seen a God besides you who acts in behalf of one who waits for him. So when I put them all side by side, and I bold the parts that are similar, and most of what's in 1 Corinthians two nine is found in saying 17. The entire phraseology is there. So if nothing else, let's say this to be fair. If nothing else, what it tells us is that when Thomas quotes Jesus saying that in saying 17, it is accurately quoting a saying of Jesus that was circulating at the time Paul wrote his letter. Whether or not Paul was reading from a text called the Gospel of Thomas, or whether he was aware of a saying of Jesus that was commonly being, you know, passed around. Because there is. There's the theory. New testament scholars for a long, long time have had a theory that there was something called a Q document, and a Q document was theorized because the gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Matthew were written at roughly the same time frame by two different people. The gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Matthew disagree on several points about specific, you know, details of Jesus life. For example, one of them says, has Jesus telling the disciples to wait for him in Jerusalem, and the other one has him saying, don't go to Jerusalem. But wait for me in Bethany. You know what I mean? That's just one example. So whereas the gospels of Luke and Matthew disagree on a lot of the details of the life of Jesus, the one thing they agree on verbatim is when they quote Jesus. So that that's a mystery. Why is it the only thing they agree on are the quotations of Jesus? So the theory is that they were both using another document that was a collection of the sayings of Jesus, and they theorized they call that the Q document, but it's a theory. We've never found a cue document. We've never found a collection of just the sayings of Jesus.

00:10:58 - James Early  
Right.

00:10:59 - Keith Giles  
Until 1945, when they, in Nag Hammadi, when they open up this clay jar that was buried in the sand, and they find, you know, several, you know, like 35 something lost books. It's like a time capsule. And they find the Gospel of Thomas. And when they start translating Thomas, they realize, oh, my gosh, Thomas is the Q document. Thomas is just a collection of the sayings of Jesus, 114 of them. Half of those sayings appear in our New Testament gospels. The other half are new or they're new to us.

00:11:31 - James Early  
Right, right.

00:11:32 - Keith Giles

So, including saying 17, which, again, until we found Thomas, we could only tie it to this Isaiah passage. But then we get Thomas and we read, we see, we translate that saying, 17, and we're like, oh, my gosh. That's what Paul was quoting in 1 Corinthians. So, you know, these are. These are the reasons why people think it was much dated much earlier. So, yeah, it was discovered in 1945. We had heard hints that something called the Gospel of Thomas existed from Irenaeus and other people. But we had, you know, until. Until 1945, we had no copies of it. And it was discovered by basically two brothers who were kind of, you know, looking for treasure, grave robbing, trying to find something. They were actually running from the law. At the same time, they were wanted for murder. They had killed someone who had killed their father. It was like a blood feud. And they found this thing. The story goes that they were afraid to open it when they first found it, because they were afraid there was a genie inside.

00:12:27 - James Early

Oh, my.

00:12:28 - Keith Giles

But then they thought, well, there could also be gold inside. So, hey, let's take a chance. And they opened it, and there was just a bunch of these, a bunch of these books that are all kind of bound together, these leather bound kind of books that are all grouped together.

00:12:38 - James Early

So they were books, or were they scrolls?

00:12:41 - Keith Giles

They're not scrolls. No, they're codices. And when you see pictures of them, they look like little bound square books that had been bound in, like, leather or animal skins.

00:12:51 - James Early

Oh.

00:12:52 - Keith Giles

And then they were all sort of bundled by bundles. So you had, let's say, like five or ten of these different books bundled in one bundle together. And then they were, those separate bundles of five or ten were all thrown into this jar.

00:13:04 - James Early

Sounds like someone was really trying to protect them and save them for posterity.

00:13:09 - Keith Giles

Yes. Yes. And there's a reason. So the reason why that person was saving them is kind of how we think Thomas was lost to us in the first place. Because we know, again from church history, Elaine Pagels' book, *Beyond Belief* is excellent to document this, that around the time of Irenaeus, again, like, 170 AD, Irenaeus starts writing against this guy, Valentinus, who's another Christian he doesn't like because. Because really, this guy had a lot of influence in the church and influence in a lot of the churches that Irenaeus was overseeing, where pastors and bishops and people in his churches were, you know, borrowing their sermons from Valentinus and using some of his teachings in their messages. And he felt threatened by that. So I really think the reason Irenaeus opposed the gospel of Thomas wasn't because of the content of Thomas, because, again, half of the sayings are in the New Testament gospels we already have. And it's. It's just a collection of sayings. There's nothing threatening about it. It's just Jesus said, Jesus said, Jesus said, I think Irenaeus really opposed that group of Christians. And he saw that they preferred that book and that he felt like, hey, if I can discredit this gospel of Thomas, I can discredit them. At any rate, we continue to see a progression of this resistance to Thomas and Valentinians going all the way up to the time of Constantine. When Constantine takes power, kind of gets the favor of some of the bishops in the Christian church. One of them is Athanasius. He's invited to the Council of Nicaea. And after that, Athanasius writes what's called the Easter letter. And this letter goes out to all the monasteries, seminaries and churches that they have control over. And he basically says, from now on, no longer are you allowed to use these texts in your worship times or in your messages and sermons or things like that. And Thomas is one of those texts which tells us this is around 340 AD, which tells us that for 340 years, guess what people were doing? They were using Thomas in their services and sermons. But Athanasius says, no, don't do it anymore. And what we think happened was that most. Most of the people that got that letter burned or destroyed those texts. Someone, however, in Egypt, near Nag Hammadi, there was a seminary near there, a monastery near there. Instead, took those books, bound them together, put them carefully in a jar, sealed it, and put it in a cave where it sat from 340 AD until 1945.

