

# A Famine in the Land

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[0:00] The message now is a famine in the land. A famine in the land.

! Now Julie and I have lived in some dry dusty places out back and we've seen some parched land.!

A dry dusty land, a famine in the land. That's the picture.

And Amos delivered this message while Israel was living in a state of ease and prosperity and luxury really. The people were very comfortable and feeling very fine and dandy. Everything was just so.

There was an abundance of religion in the land but a lack of righteousness. They despised the prophets, the messenger sent from God to deliver the word and the land was in a moral decay. And Amos 8 verse 11 reads, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land. Famine in the land.

[1:29] Amos tells of this time of coming judgment, of a coming famine. Apparently there's some ten famines in the Bible. Famine. It means no food in the land. It means drought. It means a severe shortage of food.

Hungry people. People starving to death. A nation in peril. A national disaster. People starving so they're scrounging and foraging for food.

Where they can find it? Here and there. Just yesterday I saw someone climbing in the shop bin foraging for food. She was looking for food for her chooks.

She was telling me that. Nevertheless, there's people who forage in those supermarket bins for their daily food. For every little scrap they can muster, even in the garbage, to find something, something, some small portion to ease their hunger.

Even if it's not really edible, it's not a pretty sight. And this is sometimes the case in nations around our world today. Famine. It's a dreadful thing. Famine.

[2:39] People dying. What a picture. And it calls for an urgent response. When there's a famine in the land, the United Nations muster all the aid agencies to send relief.

Send relief. There is a famine coming. A famine in the land.

And Amos spoke of this judgment. A judgment of a famine. But a different kind of famine. Not a famine of bread. Not a thirst for water.

But a hearing. The words of the Lord. I reckon the famine is upon us now. The famine is upon us now. And this famine is about words.

It's about words. You know, back in school days or in university, they talk about a basic communication model. Here it is. A basic communication model.

[3:37] You have a sender, a message, and a receiver. A sender. A message, and a receiver. It's basic communication.

It needs these things. Of course, there's also feedback. There's static or interference with the message. That can diminish the transmission process.

But this is the simple picture. A sender, a message, a receiver. And our Lord tells us of a time, of a day when there will be a famine. Of hearing the words of the Lord.

You could say there's a communication breakdown. A communication problem. The words will not get through to the ears. To the people.

So let's look at this now. This could be a problem, number one, for one thing, in the reception end. The reception end. Amos tells of a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

[4:43] The words may fall on deaf ears. The word hearing here has the sense of to hear intelligently. Often with the implication of attention and obedience.

In the Bible, when God was working, the people had a receptivity. A receptivity. It's a common thread. For example, we read Acts 2, verse 41.

And they that gladly received his word were baptised. And the same day there were added unto them about 3,000 souls. They gladly received his word.

As Peter preached. Acts 11, verse 1. And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. Acts 11, verse 1.

Acts 17, verse 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica. Acts 17, verse 11. They received the word with all readiness of mind.

[5:45] And searched the scriptures daily. Whether those things were so. They checked the preacher out. They checked the preaching out. They received the word. And they checked it out. Notice the common word here is receive.

Receive. For us to get the word, we have to receive it. How receptive are we to God? Well, some people are so receptive, they will swallow just about anything they hear.

If it's a preacher on TV, they'll tune in and they'll swallow it hook, line and sinker. We're not talking about receiving like that. But receiving like the Bereans with the sermon as they search the scriptures.

Receptive to God. Receptive to God. To receive from God. This is what the Bereans were. They were receptive and they searched the scriptures to make sure it was true what they were hearing. Here's a quote I picked up. The famine of God's word is a choice people make to reject it, to completely turn from the truth and embrace the lie of secularism.

[6:52] Even many Christians have embraced this lie. According to research done by the Barna Group, only 7% of born again Christians have a biblical worldview.

In other words, they look at life through the lens of the Bible. Is this what God wants? Is this God's truth? Is this God's will? God's way? The rest have turned from the truth of the Bible.

That means that 93% of professing Christians have no desire to hear the truth. There's a reception problem. End quote. These are damning statistics.

