



Season 12: Episode 6 | J.D. Walt | What Happens When Jesus Has the First & Last Word of Your Day?

Hello and welcome to Scripture Untangled, a podcast by the Canadian Bible Society. My name is Joanna la Fleur, I'm a friend of the Canadian Bible Society and I'm going to be your guide for today's episode. Today I have the privilege of bringing you a conversation I recently had with J.D. Walt. I think it's insightful, it's pastoral, I think you're really going to enjoy this one.

J.D. Walt is a pastor, writer, spiritual leader, and one of most compelling voices calling the church back to awakening through the Scriptures. J.D. serves as the pastor of Gillett Methodist Church in Arkansas, but many will know him as the founder and Sower-in-Chief of Seedbed, a movement dedicated to gathering, connecting, and resourcing God's people to sow for a great awakening.

Through books, small group resources, worship materials, and more, even a conference called New Room Conference, 3,000 people have started to attend this. J.D. has started to shape a discipleship ecosystem that stretches across denominations and beyond America to around the world. Before starting Seedbed, he served for many years as Vice President and Dean of Chapel at Asbury Theological Seminary, mentoring pastors, worship leaders, and ministry pioneers, some known and some totally unknown names.

He's also anchored in Scripture and anchors his mentorship in Scripture for renewal. He's an author, a conference speaker, a songwriter, an ordained minister, and fun fact, he's actually a licensed attorney in the state of Arkansas. But for many, the Seedbed Wake-Up Call, his daily devotional, read by tens of thousands around the

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world, is really his most known work right now, guiding people in unhurried, Scripture-soaked meetings with Jesus every morning.

He and his wife are parents with four children, and they make their home there in Arkansas. So today we're going to have a great conversation with him about spiritual awakening in North America, we're going to talk about Scripture as the primary source, and how everyday people can be sowers in their own communities. I think you're going to love this rich conversation, I think it's deeply encouraging, so let's dive in.

Joanna la Fleur: J.D. Walt, welcome to Scripture Untangled.

J.D. Walt: Thank you.

I'm so delighted to be on this podcast. I've looked down your roster, I'm like, one of these guys is not like the others.

Joanna la Fleur: No, this is not true.

We're delighted to have you, and even learning more about you in the last week, preparing to have this conversation, it's really interesting to see where you're... I hope we have a chance to go into a little bit of your work outside of what we're here to talk about, which is Romans, the book of Romans. But outside of that, I'd love to dive in. So, as an intro to you, if people are listening instead of watching this podcast, you're in a place where I see this very cool retro motorcycle behind you.

Where are you? Do you ride bikes? Tell us about that.

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J.D. Walt: Yeah, so I live in a very small town in Arkansas called Gillette, G-I-L-L-E-T-T. And its population, I don't know, four or five hundred.

It's a farming community. I'm a pastor. I pastor in addition to my leadership role with Seedbed, I pastor a little church here, the Gillette Methodist Church. And my son came down, my son's an artist and an artisan, a craftsman. And he moved down here about a year ago. And we bought an abandoned hardware store about a hundred years old.

And we have, he calls what we're doing a rural renaissance.

Joanna la Fleur: Okay, I love it.

J.D. Walt: And we reclaimed this place.

And we hauled off to begin with about eight dump trucks just full of trash. But there have been all kinds of treasures that we have found. We found that old motorcycle that you see behind us.

Back in the other room is a Model A car, Ford car, Ford automobile. And it's just filled with treasures from across the decades. We call this the Daily Seed Company.

And this is, David calls it the Seed House Design Studio. Now the wall over here is usually filled with art that's his and others. And then there's a leather crafting shop right over here on my, over my other shoulder.

Joanna la Fleur: Wow.

J.D. Walt: And then I do, I do my daily show, the Wake-Up Call from here every day and, you know, do writing and whatnot. But we're the only business in town.

Joanna la Fleur: So, as a means then of bridging, is that shop sort of a ministry hub? I mean, you're saying you're recording here, but what I mean is by bringing business to the town, do you visit it as connecting with just the local community or how do you think about that business as mission?

