

A Call to a Courageous Christianity

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 August 2020

[0:00] And tonight, really, it's a call for courageous Christianity.! A call to a courageous Christianity.! It seems as if there's a mediocre kind of Christianity.

! A lazy, shallow version of Christianity. And many settle for that. And I know I was talking with a friend of late, and we were talking as we were witnessing, and often a retort that we get is, well, we got it yesterday, was, you've been brainwashed. You've been brainwashed.

And actually, you know, in a way, that's true. Because the Bible says he's washed us from our sins in his own blood. He's talked about the washing of water by the word, doesn't it?

There's a washing. There's a renewing of our mind. There's a washing. And we could equally reply to them, you've been brain defiled. Because our brain has been washed.

Our mind, our conscience has been cleansed. And we've been made clean from the top of our head to the tip of our toes. He's washed us from our sins in his own blood. And sadly, many yet have their brain defiled.

[1:14] There's a dirtiness. And friends, it's a brave new world now, they say. And there's this tsunami tide of evil that's crashing on us. And the world is largely turning away from God and the things of God, the things of the Bible, even what makes common sense.

And to the human mind, such institutions as the time-honoured, God-sanctified, God-blessed traditional marriage is under attack, as we know.

And it's been perverted and twisted and defiled into something sick and bowed by the world. But what the world calls marriage, as they would redefine it, is not marriage at all.

And it's trendy now, too, to see families where they're fatherless, and purposely so. That the two females may deliberately determine that they're not going to have a father in the family, that they'll just use the appropriate substance to make them bear a child.

It doesn't matter who the dad is, who the father is, and it's purposely so. That's the kind of world we live in, isn't it? A kind of culture that is hell-bound, that is evil, and denies fathers, denies the man, the husband.

[2:33] And we see lots of pressures on humanity today, and to conform to this kind of culture. And one thing I've seen lately is where they're calling masculinity toxic.

Have you seen that? They call it toxic masculinity, as if manliness is a bad thing. And the world today would praise men who are effeminate and are soft as fairy floss.

And they would mollicoddle that which is weak and limp and limp-wristed. And it's almost offensive for a man to dare to be manly today, to have honour and dignity and maturity as a man.

So this message will talk much about a masculine kind of Christianity. I think there's a lack of that and a need for that. In this hour, there's a crisis for man to be man of God.

Man of God. Of course, we're not talking about what is toxic masculinity, as in man who are wife-bashes and slobby, bear-gutsing, no-hopers and wasters.

[3:38] We're not talking about that kind of man. We're talking about a man who has honour and dignity, a man of God, that the Bible elevates and praises and commands. Some would say that the church ought to conform to the culture of the world and just go along with this kind of manby-pamby kind of manhood.

But it seems to me we actually ought to be counter-cultural to that. That we need men of God to rise up in this day. We need men who will be men, men of God. Men for God.

And put away childish things. Men who will be brave. And of course, I know I've touched on this last weekend. I'm not meaning the women to feel left out by this message because there's a sense

where you, as women, should be courageous women too.

But I'm focusing a little more on the men here tonight that it is a message really that encourages the men to stand up. And sadly it seems, friends, I put to you that it's popular for man-made Christianity to be emasculated.

I know I was reflecting on some of our meetings of late where we've got a majority of men, which is a good thing. It should be more, I'd like to see men and women, but it's a good thing to see men who want to gather and come and fellowship together.

[4:53] But it seems like in some circles you don't see too many men. It's kind of like it's an effeminate, feminised kind of Christianity, an emasculated, effeminate kind of Christianity that's just for the women, as it were.

And look, I'm not meaning to demean or box people into boxes or anything, but potentially older women. And the men are missing.

The young men are missing. And the men are missing. And I think that's a very sad thing to see, isn't it? Isn't that sad? Men of God, we should be rising up. God is calling men to action, to the forefront.

