

# What is a gospel church? (2) The Bible

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, thank you so much, Jerome, for leading us this morning.

My name is Philip Wells. I work for the church full-time as elder at this particular point. I'm not going to be doing that forever. And what we're doing in these Sunday mornings is trying to go back to the basics of what sort of church we are and as we look forward into the future, what sort of principles we really, really want to cling to because we're bothered about what sort of church we're going to turn out to be, which direction we're going forward.

So thank you, Jerome, for leading us so helpfully and praying. Last time we looked at what is a gospel church and I explained something about gospel and evangelical, which I'm going to recap in a moment.

And this time I'd like to think about what being evangelical is in terms of the Bible. So this is really a talk about the Bible. And I wonder which of these statements you agree with.

Okay, the Bible is old-fashioned and out of date. A lot of people think the Bible is old-fashioned and out of date. So do you agree with that statement? The Bible is difficult to read and makes no sense.

[ 1 : 28 ] Well, perhaps no sense to me is what you might say. Do you agree with that statement?

There is a bit of the Bible that says some of the Bible is difficult, actually. The Bible is unscientific and unbelievable in this modern time.

Do you agree with that statement? The Bible is full of contradictions. I've had various people tell me that. And then I say, name one of them. And they say, well, that's a bit of an unfair question.

Anyway, the Bible is full of contradictions. People agree with that statement? The Bible, this is more sophisticated, is patriarchal and an enemy of human flourishing, particularly in the areas of gender and sexuality.

The Bible is the enemy. The people would say that. And maybe, I don't know everybody here, maybe you're thinking that. But people do say that.

Or maybe you would say this. I love to read the Bible. It brings hope and light into my soul. When I read the Bible, I hear God speaking to me.

[ 2 : 32 ] I guess quite a number of people would say, that's my experience of the Bible. So that's what I want to think about this morning, the Bible. Would you say, and this is what evangelical people say, what the Bible says is what God says.

What the Bible says is what God says. When you hear the Bible saying something, God is saying it. John Wesley, the old English preacher, who, not single-handedly, but with his associates, I think arguably changed the social history of England, changed the course of English history by preaching the gospel up and down the country in what would then be subsequently called the Methodist revival.

He said this about the Bible. First of all, he talks about himself. I am a spirit come from God and returning to God, just hovering over the great gulf.

Till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen. I drop into an unchangeable eternity. I want to know one thing, the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore.

God himself has condescended to teach the way. For this very end, he came from heaven and he has written it down in a book. Give me that book!

[ 4 : 01 ] At any price! Give me the book of God! And there's John Wesley. He's saying how important the Bible is.

It's the way to heaven. Give me that book! So that's what I'd like us to think about. So let's do a little recap. What is a gospel church?

So what we said last time is there are all sorts of churches, Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal, Baptist, Anglican, Methodist, all different sorts of churches. Does it matter? Are they the same?

Of course, the person in the street would probably say, well, what's the difference between them? They probably serve different grades of coffee, but that's about all you can tell between them. And what I was trying to persuade us of last week was it does matter what the message is from that church.

And if you listened openly in an unbiased way to what the message was, would you hear the gospel? That's the question. Would you, if you went into that church and you listened to what they say, would you hear the way to be saved, the way to be forgiven your sins, the way to get to heaven?

[ 5 : 09 ] And that was what I was trying to say a gospel church is. And I think as it says in our title, no, perhaps it doesn't, it says it in a minute. Evangelical, as Jerome pointed out, our full title is Calvary Evangelical Church.

It means gospel church. And the claim is, and I hope this is true, I hope before God this is true, if you come and sit and listen and listen to the message that this church proclaims and people standing up here proclaim, you would hear how to be saved.

From last time, this gospel, you could put it into a nutshell here. The Apostle Paul says, Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

He was buried. He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures. And he says, by this gospel, you are saved if you hold firmly to it. So there's a message which saves us.

And as I was getting ahead of myself, Calvary Evangelical Church means not to do with jelly, evangelical. It actually, I went through this last time, means good news.

[ 6 : 26 ] And the good news is the Christian good news, the good news about Jesus Christ, about him, his death, for our sins, according to the scriptures, his resurrection on the third day, according to the scriptures.

