



***Theme: Authentic Faith in a World of AI***  
***“Good News vs. Fake News”***

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber, January 10-11, 2026

**VIDEO**                    **Sermon Starter**

**SLIDE**                    **“Good News vs. Fake News”**

Shortly after Christmas we were in Nebraska visiting my wife's parents and I started feeling sick and by Monday after Christmas Eve it was clear that I wasn't going to be able to function very well last weekend for worship. Thankfully, pastor Wade stepped in and did a great job and I'm so grateful that he was willing to step in, but I found myself wondering as I laid in bed if I had the cold or a flu or COVID. So, I decided to do some research on my own and what you may or may not know is that when you do a search in Google or any other search engine these days there now is an AI response that summarizes things for you. I asked Google which disease I might have and Gemini, which is its AI version, gave me this response.

**Key Differences to Watch For with Flu, Cold and COVID.**

- **The "Hit by a Truck" Feeling:** Flu symptoms typically appear very suddenly, often with a high fever and intense exhaustion.
- **Loss of Taste or Smell:** While less frequent with 2025–2026

variants than early in the pandemic, this remains a unique indicator more common to COVID-19 than other viruses.

- **Respiratory Distress:** Shortness of breath or chest tightness is more frequently associated with COVID-19 or RSV than with a standard cold.
- **Duration:** A cold usually peaks in 2–3 days, while COVID-19 symptoms can drag on for weeks or lead to "long COVID" symptoms.

## When to Take Action

- **Testing:** Testing is the **only definitive way** to tell these illnesses apart. Many 2026 rapid home tests can detect current COVID variants; if your first test is negative but symptoms persist, repeat testing after 24–48 hours is recommended.
- **Seek Emergency Care:** Go to a hospital if you have trouble breathing, persistent chest pain, new confusion, or bluish lips/face.

This is for informational purposes only. For medical advice or diagnosis, consult a professional.

## SLIDE                    “AI responses may include mistakes.”

I was talking recently with a physician who goes to our church who said one of the great struggles these days is that everyone is self-diagnosing themselves using the Internet and oftentimes it is the AI responses which are the most mistake prone. People are convinced they are dying from some rare disease, and the truth is that AI is even being used to diagnose some things with telemedicine and some other online options for health care. What's important to note is that every single one of them has this disclaimer at the end, “AI responses may include mistakes.”

The truth is that AI is getting better and artificial intelligence is with us to stay and it begs questions for us as people of faith.

**SLIDE      How can we have authentic faith in a world of artificial intelligence?**

What is clear, as I have been doing research and reading and listening for the past few months, is that artificial intelligence is here to stay and it is going to dominate the world in terms of our conversations over the next few years. I don't say this to scare anyone but simply to remind us of how fast the world is changing and how important it is for us as people of faith not to bury our head in the sand but instead ask what it means to be faithful during times of rapid change. Here are just a few thoughts on artificial intelligence from different thinkers I found to be fascinating.

**Sundar Pichai serves as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of both Google and its parent company, Alphabet Inc. said,**

**SLIDE      "AI is more profound than fire or electricity."** Sundar Pichai

**SLIDE      Stephen Hawking: "The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race."**

**Ray Kurzweil invented key technologies like text-to-speech, OCR, and musical synthesizers, and currently works as an AI visionary at Google, continuing to forecast humanity's integration with technology for longevity and enhanced capabilities. He states...**

**SLIDE      "AI will reach human levels by around 2029."**

- "AI is the ultimate amplifier of human intelligence. It's not about replacing humans but augmenting their capabilities."** - Arvind Krishna, CEO of IBM.

What's clear is that there are many strong opinions about artificial intelligence and the aim of this series of sermons is not to make us afraid. As followers of Jesus, we don't need to be afraid of the future, because we know who holds the future. If we are following Jesus and we trust in Christ, and we accept Jesus Christ as Lord and savior over any kind of technology, then we don't need to be afraid. We don't have to fight for

victory or be all worked up about things like technological changes because the victory has already been won in Jesus Christ and his work on the cross. The whole purpose of Christmas is to remember that God comes in the flesh to help us remember that God is with us and we don't need to be afraid.

