

How to Spot a Counterfeit

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[0 : 00] Exodus chapter 30. The chapter began with instructions about the altar of incense, the golden altar.

! We took a look at that and saw this picture of prayer! and how the smoke of incense and the smell in picture are carried up before the throne of God and made some comments that week about our prayer life.

Then last Sunday we looked into this portion from 11 to 16 about numbering the people. We tried to understand numbering the people because it shows up a lot in the Bible and it's not always a sin like you may think of with King David but in that case it surely was.

We looked specifically then at numbering them nationally and understood the three times that it's in the Bible, twice God called for with Moses here in Numbers chapter 1 then in Numbers 26 with a new generation under Joshua and then we saw where David did it and we understood that there was some things that were specific to it meaning it was for men, 20 and above, that were able to go forth to war.

It wasn't just get the number of the masses at all. It wasn't a census like that but we learned that. Then we also took some lessons from numbering and saw that there was a right time to do it and a wrong time to do it which holds true in a lot of ways in the Christian life when there's a right time to do something that God is leading you to and then there's a wrong time to just presume that you should go do this because you've done it before.

[1 : 39] Sometimes you just need to be attentive to the voice of God. There's also something we learned from enlisting in that army there. It was expected. If you were that male and that age and able then you were expected to be there just like God expects his children to show up and be present and be engaged in the work of God and not to be missing and not to say I have other things to do but there's an expectation from God for those that he saves and those that he seeks to change and to clean up and to use in this life.

And the final thing we studied last week was that enlisting is not the same as engaging the idea being that that whole generation that was numbered under Moses in this day that they failed miserably in obeying God and trusting the Lord and going and conquering the promised land. They were sent back into the wilderness and 38 years they wandered around until they all dropped dead and then God said okay now let's take this generation and see if they do it and they did. So it's not the same. But anyway the next five verses of this chapter deal with the brass laver that was for the priest to wash with water.

And we've already covered that a little bit ago when we looked at a message earlier in the book that had to do with the priest and having bells and the pomegranates on the border of his one what was it called there the robe I believe of the ephod.

[3 : 02] And we studied that and saw that God was threatening death if they didn't do this and he threatened again in this in chapter 30 he threatened death in verse 20 and in verse 21 if they don't wash their hands and feet when they before they enter into the sanctuary or before they approach to the brazen altar to offer sacrifices.

And so we've already touched on it I'm not going to spend the time on it again but God's very serious about this stuff. He's so holy you just don't get to do what you want to do. You don't approach him, you don't presume to do things your way you always follow the word of God. But moving on, we're going to look now at chapter 30 and from verses 22 to verse 33 there's instructions regarding a holy anointing oil and then the chapter closes with information about the incense that we've already studied for that golden altar from verse 34 to the end.

But we're going to read it all this morning just to get our bearings. And so verse 22, would you follow with me? And we'll finish the chapter. Exodus 30 verse 22. The Bible says, Moreover the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Take thou also unto thee principal spices of myrrh 500 shekels and of sweet cinnamon half so much even 250 shekels and of sweet calamus 250 shekels and of cassia 500 shekels after the sekel of the sanctuary and of oil olive and hen.

And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary it shall be an holy anointing oil.

[4 : 39] And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith and the ark of the testimony and the table and all his vessels and the candlestick in his vessels and the altar of incense and the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels and the laver and his foot.

And thou shalt sanctify them that they may be most holy whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations. Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured neither shall ye make any other like it after the composition of it.

It is holy and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger shall even be cut off from his people.

And now this last section with that incense that they were to make and prepare to be burnt inside the sanctuary. Verse 34, Therefore the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto these sweet spices, stacte and anica and galbanum, these sweet spices with pure frankincense, of each shall there be a like weight.

[5 : 51] And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy. And thou shalt beat some of it very small and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation where I will meet with thee.

It shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof. It shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto that to smell thereto shall even be cut off from his people.