00:15:48 - James Early

You know, that's just really amazing.

00:15:50 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:15:51 - James Early

Two things I want to say. One, it makes me wonder what else is out there that we haven't found.

00:15:56 - Keith Giles

Oh, yes. It really does. What else could we find, right?

00:16:00 - James Early

But the other thing is, it reminds me of sort of sounds like very modern day church politics sometimes, doesn't it?

00:16:07 - Keith Giles

Doesn't it? Yes. You know what? And that's. That's exactly what I felt when I was reading Elaine Pagels' book, Beyond Belief. And she's. She's showing us, you know, this tension between Irenaeus and Valentinus. I'm like, you know what? You could change the names. You could, like. You could change Valentinus for Richard Rohr, and you could change Irenaeus to, like, John MacArthur and just let the words stay there and it would be the same. Same conversation. It's the same struggle.

00:16:32 - James Early

Isn't that interesting?

00:16:34 - Keith Giles

It's the same thing.

00:16:35 - James Early

Oh, my gosh. That's really, really interesting to think about that. We're still arguing from the same topics, the same. Different perspectives.

00:16:46 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:16:47 - James Early

And historically, the church tried to stamp out any opposing perspectives.

00:16:52 - Keith Giles

That's right.

00:16:59 - James Early

So what got you interested in the gospel of Thomas Keith?

00:17:03 - Keith Giles



Yeah, great question. So I had read it, I guess, now probably. Probably like, seven or eight years ago, and someone had suggested it to me. You can find it online for free. I just looked it up online and I started reading through it again. It's just a collection of the sayings of Jesus, so half of them I'm familiar with, but the ones I wasn't familiar with, the newer sayings they just came across to me. I'll be very honest, I just thought it was the dumbest thing I'd ever read. It made no sense. It was just like, this is silly. I mean, who would believe this stuff, right? I just dismissed it. I said, forget it. Toss it aside. It's not for me. I don't think it's legit. And that was the end of it? Well, I thought that was the end of it. But then maybe like two years ago, someone mailed me this book. And I'm very grateful for that, for this person doing this. The book is called The Hidden Gospel of Thomas by a guy named William Duffy. He has since become a friend, but I didn't know him at the time. And I was going to take a flight. I was going somewhere, so I just stuck the book in my bag. I'm on the plane and I'm reading the introduction to Duffy's book. First thing he says is that, you know, when most people read Thomas, it makes no sense to them. I'm like, yep, he's right. That's me. Makes no sense. And he says, well, there's a reason why. It's because if you don't understand sort of the lens through which to read the sayings of Jesus and Thomas, it will make no sense. But if you understand basically the code or the lens to use when you're reading it, it makes perfect sense. And then he gave an example and I read it. And I'm like, he's right. That does make sense. And then the more I studied it, more I read it. I was like, yeah, this is. I think he's right about this. And he gives a very specific example. It's called saying seven. It's one of those ones, I think early on that I probably read on my own that I read it and said, this is nonsense. And real quick, I'll read it to you, because this is what changed my mind. So just at face value, knowing nothing about the code or the lens, you just read it straight. It says this. Jesus said, blessed is the lion that becomes man when consumed by man, and cursed is the man whom the lion consumes, and the man becomes a lion. Now, that's probably the point. I tossed mine aside and said, nope, this is stupid. Makes no sense. But what Duffy points out is that these are metaphors. And again, this shouldn't be a shock to us. Jesus does this all the time, right? He's constantly talking in parables.

00:19:31 - James Early

Yeah.

00:19:31 - Keith Giles

Yes. He's not talking about shepherds and sons and sowers in the field. These are all, these all stand for something, right?

00:19:39 - James Early

Right.

00:19:40 - Keith Giles

So in this case, it's the same thing. You just have to understand what is. What does it stand for and what is the point? So what Duffy points out is that, that the lion is a metaphor for your ego. And again, because your ego is all about. It's about fighting and protecting itself and coming against anybody that comes against you and dominating, coming over other people. This is the lion. This is the metaphor. And the man in this saying is your true self. This is who you really are inside. This is the part of you that sees and is aware of your connection to the divine and your place in humanity and all that. And he says the way it should be read is something more like this. Blessed is the ego that becomes the true self in Christ when consumed by the Christ. And cursed is the true self whom the false ego consumes. Well, that makes perfect sense. Like, yeah, I like that.

00:20:32 - James Early

Let me jump in. That almost reminds me of Ephesians 4:22-24 put off the old man. Put off the old self. The old way of thinking.

00:20:40 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:20:41 - James Early

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man which is created in righteousness and God's image and likeness.

00:20:47 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:20:47 - James Early

It's the same idea really, isn't it?

00:20:49 - Keith Giles

It really is. It really is. Now, here's the thing, though. Here's the kicker for me, because I'm on the plane and I read, I read his explanation of that part and I'm like, well, that's cool. It does make sense. But then I'm thinking, yeah, but you could, you know, you just. All you kind of really did was like, decide that, oh, the lion means this and the man means that. And they're okay, I made it make sense. But, but is that really the right way to read it? Okay. Then he says this in Plato's Republic, which, by the way, was written long before Jesus. In Plato's Republic, he says almost the exact same thing, using the same metaphors he uses. Talking about the ego, he calls it the lion. And talking about the man, the true self, he calls it the man. I'm like, oh, that's interesting. Okay, that was in Plato's Republic. Now then he says this, and this is, this is the kicker for me. When they opened up the jar of all the texts at Nag Hammadi and they pulled them out. And again, these are different books bound together in smaller packages.