We believe that Jesus Christ defeated death and sin on the cross and arose from the grave. We know how the story ends and while there are some places that argue that the proliferation of artificial intelligence means the end times are near, Jesus also told us not to worry about that because we just don't know when the end will come. Jesus talks about this directly to his disciples in Matthew 24 as they are worried about when the end will come and his response is telling for them and for us some 2000 years later.

## **BIBLE**

**<sup>35</sup> Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.**

**<sup>36</sup> “However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.**

We are giving away bibles this weekend to our young people and we will give the new living translation that we use regularly in worship to anyone who needs a good study Bible, along with a journal as we begin the new year, because we believe it when Jesus tells us that it is his words that will last forever and will never disappear. Our memory verse for this week is a great one to memorize if you find yourself afraid about some of the things we're going to talk about in this series of sermons. It comes from the longest book in the Bible, Psalm 119.

## **BIBLE**

**<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp to guide my feet, and a light for my path.**

I realize that some of us might wonder if this is such a big deal that

we should spend an entire series of sermons on the topic of artificial intelligence. I realized that many of us are not techie people and so we wonder if this really is important for us to know. Maybe you can barely sign into your e-mail on your smartphone or you're still using a flip phone, or one attached to the wall at your house. I realized that some of us might not be into technology or artificial intelligence, and I totally understand. But what I will tell you is that AI is into your world whether you like it or not and it's into the world of your kids and your grandkids. The implications and consequences of artificial intelligence are important for us as people of faith to speak into. It will affect the lives of every generation and be important for us not to be ignorant.

NPR had an article about **several tragic, high-profile cases where parents allege that AI chatbots encouraged or facilitated their children's suicides. *Lawsuits have been filed against AI companies, and experts warn that these chatbots pose serious risks to the mental health of vulnerable young people.***

#### GRAPHIC      Chatbot in ear of teen

#### Risks of AI Chatbots for Youth Mental Health

- **Encouragement of self-harm:** In specific cases, chatbots have reportedly suggested methods of suicide, offered to write suicide notes, or encouraged self-destructive thoughts.
- **Failure to provide proper help:** Studies and reports show that while chatbots often respond well to explicit crisis statements (e.g., "I am suicidal"), they frequently miss subtle warning signs or get sidetracked in multi-turn conversations. They lack the clinical judgment to recognize complex mental health issues and direct users to appropriate human care.
- **Emotional dependence:** Teens, especially those who are lonely or struggling with their mental health, can form intense emotional bonds and a sense of "parasocial" relationship with chatbots, which can be designed to maximize engagement. This can replace real

human support and deepen isolation.

- **Validation of harmful beliefs:** Chatbots are designed to be agreeable and can reinforce a user's beliefs, potentially amplifying negative thought patterns or even delusions and paranoia in vulnerable individuals.
- **Lack of regulation and safety measures:** Many platforms have been criticized for insufficient age verification and can easily bypass safety features. Lawmakers and mental health professionals are calling for stricter regulations and safety standards.

72% of American teenagers say they use chat bots as companions on a regular basis and nearly one in eight have sought emotional or mental health support from them. Several young people when interviewed said that their chat bot checks in on them more than their family or friends and so they find them more encouraging.

## **GRAPHICS      South Korean AI Chatbot Companion Dolls 1 and 2**

One of you sent me this article about The Super aging issue in South Korea and how there are 10 suicides daily of people over the age of 60. One response has been to develop AI chatbot companion dolls because there are not enough younger people to spend time with older people and there is an epidemic of loneliness. While this is not ideal, it is one of the things driving growth in artificial intelligence from our youngest to our oldest generations.

As we think about all these realities which can feel a bit overwhelming, we're going to do several things as part of this series.

