

The Danger of calling Evil Good: Navigating a World Turned Upside Down

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Date: 03 June 2024

[0:00] The Word of God talks about a topsy-turvy kind of world. We see that in Acts 17 verse 6. It talks about the people of God. And it tells how these that have turned the world upside down have come hither also.

And we've got to look at the world and the things of the world and our relationship to the world and hopefully get some useful thoughts about how we can live in such a topsy-turvy kind of world.

And I suppose when you watch something, a movie, sometimes they have a content warning. Content warning. This message contains offensive truth.

Now this sermon may sound a bit judgy. That's how they call it, isn't it? But the Bible talks about a righteous judgment, a sound judgment, a true discernment.

And we're going to start with Isaiah 5. And Isaiah the prophet says this. Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

[1:07] Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight. Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine and men of strength, to mingle strong drink, which justify the wicked for reward and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.

Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness and their blossom shall go up as dust, because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

So Isaiah's message, it was a word of warning, of impending judgment. Whoa, whoa, it says. We're told of good being called evil and evil being called good.

It sounds a bit like Australia today, doesn't it? What is true and real, we're being told, is fake. And we're being fed this controlled information and propaganda.

Truly, it is a topsy-turvy world, isn't it? Topsy-turvy. There's an inversion, an inversion of everything. In other words, turning everything upside down. And evil is made to appear as something good.

[2:22] What month is it? Pride month. Pride month. That's what they're telling us. Evil is made to appear as something good.

And words are being changed too. Words like truth are being used of lies. Now here's an old family photo of mine.

No offence to my parents here present. One of the lies is evolution, of course. And I think God's reserved a special place in hell for Charles Darwin.

If he didn't repent, there's talk that he might have recanted on his deathbed. There's different views about that. But if Charles Darwin is in hell today, then there's a special, well, eternal hell, the lake of fire one day.

There's a special place for him. Because there's so many people when we're doing door knocking, when we're witnessing to people, oh, the go-to, the default, the crutch of the atheist is, oh, science tells us it's evolution.

[3:28] The world is millions of years old. It is a lie. And it's being taught as truth, isn't it, today? And so people are denying God's truth, falling for such a lie as this.

Some would say, well, that's your truth. My truth is different. Look, there is truth and there's not truth. There's one or the other. People will question, how do we know what is true? Is there such a thing as truth?

That's what Pilate asked when he stood before the Lord and he questioned our Lord and he says, aren't thou a king then? And then he says, what is truth?

What is truth? And the truth is standing right in front of his face, the Lord Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life. Sadly, when you tell somebody the actual truth, they don't believe it.

There's a lot of confusion out there. And there's so many different and misleading messages from the media, the mass media. It's filtered. And we can't always get access to the truth.

[4:28] It's managed by gatekeepers. Gatekeepers. And some of the news feeds that we can get our hands on, it's curated. It's constructed by the ideological machine of misinformation.

That's why they're banning things from access to people. That's why they banned one of our videos lately. And so we are fed lies and made to believe it's the truth.

And deception, friends, deception is the opposite of the truth. And it's deliberate. It is deliberate.

There's a whole lot of distraction that's going on. A whole lot of distraction that's going on.

And friends, now I'm going to say some things here. Don't take it personally if you're feeling like I'm being personal here. You know, I know Paul says, am I your enemy because I'm telling you the truth?

And so think about through history of believers as God's people. We've always been in the target sites. They always have been and they are now.

[5:33] And they used to test whether someone was a Christian, whether they would say to them, they would ask them, who is Lord?

Who is Lord? And the Christian would say, Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus Christ is Lord. And that's tantamount in the Roman days to saying, well, that means Caesar is not, is not Lord.

And that would be one of the ways they would test people. And they would make them offer some, sprinkle some incense on an altar and say, Caesar is Lord. And some might say, well, I could just say those words and not really mean it.

