

Locked Into Freedom

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- [0 : 0 0] I think we're live now. Okay, thanks, Stephen. We've been in Exodus for a while. We've been looking at how we should understand the law of God and just exactly how God relates to us as a lawgiver. However, the one thing that's crystal clear in all of Scripture is the love of God. Everything he does, he does for love, because God is love. So he can't do anything. I mean, it'd be an interesting exercise sometimes to go through the Scripture and look for the things God cannot do. Now, that sounds blasphemous, I know, but there are things he cannot do. For instance, Paul says, if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself. There's something God cannot do. He cannot deny himself, which means that since God is love, he cannot do anything that's unloving.
- [1 : 1 6] And if we don't understand what God's doing, it doesn't mean that God has taken a break from being loving. It just means that we don't understand. And, you know, there's a time coming when we'll be able to ask God why he did all these things. But I'll guarantee something else about that time that's coming. You won't need the answers. You will look into the face of your heavenly Father, and the questions will just fall away. They'll be irrelevant. Because you'll be looking into the face of pure love, pure righteousness, pure goodness, that has no explanations needed. Is that a good prospect? Huh? Okay. So we're taking a wee break from the series on Exodus this morning, but only in a sense, because we're in the letter of James this morning, and James talks about the perfect law that gives freedom. And so if you bear with me, I'm just looking up my... Oh, dearie me. No, it's all right.
- [2 : 3 4] I've got it here. I thought I had made a mistake, but it's okay. I'm reading from the New Living Translation this morning, and Stephen will put that up on the screen. And this is just the first chapter, but the first chapter, in a sense, sets the scene for what James is trying to do in his book. And there's one thing I want to try and accomplish this morning, is to put the sword of the Lord back into our hands, or more to the point, back into our mouths. Because there's a sense in which we've either lost confidence in the sword of the Spirit, or we've just become lazy, and we don't use it anymore. Or we've thought that perhaps it's just a ceremonial sword. It's something there to lie looking impressive and pretty and encrusted with jewels and made of pure titanium and in a glass case and looking wonderful. Just a ceremonial sword. But no, the sword of the Spirit, like every sword that's crafted by a craftsman, is intended for killing. The sword of the Spirit is intended for killing.
- [3 : 5 2] So who are we going to kill? Answer, nobody. God hasn't given us his sword for killing anyone.

But he has given us his sword for killing deception, for killing lies, for killing the rubbish that gets into our heads that affects our behavior contrary to the mind of God.

That's what his sword is intended to kill. So I hope by the time we go out of here today, we're a real bunch of killers. Okay?

Is that a good thought? You know that I edit a magazine called Sword. The reason it's called Sword, there were loads of flack and loads of criticism at the time for calling it Sword.

Because God's people have largely drunk of the spirit of this age, which talks about peace. Well, it's warmongering all the time. Humanity doesn't understand peace.

[4 : 54] And humanity has cast God in the role of a pacifist. God is not a pacifist, but he is a peacemaker. Let me make that distinction very clear.

He's not a pacifist, but he is a peacemaker. So we're going to look into the perfect law that gives freedom this morning with the help of the Apostle James.

So I'm going to read this chapter, and let's just see what he has to say here. This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm writing to the twelve tribes. He puts that in inverted commas. I'm writing to the twelve tribes, Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings! Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

[6 : 04] If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone.

Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they're unstable in everything they do. Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them.

And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. The hot sun rises, and the grass withers, the little flower droops, and it falls, and its beauty fades away.

In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements. God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation.

[7 : 19] Afterward, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him. And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, God is tempting me. God is never tempted to do wrong, and He never tempts anyone else.

Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions, and when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens.

He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. He chose to give birth to us by giving us His true word, and we, out of all creation, became His prized possession.