And faith has been feminised. The church has sometimes got scarcely any young men. And men have withdrawn and become inactive and sidelined.

And someone has made the comment, it feels like godly men are becoming extinct. It's like an extinct thing. And preachers seem intent on man-pleasing instead of pleasing God, and the church has lost its power.

[5:57] It's become unmanly and powerless. And I put to you tonight, in these days of softening and this caving in, there's a crying need for men to rise up, to be men of God, for a return to a masculine Christianity, a muscular Christianity, a biblical Christianity.

Really, the faith we stand for is for the best of men, for men who will be strong, be strong enough to do the right, who will have the character and courage to stand for Christ, even though popular opinion would be against them, and they'd be persecuted for it.

For men who will have a faith without compromise, and a faith that we'll not shy away from Tess and the cross, because we have a cross to carry, the man of men's, the man of men's, the man of men's.

How does it go? The man of men, the Lord Jesus, the Lord of lords, the King of kings, he is the godly man, isn't he? The godly model, the perfect man, and he calls men to take up their cross and to follow him.

And we must be tough, we must be brave, we must rise up, because there's opposition for us, all around us, and it's time to be men. So let me commence with the scripture here that we're going to talk through together.

[7:12] 1 Corinthians 16 from verse 13. Let's stand together, can we? 1 Corinthians 16 from verses 13 through 14, it says this.

1 Corinthians 16, 13. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong, let all your things be done with charity. Amen.

Please be seated. Paul issues here a call for godly manliness. Number one, watch ye, watch ye. Paul's saying watch out.

He's saying be watchful. He's saying stand guard, men, over your families, you that are fathers. We have a responsibility, don't we? That's a heavy responsibility.

As husbands, we should watch. Watch is a military term, as many of these are. It's the orders given to the sentinels at the post to urge them to their duty, to keep awake, keep on guard.

[8:12] We're under attack, friends. And there's a spiritual enemy that is nonstop, relentless. He threatens to invade and he's calling, our Lord is calling for man to man the post, to be sentries, to be on guard, to have that alertness and that vigilance.

And there's many cause to this theme of having our loins girded about with our minds, gird up the loins of your mind, it says, doesn't it?

To have that sense where our minds need to be switched on and full capacity. Our lamps burning, there's this sense of this vigilance, this need to be awake, to be alert. What will we be?

A couch potato or a combat soldier? There's a choice between the two, friends. We must be on the alert, on guard, against apathy and lethargy and distraction.

You know, let's be honest here tonight. There's what's called electronic mind-altering devices, otherwise known as a TV or you name it, the social media, the worldly media, the internet, electronic mind-altering devices.

[9:28] And we've got some of them in our pockets. We carry them around. And if we don't, if I don't watch you closely, you might, actually, I know Trevor's using it for writing the sermon down, he's allowed.

But, you know, you might want to quickly just check, oh, I've had a new post or something. They're electronic mind-altering devices, friends. And, you know, some would spend their time consumed with these things.

And look, I know grown men, grown men who idle away hours and hours playing video games. Why? I'm not meant to blame someone I know in my family who likes, he might have repented now. But there's a sense where, you know, these video games can consume so much of your time, can't they? And look, you might say, preacher, he's having a go at me here. Look, if the shoe fits, you know, friends, video games, video things can just consume time.

Look, I need to watch myself. Facebook, whatever it be, these things can consume so much time. And we've got to put away childish things. Get rid of them. Let's put away those childish things.

[10:34] Paul says, put away the childish things. There's a song that goes, rise up, oh, men of God. Have done with lesser things. Give heart and mind and soul and strength to serve the king of kings.

We're called to be vigilant, to be watchful, to be watchful to keep at the post. It says in 1 Peter 5 verse 8, be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

Be sober, be vigilant. Wake up and stay awake. Keep your eyes open. It's so easy to settle back in that hammock and the devil will rock you to sleep.