So here we have the holy oil and then also the incense called a perfume later on at the end of this chapter. Now the holy oil is a mixture we've read of four principal spices.

All of them are sweet. All of them are a comely fragrance. And they're mixed with olive oil as a base, the liquid of it. It's mixed over heat. It's all merged together and compounded into one oil-based confection or as he calls it a composition, a compound.

This is a unique composition. And it had a very strong and a very pleasant fragrance. The incense at the end of the chapter called perfume is a confection of sweet spices as well.

[7 : 05] And that one was dried and ground up into a powder. And it was burned upon that golden altar. It gave off a sweet smell and a smoke and we've already discussed that.

What catches my eye in both of these, and I reckon it caught yours as we read through there, comes as no surprise necessarily, but is that manufacturing these compositions is for the ministry of the tabernacle only.

God is very, very clear about that. The manufacturing and the using of both of these are reserved exclusively and strictly for the tabernacle, for the worship of God, and for the ministry of his sanctuary.

But why? Why is God so strict about this? Why would he even go so far as to threaten the people if they should choose or attempt to use it upon themselves or in their homes?

Why can't they wear it? Why can't they have their own home smelling this good? If God's places, if it's that good, and it's a holy oil, why not let all the people have this holy smell in their camp?

[8 : 15] Well, I think his attitude and the statements and the threatenings in regards to this, I think it shows us that this was special to God. And the moment that something so close and special to God becomes available to the multitudes is the moment that it loses its significance.

It's supposed to be unique. It's supposed to be holy. It's supposed to be reserved for the sanctuary of God. If it was to be passed around the camp, it would become normal.

It would become commonplace. And that should never happen with things that are holy, things that are reserved for the Lord and for His holiness. And a sanctuary itself means set apart.

And so therefore, it just stands to reason that the items there and the anointing oil of the sanctuary belongs set apart. It cannot become commonplace.

Now similarly, similarly, we the church have been given some things that are unique to the church. They're for God and for God's people and anyone connected to Him in a relationship and a bond through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[9 : 33] And there's some things that are special to the church and to our relationship with God, special and peculiar and I might even say holy. Things that God established for us, things that God instituted for us in our worship and in our work and in our ministering for Him.

And at the same time, just like God warned His people of making something and using it for something else, there are some, I might even say there are many, that have counterfeited what God has designed for His people, what God has reserved for a special relationship with Him alone and they're using it for other reasons and other ways.

We might say if we studied the Bible, it would be very easy to say this, that Satan himself is the greatest counterfeiter that ever existed, the greatest imitator of everything that's right and holy and pure.

And that's an easy Bible study which could go on into a list of a dozen, 15, maybe 20 particulars to show how Satan is imitating God. And counterfeiting what's His and what's right.

So a question I have this morning is how could we spot a counterfeit? How could we determine if a fragrance, a quote unquote fragrance from the passage, if it's holy, if it's ordained of God, if it's acceptable, how could we spot a counterfeit?

[11 : 01] Well, things have been coming into the church for decades, at least, for decades now. And it should, it shouldn't surprise us to know this, but I want to ask some questions about some things that have crept into the church.

And I want to ask these questions to help us to determine, maybe help us determine if it's holy and if it's of the Lord and if it's acceptable to Him to be putting and anointing His holy items, the candlestick, the ministers, the altars.

should these things be brought in to the house of God or are they counterfeits? Are they fake? And so let me ask a few questions this morning as we consider that thought and do our best to make sure that what we offer God is only what He calls for and is only pure and holy and right.

Let's pray first. Father, this is Your book and these are Your words, so please guard me and guide my mind and thoughts and words. Help me not to speak out a term.

Help me only say things that are right. Help Your people to receive them with the right spirit. May Your Spirit be in our midst and guide us into all truth. And Lord, may we learn where to draw the line.

[12 : 25] May we understand and may we expose things that are false. And may we only cleave to that which is good and help us in this. We could be prone to wonder and prone to receive some things that are new and shiny and seem exciting and others are jumping on the bandwagon.

