

Separation (Psalm 1)

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Date: 04 May 2014

[0:00] Psalm 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.

His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your word. It is truth and life to us. It is nourishment and nurture. Lord, we thank you that your spirit speaks to us as your church through your word.

[1:16] Help us, Lord, to heed it and obey it, to act upon it, to do it, Lord, to live it, that we might be your people in these days in which we live. For your glory we pray.

Amen. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. The separated man. Separation.

Separation. I know I've spoken of it lately as I do at times. Separation is a very important Bible doctrine. And the separated man is a blessed man.

In Psalms we read here of the call to separation, of the commendation of separation, and of the blessing of separation.

We see here separation in that contrast that's pictured here between the blessed man and the ungodly. And separation we can see, as I'll put it in this message, in a couple of different ways.

[2:18] A separation from and a separation unto. A separation from, deception, doctrinal error and defilement.

And a separation unto, heart purity, holiness and honouring God. So firstly we see a separation from. A separation from the danger of deception.

Now, deception is something that can happen incrementally. It's got a creeping nature to it. Have you seen those, there's been some adverts about creeps on the road, hasn't there?

Have people seen that? Where you tend to creep with your speed limit. It just creeps and creeps until you're going quite a bit faster than the speed limit. And deception is like that.

It's incremental. It's got a creeping nature to it. And some are like that with sin. They first start dabbling with sin. Toying with it. And end up getting in big strife with it.

[3:19] We see how in this text, it tells us of the gradual working of this sin in the life of the ungodly.

Where they are walking in the council of the ungodly. So they're kind of walking alongside and listening to it. And then they're standing together with the ungodly.

Where they then end up sitting with the ungodly crowd. And joining in with the world just like everybody else. And joining in the scoffing crowd. And it shows here in this gradual step-by-step slip-sliding that declining and creeping nature of compromise.

Of the danger of deception. And we can all succumb to that. That kind of subtle, steady, but deadly attraction away from the Lord. I think of loved ones that I know of.

Where they've kind of had this liking, for example, for rock music. And it's kind of drawn them away. Drawn them away. And it just gets a grip on them.

[4:23] Of that worldly kind of thinking. That worldly kind of style. That worldly kind of acting. And then you see that the lyrics of some of these songs as they're full of cursing.

And vile things. And when people get that little bit of a liking for something that's doubtful, it can lead to something that's totally dangerous and destructive.

And I urge you young people, especially in that regard, that you question such things. And steer away from that which is doubtful.

Steer away from it what is doubtful. You know, some might have a different stand of conscience from me on these matters. But I would just urge you. I think it's better to veer on the side of steering away from what is doubtful.

It's the best course of action to take. From my experience with loved ones that I know of that have just gone hook, line and sinker. Because it just, it drags people that way.

[5:27] Bit by bit they excuse it. They allow it. They condone it. They kind of think, oh, it's only a little bit worldly. But then it just drags them like a magnet away from that which is right.

And so I would just urge you to be cautious. And try not to set the bar too low on such things that you end up just swallowing it. Sadly, people accept things and then it gradually gets a hold of them. Because wellness happens by degrees. By degrees. By increasing degrees. You know, I think back. I know I've had discussions with some of you here today.

And I was looking back. Julie and I were looking back at some footage of some fellowships that we used to attend 30 years ago. And some of those people are with us today in this fellowship.

And I wouldn't have a bar with that kind of fellowship that I was in at that time. But even as they were back then, they weren't as worldly as I would consider them to be now.

[6:32] It's like it was a different kind of mindset. That there was this caution about the world and the things of the world in these churches that were trying their best to hold the line.

But they've declined so rapidly. And I know of late, I was hearing of a local church where now they have hip-hop classes.

Now, you wonder, well, I mean, I don't know what your stand of conscience is on such things as hip-hop. Maybe your stand of conscience is different from mine. But if you want to learn hip-hop, surely it shouldn't be in the Church of the Living God.