Right. Thomas with other books was bound with a fragment of Plato's Republic. It's the only non-spiritual text that's in the Nag Hammadi. So a fragment of Plato's Republic was bundled with Thomas. Guess which page it was. It was the page where Plato explained the lion and the man.

00:22:07 - James Early

Oh, my goodness.

00:22:09 - Keith Giles

It's as if somebody inserted a clue and put it with Thomas. So, like, just in case you don't get it, here's how to understand this. I read, I'm on the plane and I dropped the book and my mouth fell open, and I was like, I think this guy's onto something.

00:22:26 - James Early

Wow.

00:22:27 - Keith Giles

So after that, I just couldn't get enough. I just. Every. Every saying I would read, I would be like, okay, I get it. This is what it means. And I'd read the next one. Oh, whoa. Wow. I see the wisdom in this. So, thank you, William Duffy, for kind of cracking the code and making it make sense to me. And that's when I decided to. I started doing, I guess, about a year and a half ago. I started writing every Friday. I started this thing called inner circle on my blog. And every Friday, I would just post one of the sayings from Thomas and kind of my. My interpretation of it, my, you know, commentary on the Gospel of Thomas. And I just did that for a year and a half. It was very popular. A lot of people were loving it. And that's when I decided, hey, I should. I think I could write a book. I could just take. I've already written all this stuff. I could just take this and put it into the book.

00:23:09 - James Early

Right?

00:23:10 - Keith Giles

That's how The Quantum Sayings of Jesus book came about.

00:23:14 - James Early

I love the title of your. Of your book, then, Decoding the lost Gospel of Thomas. I mean, we almost need that with the Bible, too, because I think, you know, people say the Bible says this or the Bible says that, but it says what we understand through looking through our different lenses.

00:23:30 - Keith Giles

That's right.

00:23:31 - James Early

We look through different lenses. We look at from different perspectives. And so the Bible says, yes, different things to different people.

00:23:37 - Keith Giles

Exactly.

00:23:38 - James Early

Because of our own filters. So I've got a question, and I don't know if there's any way to know this for sure, but what is the thought on, did Thomas the apostle actually write this book? Or is it like in the school of Thomas, or were sayings passed down by Thomas? I mean, how do we know any. Any of that?

00:23:57 - Keith Giles

Yeah, great question. And I would say. I would say the same answer applies to Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John.

00:24:05 - James Early

Right.

00:24:06 - Keith Giles

We don't know. Right. We really don't know that any of them wrote it. It's attributed to Thomas. Yeah, I think there's reasons to believe. I mean, again, I personally do hold that it is a legitimate collection of the sayings of Jesus. It probably was orally remembered because they had oral tradition, and then eventually people did write them down. So I believe the source would be one of the disciples of Jesus, people that were close to him, that received these teachings and didn't want to forget them and memorize them and wrote them down.

00:24:36 - James Early

Right.

00:24:37 - Keith Giles

Whether it's specifically Thomas, I don't know. I kind of think Thomas was used, like, the reason why they chose Thomas to be sort of the apostle connected to this text. And this is going to sound strange, but this is just my theory is that Thomas's name, we know this from the gospel of John. Thomas's name means twin, right? Right. So the name, the word Thomas, the name Thomas, it means twin, because a lot of what Jesus is saying in Thomas is all about, and this is the lens, the code. Right. It's sort of like that separation from God is an illusion. Separation from one another is an illusion. So it's non duality. And so it's not just that we're not separated from God and that we're not separated from one another. It's also that what's true of Christ is true of us. And again, this is not a new idea. Paul says this all the time. Jesus says this. He says he's the light of the world, and then he says, you're the light of the world.

00:25:33 - James Early  
Right.

00:25:33 - Keith Giles  
So Paul does this too. Paul understands, too, and Paul says that Christ was crucified. So you've been crucified. Christ was raised, and so you've been raised with him. Christ is seated at the right hand of the father, and now you are. Right now, not in the future. You are seated at the right hand of the Father. If it's true of Christ, it's true of you. So this is not a new idea, but I think it's emphasized in Thomas, and I think by having the sort of the double meaning of the name Thomas, Thomas means twin. It's sort of like, what's true of Jesus is true of Thomas.

00:26:03 - James Early  
Right.

00:26:03 - Keith Giles  
And true of us. Like, we are the twin.

00:26:05 - James Early  
Oh, right.

00:26:06 - Keith Giles  
And in a way, it's like saying we're the twin. Yeah. Symbolic.

00:26:09 - James Early  
Oh, my gosh, that's fascinating. I've never heard that. I love that.

00:26:12 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:26:13 - James Early

You know, when somebody asked me a question like that, like, do we know if it was true? Or I said, well, I don't know. I wasn't there.

00:26:19 - Keith Giles

Exactly. Well, no. And that's why we can't know. Yeah.

00:26:23 - James Early

So why wasn't this book. You touched on this a little bit. Why wasn't this text included in the ...

00:26:28 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:26:29 - James Early

In the New Testament? I actually put on Facebook earlier today. Any questions about the gospel of Thomas? That was the first thing someone said. Why isn't it in the Bible?