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J.D. Walt: Yeah, I do. It's public space. We hope to create some community kind of community center dynamics to it.

We've got a, in the next, it's about 6,000 square feet. It's a good bit of space. And we created like a game room next door and it's, you know, everything in a small town like this, you think life is simpler and maybe it is at some levels, but the truth is everything's harder. It's, you know, like it's going to take you six months to get a plumber to call you back. To get your bathroom working.

It takes longer. It costs more and it's a lot harder. That's life though.

Isn't it?

Joanna la Fleur: Well, I often think of that living in a city. I think if you were, if you have to drive half an hour, 45 minutes to go to a grocery store and you forgot something and you got to turn around and go back, you know, your wife's in the middle of some project, some kitchen project, and she can't finish it without that ingredient and you got to turn around and go back. Oh man, that is a harder thing about country living, but I'm sure it's got to be also so beautiful there.

J.D. Walt: I have to drive 40 miles to a grocery store.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah. Wow.

J.D. Walt: What happens in that context, Joanna, is you just lose weight because you stop eating as much.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah. We're out of chips and dips. So that's the end of that.

J.D. Walt: Not going to do it.

Joanna la Fleur: Now tell us a little bit, I'd love to know more about Wake-Up Call because you know, you've spent years helping people wake up, quote unquote, to Scripture, and you've been doing this Wake-Up Call devotional work.

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Tell us about what that is and what stirred you to do it in the first place?

J.D. Walt: Yeah. About 11 years ago, I started, it's kind of like Forrest Gump, you know, when he started running and he just took off. 11 years ago, I just started writing every day.

And my goal was, even before that, I was working in the seminary. And my goal there was like, how can we read the Bible together? Right? The Bible was, I don't even think it was written to be read. It was written to be heard, and it was written to be heard together.

And so that's been one of my burning questions is how can we actually do this? Many of us are pretty good at reading the Bible alone, but like, how can we read it in community? How can we read a common text? How can we get on the same page? I mean, those who read together, lead together, and sometimes they bleed together. And always they, in our metaphor, I got seed in front of me, they seed together. And so, I started doing this 11 years ago.

And it was just my mom and a couple of other people out there reading it. And it slowly gained traction. We're terrible marketers.

We're sowers. And it's just picked up some momentum over the years. It's been all organic. It's become a podcast. Now it's on YouTube. And it's, I don't like to think of it even as a daily devotion. It's a kind of a meeting. I call it a meeting with Jesus. And He's our teacher. And His Word is our textbook.

And we're, I'll just start off like Romans, for instance, I just started off Romans 1:1. And it took me something like 100 days to get through Romans. And then that'll become a book later.

But, you know, we have a pretty established liturgy or pattern of our meeting every day. And it's called the Wake-Up Call. And every day I'm like, wake up, sleeper, rise

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from the dead, and Christ will shine on you, which is Ephesians 5.14. And that text itself carries the pattern of our meeting, wake up, it's consecration.

Jesus, I belong to you. We pray this prayer every day. And then it's rise from the dead.

It is transformation. It's not self-improvement. The Christian life, I often say is not good to great. It's darkness to light. It's death to life, right? It's chaos to new creation. And so that's rise from the dead.

And then it's in Christ will shine. It's demonstration, consecration, transformation, demonstration. Once you start seeing that pattern, you'll see it all over the Bible.

And it's sort of like wake up, grow up and light up. That's the move. That's awakening.

That's what awakening is. And we're just trying to nourish that every single day and anchoring in God's Word and, you know, being animated by His spirit.

Joanna la Fleur: I love this.

I mean, I love the spiritual practice, as you say, of the everyday, the consecration and the reading, not just alone, but being part of a larger community that's and reading or in just soaking in your mind, your spirit in Scripture together.

I'm curious, before we jump into this, this conversation in Romans in particular, because of your book, you know, was Romans something you were drawn to? I'm thinking in light of your career, starting as a lawyer, this background you have. And I think of Romans as a book about law, and your own start many years ago in the field of law.

How does that shape how you study? Well, Romans, but maybe just even just Scripture in general. Do you think like a lawyer when you read this?