It should be down at the local disco or the pub or the local bar or the local nightclub. But why are they having hip-hop classes in the Church of the Living God?

You know, you wonder how far will it slide? How far will it go astray? There's a declining, there's this steady slip-sliding and such things that happens by degrees.

[7:36] Backsliding happens by degrees. Worldliness happens by degrees. And declining church attendance and faithfulness is like this too. Bit by bit by bit.

We just tolerate, we excuse it, we justify it until we accept it and we become more comfortable with it. And then we become just like the world. So, I mean, if people want such things as that, then the world can give you such things as that.

We as the Church of God shouldn't have to bring in such entertainment, such worldly techniques.

And we know, I've seen footage of churches where they have the Harlem Shake, for example, which is a totally obscene dance craze.

And it's coming into the Church of the Living God. You know, why are Christians swallowing this garbage? Why are they doing this? Why are they taking these measures?

And then I saw this other footage of Mark Driscoll's church in America. He's another big name that's out there. And one of the gimmicks that he uses is he has beer brewing classes for the men of his church.

[8:51] He teaches his men how to brew their own home-brewed beer so that then they can go home and get drunk. This is the church. This is what's happening in churches, in churches today.

And Christians are swallowing this dangerous, dangerous thing. And they tolerate it, then they justify it, but then they're just as violent and wicked as the world around us.

There's no difference here. And people are ending up deceived as they're held captive by this subtle grit, this powerful compromise. They're sucked in, as it were, by this ungodly council, ungodly associations, and end up with full-on godlessness so that these youth groups seducing all the discos with some Christian phraseology to the songs they sing.

And so they're sitting together in alliance, in agreement with it, and they're full of the spirit of the world. Now, friends, today I want to urge you that God calls us to discrimination. Now, let me explain. Of course, we're totally against racial discrimination and such things as that. But there is a godly discrimination because God calls us to discriminate.

[10:08] It's got the sense of to make a clear distinction. God makes a clear discrimination here between blessed is the man and the ungodly. There's a discrimination there.

There's a difference there. There is a distinction there between the clean and the unclean. Of course, we as God's people, we know brothers and sisters, red and yellow, black and white. We're all God's people here today. And there's no discrimination of such a nature here. But there is a godly discrimination between what is clean and what is unclean. We read of that in Leviticus 10, verse 10.

There's a difference between the holy and the unholy, between the unclean and the clean. Friends, we're urged and exhorted in God's word to exercise discernment, to discern deception and detect it and reject it.

Our world is gripped in the power of the evil one. 1 John 5, verse 19. It says the whole world is in the evil one's power. And John 15, verse 19.

[11:10] The Lord Jesus says, I chose you out of this world. We cannot have a compromising connection with the spirit of this world. So we can't mix the world and God's spirit together.

We are not part of this world. We are passing through. Of course, we're to reach this world. As the Lord Jesus mingled with sinners, he wasn't afraid to mix with the sinful, but yet he was holy, undefiled, and separate from the sinners.

Hebrews 7, verse 26. He was the friend of sinners, yet he was separate in that he wasn't party to their sin. And God calls us too, brothers and sisters, to be in the world, but not of the world.

Not of the world. He doesn't want us to be bigots and hypocrites, wearing holier than thou. But he does call us to be distinct, different, set apart his devoted people.

And Paul urges us in 1 Thessalonians 5, abstain. In other words, have a barge pole between all appearance of evil.

[12:19] Abstain from it. Keep clear of it. Even the hint of it. The appearance of it. So watch out for the creeping danger of deception. Watch yourself. Watch your church fellowship.

Watch your preacher. And watch that deception doesn't come in. Watch it carefully. We need to guard the truth and not remove the ancient landmarks.

There's a sense where we've got to be sticking the muds, as it were, in a sense where we're like a tree planted in that vicinity to that river.