I could kind of get away with it. But the full-on Christians would say, no, Jesus Christ is my Lord. Jesus Christ is my Lord. And the emperors of the Roman Empire would use circuses to entertain the masses, to occupy them.

And we're seeing some of the things that we've seen only in recent years, really in recent times. And here's a picture of a pastor being arrested by the police because he didn't comply with the tyrannical government rules.

[6:43] And we think of the rules of government and potentially they're becoming more and more anti-Christ. Let's face it. Who knows when the next scary thing happens?

And we'll all be told to line up and do what we're told. And when we don't, we could face getting arrested. And you think about it, in times past, they had a coliseum.

I don't know if people have seen this. I put it out there on my social media. It's really an interesting movie. It's a three-hour doco comparing Christians today and modern sports entertainment.

It's called the Colosseum. It's really interesting. A three-hour watch if you've got time. And think about how the Colosseum, the Roman Colosseum, was entertainment for the masses.

And it's interesting when you think about it, how ancient Rome chased after this entertainment culture. And the circuses distracted the masses from actually thinking about and questioning the emperor's policies.

[7:46] It's like a distraction. And you get that today, don't you? There's scary things going on in the world. But how much of the news program is actually news? How much of it is sports?

It's quite interesting, really, isn't it? They call sports news when actually it's vanity, mostly, really. So the people were preoccupied with trivial matters.

And so the circuses, the Colosseum, would keep the masses from discovering the truth and questioning those in power. And it's like you could think, well, there's kind of like a new religion now. It's kind of a God substitute. That sports have become a religion for billions of people, haven't they? We don't have Colosseums anymore, but we've got these massive stadiums now. And the devil, I put to you, has cleverly used sports to distract people from serving God.

And, of course, we know there's a harmless element to it. But we see some people, they're just totally devotees to such a thing. And they dedicate their time, their money.

[8:46] They just pour out their lives, their passion to their favourite teams. And sports have taken on this almost religious feel for them now.

For many people, it's their new religion. And you think how, when you look at the world today, it's topsy-turvy.

We see sports fans, they're so dedicated. They just act like religious followers. They memorise their team's details and history. And they shed tears. And they shout for joy.

They got more enthusiasm than some of us Baptists. They got tears. And they're shouting at these games. And the fans are spending these vast sums of money to go to the other end of the nation to go and watch some sports event.

And meanwhile, they neglect their spiritual lives. And some such people, they will mock those who prioritise serving God. And their sports function like this kind of a modern-day religion.

And they have such intense experiences, this sense of community about their teams and their events. And like I say, it's like a religious practice, a devotion they have. And this sports culture is like a faith to them.

[9:51] It brings this sense of belonging. This community that they form around their gathering places, like a place of worship almost. And the fans have got this so much devotion and passion.

It's like a kind of idolatry. And honestly, when you think about it, if you just take a step back and think, it looks a bit, sounds a bit like some of the godless ways of pagan Rome in some ways.

Of course, we're not slaughtering people like gladiators would. But there is a lot of, you know, quite blood-spilling sports now that are getting very popular, aren't there? What do they call it? The MMA?

I mean, there's gruesome stuff out there that's going on. It's getting quite bloodthirsty, some of it. And you wonder, well, where does that come from? What's behind that? What's driving that, really? That kind of fanatical stuff that's going on. And there's much self-exaltation as well, where they place these teams, these players, these athletes on this pedestal and make them such an important part of their life.

[10:58] And the athletes themselves, they invest such passion and dedication in these, what really are vain pursuits, really. And then we think of the Olympics. Think of the Olympics.

That's another classic one, the Olympics. And here's a couple of shots of some modern Olympics and some of the things that they do. And when you think about the Olympics, it stems from Mount Olympus, Mount Olympus, which was the home of pagan Greek gods.

And you see some of the opening ceremonies. And here's one picture with this Cupid flying. Some of the opening ceremonies are quite alarming, actually, when you actually look at it and take a step back and think, what are they actually symbolising?

