

How to Remain Innocent in an Ungodly World

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[0 : 00] Would you open up your Bibles to the book of Exodus in chapter 23?! Exodus chapter 23.

There are several verses of this passage of this passage of this passage of this passage! While we've studied either the commands given in Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments, or the judgments that we read and studied in chapter 21 and 22.

And so some of this is repetitive a bit. For instance, verse 1 talks about raising a false report that corresponds to the ninth commandment of thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Also, verse number 9, about oppressing a stranger, corresponds with the previous chapter and 22 and verse 21 that says, neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers.

And so we're familiar with some of these verses as we've already recently read them or kind of just compared them and studied them with the previous chapters. Much of this chapter is various commands and expectations that God has for His people.

[1 : 17] And we're no longer reading judgments or punishments for when they trespass a command. Now it's going to be a little bit more of some thou shalt nots and some of that coming back into play.

And today we're just going to read the first nine verses. So if you would, get your Bible open to Exodus 23 and follow along the scriptures, the holy scriptures. The word of God says, thou shalt not raise a false report.

Put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil. Neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment.

Neither shalt thou counsel a poor man in his cause. If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

Thou shalt not rest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter. And the innocent and the righteous slay thou not, for I will not justify the wicked.

[2 : 25] And thou shalt take no gift, for the gift blindeth the wise and perverteth the words of the righteous. Also, thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

And so we'll stop there. This passage is going to change after this to get into some Sabbaths and some feasts. But for these first nine verses, I want to just stay in this part today and show you, we've just read that it condemns several practices of false reports or a false matter, it says.

Being an unrighteous witness. This little chunk of scripture forbids evil doing and what it calls resting judgment, which means to pervert judgment.

It also describes taking gifts and perverting truth and justifying wicked while slaying innocent and righteous. All of these practices and all of this behavior is forbidden in what is to be a holy society, a people that God is...

He wants this people, His chosen nation, to reflect His person, to be a reflection of His character down here on earth. And He gives them these laws and He gives them instructions to follow.

[3 : 41] And there are certain things that they are to refrain from. And so from their individual relationships with either their neighbors or even their worst enemies, all the way up to the highest court of the land, God demands uprightness.

He demands innocence. He demands honesty and truth. He requires this of His people. It's how He expects them to live.

This policy or this thinking that anything goes or the survival of the fittest or anything like that is not of God. God is a God of order and a God of uprightness and a God of holiness and a God of purity.

And this stuff is a big deal to Him. And so we're going to take the day and push this at you as best as I can that we receive and understand this kind of...

Our behavior and our dealings with our neighbors or even our enemies, it's a big deal to God. He doesn't just say, yeah, you get a pass on that one.

[4 : 46] He draws it out. He spells it out, His expectations. Now, unfortunately, this nation did not live up to God's standard. And I think when...

I know you say, well, I'm not a judge. I'm not a justice or on the Supreme Court. And so how does this apply to me? Well, you make judgments every day of your life. You really do.

You make personal judgments. And if you're a parent, you make judgments over children. If you're at a job, an employment, you may have people under you. You make judgments on them. Or just individual choices that you decide is either acceptable or unacceptable, right or wrong.

So this doesn't have to be somebody with a robe on and a gavel to apply to them. Because judgment is something that we're called to do. Jesus Christ says, judge righteous judgment.

He that is spiritual judgeth all things. And God told His preacher, wilt thou judge them, O son of man? He expects them, all of us, to judge.

[5 : 46] Don't be deceived by somebody saying, oh, Jesus said judge not. You better get your Bible right. Because Jesus is expecting you to judge righteously. And He's expecting His people in their relationships to judge righteously.

Now, for us today, to see that this nation did not follow through and keep up with God's standard here, I think it's quite a relatable thing for us to live amongst a people where righteousness does not prevail and where holiness is not the standard.

In our world, in 2025, crime and deceit and unrighteousness, they're probably at an all-time high.

Especially in our land. It's very popular for somebody to cheat an individual at a marketplace or on OfferUp or Facebook. Or it's very common for somebody to try to cheat a company out of money or falsely sue them to get a big payday.

Scams are everywhere. I don't think there's ever been so many liars and cheats that are trying to get your information or trying to get into your pocketbook or wallet or trying to get a hold of your bank account.