He'll sing you a sweet lullaby. We're in a spiritual war, people, and our enemy is bent on spiritually shipwrecking Christians. And hurting their testimonies. In those moments when the Achilles heel, as it were, when the sun chunker chink in their armour, and bang, the fiery dart, you could say.

Their testimony gets ruined. And the devil wants to steal the Christian's joy. He wants you to foul up and feel fouled up and not get right. Many people get overtaken.

[11:48] They're not watching. Many people are slumbering. And they're lulled to sleep by the lullabies of the world and Satan. Friends, the urgent call here is to watch.

Watch ye. And 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 6 through 8 says, Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night.

And they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

Evils abound. We need to be watchful, friends. Evils abound in the church. There's Christians falling here, there, and everywhere. There's division, there's strife, there's chaos, there's confusion, there's false doctrines, there's false teachers.

We've got to be wakeful, we've got to be watchful. Watch ye, number one. Second, stand fast in the faith. Stand fast in the faith. Another military term. And it said that this would be given in the heat of the battle.

[12:52] Stand firm, don't break ranks. Stand solid and sure. David said, I will go and fight this Philistine. And he says, is there not a cause?

That's 1 Samuel 17, 29. Is there not a cause? There's no greater cause than this. There's no greater cause than the cause of Christianity, than the cause of that battle that we must fight. There's no greater cause. There's nothing greater you can enlist in that you can commit to than this cause, the cause of godly, biblical, masculine Christianity.

And David said, I'll go and fight this Philistine. Here's this little strapping man, this strapping youth, going to fight this giant man. And God fought his battle.

Amen. Stand fast in the faith. Like David stood. And we have a cause. We have a battle to fight.

We've got a... There's things ahead of us.

[13:51] Now, I urge you today, consider that you are standing fast. There's fighting to do. There's battles that lie yet ahead of us.

There's possible pain. There's possible hardship. You know, we know that. Much tribulation, Paul said, you're going to go through. Friends, there's hardship ahead.

There's hardship that lies ahead. And we've got to get stronger in our faith. I heard the speech of Churchill where he said, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.

He didn't say it was going to be easy. I wasn't around at that time. But friends, Churchill didn't make it sound very accommodating. He said, there's just blood, toil, tears and sweat.

But then there's victory. Isn't there? It's not the Christian life. There's got to be some hardship ahead of us. You know, I'm not presenting to you a best life now, as in, you know, become a Christian and it's all easy breezy.

[15:02] It's just a ride the glory train and kick back and enjoy the ride, you know, as if it's all going to be easy for you. There's hardship for the Christian.

And stand fast in the faith. It means hold your position. There's no retreat. The one who's on duty as the sentry has to stay awake and alert, anticipating a potential attack.

Likewise, we must stand firm for our Lord. In this godless culture, let's have a backbone for the Lord, to stay the course, to stay strong, no matter what. Look at Paul in 2 Corinthians 4, verse 8 through 10.

He says, we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed. We are perplexed, but not in despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken. Cast down, but not destroyed.

Always bearing about in the body. Only the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. Paul, the apostle of God, he knew what it was to be troubled, persecuted, passed down.

[16:13] Friends, we might face that. As a godly man, as a godly woman, be resolute. When pain and suffering comes your way, and it hits home. When loved ones are going through times of suffering, of hardship, of ill health, stand firm.

Don't let anything dissuade you. Paul says likewise in 2 Corinthians 4, from verse 16, For which cause we faint not, though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For this, our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Paul says this, this is just short.

It's temporary. It's light. This is exceeding, far more exceeding, eternal weight of glory. What a contrast.

This little affliction for the time is but a moment. It's fleeting. What will you do? Will you stand firm? Will you stand fast in the faith? Friends, will you bow down to Baal?

[17:18] It would be easier to. It would be easier for you to join the Baal worshippers, the ball worshippers. You know, the football, the softball, the baseball, the basketball. You know, you could join the Baal worshippers, as it were.