Not only 7% of born again believers have a biblical worldview. What are they tuning into instead? What the world is feeding them.

And if people don't receive food, they will suffer. Or they'll turn to some substitute, which is not good. And this is what happens when there's a famine. A famine in the land.

[7:53] And friends today, the word of God is food for our soul. It's food for our soul. Our Lord says in Luke 4 verse 4, Check that you have that important verse in full in your Bible.

But by every word of God. This is the punchline. Punchline. And it seems like people are not interested in hearing the words of the Lord.

The famine of the word is a reality, I believe today. As it sounds like a time when the word of God will be disregarded. There'll be this lack of a biblical worldview.

There'll be this sense where the Bible is not upheld. As inspired and honoured. It's degraded and doubted. It's a reception problem. We are to receive the word.

And to receive the word, we must esteem it. As Job did. What did Job say? In 23.12 he said, I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

[9:08] He had a hunger and a thirsting, a longing and a esteeming of the word of God. He regarded it highly. If only people will gather to hear it. To gather to hear it.

They will hear it. Hopefully they will gather where they will hear it. They will gather with humility. With a brokenness. With a hunger. With a soul thirst.

A reception problem. Make the most of every opportunity. To get along to a faithful Bible preaching church meeting.

A Bible study. Make every opportunity that you can. This famine is especially due to a reception problem. It's an attendance problem. We need to attend to the word.

Attend where it is faithfully preached and taught. Be attentive to it. I'm preaching to converts today. You're here. You're attending. But at other times. When there's other opportunities to attend.

[10:09] Attend. Attend wherever you can. Proverbs 4.20 it says, My son, attend unto my words. Incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let not them depart from thine eyes.

Keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them. And health to all their flesh. There's a health. There's a blessing.

There's a tangible something you get. When you receive the word. It's a medicine. It's a health to your flesh. It's what you need. When you're feeling down.

Go to the word. When you're needing comfort. Find the comfort of the scriptures. Find this as the blessing that your soul craves. Develop that better receptivity.

We must cling to our Lord. And to his word. As our text tells us. Verse 12. Some will search for the word. The words of God. They'll search. And they will not be able to find them.

[11:08] This is the other dimension. Of the famine of the word problem. This communication. Breakdown if you like. So first we have seen. There's a potential reception problem.

People will fail to receive the word. They'll fail to esteem it. They'll fail to be where the Bible is faithfully preached. And fail to hold a biblical worldview.

And they'll fall into a spiritual slumber. For communication to happen. There has to be a reception. A reception. That's one side of the equation.

And on the other side is the transmission. Number two. A problem with the transmission. There has to be a message sent. The words have to be communicated.

The words have to be communicated. From the sender to the receiver. The words have to be communicated. Romans 10.14. We read. How then shall they believe.

[12:05] How then shall they call on him. In whom they have not believed. And how shall they believe in him. Of whom they have not heard. And how shall they hear. Without a preacher.

And the context there is that faith comes by hearing. Hearing by the words of God. We need a preacher. We have many churches. And all kinds of Christian media today.

But where is the sound preaching. Of the words of the Lord. I believe we have that here. And the preachers that preach here. There is an absence of God's word in some quarters.

There's an absence of faithful God called preachers. One commentator from the US said this. If the US government through hate crimes legislation.

Can jail individuals. Who will proclaim what the Bible says. About homosexuality. And can forbid us to discipline our children. According to the book of Proverbs.

[13:05] They could also legislate. That we can't preach on hell. Or on topics relating to the judgment of God. They could also mandate. That unless we preach an ecumenical message.

That Jesus Christ is not. The only way to heaven. Our local church will be marked. As an illegitimate. Entity. End quote.

In other words. They could outlaw. What we're hearing today. We could. This could be an illegal gathering. And you could face. Fines.

Imprisonment. The death penalty. Sound Bible preachers are scarce. And could even be outlawed. It could be declared a criminal act.

And churches like this one. Could be closed down. By the thought police. We need preachers. We need preachers. Who will sound forth. The words of the Lord.

[14:03] While we can. While we still can. Let us. Not hold back. Let us be faithful. Forthright. Willing to go through hell. And high water.