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters. You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

- [8 : 27] So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has power to save your souls. But don't just listen to God's word.
- You must do what it says. Otherwise, you're only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it's like glancing at your face in a mirror.
- You see yourself, you walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.
- If you claim to be religious, but don't control your tongue, you're fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress, and refusing to let the world corrupt you.
- This is the word of the Lord. And praise God that it's in the book. It's not a comfortable book, James' little epistle.
- [9 : 44] Martin Luther called it an epistle of straw. He was not a great fan of it. He said he wouldn't prevent anyone else from studying it or benefiting from it, but he personally gave it a wide berth.
- Perhaps because his understanding of justification by faith had come so hard won. Martin Luther had absolute miseries on the way to discovering that we're justified by faith and not by works.
- But James, you see, seems to say the opposite. He seems to say something quite different. So, in many ways, James is, it's almost as though it's an instruction manual.
- Somebody has called James the Proverbs of the New Testament. It's sort of, all the instructions just keep tumbling out. It's one after another. And they're not necessarily even connected to each other.
- It's as though James' head is full of things that he needs to communicate to the body of Christ because he's concerned about one thing. I'm going to suggest that you could understand the epistle of James with the benefit of one phrase from the Lord's Prayer.
- [10 : 58] Hallowed be thy name. That's basically James' longing and desire for the whole of the body of Christ. To these people he's writing to, he's trying to say to them, God's name is at stake in the way that you live.
- God gets the reputation we give him. Now if that makes you squirm a bit, then I would add my name to your list of people who are squirming.
- God gets the reputation that we give him. I'm not comfortable with that concept. but I'm also learning to be comfortable with the fact that God himself has undertaken to make it possible for us to live right.
- It's God himself. Paul says, God is at work in you enabling you to know and to do what pleases him. Now you stick up a hand if you're pleased that God is working in you to help you.
- Right, that's good news, isn't it? That no less than God himself is working in us. Is God for us or is he against us?
- [12 : 22] I can't even hear you and I know what you said. God is for us. A Bible teacher said many years ago something that has always stuck with me and I keep repeating it.
- So if you've heard it before you don't need to forgive me. I'll probably do it again. He said, God is not against us for our sin. He is for us against our sin.
- Now that's encouragement, is it not? God is not against us for our sin. He is for us against our sin. And so he's given this instruction manual through the Apostle James.

But let's think for a wee moment about who is actually writing this. This is James who actually is the brother of the Lord Jesus.

He's the half-brother of Jesus. Now, how does he introduce himself? He introduces himself as a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus the Messiah.

[13 : 35] A slave of God and of the Lord Jesus. My goodness. That sounds to me like the expression of a humble man.

I mean, do you not think he could have pulled rank at this point? Do you not think he could have said something like, the sibling of the Messiah?

I grew up with Jesus. We shared a table. We played together in the same streets. I know this man like few other people know him.

I was privileged to be growing up with him. And so he could have thrown his weight around here, couldn't he? But he doesn't even mention the fact that he's the Lord's brother.

He just says, I'm a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that gives me confidence with this epistle because that says to me, I can trust the word that's being written by a man who is that humble that he wouldn't even draw attention to the fact that he had personally grown up in the same house as the Messiah of Israel.

[14 : 46] Amen? So James here has a mountain of instruction for us. It tells us how to rejoice in trials, how to persevere, how to seek wisdom, how to refuse doubt, how to think rightly about God, how to fight deception, how to control our tongues and how to manage our anger, how to have true faith, how to submit to God's will, how to have patience, how to confess our sins, how to resist the devil and how to pray and even pray for healing.

He teaches us all those things and a lot more. It's all just tumbling out of James. But there's one thing that he says that is so important.

He wants us to understand that, as he says in the second chapter, if you read into chapter 2, verse 20, faith without works is dead. Faith without works is dead.

Now, scholars have argued for centuries about what James means by this. In fact, many scholars actually see a major dispute here between James and the apostle Paul.

Because Paul said, we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. One is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

[16 : 22] And James says, faith without works is dead. So it seems as though the two apostles are at loggerheads here, doesn't it? James says, don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. And so it happened just as the scriptures say, Abraham believed God and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.

