

How are we to live in a Babylonian World?

Confronting the spirit of Pride

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[0:00] Culture. It's been defined as the way we do things around here. It's our values. Think! of the world's cultures, the prevailing culture of our world. Sadly, the world's cultures, its ideologies are godless, largely, aren't they? And we're called to be counterculture, countercultural. It seems like the gods of our age are framing what we could see as a materialistic consumer-driven culture. And many of the ways of our world, the value systems of our world, we adopt without even thinking about it, without even realising it. And it's important that we consider how are we to live in such a world as this? How are God's people meant to live in the world? We can look at Daniel as a great example of just how to live.

Daniel and his friends, how they lived in such a world. And they show for us how God's people ought to live in a strange and hostile land. The Babylonians had taken the very best of the young people back to Babylon for training in the king's court. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to force them to conform to the ways of Babylon. And believers here today, it's the same story for us, isn't it? We're in the same battle where they're conforming to the ways of Babylon, the ways of the world. And really Satan wants to conform us to this world. As in Romans 12, it talks about the world wanting to conform us to the world and the ways of the world. It's like a picture of being squeezed into a mould.

And these young men were transported hundreds of miles from their homeland to Babylon, brought to Babylon. And Babylon, we could understand, represents really the anti-God system of culture and power.

And it was right at the start in Genesis 11. Genesis 11, when we first read about Babylon, the Tower of Babel. It reads Genesis 11, 4. And they said, Let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven. And let us make a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. They're saying, let us make a name for ourselves. We want to be prideful and proud of our city, of our culture.

[2:48] And Babylon, Babel was marked by pride, really. Pride really meaning rebellion. Rebellion against God. And it's the same story for you and me today in Australia.

This pride, this rebellion against God. And so we pick up the story in Daniel 1, verse 4. Here they were, the ones taken to Babylon. They were the finest. It reads there, Daniel 1, verse 4. For of these ones they were children in whom was no blemish, but well-favored and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

These young men, they were only teenagers at the time. Daniel and his three friends, they're brought into Babylon as captives.

Such a long way from home, now they're totally surrounded and immersed in a pagan culture. And Babylon in the Bible is this picture of this God-opposing, idolatrous pagan power.

[4:08] It's a pagan empire founded on pagan principles, governed by pagan institutions revolving around the worship of idols.

Now when we go door-knocking sometimes, some will proudly say, I'm a pagan. I'm a pagan. Paganism is alive and well in Elizabeth, South Australia. Amen.

Babylon represents the world. It was a superpower, big, rich, materialistic, mighty. Babylon, it's just like the materialistic world of today, full of prideful rebellion.

Babylon is this metaphor. It stands for the godless, secular systems of power in the world, in this world. And our world has a culture of pride, about sin.

Now I'm quoting a little and I've drawn some thoughts from Martin Isles, who's put it like this along these lines. Our modern culture has taken the word pride and made it into a marketing slogan.

[5:11] And nobody bats an eyelid. Pride. Pride. Pride. Here's what the Bible says. What does it say? Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Pride. I continue the quote. It's a wicked sin. And yet it's become a marketing slogan. It's become good business. It's become a festival.

It's become a parade. It's become a good life. It's become a way of living. A life philosophy. Pride is exalted among the people as a virtue.

It's wrong. Pride never got anyone anywhere good. Pride never got any culture anywhere good. It would appear that pride is the reason Satan fell from heaven.

So we see this analogy here. This parallel here. In the city of Babel they built this tower. His top is in the heavens.

[6:17] They wanted to be as Lucifer. Like he wanted to be as God. To build the tower to heaven is a picture of their wanting authority.

It's a picture of rebellion against God's authority. And God has given us the blueprint for life. The word of God has given us such clarity on really the essentials.

In the beginning he made them male and female. Man wants to mess all of that up. And pervert really the very essentials of life.

Basically it's a lie. And as Christians we actually believe that there is such a thing as the truth. As the Lord says sanctify them. In other words make the people, his people holy.

Sanctify them he says as he prays for us. Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word. Thy word is truth. There is such a thing as absolute truth.

[7:25] And we believe in it. And really sensible people would agree that an XX chromosome is an XX chromosome.

The science is clear and real. You can cut bits off and add bits here and there. But it doesn't change the person that we are. The father of lies, the devil is behind all of this warped kind of agenda.