Or we could actually, I'm just making a bit light here, but there's many gods, isn't there? Aussie gods, the Aussie idols. We can bow down to them and just go with the flow, join the crowd. But we will not bow down to Baal, to worship anything but our God. As the three Hebrew children, we will not bow.

And friends, this standing firm, it speaks of that inner strength and conviction, of staying true, of holding true to the word, of shrinking not back. We must stand, friends.

We must stand and fight. And that means witness. It means pursue the Lord, the work of the Lord. It means seek after that godliness, to share in his suffering, to be willing to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

[18:16] And these are not just light sayings. This is not just to make it sound poetic here.

We are at war. We are at war. It means war. Christianity means war. And 2 Timothy 3, Who are you going to please?

Yourself or the commanding officer? The commander in chief? Our Lord Jesus Christ. We're at his service. And we're enlisted. And there's no signing off.

There's no quitting. There's no resignation. There's no retirement plan. This is a call to perseverance. So there's time to let things go. To not get entangled. How easy it is to get tangled. Don't get tangled up. Keep serving. Keep soldiering on. Don't give ground. Paul says to the Galatians, Galatians 5 verse 1, Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

[19:29] And be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. We've been truly set free. True faith is not a burden or a bondage. It's a setting free.

That's what it is. We that know Christ, we know we've been set free. And the world would laugh at people of faith. That it's a crutch. That it's foolishness. But here is true strength and wisdom. It's faith. As Paul says, Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day. Ephesians 6. And having done all to stand.

Stand therefore. Having your loins girt about with truth. Having on the breastplate of righteousness and so on. Friends, we've got a spiritual warfare that he's called us to engage in.

And he's called us to wage a good warfare. Are we going to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ? Makes you wonder, well, are there some who are not good soldiers? There might be so-so soldiers.

[20:26] Let's be a good soldier. Amen. Let's aspire to that. To wage good warfare. To realise, yes, we're called to engagement. To conflict.

To a holy violence. We're summoned to battle and to boldness. And the word of God says in Proverbs 28 verse 1, The wicked flee when no man pursueth, But the righteous are as bold as a lion.

It says the righteous will be bold. It's not a righteousness of our own making, but the righteousness that he gives to us. He makes us righteous. And he makes us to be such that we can be bold.

We can have that faith. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. And we're more than a conqueror. Now, friends, we might think, well, we're outnumbered. We're outgunned.

We're just, you know, it's kind of like we're behind the eight ball here. He says, stand fast. Stand fast in the faith. There's a story about the Korean War where the enemy forces advanced and there was this unit called Baker Company.

[21:29] And it was cut off from the west. Sorry, cut off from the rest of the unit. And for several hours they heard no word. And headquarters were trying to communicate with these troops on the front line here.

And this faint signal came through. And the signaller asked, Baker Company, do you read me? This is Baker Company, came the reply. What is your situation?

Asked the operator. The enemy is to the east of us. The enemy is to the west of us. The enemy is to the north of us. And the enemy is to the south of us. Then after a brief pause, the sergeant from Baker Company said with determination, the enemy is not going to get away from us now.

You know, we might feel like that, can't we? Spiritually speaking, we're surrounded. We're outnumbered. We know that humanly speaking and humanly thinking, we might think we're defeated.

But no, we're on the victory side. Amen. We're on the victory side. So stand fast in the faith.

Friends, it says, I've got to remind myself here already.

[22:32] It's a short verse. We've already forgotten that. Watch you stand fast in the faith. Number three, quit you like men. Now, quit you like men. We could think of the word quit. We might not understand that.

But we think of the word acquit. Acquit as in to act like men. And Paul's saying here in this third point, he says, quit you like men. He's saying act like men.

He's saying, in other words, man up, play the man. It teaches godly manliness. And here's Paul. He spoke from his experience in godly manliness. He lived it.