God, give us discernment, please. We pray this in Jesus Christ's name for His sake. This is His church. Amen. So in Exodus 30, the first portion we read in verse 22 to 25, we notice that God gave the instructions for how to make this pure, this holy, anointing oil.

And so the first thing I want us to consider or the question I want us to ask about whether it's real or whether it's a counterfeit is does it match the scriptures? Because the scriptures tell you the exact measurement and the exact ingredients and if you take those as the scripture says, as the word of the Lord spake and you take them and do it from what God says, you will arrive at what's holy and what God expects it to look like and smell like and be like.

This is going to be an ointment. In verse 25, thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound. After the art of the apothecary, it shall be an holy anointed oil.

So I might just quickly say if it doesn't match the word of God, if those aren't the ingredients and it's not the right amounts of each ingredient, then it's not holy and it's not pure and it's not to be used and it's not acceptable.

[14 : 05] We could call it a counterfeit. We could call it a counterfeit. Does it match the scriptures? Because the scriptures are the first and they're the most important way to analyze anything that comes into the church.

Any way we do what we do, any way we worship and communicate and minister and attempt to serve God, we should analyze it. Does it match the scriptures?

If we didn't have a Bible, then we wouldn't have an opportunity to do that. It would be just, well, how do you feel? What do you think? And how has that worked? And has that brother done that? Are they doing it at that church?

Maybe we should do that at this church. If we didn't have a Bible, we'd be on our own. We'd be taking votes every time we come together about should we do this or should we do that. Eventually, who would win?

Who would choose? We need to check everything by the word of God. Thank God for a holy book that we can trust and count on. We need to learn to rely upon it for our ministry as well. Otherwise, we might be offering God something counterfeit, something that's not acceptable.

[15:10] Let's consider some examples of this in our churches, in our services, in our worship, or our ministry. I'm not going to go down this long list and I'm not going to do Bible studies on each one of these and prove to you the right and wrong way.

We're just going to throw these out and I'll let you discern. Let your ear try the words and see what you think. I mean, if you're spirit-filled, if you're led by God, if you're a student of the scriptures, some of these things will just click right away, some maybe not.

So, what about worshiping God? How should we worship God? The Bible says God is a spirit. And they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Now again, this is not a thorough Bible study on it, but that's one verse, one very clear statement about how God is to be worshipped in spirit, in a spiritual manner, and in truth.

It's going to have to match the Word of God. It's going to have to match what God accepts. It's going to have to match His person. He revealed some things to us. If we neglect to study and to learn these things, we're going to go off on our own path and decide God accepts this and there's many paths that can get to God.

[16:25] Where does man come up with that nonsense? But when we come right back to the Word of God, oh, there's one way, a narrow way, a way to worship God in spirit and in truth.

we've studied already, I mentioned it last hour, spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. Does the worship that goes on in churches today qualify as spiritual worship, as truth, in truth, according to truth?

Or is it just a carnal display of the flesh? And does it have any scripture in it at all? There was a, it was very recently, there was a song that I heard and it just, you know, if I was exaggerating, I'd say I threw up a little in my mouth.

It didn't happen, but it kind of, that's how the feeling was where it just got to this little spot and just repeated and repeated and repeated and repeated and went up a key and repeated and repeated and went up a key and repeated and repeated and it was just, what are we doing?

Is God at the throne saying, oh, this is so good. I mean, the people don't even know what they're doing, they're just clapping, clapping, clapping, clapping, clapping, clapping, clapping, and then take it up and then, clapping, clapping, clapping, clapping, bouncing, bouncing, bouncing.

[17:46] I was tempted to show you some videos of this stuff. It would have distracted too much. It would have maybe even turned you off so much and got you mad. I don't know. I don't want to waste the time with it, but it's very easy to spot this stuff and to put it out there and show you what's going on inside of churches where people get in their car and drive, they get dressed up, they walk in the doors and come into a place and sit down and then the worship is something you would be feeling very uncomfortable around.