Everything Babylon really stands for. And Babylon is alike to the pride of our modern world. With its obsession about the self and the greatness of the self. The selfie world.

Isn't it? And of Babylon really the last Babylon in the Bible. is pictured as this raging woman. Drunk with the blood of the saints.

The blood of the martyrs of Jesus. She's hostile towards the testimony of Christ. We see as it reads of her, Revelation 17. The name upon her forehead.

[8:25] Mystery Babylon the great. The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. It's a picture of the hostility of the godless system of the end time called Babylon against the people of God.

And what do we see today in our world? And look again, we see it often at the doorstep when we're talking to the average Joe. A hostility towards Christianity.

A rising hostility. They're almost frothing at the mouth. A world hostile to everything that is Christian. To everything Christianity stands for.

A hostility towards Christ and the gospel. And like the woman of Revelation, it has a seductive side too. Babylon today, really secularism, isn't it?

Material prosperity and comfort. It's rampant deception. And back to our story. Daniel and his three friends, they were thrust now for three full years.

[9:30] Immersed in Babylonian culture, beliefs and practices. So they were right there in the thick of it. And friends, we see a brainwashing going on.

That they encountered too. These young men, men who loved God, were put in this place where they were being brainwashed.

Well, that was the aim. The idea was for them to forget their spiritual roots and to adopt the mindset and the values and the worldview of the surrounding culture.

And really, as we sit in front of the screens, there's a brainwashing, isn't there? It's a bombardment. But these men, they stood strong.

And believers here today, we're living in a world that often embraces values that are contrary to God's truth. We're meant to be not of the world as much we are in the world.

[10:40] We are not of it. Think of the world and what the Bible says about the world. It says that Satan is the one who has the world under his control.

The cosmos. The cosmos. He's called the prince of this cosmos, of this world. Our Lord calls him that in John 12, 31. John 16, 11.

The apostle John says, the whole world lieth in wickedness, or in other words, under the control of the wicked one, Satan. And what happened to these young men is a light to the world's strategy that we're encountering.

A strategy of spiritual reprogramming. And it's often in the world's educational systems. Satan wants to control the educational process so that our children grow up immersed in his world view and his philosophy of life.

And it happens from birth to end of university now. The whole it's the whole spectrum, isn't it?

[11:54] The whole continuum. Zero to 12 to finish your uni or your trade. The bombardment of the ways of the heathen.

The Bible says, learn not the way of the heathen. There's a constant barrage of these messages. And in the workplace too.

You know, I've been in the public sector and thank God I'm not in it anymore because it's more and more flying the rainbow. Wear purple today. Wear the rainbow.

God help the people that work for coals down there. There's this subtle pressure. Oh, just put a little rainbow flag on your name tag.

It's subtle. And sometimes not so subtle. It's indoctrination. That's what it is. And we're all facing it in every workplace.

[12:57] Unless you might be self-employed, you might escape it to some degree. But it's everywhere, isn't it? It's right through. The woke agenda. The woke agenda. It's bent on the deconstruction of Christianity.

It's like there's these thought police. I know one time I said something that wasn't politically correct where I was working in the Department of Health at the time.

and this lady said, oh, I didn't have my antenna up to pick up this homophobia because I said something that didn't go along with the agenda.

Looks like you've had too much to think is the saying there. The sense where they're policing our very thoughts. We've got to fit in and go along.

The Bible says a good thought control is that every thought should be captive to our Lord, to His Lordship. That's a good thought control.

[14:04] But this is Babylon, isn't it? It's a mockery of virtue. It mocks virtue and it cancels truth. And everything is fair game. We've heard about Anzac Day today.

That's in the target sites, isn't it? Australia Day. Christmas. Anything that has any smacking of anything that's of national pride or of that which would have a good legacy, a good heritage.

That which has any virtue. They want to change history and rewrite it. And everything is fair game.

Basically, they want to get rid of the author of truth and make you the author of your own truth.

Everything becomes subjective. Extreme individualism. And they're changing everything, just about everything, from the basic building blocks of society.

Even the family is being redefined. Only God has the power to define a family. He made the male and female, husband and wife. human life is being redefined as to when they say it starts.