He knew afflictions. He knew hardships. He knew beatings and imprisonments and labors and hunger. And he writes here as a general preparing his soldiers for combat. And friends, Paul's saying man up.

He's saying conduct yourself in a manly way. Show yourself to be a man. Amen. There's harvest fields all around us calling for laborers. And you that answer the call, you face hardship.

[23:34] You face sacrifice of time and energy. You face being bruised and wounded. You face financial loss. You face inconvenience and

disappointment.

And you may fall. It says the righteous man falls seven times and the Lord picks him up. Amen. And someone said this about getting, maybe if you feel, you know, the wind's been knocked out of your sails.

And here's what someone said. If you must get knocked down, fall on your back. That way you can still reach up and punch the devil in the nose while you're getting back up on your feet. You know, sometimes we might have those moments when we feel like we're knocked down.

But keep on punching. Amen. And get back on your feet. You know, friends, some of you may have to endure more hardness than others. To give your life in service for the kingdom.

That's ministry. You know, there could be great cost. And here it calls you to do it. It calls you to do it cheerfully and gladly and joyfully. There's no chore to it.

[24:35] There's no irksomeness to it because it's a glad service. It's a glad thing. What does it say? Julie likes to remind me, serve the Lord with gladness.

You know, sometimes we serve the Lord, but we always got to remember, keep the gladness factor. Serve the Lord with gladness. And friends, we might have to take up a situation right there on the battlefield where the battle is hot and you may get weary.

You might get some flack. Like, let's not settle for the average, the ordinary. Man up. Be brave. Be manly. Brave the tests that come against you.

Friends, we will get that. And don't be a coward. Don't be fearful. Don't be alarmed at your enemies, but be bold. Be brave. The United States Marines have a saying, when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

And that should be us, shouldn't it? We should not resile from toughness, from hardness. There's a spiritual war raging all around us and we're called to man up, to grow up, to be mature in Christ.

[25:42] Friends, think of where you are at and of the knowledge and the resources at your hands. We have a whole Bible. Early Christians only had bits and pieces.

We've got the whole thing. And we've got such a blessing, haven't we? We've got resources at our fingertips. We've got ways we can study online through means on the wall there. There's an online Bible school.

There's opportunities through means we can gather information on all manner of Christian topics and be edified. We've got everything at our disposal in the Western world.

And there's not really a lot of toughness, let's face it, for us. But the call goes out still. Manna, toughen up, grow up, have courage.

There's a call for men. And it's a call that goes right back through the word. Ezekiel 22 verse 30. The Lord says, Friends, we're called to be courageous men.

[26:57] Real men. Godly men. God is searching for men. For you. For me. That are men here tonight. And for women too. To answer that call to a resolute, courageous Christianity.

There's a need for maturity. It's time we grow up. There's the sense of this word of, to quit you like men. A sense of maturity too. Of manhood. Of maturity.

In the sense of this word. And it's so easy to stay in immaturity. A lot of Christians are still in the spiritual kindergarten. It's like they've not got the graduation yet.

Still at kindergarten level. And in Ephesians 4 it says, verse 14, That henceforth we be no more children, Tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine By the slight of men and cunning craftiness, Whereby they're lying weight to the scene, With much need of spiritual maturity. The cults and the false teachings and philosophies And the carry on that's all around us. And in our churches too. There's much to be desired.

[28:04] There's an infection. There's a virus. There's a virus out there. There's a plague. That's it.

Look, a church such as this one is not immune to the viruses, As it were. So we've got to be careful. We've got to watch. We've got to stand fast. We've got to be men.

And the problem is that this virus, It's kind of invisible. Isn't it? That sense, isn't it? The sense where who's got it? There could be someone here who's got it here tonight.

I'm being a little playful here, But there's a sense where we're not immune. Just because we, as a church, Hold, we believe godly, biblical, sound doctrine.

God helping me to preach it. God helping you to correct me when I don't deliver it. That we are a godly, bible-believing church, But yet there's always the need for us to be always on the alert.