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J.D. Walt: Oh, that's a great question. Yeah, I've gone from the law to grace, haven't I? And I've also often said, "God doesn't need lawyers, He needs witnesses." I'm trying to become a witness. Right.

But Romans, it's interesting the way you put that. I have, you know, I've always seen Romans from the vantage point of it is sort of a doctrinal thesis. It's theological.

It's a treatise. It's just sort of a massive argument, if you will. And so therefore, I don't know, I didn't steer away from it, but I didn't actually steer into it.

And when I got into it, I began to really see it very differently than I had seen it before. And for starters, I call myself a master of the obvious insight, like I don't really have to go very deep. It's most of the revelation is right on the surface.

But I think I have to go deep, and I miss what's on the surface. Right. That's the nature of epiphany.

So, I was thinking about Romans and I'm like, you know, what do we call it? Well, we call it the book, the book of Romans. That's shaped our understanding of it. And anytime you say you're talking about a book, your first question is, well, what's the book about? And you want to go, well, it's about the Gospel. It's about theology. It's about grace. It's about, you know, all these things.

But then it just hit me the obvious. This is not a book. Romans is not a book.

It is a letter. And when you are approaching a letter, you don't say what's the letter about. You say, who's it from and who's it to? And all of a sudden, you're seeing it differently and you're reading it through a different lens than you would read a book.

And so, I started reading Romans like, well, this is a letter from Paul to a group of about a hundred Christians in a city of a million people. And it's become...

Joanna la Fleur: 0.001%

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J.D. Walt: Statistically insignificant. And yet Paul, like, why is he writing this letter? This had kind of been lost on me because you just focus on what's it about.

Oh, it's about like sin and grace and sanctification and justification and all the things that are right at the core of it. But like, no, this is a letter written from one person to a hundred people in a city of a million who couldn't get along. And he's like, the city is resting... The future of this city is resting on your relationships. And if you can pull it together, the world might be saved.

And so, you know, he's writing to the whole story. I just didn't even know it. Right.

So, they've got this church that gets started by Jewish Christians and then the Jews get kicked out of Rome by one of the emperors. They're exiled from Rome. The Gentiles start coming in and building up the church.

And then the next emperor lets the Jews come back to Rome. And all of a sudden, they're like, who moved my cheese? Like, who moved the furniture in here? This is not how we do it. The Gentiles, right there, they've started taking the church on.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah. Somebodies in my house and I don't like how they've decorated in here or we always ate dinner in the dining room. And now you want to eat in the kitchen or whatever.

J.D. Walt: And we don't eat that kind of meat. We don't drink that kind of drink.

We don't eat that kind of meat. And all the things that you see in the first century and all these churches with Jews and Gentiles. And so, Paul's like, OK, I've got to help them figure it out and come to grips with the Gospel, because I'm not just going to solve this by some conflict resolution technique and I'm not going to be able to shame them into loving each other.

And so, I'm going to start at square one. Like sin, the world, grace, I'm going to teach them, I'm going to go over the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And he takes like 14 chapters to even get to the problem.

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Joanna la Fleur: I mean, it's very it's dense, isn't it? I mean, Romans is intimidating to readers. I think I love how you're talking about this approach. Think of it like what it was really a letter in the context of, humanize it, if you will, because it's this dense theology, complex arguments, which is why I think people aren't quite sure what to make of it.

But you're approaching it really from you're coming at it really much more in the heart than I mean, the heart and the head, not just the head.

J.D. Walt: Exactly. And relationally.

And so I wind up writing 90 letters to my readers about, you know, Paul's letter, which is 16 chapters, maybe it's, I don't know, 20,000 words, and I'm writing probably 100,000 words. It just tells you something about like the Word of God is so inexhaustible in its revelatory capacity. And that's part of what I want to do every day is just like, can we wake up to the fact that the grass withers and the flower fades, the Word of the Lord endures forever, right? Everything that you see around you is coming to nothing except one thing.

And this one thing is becoming everything. And like, it's worthy of our highest attention, deepest devotion and love. Because Paul, that hundred people would wind up upending the city of a million.