00:26:37 - Keith Giles

Yes. Yeah, yeah. It's a good question, and it's sad to me. Again, I think the only thing that makes sense to me is this sort of rift politically between the followers of Irenaeus and the followers of Valentinus. And sadly, you know what I mean, that created a rift not just for Thomas, I would say, because one of the other texts found in Nag Hammadi was another lost text that we have references to from the same sources but never had any evidence of until we, until Nag Hammadi. And that's a book called the Gospel of Truth, which many people think was written by Valentinus, that Valentinus wrote this. And Dr. Pagels just published an article in Harvard Review, I mean, just published, like, a couple of days ago. And she sent me a copy of the article. And her article shows that the Gospel of Truth is actually a homily and a commentary following 1 Corinthians one through eight. So again, nothing objectionable. It's referencing Paul's ideas in 1 Corinthians, but yet this was also a text that was, the only thing that makes any sense to me is the reason why it was suppressed was that it was connected to people that followed Valentinus. And sort of the people that followed Irenaeus are the ones that were given seats of power under Constantine. And now with the sword of Rome, you know, authority of Rome, they have the power to say, we're right and you're wrong. And then that's kind of what happened.

00:28:08 - James Early

Yeah. That power play is fascinating when you look in church history, because it's usually the very antithesis of the way Jesus actually wanted us to behave, his followers, anyway.

00:28:20 - Keith Giles

Yeah, yeah, I agree. Yeah.

00:28:23 - James Early

So why is this book, the Gospel of Thomas, how is it relevant today? Obviously, as you said, there are a lot of sayings that we're very familiar with. The others aren't. Is it something that a Christian should stay away from? Because I know there are a lot of opinions. The people who are on the side of Irenaeus today, and they're still around, they probably don't like the book.

00:28:43 - Keith Giles

Yes. I'd say yes. Yeah.

00:28:45 - James Early

Even for someone like that, what's the value? What's the relevance today? How does it help you and me, if we're open to it? How does it shed light on the Bible? How does it help us understand and follow Jesus better? That's what the Bible speaks to you. Podcast is really all about, is how do we get into the mindset of Jesus? And so how can the gospel of Thomas help us with that?

00:29:08 - Keith Giles

Well, great question, and I think that's really what it's all about. I wrote this book, this commentary on the Gospel of Thomas to do exactly what you're saying, to enrich someone's daily desire to have a connection with Christ.

00:29:26 - James Early

Wait, wait, wait, wait. I want you to say that again. That was really powerful. Why? You wrote the book.

00:29:33 - Keith Giles

Yeah, well, yeah, I wrote it as I wanted it to be something that would enrich someone's, you know, daily desire to follow Christ.

00:29:41 - James Early

Wow.

00:29:42 - Keith Giles

So as I'm going through the sayings of Thomas, I'm connecting these ideas from Thomas with the gospel passages. I'm connecting them with ideas in Paul's writings. So I'm definitely blending and connecting dots between Thomas and the gospel passages. So it's not, you know, it should complement, you know, your devotional. And I kind of wrote it. I mean, the way it reads, again, there's a. There's a, you know, a good introduction at the beginning, answering all these questions about the history and the background and all that. But then once saying one starts, it's just saying one, the saying in my commentary saying two. And there are 114 of them. And so I think it makes more sense to kind of read my book as a devotional. You know what I mean? Like, get up in the morning, open it up, read one of the sayings, read the reflection, and just let that be kind of your guide of your thinking throughout the day. And so I think it's very inspirational and I think it's. That's my. That was my intention. But let me say why. You know, why I think Thomas specifically is so necessary and important for today. I feel like we are living in the most divided time of my life in my lifetime. I cannot imagine the time that we've ever been more divided. And I feel like. I think people feel that. I think we can feel, you know, certainly on social media, on the news, right, it's progressives against evangelicals, it's conservatives against liberals. It's the Republicans against Democrats. It's Muslims against Christians or Jews and every level, politically, religiously, socially, men against women, families are divided sometimes even within ourselves. You know, we're experiencing struggles and divisions and things like this. And so, yeah, this is why I think Thomas is so, so beautiful and so essential for this time that we're living in now. Because over and over and over again, the message of Jesus is reminding us of our connectivity. It's reminding us of our oneness with the divine and with one another. It's. It's pointing us to a shared divinity and a shared humanity. And I feel like it's what we need today, desperately, and not just what we need in the sense of curing and healing and restoration and transformation. Yes, all of that. But I feel like. I feel like the more I read Thomas and I see what Jesus is emphasizing over and over again about this power of transformation, of meditating and realizing I am connected with the divine and everyone else is, too, and I'm connected. So we have this shared divinity and the shared humanity. What I realize is this is the way for us to do the things that Jesus says to do in the sermon on the mount. Like, to love your neighbor as yourself is easy. If when you look at your neighbor, you see yourself and you see Christ in them, loving my enemy is easy. Because when I see my enemy, I don't see an enemy. I see myself reflected. I see Christ reflected in that person. I'm aware of that shared divinity and that shared humanity. This is the way we beat our swords into plowshares and study war. No more. Because how can I go to war and shoot and kill someone or bomb someone, who when I see them, I see myself. When I see them, I see Christ. And again, so I feel like. I don't want to be too corny or hyperbolic, but I really do believe that if humanity could really get this, that it's the end of racism, it's the end of prejudice, it's the end of war and genocide. It's the end of all these things, again, which are trying to divide us, that are all focused on dividing us. And we need to wake up and recognize we have way more that connects us than what then divides us.



00:33:39 - James Early

Oh, that is so true. You said something really powerful there, Keith, and that is that you talked about this shared divinity that we have with Christ. With God. And I think some people don't like that idea of the divineness of mankind, but there are places in the Bible that really bring that out. I'm thinking of John 17, where Jesus is praying just before the crucifixion, and he's praying that his disciples, including everyone who will ever believe on him, that's you and me and a lot of other people, that we will all be one with him and the father. That's what you're talking about, this quote, unquote, shared divinity.

