

How Bright are you?

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[0 : 00] Please be seated and let's go to the word of God. Philippians 2, I'm going to start, but I'm going to spend most of my time in 2 Timothy 3.

! Now, we know only too well that today's culture and the generation, the world we live, is crooked and perverse, isn't it?

People are in darkness. There's a darkness overtaking. Minds are blinded, the Bible says. And we as the children of God are meant to be the opposite of the darkness.

We're meant to be shining as lights. Now, let your light so shine. You know, the good works that people see will show who you belong to. It shows your allegiance.

We should be the opposite of the world. We should shine as lights in the world. So, my question again, how bright are you? How can we better shine?

[1 : 35] What I put to you today is how can we be counter-cultural? We should be unlike the world, which is dark, shouldn't we? We should be like Christ, who is the light of the world.

And our Lord used strong words to talk about the generation, the culture of his day. He called the generation in Matthew 16 for a wicked and adulterous generation, a faithless and perverse generation, and an evil generation.

Peter, when he urged the crowd at Pentecost, he urged them to turn from the crooked world of his day. He said, save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Untoward. It's got the sense of crooked, depraved. And friends, let's be honest here today. Our world, our culture, Aussie culture, it's going down the tubes.

And for all its modern improvements, modern society and culture is rotting. It's corrupt. It's a stray from God. And we're meant to be different, unlike the world.

[2 : 42] Different from it. As Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2 verse 9, he tells of us that are saved. He says, ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and holy nation, a peculiar people that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

And in a time of darkness, we're meant to be shining, shining brightly. Light shine us for the kingdom of God, for the glory of God, to show forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness.

We should not be like the world. We should be unlike the world. How bright are you? How can we shine brighter is the question. And truly the last days are looming.

And so we'd like us to turn to 2 Timothy 3. 2 Timothy 3. Now look at how we can be counter-cultural. Revolutionaries, really. Counter-cultural.

We know it's dark and it's going to get darker, don't we? We know how dark this world already is. God's word says it's going to get dark. It's going to get darker, even darker. And Paul writes to Timothy, he gives us a foretaste of what's in store.

[3 : 55] I know our brother Roy is talking about, we know what's in store. Who's in store? He's coming with the clouds. It could be any day that he's coming back for his church. Paul writes to Timothy and tells of a time of darkness, of perilous times.

And we know this one, I'm sure it's familiar to many, 2 Timothy 3. So I'll just get that ready, 2 Timothy 3. Be encouraged this morning to shine bright.

This note also that in the last times, last days, perilous times shall come. What are these signs of such a time?

Verse 2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection.

Truth breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

[5 : 01] Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof from such, turn away. 2 Timothy 3, verse 1, last days, perilous times.

It's saying here there's coming days that are surely days that will be perilous. You could say violent. What's a big kind of, one of the signs that we see around us today?

Violent video games. Have you seen them? It's quite bloodthirsty, isn't it? The shoot-em-ups where it's just, it's gross. And there's a rising appetite for these violent, bloodthirsty games.

The themes of mayhem in movies. Look at what they promote. It's all about violence and shooting and killing. There's entertainment.

It's like the Coliseums again, isn't it? People are obsessed with this. They can't get enough of it. Violent times. Times of stress, of trouble. We see that today.

[6 : 03] People are just stressed out. Stress to the max, you know? Mortgage stress, whatever it is. Truly, I tell you, hard times are upon us. Difficult, dangerous, days of despair, days of darkness.

And what we read about here in 2 Timothy 3, we're just going to step through this. Now, usually my sermons have got like three points, but this has got about 18 points because there's kind of 18 characteristics here in 2 Timothy 3.

And you could say, as Paul writes these things, as we read them today, wow, it sounds like today. It sounds like it's happening now. It sounds like Adelaide. It sounds like this is something that sounds familiar.

Paul gives us a list here of what to expect in the days of our coming saviour. It sounds like current events unfolding before our eyes. It's evident in these alarming signs that sound like news stories that we could watch today or read today.

And these words here are very much like a descriptor of the days that we are living in now. Perilous times.

[7 : 18] What is the world's popular secular religion today? These days are, I know Roy kind of referred to it. Me, me, me. Me, myself and I.

These are the days of humanism. Basically, it's a godless philosophy, isn't it? The world promotes godless philosophy, humanism.

Let's walk through the pages of the Bible here, these verses of the Bible, and pose the question, how do we counter this? How do we counter this darkness? Darkness. We need some light.