[15:16] Isn't it obvious when it starts? They want to say, oh, life doesn't begin until so many weeks and then, oh, then it's alive. No, it's right from the first moment of conception.

Human life begins when God makes life in the womb. And these men were forced to learn both the language and the literature of the people they were living in.

What is the language of the world? The language of the world. Really, it's not just English now in Australia.

You've got to speak political correctness as well. It's a dangerous language that people are buying into. Really, it's indoctrination, mind control, into this secularist, humanist kind of way of thinking. And our world is becoming more and more hostile to the gospel. Really, this is the reality for every one of us. And think about the cultural norms, the cultural norms. What the world says is normal now of our day.

[16:20] Wickedness and perversion is an alternative lifestyle. Abortion, they call pro-choice. It sounds so wonderful. Mention of God is removed from schools and political agendas and political arenas.

There's a warping of values, a mocking of biblical Christianity, a rewriting of history. Now, it's interesting that in ancient Rome, what they used to do was discard infants in the hours after birth on the rubbish dumps of the city.

If it was inconvenient, they didn't have the comfort of an abortion, they would just merely take the child down to the local rubbish tip and dump it there while it was still alive.

And the Christians became known as the ones who went there and found them and raised them up as their own. This is the natural tendency of paganism, isn't it? To defalue life.

We would think historically of our nation, of our society, it was once generally somewhat Christian, moral, ethical, patriotic.

[17:34] There were certain values we'd embrace like liberty and freedom, justice. But there's been this huge cultural shift now. And the West has moved from Christian culture to post-Christian culture, now to anti-Christian culture.

And the culture shift really it's affecting everyone, even in the churches. Now hopefully that's not only here present at the moment. But many churches are sleeping, aren't they? Many churches are sleeping.

They're asleep. And they've so subtly compromised bit by bit. Now they are far, far away from the scripture. There's churches that have bought into this whole agenda.

And God's church ought to be more concerned about what's biblically correct than being politically correct. But really there's a fundamental clash of values. That's what's happening. A clash of values going on between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world.

Brothers and sisters, this is what's happening. What about us? About you and me? How are we living in the culture of our time? Can we be as Daniel and his friends living to God's glory in a pagan culture?

[18:45] Back to our story, verse 5, it reads on how for these ones brought to Babylon, the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them three years that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

So the king's object here in this kind of scholarship, this kind of this university program that he was investing in these men to undertake this three year program, he wanted to give them all the comforts of the palace.

And when you think about it, if the enemy can move us to depend on the material comforts that make up our way of life or certain pleasures of this world that we've grown to love, then he can far more effectively draw us away from the Lord.

It's really part of his programming, of the king's programming. And when we think about it, Satan is just like that. His fundamental goal is to re-educate our minds into his way of thinking, to instill in us a sense that all the good things of life come from the world around us, from the satisfying of the desires of the flesh.

So this was the idea behind the king's program, that at the end of this three-year process, their previous identity would be fully obliterated, and they would then enter into the service of Nebuchadnezzar, into his court, into his service.

[20:21] So the process was meant to obliterate everything of Israel, of Israel's God, from the minds of these young men. The idea was to instill in these men this sense of total dependence upon Nebuchadnezzar for all of the good things of life.

And we read on verse 6, it tells us of these men, now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names.

For he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar, and unto Hananiah of Shadrach, and to Mishael of Meshach, and to Azariah of Abednego.

So this was a comprehensive brainwashing exercise. Notice their names were changed. It was a complete indoctrination process. Now, all four had names that honoured the God of Israel.

Their names were changed from the God of Israel to honour the Babylon gods. So Daniel, God is my judge.

[21:35] He became Belteshazzar, Baal's prince, the god of creation, supposedly. Hananiah, which meant beloved of the Lord, became Shadrach, the moon god. Mishael, who is as god, became Meshach, who is like Venus.

Azariah, the lord is my help, became Abednego, the servant of Nebo, the Babylonian god of wisdom. So the object here of the king was to take away their identity.

He wanted them to identify with Babylon's gods. And it's the same with you and me today. Satan wants you to identify with the world. That you think like the world, that you watch what the world watches, that you act like the world acts, that you have the philosophies that the world has.

He wants to take away from you your identity as God's children. And how does he do it? He changed their names. So there's this subtle changing of language. Now think of it today brothers and sisters in the world that we live, the change of language.