It's not right. It's not in the spirit of God. It's not according to truth. What about praising God? This is kind of piggybacking off of the worship.

Praise in the Bible is directed to God alone. Directed to God. Praise ye the Lord. I mean, it's all over the book. It's directed to God. It's something that should be engaging of the people of God where we're invited to join in and to praise.

And yet, in certain churches and many churches today, their service, their praise to God is not engaging in any way. It's entertaining. It's you sit back and watch us up here put on a show for you. We've lined up the team of qualified and pretty people and we've got the spotlights on them and all of the instruments and you, you just sit and watch.

[19:10] You just sit and watch and nod your head and wave your hands if you want to. But praising God is something for the people to do, for the congregation to do, not for the performers.

I don't believe praising the Lord should be a performance at all. I understand there should be order. I understand for special music and things there should be practice. I'm for that, of course. But we better be careful that what we're offering is to the Lord alone and that it's not being to the congregation and the crowd. You want to edify them with what you're doing, not entertain them and not get them clapping their hands for you because they can turn pretty quickly. You give the flesh a little bit and he's going to love it and he's going to put on the show to get more. He's a filthy man inside of you. Be careful with your praise. What about the preaching? Turn to Acts chapter 2. I want to point out just a little thought here. There's so much to cover. Just little drops, little crumbs about this topic here. What about the preaching that goes on in our churches?

[20 : 20] The question is, if it's real, does it match the scriptures? Is it Bible preaching? Are you opening the Bible and turning to the Bible verses and hearing the scriptures or are you just getting some petty story about politics?

Are you getting some lame jokes and somebody telling you about their weekend and their time with their friends and their golf game?

Is that what you hear? And then saying, boy, isn't Jesus good? I was four under par yesterday. Look at Acts chapter 2 and I'm pointing this out because this is when the Holy Ghost descends and fills these men.

And in verse number 6, no, no, verse 4, it says, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now, what are they speaking is my question. Verse number 11 tells us the audience is given in 8, 9, 10 and 11, Cretes and Arabians and they say this, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

[21 : 45] When these men are filled with the Spirit and they're speaking, they're speaking the wonderful works of God. They're not talking about themselves and what they've accomplished and what their ministry has done.

They're talking about the Lord. This is just a drop in the bucket like I'm telling you. But while you're here in the New Testament, flip over to Colossians chapter 2. How are you going to spot a counterfeit?

Is their sermon, is their preaching going to be the scriptures or is it going to turn into something else? Look at Colossians chapter 2.

There is a train of verses we could study on this. Look at verse 8. Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.

I could say for decades now man has been standing behind pulpits spoiling the church of Christ that is spoiling like taking their money and using philosophies, using the traditions of men, rudiments of the world, using worldly practices and marketing techniques to extract money from the people that come.

[23 : 14] It's pathetic. It's counterfeit. I'm not going to run the scriptures on this. Peter tells them that there's some that come to make merchandise of you. There's some that are gods of their belly.

They use good words and fair speeches but they're not there to minister the word of God. They're there to get paid. They're there to grow themselves, to grow their ministries. What about prayer? That's something we do as people of God, a relationship we have to God in prayer. The scripture informs us. We've talked about this recently of things not to do, of praying publicly and praying in the corners and the streets out loud to be seen of men is what he said.

Praying to be seen of men, eloquence. And just where somebody, oh, they can pray. Oh, I love to hear them pray. Somebody uses vain repetition, Christ warned against that.

There's ways that we can spot a counterfeit. When somebody gets up with a book and opens it up and reads their prayer, that's a counterfeit. That's not acceptable to God.

[24 : 20] That's not from the scripture. That's not taught by the people of God. And when it doesn't match the word of God, the result is this, a counterfeit Christian culture.

You've been living amongst it for a while now, pretty much most of your lives for many of you. A counterfeit Christian culture where they have counterfeit Bibles, they have counterfeit music, they have a counterfeit message.