[7 : 02] Whether they're standing on a corner right now with a sign pretending to be something they're not just to get some money out of you. Or they're behind a computer screen typing in some code to try to circumnavigate certain protections.

They're trying to get a hold of some money. There's so much deceit and so much lies. And I just recently got several texts about unpaid tolls in New Jersey that I haven't been to.

I've heard radio announcements of beware of tax ID frauds or things about tax season and how many scams are out there watching out for that stuff.

And so whether they're even a used car salesman, you know, the stigma of that one, or a deceitful plumber or somebody who's trying to upsell you for something you don't need or a realtor that's hiding certain things.

Just somebody seeking to take advantage of somebody else. It's all over the place. Now, in this text, I want to point out some ways that you can be clean. That you personally, you can't control the world.

[8 : 06] You can't deal with them according to the way they deal with you. You have to be innocent. And I want to point out some things that are charged you that although your society, maybe as a whole, may reject these sentiments and individuals will scoff at this and they'll seek to get their own no matter what it takes, you are expected to be different.

You are expected to follow the Word of God and to be a reflection of His character in this world. Paul says, we'll read this before we quit, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

You're to shine. You're to look way different than the world around you. And so I want to take this passage and preach to you how to remain innocent in an ungodly world.

We're going to follow what the Scripture says so that we can remain innocent in an ungodly world. Before we get into the passage again, let's pray together and just seek the Lord's help and submit to Him.

Lord, we need Your help. We need Your Spirit to take these truths and to place them and to instill them in our hearts and our minds.

[9 : 12] We need to be conformed to this Bible by the renewing of our mind. Please do the work today. And may Your Scriptures be powerful. May the truth be evident.

And may each heart be open and receive this. And God, I prayed it earlier. I prayed again that You'll change us today. That there'll be something inside of us that will change according to the Word of God.

Please make us holy people, godly people in this present age. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Alright, the first thing I want to say is how to remain innocent in an ungodly world.

And I'm going to spell this out in a few ways. The first way is to prioritize truth. Truth. Meaning put truth above everything else. Truth. That's the top.

That's what we're seeking for. That's what we desire. And if it's not true, then it's not going on top. And I want to show you a few things. Look at verse 1. It says, Thou shalt not raise a false report.

[10 : 09] Put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. It begs the question I ask, Why would anybody raise a false report? Why would anybody be an unrighteous witness?

What is the purpose for that? What is the motivation of that? I think there's several reasons that are plausible here. And I want to give you three thoughts. And then come at that with prioritizing truth.

Reason number one why someone might do that is because there's something in it for them. Right? They gain. If I raise this false matter or if I am an unrighteous witness.

If I say something and put my hand with the wicked and I agree to it. If I sign my name there. You'll give me that if I sign? Okay. And if I can get something out of it. Well then I might follow this course of action.

Even if it's a false report. Even if it's with the wicked. And even if it's unrighteous. Well money is. Money is proven to be.

[11 : 10] The love of money is still the root of all evil. And men will do many, many things to get their hands on money. Or on wealth. Or on promotion. And I think that's a very likely motivating factor for somebody to raise a false report.

But to contrast that. We are to prioritize truth. And so to come against that thought of getting success and money. We ought to hold truth higher than success.

Hold truth higher than money. Hold truth higher than a promotion. So that we don't fall into this category of our ungodly world.

But remain innocent. The business world has a term they use. And they say it's a cut throat business. What are they saying? They are saying men will cut your throat.

To get ahead of you. They will lie to you. They will cheat you. They will deceive you. They will even kill you. To take your place. And to win. And to be more successful. But that is not the life of a child of God.

[12 : 13] A child of God prioritizes truth. Because God's a holy God. And we studied it in Sunday school. He is the spirit of truth. And we don't want to be falling under this lines of a false reporter.

An unrighteous witness. And so a child of God prioritizes truth above success. Even if it means he has to settle for less. Even if it means he doesn't get that promotion.

Or he has to be poorer than he could be. Let's keep your place. And I want you to turn to the Proverbs. And there's so many Proverbs we're going to look at today.

You just stay there as well maybe. And keep a bookmark. Go to chapter 28 to start. Proverbs 28. And we'll be coming back to Exodus 23 shortly.