Don't we? I don't want to dazzle you this morning, but that's what we need, don't we? We need some light. We need some light in days of darkness. How do we shine brighter? We've got to counter this.

What should our response be in days of darkness, of despair, of dread? How can we be different? How can we make a difference? How can we live contrary to the world's culture?

[8 : 19] We don't belong here. Our home is in heaven. He's prepared a place for us. How can we be counter-cultural? 2 Timothy 3 tells us that. In 2 Timothy 3, we see that we see the last days, perilous times to come.

Verse 2, we see, for men shall be lovers of their own selves. Isn't there a lot of selfishness these days? Selfishness, you know? Get out the iPhone, you know, the selfies, the selfish generation, isn't it?

Self, self, self. Self on the throne. Self-centeredness. Polk is here in Timothy 3, a whole long list of 18 qualities.

Really, it's a list of sinful ways of living, isn't it? These are the character traits of the ungodly, the self-willed, the damned. We should be different. Here really is the starting point for man's sin problem.

Men shall be what? Lovers of their own selves. Self. The middle letter of sin, S-I-N. The middle letter, I.

[9 : 31] The degeneration of the character starts with the self. The ego. The self-centered, self-driven life. People want to do what's right in their own eyes. It's the same, the age-old problem.

2 Kings 21, 25. Do what is right in their own eyes. Oh, it feels all right to me. I'm the master of my own destiny. And some churches promote this sort of talk too.

They actually promote this same idea. Self-esteem. As if that's the be-all and end-all. Actually, man's identity problem starts with self-love.

Self-esteem. It's not the answer. Not what people need. We don't need self-esteem. It's actually what we need to let go of, to repent of, to renounce, to get away from.

A greater self-love is not the answer for the world today. It's the problem. And so what is the counter-cultural response to that?

[10 : 30] What is the opposite to self-love? Love God. Love God. Not loving yourself, but loving God as your ultimate aim, that he would be your love.

And when Jesus, our Lord, is our love, the one who is the lover of our soul, it makes a difference, doesn't it?

When he is in the throne of your heart, when he is Lord, when he is your love, when you love Jesus, everything changes. And how you relate.

There's an unselfishness that happens. When Jesus is on the throne of your heart, you start to be unselfish.

You consider others more generous and giving, thoughtful. And really the fundamental answer, when the lovers of self actually die to self.

[11 : 32] When we find our identity, not in self-esteem, but we find our true identity in Christ. Christ is our identity. We are filled with his life, his character, his love, his power, his person.

And truly the one who follows the Lord is meant to be selfless. Selfless. To die to self. It's saying here that people will be lovers of themselves.

In the darkness, they'll be lovers of themselves. It goes on then, the next stage really, the next it follows on, that they will be lovers of money. Men will be self-lovers and men will be money lovers, you could say.

Because the second point, lovers of themselves then, it goes on, covetous, covetous. Self-love leads to money love, to be materialistic. And it goes on to say how greed can overtake people. Don't we see that today? They just can't get enough. They've just got to work themselves to death, to get more, more. They must have more, more and more stuff.

[12 : 40] As if it's the one who, the one who wins is the one who's got the most toys at the end of their life, but it's not that, is it? Amassing more and more materialism. They're never satisfied.

There's never enough. Now you hear some millionaires, they just want to make another million. Another million. They want more and more, more and more cars, more and more houses, whatever it be.

Their money love is such that they're obsessed with that. Lovers of money. You could say prosperity seekers. Sadly, there's some churches that even cater to that lust.

But they're prosperity seekers. Hey, you know, come to our church and you'll get the prosperity gospel, where it's all about making and getting and acquiring more and more. But what's the opposite of that?

It's darkness. What is the countercultural of that? Make heaven your goal. Make Christ your purpose. Be content with what you have. Be content in what state you're in.

[13 : 38] Don't be having this greedy grasping, more, more, more. That thirsting for the things of the world. Realize it's not more and more things that bring happiness.

It's finding Christ. It's that fulfillment in him. It's that Christ being your purpose, your treasure. Yeah. And our fulfillment is in that.

Treasure's in heaven. Wow. Nothing beats that, really. To know him, to love him, to have that desire, that he would reign in your heart.

And your fulfillment is in that, in the Lord. Next up, we see it goes on. After covetous, it talks about boasters, proud. Next up, we see where the self-willed go.

They go to the place of pride. Self-centeredness that drives people today, doesn't it? Pride. Haughty, arrogant, conceited. Pride.