It becomes the in thing, the trendy thing to have Jesus as your friend and have a talk, to rent out an arena and fill it with a bunch of soft, non-biblical nonsense.

Pack the place with a bunch of praise and worship and rocks music and then give a little talk about how good Jesus is. It's counterfeit. It's the wrong ingredients.

For some it may look the same, for some it may even seem to smell the same, but it's not what God said in his word because he gave the exact stuff. He teaches us how to worship him, how to praise him and how to walk with him.

[25 : 29] Second question, back in Exodus chapter 30, we looked at verses 22 through 25. Now the next portion, a question as, is does it match what's been used in the past?

In verse 26, he was told to anoint the tabernacle and the ark and the table and his vessels and the candlestick and his vessels and the altar of incense. Everything that is inside the tent, even out there where the altar was, the brazen altar and the laver, that's there too, in his foot, verse 28, including the men themselves.

In verse 30, Aaron and his sons. Everything that steps foot inside or is placed inside the tabernacle courtyard and inside the building, including the building structure itself, that was the first thing mentioned in verse 26, thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation.

Everything had that fragrance put upon it. Everything that was made was consecrated to the ministry of God's sanctuary. If it was inside the door, then that holy and sweet and pure oil was upon it.

So the question today I ask is, is this the same oil that has been used on God's ministry, ministry that God has used, that God has blessed, is it the same oil being used today?

[26 : 56] Or is it something new? Is it something new that's been brought in through the gate? Because if it's right, and from the word of God, and if it's acceptable to God, then there's going to be evidence that it's been used in the past by God's people.

It's already on Aaron and his sons. It's already going to be on the candlestick and the table and the mercy. All of it's going to have this oil on it. So is it the same thing or not that's been used in the past?

The Bible says there's no new thing under the sun. And when God calls his people to walk in a path, he says, ask for the old paths. Walk in them. That's where I want you to be looking, not seeking for some new thing.

So what's being brought into the church today, does it match what's been used in the past? Some years ago, a good old Southern California boy, I don't know that he was from here, but he made his way out here to Southern California, Rick Warren.

He instituted a program. He decided to come out to the San Diego area and he wanted to build a church. He wanted to get something going. He wanted to do something for God. Instead of seeking what God has in his word and what God desires and what God blesses in the past, he developed a new way of building a church.

[28 : 21] He decided to take a survey and he went all through the communities surveying the people of the community. Didn't say, are you saved? Do you believe in Jesus? He just, he said to them, what do you want out of a church?

What do you want a church to look like? If you were to attend a church, what would it look like? What would it sound like? What do you want the music to be? What do you want the atmosphere to be like?

How would you want to dress? Do you want cream in your coffee or sugar in your coffee when you come? And he took the survey and the result he came up with was that he built a massive following by giving everybody what they wanted.

He gave them exactly what they asked for. Didn't give them what they needed. Didn't give them the word of God. Didn't give them what God desires a local church to look like or sound like or be like. He gave them what they wanted it to be like. And my people, God said, love to have it so. He's not the only one. His success sparked some others and there's been others before him that could fall into the same category, I'm sure.

[29 : 43] They've patterned their local churches in similar ways. Get them in by attracting them with things that they already like. Things that they already have in their world.

Americans are addicted to entertainment so let's entertain them while they're here. Let's make our church service be something that will keep their attention, keep it moving, keep it flashing, keep it

bright and allow them to enjoy themselves.

People are heavy on entertainment. They're heavy on social connections and activities. So let's give them a church with all the social connections and activities they can have. Let's start having groups.

Let's have them meet in each other's houses throughout the week. Let's develop these kind of little small core groups and bonds. Let's pretend that this is what local church is. Let's be heavy on the entertaining and the connections and let's be light on the Bible and on getting God what he deserves.