What is that all about? The associated entertainment, the symbolism. There's a whole lot of homage that's being paid to really ancient gods and fallen angels. And the Olympics have been thoroughly pagan right from the beginning.

The Roman emperor, Theodosius, banned the Olympics in 393 AD. They thought it was too pagan. That was the reason. And Theodosius II ordered his Roman army in 426 AD to demolish the impressive stadium of Olympia, which could accommodate more than 40,000 spectators.

[12:16] Now, this was after Constantine that had some somewhat Christianisation. And they thought, this is too pagan. We're going to get rid of it. And the Bible tells of this war that's going on, really, this topsy-turvy world between God and truth.

Woe unto them that call good, evil, evil, good. It's a substitute. And it's popular, isn't it? I know we've had a lot of liking for watching such things.

It's very popular. Exodus 23 too, though, it says, Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil. The enemy uses deception, harmless, entertainment, deception to manipulate and distort the truth.

And the world, by and large, just swallows it, goes along with it, and they hate absolute truth, the Bible. Look at Australia today. Aussies are more materially wealthy today, and yet they're more morally bankrupt and unhappier than they have ever been.

A topsy-turvy world. It's a world full of darkness, really, isn't it? In John 3, 19, it reads, And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world.

[13:24] And men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. People are loving darkness more than light. And then 2

Corinthians 4, 4, it tells us, In whom of the lost, in whom the God, small g, of this world, have blinded the minds of them, which believe not.

That the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. And there's a contrast here in this topsy-turvy world, darkness and light.

If it's popular, maybe some of it is not for me. That's not to say we can't have some honest recreation and a bit of enjoyment with a bit of sport.

I'm not meaning to go over the top here. I'm just saying, let's take a step back and think, well, maybe some people are taking it too far. And we know it can become a God substitute.

I think of some of the young men that have attended our church and they've had sport on Sunday. And the minute they join the team, we've not seen them in church ever again.

[14:32] Gone. Gone forever, gone. It's a very sad thing. I think when someone would take a team sport so that it would take them away from the worship of God, I think that's a big problem, brothers and sisters and families today.

Sunday sports is, I think it's wicked. I've got to tell you, it can become a wicked thing. If it's taking you away from worship, then it's wrong. I've got to be honest with you this morning.

We've been fed lies that there's no absolutes, everything's relative, and many Aussies have abandoned absolute truth. And it's destructive. It tells us that my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

It's a problem, brothers and sisters. Many churchgoers, they're biblically illiterate. There's this crying need for God's people to learn how to think biblically. Actually, what would God want?

Shouldn't that be up here? Sports are down here somewhere. God should be up here. What's of the interest for my soul? That should be the foremost consideration. And there's this crying need that we should think biblically, people.

[15:40] We're supposed to be upholding the truth and defending it. And the church, the church for one, especially the church, should be that pillar and ground of the truth. We should be the foundation of the truth.

Everything that we have, that we build upon, it should be true and the truth. And the truth is that God's wonderful good news, the gospel, is ours to declare. We've got this message, this burning message.

We should want to share it. Our mission is to see souls saved and for people to come into the knowledge of the truth that saves and frees people. Isaiah 520 tells of this topsy-turvy world, calling darkness light, light darkness, a world that redefines moral categories, that cause bitter, sweet, and sweet bitter.

You know, imagine if you had a time, you went down to the local bakery and bought yourself a Kitchener Bun and the baker there is putting on the salt on top of the Kitchener Bun.

Looks just the same. Bit of salt, you know, looks just the same as the Kitchener Bun with sugar. But you want to put your teeth into the one that's got salt on it. It's bitter, isn't it?

[16:45] They're putting sweet for bitter, bitter for sweet. Friends, it's wrong. And people today, they're saying right is wrong and wrong is right. We're being fed these lies.