To get the message through. At the risk of our own lives. We must. All of us. Be mobilised. As a church people. As witnesses for Christ. Individually.

Each one of us. Not just. A select number. Who get to preach. So much. As the whole body of Christ. Mobilised. We must have preaching.

Sound doctrine. Bible preaching. 2 Timothy 2. 4 rather. Paul says. Preach the word. Be instant. In season.

Out of season. Reprove. Rebuke. Exhort. With all longsuffering. And doctrine. For the time will come. When they will not. Endure sound doctrine. But after their own lusts.

[14:59] Shall they heap to themselves. Teachers. Having itching ears. And they shall turn away. Their ears. From the truth. And shall be turned. Unto fables.

Paul tells of such a time. And how. Needful it is. That we. Tune in. To. Biblical. Truth. We preachers.

Have much to answer for. As to what we preach. There's a greater judgment. On those that will claim. To teach. It's a heavy. Accountability.  
To God. And in some quarters. These days. Preachers turn. To fanciful stories. Or clown around. Telling of latter day revelations.  
Some mystical. Supernatural. Goings on. Of their own making. And their own invention. Rather than the more sure word. Of prophecy. We must guard against that.  
[15:57] Sometimes a preacher. Will just sound out. What the people. It seems. Want to hear. Smooth words. Just sugar coat them. Preacher. Make it easier for me.

To swallow. But the preacher. Must rather. Preach the word. We must preach the word. Brothers. Sisters. Today. We must have preaching. That is a preaching of the word.  
And deliver it faithfully. What the word says. Without fear or favour. Without currying. Anyone. It's a serious. Transmission problem. Where preachers fail.  
To deliver the faithful word. You know. We see. At times. Where some preachers. It's just a. Kind of religious. Motivational. Self-help talk.  
Just to give you. A little. Sappy. Kind of self-help. Kind of pat you on the back. Or will we rather. Be a true servant. A prophet of God. So to speak.  
[16:55] Preaching the word. With gusto. With guts. With the Holy Ghost. And power. This is the preaching. We need. Not just. Some entertaining. Of a crowd.

But an expositing. Of the words. Of the Lord. And God helping us. That's what we seek to be. God helping those. That preach here. That we be faithful messengers. Of this authentic. Infallible. Incorruptible. And unadulterated. Word. A word. We can have sure. Confidence in. Life giving.  
Nourishing. Nutritional. Not some. Ear tickling. Fairy floss. And there's a transmission problem. Today. We're seeing this.  
Trend. A fast food. Kind of Christian. For. We've just got to keep it under. Under so much time. This is my little. Bit of my.  
[17:51] Week. And I'm just timing God. Timing the preacher. Just to. I'm a fast food Christian. Just deliver it. And let me go. And drive down the road. And just. Get on with it.

And Christians. Are this. Fast food variety. Where it's like. They're fed on junk food. Rather than the sincere milk. In other words. Pure milk. And so they become anemic.  
And malnourished. And. And they have this diet. Depleted. Of vital nutrients. I was reading a story about. Someone that lived on. Chicken nuggets. And you could see the results.  
In. What happened to them. You know. What you eat. Is. Has an effect on you. Doesn't it? I know that. Only too well. But. Thankfully. I've got a good. Cook at home.  
But. Now. Sometimes. We have these. There's fast food. Kind of Christianity. And. Sometimes. We lack that message. That will nourish. And nurture. With the vital nutrients.  
[18:47] We need. This message. Must come across. Clear. And uncorrupted. And so. We need. A desire for the word. As 1 Peter 2. 2 puts it. As newborn babes.

Desire. The sincere milk. Of the word. That you may grow thereby. The pure milk. In other words. Sincere. It's not been adulterated. It's straight. And strong. And sadly.  
These days. Increasingly. Preachers. Who preach straight. Are accused of being. Unloving. Legalistic. Judgmental. Negative. It's as if.  
There's a war on preachers. And we see. Preachers. Who are in military. Institutions. And prisons. And hospitals. There's an increasing.  
Confinement. Of what they can say. And we see. Churches. And bible schools. Churning out. Preachers. Who are cool. And hip. Can manipulate. The masses.  
[19:44] But fail to deliver. Fail to transmit. The message. The word of God. When Peter was saved. Out of prison. As the angel came. And he was set free.