He was even called the friend of God. So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. Now that's James.

We're shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. And then along comes Paul, a good few years later it has to be said, and he says this, Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation.

What did he discover about being made right with God? If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about, but that was not God's way.

[17 : 41] For the scriptures tell us, Abraham believed God and God counted him as righteous because of his faith. Well, that seems like an impasse, doesn't it?

It does until we notice two things. We're not comparing apples with apples here. James and Paul are not actually saying the same thing about the same thing.

We need to become very clear about this because if I was to put it this way, I would draw attention to just two words in the readings there. James 2, 21 to 24, he says, so you see, this is verse 24, so you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do.

We are shown to be right with God by what we do. What's James talking about? He's talking about evidence that we're right with God. we are shown to be right.

Okay? Paul, on the other hand, is saying, what did Abraham discover about being made right with God?

[19 : 04] He's not talking about evidence at all. He's talking about the means of being saved. what did Abraham discover about being made right with God?

So, on the one hand, James is talking about how we are shown to be right with God. That's the evidence. And Paul's talking about how we are actually made right with God. That's the means by which we're saved.

So, Paul is saying, the means by which we're saved is we are saved and justified by faith. James is saying, if you want to have people believe that you're truly saved, there needs to be evidence.

If Christ is in you, then Christ needs to be seen in the way you use your hands, in the look that's in your eyes. if you meet an enemy that you know has got it in for you, what are they going to see in your eyes?

Or let's put it around another way. What do you think Pilate saw when he looked into the eyes of Jesus? Did he see hatred for himself?

[20 : 25] It's inconceivable, isn't it? The king of love standing in front of him bruised and battered by Roman soldiers. And Pilate could not have looked into Jesus' eyes and seen hatred and resentment.

He just couldn't have seen it because it wasn't there. Jesus would have seen love.

Jesus would have seen to it that there was love in his eyes for this man who was his enemy. Let's just think of that for a moment.

This was the man who said, why don't you talk to me? Do you not realize I've got the power of life and death that I can crucify you or I can set you free?

Jesus said, you wouldn't have any authority unless it was given you from above. So you see, Jesus would have looked at Pilate with love because Jesus was the living embodiment of everything he taught and he said, love your enemies because he loves his enemies.

[21 : 53] Now, brothers and sisters, if Christ is in us, there will be evidence that Christ is in us. It can't be repressed.

It can't be suppressed. You cannot suppress the fact that Christ is in your life, that he indwells you. He indwells us by the Holy Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the same spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. And so James is teaching us, he's giving us all these instructions, he's calling us to obedience as evidence that we are saved people.

And the Holy Spirit is within us, enabling us to know and to do what pleases our God. And this spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead is the spirit who is enabling you to obey the word of God.

Is there anything that we cannot do that God commands? Now, I'm going to ask that again. It would be nice to just see, heads nodding or heads shaking or lips moving or whatever.

[23 : 15] Is there anything God commands that we cannot do by the indwelling power of the Spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead? I've just painted you into a corner, haven't I?

Or at least God has. God our Father has painted us into a corner. There is nothing we cannot do with the help of the indwelling Spirit of God.

Okay. Now, we need to forget. We need not to forget. You'd think a guy who's handling words all the time would remember to keep the word little not word in there if it's needed.

And it is needed. We must not forget that the God who judges is the God who saves before he commands.

Now, what did we discover in our tramp through Exodus so far? We've discovered that the Ten Commandments of God were given after he delivered them from slavery in Egypt, not before.

[24 : 19] He saved them first and then began to give them his commandments. The obedience that he calls us to is intended to secure our joy, not to kill it.

And we got a taste of that from Cal last week. The apostles were clear that his commandments are not burdensome. It's ignoring his commandments that is burdensome because sin is burdensome.

Sin puts a weight upon us. So, we need to learn how to not sin. We need to learn how to obey. And we need to stop arguing that it's impossible to obey.