So pretty much every point has something that the Proverbs can back up. And I'll stick with this book because it's loaded.

[13 : 11] And because we can just get all we need right here for the most part. Proverbs 28. And notice verse number 6. We're prioritizing truth above success.

Verse 6 says, Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich. A poor man's better off if he's going to walk in uprightness.

There's another one I have marked here. Chapter 19, verse 1. Very similar. It says, So the wealth that you can gain from being perverse or being a false witness or an unrighteous witness is not worth it.

According to the book, the Bible, God says it's better to be poor than it is to get that money. And to get that money in your bank. And by the way, the Bible says riches certainly make themselves wings.

They fly away. That money that you get your hands on, you love, you lust, you sin to get, God will just let it slip right through your hands. It doesn't take much to have a flat tire and there goes a hundred bucks.

[14 : 28] It doesn't take much for something else to happen and there goes that money and there goes that money. It's better to be upright and walk in righteousness and even not have the money than it is.

So when you prioritize truth, hold the truth higher than success. Look at chapter 21 of Proverbs. 21. And God has a little formula for success and it's not deceit and being unrighteous witness and a false witness.

But rather humility and a few other things. 21.21. It says, He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life.

Righteousness and honor. You want to be promoted to honor? You want to be exalted and lifted up? Then follow after righteousness. Not falsehood.

Look at 22.4. Very similar. 22.4 says, By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life.

[15 : 29] So it seems God has a formula for your success. It is to be humble and fear the Lord and follow after righteousness and mercy. And then you can find honor and riches.

One more. 22.4 says, There's some things more important than money, than promotion and success.

And it's your reputation. And it's your testimony. I'm reminded of the man Job. And you don't need to turn, but I feel like we read this very recently on a Wednesday night.

In Job 27, when people were accusing him falsely, he said this. He said, Verse 4. Nor my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

God forbid that I should justify you. Till I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go.

[16 : 28] How would he let it go? By lying or by being deceitful. By a false matter, by a false witness. And he says, I will not let my righteousness go. Till I die.

He says, My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live. So he's going to hold truth above success, above wealth, riches, money, anything.

Prioritize truth. So the first reason somebody might raise a false report is because there's something in it for them. Another reason is probably to get back at somebody else. See an opportunity to get back at your neighbor or your enemy and to hurt them.

And it's no, that's not surprising to us at all. People go to great lengths to see other people suffer or to get retribution. But if you're going to be innocent in an ungodly world, you're going to prioritize truth.

So you're going to hold truth higher than your own feelings. Hold truth higher than success. Secondly, hold truth higher than your own feelings. Which is very hard for a lot of people to do.

[17 : 32] Why is that? Because you're run by your emotions. A lot of Christians that have a word of God, a God in them, they're still just completely driven and under the control of their own emotions.

And their own flesh. Instead of being in subjection to the word of God. And bringing every thought into captivity and to the obedience of Christ. You're in Proverbs, still look at chapter 20.

And verse number 22. Proverbs 20 verse 22. Say not thou, I will recompense evil. But wait on the Lord.

And he shall save thee. It's not up to the child of God to get back or to get even. And so he's going to hold truth above his own feelings.

The child of God surrenders their feelings and their emotions to the obedience of Christ. So that truth can prevail over your personal thoughts. And just this inner feeling of revenge.

[18 : 33] And of vengeance and retribution. Being innocent is far more valuable. Than getting even. You don't hear it now.

You can receive that now. But you'll know it when you stand before the judgment seat of Christ. That being innocent today in this life. Will be far more valuable than getting even in this life.

Because God said, I will repay. You just dump it on him. It's his job to take care of that. So people will raise a false report or be an unrighteous witness to get even with somebody.

Just like to get something out of it. There's a third reason that I think is because they'd raise a false report. Because they're not privy to the facts. That is, they're ignorant of the truth. And they just, you know, everybody else is saying this is the way it is.

And just kind of going along with someone's false report. And that's mentioned back in Exodus. It's mentioned back in Exodus 23 verse 2 about following a multitude to do evil.

[19 : 34] Or declining after many to wrest judgment. And so the thought is that the multitude or the crowd is all in one consent. And that would be a reason why somebody might go along with it.