The angel told him. Don't hold back. Stand up and deliver. In Acts 5 verse 20. The angel said. To Peter. Go. Stand. And speak in the temple.

All the words. Of this life. Don't hold anything back. That's what I pray. We will do as a church. God helping us to. So we see.

There can be a. Reception problem. There can be a. Transmission problem. A transmission problem. In times of famine. There's this call. Goes out.

We need food. We're hungry. We're starving. There's a call. For a distribution. Of food. There's a crying need. For food distribution. For distributors. To send the food.

[20:38] To get the food. Where the famine is. And in the dark ages. Of history. The establishment church. Held back. The word of God.

They held it back. It was not published. In the land. In the language. Of the land. And men went to the stake. And were burnt to death. For simply translating.

The Bible. As we have it today. Yesterday was. What some call. Reformation day. When Luther. For all his followers. Holtz.

As we know. He was a fallible man. As we all are. On October the 31st. 1517. Hammered. His 95 theses. To the door.

Of the castle church. In Wittenberg. To stand against. The heresy. And the corruption. Of the Pope's church. And he translated.

[21:32] The word of God. Into his native tongue. Of German. And nowadays. The Bible. The Bible. The Bible. The Bible. Is the world's. Most translated. Best selling.

And most freely given book. If you want a Bible. We'll give you one. It's too precious. For you not to have one. It's the book. I'm told. Most stolen.

The most stolen book. You don't have to steal one. We'll give you one. We need the messenger.

The preacher. We need the message. The Bible. The Bible itself.

It's a forgotten book. Neglected book. It sits gathering dust. On many shelves. And it can be a rare book. I was staggered to hear this. Recently.

A preacher told me lately. Personally. Personally. That his Australian Christian bookstore. Does not stock King James Bibles anymore. I was amazed to hear that.

[22:28] They're not on the shelf. In that store anymore. And have to be specially ordered in. And this preacher. Literally had to travel. Thousands of kilometres.

To get his hands on one. Came to Adelaide. They'd still got some in Adelaide. But it sounds a bit like our text. Where it says.

They shall wander. From sea to sea. The word wander here. It's used to describe. A people. Unsteady. Seeking. Bewildered.

Running to and fro. Not being able to find. The words of the Lord. And friends. People are bewildered today. There's a bewilderment. A confusion. In these days. About the Bible.

We need light. The world needs light. In these darkening days. Psalm 119. Verse 1 of 5. It says. Thy word. Is a lamp.

[23:22] Unto my feet. And a light. Unto my path. There is a famine. In the land. And the word tells us. Of a day coming. When. They won't be able to find.

A real Bible. They won't be able to find. A real Bible. Preaching church. It's sad. When the words of the Lord. Are scarce.

Our Lord says. At a time. Where my people. Are destroyed. For lack of knowledge. Hosea. 4 verse 6. The devil is destructive. He's got a deliberate agenda. And he's always.

Always attacked. God's word. From the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3. Yay. Have God. Said. The serpent said.

It's his modus operandi. It's his methodology. To attack the word of God. He hates the word of God. He doesn't want you to have the word of God. And his strategy is to sabotage.

[24:22] To lead people away. From Bible truth. To take the word out of your hands. Out of your ears. Out of the preacher's mouth. And it's a light to the parable of the sower.

As we read of the devil's tactics. And the birds came. And they took the word away. Could there be words taken. Out of your Bible.

Words missing is a big problem. In numerous passages. For example. I'm told. The so called good news Bible. The good news Bible. So called good news.

It deliberately takes. The word blood out. Doesn't want the blood. There's someone who doesn't want the blood. In your Bible. That's an important word I put to you.

An important word. It's an important word. And it's conspicuously missing. Conspicuously missing. They've taken it. They've changed it to death. The word blood. Was taken out.

[25:20] So here is someone here today. Who has deliberately searched out this church. Because they didn't want to be preached to. From a good news Bible. Bible. Now. I've got a. I've got a razor.