[29:02] And to grow up too. Don't stay in spiritual kindergarten. Think of the man of man himself, the Lord Jesus. He spent 40 days in the wilderness fasting, praying.

He endured that mental and spiritual toughness. He was a godly man. Jesus was a man. He worked in the carpentry trade.

He would have been a man who had a certain manliness to him. And we've need of such men today. Men who will be fathers and husbands of families.

Who will be godly models in churches. 2 Peter 3.18 it says, But growing grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, To him be glory, both now and forever.

Amen. Growing grace it says. Paul says, 1 Corinthians 13.11, When I was a child, I spake as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things.

[30:05] There's a time to say, actually I'm a man now. I came to that point in my life, I suppose, In some small measure, I used to have lots of toys.

You could say. They were boyish toys. I used to collect stones and stamps and war medals and Eagles books and books about aircraft and all sorts of things.

That was kind of like my little hobby or lots of little hobbies that I had. And one day I thought, I'm just going to put that all away. And I just went and dumped it down at the op shop. And in a sense, I just wanted to actually say, Now this is what I want to put my energy into.

This is what I want to do. And it's the same with us, friends. And I'm not saying go and throw away all your things that you're attached to, those hobbies as such. But there's that sense of putting away childish things, isn't there?

I actually want to be a man of God. I actually want to stop being a boy and start being a man. And it's time to grow up, to conduct yourself as a man, in a mature and manly way.

[31:06] And have the courage to live for Christ in a world that's hostile to Christianity. Friends, there's much more we could say. Now I've just got to catch up here.

Watch ye stand fast in the faith, bit ye like men. Number four, be strong. God wants us to grow strong. And he is that source of our strength.

Ephesians 6.10, Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. His strength is what we need, not our own, not a working up of our own strength.

It's God's doing, God's working. Paul says to Timothy, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. This strength that he's called for, friends, this is not a strength as much as I'm a fine specimen of such.

But it's not a physical strength so much as moral strength, as spiritual strength, as godly strength. God calls us to be manned and will rise up, or shake off the weakness and the sloppiness and the fleshliness, to be those warriors, to sign up for duty, to enlist, to be valiant for the truth, to have that dynamic faith that will not be deterred.

[32:17] And, friends, I think there's a crying need in our day and time for a return to a manly Christianity because we face giants. And, again, I'm not meaning to exclude the women from that because there's some godly women who's going to balsam giants here tonight too.

And we're all called to this courageous Christianity. But I'm talking largely more directly to the men. For the people of God to be steeled about whatever faces us, we need to be men.

Stop being a boy and start being a man. Put away childish things. To be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Jesus, biblical manliness, it means a strength of character.

It goes to the very heart of men. In 1 John 2.14, Paul writes, in part, he says, I've written unto you, young man, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in ye, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

How does a young man get strong? As the word of God abides in them. John tells them that's where their strength comes from. So, friends, take time to drink this in.

[33:26] And let it saturate your soul. The best thing you can do is start memorising it. Memorise some of the critical parts.

Hide it in your heart. It's so important. Now, I look back as a younger man, there's one thing that I was blessed as a, there was a youth group I was in, and they encouraged us to memorise like 100 Bible verses.

And it took a while, but, and that was just the beginning. Now, find those verses that really, you should lock them in here. Because believe me, those grace cells get less and less as you get older. It gets harder and harder to lock it in. I'm speaking for myself. But, friends, lock it in. Lock it in.

Amen. The word of God, the young men are strong because the word of God abides in them.

1 John 2.14. And it's powerful. The word of God is powerful. And there's true strength here. And it sources from God. It says in Psalm 27.14, Wait on the Lord.

[34:26] Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord. I believe the problem today is not toxic masculinity.

It's toxic Christianity. It's that toxic Christianity, that weak, anemic, weakened kind of Christianity that says, I'm all right, Jack, and I'll just kind of have a pretty kind of slack kind of Christian life.