There's a subtle changing of language, sometimes not so subtle. You've got birthing persons now. Chest feeding.

[22:55] Pregnant people. Coming up soon we've got birthing parent day. Birthing parent day. Of course now we even have God who cannot be referred to with gendered language.

That we would call him father, call him him. Free speech is now only if you agree with me they say. What used to be free speech now they call it hate speech.

They use words like gender affirming care to describe castration and other monstrous life changing surgeries. Now it's gender affirming care and there's much talk about diversity.

Diversity is actually where everyone looks different but thinks the same. That's diversity. Anything that doesn't fit with their narrative they call misinformation.

And there's a deliberate effort to ban certain words. Harmful language. Words like father, mother, husband, wife.

[24:09] Gendered language. Gendered language like man or woman. Language is being changed isn't it? Can't you see it? And the more we feed from that source the more we'll start to think like them.

Like Babylon. Language is being changed all around us. It's another sign of Babylon at work. Now let's get back to our story again and we see a daring decision of Daniel.

Daniel 1 verse 8. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat nor with the wine which he drank.

Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. It was just a little compromise. For Daniel the problem was a defilement.

It was a polluting, a staining. Daniel made a decision. Daniel was up front about why? About the spiritual basis for his decision, for his request. We could contemplate that Daniel knew that portions of all the foods were offered to the Babylon gods.

[25:25] Portions of the wine were poured out on the altars of the Babylon gods. He also knew that eating some of the items on the king's table would be against the law of Moses. So he resolved not to defile himself.

He made a decision and so can you people of God. You can make a decision not to allow the culture of Babylon to diminish your relationship with God. Not even in the little things of life.

He decided to live to please God. Not the culture of his day. Not to fall in line with the culture that surrounded him but to decide to live counter to the culture.

The reason Daniel stood up is because he realised his relationship with God touched every area of his life. Even what he ate. So it seemed a trivial thing but it was a big thing to Daniel because it was as you could imagine it's making the door ajar and before you know it.

It's wide open. And so rejecting the menu was like rejecting the king. This could have resulted in severe punishment. Imagine as they said no we're not going to eat from the king's table.

[26:36] What an offence that would have been to his majesty the king of Babylon. And the king of Babylon he was known for his severe punishment. In Jeremiah 39 verses 6 through 7 Jeremiah 29 verse 22 talks about the brutality of the king of Babylon.

He slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes then he put his eyes out and bound him in chains. Later he roasted him. This is the man they're dealing with the king of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar.

So when the young men refused to eat the king's food they could have landed in all kinds of trouble. It may seem a trivial thing that they refused the food.

food. It's just a small thing. It's just a small trivial thing. But we know a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

And it's by small matters that we stand for the right that we get great victories. It's those little decisions of your life that are the right choices to make.

[27:48] The little things. It matters. Daniel made up his mind right from the start. right from day one. Others would have seen this as a trivial matter.

But Daniel nailed his colours to the mast. He said I'm going to stand. And Daniel's philosophy was one of no compromise. Think of it brother, sister for yourself.

God helping you. Be faithful to the lordship of Christ. We have need for conviction in a culture of compromise. We can choose purity in a time of sensuality.

We can choose purity. Our world is really quite an entertainment culture isn't it? Think of the pagan Romans. What did they have for their daily entertainment?

People getting slaughtered. Blood shed was the entertainment culture of Rome.

[28:50] And the pagan Romans had these bread and circuses. They were just loving it. Now we could think of Aussie culture of similar stadiums where some would be obsessed with such to the point of God is far, far away from their thoughts.

God calls us to live as citizens of heaven, to be a people called out, to be distinct. Daniel and his companions, they would not defile themselves even with the king's fancy foods.

I don't know if they were nearby when they were cooking them, they probably smelled really lovely, I imagine. The best chefs of the known land were gathered there to cook the greatest spices and offerings that money could buy, but they said no.

What about us? Do we go the way of the world, or will we remain faithful to our Lord while in enemy territory? Do we conform to this world and its ways?

It seems that some people try too hard to be culturally relevant that they lose any influence they can be. Now Daniel could have just fallen in with all the crowd and just blended in.