[14 : 37] Self-sufficiency. It's sin. It's sin. In Ezekiel 16, 49, it talks about, really, the sin of Sodom was this kind of pridefulness, this pride.

They were a proud people. It's like the Tower of Babel. We will make a name for ourselves. Pride, wasn't it? We're going to make it a big, we're going to hit the big time. They were braggarts.

It says in the last days that people are going to be braggarts. How good am I? They will be self-obsessed. Don't we see that so clearly today? This selfishness.

People love talking about themselves. Now, look, I'm on Facebook, but you see some people, they take photos of themselves. They're obsessed with themselves. Themselves.

Themselves is the main topic of their conversation. They can tell you all about themselves with their scarcely thought for others. We see this all the time, don't we? People are being arrogant, boastful, want to brag.

[15 : 37] Oh, we're better than the Joneses. Or whatever it be. And you get that when you go witnessing, you see some people, you knock on their door, and they say, I'm good.

Didn't we got that one, Trent? I'm good. They don't know how wrong they are. How wrong they are. Again, it's like this self-centeredness that some people display. That's the darkness.

What is the opposite? What is, when the darkness, what do we, how can we shine the light? How can we get the light? What is the opposite of this kind of pride?

Humility, isn't it? Humility. We need to have some humility. We're meant to take the lower place, to take the place of a servant. You could say, be humble, or you'll stumble. It's a good quote, that one, isn't it?

Be humble, or you'll stumble. It's good if we can display a servant heart. Serve others. Serve the Lord. Take the towel like your saviour did, and wash somebody's feet.

[16 : 35] It's humility. It's taking the towel, blessing others, being a servant, as we saw in John 13. Stoop down like our Lord, the one who stooped down from heaven's throne, and took upon him the form of a servant, was made as a man.

Yet we know without sin. Will we stoop down like our Lord did, and show consideration, and care for others? That's counter-cultural, isn't it? Instead of being proud, proudful, be humble.

Be humble. Next up, we see the self-willed, where do they go next? They go to the place of cursing. Cursing. It's saying next of blasphemers. Blasphemers. It's saying here of the people, doing a whole lot of cursing, and throwing insults.

You could say it, God, against God, and against man. What is it? This blasphemers, it means evil speakers, abusive, abusive talkers. There's a lot of abuse in the world today, isn't there?

Child abuse, whatever it be. A lot of abuse, elder abuse. There's abusiveness, there's abuse, there's abusive talkers, there's scoffing, there's insulting of others.

[17 : 41] There's a lot of toxic talk going on, and it's darkness, isn't it? Blasphemers. It fills the world's thinking, the airwaves, trash talk, toxic talk, abusive language.

You know, you go down the shop, and it's almost like, oh, someone just used the F word, the B word, whatever it be, or the Lord's name in vain, blasphemers.

It's like, and coming out of the mouths of people, you thought, well, that's a younger person, you know, and it used to be, you know, not being sexist or anything, but there used to be something about a female had a little bit of a higher, you know, there was something expected, or in the presence of a female, how you would speak, the words you would use.

But nothing, anything goes now, isn't it? Blasphemers. People cursing and swearing, using the Lord's name in vain, routinely. And it sounds a lot like popular music, doesn't it?

Popular movies, full of blasphemies, and evil speaking. That's darkness. What is the opposite of that? What's counter-cultural? Let's stop copying the world's view, the world view.

[18 : 48] Let's stop mimicking the ways of the world, the mindset of the world, the trash talk of the world, and start following after the example of Christ. That's what we need to do, isn't it?

Now, as believers, we can start to kind of get influenced. There's an influence there. That's upon all of us, isn't there? Let's be honest. Instead of speaking what is evil and what is wicked, let's speak what is wholesome and good.

Our speech should be uncorrupted. Not cursing talk of the darkness, but edifying words of the light. Building people up. That's what we need, don't we, brothers and sisters?

To be such a people. People who are self-centered, are only interested in pleasing themselves, lifting up themselves. And some do that by pulling other people down, don't they?

They've got to get higher by trampling on other people and treading on them. Next up, we see arising from the self-willed heart. Another feature of these 18 is the selfish attitude problem of rebellion.

[19 : 52] What does it say? Disobedient to parents. Disobedient to parents. Another hallmark of the latter days, of the perilous times. You could pose the question, if a child will not honour and respect his own mother and father, then who will he respect?