People don't deny the truth and they're feeding it to us. And we're seeing a society that's blurring these lines between right and wrong such that there is no right and wrong. And it leads to confusion and chaos, doesn't it?

Calling evil good, good evil. It's tearing apart the very foundation of life, of order, of decency.

Everything is gone, topsy-turvy. Aussies are embracing this moral relativism where it's all about people's feelings.

Oh, don't offend someone's feelings. Oh, that would be the worst thing to do. Preachers have got to, you know, toe the line. You know, we've got to be careful because we might offend someone's personal preferences or their notions.

And so there's this constriction of, actually, we should be declaring, hey, people, let's wake up. Wake up.

[17:51] The values of decent society and principles of right and wrong are being thrown away. It talks about such a time in Isaiah 59 where the

word of God, the truth, is going to be treated like a piece of rubbish on the stream.

But it talks about truth. It's fallen in the stream. So there's justice, the judgment is gone, the discernment is gone, the righteousness, the equity, the truth is gone. And people are accepting immorality as freedom.

No wonder confusion prevails, people. And people are caring little for personal integrity. Friends, we need the truth. We've got to have the truth. And truth is at the core of the very character of God. It's the core of what we should be about, the core of who he is, our Lord. And we think about the truth, the word of God, the more that we strengthened in it, the more that we know it, the more that we honour the truth, that we'll live in accord with God and his truth.

And sure, we might look like we're pretty odd, pretty odd kind of people, that we should want to worship God as something that we consider that is important for me. We're living in a generation where they're questioning, is there anything that's true?

[18:59] And meantime, we're surrounded by lies, this culture of lies. And our children are being trained in these lies. As we say, evolution. Many people are falling for these lies.

Now, truth is relative, and so is all morality. There's no moral absolutes anymore, they would tell us. So you can't really condemn evil things. The whole idea of morality is being redefined.

Morality. Nowadays, to not show tolerance and inclusion is morally wrong. That's the worst thing you can do. To be intolerant. To not be inclusive.

That's, oh, that's a horrible thing. That's a moral failure on your part. That's what they would tell us. And here's one of our former prime ministers, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, 2007.

And he called something the great moral challenge of our generation. The great moral challenge of our generation. He waxed lyrical about this terrible moral sin.

[20:01] Here he was speaking at Parliament House in Canberra. He wasn't talking about some sin. As the Bible would define it, Prime Minister Rudd was addressing the National Climate Summit, famously declaring climate change to be a moral challenge.

People are calling it a moral imperative. They're using words like that as if it's some moral thing. These people care little for biblical morality, biblical values, biblical truth.

The fact is, it's actually God who controls the skies and the rain. Amen? It's God who controls the wind. It's God who has power over the clouds. It's God who has power over lightning.

It's God who's in control of all things, including the weather. And that's not to say we shouldn't be good stewards of our planet. But it's not a moral issue. Meantime, lots of Aussies hold to the idea of moral relativism.

Relativism. Many people, they do not believe in objective truth, in absolute truth. So they would deny this book and they would say, oh, it's just another book. They haven't even really considered it truthfully.

[21:06] Where do people go now to find information and information of what's going on in the world today? Google. Google doesn't always get it right. Amen? And the further we get away from the truth, the more people will say it doesn't matter.

Nothing matters. Truth is relative. That's what they say. You get this objection all the time from people. Oh, you've got your truth. I've got mine. There is only one truth.

In contrast to these lies, the Bible shows us we can have a sure foundation, a sure truth. We can know the God who is true. The God of truth.

And we're commanded to worship him in spirit and in truth. 1 John 5 tells us how the whole world lies in this wickedness, this state of wickedness. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we may know him.

That is true. And we are in him. That is true. Even in his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. A topsy-turvy world.

[22:11] They don't want the truth. They don't want the true God. They don't want the light. They want the darkness. And our Lord calls us to discernment. In such a topsy-turvy world, what are we to do? We need to exercise discernment.