And put their hand in with the wicked in a false matter. But we can be innocent when we prioritize truth. And when we hold truth higher than popular opinion.

Higher than what the world says. Higher than what the majority says. You and I as children of God, people of the word of God, must determine that what is true, that is truth, is more important than how anybody feels.

Not just myself. I'll hold it above my success. I'll hold it above my feelings. But I'm going to hold it above popular opinion. The Bible says, let God be true and every man a liar.

Meaning, if every man on the face of the earth, every single one is all in consent, is all in agreement, and it's against the word of God, we stand with God.

[20 : 43] We'll let God be true and we'll stand against every man. When you hold truth higher than popular opinion. The Christian soldier is told to take a stand against wickedness, having his loins girt about with truth.

We must prioritize truth and hold it above popular opinion. The multitudes have always had their opinions and their beliefs in direct opposition to the word of God.

But the Bible says, thy word is truth. And the Bible tells us to hold fast the word of life. Holding fast the faithful word. We don't let the word of God go.

We don't let it slide because the world is against it or because it's not popular. Because the world is accepting of something. It's against the Bible. It's against us. And we're against them.

And so you hold truth. You prioritize truth. Now come back with me to, you can stay in the Proverbs, we'll be back there in a little bit, but come back to Exodus 23 again.

[21 : 47] And a good part of this passage of nine verses, I'm going to kind of pop and just jump around a little bit now. Well, the first thought was you can remain innocent in an ungodly world if you're prioritized truth.

Hold it above everything else. And then secondly, if you'll practice impartiality. Now this sounds a little bit off, maybe to you. Just let it sink in because it's all over this passage.

Practicing impartiality. Being completely neutral and completely impartial in certain things. Notice this. Verse number three. Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.

Now I'm going to couple that with verse six, where it says, Thou shalt not rest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. What are these verses saying? The word countenance of verse three is to show favor to them.

It's to prefer the poor in his cause. Basically, I feel sorry for him, so I'm going to give him a pass. I'm going to let it go because, well, you're far worse off than he is.

[22 : 56] So for this time, I'm just going to rule in your favor. And God says, no. No, you never countenance or show favor to the poor in his cause because he's a poor man. And you don't attack the poor man.

Verse number six. Then he says, thou shalt not rest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. Meaning you don't pervert or twist what's right for the poor. You don't despise him and say, oh, you're poor, you're nobody.

Get out of here and I'll just award you the right judgment. No, you're neutral. And there's a famous quote here. It says, justice must hold her scales even. God is not a respecter of persons.

And so if they're poor, you don't get to give them a pass for their crimes and their wrongdoings and turn a blind eye. But you don't also treat them with despise or look down upon them because they're poor.

You're neutral. You're impartial. And you judge the cause, not the person. Notice in verses eight and nine, toward the end of our passage, verse eight and nine, it says, thou shalt take no gift.

[24 : 01] For the gift blindeth the wise and perverteth the words of the righteous. Thou shalt also not oppress a stranger. Feen near the heart of the stranger. So taking bribes, taking gifts, or looking down upon a stranger because in this case they're not a Hebrew.

And if they're not a Jew, then we'll treat them worse. God is treating somebody unfairly. God is, he's not for it. He's forbidding this action. And he's insistent that they don't show favoritism.

There's another place here in verses four and five. Did you notice this part about the enemy? So we've discussed briefly the poor.

We've discussed briefly somebody who would bribe or give gifts and also somebody who's a stranger. But what about an enemy? Verse four and five. If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.

Surely. You have to do it. You have to help. Verse five. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee, he hates me. He hates me. I don't hate him.

[25 : 06] He hates me, it says. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

The verse says thou wouldest forbear to help him. That means your will, thou wouldest, what you would is to just walk on by. That guy hates me.

He's got a problem with me and I didn't do anything wrong. I'm not helping him. That's a pretty normal and natural sinful response that most humans have.

If somebody's done you wrong, I'm not helping you. I'm not lifting a finger to help you until you come crawling on your knees and tell me how bad you are and how right I am.

God says if your enemy that hates you has an issue and a problem and you see it, you help them out.

[26 : 02] Now come to the Proverbs. Look at Proverbs 24. We want to be innocent in an ungodly world.