00:34:29 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:34:30 - James Early

You know, that's really a powerful idea.

00:34:33 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:34:33 - James Early

And then what does Paul say? We're in Christ. When you're in Christ, there's no Jew.

00:34:39 - Keith Giles

Or Greek, gentile, slave or free. Yeah, yeah.

00:34:42 - James Early

Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, male or female.

00:34:46 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:34:47 - James Early

The worldly approach to looking at things, even following Jesus, the worldly approach to that doesn't like that. Because we like to make those distinctions. Yes. It's hard for the ego. Getting back to the ego, the lion you're talking about.

00:35:05 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:35:06 - James Early

If we swallow up that lion, if we put off the old man, we start to see who we really are as children of God, made in his image and likeness. And you start to see, this guy's my brother. Oh, and the other thing I was thinking of, you know, where Jesus, Matthew 25, he talks about, you did it to me, or you didn't do it to me.

00:35:26 - Keith Giles

Yeah, that's right.

00:35:27 - James Early

I've said before on my podcast, what if we treated everyone we met like they were Jesus?

00:35:33 - Keith Giles

That's right. That's exactly what he's saying there. And. Yeah.

00:35:36 - James Early

Including ourselves.

00:35:38 - Keith Giles

There you go. Exactly. Thank you. Yeah, no, this is. This is right. Yeah, I get excited. This is exactly right, James. Because, again, so these ideas are in the New Testament. Jesus is saying these kind of things. He also says John. I think it's John 14. Another radical thing. He says to his disciples in that day, you will realize, okay, meaning you don't get it yet, but one day you're gonna get it. One day you're gonna realize, this. Here's what you're gonna get, that you're gonna say, I am in the father and you are in me and I am in you. That's this connection with the divine, and that's the connection with each other. And again, this mind blowing idea. And it's all over the gospels. It's all over Paul's writings. Like, Paul says that in Colossians, he says, we are filled with the fullness of Christ, who fills everything in every way. Everything in every way.

00:36:35 - James Early

Yeah. Wow.

00:36:35 - Keith Giles

This is why he also says, you know, to idol worshiping pagans in Athens, did you know that God is your father? You don't even know who he is. But this is the one in whom all of us live and move and have our being. Not Christians, idol worshiping pagans who are oblivious to

who Jesus is that, hey, like it or not, you are in Christ, and Christ is in you. So, again, I know we're not raised in my evangelical days. I was, I was told, no, no, no. That division was. Was there. But yet I see Jesus and Paul and other places saying, no, that division is an illusion, that we are connected to the divine and we're connected to one another. And Thomas is just emphasizing that way more. It's the same, all those same ideas from John and Paul and Ephesians and Colossians. But Jesus is emphasizing them much more than we see it in other places. And it's radical, it's beautiful, it's powerful.

00:37:27 - James Early

Yeah, well, Jesus was pretty radical, too. We've sort of institutionalized him a little bit too much sometimes.

00:37:34 - Keith Giles

I agree.

00:37:36 - James Early

So, obviously, Bible scholars today have different opinions about the book of Thomas.

00:37:41 - Keith Giles

Sure.

00:37:41 - James Early

Some people have said, oh, it's heretical, it's gnostic, it's all these things.

00:37:46 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:37:47 - James Early

Is there any validity to that? Is there anything we should be aware of or cautionary of when we're reading it? How do we. Yeah, how do we take it? With a grain of salt? I mean, I don't. Does you get the idea where I'm going with that?

00:38:00 - Keith Giles

Oh, yeah, no, no, I do. I think I do. There's some misconceptions about Thomas. One of them is. I mean, let's just start with the name, the Gospel Thomas. It's really not a gospel like. It's called the Gospel of Thomas.

00:38:11 - James Early  
Right.

00:38:11 - Keith Giles

But it's not a gospel in the sense that we know gospels because the gospels that we have, Matthew, Mark and Luke and John have a story. They have a birth narrative, they have, you know, the life of Jesus. They have the disciples being chosen.

00:38:23 - Keith Giles

They have all these specifics about. He went here and he went there and he did these miracles and he had these arguments with these Pharisees, and then, you know, there's a crucifixion, there's a resurrection, and there's these apocalyptic things about the return and all that. Thomas has none of that. Absolutely none of it. It's just Jesus said, Jesus said, Jesus said. Or once in a while, you know, the disciples asked Jesus a question and then Jesus said, Jesus said. So it's just a collection of the sayings of Jesus. That's all it is. That's also one of the reasons why I don't see it.

00:38:55 - Keith Giles

I don't buy this idea that it was something written after the other gospels as some way to subvert those gospels, because, I mean, those exist, right? There are plenty of gnostic gospels and gnostic texts that were written much later that tell a counter narrative, that tell a different story, that undermines Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

00:39:14 - Keith Giles

And if that was your goal, that's what you would do. If your goal was to undermine those gospels, you would write another account or narrative and you would tell a different story. Thomas isn't telling a story. Thomas. So, like, it doesn't make sense to me that, oh, Thomas is this aversive book that's trying to undermine the other gospels then why does it quote half of, half of the sayings are taken from those gospels? So that's, that's the wrong way to go about that, if that's your goal. I just don't buy that idea. And I, and the other misconception, and this is a big one, is that Thomas is a gnostic text.