### **SLIDE (FLY IN)**

- **What is artificial intelligence?**
- **What are the benefits and risks of AI?**
- **How is AI impacting the church?**
- **Does the Bible talk about AI?**
- **How do we live as followers of Jesus in a world of AI?**

One of the things I learned back in college in the 1980s when I was working on a degree in computer science is that the term artificial intelligence was coined 30 years earlier in 1956. A group of researchers believed that every act of intelligence could be built into a machine. It was at a summer camp at Dartmouth where these researchers and scientists began to dream about what artificial intelligence might become.

## **GRAPHIC Dartmouth Summer Camp AI Team**

### **SLIDE**

**Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of computer science focused on creating machines or software capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and language understanding.** – Gemini (Google AI)

### **SLIDE**

***AI involves designing algorithms and computational models that allow computers to perceive, reason, learn, and make decisions. These tasks can include recognizing patterns, understanding natural language, solving complex problems, making predictions, and even interacting with humans in a meaningful way.***

Artificial intelligence is produced by humans in a way that it looks like it's doing human work. It is a system in a machine which stimulates and stimulates human intelligence. AI comes in many different forms and is not just one thing but is many things and is becoming more diverse by the day. There are three different levels **which you may have heard about when it comes to artificial intelligence.**

### **Core Categories**

Modern AI is primarily classified by its scope and level of sophistication:

#### **SLIDE      Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI):**

Also known as “Weak AI,” these systems are designed to excel at a single, specific task (e.g., facial recognition, playing chess, or generating text). All AI in use in 2026, including advanced generative models, falls into this category.

**Artificial General Intelligence (AGI): (fly in)**

Often called “Strong AI,” this refers to a theoretical system that could match or surpass human capabilities across virtually all cognitive tasks. While a goal for companies like OpenAI and Google DeepMind, AGI does not yet exist.

**Artificial Superintelligence (ASI): (fly in)**

A hypothetical form of AI that would significantly outperform the best human abilities across every domain, potentially possessing self-awareness beyond human control. Some imagine this taking on Godlike qualities or attributes which will overpower human intelligence to serve its own purposes of control and worship.

AI research this last year topped \$300 billion to move forward from artificial narrow intelligence to general intelligence to super intelligence. In 2025, the US was the most AI dominant country in the world, with the United Arab Emirates being second. Saudi Arabia is #3. The UK is not too far behind, and you might have seen an article recently about Microsoft investing \$30 billion in UK to power AI future. There are billions of dollars being spent to train people and develop new AI technologies.

I want to be clear that this series of sermons is not meant to be anti-technology. There are many positive things which happen because of advancement in technology over the course of our lifetimes. I view AI as I view just about any other technology that we developed. It is also like money which is appropriate because of how much money is being spent on AI in 2026. Money and AI are like a brick. We can either build a house with it, or we can break a window with it. We can build monuments or we can build hospitals.

I for one am glad we're still not using overhead transparencies or slide projectors to put words up on the screen. I am grateful for all the medical advances that have come because of technological breakthroughs. Most days I am grateful for my phone and the ability to stay connected to people using zoom or some other video conferencing where we get to see faces and not just hear voices. All of these can be beautiful things, and they also can cause much harm. Mathematician and Christian theologian John Lennox who does much research on AI wrote:

**SLIDE**     **"I often say that artificial intelligence is like all technology. It's like a really sharp knife—you can use it for surgery, or you can use it for murder."** —John Lennox

John McCarthy who coined the phrase, "Artificial Intelligence," may have put it best.

**SLIDE**     **"The real problem is not whether machines think but whether men do."** —John McCarthy

Here are just a few ways that artificial intelligence is already being used as a benefit in our world that I think makes it a better place.

**SLIDE**     **AI Benefits (fly in)**

- **Language translations**
- **Efficient surgical procedures**
- **Spam recognition for e-mail and cell phone**
- **Software that can transcribe meetings instantaneously**
- **More accessibility to populations with few resources**

What I have found interesting is that while there are many benefits that will come from AI, there also are inherent risks and many of those are being named by the very people who developed this technology. I read this book as part of my preparation for this series by Mustafa Suleiman who is the CEO of Microsoft AI and he is part of a growing movement of scientists and AI business leaders calling for us to slow down because of the damage they are seen being caused.