An ungodly world would let their emotions get the best of them and say I'll never lift a finger to help you. But that's not for God's people.

We're to be different. How different? The word of God different. Here's verses 17 and 18. Proverbs 24, 17. Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth.

And let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it and it displease him. You know what you and I are to be as children of God?

A pleasure to our God. We are to please him in all things. What displeases him according to this is when you rejoice and you're happy when something goes wrong with your enemy.

[27 : 02] Somebody that hates you and doesn't like you and treated you wrong. You see bad happening to them. Yeah, well they had it coming. Yeah, I mean they deserved it. And there's just a little bit of satisfaction in your soul.

And the Bible says don't you rejoice because if the Lord sees it, it's going to displease him. And he may turn his way of wrath, the wrath away from your enemy.

It might come your way. Look at chapter 25 and verse 21. If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat.

If he be thirsty, give him water to drink. What are you supposed to do? Not ignore him. Not turn your back. Not step on him.

You're supposed to help him. One more. Look over at 16. And there's a statement in this proverb here, chapter 16, that has dug into my heart for the last 20 years.

[28 : 07] Proverbs 16 and verse number 7. When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

The motivation for the man, or I'll just say the woman too. I don't want you ladies to get off the hook. When a woman's ways please the Lord, she maketh even her enemies to be at peace with her.

The motivation is to please the Lord. The motivation is not, oh, I want my enemy to be at peace with me. But it's, I want to please the Lord. And when I please the Lord with my actions and my attitude and my dealings with everybody, friend or foe, rich or poor, stranger or brother, but when I don't show partiality and when I show that I love God and I'm going to do equally to everybody and I'm going to do right in every situation, I'll please the Lord, but also that enemy of mine isn't going to be so angry with me.

It's pretty hard to be mad at somebody that's just compassionate and helps you out and giving and forgiving and compliant. It's easy to be angry with somebody who's bitter and nasty and cold.

That's easy to just, but when your ways please the Lord, when you show that New Testament forbearance and humility and love and charity, you'll make even your enemies, man or woman, to be at peace with you.

[29 : 46] So practice impartiality to remain innocent. Practice impartiality. Don't allow your feelings toward another to interfere with doing what God says is right.

Amen. What God says, I want my ways to please the Lord, all of them, to be pleasing in His sight. Because remember that verse we read, God sees.

That was that first verse I read. I don't know where it's at anymore. 24. Lest the Lord see it. Because His eyes are running to and fro in all the earth. Now coming back, keep your place in Proverbs.

Come back to Exodus one more time. This will be our last time back in Exodus. And there's one verse we have not covered or read here. And that's verse 7.

And so prioritize truth to remain innocent. Practice impartiality to remain innocent. And then thirdly, part company with sinners.

[30 : 50] And verse 7 says, Keep thee far from a false matter. And the innocent and righteous slay thou not. God says, I am not ever, ever, ever going to justify the wicked.

So you better stay far away from that stuff. Keep thee far. I want you in the Proverbs. I'll just give you two quick ones here. Proverbs 1. And then Proverbs 4.

Part company with sinners. You want to remain innocent? This is a good one. The Proverbs written by King Solomon.

He was pretty concerned about his son and the company that he kept. And so in verse number 10 of chapter 1, he said, My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

If they say, Come with us, keep thee far. Verse number 15 says, My son, walk not thou in the way with them.

[31 : 55] Refrain thy foot from their path. Keep thee far. Look at chapter 4. Proverbs chapter 4. And two verses here. These are short, but they're potent.

Verse number 14 and 15 says, Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it. Pass not by it.

Turn from it and pass away. Part company with sinners. Keep thee far from them. If it smells fishy, if there's a red flag going up in your heart or mind, there's a reason for it.

If you're not certain that it's right, that it's righteous and above board, then you best play it safe and stay away. Keep your hands clean. The Bible says back there, Put not thine hand with the wicked.

Keep thee far from a false matter. It's a great way to remain innocent in an ungodly world. It's a safe way. It's a smart way. Is to just stay away from the sinners and wicked.

[32 : 57] I'm going to take you to two places, and we're going to finish up here. I'm going to go back to 2 Corinthians chapter 6. This is a passage that's pretty popular, and this is very fitting for today.