And the gospel church receives that, believes that, and tells the good news about Jesus Christ.

Christ. So, I want to just wind back a little bit to where it said, according to the scriptures, because I went over that rather quickly last time, and that's the bit I'd like to focus on.

He died for our sins according to the scriptures. He was buried, raised on the third day, according to the scriptures. scriptures. These scriptures are written words.

And, so I'm going to ask, try and, try and tease that out a little bit, thinking about these words of scripture. Where do we get these gospel words from?

[ 7 : 39 ] What is the content of these words? And what is the impact of these words? So, that's my attempt to try and draw this out a bit, and I hope it will be reasonably useful.

And if I make a complete mess of it, then you can come back at half past six this evening, and when we discuss it, we can, sort of, put it all in order. But, anyway, this is what I'm going to try and do, to say, where do we get the gospel message from?

What is the message? And what is its impact? So, that's a, there's a where, a what, and a how. So, let's look at some texts. So, let's look at John 10, verses two to five.

So, seeing as we're talking about the Bible, we're going to look in the Bible. And, we'll, we'll do this. If you have a Bible, please look in there yourself, or if you can share across with somebody else, or if not, I'll read it out anyway.

So, this is John's gospel, which is in the New Testament, written by John, reporting on what Jesus said.

[ 8 : 52 ] And in John 10, verse two, this is what Jesus said. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.

The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out.

When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them. His sheep, I lost my place, because I, his sheep follow him, because they know his voice.

But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him, because they do not recognize. A stranger's voice. So, let's look at that text, and ask some things.

It's about the good shepherd. It doesn't say good, it just says shepherd here, doesn't it? Shepherd of the sheep, and so I can ask you, you can help me with this. So, who is the shepherd referring to?

[ 10 : 03 ] Jesus Christ. Okay. And this is to do with the sheep, and the words of the shepherd. You notice that? The sheep, and the words of the shepherd.

What does it say? About the sheep, and the words. What do they do with the words? What does it say? They listen. Okay. They listen, or they hear. The sheep hear his voice.

And, what does it say, about the stranger's voice? The stranger calls, come and follow me. What does it say, about the stranger's voice? They won't follow him, and they won't follow the stranger, because?

They don't recognize the voice. Okay. So, there's something going on here. These are the words of Jesus. The sheep hear his voice.

They follow, and the stranger, sorry, I've got myself all in a muddle here. They recognize that the voice is his, and other voices do not convince them.

[11:08] Now then, let's ask that question. Where do these words, where are these words, where do we get these words?

So, where did those words come from? From the Bible. Okay. Thank you very much. From the Bible.

From, and which part of the Bible? The New Testament. And which part of the New Testament? John's Gospel. And who wrote those words down?

John did. And where did he get the words from? From Jesus. So, I invite you to notice, that we have the words of Jesus. These are the words, which he says, the sheep hear.

And they recognize, that it's the words of Jesus. However, it has come to us, from the Apostle John. And the Apostle John, has written them down.

[12:07] And they're in the Bible. So, here's one answer to that question. Where are the words? And you knew this all the time, but I'm just sort of, picking it out, so you can see the stages. They're in the Bible.

When we listen to the Bible, the New Testament, we hear Jesus speaking. And sheep recognize his voice. So, I don't have to prove to you, in some very clever way, that this is the voice of Jesus.

Because if you're one of the sheep, you just know, don't you? You hear it, and you say, that's God speaking. It's from the lips of Jesus, as recorded by those who heard him, the Apostles, the first witnesses.

It's written down in Scripture. And, what is it about? Well, I did ask that question, what is it about? And there's a few answers here.

In verse 17, Jesus says, the reason the Father loves me, is that I lay down my life, only to take it up again. No one takes it from me.

[13:09] I lay it down of my own accord. And, he's talking about his death, and his resurrection. And, this is a common theme. What is the message about it?

It focuses on the death of Christ, and his resurrection. And, it's there in that chapter. And, what is the impact of these words? They follow.

So, the words are not just information. There's a call, the sheep here, and they follow. Yeah? So, there's an impact to those words.

And, this is, so, here's the first text that we're looking at. When, we read the Bible, and, particularly here in the New Testament, aren't I?