Put it this way around. Jesus saves. What does he save us from? I mean, if we remain essentially the same people we were when Jesus saved us, what has he saved us from?

Denial of sin, I would say, is the ultimate expression of wokeness. If you want to be woke today, deny your sin. Because what it does is it protects us from the truth by inverting reality.

[25 : 51] And it makes God out to be the liar, and we're the ones who are telling the truth. Because if we say we have no sin, we make God out to be a liar, and his word is not in us.

that's the apostle John. We end up, the denial of sin actually imprisons us in a sort of Disney fantasy, which denies us the opportunity to experience God's mercy, or to experience God's forgiveness and amazing love.

Denial of sin makes us say we can't, when in fact the Bible says we can. Let's hear that again, this is so important.

Denial of sin makes us say that we can't, when in fact the word of God says we can. Identity politics that is practiced everywhere these days, it's running all through our society.

Identity politics is really from the pit of hell. It's a demonic strategy. for insinuating locking lies into our minds, so that we begin to believe that certain things could never change.

[27 : 13] We believe wrong things about ourselves. Once we accept the lies about ourselves, we believe that our sin is part of our identity. We believe it's something that can never be changed.

We believe it's something from which we can never be free. And consequently, we resent the suggestion that we can be free. And we refuse any offer of help to be free.

Now, can we please be patient with this, please, because this is a key point for us to understand. Otherwise, James is wasting his breath, he's ink.

we need to understand that if our sin is part of our identity, it can never be changed. But if sin is something that we can say no to, then we can have freedom.

He's talking about the perfect law that gives freedom. How does it give us freedom? I want to suggest to you what the law does, is it actually sets us free from unreality.

[28 : 24] It sets us free from unreality. We begin to see that we are not who we thought we were. Example.

Please don't tell me not to worry. I'm a worrier. That's what I am. I've done that all my life. I always worry. And when I'm not worried, I worry why I'm not worried.

So, please don't ask me to change. That's who I am. That's identity politics, folks. That's just Christians playing the same game.

I'm a worrier. As soon as you believe it's your identity, you don't expect to be able to change. But if you refuse to believe it's your identity, if you believe that your worry is breaking a commandment of God who says, have anxiety about absolutely nothing.

But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your request known to God, and the peace of God that passes understanding will garrison your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

[29 : 36] words. You see what I mean? You see the difference between saying, I'm a worrier and I can't change, and then realizing that God has said, I don't want you to be anxious about anything, and so I say, okay, Lord, the spirit at work in me is the spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, so it is now possible for me not to worry, so I'm not going to worry.

And then you think, oh, that doesn't really work, I'm still worried. It's not true. Don't we do that we had this kind of wrestling? But the glory of this is that James is not commanding us to do anything impossible.

When he tells us to control our tongues, we can control our tongues. When he tells us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry, he's telling us what's possible, not what's impossible.

Do you want to be free? Do you want to be free of being a warrior? Do you want to be free of having a quick temper? Do you want to be free of eating when you shouldn't eat and you don't need it?

Do you want to be free and let the world see that you're free? Do you want to let your family see that you're free, that you're not part of the problem like everybody else, that you're part of God's answer to everybody else?

[31 : 08] Do you want to be free? Because if you want to be free, if the Son has set you free, and he has, then you're free indeed. Ethel has taken to finishing my statements for me.

But here we go, I mean, what a wonderful God we serve, what an amazing God we serve. He's covered all the bases. He said, look, I understand it. You're going to be fooled into thinking that you're a warrior and you can never change.

But you can. Don't have that word can't in your vocabulary. Toss it out, tear it out of your dictionary. It doesn't belong to you. You have been set free.

You can be a different person. You can be a person who brings glory to God because you refuse anxiety. So how do we do it? How do we refuse these lies that lock us into a kind of behavior that we need to get rid of?