We want to be standing firm. Not letting the devil gain a foothold. Not giving the opportunity to the flesh. Not even starting on that slippery downward path that the world would tempt us with.

That we will not dabble. We will not mess with it. We don't get our counsel from the world. In Psalm 119, David says, Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.

[13:25] And I hate every false way. That's black and white. I esteem all thy precepts and I hate every false way. That's a real contrast there.

And so, if there's something that has potential to harm your Christian life, if there's something that's got a potential to damage your devotion to Christ, to steal your energies away from Him, then steer away from it.

Abstain from all appearance of evil. Steer well clear of it and give it a wide berth. So, beware of deception. And that can mean in associations and in actions.

In Ephesians 5, Paul says, Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. So, we neglect separation at our peril.

Guard yourself from that mixing, that compromising with the world and avoid it at all costs. So, the separated man and woman will be alert to the danger of deception.

[14:32] Secondly, the danger of doctrinal error. Doctrinal error. In these last days, we're told there will be a great falling away. We're told this many times.

The Lord Jesus spoke of false prophets, of false teachers, of abounding iniquity, of a spirit of deception. And, I'm not saying holist, bolist, but I would say, I caution against numbers of the TV preachers that are popular.

But, much of their messages are wishy-washy, if not outright error. Where they're not addressing truth.

They're getting astray from sound teaching. And, it's all very warm and fluffy and fuzzy in this kind of doctrine, this kind of teaching, that is prevalent.

That's not to say, we've got to watch ourselves too. I'm not saying that. But, I'm saying we need to be alert to doctrinal error. It says in 1 Corinthians 5 verse 6, a little leaven, just a little, leavens the whole lump.

[15:45] Speaking, a leaven speaks of sin, and speaking elsewhere, a false doctrine. And, God warns us of doctrinal error. Doctrinal error. You know, our teaching must line up with God's word.

That's why we like to put an emphasis on teaching in this church. With our Sunday school, it's not just, um, bedtime stories. It's not just Bible stories.

There's doctrine to that teaching. There's doctrine there, for the very young, to learn the Bible, to learn about sound teaching, so that they can know the truth, and they can know error, and discern it.

And, likewise, we have this Wednesday night fellowship. We're going to be teaching sound doctrine. It's important for us. It's valuable, and it's important in these days, that we are alert to doctrinal error, and no doctrinal truth.

So, we must guard our teaching. We, prayerfully do guard our teaching. And, correct me if you've seen my teaching astray, because we want to know God's truth.

[16:51] We want our teaching to be biblical teaching, and not doctrines of demons, 1 Timothy 4, verse 1. We need to have our eyes open, to recognise the dangers, to discern God's word, and, and that, what we teach is, wholesome doctrine, as we read in 1 Timothy 6, verse 3.

And, it's, not, perverting the gospel, but it's proclaiming the gospel. And so, like the church of Corinth, much of, the church today is full of, disunity, carnality, worldliness, doctrinal error.

There's an abuse of spiritual gifts, where, they're just going totally, running totally amok, in some circles, where, you go to a, church, and, the message is scarcely, a word from the Bible.

It's all about, visitations to heaven, and, angels, and, and what, what some preacher thinks God's told him to say, thus saith the Lord. But it's not, quoting from this.

And it's dangerous when we get, in that, in that domain, where we're getting astray, from, biblical teaching. We want to contend, earnestly, for, the faith, once delivered, to the saints.

[18:07] And so, wrong teaching, can be very dangerous for us, and harmful for our Christian lives. Blessed is the man that walketh not, in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth, in the way of sinners, nor sitteth, in the seat of the scornful.

We must reject error, and rebuke false teachers, and contend. It's got the sense of a struggle, of a fight, of a combat, for God's truth. And to hold it fast, no matter what, at all costs.

Because, his delight, his delight, is in the law of the Lord, and in his law, doth he meditate, day and night. As we know God's word, as we love it, as we meditate on it, as we put it into our hearts, it will help us to discern, truth from error, and the holy from the unholy.