00:39:42 - Keith Giles

I think it. It's called a gnostic text most of the time because it. Not all, but some of the texts found in Nag Hammadi were truly gnostic texts. And I guess we should explain Gnosticism. Gnosticism, like Sethian Gnosticism, is like what we usually are thinking of when we think of Gnosticism. These are Christians that took a very esoteric spiritual view of the world. They believed that this world, this planet earth, was not created by the true God, but was created by a secondary, a demiurge or a demigod, and that God is either evil or just dumb because he thinks he's the true God, but he's not.

00:40:20 - Keith Giles

They believe that the real God who made him and the universe is the father of Jesus. So Jesus comes to basically contradict the false God and give us the message from the true God. They also believe in these angelic beings, and they believe that the flesh is evil and that the spirit is pure. Have a very hard line idea, which is, again, a duality. And Thomas would argue against that. Jesus is saying that there is no duality, that those are illusions, that this idea of separation isn't real. So Thomas doesn't include any of that. Thomas doesn't talk that way, doesn't have any, anything, any teachings like that at all.

00:41:00 - Keith Giles

It's sort of guilty by association because Thomas was found with some gnostic texts. They call it gnostic, but it is not gnostic at all. And so because of that, I mean, I would say I don't want to ever tell people this is probably even true of my own books. Don't just read anything with your filters off and just like, I'm just going to believe everything I read.

00:41:20 - Keith Giles

So anything you're reading, you should have some level of, you know, discernment and, you know, think for yourself and decide for yourself. Do I, do I believe that? Do I not? What do I think about it? You know, hold loosely to those things. Don't just accept too blindly, but don't reject everything either. You know, don't just be a skeptic. I think there is so much wisdom and so much beauty, an insight for people in Thomas. It's absolutely worth looking into. But as with anything you know, decide for yourself what works for you and what doesn't.

00:41:51 - James Early

Right. You're right, that's a, that's a really great approach. What in the Gospel of Thomas has been the biggest surprise to you or maybe the biggest Aha Moment for you, or what has stood out? What has really moved you, made a difference in your life?

00:42:07 - Keith Giles

Oh, thank you. What a great question. Well, I guess in general, just this reading them over and over again, all the different ways that Jesus is encouraging his disciples to sort of wake up and recognize that, you know, the world around us is wanting to always emphasize division and separation, right. And that the reality is that we are all one in Christ and that brings us closer to each other when this one is in humanity. So, you know, gosh, there's so many sayings that I really like. There's one, just let me find a couple of them that I think are really good. I think it's saying 22. This one starts a little differently. "So Jesus saw some infants who were being suckled. And he said to his disciples, these infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom. And they said to him, shall we then become infants to enter the kingdom?" Now that reminds us of something else we've heard from Jesus in the Gospels, right? Jesus answers

them. Now, here's where it gets different. Here's something new Jesus said to them. "When you make the two one, when you make the inside as the outside and the outside as the inside, and the upper is the lower, when you make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male is not male and the female is not female, and when you make eyes in place of an eye and a hand in place of a hand, a foot in place of a foot, an image in place of an image, then you shall enter the kingdom." And again, it's just another way of saying what Paul is saying in Galatians, and he also repeats it in Colossians, that in Christ we're all one, that in Christ there is no male or female, Jew or Gentile, slave or free. It's recognizing that those things are illusions and that the reality is our connection and our oneness, and those kinds of things are all through. There's another saying I really love. I can't remember where it's found now, but again, and it goes hand in hand with other sayings of Jesus. So like, you know, Jesus says in the gospels, he tells the disciples, unless you repent and become, unless you change and become like little children, you'll never see the kingdom. In Thomas, there's a saying where Jesus says, "An old man, old in years, shall not hesitate to ask an infant seven days old the meaning of the universe or the meaning of life or meaning of truth, and receive an answer." And again, it's this idea that, yes, children, their simplicity, their wonder, their curiosity, their awe, this is wisdom. This is truth. Right. This is something we have to kind of get back to, this embracing of mystery and being, living in this place of awe and wonder and holding loosely to our certainty and those kinds of things. So those are the kind of sayings that I see in Thomas that really help me and inspire me and remind me how important it is, you know, kind of keep our focus on those things.

00:44:51 - James Early

I have a translation of the gospel of Thomas. It seems a little more archaic than yours is, but this is saying, let's see, number six.

00:45:01 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:45:02 - James Early

"His disciples inquired, saying, do you desire us to abstain from food? How shall we engage in prayer? Should we give to the needy? What dietary rules should we follow? Jesus replied, abstain from falsehood and from engaging in what you despise. For all these things are laid bare before the heavens."

00:45:23 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:45:24 - James Early

They were trying to find some formula for what to do.

00:45:27 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:45:27 - James Early

He was talking about what you're thinking.

00:45:30 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:45:30 - James Early

What's in your heart.

00:45:31 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:45:32 - James Early

You know, go on a fast from the bad thoughts that you have in your heart. Anyway, I just really love the insight from that little twist of phrase, you know?

00:45:41 - Keith Giles

Yeah, yeah. Well, on that saying, too, I think the other thing is he's recognizing the disciples in asking that question. They haven't got it yet. You know what I mean? And this is the story, right? The disciples are kind of boneheaded. He has to tell them even in the other gospels, right? How many times does he tell them, I must go to Jerusalem and die, and they don't. And then when he gets arrested and crucified, they're like, how did that happen? You know? Like, he told you a million times.

00:46:06 - James Early

Right.