I'll just kind of go easy. And that's missing out. Friends, it's missing out. Answer the call. Answer the call.

And sadly, at times, the preaching is deficient too. I've got to try harder. The preaching can be sickly, sweet, lacking, soft.

There's no challenge. There's no stirring. There's no urgency. And preachers preach a sentimental, jellyfish kind of sermon.

[35:31] We have to take a stand. Friends, I urge you. And this is not to condemn or belittle or intimidate or make you feel that I'm attacking you.

But I must speak the word strongly to you because there's nothing more important. Is there not a cause? There's no greater cause than Christian faith. And to stand against wickedness, the wickedness abounds and it's prevailing.

And we can get sucked into that whirlpool. We can get drawn into those electronic mind-altering devices such that we get programmed just like the neighbours who don't know the Lord.

And friends, it's not unloving for the people of God to expose error. We have to speak against error. We have need of strong preaching, strong Christianity.

Paul says, Philippians 4.13, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. We have need of his strength. Friends, his strength. That Christ strengtheneth me. To be those who will soldier on.

[36:37] What's around the corner? Are you ready? Are you going to be a soldier? A good soldier? A good soldier of Jesus Christ? A good soldier of Jesus Christ who will endure hardness.

There's a sense of hardness ahead, of manly work to do, of labour. It makes you think of Nehemiah's day as they seized the tools and the bricks and the mortar. That was hard yakka.

And every family played a part as they built in front of their house. They manned their own station. And there's a call for us all to take our part, to occupy our place on the wall.

Take the tools, the bricks, the mortar, sword, as in Nehemiah's day. There's a call to the rugged aspects of the gospel. Sometimes it's almost like even the slightest thing that God might prompt you to do, to help to do is such a hardship.

It's such a hard thing. But honestly, friends, it's our blessing from God to serve. And there's no cross to speak of here, honestly.

[37:45] But I urge you today to sense the urgency of the hour, the cross, the labour that we must take up. And this labour is not an irksome thing.

It's our privilege to be a gospel labourer. It's our great joy. And we can serve the Lord with gladness. But for the meantime, we've got to fight to fight and we need to take up arms, to bear weapons, spiritually so.

And in spite of the difficulties, we need to be courageous Christians. In the face of the difficulties that face us, we must be undeterred. Think of the examples who've gone ahead of us.

You know, a great spiritual benefit for you would be to read some good godly biographies. Read some good godly biographies of men and women, missionaries, of revivalists, of reformers of old, and how they soldiered for the cause through great hardship and tribulation and loss, yet gain. And the Lord wants us to be such that we will stand in their tread, that we'll walk in their tread and we will be strong. The psalmist cries in Psalm 119, 28, strengthen thou me according unto thy word. [39:04] Make it your prayer to be strong and take that application. Let us hold our nerve. Friends, we're coming to that last one now. We've covered, as we have gone, it says, Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Number five, let all your things be done with charity. Let all that you do be done with love. Let love be that great motivator that you'll speak in love, that you'll speak the truth in love. Now, biblical manhood is loving. And that is another strength. It's not a weakness to love. It's a strength. Amen? It's a strength to be a loving man, to be a loving husband, to be a loving father. And we can be spiritually tough and tender at the same time, can't we? We can be courageous and compassionate at the same time. There's no contradiction because they come hand in glove. And this love that we have is Christ's love. It's self-sacrificial. It's selfless love. It's committed love. It's the love that our Lord showed when he slayed down his life for his friends. [40:17] And may all of our actions be motivated by love. Think of the love of Christ, that he would constrain us, that he would motivate us, to please him, to honour him.