We could say, I hear Jesus speaking to me, and I know it's his voice. I just know, because I recognize his voice. And, I would ask you, you don't have to be ever so, hugely demonstrative about this, but you just move a limb slightly.

[14:17] If you have ever, read the Bible, and found that Jesus is speaking to you. Well, there we are.

Thank you. Let's look at another text, and ask the same question. So, we're going to go to Hebrews, chapter 1. See, what I'm trying to do, is to, develop our understanding of the Bible, starting with the idea of the Gospel.

We could start in various different places, but I'm trying to start with the Gospel, and see what that says about the nature of the Bible. So, Hebrews 1, verses 1 to 4. Okay, you got that?

Hebrews 1, 1 to 4. In the past, God spoke to our forefathers, through the prophets, verse 1, and in various ways, but in these last days, has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he made the universe.

The Son is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven, and became as much superior to the angels, as the name he has

inherited is superior to theirs.

[15:56] And then just nipping over to chapter 2, we must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?

This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders, and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his will.

So let's ask the same sort of questions of this text. Where do we find these words? What do the words say, and how do they have an impact? Okay, that's what I'm going to try and do.

So it says, God has spoken through the prophets. So where do we find those words? It says, God, in past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways.

[17:04] So it's a past tense. He spoke. So are those words lost? So if you weren't there, and you didn't hear them, are they lost? I mean, some of them would be, but is that what he's talking about?

Do we have any of the words of the prophets? In the Old Testament. Yeah. So he's talking about the scriptures of the Old Testament. In the scriptures of the Old Testament, God spoke, and the prophets wrote them down.

So we've got already God speaking, the prophets writing them down, and that's still God's words in a scripture form. If I were to say they would have been inscripturated, turned into words on a page. That's what happened in the past. And where is it? So I answer the question in the Bible, in the Old Testament. And now he says, in these last days, so we're in the last days, in the last days, he has spoken to us by his son.

Now then, where are those words? He spoke to us by his son. So does that mean, if you didn't actually hear Jesus speaking, you know, in Galilee, or in, you know, Costa in Nazareth, or wherever Jesus was speaking, that if you weren't there, those words have disappeared and gone, and it's as if God had said nothing.

[18:25] Is that the, no? Okay, so where are those words? In the Gospels. Yeah. In the Gospels. And actually, let me just backtrack.

So who wrote the Gospels? Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Yeah. Jesus specifically trained and set aside a group of people, we call them the Apostles, and their assistants, to whom he said, you watch, you listen, I will send the Holy Spirit to you particularly, so you can write this down.

And you'll be able to pass on this message to other people. You can pass it on in words while you're alive, and you write it down, so when you're dead, it's still there. So we still have this revelation in the Son.

God has spoken to it in his Son, in these last days. And where is it? Well, look, chapter 2, verse 3. This message, which was first announced by the Lord, so his words, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. So people heard him, and then they could pass that on, either by speaking, or in a written form, and we have it in its written form.

[19:47] And the process was confirmed by the Holy Spirit. And of course, we know about this because we've got a book in front of us. Haven't we? And the book has got the words of God in it.

This is the word of God. I'm just trying to say that this, this is telling us that the Old Testament is God's word, the New Testament is God's word. They come a slightly different way, but they all meet together about Jesus Christ.

And what is the content of this message? Well, we can glean from these texts in chapter 2, verse 3. It's a great salvation. How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? And I won't go into very much more detail on that. But he says, these words, this message, is a great salvation.

And at the beginning of chapter 1, he talks about the Son and the way he's made purification for sin and the way he's triumphed and is seated at the right hand of God.

[20:57] What's the impact of it? Well, chapter 2, verse 1 says this, we must pay careful attention to what we have heard.

How does it impact us? We are to pay careful attention to what we've heard. Why? Why? What does it say? So we don't drift away.

So we don't drift away. So the importance, brothers and sisters, of us not just saying, oh, we used to have the Bible in our sermons, but we don't bother with that anymore because we knew it anyway.

We'd heard it all before. We must pay careful attention so that we do not drift away. We need to keep coming back to Scripture.

We need to be remoulded by Scripture, recalibrated by Scripture. And that's what I hope and pray that our church will be doing, you know, a hundred years' time.