2 Timothy 6. I'm sorry, Corinthians 6. And then there's one more place, it's Philippians 2. I'll give you a second to find these two places.

2 Corinthians 6. We're speaking of parting company with sinners and keeping far away and walking not with them.

So the end of this chapter 6 begins, I'll start in verse 14, and you'll see that there's certain things that just don't belong together. The Bible says in verse 14, Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?

[34 : 13] Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God. As God hath said, I'll dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore, all of that to say, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.

And I will receive you, and be a father unto you. You shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves.

Come out. Be separate. Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

That is what God's instilling in His people back in Exodus. That's what He's training these people for. Holiness. A holy community in society. And they fell far short.

[35 : 17] And now it gets applied to you and I, the church, where God says, I want you to be clean. You're not to have fellowship with unrighteousness. You're not to have communion with darkness.

You're to walk in the light as He is in the light. You are children of light. So be ye separate. And touch not the unclean thing.

Part company with sinners. You want to be innocent? You better get away. You better stay away. Because they will bring you down. You will not bring them up.

Who are you kidding? It's never happened. And it won't happen. So you better get away. Now I want to conclude with a verse in Philippians chapter 2.

Would you turn there and we'll be done. in Philippians chapter 2. We're speaking this morning about remaining innocent in an ungodly world.

[36 : 14] That you remain innocent. Though the world has not been inclined to follow the word of God and the world has not turned out the way He would have hoped in its original creation.

Though it's gone far from that, He has a light in this world. He has a remnant. He has a people of God that are to obey His word. And for us, we're going to remain innocent by His grace.

Now, before we get to this verse, when Jesus Christ came, the Bible says that He was made of a woman, made under the law. He says He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. He was made just like you and I.

And He was tested in every way, attempted in every way, like as we are, yet without sin. And He knew no sin. And so the Bible says that He was holy and harmless and separate from sinners.

Though He took upon Him the form of a servant who was made in the likeness of men, born of a woman, He was separate from sinners. Made in the likeness of sinful flesh, but still separate.

[37 : 17] He separated Himself. Come out from among them and be ye separate. Touch not the unclean thing. That was Jesus Christ. He fulfilled that. He stayed separate from sinners.

He told His disciples in John 17 that though you're in the world, you're not of the world. There should be a separation between my disciples and the world.

Just like there was a separation between Jesus Christ and the world. So a separation ought to be evident in the people of God. Now let's read this verse together. Chapter 2 and verse 15.

Paul says that, ye may be blameless and harmless. That sounds a lot like innocent. The sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

We're talking about being innocent in an ungodly world. We live in a world that's filled with greed and lust and lies and deceit.

[38 : 23] Yet let it not be once named among you as becometh saints. A good name is rather to be chosen. And your testimony and your reputation is far too precious to throw away on some cheap thrill or cheap promotion or a paycheck.

Hold fast your integrity and be strong in the Lord and be faithful and abounding in the fruits of righteousness. Keep your hands clean and remain innocent in an ungodly world.

And you'll shine. You'll stand out. You'll be different. You don't have to proclaim it from the mountaintops that you're a Christian.

You just start living like one and you'll stand out. You will shine as lights in the world just by not doing the things they do if you're blameless, if you're harmless.

You live like a child of God without rebuke because the world around you is crooked and perverse. So how to remain innocent in an ungodly world if God's people fell?

[39 : 35] They didn't follow through with what God laid out for them and yet we find ourselves in a world very, very close to that one. So will you fall or will you stand?

Will you be innocent? You're going to have to prioritize truth what's right and what's righteous has got to be more important to you than that money, than what's popular, than friendships, than relationships, than your own personal feelings and emotions.

You're going to have to say, nope, what's right is right and I'm putting that all the way at the top. I'm going to do what's right. You're also going to have to practice impartiality like I said and showed you.

It doesn't matter who it is. Family, friend, enemy, foe, you need to be innocent in your dealings with them and righteous before God because His eyes are on you and then finally, do you God a good to get yourself separate from sinners, to get away from the sinners.

It might be your own family that's bringing you down. Maybe you need to put some lines and draw some lines, build some walls and say, sorry, I love you, but I love the Lord more and I'm going to have to put a line up right there.