So, there's a wonderful, appeal, of, counteracting the danger, of, unsound doctrine, of doctrinal error, and having doctrinal truth.

And thirdly, we should be alert, to the danger, of defilement. Now, 2 Corinthians 6, God says, in that familiar one, wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not, the unclean thing.

[19:24] Don't even touch it. And I will receive you, and I will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. There's a wonderful, a wonderful, separation, unto God, and, and, away from, defilement.

It goes on, let us cleanse ourselves, from all filthiness, of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness, in the fear of God. Now, God wants his people, to be, clean, and cleansed, from all defilement.

Now, the Bible speaks of being, unspotted from the world. If you hang around, a, a splashing bucket of mud, long enough, you're going to get spots, on your clothing, right?

Don't even hang around it. We want to be unspotted from it. We don't even want to splash, a speck of it. We don't want to have any question. We want to be, cleansing ourselves, from all filthiness, of the flesh and spirit.

And so, in the Bible, there's this clear, divining line, between righteousness, and unrighteousness, between light, and darkness, between Christ, and Satan, between faith, and infidelity, between the temple of God, and the temple of idols.

[20:45] And God wants us, as his people, to not be defiled, but to be cleansed. Friends, sin will break fellowship with God. In Psalm 66, the Lord says, if I, well, David says, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

And friends, if there's that defilement, it can break that communion with God. It can break that fellowship with him. When there's unconfessed sin, in our lives, let's identify it.

Confess it, as we heard this morning. Avoid it. Flee from it. Cleanse ourselves from all defilement, of flesh and spirit. And be separated. In Psalm 1, verse 4, it says, the ungodly are not so.

As far as, they're not planted firmly like the tree, but they're like the chaff that's wind, driven around by the wind, that the wind driveth away. The separated man, then, the separated woman, will be alert to being separated from some things.

Just to recap thus far, the danger of deception. Be not deceived. The Lord Jesus says, it's really a key verse for the days in which we live, isn't it?

[22:00] Be not deceived. The danger of deception. The danger of doctrinal error. And the danger of defilement. It all comes when we start to listen to the counsel of the ungodly.

We end up sitting in the seat of the scornful. One thing leads to another. The separated man and separated woman will heed God's call, to be separated unto God.

So, let's look at some other things now, how we'll be separated unto some things. We've looked at the negative side. We've looked at that which we should be separated from. Deception, doctrinal error and defilement.

Let's look at now the things, as God's people, that we are called to be separated unto. These are the good things. The things that we should be dedicated unto. So, our resolve is to leave those things, and to be dedicated unto these things.

So, Psalm 1 verse 2, it says, but his delight, the delight of the blessed man, his delight, is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

[23:04] First thing we see, the call to heart purity. Heart purity. We see, as against defilement, we're called to heart purity. In James 1 verse 27, it tells us of pure religion, and undefiled, before God, and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless, and the widows, in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted, from the world.

We're called to a heart purity. God wants us to have a clean heart, and there is a delight. There's a delight in the heart, of the blessed people of God. There's a delight, because our delight, is in God's word.

Our delight is there. There's a washing of the word. In Ephesians 5, we read how, the Lord Jesus has, wanted to, sanctify and cleanse, his church, by the washing of water, by the word, that he may present it to himself, a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, that it should be holy, and without blemish.

There's something clean, and fresh, about, this refreshing, this washing, this washing, of the word. There's a great feeling, when we have a good wash, isn't there?

There's a great feeling, a great refreshing, to feel clean. And there's that, wonderful cleansing, that can happen, in the spiritual vein too. That purity, that, undefilement, that heart purity, that can come.

[24:28] And it's beyond skin deep, it's a heart purity. Where our delight, it comes from the innermost person. Our delight, is from that heart, made clean by vein.