[ 22 : 03 ] There's a plaque up there, Mrs. George Gates. This tablet was erected by the Friends of the Railway Mission and members of her family in loving memory of Mrs. George Gates, founder and president of Brighton Railway Mission.

And this church was founded as a mission hall to railway men. And if you read the plaque, it talks about Mrs. Gates' devotion to the Christ of the Bible.

And by God's grace, this isn't true of all the churches in Brighton, by God's grace, the Lord has kept us. Keep coming back to this.

And it is, I pray, and I hope the determination of all of us that as we go forward into the future, we will be based on the Bible. Am I right?

This is what we're... Yeah, yeah. Yeah, absolutely. So that we do not drift away. And he says, you must not ignore such a great salvation. And I really hope, brothers and sisters, that in future, that any visitor coming into this, these meetings, in future, it wouldn't be long before they've heard something from the Bible.

[ 23 : 17 ] I don't say it with any glee. Maria and I went to a church when we were visiting Maria's sister. And it was three quarters of an hour into the service before we had anything from the Bible.

We had songs, we had prayers, we had testimony. We didn't have any... We didn't have God speaking. And I really, really hope that will not be the case as we go forward into the future in our church here.

That God will be allowed to have the first word and the last word in Scripture so that we don't drift away. One of my delights from yesterday at the Sussex Gospel Partnership was that I met my old friend and colleague David.

I hadn't seen for six years. And he had drifted away. And it was the first time I'd seen him for six years. I was so moved. I think he was in tears as well. to be able to give him a big hug because he's come back to the Lord.

But it just reminds us that it's not a hypothetical danger of drifting away. It's not something that happens to other people. This is a real thing. We need to pay careful attention so that we do not drift away.

[ 24 : 38 ] Let's look at another text. Let's look at Romans 1, verses 1 to 5. And you might say, well, he just said a few, he didn't say very much this morning and he kept repeating himself, which is probably true.

But what I'm trying to repeat is something absolutely important. The Bible. And this theme surfaces all over the place.

I'm just trying to pick some points. So this is Romans 1, verses 1 to 5. And verse 16 as well will be. But verses 1 to 5. Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, the gospel he promised beforehand through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David and who, through the spirit of holiness, was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him and for his namesake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

[ 26 : 06 ] And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. And then verse 16 says, I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

First for the Jew, then for the Gentile. We will stop there. Okay, so let's just ask those three questions again.

Where do we, where do we find these words? Where do we hear the gospel of God? So from what Paul's just said in Romans, where would we hear the gospel of God? Sorry?

Well, we would hear it in Genesis. Yeah, it wasn't the answer I was expecting. But just, Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

Verse 5, through him and for his name's sake we receive grace and apostleship to call people from all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. So let me focus the question.

[ 27 : 08 ] Those Gentiles who hear the gospel of God that Paul's referring to, those Gentiles, where would they hear the gospel of God? Through the apostle. Through the evangelist.

Okay, any evangelist. But the evangelist would have had to get it from the apostle Paul or one of the apostles because they, it all comes from Jesus via his apostles and that's where it all comes from.

It doesn't come from there, it's come from the wrong place. So those Gentiles would have heard it from Paul. So when Paul speaks, they're hearing gospel, they're hearing God speak and through the gospel that Paul is proclaiming.

Now then, so we don't hear Paul. He died a long time ago. So does that mean if we weren't there that that gospel is lost and we don't know what was said?

No. How do we know what the gospel was that Paul preached? In the Bible because he wrote it down, didn't he? So we still have the gospel of God in a written form in the Bible.

[ 28 : 28 ] Have you ever bought anything off eBay and thought, this isn't quite what I thought I was getting? You know, it says it's an iPhone 6 and you get it home and it's an old Android thing that's been sprayed and somebody's written iPhone 6 on it and you think, that's not an iPhone.

I don't know, what's the latest iPhone? I've no idea. Is it? Okay, right. iPhone 13 and you actually get... but there is such a thing as something being advertised and when you get it it's not the real thing.

And you need to go to an authorised dealer to get the real thing. Then you know you're getting the real thing. And the apostles are the authorised dealers for the gospel.