And sometimes. Believe it or not. I do have a shave. But sometimes. I use a razor. That's a bit blunt. Now. Having a good news Bible. Is better than having no Bible. But.

I'd rather have a sharp razor. Wouldn't you? That's what we need. The word of God. The word of God. There's popular Bible translations today. With a whopping 9% of the content missing.

Compared to the King James Bible. This should alarm us. It should alarm us. And the enemy wants to weaken the church. To weaken the Bible. To cast doubt. In our mind.

And even take words out of it. All together. And I believe he's deliberately. Doing just that. One of the big problems. In our world today. Is in the area. Of Bibles.

[26:13] There's countless changes. Whole verses missing. Could it be deliberate? I put it to you. I believe that it is. Paul warned of a time. And he said even of a people. In his own day.

Who had corrupt. The word of God. 2 Corinthians 2. Verse 17. He says. We are not as many. Which corrupt. The word of God. There's a deliberate. Taking away from the Bible.

That's a really dangerous thing. And we should be alerted. And alarmed about it. And be aware of that. It's very dangerous people today. Yet our Lord has promised this. He's promised that his words.

Will not pass away. Matthew 24. Verse 35. He says. Heaven and earth. Shall pass away. But my words. Shall not. Pass away.

He says. My words. Shall not. Pass away. We can be assured. That God's words. Every one of them. Are kept for us. And we can know them. And know his word is sure.

[27:10] And it is true. Amen. And we can hold fast. The faithful word. We're talking today. About a famine. Of hearing. The words of the Lord. Famine in the physical sense.

Means a people wasting away. It speaks of a people. Who stop growing. They become listless. And confused. Joseph in the Bible. Knew. To make ready. For a coming famine.

That was to come. And he prepared for famine. And so must we. How will we prepare? I put it to you. To prepare.

Let us. Prepare. By hearing God's word. By faithfully. Attending. Faithful. Bible. Preaching. And teaching. Whenever we possibly can. Prepare.

By studying the scriptures. Treasuring them. Hiding them in our heart. And obeying them. Truth. Does not change. Hold it fast. We face desperate.

[28:05] Spiritual times. God will send a famine. He says he will. And it will be a sign of judgment. A sign of warning. People are starving today. Starving for God. Starving for preaching.

That will feed their soul. And nourish their spiritual life. Searching and longing for the word. But in vain. It's a reception problem. It's a transmission problem.

We need good preaching. Heard and heeded. How can we end this famine? Brothers and sisters today. I urge you. Develop a pattern. Of daily Bible readings.

Get in the habit. Of opening your Bible regularly. To get daily nourishment. Ask the Lord. To develop in you. This hunger. This longing. This desire. This love. For his word.

As Psalm 119. Verse 97. The psalmist says. Oh how love I thy law. It is my meditation. All the day. Prioritise.

[29:01] Getting to Bible study. Wherever possible. Wherever you possibly can. Don't miss this. These are days of famine. And so we need food. Our world. Our nation. Is suffering a famine.

People are starving and dying. We need God's word. For the hurting. The dying. The oppressed. The afflicted. The addicted. The unsaved. The backslidden. And the lost. So we must be faithful communicators of it. Share your bread with the hungry. I read this amazing story. About a young girl.

A Colombian girl. Who received a New Testament. In her school. And she read this New Testament. Until one day. Her father. Saw her. Reading it.

And he told her. Not to read it anymore. Because it was full of lies. And fantasy. But the girl kept reading. Her New Testament. Until one day.

[29:56] The father came. Unexpectedly. And found her again. With the New Testament. He grabbed it from her hands. And put it in his pocket. And the father went off to work. Where he was a mining engineer.

And several hours later. Sirens went off in the community. There had been a caving. At the mine. The father was trapped in the mine.

And the rescue workers took five days. Five days. To finally reach the men. But it was too late. Too late. And all 31 men died.

Including the father. Of this little girl. Curiously. The workers came. And they found the man. Clutching the New Testament. Between his praying hands. And when they opened the front cover. They read a note. To my daughter. Keep reading this New Testament. It is true. And right. And I will see you one day.