That heart, that is made, his own heart. That new heart. And it's a, clean heart, it's a new heart. A heart, inclined, after his spirit.

And so, we call to have, that heart purity. Not that mixture, that we, warned against, in Leviticus 19, verse 19. God warned, Israel, against mixture.

Mixing things. They weren't to sew, with mixed grain. They weren't to wear, mixed garments. They weren't to mix, the species of their cattle. Of course, we can think, well, it's got nothing to do, with us today, such laws as that.

But the point was being made, God was against mixture. And God is against mixture. You can think, if I was to hold here, a glass of water, and to pour some oil in it, and shake it all about, it might look cloudy, for a moment, but eventually, the oil would separate, from the water.

[25:32] And there would be, a clear distinction, a clear, object lesson for us, as to the separation. They, they really are different, substances, and so, they will not mix.

And God wants that, with his people. He wants us to be, a pure church. A church, not with a dangerous mixture, as a kind of, hodgepodge, mishmash, of truth and error, of the world, and the spirit.

They shouldn't mix, they're different. There should not be, this kind of, kind of, mishmash, where, you come to a church, and it sounds, and smells, and feels like a rock concert.

And as to the, environment of it, as to the, the intention of it, it's just like, that kind of atmosphere, that you could get, from such a place, a nightclub, or a disco, and such things as that.

I think it's a very sad thing. I think there's a lot of, well-meaning, kind-hearted people, that are, swallowing this kind of thing, and think there's nothing, wrong with it. Whereas, I just can't get my head around it.

[26:38] It does my head in, to see, such a thing going on. Because I can see, how God's word is very clear. He wants that separation. He wants the, these substances don't mix.

The world doesn't mix, with the spirit of God. It's not, they're different substances, there are different, intentions there. And so, he called to be, undiluted, uncontaminated, uncompromising, a separated people, where there's a, heart purity.

And again, I'm not trying to project, this idea, that we've all got to walk around, as some kind of, glum faced, and, and grimacing, you know, sour kind of, looking people.

But there is that sense, where, the world shouldn't mix, with God's people. We shouldn't have, that contamination. So there's a call, to heart purity. There's a call, to holiness.

Why should we be separate? Because God commands us, to be separate. He commands us, He commands us, to, that beauty of holiness. There's a beauty to it.

[27:39] It's not an ugly thing. It's not a, it's not an unpleasant thing. There's a beauty, to holiness. There's something beautiful, to see, a young woman, a young man, who, dedicates themselves, to purity, before marriage.

There's something beautiful, about, a man, or a woman, who says, I'm going to stand for God, and even though, people laugh, and mock, and scorn me, I'm going to stand for God, in my workplace, and I'm going to be a Christian, who, stands up, for what I believe in, no matter what, the cost, to me.

You know, it might cost you promotion. It has me. It might cost you, in lots of ways, in lots of opportunities, of life, but what does, what really matters, is, what's, what's right.

And so, being holy, has a beauty to it. It's got that sense, of you belong to God. You're, you're meant to be part, of that glorious, that spotless, that without wrinkle, kind of church of God, that he's coming back to, like a, a pure bride.

That's the kind of picture, and it's something beautiful, to see, such a thing. That beauty, of belonging to God, that we are holy people, just as we have a holy Bible, and we're going to a holy city.

[28:54] There's something beautiful about that. There's something precious about that. Something, that marks that, as belonging to God, a holy people, obedient to God.

In Romans 6, verse 22, there's a fruit, to holiness. There's a beauty, to holiness, holiness, and there's a fruit, to holiness. There's something that, it's vibrant, and alive, and it's living, and, and, abundant.

As we see the picture, of Psalm 1, of the leaf, shall not wither, and, they're going to bring forth fruit, in the season.

And so, we see there's a fruit, for holiness. You know, isn't it beautiful, when you've got a fruit tree, in your backyard, and you see the fruit, and you can pick that fruit, and you think, wow, that's just so beautiful.