What do we see today? Particularly a mockery of family, of fathers. Fatherhood. An undermining of patriarchy.

It's like it's a dirty word now. Patriarchy used to be something good and honourable. There was a father figure who was leading the family in an honourable way. Someone to look up to. Someone to aspire to be like.

Now, patriarchy is like a dirty word, isn't it? Oh, don't talk about patriarchy. That's not equal enough. Honestly. It's undermining. And where do we see this?

And not that I've particularly seen such things, but I'm told that things like the Simpsons family guy, that the father is depicted as some bumbling fool, kind of to be mocked and laughed about, because he's a no-hopeler, a no-hoper, you know, just some, what would you call it, a deadhead, someone who's a waste of time.

[21 : 15] And they picture the fathers like this, someone to be laughed and scorned about, instead of the father. And there's miserable fathers, but hopefully there's some good fathers, some virtuous fathers, some fathers that are living up to the, what is good and right and best about a father.

Paul's saying there's going to be a disobedience to parents. There's going to be an authority problem in the end days. In the last days, there's going to be this poisonous and destructive sign where there's going to be a disobedience to parents.

You know, there's not an honour in the home at times, where fathers and mothers are kind of disregarded, disobeyed. There's just a, they go their willy-nilly way. And it's an evidence today, I'll put to you, of this obedience problem, this authority problem in our world today.

A disrespect. And like we said, if it doesn't, a child doesn't honour and respect their father and mother, who else are they going to respect? The police, the law, the government, the laws of the land.

And, anything goes. This disrespect, this rebelliousness, it starts in the home. That's where the society breaks down, right at the level of the home.

[22 : 26] There's a breakdown. And there's no respect and order in a home, it flows right through, it brings chaos to a society, a lawlessness. That's the darkness. Disobedience to parents.

What's the opposite of that? There should be a godly order, a godly order in the home, a godly leadership, a submission, a harmony, where the home is structured in accord with that which is of God's ordering.

The way God's order is in the home and in society. It's one of the fundamental building blocks of a strong and decent society. Children are meant to learn respect and have a sense of responsibility and honour in the home.

That's a good godly building block, isn't it? And we as Christian parents, as Christian families, as Christian children, we should have that respect, that honour, that obedience, not the disobedience of the darkness.

Another flow and effect of a self-willed life, of a life lived for the self, for the flesh, it goes on, Paul says, unthankful. Unthankful. People being thankless, without gratitude, ungracious, ungrateful.

[23 : 42] You ever notice that down the shops? You rarely hear a thank you anymore. People rarely say thank you these days. Common manners are out of the window.

People who grow up, especially in our privileged society, can get this sense of entitlement. Well, it's, you know, as the shop assistant says, \$3.95 or whatever it says, and you just pay it.

You don't say thank you, or there's no, none of that kind of, oh, it's just that sense of entitlement, and there's lack of true appreciation, for what they have. They take it all for granted.

They don't stop to think, what are the blessings that we have? In this fair land that we live, we've got so much to be thankful for, and we, do we ever stop and be grateful, and say thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord. And maybe we should, you know, write a letter to the government, say thank you for looking after me. That might be stretching it, but you see, you see, we looked after, aren't we, in this land that we live?

[24 : 43] Aren't we? We've got so much to be thankful for, to be grateful for. What's the opposite of that, of being unthankful? Being thankful. Appreciate what we have. Say thanks to the Lord for what you have.

Be gracious. Be thankful. Be, give thanks. Acknowledge God as your supplier, as your sustainer. Be conscious of the grace of God over your life.

Stop and give thanks. Know God's great grace upon your life. His goodness that we receive. We can take it all for granted. We, and we should acknowledge that his grace is undeserved.

How thankful we should be. Amen. For his grace. Where is the gratefulness gone? It's another sign, isn't it? Here's another sign of the, the hallmark of the self-willed life.

Our world is increasingly godless. It says unthankful. Then it says unholy. Unholy. It could put irreverent. Unholy.

[25 : 47] It speaks of pollution. Unholy. The opposite of righteousness. Of consecration to God. When we see the norms of society being dismantled all around us.

Values are under sustained attack. And a lot of the so-called humor these days is irreverent. It's darkness, isn't it? It's irreverent.

Darkness. Smutty. Coarse. Crude. Vulgar. The world mocks and applauds. That which is darkness, it's unholy. It applauds.