[40 : 41] I'm not going to participate. I'm not going to be part of that. Maybe it's people at work that are always pulling at you and trying to pull you in. You're going to have to take a stand and be blameless and harmless. You realize that you're a child of God.

You realize the pure and wonderful privilege that is to be born again and to have your sins forgiven and have eternal life and the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And would you walk in this earth and just forsake that as if it's not a big deal? As if it's not changed the destiny of your eternity? Would you live in the light of what God has given you?

Would you be that son of God without rebuke for his sake? He wants to use you to be a light. Just this week, I think I told Mark this.

Just this week, I guess I was moved by my dad's testimony last Sunday. I was moved a little bit by hearing him say that he grew up Catholic and that he got out because he just saw the hypocrisy and the folly of it all.

[41 : 44] And then he lived a life partying and he dropped out of school and he was just kind of in a dead zone in life as a young man. And he said, I called out to God. I said, God, if there's even a God, would you help me?

I need help. That was his prayer. And it was heard because the Lord got the gospel of Jesus Christ to him. And you know the rest of the story. But I sat there this week and I just looked around at the multitudes around me and I thought, Lord, how many of these people are praying that prayer today?

I mean, there's hundreds of thousands all around us. How many are calling out, saying, God, I need help. I don't know what to do, but I need help. But I said, Lord, would you please use me to get to them?

Would you direct them to me if it pleases you? I'd love to be used of you to get the gospel to those that are looking for it. I want to be the light in somebody's dark world.

I don't have to go out and just yell at all of them and tell them they're going to hell. Some of them know that already. And if they're praying and looking for God's light, I just said, Lord, would you please use me?

[42 : 53] Because I truly in my heart want Him to use me. I want to be the light. But it would also help me a big deal if I'm innocent. If I don't have a reason for them.

You know, the Bible says we're to be blameless here. Harmless here. Blameless. It says the same thing about the preacher in 1 Timothy, to be blameless. Looks like it says it about all of us. And I find that I want God to be pleased with my life.

I don't want to have my own reputation be the reason that somebody doesn't come to Christ or seek after me to find the truth. So God help us to be innocent and to be the light that we're supposed to be in this world for others.

Let's bow our heads together. Would you bow your heads? And I'm going to dismiss you in just a few minutes. But before we get out of here, I want to ask you a question.

I'm preaching to people that know God. They've been born again and they understand that this book is teaching them how to live their life. But I wonder of all the people here this morning, is there anybody that say, I'm that person that has prayed and said, God, I need help.

[44 : 07] I don't know where I'd go if I died right now. I don't know if I'd go to heaven. I've done some things that I shouldn't have done and God knows it. If you feel that weight of sin on you, I want to tell you this morning, you can have that weight taken off of you.

You can have Jesus Christ forgive you of every sin you've ever committed because the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse you from all sin. And I'm going to leave it in your court this morning.

If there's somebody here that says, I need help, I want to know how I can be saved and how I can go to heaven. I want to ask you to meet with me after this service, after I dismiss everybody from the building.

I'll say, would you please just hang around a little bit and just talk to me about it. I want to show you from the Bible how you can know that you have eternal life from God.

Not a hope so thing, not if I be good the rest of my life I'll get it. No, you can leave here with it in your heart. So I'm going to leave that up to you. If you're not sure you're saved and on your way to heaven, if you're not sure you're a child of God right now, then let's not let today go by without getting that thing settled and the gospel of Jesus Christ made a way for you to have your sins forgiven and eternity in heaven with God.

[45 : 23] Father, as we dismiss this morning, I want to thank you for this book and thank you for how holy and pure it is, how it points us away from this world and it points us to a better relationship with you, a clean and upright and innocent one.

Lord, help us to take this as serious as you do our relationships and our decisions and that we don't use deceit, that we are honest and full of integrity and that we shine as lights being blameless and harmless in this world.

Lord, this world is just as ungodly thing as we've ever seen or known. There's so much around us each day that can call us and tempt us and lure us astray. Lord, give us courage to stand against it and give us a strength within the inner man to be pleasing to you.

Help us to realize you're watching, you're noting, you're not missing a thing. Help us to remain innocent before you. We love you, Lord. You're so good to us and we want to thank you for what you've done for us and we thank you in Jesus Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.