There's something beautiful, about that. There's something wonderful, about the fruit of that. And a Christian, is meant to be fruitful, abounding, as a green leaf, as that sense, of that fruit, bringing forth.

[29:57] And the enemy, doesn't want you, to be a fruitful Christian. The enemy, doesn't want you, to bear fruit. He wants you, to be a sterile, stagnant Christian, a fruitless Christian.

And he wants, to spoil your fruit. He wants, to put the worms in it, and the fruit fly on it, and corrupt your fruit, and make it spoiled. But God wants you, to have that fruit, of holiness.

It's something beautiful, it's something good. And we call to that. Holiness isn't something, that's um, um, that, that puts us off. But it's something, that attracts us.

It's something, that is, very precious. When you see someone, who's a glowing Christian, and it just draws you, to them. It makes you love them, as a brother, as a sister.

There's something, precious, and wonderful, about that. That inward holiness, that reflects, in the life. So he called, to a holy life, a holy living. Just as Abraham, he was called out, of his country, that pagan land, and he was, made part of God's nation, of God's people.

[31:04] And Hebrews 13 says, let us go, outside the camp. There's a sense, where there's a cutting off, and there's a connecting to. The Lord urges us, come out of her.

Speaking of religious Babylon, come out of her, my people, and be not partakers, of our sins, but you receive not her plagues. In Revelation 18, there's that sense, in the latter days, where there will be, this Babylonian, kind of system, that's just endemic, and just overwhelming, as it were, this latter day, kind of churchianity, that's going to be, just basically, following the Pope, and his crowd, and just kowtowing, to all kinds, of religious error.

So there's a, meaningful sense, where we need to be alert, to such things, and be aware, of such things. So friends, separation, is a vital Bible truth.

I understand this word, relates to our word, horizon. Horizon. Where there's a separation, the light from the darkness, you know, the earth from the sky.

It's kind of, it's a pretty clear cut, kind of thing, when you see a horizon, you're either on the earth, or you're not on the earth. There's a separation, that's the sense of, of separation, this vital Bible truth, that we're either in Christ, or not in Christ.

[32:27] We're in the world, or in, in God's, domain. And friends, I urge you today, to think very carefully, about where you stand today.

Because we're meant to be, those dwellers, those pilgrims, heading to that heavenly city, that is to come. And so, we don't dwell here. We don't make our, our abode here.

This is not our dwelling place, where we belong. We're just passing by. And so, we're meant to be that people, who have that love, for the things above, not the things on this earth.

So, we call to a separation from, from sin, and unto God. A separation, that's twofold. It's a boundary, a dividing. As, God divides the world.

He divides us from the world. And in a sense, He sets walls around His people. You know, there's a sense like, Jerusalem, was, at risk, when the walls were, crumbling.

[33:32] When the walls were, falting, Jerusalem, was at risk. And, when Jerusalem, had its walls built, there was a strength there.

There was a strength, a protection. There was a peace there, from its enemies. And, the enemy wants to break down the walls. Break down the walls. And, we must not let him.

Don't let him break down the walls. You know, I know, some have got this idea, we, you know, we can be too, too strict. I'm not saying any of that, here today, in this message.

But, there is that strength, that comes. We don't, we don't want to, diminish the strength, which comes from, trusting in God. And, that picture of the walls, around the, around the city.

We want to protect our people. We want to protect our, our faith. We want to protect, ourselves, as, as God's people. Just as, God wanted his holy city, to be protected.

[34:36] We want to protect, that wonderful separation, that beauty of separation, which is a good thing, and a godly thing. So, we see separation, it means, a, a call, to heart purity, a call, to holiness, and thirdly, a call to honour, the Lord.

Psalm 1 verse 6, it says, for the Lord knoweth, the way of the, of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly, shall perish. God knows, his own people, he knows, them that are his.