[30:54] In heaven. Then they turned to the back page. Where the father. Had signed. The commitment card. After having sent. The sinner's prayer. He had prayed. To receive Christ.

But that was not the end. Of the story. Turning to the page. He saw other names there. The names of the other. 30. Workers. The word must be delivered.

In the time of famine. Our Lord tells of a severe famine coming. And famine is harmful. It's destructive. It's deadly. If we are to grow. We must.

Have the words of God. The words of God. Ephesians 4.14. Paul warns of a time. And he tells. That we henceforth. Be no more children. Tossed to and fro.

And carried. About with every wind. Of doctrine. By the slight of men. And cunning craftiness.

Whereby. They lie in wait. To deceive. France. There's no time for that. There's no time.

[31:51] To. Pussyfoot round. No time for it. Sure. The Bible is a banned book. In many nations. Of our. Of our. World today. And it's regularly mocked.

In our own nation. Scholars mock it. And try to. Degrade it. But the word is only. Absolute truth. It is. Absolute truth. Pure. Preserved. The final authority. Truth isn't what you make it to be. It's what God says it is. That's what it is.

The Bible warns of many winds of doctrine. And we see that today. Many misled. Following after charismatic preachers. And practice. Or they're joining together with Rome. All manner of falsehood.

You know. What about that man standing at that door. Hammering that. Truth. To a door. To a church door. They're going back.

[32:45] To Rome. Right. True truth. God's word is true. Friends. It's true. It's reliable. It's authoritative. It's without error. Without error.

God has chosen to reveal himself to us. By its pages. Is there a famine in the land? I believe there is. I believe there is. The Bible is a scarce resource.

It's as if the supply road is blocked. The distribution can't get through. As if people are searching for churches just like this one. And there are few and far between.

Few and far between. There's a reception problem. And the transmission is poor. The word must be preached faithfully. And received. Like a life-giving seed.

1 Peter 1.23. Peter writes. Being born again. Not of corruptible seed. But of incorruptible. By the word of God. Which liveth and abideth forever. This word.

[33:39] This seed. It's incorruptible. It cannot be corrupted. Well. It is being corrupted. But. This truth cannot be corrupted. The word that we hold. And revere. The word of God will endure forever.

And here's some facts and figures that should alarm us. About how bad the famine is. A famine of hearing the words of the Lord. Here's a quote. We're an affluent and educated people in all things except the word of God.

Well. George Gallup. This pollster. He conducted some surveys. And he found this. Less than 50% of adults. Knew that Genesis. Was the first book of the Bible.

On an average. Teenagers can name only about 3 or 4 of the 10 commandments. Over 75% of adults. Are unable to name a single prophet of the Old Testament.

Only 34% of adults. Knew who preached the Sermon on the Mount. Some people think Billy Graham who preached it. Only 35% knew that the Roman Empire ruled Palestine during the time of Christ.

[34:42] And only 3 out of 10 would name the 4 accounts. The 4 gospels. So it's no wonder we're seeing such a mixed up world that we are in.

People call evil good and good evil. They can't tell the difference anymore. That's the end of that quote. As much as I ad-libbed a bit there.

But when the word of the Lord is not preached, it's a curse. This is what Amos talked about. We need preaching. We need to have the transmission with the authority, with the message of the word of God.

And we need the truth on fire, hard hitting. Right between the eyeballs. That's what we need.

Jeremiah 23, 28. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream.

And he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wind, saith the Lord? It's not my word. Like as a fire, saith the Lord. And like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.

[35:40] This is the word we need. Strong preaching. Strong preaching. Joel Osteen is likely the most listened to preacher in America. He has publicly declared he does not preach about sin because people don't need to hear that negative message.

That's a big problem, I put it to you. Friends, truth has fallen in the streets. It's fallen in the streets. It's just like a piece of litter that's just blowing along by every wind. And churches are redefining morality and preaching lies.

There's a dangerous mixture. It's been truly said that a half-truth is a whole lie. And so we must hold fast our profession, the profession of faith, without wavering.