Joanna la Fleur: And when you think of Paul, you know, I hear you coming like Paul, you're trying to come with an approaching Romans from a pastoral heart shepherding. When you think of Paul's pastoral heart, or just his experience with Jesus, how are you trying to make that aspect come alive in these readings? How did you do that to try and to have people not miss the heart behind what's going on in the complexity of the text?

J.D. Walt: Yeah, well, I mean, you know, we typically say the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And that means that you can expect to understand what is the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Well, it's ABCDE.

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And in fact, that has become like how Romans has been understood. You know, there's sin, there's justification, there's sanctification, and it's not real personal. In fact, Romans gets reduced down to the Romans road, right? The Gospel becomes very transactional.

And I'm like, but the Gospel is not transactional. The Gospel is relational, and it shifted. Here's the growing conviction.

There is no Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is Jesus Christ. Right? He is the Gospel.

It is His person, in His personhood.

Joanna la Fleur: He is The Way, The Truth.

J.D. Walt: He is, and you meet Him, and He introduces you to our Father. And you meet Him and He introduces you to the Holy Spirit.

And this is what, I remember years ago when I was in seminary, one of my professors was Ben Witherington, the third. And you ought to have him on this show sometime. I mean, he's amazing.

And Ben, in those days had released a book called *Paul's Narrative Thought World*. Okay, he's trying to himself, get behind what appears as a theological doctrinal treatise.

And like, understand where, you know, Tom Wright has done this so well with his work about like, helping us understand this person, Paul, who's writing this. And because it's very easy, interestingly, to kind of miss Jesus in Romans. Because he's talking about it at the next level out.

And so, what I'm trying to do, I mean, Jesus is, He's the rabbi here, He's our teacher, He's our Lord, but He's like, let Me open Romans for you. And just like with those guys on the Emmaus Road, you know, you want to read Romans and say, did our

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hearts not burn within us as He opened up the Scriptures to us? That's how I want to read the entire Bible. Is Jesus like, teaching me, training me, and then almost like mirroring the text Himself through the Gospels, His life, right? That's another thing, Joanna, that I feel like so much of the church reads the Gospels through the lens of Paul.

And I'm like, no, we got to read Paul through the lens of Jesus. We don't want to look at Jesus through the lens of Paul; we want to look at Paul through the lens of Jesus. We want to read Romans through the glasses of the Gospels.

Which is, that's what's led me on my present series I'm writing right now. It's on Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, 89 chapters, 89 days in a row. It's been a marathon.

Joanna la Fleur: Well, I love this idea. You're talking about this idea of, you want the readers or listeners to know Jesus, not just know about Him, know Him. Which is where you're talking about this title of this book, but Romans is from sin management to love unleashed.

So that sin management word or that phrase feels a little, I don't know, provocative or like pokes a little under the skin. So how does Romans invite us deeper? How do we get beyond that reading it as sin management? Where are you, where do you see that as you're looking through the lens of Jesus, not just Paul?

J.D. Walt: Yeah, as I'm working my way through Romans, again, I just kind of have another obvious insight that there is capital S sin, and then there are little s sins. And we mostly in life deal with little S sins.

I think of it like this. There is capital S sickness and there are little s symptoms and discipleship that I have experienced for much of my life has been very rooted around like treat the symptoms.

Joanna la Fleur: I love that.

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I really love this analogy. Yeah, there's a sickness and then the sickness is the capital S sin, and the symptoms are the day-to-day sinful behaviors of our hearts and our actions.

J.D. Walt: And so, what the fact is, is that we've got sin cancer.

We're born with it and it's going to destroy us. It is destroying us. And, you know, we just kind of give lip service to the fact that, well, here's the bottom line.

We, I think, practically speaking, at least I can say myself, I grew up thinking I was a sinner because I sinned, but it's just the opposite. I sin because I'm a sinner that I'm born in that fundamental condition and that unless we treat the cancer, I'm destined to sin. And I'm going to live in a world of trying to manage that.

And I'm going to try to think, well, I'm really not that bad or I'm not as bad as that person. And this is legalism. This is the oldest sin.