And, he's called them out. It's what church means, that called out, called out ones. He's called us out, to stand out, from the ungodly. So that, we don't have the same, loves, that the world has.

You know, we, it's like, they're on a different, wavelength. You know, when they're going on about, the latest, hot goss, about the latest, Hollywood, rock star, or, film star.

Well, that's just totally, their wavelength. That's what they tune into. What, what should we be tuning into, brothers and sisters? We're meant to be God's people. We're meant to be God's, holy people.

[35:49] So, again, there's personal things here. I might be stepping on your toes, and this might be, maybe, maybe you like a certain rock star, or a certain film star.

Maybe, maybe you love that kind of thing. Maybe you can do that, in good conscience, before God. And, you've got no crimes of conscience about that. I'm not condemning you today. But, I'm just saying, what should we love?

What should we love? What should we be attracted to? What should we be, should we be attached to? What should be our conversation? What should, what should occupy us?

What should be our preoccupation? Shouldn't we be a holy people? God's own people. Shouldn't we be a people, heading to a holy city, that love our Lord, more than anything, that this world can afford?

Shouldn't it be that, holy preoccupation, that our thoughts dwell, on things above, not on things on this earth. Our affection is not here, on these things, but our affection, is on what matters to God.

[36:55] What, what is pure, and right, and true. Friends, God wants you to be, a rock solid Christian, planted firmly like a tree. Psalm 1 verse 3, and he shall be like a tree, planted, by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth, his fruit in his season.

His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth, shall prosper. There's a wonderful fruitfulness, and abounding. Now that may not be, in material sense, but in that, that vibrancy, of the spiritual life.

That's what should matter. That's what should set us apart. That we stand out from the crowd. We don't blend in, like some chameleon, and we just go with the flow, and follow the crowd, and the, the latest, gimmicks, and gadgets, and fashions.

But our love, our affection, is something, eternal, and precious, and beautiful, and wonderful, before God. And so there's a, separation, that honours God.

That we honour God. That honouring him, is what matters to us. More than any other thing. And our stand of conscience, might be different, from another brother, or sister, from me, on all kinds of matters.

[38:08] But what will matter, is we honour the Lord. We honour him. We put him first, and foremost. Our loyalty, our obedience, our conversation, is tuned into him.

Into what matters to God. That we love, what God loves, and we hate, what God hates. And we want to please God, in those decisions of life, in the everyday, practical decisions of life.

In those things, that we choose to love. In those things, that we choose not to love. That we'll, we'll put, honouring God, as our first, and foremost consideration. And we'll value, what God values.

And we'll speak, of what God speaks of. And we'll set ourselves, apart daily. We'll consecrate ourselves. We'll despise error, and every false way.

And we'll avoid it, and hate every false way. And we'll take the gospel, with us to the world. Because we're meant, to be as ambassadors. We're meant, to be shining as lights, in a dark place.

[39:08] Not, not just dimming our lights, and hiding our light, under a bushel, under a container, so it cannot be seen. But setting that light, on a hill, that it will beam out, far and wide, to everyone, in our circle, of acquaintance.

So we'll be, glowing, shining, shouting ambassadors, for this message, that our loved ones, need to hear. How will they hear, unless we tell them? We're called to be, in the world, but not of it. You know, you're supposed to have, your boat, in the water, not water, in the boat. Sometimes we've got, water in the boat. We need to get it out. It's not going to help us, if we've got water, in our boat, we need to get it out.

Maybe as a Christian, there's water, in your boat, so to speak. I'm using, picturesque language here. There's things, that get in our lives, they're going to, slow us down. They're not going, to help us on that, as we're rowing that boat, it's just going, to slow you down.

There's some things, you've got to throw, overboard. And sometimes, those worldly things, that can come in. You know, you hear some churches, do some things, like smash TV sets, or get their, their worldly rock music, and they burn it, and stuff like that.