Non-existent in these churches is negative preaching. It's just not even there. It's not even close to being there. What is there is such a positive soft message of Jesus and of hope and of kindness and of love and you've heard it probably for decades now how love, love, love, all of that, share this, share that and that is the ceiling that these churches can take their people to.

[31 : 11] I wonder, sin in the Bible is likened to leprosy. So for the analogy or for cancer or something like that, could you imagine that you have it but don't know it?

Do you want the doctor that figures out you've got a problem? Do you want him to tell you? Do you want him to try to treat it or do you just want him to tell you, great, see in six months if you're still around?

Do you want to just hear a positive message when there's really a problem that's destroying you on the inside? Bible preaching deals with sin.

It's not afraid to call it sin. It's not afraid to proclaim what God declares and it's not afraid to push toward holiness. So should a preacher tell you the truth or is the goal to make you comfortable and happy and to keep you giving?

If I just keep you happy, I'll keep you coming and if I can keep you coming, I'll keep the money coming in and avoid the ugly truths by any means. The truth is I believe many churches are far less about giving God what he deserves and what he desires and they're much more about giving the people what they desire and they're counterfeit.

[32 : 26] It's a counterfeit Christian culture is what it is. It's not holy and it's not been used by God's people in the past and when you go up to that altar, when you go to that candlestick, you don't see that scent and that perfume on it because it's not right.

What's been coming in as far as I'm concerned, I doubt it's going to go anywhere. I think it's here to stay and probably just get more gross and fall away further and further. But we don't want it in here. So we're going to have to decide does it match the word of God? And does it match what's been used in the past? That holy anointing oil that God has blessed, does it match that?

There's one more thing, we'll come back to our passage in verse 31. Let's read from here to 33 again. Thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel saying, thou shalt be an holy anointing, this shall be an holy anointing oil unto me.

Unto me, God said. It's not for you, it's for me throughout your generations. Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it after the composition of it.

[33 : 37] It is holy. It shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger shall even be cut off from his people. The third thought and third question I want to ask is, is this new oil, is this a counterfeit or real?

How can we tell, well is it connected to the flesh at all? Or is it connected to a stranger? Somebody that's not God's people? If so, then it's not holy and it's a counterfeit and it's not acceptable.

Because the holy things of God, as we've seen, are consecrated for the work of God alone. They reflect his person. They are to be, this is a holy anointing oil unto me.

The holiness of this reflects his nature. It reflects his righteousness and his holiness. Let's take a quick peek at something. Just one little verse among a thousand, it feels.

Luke chapter 4. Would you find Luke chapter 4? One verse that gives us an idea of what the holy anointing oil pictures for us or what it represents to us.

[34 : 56] Luke chapter 4. And there's no idea of why God's holy anointing oil through God's holy anointing oil through God's holy anointing oil through God's holy anointing oil through God's holy anointing oil through God's holy anointing oil through God's holy anointing oil through God's holy anointing oil through God's He came to Nazareth where he had been brought up.

And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read. There was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. When he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written.

Verse 18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He hath sent me, so forth. The Spirit of the Lord is upon him. The picture is that he's anointed with the Spirit of the Lord.

The picture is this anointing oil on Aaron, the priest. He's saying the Spirit of God has anointed me to do these, to minister, to preach, to heal, etc.

[36 : 04] The act of anointing, the use of oil as we're studying in Exodus, strongly represents the presence and the work of God's Holy Spirit.

The same Spirit, the same person that dwells within all of his children, and that works through them to glorify God. And so if it's right, it's going to match the nature of God.

If it's right, God's Spirit will be all over it. He'll be present. He'll be bearing witness to it. And God will be glorified.

But if it looks like flesh, if it looks and sounds like it came out of Egypt, or it came out of Canaan land, you can count on it being counterfeit.

It may smell like it, but it's not acceptable. That stranger we read, it's not to be on the stranger. They were not part of God's people.

[37 : 14] It's not to be on man's flesh. It shows it cannot have a connection to flesh or to the world. We've already learned that the Lord thy God is a jealous God.