Jesus has made them the authorised dealers for the gospel. And if you don't get it from them, if it's not the apostolic gospel, then it's a fake because that's the only place you get the real thing.

The apostles are the authorised dealers. I can't use that word for the gospel. That's why we read John's gospel. So John's an apostle. That's why we read from Paul. Paul's an apostle.

[ 29 : 44 ] And they had assistants as well. So I guess Luke would be somebody who would talk to the apostles, talk to the original people and can give us God's word as a gospel.

So where does he say, let's come back to the point that Julia was making. So Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

What does verse 2 tell us about the gospel? It was promised. And where was it promised? Through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

So Paul isn't saying, oh well, we have Jesus. This is all new. It just comes out of nowhere. It stands alone. Let me tell you what it is.

He doesn't say that. He says, this salvation that comes in the Lord Jesus has got lots of backup. And it's there in the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, pointing forward.

[ 30 : 48 ] God has set this up really carefully, really comprehensively, saying what the issues are. And just working that through. What the promises are. What the method of salvation is.

What this saviour has to accomplish. What sort of magnificent work he will do. And that's all there, promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. And when Christ comes, it's all fulfilled in him.

So he says, you know, we need the Old Testament Scriptures and we need what I'm proclaiming as the gospel because it all fits together. Brothers and sisters, I've heard of a church where they say, oh, we don't bother with the Old Testament because we've got Jesus.

We just stick to the New Testament. We don't bother with the Old Testament. Not what Jesus said. No, that's right. What a waste of time going through Isaiah like we did the other, however many years we went through.

Was anybody blessed as we went through the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah? Well, I was. The Old Testament is God's Word and the New Testament is God's Word.

[ 31 : 55 ] So where do we find it? In the promises of Scripture and what sort of things are being said. Well, again, I won't spend too much time on this because we did it last time. But we have, it is about his son, verse 3, regarding his son.

And here he talks about the human nature, the flesh of the son and his being a descendant of David. So we have all the promises to do with David fulfilled in Jesus.

And through the spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the son of God. There's different translations of that. I think we had last week appointed with power, set to be the son of God with power through his resurrection.

And we have the key significance there, again, of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, and how does it impact now here's a statement about the impact of the gospel and it's in verse 16. It's in verse 16. What does it say about the gospel in verse 16 and its impact? It's the power of God for salvation.

[ 33 : 04 ] So he's saying that there's something about the power of the gospel to change people, to save people. I think I've got a little bit more to say about that.

And I'll come back to that. There's another impact here. It's called to obedience. He says it calls people to change their lives, to trust in Jesus Christ, to become obedient to his lordship. And that's the gospel calls people and impacts their lives like that. So here is the gospel and it has power. It does things.

And I just put there, for example, when Paul went to Ephesus. It was Ephesus, wasn't it Lydia? Was it Ephesus? No, it was Philippi, wasn't it?

Yeah, I put the wrong place. The Philippian jailer. He went to the riverside where he knew people, Jewish people, would be praying. And he spoke about the gospel and Lydia was there and it says her heart, the Lord opened to receive the words of Paul and there was a sort of gentle working of the gospel there.

[ 34 : 17 ] And then a little bit later, there's an earthquake. Do you remember Paul gets locked up in the jail and there's an earthquake and during the earthquake, the Philippian jailer becomes a Christian.

He says, what must I do to be saved? And there's God's word at work just in a very gentle, sweet, lovely way with Lydia and then in an earthquake for the Philippian jailer.

So, just trying to illustrate that God's word has power in all sorts of different ways. So, let's try and sum up what we've been trying to look at this morning.

We've looked at three texts. We could look at lots of other ones and I've just tried to show that there's a common theme here. Where are the words of God? The Old Testament is the word of God.

The Old Testament promises us Jesus and what, when Christ comes there's a fulfillment of all those powerful, rich, glorious promises.

[ 35 : 25 ] and you could stand in the Old Testament and follow them forward and get a rich and glorious picture of Jesus standing in the Old Testament looking forward.

Depicts his role, his mission, his characteristics, his salvation as the king, as the lamb that takes away the sin of the world, as the one who changes hearts, as the one who brings God into the world as it were, as the hope of the new age and so on and so on.