[30:09] Babylon wanted to change him and his three friends. The Babylonians, they could change Daniel's home, his textbooks, they could change his name, and they could try to change his menu, but what they could not change is his heart.

It may have seemed like a little thing, but the only way to go on with God is by being faithful in the little things. You might say, oh, I can get away with this or that, I can skirt around this responsibility or that, I can miss this or miss that, just a little thing, but it's the little things that add up, don't they? Be faithful in the little things. Be faithful. And don't follow the crowd, rather go against the flow.

These men, they did not compromise, they dared to trust God and his word.

Think of it, friends, for ourselves as those who would be followers of Christ, how can we live differently? What should mark us? That our lives would be such that we're called to be a set-apart people, to fear God, to sacrifice, to honour God above all else, to have the humility in a world obsessed with pride.

And Daniel was one who was marked as recognised for his excellence, his faithfulness. They said an excellent spirit was in him. And Daniel went to the lion's den for his convictions.

[31:40] And these weren't just fluffy toy lion. They were real ones. But think of it, brothers and sisters, us modern Christians, we're comparatively weak.

I say for myself, there's much apathy, a lot of compromise with the idols of this age. How can we live for Christ in a secular world? In a material world which seems that people are just bent on that. It's all they care about. materialism. There was one time during a funeral, a man leaned over to the fellow next to him and said, this guy was worth millions.

Wasn't he? How much did he leave behind? And the man said, all of it. All of it. Friends, we can get obsessed with what the world would count important.

We're meant to be different. in a way that aligns with our Lord. It would be counts of the culture of our day. It's a controversial message, isn't it?

[32:46] Some would think, oh, you're one of those wacko Christians, you actually believe the Bible and what it says. Yeah. It's controversial, isn't it, to be such a one.

And the message of the cross, it says Jesus Christ and him crucified. It's a stumbling block to the Jews, it says. A stumbling block to the Jews. Literally, it's a scandal.

It's scandalous. A man dying on a cross. The idea of a saviour hung on a cross. This was a crazy thought. Insane.

And for the Jews, this was a curse. The one hung on a cross is a sign of one who's cursed. The Lord Jesus is radically different, isn't he?

And Daniel lived counter to the culture. And he was blessed. Friends, we've got the same calling. We're living in a world that is hell bound, but we are set apart.

[33:46] Doesn't mean we've got to be crazy, loopy, weird, or anything like that. But we can dare to be different. Amen? We can dare to be distinct. We can dare to counter the culture.

Really, our mission is counter-cultural. Our community is counter-cultural. It's a cultural war, isn't it? A culture war. That we would come under the kingdom of God, the rule of God, that we would prioritize our relationship with God such that that matters the most.

Daniel was willing to risk position, privilege. He could have faced death as he did face death, as he loved God more than his own comfort.

And for me and you, living in this world, dare to be a Daniel, to counter the culture, make a choice, to be biblically correct as the motive, not politically correct.

When we think about it, future generations will live in the society we create today. So we're thinking about children and grandchildren. God help them. Friends, this world is going downhill.

[35:00] And so, may the Lord guide us that we would not compromise. That we'd stand as a godly witness, even in a hostile culture. And we know that the word of God talks to us in Matthew 5 of those who ought to be such a people to refuse to compromise.

It says that we are to be the salt and the light. Matthew 5. You can refuse to compromise. You can be such that your salt. It's got this purifying, this preserving effect.

The salt preserves. We can make an impact. And we can be light where such as darkness all around us, we can shine God's light. So, I urge you this morning, if you could take to heart this challenge, dare to be a Daniel.

Dare to be counter-cultural. You can influence your culture instead of letting it influence you. And we can impact our world. We can make an impact. You might think, what can I do?

You can be one who says, I'm going to make an impact. And the ripple effect happens from that too. Take stock of yourself today, where you're going.

[36:14] What is it that consumes your time and your energy? Do we live the worldly way? Or do we actually think, no, I want to have God as my first consideration.

That I'll be unyielding, unwavering. That I'll stand for God even when it's going to cost. And even when the law of the land was to worship the image, we know that these men, these three young men, they stood firm.

And the king challenged them and they said, look, we're not careful to answer thee in this matter. It says, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and he will deliver us from thy hand, O king.

So there's this huge image and everyone had to bow and worship, but these men stood and did not bow. And furthermore, they stood in the fire.