00:46:07 - Keith Giles

So in Thomas, it's that way, too. Like, he's constantly, they're asking these questions, and he's like, really? You know, because. But when they're asking these questions, they're also saying, you know, like, fasting and praying and giving alms and deserving, observing the special diet. And what Jesus recognizes is what they're asking is like, these are all ways, religious ways of, sorry, sort of currying favor with God. How can we get God to do what we want God to do,

what we, you know, what we think is best? And he's saying to them, like, again, the point is, like, God is not separate from you. God is not far from you. You don't have to get God's attention. His attention is always on you. He's living within you. You don't need to jump through these hoops to have God's heart, to have God's attention. Recognize this connection that you already have with God, with a father who loves you, who cares about you, when he says, look, just don't do these things you don't want to do because you're only doing them because you think that if you do them, you're going to get some kind of, you know, you're going to trick God or get God to like, okay, I'll do what you want me to do. And again, it's just a beautiful reminder, and by the way, that exasperation is all through Thomas as well. There's, there's several times where I feel like they will ask him something and he'll just, he'll just turn it the other way. Instead of, you know, pointing out to them for the thousandth time, you know, how they get it wrong. He'll just play along with them, like, okay, sure. Why don't you just go that way, right? Like, just so they see if they'll notice. Like, well, but if I did that, that goes against everything else you've been saying. Yeah, exactly. Like, think about this for a minute.

00:47:46 - James Early

Well, I love number 53. There's a little sense of humor here.

00:47:50 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:47:51 - James Early

Saying 53, "His disciples said to him, Is circumcision useful or not? And he said, if it were useful, their father would produce children already circumcised from their mother." I love that.

00:48:04 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:48:04 - James Early

"Rather, the true circumcision in spirit has become profitable in every respect." And Paul talks about that in some of his writings.

00:48:13 - Keith Giles

Yes, no, exactly. Yeah, yeah.

00:48:15 - James Early



And so I just love it. Again, they're looking for this little material formula to follow, and they think that that's going to make, it's sort of a legalism almost.

00:48:24 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:48:25 - James Early

Jesus is trying to wean them from this legalism of things to be more in the spirit when they're worshiping and in their connection with God.

00:48:35 - Keith Giles

Yeah, yeah, exactly.

00:48:38 - James Early

I have a question about the very last saying, and I know this one is really, really controversial.

00:48:44 - Keith Giles

Oh, here we go. That's the most controversial one.

00:48:47 - James Early

I'd love for you to comment on that.

00:48:49 - Keith Giles

Yes.

00:48:49 - James Early

I imagine most of my listeners have not read the Gospel of Thomas. Some of them may have, yep. But I know that this last one, number 114, is.

00:48:58 - Keith Giles

Yeah, yeah.

00:48:59 - James Early

People have different opinions about that? Yes, I'd love your thoughts on that.

00:49:03 - Keith Giles

Right. Well, so you're right. It's controversial. Let me go ahead and read it. This is the very final saying, the very last saying in the entire gospel of Thomas, saying 114. And this one starts with Simon Peter. "Simon Peter said to them, Mary should leave us, for females are not worthy of life. Jesus said, See, I will lead her to make her male so that she, too might become a living spirit that resembles you males. For every female that makes herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven." Now, I think, again, if we take this at face value, that's horrible. And I would say it's just taken at face value. No, that doesn't sound like Jesus. I mean, it sounds like Peter. I totally believe that Peter would have said that, but I don't believe that Jesus would have answered, you know, again, other than maybe ironically or facetiously. And I think that's what's happening. So I think if we, I think we can take this as a true saying of Jesus from the Gospel of Thomas that this, this exchange took place. But I think, again, that it comes at the very end of Thomas, and it comes after Jesus has said over and over and over again. I mean, the one I just read saying 22, right. He says to his disciples, the only way you're going to enter the kingdom is if you do what, when you make the male and the female into a single one. So that the male is not male and the female is not female. So he's already told them, right, emphasized to them over and over again that this separation idea is wrong. This is the wrong way to think. It's the wrong way to be. This has nothing to do with the kingdom. In the kingdom and in Christ, there is oneness, there is connection. So when Peter, now, again, who still doesn't get it after 113 sayings, he comes out with this idea of, yeah, but Mary, we should cast her out because females aren't worthy of. Again, I think this is an example of Jesus because he kind of gives the first half of what he says in Saint 22. I think it's a way of, like, a hint. Like, remember, Peter, when I said the thing about, you know, every female that makes herself male will enter the kingdom, but do you remember what else I said? I said when the male becomes, like, the female, so that the male is not male and the female is not female, like, when we erase those things, he doesn't finish the thought, but I think he leaves enough of a clue of like, yeah, but do you like I did say this before. Right. I emphasized this idea before, that these divisions are not what I'm. What I'm about and about entering the kingdom. Maybe this is true for Mary, but if it's true for Mary, Peter, it's also true for you.

00:51:33 - James Early

What you said is really powerful because you're saying we can't take one verse, whether it's in the gospel of Thomas or in the Gospel of Matthew or Luke or John or wherever, one verse and build a case.

00:51:48 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:51:49 - James Early

Out of context.

00:51:50 - Keith Giles

Yes, exactly. There's a wider context.

00:51:53 - James Early

Yeah, there's a wider context. And you. You explain that really well. Well, I really appreciate that because that helped me because when I first heard somebody talk about that, oh, my gosh. And they interpreted a completely different way. They putting a modern filter on what that could mean about all kinds of stuff anyway, so that, that's really helpful.

00:52:10 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:52:10 - James Early

To put that in context.

00:52:12 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:52:12 - James Early

We're going to close up here in just a few minutes. Keith, I have enjoyed this so much.

00:52:17 - Keith Giles

Good. Me too.