That's the Old Testament. And the New Testament is the word of God declaring Jesus the things that he said, the things that he did and the full confirmation and explanation by the apostles.

This is what he was doing when he died on the cross. He died on the cross for our sins according to the scriptures. And this is the proclamation.

So I want to say, and you might think I've taken a long time going around it, but I just want to really spell this out. What the Bible says is what God says. We can trust it.

[ 36 : 27 ] We can believe it. Like John Wesley said, give me this book. What we have in our hands is we have a Bible. It's such a precious thing. I want to say, read this book.

Get into this book. Pour it into our souls so that we eat, sleep, live by this book. We build our lives upon this book because these are the words of God. What is the message of God?

Well, it's to be saved from sin by Jesus Christ. He died for our sins according to the scriptures. And all the thing that sin messes up, Christ puts right.

From the guilt of sin, we are forgiven. from the despair of guilt which human beings cannot take away.

Christ forgives our sins. Wonderful, isn't it? From the shame of sin, we are cleansed.

[ 37 : 33 ] From the shame of sin. It's totally humiliating to know that we have sinned and we are sinners. And Christ takes away the shame and says, come and sit with me on my throne.

Come and be adopted into my family. Come and receive the love of God as your heavenly Father. All that is wiped away, forgotten. You know, the woman at the well who had five husbands and whose sexual life was pretty dubious.

Jesus says, I know about that and come and drink the living water. From the power of sin, he gives us a new life.

He shows us the right way to live. He gives us his spirit. And from the ultimate judgment of sin, he says there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

We can look forward to the last day and know that we don't have to quake and fear to meet Jesus. That we can come and he will welcome us.

[ 38 : 38 ] Does it say on there, well done, good and faithful servant? I can't remember whether it's that one that says that. To be welcome on the last day. And how does it impact?

It is the power of God. This is again sort of coming at the subject from another angle, but of course God, when he made everything, he made everything by speaking, didn't he?

God said, let there be light. And in Jeremiah, it says, is not my word like a fire, declares the Lord, unlike a hammer that breaks rock in pieces.

The power of God's word. We're born again through the living and enduring word of God, so we're brought to new birth by the power of God's word.

God's word raises to life because of the power within the word. So when Lazarus was raised to life and Jesus said, come out. It wasn't Lazarus' power, was it?

[ 39 : 46 ] It was the power in what Jesus said that brought Lazarus to life. The power to rule and transform our lives.

The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword. It delves into us and pierces and looks at our motives, our desires, our motivations and works down into them.

As it says in Hebrews chapter 4, that's another subject. And through God's word, we are changed. I hope we are. I hope that we're not a church that sits and listens to sound teaching.

Well, I hope we listen to sound teaching. But I hope we're not a church which just listens to sound teaching and that's all we are. I hope we're being changed by God's word. It's doing its work in us to make us different people.

God tends to work rather slowly, actually. You know, it takes a lifetime. time. But, they're being transformed by God's word. So, here's a gospel church which receives, lives and tells the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 40 : 57 ] So, part of my job is to welcome people and say, come and be part of this gospel community. Join your life to Jesus Christ and join your life to your brothers and sisters.

I'd say, has this message got hold of your life? You're saying, yes to the Lord Jesus that I want you to rule my life by your word and bless my life by your word.

Is there a, have we surrendered to him? Take my all, Lord. Whatever I have, I want to surrender to you. We believed him and if not, why not?

Why not? Are we a gospel church that takes its stand on the gospel by believing the Bible? What the Bible says, God says.

And we see everything or see to see everything through the spectacles of scripture. Perhaps we can say more about that this evening. We're like the sheep that hear his voice and follow.

[ 41 : 58 ] We're people who yield to his word, trust in his word and love his word. And by his word, we're under the touch of God upon our lives.

By his word, these people meet and know the risen Savior. Jesus presides in his church by his word and spirit. And that's the sort of people I hope we want to be.

And that's the sort of church I hope we want to be. And I hope we're bothered about that and determined and set on that. Because what other sort of church would we want to be?

What other sort of church would we want to be? A drifting church? A dying church? A declining church? A hardened church?

A living church? So let's be people of the word of God. And what could be better? What could be better than to feed on God's word?

[ 43 : 00 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.