How do we get rid of these locking lies? How do we get locked into freedom? And that's the question I have to put before everybody today. How do we get locked into freedom? Answer, by using the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, by really believing the Word of God.

[32 : 27] Raymond said at the beginning that this is not a passive thing that we're here for today. We're not here as an audience, as spectators, as folk who are just interested in what the folk at the front are doing.

We're actually all engaged, we're all involved, we're all active, we're not passive. Well, it's the same here in our attitude to the Word of God.

We're not passive with the Word of God. We take the Word of God and we send it into battle. We use the sword of the Spirit. It's supposed to kill something.

And since it's the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, it's clearly not intended to kill people. It's intended to kill lies.

It's intended to kill untruth. It's intended to kill unbelief. God will give you love. It's true. My brothers and sisters, I want to ask a question here that I think we need to get to grips with.

[33 : 32] Is God unreasonable to command? Now, look at Calvary. Think of Calvary. Think of our Savior on the cross.

Think of the price God paid to bring you to himself. And now, answer the question, would God's commands ever be unreasonable?

Definitely not. Okay, so if God is never unreasonable to command, that means, now wait for it, that means that we are unreasonable to disbelieve and to disobey.

I hope, I hope I'm making this clear, because honestly it's so important that we grasp it.

If God is not unreasonable to command, we are unreasonable to disbelieve and disobey. And let me say again, if we disbelieve, we will disobey.

[34 : 44] If we disbelieve the word of God when it says, have no anxiety about anything, and we start to argue with that and say, well, that's okay, you know, if people can accept that, that's fine, but that's not me, I'm a worrier, I'm always going to be a worrier, that's who I am.

if we disbelieve, if we disbelieve, and God's word tells us not to be anxious, if we disbelieve, we will be anxious.

We will worry, we will fret, have no anxiety about anything. That doesn't really leave anything out, does it?

Have no anxiety about anything. it might be your finances, maybe there's too much month at the end of your money. I think we all know that feeling.

It could be anything. We all worry about things, don't we? Put a hand up if you haven't worried about anything this week. See, what an honest congregation we are.

[35 : 54] Isn't that lovely? Such honesty. We've all worried about things this week. I'm not suggesting here that we suddenly become, we walk out of that door today and we're suddenly a superhuman race.

That's not what I'm suggesting. I'm just saying, come on, let's change your mindset about all this. Let's begin to think in terms of the possibilities that God has opened for us.

Because the Holy Spirit is at work within us. He raised Jesus Christ from the dead and he can raise you and me out of anxiety. Amen?

But we need to believe the word of God. Fear not, I am with you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

God. We need to take the word of God and send it into battle, not against other people, but against the lies and the garbage that this world tries to put into our minds.

[37 : 06] The world is full of its clever sayings that have no basis of agreement in Scripture. all sorts of rubbish gets pumped into us from the time that we're born.

The Lord helps those who help themselves. No, he doesn't. The Lord helps the helpless. Let's get short of the lies.

Let's begin to think the way Scripture teaches us to think. Let's have a holy aggression against the lies that are in our own heads. And let's not give them house room anymore.

Let's take ourselves and give ourselves a good talking to. Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why are you so disturbed within me? Put your trust in God, for I will yet praise him, my King and my God.

That's David giving himself a good talking to. Do you need to give yourself a good talking to? I think we all do.

[38 : 22] The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible. Honestly, if I was to try and recommend a commentary to you right now for understanding God's Word, I would say you can't beat the Bible.

What do I mean by that? Well, I mean that even if you struggle over a text and you just wonder how can I agree with that?

Surely I can't understand that. How do I get my head around that? If we're patient enough and if we trust enough, God in his mercy and in his own good time will take us to another part of Scripture that will throw light on the bit we're having trouble with.

I promise. And I'm not saying trust me, I'm a politician. I'm saying trust me because I believe what's on the page here. I believe what's on the page.