And Hebrews 5 talks about strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. How do we discern? How do we know what's good and evil? Well, this is the discerning means. This is the book that will tell us how to discern the strong meat, the word of God. It's sound doctrine and teaching, biblical truth.

And as believers, we're called to be discerning in such a time. We're called to recognise that there is such a thing as the truth. And there is such a thing as the good and the evil in a world where the world is largely hostile towards the truth.

Romans 12 exhorts us to not conform to this world but to be transformed. The renewing of our mind is the word of God transforming us. And so we are called to exercise discernment.

[23:18] And there is this topsy-turvy world where they're turning everything upside down. It's God's truth that is the moral compass we need. God's truth that is the true north.

And we need the courage to resist the world and its pressures and speak up. Friends, think about it. It's almost like you've got to take a step back and just re-evaluate what's going on and have the mind to think, actually, maybe I should just rethink about the subtle ways the world's influencing me and what I think.

And look, I've been trained by the government. You know, I've got a university training. I've got, I've been trained, trained and trained and trained again in the government.

And sometimes you can, a little bit of that starts to, oh, yeah, I can see this or that. You start to get changed and it can happen subtly, can't it? And rather, we need this to help set our thinking straight.

This should be the calibration method for how we think. And truly, these are days of deception. And we have to stand for what's right, for what's right, even if it's not popular or convenient.

[24:34] As the saying goes, right is right even if everyone is against it. And wrong is wrong even if everyone is for it. We must distinguish between truth and disinformation.

And we're commanded to obey the truth, to love the truth, to test everything. Here's one, 1 Thessalonians 5, 21. How are we to live in such a topsy-turvy world?

Prove all things. That's a small word there again. All, isn't it? Heard about small words. That's a big word, isn't it? It's a big word. All things.

All things. Prove them. Test them. Check them out. Discern. Suss it out. All things. Everything. And hold fast that which is good.

There's a lot of fakers, a lot of fakes, a lot of hypocrites in our world. And we're to judge by the truth. There is such a thing as truth. To speak the truth in love.

[25:35] To walk in the truth. There's nothing more that this world hates than the truth. And it cannot stand it. It cannot tolerate the truth. And anybody who stands up for God's side will be attacked.

And if you do what's right, somebody's going to come after you. There's a great dividing going on in this topsy-turvy world. And rather stand with God. Stand for the right.

There's polarising. It's getting stronger and stronger. And Christians are being scapegoat and painted as bigots and as kookies.

You know, they're being painted that way, aren't they? And there's this polarising going on. And really, we shouldn't be afraid to stand with the Lord. And stand with the right. Stand with the word. We have to be willing to be different. Be willing to stand out from the crowd. Because the world, by and large, is falling after evil. Now, I'm going to tread on some more toes this morning. So I'm going to kick some more sacred cows.

[26:35] And some of you are going to get annoyed with me. But honestly, I don't mean to be controversial, but I'm just wanting to be truthful here. So look at the entertainment industry.

The entertainment industry. Innocent, harmless, fun. Hollywood. It's interesting that holly is what they make witch's wands out of.

And a hollywood is what? A witch's wand. Hollywood. Hollywood has been called the devil's magic wand. Oh, Disney princesses.

Aren't they so sweet and lovely? And then you've got the Disney witches as well. And you've got innocent little Mickey Mouse. Oh, he's such a darling.

Such a cute, fun character. What does he first appear as? As a magician holding a witch's wand. Innocent, harmless, fun.

[27:35] That's what it is. That's what people think it is. And we think of the agendas in modern movies these days. They're often undermining the values of God's word. There's a control, even witchcraft.

Even witchcraft at work. So when you go home today and you go and check your DVDs out, all those Disney princesses, where do they belong? In the fire.

In the fire. And Disney and Hollywood can cast a spell. And it does cast a spell on billions of people. There's the spiritual realm at work.