He revealed that to us in Exodus chapter 20 in his commandments. You're not to worship any idols. You're not to make them. You're not to bow down to them. I'm a jealous God. He redeemed that people.

He delivered that people. And he forbids that people to worship any other God. That same jealous attitude is here in chapter 30 when he makes this holy anointing oil and perfume and says, It's unto me.

It's holy unto me. So producing it and using it for any other purpose or manufacturing a knockoff to smell thereto and to look like it, it's forbidden and it's punishable.

He said they'll be cut off from the people. Cutting off, they're cut away. They're excommunicated from the covenant that God had with that people. And furthermore, in some cases, cut off means death.

[38 : 17] Like in Daniel 9, Messiah shall be cut off. We're looking at a counterfeit Christian culture today. Some things have come in the church.

And we need to test them. We need to check them. We need to see if they're real or if it's a counterfeit. And this Christian culture of our day is thriving.

It feigns itself to be the real thing. And I'll grant that some people, some born-again Christians, are just simply ignorant of this. They've been raised in it. They've been brought up around it.

They don't know any better. They've never been taught the truth of the Word of God. They've never been taught the worship God in spirit and truth. They've never been taught about the old man and the new man and how to put down.

They just, they're ignorant. And yet they're not seeking out from the Scriptures either to find out, are these things so? This culture feigns itself to be the real thing.

[39 : 17] But the real thing, as we know, is holy. And the real thing doesn't change with the times. And the real thing can be identified in the pages of the Holy Scripture.

The real thing has been blessed by God and used by God in the past and it still works today. The real thing doesn't appeal to your flesh. The real thing doesn't look like the world.

The real thing doesn't sound and dance like the world. It is still holy and it is still made in fashion for God alone. That's the real thing.

The Lord Jesus Christ said, Give not that which is holy unto the dogs. There's some things that belong to God. They're sanctified for God only.

Not only do we as a church need to hold forth the word of life and stand for the truth. As the Bible says, we need to be sound in the faith. We need to hold fast that which is good.

[40 : 23] We need to contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints. And doing that, we also need to be aware of a culture that has a form of godliness.

A culture that is turned aside unto vain jangling. A culture that is lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. A culture that minds earthly things.

How can we spot a counterfeit? I gave you three questions. Three questions out of that passage that helps us to spot whether this thing is holy or whether what's happening is a counterfeit for what God desires and deserves.

Can it be found in the scriptures? Has it been used in the past and God blessed it? And thirdly, is it connected to the world or to flesh?

Does it appeal those directions? Then it's not of God. And it's not holy. God help us to tighten up. To have our guard up. To not be found with them, numbered with them.

[41 : 30] That would turn aside. I don't want you to be hardcore and mean and aggressive against people that don't know better. But at the very least, keep your Christian life clean and according to scripture.

At the very least, you do that. You keep yourself right. Have a testimony. And when God allows and opens the door and gives liberty to influence or to talk or to correct or to help, to teach and to disciple, then do it.

Use it. And do it in love. Speak the truth in love. Because otherwise, we'll just get painted as this mean bunch of jerks that think we know everything.

And God has been good to us, giving us the word of God and giving us an understanding. We have to be cautious how we use it. But let's never, ever, ever give in to this culture.

Father, thank you for this attention to this truth. Thank you how your word gives us this light and points us in these directions. Lord, may we take serious what you take serious.

[42 : 34] And may we not be caught up in the things that go on and what draws attraction and crowds. Lord, I'd love to grow in this church in size and in spirit and in energy, but not casting the word of God aside.

Never. Not casting aside what we know works and what you bless. And not trying to appeal to the world and to the flesh. We're here for you.

I said it earlier, and I believe that this is your church. We meet here because of you. If it weren't for you, we'd be dead in our trespasses and sins, having no hope.

So God, thank you for a local church that stands for what's right. Lord, where we're not right, rebuke us, chasten us, cleanse us, help us to do what's right, to be pleasing according to your standard.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.