And even today, like in my Wake-Up Call, I was writing about the prodigal - Luke 15, the prodigal son. And I'm like, I'm just waking up to how bad some of the headings that the interpreters have put in the Bible over the years, like the good Samaritan, like, well, what are you saying there? Are you saying all the other Samaritans are bad? And then the prodigal son, and I'm reading it and I'm like, you know what? That's not in the Bible. Both of the sons, both of them were equally lost.

One was lost in the backyard and the other was in the far country, but they were equally lost. They're both lost sons.

And I think, you know, growing up, it's like, well, you can recognize the notorious sinners. And it seems like, you know, they're writing the amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me, but the rest of us are like, well, I'm not that bad. I'm actually, you know, I could get better.

And therefore, the Gospel becomes a self-improvement program, like good to great.

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Joanna la Fleur: Well, and much preaching is this way. It's a difficult challenge for those who teach, isn't it? You know, just on a personal note, I'm working on curriculum for 10th grade students right now in a leadership program and the section on this idea of character development and reflecting on where our lives are not looking like Christ. How do we talk about this carefully as leaders to not become legalistic about it? A checklist of behavior modification as opposed to the deeper work behind it.

And how do you talk about that to a 15-year-old? It's not, I just mean with much, much love to the preachers. It's not an easy, it is a challenging dance because we do want the behavior to change, but it's not about, that's the symptom, not the disease.

J.D. Walt: Exactly.

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And so, what we've got to, okay, think about cancer, right? So, there's lung cancer and let's just say somebody, this guy over here got lung cancer and, oh, well, he smoked two packs of cigarettes a day. I get it, I understand, but then there's colon cancer or pancreatic cancer and you don't even know you have it. The symptoms don't present until stage four and you're dead.

Same cancer. Everybody's got it. And this to me is the only way you can explain the world that we live in.

It's not just the people who are blowing up buildings out there, right? It's endemic and it is dastardly broken and I, you know, what's the Taylor Swift song? "Hi, it's me. I'm the problem. It's me."

That's what I teach kids every Sunday and I teach the middle school and high school Sunday school class in the youth group that night and I'm like, guys, you've got it.

And I'll pull over the example of like, let's just say the national debt of the United States. And I'm like, guys, you were born a debtor if you were born an American and if they were to call in the note, you're going to have to pay.

And you didn't create the debt. You added interest to it. You sin because you're a sinner.

You were born a sinner. This is hard for people to understand who've lived in a world that tells you, well, you're already basically good. You just need to be better.

And the Bible says, no, you're, you're not good. You're not necessarily bad, but you're not good. You're broken.

You're sick. You have terminal cancer. And guess what? Here's the good news.

There's a cure. It has a 100% cure rate, but there's only one. There's only one way that you can get this cancer cured.

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It's the chemotherapy of the blood of Jesus. If you'll take, He'll cure you. And then love becomes unleashed in your life and sin loses its power. And the gravity of sin is overtaken by the gravity of heaven. And instead of being pulled down, you're being pulled up. And your life becomes a burning bush.

You're on fire, but you're not being consumed and people are double taking. And they're like, I must go see this strange site.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah.

I would love to talk about this. This whole, this idea in the context of, I mean, you can't help, but take these texts and think what does this say to our world today, our church, our culture? I know you've mentored pastors, worship leaders around the world. You're in those personal moments with people where they're looking, hopefully looking to grow or to be coached.

Yeah. What are some of those challenges you see in, we're sort of already addressing it, but these, I think of maybe not, not with names, but I mean, when you think of these leaders, how we handle Scripture, how that applies to how we write worship songs, choose songs on a Sunday, teach the Bible, Sunday school or large auditorium. Where are you seeing those challenges? And maybe also the other side is where's their hope? Where are you excited about what you're seeing maybe in a new generation?

J.D. Walt: Yeah, that's good.

I mean, I was just flipping through the book, and I was in a conversation with, I've moved back here after being away from the area for 30 years. And I reconnected with one of my old friends and this particular friend, life went off the rails some years ago and just has had a very difficult way in lostness. And so, I just kind of sketched a bit of a poem in one of these entries and it's called the hard and beautiful truth.