That which is foul and filthy. And immoral. The storylines of movies are more and more filled with anti-God messages. And innuendos. You know, they can't just help but put the innuendos in there. And then they call it family friendly or give it a G rating or PG or whatever. What's the opposite of darkness? Of that darkness? Of that kind of unholy?

[26 : 47] It's holy. Not that we should be holier than thou. But we should be truly holy. Like Christ. There should be a holiness that's in us.

That's in our fibre. It's in our being. It's who we are. Separated from, unto, the Lord. It's something to seek after, isn't it?

Not the unholy, the darkness, but the holy. Counter-cultural. He's called us to be a holy people.

Wow. That's just mind-blowing, isn't it?

That he should even deign to honour us with salvation as his gift. And that he would make us and call us to be. And that he should...

Give us his holiness. It goes on to say, of the self-willed that they are hateful. Verse 3. 2 Timothy 3, verse 3.

[27 : 49] It says, Without natural affection. Yeah. Verse 3. Without natural affection. Without natural feeling.

Without family affection. It's saying that the self-willed, will be so self-willed, that they won't care for others. They'll have no love.

They'll be callous. Unloving. Our Lord says, as we know, the love of many shall wax cold. It's going to be a sign of the end. That love will be lacking.

And then you see what the world will actually redefine love. As something that's perverse and twisted. The world will redefine marriage and family into something sick and unnatural.

Yet we as Christians, we're not of the darkness. We know true love and affection. We as Christians ought to uphold genuine family values.

[28 : 50] Loving Christian marriages. Christian parenting. Something that's honourable. Something to be cherished. Something to be sought after. Not unloving, but loving.

Next we see the self-willed are truce breakers. Truce breakers. What does that mean? People breaking truce. People in a state of hostilities. In other words, people refusing to reconcile.

Banging their heads together. Banging their heads together. Refusing to make a truce. People who refuse to be at peace with others. We see that in churches. People consume.

Consume with hatred, resentment. They won't lay down their arms. It's like the Hatfields and the McCoys. There's this feud that's going on. There's this hatred, this resentment, this unforgiveness. Bury the hatchet. Unforgiveness. Truce breakers. It's like it's set in cement. That they just won't give ground. Such people are merciless, unyielding, stubborn, disagreeable, pig-headed.

[29 : 53] Without peace. Unforgiving. Friends, we shouldn't have that. That's darkness, isn't it? It's darkness. We should not be irreconcilable. We should be reconcilable.

Let's be of this number. Not in the darkness. Not in the darkness here of this truce breakers of those who will not make peace.

But let's be of this here. Know his forgiveness and give forgiveness. Let's be a forgiving people.

Amen? Brothers and sisters, we as God's own dear people, we of all people, should be forgiving.

Should we not? We should forgive. Make it your intent to shine us lights, to exercise forgiveness, to be forgiving, to extend forgiveness.

Not hold grudges. Not hold some resentment or hostility, but make things right with God and make things right with others. Next one we see, false accusers.

[30 : 54] False accusers. This is talking about slanderers, malicious gossips, people who are divisive, diabolical. Diabolical. In fact, the underlying word here for false accusers is diabolos.

Now, our Greek friend here will tell us what diabolos means. The devil. It's talking about people acting selfish, acting devilish, acting like the devil.

That's darkness, isn't it? It's the devil's work to be the accuser of the brethren. You know, we don't want to spread stuff about people that pulls people down and casts muck up and dirt, throws dirt on people, especially when we don't know all the facts.

We don't want to be a false accuser. That's darkness. It's the devil's work to accuse the brethren. Rather, we should aspire to speak the truth in love.

There's time to say things are wrong. There's fault. There's need to call out false teachers and false practice. But we don't want to be a false accuser in the sense of doing the devil's work, running people down.

[32 : 04] Rather, we should aspire to speak truthfully and lovingly. And what comes out of our mouth reflects what's in us, doesn't it? Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

Psalms 141, verse 3, it says, the psalmist cries, set a watch. Oh, Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips. It's got the sense of a sentry walking around like a little guard, a little, maybe a guardian angel, guarding your mouth.

A watch, a watchman, someone who's, like, doing sentry duty. Don't let anything out of this mouth that's going to dishonour our God. Set a watch. Have that little, that little angel doing sentry duty over your, around your teeth.

That's what we need, don't we? Set a watch, oh Lord, before my mouth. May we guard our tongue from passing on comment that is not founded in fact and truth. Rather, that's darkness, rather be uplifting, uplifting, godly.