The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible. Sooner or later, if you have problems with a passage of Scripture, God in his mercy will lead you to another part of the Bible that will give you all the light that you need, just trust him in the meantime.

[39 : 43] Because at the end of the day, we live by faith, not by sight. Don't we? We live by trust, not by having the answers all fall into our hands whenever it suits us.

James is concerned about our obedience. He's concerned that we should answer the prayer in our own lives. Hallowed be thy name.

Let's just think for a moment about how we can benefit from the Bible as a commentary on itself. James has said to us that we should be slow to speak.

We should be quick to listen and slow to speak and slow to get angry. Where do you think you would get the inspiration for saying that, for that kind of counsel?

What about Psalm 103 verse 8? The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

[41 : 00] See, there's Psalm 103 verse 8. And when the psalmist wrote that, he had no idea he was going to be writing a commentary on James. But let's go back further.

What about Genesis 15 verses 12 to 16? As the sun was going down, Abraham fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down upon him.

And then the Lord said to Abraham, you can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years.

But I will punish the nation that enslaves them. When is he going to do that? He's going to do it in 400 years' time. And in the end, they will come away with great wealth.

As for you, he says, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age. After four generations, Abraham, your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.

[42 : 10] When are the sins of the Amorites going to be judged? In 400 years' time. The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry, filled with unfailing love.

And then Exodus 12 gives us a bit of a commentary on James as well. The people of Israel had lived in Egypt for 430 years. In fact, it was on the last day of the 430th year that all the Lord's forces left the land.

And so here's God working out his purposes because he's slow to anger. He has just poured out his anger and judgment on Egypt and now he's about to take Israel across the wasteland to bring his judgment upon the Amorites.

But he has waited four centuries to do so because he's slow to anger and abounding in love. You see how the Bible is a commentary on itself?

You'll find that a lot as you take time. But we've got to be aware of these lies that lock us into bad behavior because we honestly, we really believe that we can't stop worrying.

[43 : 41] We honestly believe that it's just something we've got to deal with. Do you know what the sin of worry says?

It actually says it means our theology has gone dark. It means that we're thinking thoughts of God that are unworthy of him. When we start to worry and we allow our worry to keep running, we're saying if God was wise, he would be as worried as we are.

Lord, will you please just move off the throne for just half an hour until this thing's over? I think my worry will achieve more than your mighty power could ever do.

So, Lord, will you just please let me take care of myself for a wee while? That's what worry is saying. It's a very, very subtle form of idolatry that takes God off the throne and puts myself on the throne.

Hello? Is this the way we want to live? Now, nobody should go away from here today feeling condemned because God is not in the condemnation business.

[44 : 57] If he's challenging us about our worry, it's because the Bible is a book, is a Bible of, it's a compendium of 66 love letters from the Lord, from Genesis to Revelation.

I think you'll also find his love in the maps if you look for it. Genesis to maps, God's love, wall-to-wall love, and you will find that God has given us his word in a book to express his love to us, not to bring us down, not to make us feel condemned, but we must not think in terms of impossibility if we are children of God.

We must think in terms of what God enables us to do by the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Amen.

Let's pray. Living God, we thank you for the living word that gives freedom. We praise you that your law delivers us from unreality.

Forgive us, Father, that we have believed lies, that we have believed unreality. We have believed that it's impossible for us to change. We have believed that we can never get control of our temper.

[46 : 25] We can never get control of our finances. We can never get control of our worry. We believe that we can never forgive those who hurt us.

that we can never love our enemies. We believe all these lies, Father, and we ask your forgiveness and we repent of believing these lies. And so we remember that you have told us to be anxious about nothing, that you have told us to love our enemies and pray for those who harm us.

And we know, Lord, that you're not unreasonable to command these things, but we are unreasonable if we disobey because we disbelieve. Father, help us in Jesus' name and help us to understand that the Spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead can give life also to our mortal bodies and enable us to be the people whose lives say, hallowed be thy name.

For Jesus' sake we pray. He's saved.