And here it is.

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She says, I don't want you to think I'm not a good person. That's what my old friend said to me upon meeting again after decades apart and a long confession of her broken story.

And I assured her with the hard and beautiful truth. You're not a good person. I'm not either.

We are broken sinners. I said something deep in me and maybe you too wants to believe that we are good or worse, that we're bad, that we just need to lose 20 pounds, drop a few bad habits and try harder to be better. And then I assure myself with the hard and beautiful truth.

Good people and bad people is a lie from the pit of hell. And the way from good to great or bad to worse paves the way there. Jesus only goes from death to life, lost to found, slave to free, broken to beautiful.

And then she asked me, if you're not good, if you're not good, like a preacher, right? You're a preacher. If you're not good, then what are you?

Loved. Loved, I said.

I am loved and you are too.

That's the Gospel, right? For God so loved the world. And we're mostly living in a morality plot, a shame and a pride plot.

And those are the same thing. I'm either managing my sin well or not. And it's really all about me.

And I don't know, Paul, I think, thought if he could get a hundred people freed, freed from the slavery of sin and loving each other like Jesus loves them, it changes the world. And here I'm like pastoring a church. We may have a hundred people on Sunday.

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And that's the size of most churches. And that's what I want. That's what I want to get across to churches is like, I mean, a hundred people like you're in Toronto.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah, there's a bunch of millions here.

J.D. Walt: Oh my gosh. That's one of the biggest cities in the world.

Yeah. But a hundred people in the city of Toronto can change the world. If we can get, if we can get the Gospel, if it can get us, if Jesus can get us, that it's not about numbers.

It's about love and power. And that's awakening.

Joanna la Fleur: And you often, you often talk about this idea of letting Jesus have the first word and the last word of your day.

What have you found? I mean, whether personal or just in general, in a group of people, you talk about those hundred people, if a hundred people have with, and maybe what do you mean by that? Maybe break it down for someone who, I don't want to assume someone knows what you mean when someone, when Jesus is the first word and the last word of the day. And then if a hundred people actually live like that, what happens?

J.D. Walt: Yes. Well, I mean, I, this was born out of my own.

I just realized that I wake up in the morning and the first thing, of course, I'm going to pick up is my phone. And I'm going to go to my phone. I'm going to pop over to Facebook or Instagram or my texts or maybe my emails.

If I'm feeling particularly like I got to get going today. And I'm like, that's what I'm giving the first word to in my day. And then I realized like, well, at the end of the day, I'm laying in the bed. The last thing I put down is my phone. But before I put it down, I'm just watching a Netflix show or some YouTube video and...

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Joanna la Fleur: From tiny screen to mid-sized screen to big screen, back to tiny screen.

You know, this is our day.

J.D. Walt: Yeah. And my last word of the day is Netflix.

First word, Instagram, last word, Netflix. I'm like, that's shaping me. That's forming me.

And I'm like, not saying Instagram and Netflix are bad. I'm just saying they shouldn't get the first word and the last word of my day, because those are the most important words. Who gets the first word? Who gets the last word? And I'm like, how about God's Word?

And so now my feet. Even before my feet hit the floor, I'm going over and this is what I try to help people with. Like at the beginning of a year, I'm like, can we ask the Lord to give us a word from Scriptures, a text for this year? And could that text be our first word and our last word of the day, every day? And so, you know, I've been going over.

"Forget the former things. Do not dwell on the past. Behold, I'm doing a new thing. Now it springs up.

Do you not perceive it? I'm making a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert." (Isaiah 43:19)

That's my first word. And then at night, you know, I'll watch a Netflix, but then I'm not going to give it the last word.

I will say Psalm. It's a text out of Psalm 16, I think, that says, *"I will bless the Lord who counsels me even at night. My heart instructs me."*

Like I'm going to go to sleep, but God's not going to slumber. His Word is working all night and like He's going to talk to me in the night. And sometimes I'll ask him a

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question like, could You wait? Could you have this for me in the morning when I wake up? And He will a lot of times.