Talk godly or talk not at all. Now, don't act like the devil. We can copy and mimic and get influenced by the dirty talk of this world and we should have clean talk.

[33 : 18] Act not like the devil, diabolos, but act like the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen? Don't we? Shouldn't we? Next up, we see the next one.

We're getting there. There's quite a few of you to get through but are we more than halfway I think now. So next up, the self-willed are seen to be a people who lose control. It says incontinent. Now, of course, we know what that can relate to. There's a sense of lack of control, a loss of control, of ungoverned, of degenerate, of uncontrollable, of uncontrolled, without self-control. Incontinent. People are without control these days, aren't they? You see some people that are out of control. You see some people that have this really short fuse and it doesn't take much to, oh, they get so touchy, don't they?

They're so offended. It doesn't take much for them to react, to lose it. And then you can't reason with them. They just blow their stack. The steam comes out their ears and the, you know, the smoke comes out of their ears and they start to froth at the mouth.

[34 : 25] You just can't reason with them. Some people are like that these days and I think increasingly so. We see more and more of this people out of control, whether it's drugs, drink, whatever.

Just, they're out of it, out of control. And like someone has commented, every man does what he's right in his own eyes. Woe to the people who dare to question their lifestyle choices.

Oh, don't touch that, holy cow. Lifestyle choices. I'll do it my way. Thank you very much. People are often saying this, especially in our current generation, how the modern generation, and look, people have been saying various, casting aspersions on the younger generation for centuries and centuries, but there's this sense where you could say, as many commentators say today, that we're living in an easily offended generation.

Very easily offended. You know, you've got to be so careful, politically correct. You might offend some minority group. Don't dare to challenge or question their choices.

They might get upset with you and they'll get their feelings hurt and you'll get sued. You know, this is what's going on today, this lack of control. And it's like, it doesn't take too much to get someone off, they get aggro to set them off and they get their backs up and they want to fight.

[35 : 46] There's this hostility that's in people these days. That's darkness, isn't it? We shouldn't be like that. Should we? Let's not be easily offended. Let's not be the touchy type.

Let's not be one who gets aggro and fights fire with fire. Let's be rather of the light. Of the light.

Countercultural. What is that? Incontinent, out of control or self-control.

Self-control. Self-control. We should exercise self-control. It says, forbear one another in love. We should be forbearing. We should be so kind and calm under pressure.

Someone said of me that I'm very placid. I said it when I'm preaching. We should be placid, shouldn't we? We shouldn't be reactionary. We should just, yeah, okay, keep your cool. Next one, it says of the self-willed that they are fierce, fierce. This word fierce is like savage, brutal, untamed, wild, ferocious.

[36 : 53] There's this ruthlessness in people. There's fierceness. Again, a bit like what I was talking about. It's like they have no God. So they think, to answer to, so they act like it.

Don't they? You know, when Trent and I were out door-knocking yesterday, I thought we were going to get attacked, Trent. You know, there's this woman. She was fierce, wasn't she? She was fierce.

She was like, I think she had a weapon in her hand. She's almost like she's starting to run down the road towards us. And she said, don't even talk to the neighbour. She was fierce.

She was angry. She was an angry woman. And there's this ferociousness about some people these days. This ruthlessness. It's like Boab before he met Ruth. He was ruthless.

You know, there's this ruthlessness today. There's fierceness. There's unrestrained. There's unfeeling. There's no regard for the feelings of others. They just want to shout and fume and abuse.

[37 : 49] That's darkness, isn't it? We shouldn't be there. What's the opposite of fierce? Gentle. Gentle. Rather, we should be at peace with all men. Shouldn't we be there as light bearers, as light shiners?

How can we shine the light? Keep your cool. Be considerate. Be kind. Just cool down. Don't be like the darkness. Let's be like Christ. Next one, it says they're despisers of those that are good.

They're self-willed. They're defiant. They hate the good. They hate goodness. They hate what is right and good and true. It's like there's this progression of evil. You know, the self-love and then they start to hate.

They start to despise. They start to fight against what is right and good. It's like this progression of evil. They actively withstand their maker. Don't we see that today? Not only do they deny God, they hate him as well.

Don't they? They're despisers of those that are good. They're opposed to the good. They're opposed to virtue. These are people who are hateful of what is good. Haters of what is good.

[38 : 55] Haters of those that are good. They will hate goodness and kindness and virtue. needless needless needless needless needless needless needless needless needless needless See the rabid atheist campaign against the Bible.