And the fourth man stood with them. It says, as they answer the king, we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

[37:24] Now some will bow down. The majority will bow down. They'll count their reputation and their standing and popularity too much. The compromise is what they choose.

they're not willing to lose. So they will compromise. But it's the ones who went into the fire that had a testimony. As we read later in Daniel 3, and really just touching on this briefly, but we see that four men were walking in the midst of the fire.

And the people saw this and said, no other God can deliver like this. The ones who went into the fire had a testimony. And it's the same for you, brother, sister. As you go into the fire, you're going to have a testimony.

The fourth man will join you in the fire. In other words, Christ. What will our mindset be? Will we choose to conform?

Or will we say, no, I'm not going along with that? We need more Daniels, don't we? Daniels, and as these three men, men will stand in the fires of life, stand for Christ.

[38:46] And of Daniel, later it says he was recognised even by the pagan authorities. And in fact, by the young men's testimony in the fire, Nebuchadnezzar was converted.

So maybe we could even influence the culture such that we can touch lives as well. And Daniel was recognised with high honours.

An excellent spirit, it says, was found in him. He had a testimony. He had a testimony. Look at the spirit of the man. It's the spirit of God here. Then Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes because an excellent spirit was in him and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. It's interesting when he was challenged at the time where they made prayer illegal that Daniel prayed. And he gave thanks. It's kind of telling, isn't it?

That not only did he pray, but he gave thanks. He gave thanks before his God. And you know, we can be such that as Daniel here facing this confronting anti-Christ system of his day, we can be like Daniel.

[40:03] He was consistent. He was consistent and he thanked God. Even as he faced the lions, Daniel was steadfast. And friends, to see his boldness and his courage to pray, even if he was to go to the lion's den, he was thankful.

What about you and me today? Will we compromise or will we stand? Friends, I'm addressing Christians really. And really, it's the truth that to follow Christ is really, it's counterculture, isn't it? To trust him, to love him, to follow him is going in the opposite direction to the vast bulk of humanity. And some would criticize the kind of things that I said today, including people I very much love and care about and say, well, it's just a political thing.

You know, Jesus never said anything about homosexuals and this or that. Well, the Lord Jesus said that broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.

Narrow is the way that leadeth to life. Few there be that find it. Few there be that find it. Some would say, well, Christianity is inclusivity.

[41:25] Inclusivity and tolerance and love. The most loving thing that I can do is say the words of our Saviour.

He says to you, I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. Christianity is a very exclusive path.

It's not a wide open broad way. That's the one that leads to destruction. But it's a very narrow way. He says, I am the way. He's the one and only way. Christianity is exclusively Christ as the one way, the one way.

And I pray that you might know him, trust him. There's only one way to be saved. One name under heaven given among men. The name of Jesus. Jesus our Lord. I pray that you trust him.

Let's close with that thought. Lord, we thank you that we can trust you for time and for eternity in a world gone mad, in a world where truth is thrown into the streets as litter that blows along, as truth is trashed in the marketplace, in the streets of our world.

[42:40] Lord, we know that there is an absolute truth, one absolute truth, one absolute saviour and you are that one. We pray that folk may

trust you. Lord, help us to be such that we're willing to have the courage to stand, to stand and keep on standing even when this world would take a different course that we would be willing to go the opposite way, that we'd be willing to trust you.

We pray that each one might know what it is to know there is a saviour for my sin. There is one who's paid the full price, the full penalty, the death penalty, the wages of my sin. My sin is death. And Lord Jesus, you paid that in the dying of yourself at the cross. Lord, you paid my penalty.

And for each one that trusts in you, we can know that truth, that soul-saving truth. Lord, give us boldness, give us courage.

As we know, every one of us faces this constant barrage from the world system, this constant messaging, this hostility towards your truth.

[44:03] Even pray for these ones that seem to want to tear us apart at the door Saturday with their ferocity against you and the gospel.

Lord, as it were, a soul breathing out threatenings and hateful towards the Christians, Lord, that even they can be saved.

Even as Nebuchadnezzar got saved, there's hope for anyone who has breath in their lungs to trust in you. Lord, we thank you for that great grace that it avails still for all who will call on your name and helps to be a people that will walk in that grace and truth.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.