That's what's behind it. That's the morals. That's the mentality. That's the philosophy that's driving some of these movie makers. I'm not saying it's all necessarily horror and some of it's quite harmless, maybe so.

But it's the agenda that's behind some of the ones who construct these things. There's this kind of satanic agenda. They're out to bewitch and to corrupt the minds of those who follow them.

[28:33] And so we've got to be discerning. Again, I put to you, be discerning. So the end times tells of a time, the word of God tells of a time where it talks about the deceivableness of unrighteousness in those that perish.

It talks about those who receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. It tells how God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they might be damned, who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.

So it's talking about this unrighteousness, it's talking about the deception, it's talking about delusion, it's talking about people who will refuse to love the truth and be saved, and they refuse to love the truth, they don't want to know about the truth.

And God sends a powerful delusion so that they will believe a lie. There's delusion at work. Now, of course, you don't necessarily have to act on what I just said there, kind of a little bit tongue in cheek, that you should throw out all your Disney princesses, but I just think, take a step back and think, what's behind it?

What's the philosophy? What's the message? What's the underlying message? And think about whether that's a good thing or not. Alright? We're living in a time of delusion, people taking pleasure in unrighteousness instead of taking pleasure in the truth.

[29:45] And then in some schools today, you've got children identifying as cats. And if the teacher doesn't acknowledge that they're a cat, the teacher could lose their job.

honestly, yes, honestly. They've got to sacrifice truth and common sense and just plain straightforward thinking.

They've got to sacrifice all of that on the altar of feelings because they don't offend anyone. They say, actually, that looks like mental illness to me.

And I'm not saying that mental illness is something to make a joke about, honestly. I'm not saying that. But I'm saying that these people need help. They need help.

Okay. And people are calling what is wrong right. That's something we simply cannot do. We cannot call wrong right. We will call evil evil. We will call good good. There is a defining line.

[30:46] And look at the rainbow. Actually, that's God's idea. The rainbow is God's idea. I love the rainbow because it's a sign of God's promise. Amen. It's not a sign of pride.

It's a sign of God's promise. He says, I just set my bow in the clouds and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. That rainbow is a token of God's covenant.

It's a sign of God's covenant. Now the rainbow has been hijacked. It means God's promise, not pride. We have to go by the one who defines truth. It tells us what things are and what things are not.

So tell us what is right from what is wrong. And he wrote the book of truth. It tells us here that we should know the word as the word of truth. It tells us our Lord praise, sanctify them, make them holy through thy word is truth.

And we've got to love the truth in such a time. How should we live in a topsy-turvy world? We should love the truth. We should love it. There's a sad decline of truth today and there's a war on and it's in the halls of government too.

[31:49] In the halls of government of our land. It tells us in Proverbs 29 too, when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

When a wicked man rules, it says the people are going to mourn. They're going to groan. Oh no. And we need to be more and more like Nehemiah was in his time as he went to work building, rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

In the one hand he had a sword, in the other a trowel. He built the wall and the people of God, they rallied to build the wall. And we're meant to be such a people building, building the walls, building the truth, building up our families, building up the church.

And we need to have a sword in our hand such that we're willing to fight the enemy that is at the door. And we're willing to fight and to build and to build and to fight. What are we to do in a topsy-turvy world?

We're meant to stand up and fight. Stand up and build. And oppose that which is evil. When we see darkness and evil, let's speak it out.

[32:54] Let's call it for what it is. Every time we read a book or we listen to something on the screen, every time we listen to something on the radio, there's some ideology that's going into our ear gate or our eye gate.

Something that's raising itself up against the truth. We ought to be a people who contend for the truth, mightily so. It tells us we know of these scriptures and I don't mean to labor unnecessarily of the last times, the perilous times to come.