It's not enough to just deny the Bible or to question the Bible. They hate the Bible. They despise what is good. And they attack Christians every chance they can. That's what we're seeing today, aren't we?

You're in the crosshairs, people of God. You're under attack and they're against you. How are we to respond? How can we shine brighter? How can we love what is good and right and stand up for it?

When the darkness prevails, when the devil is on the warpath, when we're against those that are despisers of those that are good, and that which is good, we should defend it, shouldn't we?

Defend it, uphold it, stand up for it, speak up for it. Be on the side of what is right and don't be afraid to fly your colours. Verse 4 goes on.

[40 : 06] Next, traitors. Traitors. It's talking of people who are treacherous. They cannot be trusted. They're disloyal. They're faithless towards their friends. Don't we get that today?

Someone's your friend one minute and then they're your enemy. They betray a trust, a confidence. They fail to deliver on what they said they were going to do. They said they were going to pay you some money and then they shoot through.

Where are they? They said they were going to pay me some money. Now they can't change their phone number. You know, you get that, don't you, today? People are supposed to help you with something and they don't show up.

Where's the honour? Where's the duty? Where's the responsibility? People are all too easily inclined to let you down. They betray you. They let you down. People are all too inclined to that.

It's talking about people being false. That's what it is. Be fair dinkum. Be fair dinkum. Don't be a traitor. Don't be someone who yarns on about being a friend but you see they're not loyal.

[41 : 10] They're not faithful. Be amongst the dependable. Be amongst the faithful. Be one who will stick at it through thick and thin. Let's be the people who won't be shirkers or quitters.

People who won't turn tail or change sides. But those who will bear the load. Who'll do the hard yards. Who'll soldier on. Be someone who can be relied upon. That's the light. Be someone who can be relied upon. Not a betrayer. Not a traitor. But one who can be relied upon. That's the light. Someone who won't let others down. Be a saint who is steadfast. Solid. Steady. Always abounding. Rock solid. Solid as a rock. Go the distance. Faithful. Next one we see. Heady. The darkness. Getting to the close here. These are the people who are headstrong. Heady. You know. It's all kind of. They're headstrong. They're thoughtless. They just act without thinking. They're self-willed. There's no self-control. [42 : 07] They're rash. They're reckless. They're hasty. They're careless. How are we to shine our light? We shouldn't be like that. Hasty. Reckless. Careless. In dangerous days we need to exercise care.

Carefulness. Steadiness. Let's not be headstrong and foolhardy. Rather use wisdom. Make decisions that are wise and thought through. Be self-controlled. Let us think things through. Think sensibly. Use wisdom. Godly wisdom. Not making impulsive decisions. Be wise. Next. Next. Another characteristic of the self-willed is high-minded. High-minded. Self. The self again. It's conceited. They're puffed up. They're blinded with pride. They've got swollen heads. That's the sense of it here. High-minded. They're just big shots. Know-it-alls. Knowledge puffs up it says. Let's get knowledge but let's not get puffed up with the knowledge.

[43 : 06] Some people act like they're the fount of all knowledge. They're not willing to consider the things of God though. Let's rather have a mind that is occupied with heavenly things.

With what really matters. Let's not ever get that inflated view of ourselves that we can't take correction. That we're not teachable. That we've got that humility of spirit. Let's maintain that brothers and sisters.

That genuine humility. That humbleness. To realise we're all on the same level. No one's better than another. We're all the same. We're all equally in need of God's great grace and help. Next up we see we're getting there to the final stage here. Where the self-willed finally end up. Those that are lovers of themselves. They end up lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. You know where a self-willed one ends up ultimately is at the altar. Where they worship. They worship the world. They are lovers of the world and the things of the world.

[44 : 06] They are worldly. They are pleasure lovers more than lovers of God. Rather than God lovers they are world lovers. They are self-absorbed, self-gratifying. Friends this is a danger here.

And saints of God we should be alerted to this. We don't want to be in their number. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. It speaks of those who would love sensual pleasures and vain amusements.

Friends we're living not only in a faithless, adulterous, wicked and evil generation. A privileged, easily offended generation. But we are living in a distracted generation.

Aren't we? Distracted. All too easily distracted. Distracted. Because there's much to busy yourself with. There's much to occupy yourself with. People are busy serving other gods.

Serving other gods. Whatever it be. The world. The flesh. The devil. Whatever the devil can throw at you. Whatever the devil can occupy you with. Something to distract you and allure you.