But it's just that sense of, only one thing can be prior.

Joanna la Fleur: You, before you ended up where you are, one of the jobs you've had, you served as a VP and Dean of Chapel at Asbury Theological Seminary. And I'm not looking for you to be the spokesperson of what happened there.

But the Asbury revival is something that, you know, movement amongst students where it seems that God moved in a profound and beautiful way to. I don't know what to what degree you'd want to speak to that, but maybe just that or broadly, you know, I'd love for you to speak to people listening or watching about this upcoming generation, what you're seeing, what where you're seeing, you know, a new thing for, you know, as now it springs up, don't you see it with a new thing, a new generation? Could you speak a little bit to that? Yeah. Just to encourage people.

J.D. Walt: Yes. You know, so I was just remembering this today. Back in I went to Asbury to the seminary.

I was there as a pastor in about the year 2000. And one day, one of my interns, that's the best part of my job. I hired these young people every semester to work by 10 to help carry out the worship leadership and ministry of the seminary.

And one of those students brings me this book and he says, you got to read this. It was just out. It was a book called *Red Moon Rising* by a guy named Pete Gregg.

And Pete is from, you know, the UK. And so, I went and I read it was a page turner. It was it was about 24-7 prayer movement that Pete was just underway with 25 years ago.

And that student, I went back and I told him like, wow, how did you learn about this? And the young man said, do you think he'll come? Do you think he'll come? I'm like,

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well, I hadn't even thought about it. Let's see. Well, Pete came because we wanted to start a 24-7 house of prayer in Wilmore, Kentucky.

And we wanted to do it between Asbury College, now University and Asbury Seminary students. And we asked Pete to come help us start it. So back in like 04, 03, we started a 24-7 house of prayer.

It persisted for years and years and years. And, you know, back in 2023 and this whole work we're doing called Seedbed, it came up out of our work at Asbury Seminary. I start getting texts.

I had a son in college there at Asbury. At the time, they said, Dad, you need to see what's going on here. I called our whole team.

I said, guys, if you can get to Wilmore, we'll cover your way and all your expenses. This is what we've been praying for. And we converged there in Wilmore and we were there for 16 days.

Joanna la Fleur: During this, this is in 2020, 2023, yeah.

J.D. Walt: We, we immediately, we'd been having a conference for years called the New Room Conference, and we've been training up altar ministers. And so, we called our prayer guy.

We said, you got to get to Wilmore. And he starts training altar ministers, trained a thousand. Okay.

These people work the altar for 16 days, all day, all night. I mean, it was a profound thing that was happening there. And people coming from, I immediately, you know who I called first? Pete Gregg.

I said, Pete, I called him in England. I'm like, you got to come.

And immediately he brings about 14. He says, well, I got a call going with a group called Revive Europe. It's tomorrow at noon.

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It's a Zoom call. There'll be about 200 people on here from all over Europe. Would you come on and just bear witness to what's going.

And immediately 14 of them got on planes and came to Wilmore. And it was so simple and so humble and unassuming and profound. I mean, I'm still just in awe of it.

Yeah. I mean, here's the thing, Joanna, it was led by students. You know, we didn't come in there and try to take over the thing.

We're just like, how do we support what God's doing? And how do we keep, because here's the thing, you know, they did need some help because there were people coming from all sorts of crazy ministries and points of view, and they wanted to bring in their banners and they wanted to take it over. And we're like, you know what, this is their house and we got to be hospitable guests here. But these students, Gen Z, they led the thing.

And I mean, it's wild. One of our guys on our team was with us, a worship leader. And I mean, immediately they're needing help.

It goes one day, two days, five days, six days, and they're like out of worship leaders because it's around the clock. And so, our guy gets there and the next thing you know, he's up there leading worship. And one of these students comes around behind him, taps him on the shoulder, pulls him back and says, can we talk to you off stage? And they said, we just sense your heart's not right, to my guy.

And, you know, he's humble. And they said, could you come back to the consecration room?

Joanna la Fleur: Not a green room. Maybe the context, you know, a lot of worship teams hang out in the green room and drink coffee and it's very exclusive kind of a situation.