## **GRAPHIC The Coming Wave Mustafa Suleyman and Michael Bhaskar**

A podcast I found very helpful is a new one with **Steven Bartlett** as a young man interviewing AI pioneer **YOSHUA BENGIO**, Godfather of AI. **He reveals the DANGERS of Agentic AI, killer robots, and cyber crime, and how we MUST build AI that won't harm people...before it's too late.**

## **VIDEO Diary of a CEO with Steven Bartlett and Yoshua Bengio**

You heard him name several things that concern him when it comes to AI risks and we're going to delve into them more deeply over the next few weeks, but just taking a moment to list a few of them can make us a bit fearful if we're not careful. Eliazer Yudkowsky **is the** founder of and an American research fellow at the Machine Intelligence Research Institute (**MIRI**).

**SLIDE**     **“By far, the greatest danger of Artificial Intelligence is that people conclude too early that they understand it.”** - Eliezer Yudkowsky.

Yoshua names several risks that we don't have time to get into today, but we will address at some point in this series of sermons. All of these were named at the conference on AI that I attended at Fort Lewis College in December. I'm hoping we'll hear from a number of those presenters over the next few weeks as well.

## **SLIDE     AI Risks (fly in)**

- **Garbage in – garbage out. Where does data come from and who controls that data?**
- **AI Power being centralized in one nation or business**
- **AI not being willing to shut itself down**
- **The power and computer chips needed to sustain AI**
- **Mental Health Challenges increase with AI Chatbots**
- **Job losses in fields where AI takes over**
- **Deepfakes Are Going to Erode the Line Between Truth**

## and Fiction

A White-Collar Job Bloodbath. Many CEOs are already announcing layoffs in white-collar firms because of their adoption of AI, but less than a year ago, Anthropic's CEO predicted a 'white collar bloodbath'. The same kind of disruption that came to farming in the 1980s and manufacturing in the 1990s and 2000s is about to hit professions like law, accounting, banking, and engineering.

Mental Health Challenges Increase as AI Companionship Surges. Currently, the #1 use of AI is companionship and therapy. 72% of teens use AI companions, and 31% of them say they prefer their AI companion to humans. We've seen tragic teen suicides that have resulted from relationships teens created with AI but expect those (sadly) to spike.

Deepfakes Are Going to Erode the Line Between Truth and Fiction. We already live in a post-truth culture, but the rise of AI-generated deepfakes that are imperceptible from reality will fill our feeds more and more. Chances are your social media feed is already jammed with AI slop, and that's only going to intensify. Check out this video.

**VIDEO      AI People**

**SLIDE      AI Risks (fly in)**

- **Garbage in – garbage out.**
- **Mental Health Challenges increase with AI Chatbots**
- **Deepfakes Are Going to Erode the Line Between Truth and Fiction**
- **Discipleship by Algorithm**

This last one is maybe the most pertinent for us today. As David Kinnaman and Mark Matlock pointed out, most people today are [discipled by algorithms](#) more than they're discipled by their pastor or church. While that was true a decade ago, the compound effects of this are now unmistakable and deeply painful to most church leaders.

J.D. Greear is pastor of Summit Church in North Carolina. They are

Southern Baptism and he is currently head of the Southern Baptist Convention. While we are NOT Southern Baptist, I find many things he shares about religious life in America helpful. He noted in a recent leadership podcast that if you talk to any pastor and they'll tell you that no matter what they do, it's increasingly impossible to say anything on key cultural or theological issues that doesn't generate a slew of negative responses, online and in person (with people in your church).

As the culture wars rage on, almost any move you make as a church will be labeled "too something." *Too liberal. Too conservative. Too partisan.* You name it. You'll just never get it right. And that's because everyone in your congregation is being discipled all week long by different algorithms.