[40:17] You might have, different convictions, on all these kind of subjects. But it's up to you, before God, to think, is this pleasing God, what is in my life, what I'm preoccupied with it.

Is it something, that is a, an appearance of evil. We've all got to answer, that question for ourselves, don't we?

And ask God, we don't have to go, completely nuts, like, you know, some people go, nutsy, and then, then they, wax and wane. You know, let's just think carefully, and reasonably, and sensibly, and, and almost go through, a bit of a checklist, for ourselves.

And think, well, I'm doing this, or I'm following that. Is that pleasing God? Is it something, that I need in my life? Can I, do that, and please God?

Maybe there's, different, worldly things, you can join in, that you can be a witness in. We're not against that. You can be, active in a sport, and be a witness, on the sports field, or, down, at the local hobby club, or whatever it might be, that you're engaged in.

[41:25] You might be doing, some study, that's not necessarily, spiritual, but it's going to help you, in, in your practical life. There's, all of these decisions of life, we've just got to come, to grips with.

But first and foremost, let it honour God. Honouring God, is what matters, and what counts first and foremost, and everything else, should be dictated, and, evaluated, in the light of that.

So, let's make a determined step, today, to be separated, separated, to be, as this blessed man, to be, as that one, who's, not going to be swayed, by different counsel, or, different, the way of sinners, about the seed of the scornful.

We're not going to be swayed, by that. Our delight, is in the law of the Lord. We delight, in his word, we meditate in it. We're grounded, like a tree, firmly planted, by those rivers, that keep us fresh, and fruitful, and vibrant.

Not as the ungodly, that are blown around, by the wind, by every wind. We want to be rock solid, and firm, unshakable. So, we want to consecrate ourselves, to reckon ourselves, dead to sin, to self, and to the world, and reckon ourselves, alive to God.

[42:40] Alive to God. The separated one, will be alert, to be separate from, the danger of deception. Watch out. Watch out, for anything, that will cause you deception.

Whatever it be, well-meaning, Christian TV evangelists, and preachers, and teachers, and false prophets, danger of deception. Don't swallow, everything you hear, from a pulpit.

The danger of deception, the danger of doctrinal error. There's many doctrinal errors. They're all over the place. In independent, Baptist churches, doctrinal errors.

There's dangers, of defilement. Dangerous when we, excuse something, oh, it's just a little bit sinful. Oh, there's just a little bit of swearing, in that thing, that I'm going to watch.

There's just a little bit of nudity, just a little bit of, fornication. The danger of defilement. Give an inch, and the devil will take a mile. Don't, don't, open the door, don't let it ajar.

[43:43] The danger of defilement. Does it please God? Or is it defiling me, and my mind? Separated from, separated unto. Heart purity.

Have that heart that delights in God, in God's truth. Delight in Him. Delight in His Word. Meditate on it. A heart purity. A holiness. Not a holier than thou, but a holiness that's vibrant, that's beautiful, that's precious, that's glorifying of God.

A beautiful holiness. That's what God wants for you. The beauty of holiness. It's something beautiful, and pure, and precious. And honouring the Lord. Honouring the Lord.

So that, in those decisions of life, you ask the question, does this honour God, or not? If it's questionable, it's like water in the boat.

It's better that you, that you bail it out. Lest it slow you down. Believe us here tonight, talking about your walk with God. If you're not a Christian here tonight, this won't make much sense to you, because you haven't even started.

[44:58] But I urge you today, trust Jesus Christ, for time and eternity. Trust Him. There's an amazing transformation. You go from being counted amongst the ungodly, to being one of the blessed.

The blessed. This word blessed, it means happy. It means joyful. It means that there's a joy, a blessing. And there's no greater blessing, that you can know, than to know Jesus Christ.

There's no greater blessing, that can fill your life. There's no greater knowledge, no greater joy, than to know Him, to know Him. And a transformation happens, when you trust Him.

Let us pray.