People, lovers of their own selves. It goes on to say, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. It tells us how a world has gone topsy-turvy, where all of these things are going on, the wickedness. It's ever more so, without natural affection. So even the breakdown of families. This war that we're engaged in is a war on the truth. It's a war against the truth. And it's about for us to be contending for the truth, to be contending for the faith.

The reality is in this topsy-turvy world that we're living in, we're called to fight. We're called every single day of our lives to stand up for the right, for the true, for the truth, to have that biblical faith.

[34:02] And that can put you at odds with this world. And when you wake up, whether you go to church, whether you work, whether you're in the world, the community, doing this or that, recognize the darkness that is all around and say, actually, I don't want to be a part of that darkness.

And it tells us here that we should have no fellowship, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Ephesians 5, 11. Now some Bible translations say rather expose them.

Look, it's good to expose them, but the King James is more straight down the line, not just expose them, actually we're going to reprove them. We're going to rebuke them. We're going to stand against them. We're against the powers of darkness.

We want to rebuke that. We want to reprove that. How should we respond? Reprove the works of darkness. Stand against them, withstand them, rebuke them. You're in a fight, people. And this fight that we're fighting is a fight for the truth.

We see the whole book of Jude talks about that context of, as he writes to true believers in Jude, we see that small book. It's a good book. He talked about small words.

[35:07] There's a small book to read, the book of Jude. And he calls believers to engage strenuously in this fight for the truth, against the false, and addressing apostasy that was in the churches.

He talks about these spiritual fakes and frauds, these apostates that were destroying the church through their false teaching. Friends, they're out there. They're in our church, as in the broader church.

These false teachers, it's overwhelmingly so. False teaching is a real issue. And Jude writes, he says, it was needful for me to write unto you that you should earnestly, earnestly contend for, for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

So this word, content, it's a really strong word. It's got the sense of agonizing. It's an agony to it. There's a good kind of contention. We don't want to be contentious people.

We don't want contention in our number, but we should be contending against, contending against that which is wrong. We should have that agonizing, that, that struggling, that action of battle that we're willing to fight strenuously, to war mightily, to battle vigorously, to wage war.

[36:18] And that is what it's talking about here. Contending for the gospel, for true salvation, there's a battle on. And it's about this gospel. That we need to stand for.

Even the gospel itself is under threat. About what the gospel is, is under threat as well. And rather we should stand for the good news. Christ died for sinners.

We can know his saving grace. Friends, we need to stand for that. And battle against the occult agenda. And it's all around us. See it for what it is.

And even the very church of God is under attack. We ought to be the pillar and ground of the truth. But in some quarters it's not. The true church of God. We're meant to be a separated people.

Our Lord tells us that the gates of hell will not prevail against his church. And his church will never be defeated. So we've got need of biblical doctrine. We see a lack of personal holiness.

[37:13] Some churches are more like a social club rather than a training center where the word of God is training people to confront the world that is out there. And it tells us of a time to come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

And they'll have these teachers having itching ears just turning to this one and that one. Turning away their ears from the truth. Turning unto fables. So this is the context. This is the world I put to you.

The world more so that we're living in as time goes by. This war that's on. A war against families. Against marriage. Marriage is getting scarcer. Marriages are often getting broken.

There's a war on against men as well. The Bible shows us what it is to be a man. Man there's nothing wrong with being a man. Amen. There's nothing wrong with being a man.

A manly man. And we've got a calling to fulfil but there's this trend in the world today of effeminising men. Making men wimpy, weak, watering it all down such that when a man's masculine they call it toxic masculinity.

[38:16] The world calls strong men toxic. Toxic. They say men cannot be strong. Now of course we know it's not meaning strong in the sense of being a wife basher.

We're not in any way condoning that. But we see when God made man, he says God created man in his own image and in the image of God created he him. Male and female created he them.

There is such a thing as biblical masculinity and biblical femininity. They're good things. They're good things. God created man and woman. That's his plan.