[45 : 08] It's all around us isn't it? Look I've got to confess Facebook is a big problem. Just scroll, scroll, scroll. Waste time. Minutes. Hours. God help us. I need to get deliverance here.

There's a sense where they can get easily alert and distracted. Can't you? It's not like there's anything necessarily wrong. But it's distraction. And it's lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Let's occupy our thinking and spend our time, our energy and that which matters. What is it that we devote our time to? It says something doesn't it? We can get too busy.

I can get busy. We can all get busy. It's confession time this morning. We can get occupied with that which is vain and empty. It drains the life out of us.

You know you flip the channels and before you know it, oh it's time for bed. And what happened with the day? It's gone. The devil wants to distract you, to occupy you, to drain the life out of you.

[46 : 07] Such that you'll have no time, no care for God. Of such people it says they will please themselves, their flesh, rather than loving God. How can we be counter-cultural?

Lovers of pleasure or lovers of God? Wouldn't you rather be on that side? Lovers of God?

Counter-cultural. Rather to lay down your life to feed godly desires.

To feed your godly heart. To feed your godly mind. To let God be real. Let God be the controlling motive of your life. It goes on to say where the self-willed end up.

And it comes, really it comes down to the things of God. Where the darkness leads to. It says, verse 5, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof from such turn away.

Paul tells Timothy, don't be fooled. Some will adopt a form of spirituality. You know, we see that when we're witnessing. You see some people and they talk about spirituality. Maybe they're into the new age.

[47 : 08] The crystals. The fortune telling. The Ouija boards. Or something more harmless maybe. I don't know, you know, some would think fortune telling or astrology is just a little interest, a little sideline.

But it's of the devil. It's a form of godliness but they're denying the power thereof. Some will adopt the eastern mysticism or some empty philosophy. They may have some form of belief yet they have no saviour.

They're lost. They're damned. They're in darkness. Paul says to Timothy, turn away from such people. It's a sham. It's a make-believe. Some will make some claim of faith.

It'll show some form of respect towards God but it's just external. It's just putting on a show. It's just talk. In the reality it's not there.

We're meant to be counter-cultural people today, this morning. I urge you. I pray there's been something that might have provoked some conviction. God helping.

[48 : 08] That God will have pointed to some things this morning. Oh, how can I be more shining the light? I want to be on this side. I want to be on the light side, not on the dark side.

I want to be on the light. That's what we need to be, brothers and sisters. To aspire for a true godliness, a true reverence, a true yearning, a heart after God. To know him personally, not in a form or an empty sham, but to know him, to know him who is life, life eternal.

These are perilous times. It's dark and it's getting darker. There's a supernatural war. There's an enemy intent to deter and distract and damn you.

Shine your light brighter. Know Christ. Know him. Not just talk about it, but know him. Truly know him as saviour, as Lord. And don't be afraid to not follow the crowd because there's a lot more people on this side, isn't there?

There's a lot more people in the darkness. You know, there's many that go thereat, down that broad way. You've got to choose that, as our brother said, the way, the one who is the way, the truth, the life, the narrow way.

[49 : 21] Choose Christ. Follow Christ today. And know his enabling power. He will enable you to shine. You might say, Preacher, my battery's running out.

My torch isn't as good as this one. Look, shine the light that you have. Be that let your little light shine as the old song goes, don't we? Let your little light shine, brother, sister.

God will help you to shine brighter. Amen. He'll give you that glory to God. Let's close. Lord, we thank you for your precious truth. That, Lord, in these terrible, perilous times, there is a great hope and joy we have.

And a knowledge that we know you. Lord, not of works, lest any man should boast. It's only your grace that saves. As we, in faith, put our hearts' trust in you.

Lord, you send us out of darkness and into light. You translate us into your kingdom. Lord, you make us a people who will show forth your praises. That the world will see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven.

[50 : 23] Help us, Lord, to be mindful. How can we? Each one. How can we? Each one personally. Asking this question. How can each one of us be more like you, our Lord Jesus Christ?

To be glorifying you with our life and lifestyle. Lord, that you would be that one who does truly enlighten us with that heavenly way of living.

And we pray if there's any here present that are yet to know you. As your word tells us, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. We pray if there's anyone here present who does not know you yet, a saviour and Lord, that they would simply ask another known Christian here or myself to seek prayer and seek answers, Lord, to put that and settle that today.

To settle that eternal question. To do business with you, Lord God. While we can. This side of eternity. We praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.