00:52:19 - James Early

Any final words of wisdom or something I didn't mention or ask you? What do you wish people would ask you about the gospel of Thomas that they usually don't?

00:52:31 - Keith Giles

Oh, that's a great question. I mean, I don't know. I guess, honestly, most of the time, people ask most of the things we've covered. Right. Is it really a gospel? Is it Gnostic? And why wasn't it in the Bible? Those are all the very common questions. I think the question people don't ask that I wish they would ask really is, what is the message of Thomas? What's the point of it? Right. What sets it apart from the other gospels? And really, it's this very profound idea again, which is something I feel like we need more than we've ever needed it before, is this beautiful reminder of our shared divinity and our shared humanity. It's the way. It's showing us the way to follow Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount so that we can love our neighbors, ourselves, we can love our enemy. We can care for the poor, the hungry, the broken, the outcast, because it erases that idea of us and them, and it shows us that there is no

us and them. There's just us. And that is the most beautiful thing about the gospel of Thomas. And that's what I invite people to discover, and that's why I wrote this book.

00:53:37 - James Early

Cool. Well, I will have the link to your book, *The Quantum sayings of Jesus, Decoding the Lost Gospel of Thomas*. I'll have a link for that in the show notes. So if you're listening and are intrigued by this, which I hope you are, I encourage you to get a copy of Keith's book and check it out. And as he said, read it with your own perception, your own discernment. He even says, don't believe it just because I say it. He wants you to think about these things.

00:54:05 - Keith Giles

Exactly.

00:54:06 - James Early

And I think that's a healthy way to approach it. Keith, I just want to honor you. I feel like you have that heart of a little child. You have this spiritual curiosity in you. Like, I want to figure this out. I want to understand this. I'm going to, I'm going to check into this, and you just then write a book about it. And I really appreciate that about you and all the, all the things you've done to help people think about things in a fresh way and to look at the Bible in a fresh way. And, you know, we all need to challenge the way we've been taught. Maybe, maybe you challenge it and you realize, well, that's really what I believe. Sometimes when we are willing to look and say, well, why do I believe something? Is it just because somebody taught me that? We learn as we keep exploring our parameters and things. So I'm really grateful for what you've done.

00:54:53 - Keith Giles

Yeah.

00:54:53 - James Early

I always ask my guests three final questions. You may remember this.

00:54:58 - Keith Giles

Okay.

00:54:58 - James Early

You may not. So the first one is, if you could talk to any Bible character other than Jesus, who would it be and what would you ask them?

00:55:09 - Keith Giles

Hmm. Wow. If I could talk to any Bible character other than Jesus, who would it be and what would I ask them? Um, I guess I would want to talk to probably Mary.

00:55:25 - James Early

Which Mary?

00:55:26 - Keith Giles

His mother.

00:55:27 - James Early

Okay.

00:55:28 - Keith Giles

Yeah. I'd really want to talk to her and just get to know her and hear more about, like, you know, what Jesus was like growing up and, and what the whole experience was for her, you know, that would, I think that'd be really fascinating conversation.

00:55:42 - James Early

Oh, I'd like to be in on that, too. Here's the second question. Is there any Bible character who you especially identify with?

00:55:52 - Keith Giles

Hmm. Oh, boy. Wow. Gosh, that's hard. A Bible character I identify with?

00:55:59 - James Early

That you see yourself in. You feel like you resonate with their, with their experience or.

00:56:08 - Keith Giles

Hmm. I feel it would be somebody really obscure.

00:56:13 - James Early

I don't think you're so obscure.

00:56:16 - Keith Giles

I don't know, though. Well, I don't think I'm really anything like Paul. I don't think I'm anything like, I hope not, well, sometimes I am like Peter. So maybe Peter, uh, just, you know,

putting your mouth, opening your mouth before you engage your brain and taking a long time to get something because it's taken me a while to get some things that I, that I've learned. Yeah, I probably Peter. I guess I hate to say it, but probably Peter.

00:56:38 - James Early

Okay, here's the third question. The Bible Speaks to You Podcast is about getting back to the original message, the original Christianity of Jesus, and imbibing his mindset. How would you describe Jesus original message of how he wanted us to live our lives?

00:56:59 - Keith Giles

Beautiful. Well, I mean, yeah, to me, the most obvious answer to that is when Jesus says, you know, he answers that question about the greatest commandment. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second is like the first, that's the key phrase. The second greatest is like the first one, love your neighbor as yourself. And so by loving our neighbor as ourselves, we are loving God. And if we, again, 1 John, you know, emphasizes that, too. You can't say you love God if you don't love your neighbor. So I think for me, that's probably the most critical thing. Jesus connecting those dots, those ideas of, like, your love for God has to be reflected in the way you love your neighbor and you love other people around you. And I think I've heard the phrase, you know, you, I only love Jesus. I think Dorothy day said this, right. I only love Jesus as much as I love the person I love the least. So that's always a constant challenge for us, right? To make sure that our capacity for love is growing. It's always greater, and we're wanting to expand that capacity, to invite more, to be as inclusive as Jesus was.

00:58:09 - James Early

Wow. Yeah. That is so, so true. Keith, I want to thank you so much. This has just been a delightful time with you. I really appreciate your words of wisdom and your insights on specifically the gospel of Thomas, but also just on what it means to follow Jesus and to really dig into what he wants us to do. I really appreciate it. Thanks for being here, James.

00:58:32 - Keith Giles

Thank you for having me. It's been great. Thank you for your work and for this podcast and being so gracious to invite me and have this conversation.

00:58:39 - James Early

Yeah, absolutely. All right, take care.