We've all got a calling. There's a lack of men. There's a lack of godly women. God created the family for a reason and that's why Satan hates it. And think of it friends down through history. Children are especially the target.

Children are especially the target in all areas of life. Every communist regime. Every totalitarian dynasty. Down through recorded human history. The number one goal to get control of the children.

[39:22] Get the children. To seize the children. To make them in their own image as tyrants, as socialists or Marxists. And look around our nation today at the children. They're under attack.

Satan hates them. And we must watch over them. Mustn't we? Watch over our children, our grandchildren, God helping us by the love of God to show them the love of God to train them up in the way?

They should go, woe unto them that call evil good. That call good evil. Who put darkness for light, light for darkness, sweet for bitter, bitter for sweet.

Woe to them that are wise in their own eyes. There's so much confusion. And deception means to trick or deceive, to lead astray. This is their method, isn't it?

To deceive. We must resist. We must fight for truth. One of the most dangerous aspects of this spiritual enslavement is people aren't even recognising that it's going on.

[40:16] There's moral relativism. It's like people don't even, it doesn't click that this is happening. And they're blinded. Yeah, they're not discerning. Friends, what are we to do in such a time of a topsy-turvy world?

There is such a thing as the true north. The true north. In other words, there is right and wrong. There is a plumb line. There is a plumb line that says, this is straight up and down. This is true. And the powers of darkness threaten, but we have victory. There's a global enslavement, but we have the truth. Woe unto them. Woe unto them. It's talking about in the context of a moral decay, of a social injustice in Judah.

The people are turning away from God's word. They were engaging in corrupt and unjust things. And Isaiah calls to repentance. He urges the nation to get back to God's righteous standards. And he says, woe to them. Woe to them. Judgment. Judgment is fast approaching. One day, judgment will fall. And that will be seen for what it is. And we think of the world today, they were saying, well, modern man has got smarter now, more intellectual.

[41:25] We've advanced technologically. But friends, if we're missing the moral compass in these turbulent times, that's dangerous. Isn't it? The moral compass is Christ, isn't it?

It's Christ, our great Lord and saviour. And friends, in such a time, what are the people of God to do? When the moral compass is missing, when there's just no right or wrong anymore, actually there is right and wrong.

There is that which is right and there is that which is wrong. And you shall know the truth, it says, and the truth shall make you free. There is such a thing as truth and you can know it. And there is one who can make you free, free indeed.

If the Son, therefore, shall make you free. There is freedom in Christ, Galatians 5, 1, a freedom that is in Christ. And I urge you this morning, I pray that you might know Him who is the truth, that we believe in the true God who gives us the true eternal life, that we can know God's truth and make it real in our lives, such that it affects our actions, our decisions, our thinking, what we say, how we live.

That we can have deliberate choices. Actually, I want to honour my God as the foremost thing that matters most to me. And I'm going to recognise, actually, when it's doubtful, I'm not going to touch it.

[42:48] God helping me. And those lines between the right and wrong, they don't have to be blurry anymore because we can know the truth. Amen. Let us pray.

Lord, we thank you that in all of our lives we've all got to make questions, stands of conscience and decision. Lord, of choices we make. We pray for our families, our children.

We know that enemies are fighting hard and yet sometimes the church is not. Lord, in this topsy-turvy world, help us to contend earnestly for the faith.

Help us, Lord, to when we see the works of darkness, to reprove them, to speak against them, to stand against them, to withstand the enemy and his works. Lord, help us to discern truth from error, right from wrong.

Help us, Lord, to be a people of truth such that we care enough about the truth, we want to tell others about the one who is the truth, the one who can save us from this darkness and give us eternal life as we trust in you, our great Lord.

[43:50] Lord. We pray each one might be encouraged today that if anything that I've said might have hit a nerve, Lord, we just prayerfully consider and, Lord, make our own decision about all of these things, that you would lead us and guide us into all truth.

In Jesus' name, Amen.