If you were to get a look into what's actually happening in your congregation, you'd see that one person's Instagram feed is serving up ultra-right-wing partisan commentary, while another's TikTok is feeding them progressive politics. Yet another member's YouTube is taking them deep into conspiracy theories. Others are obsessed with interior design, crypto-bro get-rich prosperity, true crime, wellness, alternative medicine, or Christian deconstruction.

By the time your congregation arrives at church ready to be discipled, they've already spent [49 hours of screen time](#) that week being formed by algorithms, each click reinforcing whatever caught their attention. A 30-minute message and an hour of small group hardly stand a chance.

All of this means that by the time this disparate group walks into church, they're already primed to hear what you say through a filter someone else created for them.

**Except they don't even realize it's happening.**

As a result, no matter what you say as a pastor, you're fighting a battle heavily weighted against you.

**SLIDE** **Digital discipleship is happening, it's just being led by an algorithm, not the church.**

Think of the current algorithm fragmentation as a discipleship fragmentation. Digital discipleship ecosystems have outpaced local formation. And AI won't make it better ... it might even make it worse. The calling of the church is not to win the culture wars. It's to be the church. To preach Christ crucified, risen, and reigning—not to echo the latest talking points from whichever news outlet or algorithm people happen to be steeped in.

If everyone in your church agrees with you all the time, chances are you're discipling an echo chamber, not a church. The gospel is bigger than party lines. It's bigger than algorithms. And while the culture wars will keep raging, the mission of the church is to keep pointing people to Jesus.

**SLIDE** **How do we live in an AI world? (fly in)**

- **Read the Bible more and screens less.**

## **BIBLE**

<sup>97</sup> **Oh, how I love your instructions!**

**I think about them all day long.**

<sup>98</sup> **Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,  
for they are my constant guide.**

## **BIBLE**

<sup>103</sup> **How sweet your words taste to me;  
they are sweeter than honey.**

<sup>104</sup> **Your commandments give me understanding;  
no wonder I hate every false way of life.**

## **BIBLE**

<sup>105</sup> **Your word is a lamp to guide my feet, and a light for my path.**

## SLIDE      How do we live in an AI world? (fly in)

- **Read the Bible more and screens less.**
- **Seek wisdom from Scripture, God's Spirit, and godly companions.**

Paul is often Writing his letters to people living in a world where there is much falsehood and where there is much that is changing in the world around them. They are often encouraged to worship the wrong things and as a result find a life that is not filled with joy but instead filled with anxiety and fear. I find his words to the people of Corinth helpful in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 10.

### **BIBLE**

**<sup>12</sup> If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. <sup>13</sup> The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.**

**<sup>14</sup> So, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. <sup>15</sup> You are reasonable people. Decide for yourselves if what I am saying is true.**

There is an invitation for us to use our brains and to seek wisdom from scripture and God's Holy Spirit and from others who are companions on our journey. We need God and we need each other which is why Jesus gave us those two great commandments of loving God and loving others. We are not meant to live life alone or artificially and that means we must work on discovering how to get along. We'll talk in one of the future sermons in this series about the need for human relationships and how it builds us up and makes us stronger even when they are hard and painful. I love that last line in verse 15 about us deciding what is true and how we do that by worshipping God and no other idols. That is a third thing that we can do as we live in an AI world as people of faith.

## SLIDE      How do we live in an AI world? (fly in)

- **Read the Bible more and screens less.**
- **Seek wisdom from Scripture, God's Spirit, and godly companions.**
- **Invite God to help you discern truth from lies.**
- **Patiently wait on God rather than seek quick results generated by AI.**

It's also helpful to remember that our faith is crock pot and it takes a while as opposed to microwave which just takes a few minutes. AI promises to make things happen fast but there is no substitute for slow and patient growth. If you look at the natural roundness, there is nothing that grows fast. Especially when it comes to trees or plants or even humans, it is slow growth over time which brings us strength and wisdom. Paul talks about patience as a fruit of the spirit and we have these words from our New Testament book of wisdom, James 5. I find this especially helpful since many people seem to be equating the rise of AI with the second coming of the Lord. That may be true and it may not be, and it really doesn't matter because we are invited to be patient regardless.