Yeah.

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J.D. Walt: Yeah. Just this became the death of the green room in our eyes.

We'll never have a green room again. We have a consecration room at our conferences and our events. But they took him back there and they just started praying.

And I mean, he was offended at first, but he said, you know what? They're right. They were right. Now get this.

A couple of days later, they came back around to him and they said, we've got another slot for you. And they said, here's the time. And it was like, I don't know, 10 o'clock on Thursday morning or whatever day it was.

And so, he shows up at that time slot, and it turns out that that was a time slot that they had. The room was closed for cleaning for an hour. He led worship in that room for an hour to nobody.

It was just unto the Lord. It was so powerful. It was just remarkable even in his own life and story, like he'd never done that before.

But that's Gen Z, that's imagination right there. And I see it. They are done with fame culture.

You know, they're done with commercialized religion. I think they're also done with deconstructing. And of course, there's so much that needs to be deconstructed, but they're like, how about we reconstruct? And I'm just, you know, here's a great little story.

So, I was on, I was teaching a little, I teach this little class. I do it from time to time called *How to Read the Bible Better*. And we had a big online Zoom group a couple of nights ago.

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And I always stick around after and I'm like, anybody wants, we start in the sort of lobby and we're just visiting. Then we go into the class and then we go to the fellowship hall on the Zoom. That's kind of how I frame it.

And I just talk to whoever wants to talk. And I looked up and I saw this young girl. And if I see somebody, sometimes the Lord will just highlight him and I'll just call on him.

So, I said, Katie, what's the Lord saying to you tonight? And I said, how did you get connected to the Wake-Up Call? She said, well, my grandparents. Turns out she lives in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She's 15.

And she says, my grandparents told my parents about it. And me and my mom started doing it together every day, the Wake-Up Call. And she said, I just wanted to tell you about a paper that I wrote for school the other day.

I was asked in my assignment to create a new character for the book *Pilgrim's Progress* and to write it into the essay. And she said, I called my character Behold. Behold, which is a word that I make much of in the Bible that often gets translated out of the Bible.

Behold, it means wake up. And she said, my character goes around saying to people, wake up, sleeper. Rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you.

I'm like, that's Gen Z. That's Gen Alpha right there, probably.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah, you say I love that you're teaching Sunday school or a youth program.

J.D. Walt: I teach Sunday school, Sunday morning and youth group Sunday night.

Yeah.

Joanna la Fleur: Awesome.

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JD, you know, there's so much here, we've run out of time. But if people want more of you, there is more. So where do people go for Wake-Up Call? How do they join the Wake-Up Call community? And we're going to link this in the notes.

But is there a website or a place you want to send people to get connected to everything we've just talked about?

J.D. Walt: Yeah, the best the gold standard for me is go to seedbed, S-E-E-D-B-E-D dot com slash Wake-Up Call one word and just give us your name, your email address. I want to get directly connected through email. You'll get it every day.

Yeah We've we loaded up with goodness. But it's on all the podcast deals and it's on YouTube.

But we meet every morning. It's not live, but it feels live because I'm with you and you're with me and you know what we sing every day on this thing. We lead and could never have imagined I'd be doing this, but I lead a hymn, a hymn at the end of the Wake-Up Call every single day.

So, I'd love for people to come on board. And of course, there's the Romans book and there's several books that have come from it that are great, churches like to gather around them and study the Bible.

Joanna la Fleur: Yeah.

Well, everyone, if you want to wake up with Jesus, first word, last word, or if you maybe just want to hear, you know, the amazing singing voice of J.D. Walt, we're going to link that down in the notes. But thank you so much for the conversation. I mean, there's I can tell there's hours more of conversation that could be had.

I see your heart for people, but more I see your heart to be a person following after Christ, transformed by Him from dead to life. And as you said, not sin management, but love transformation. So, your book, *Romans: From Sin Management to Love Unleashed*, is something we'll link.

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But just in general, I think people will be so glad to have heard from you, learn from you. And I think people are going to want to follow along now from this point on. So, thanks so much for your time.