And his love, it's not a weakness, it's the strength of strengths. Is it not? The love of God, the love of Christ, it's our true strength. His love, it says, constrains us. He constrains us. In other words, he enables us, he impels us, he propels us, he sends us, he fills us with that love, that he sends us to take that love, to tell that love, to be that love. And true godly manliness, it's not some toxic kind of masculinity that overbears and demeans and bullies. You know, the son that they profess to be Christians, you know, are just big bullies. They just think that that's the masculine thing to do, to be hateful in their words and actions, to strike their wife, to overbear their children, to be a big bully.

[41:33] Friends, Paul says, let all things, let all your things be done with love, with charity. And the true godly man is a chivalrous man.

You see those pictures back of yesteryear where the muddy puddle, puddle, I'm going to pronounce it, there's a muddy puddle on the roadside and the man takes off his coat and throws it over the top so the woman can walk across the muddy pond and not get her feet muddied.

Now there's that kind of chivalry of a man who would be such a man that he would be a servant of servants. That he would be committed to the safeguarding of his family and the protection and that he'd be committed in love to even to the laying down of his life for the nurture and cherishing of his wife and of his children.

This is elevated manhood, is it not? That's what we call to, men. To be the heroes and the champions of this hour for our wives, for our families, for our children that we can fight for them and be their protector and defender.

Friends, may we heed this call to a godly masculinity, to a vigilance, to a diligence, to a fight, to be manly, to be strong, to be mature, to be bold. Let me close with a quick picture here.

[42:58] In the year 1836, the Republic of Texas was fighting for its life for some costly battles with the Mexican general, Santa Anna. And in the opening days of the campaign to reclaim Texas for Mexico, Santa Anna faced up to the Texans as they were called at a lonely mission post called Alamo.

And they were outnumbered greatly and legend says the commander, Colonel Travis, drew a line in the ground with his sword. And he made a patriotic call and he asked every man willing to give his life for Texas to cross that line.

And the same legend says that only one man did not cross the line. His name was Lewis Rose. He was the one that supposedly told the story that the legend is based on. And within 24 hours, every man who had crossed the line was dead.

They had all given their best, their lives, their fortunes, their homes in an effort to bring freedom from the tyranny of the Mexican army. And their lives were given for a cause that was great and a

cause they deemed more important than life itself.

Friends, the Lord Jesus is drawing a line. Isn't he? He's drawing a line in the sand. He's looking for those who will commit, say, I'm going to cross the line.

[44:14] I'm going to cross that line. I'm going to step over that line. And friends, are you willing to give your all to Jesus? Let's pray. Dear Lord, we thank you that you are the man of men.

Lord, you are the ultimate model for every man. And even, Lord, for women as well. Of course, we know that example of courage, of love, of grace, of truth.

Lord, that you came in the person of Christ to bear our sin, our guilt, our shame, that there at the cross you paid our death penalty in full as we that trust you can know that saving even now, here and now.

Lord, we pray if there's any yet to trust you, that it will be almost a moment of considering that line in the sand and of which side we're going to stay. Lord, not that it's all by your grace and mercy that you would even extend a pardon towards us, Lord, that we can know that grace of God today, that we'll hear that call, we'll hear your voice, we'll know that grace and we'll find that peace through faith as we trust in you.

Lord, we pray if there's any yet to trust you, even here right now, I'll say, Lord Jesus, I trust you that you died on the cross for my sin. I believe in your saving for me and I receive your gift of salvation in simple trust in everything that you have done for me.

[45:44] And Lord, we pray for everyone here tonight. Lord, we've all heard these words of challenge and Lord, of these thoughts of manliness, of being a soldier, a good soldier.

Lord, we hear of this need to stand fast, to watch, to be manly, to be godly. Lord, to be loving. help us to find that best for us, that maturity that you call us to, that will put away the childish things, that will stop playing games and put away the toys and start being serious, Lord, about our faith because is there not a cause?

And Lord, we know there's giants to face but you've already won the battle and we thank you, Lord, for the grace you've given us. Help us to grow stronger in it. In Jesus' precious name. Amen.