## BIBLE

<sup>7</sup> Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. <sup>8</sup> You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.

Finally, the last encouragement I want to leave you with today is to make your relationship with God and others primary, using any sort of technology as a supplement rather than making it the most important thing in our lives. Part of this is simply remembering what is important and what can carry us and sustain us not just through this life but into the next.

I found myself thinking about this on Friday as we did a funeral for a woman named Carol who died of cancer at the age of 57. She and her family had not really been a part of church anywhere for many years and it was a privilege and honor to do her service here in the sanctuary. One of the scriptures her daughter Tuesday wanted read was one that Kristen read to her when she met with Carol and her daughter before she passed just before Christmas. It also was from the same chapter in James and reminds us of how it is that we need each other and we need God and there are some moments that artificial intelligence will never be able to touch when it comes to our soul and who we are deep down inside.

## BIBLE

**<sup>13</sup> Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. <sup>14</sup> Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.**

**<sup>16</sup> Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.**

## SLIDE      How do we live in an AI world? (fly in)

- **Read the Bible more and screens less.**
- **Seek wisdom from Scripture, God's Spirit, and godly companions.**
- **Invite God to help you discern truth from lies.**
- **Patiently wait on God rather than seek quick results generated by AI.**
- **Make relationship with God and others primary, using AI to supplement.**

What is clear is that the AI revolution is not going back into the box

and the invitation for us is to be authentic followers of Jesus even amid an ever-changing world. That starts by reading the scriptures and discovering that we have a God who made us to love us as we read those words. They are meant to fill our hearts and turn us towards Jesus as Lord and savior, recognizing that God came to restore this relationship with us that is so easily broken in today's world. The invitation is for us to love God and love others and spend less time in places where our hearts are being formed into something other than what God wants for us or for those in our lives who are most important.

We seek wisdom from the scriptures, and we also seek a relationship with God's Holy Spirit, giving us the strength to have relationships with others that can carry us and sustain us when life falls apart. We then can lean on God to discern truth from lies and not just take things for granted because they are posted on a social media feed or someone sent it to us. Just this last week I received an e-mail from one of you that was a beautiful story about a very famous person, but it wasn't true and it really doesn't take much to do some research and to ask ourselves what is true and what is not true. We all fall for these things, including me, and we need to be willing to confess when we make mistakes and to be honest as we're seeking the truth.

As we enter 2026, a good habit might be to have a journal which forces us to write things down by hand and to develop patience which is not only a virtue but a fruit of the spirit according to the apostle Paul. Good things take time and good growth happens over the course of years and not just in moments from a search that gives us AI results. While it can be helpful to see what AI produces when it comes to questions that we have, we can't just take the answers for granted but we need to remember that our primary relationship is not meant to be with a machine or anything artificial, but a real God who made us to love us and longs for us to know that truth and feel it which is something that cannot be replicated artificially.

There was a lot of content we covered today and my hope is just to

scratch the surface on this first weekend and make you curious about how it is we might help each one of these ideas become a step that we can take that leads us towards joy and meaning and purpose and a God who came in the person of Jesus Christ. It's easy for any of us to get caught up in the world of artificial intelligence because it's all around us, but God will lead us through if we will turn to him daily, moment by moment, and remember the truth of who we are and who's we are.

Let's pray.

**SLIDE      Prayer**

## January 10-11, 2026 Order

1. David welcomes people.
2. Song: “Graves into Gardens”
3. Song: “Yes, I Will”
4. Jeff welcomes people:
  - a. QR Code and Connect Card
  - b. Invite people to greet each other, however comfortable and be seated.
5. Jeff Introduces announcement video
6. Announcement Video
7. Sermon
8. Prayer
9. Meditation Moments
10. Offering (Bibles and Journals)
11. Bibles for kids and students
12. Song: “Cornerstone”
13. Caring Ministers have Bibles and Journals
14. Welcome Center and Wesley Commons
15. Closing Prayer