We need raw truth, loudly proclaimed. Whatever the cost, we must preach it. We have to preach it. I have to preach it. Or woe to me. Woe to me. Ephesians 6, 13.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Ephesians 6 tells of the evil day. The evil day.

[36:47] I believe that day well and truly could mean now. The evil day. This is an evil day. Look at what's going on with the legislators, with the governments of our day, with the policy makers, with the ones who have rule over us.

What they're allowing and promoting and celebrating. This is the evil day, you could say. And in this day we need the full armour of God. And that means we need to have the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

And not a blunt one, but a sharp two-edged sword. The Word of God, the sword of the Spirit. Take it up. Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. God says the days are coming when His words will be in short supply.

Now this day we're living in has been called the information age. The information age. And yet there's a woeful ignorance of the Word, as we've just seen. And nowadays there's a biblical illiteracy, even in churches today, where sadly many have very little Bible knowledge.

They're not attending Bible study. They're not attending fellowship where they can grow. They're not studying the Bible at home. Christians are increasingly spiritually worldly, immature, complacent, malnourished, and overwhelmed with secular culture.

[38:02] And we're in need a sharp, penetrating sword today. For the Word of God is quick. It's alive. It's powerful. It's sharper than any two-edged sword. Peaceing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and of the marrow.

And is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Friends, I put it to you today. We need the sword of the Spirit. We need the two-edged sword. And friends, we need to be alerted and alarmed about the trends around about.

The church, by and large, worldwide, it's infected with this seeker-sensitive, soppy, tolerant, uniting, ecumenical, new age kind of abomination.

And we see preachers bragging of new revelations. It seems like deception abounds on every quarter. And so we need to test the spirits. Search the scriptures.

See if it is so. Search the scriptures. Test the spirits. Defend the truth. Friends, I put it to you. There is a transmission problem. And there is a reception problem today.

[39:07] And there's a communication breakdown. The gospel is missing from pulpits across our land. And it's being withheld by preachers and replaced by fables. Here's a few pointers as to what we can do.

And where we fail, I put it to you. We fail in hiding the word of God in our hearts. The psalmist said, I've heard his word in my heart, that I may not sin against him.

We should search the scriptures. John 5.39. As our Lord urges the people to. In Acts 17, we need to be like the Bereans who searched the scriptures to see if these things were so.

We need to be like Paul exhorted Timothy. Study. To show yourself approved. It's because we're lacking in these things. Hiding the word. Searching the scriptures. With discernment.

With study. That we've become a malnourished people. Will God remove his word from Australia? Will it get to the point where you can't find a real Bible? You can't find a Bible.

[40:10] There's a growing reception problem. There's a growing attendance problem. A hearing problem. And a transmission problem. We need preachers who will preach the word. Preach the word.

In its truth. In its purity. And in its power. We need the faithful word. No other word will do. No other substitute will do. And we need God helping you.

People of God. To be a people of the book. To be a people of the word. A people who will hear his word. Instead of spending more time on the daily news or the TV guide.

To spend more time with the precious scriptures. Otherwise we face a terrible crisis I'll put to you. A terrible crisis. A famine. A famine. And it's a famine not only for ourselves.

An eternal impact for our children and our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren. Let's rather be as the psalmist. More to be desired are they than gold.

[41:06] Yea, than much fine gold. Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. We've seen a famine predicted. A famine in the land. We've seen a reception problem.

We've seen a transmission problem. We see much to be desired. Yet we see more to be desired are they than gold. Yea, than much fine gold. He's talking about these precious words.

The words of the Lord. The word of God. And you can take this and hear it. And know it's true. And rest your eternity on it. Its message. And yet not be hearers only but doers of the word.

Now there's some people. Mormons have got the King James Bible. Masons have got the King James Bible. But it's not just hearing it. It's applying it. It's receiving the message.

To be born again of incorruptible seed. To put your faith in Christ for eternity. To know your soul is saved. To know that Christ is truly your saviour. To know him who by his grace grants heaven to us.

[42:10] By faith in him. I pray you'll know him. And know his truth today. And be encouraged. That while there's a famine in the land. You've got his word hidden in your heart. You're studying it.

You're nourished. And you're attending unto it. Every chance you can. And God will help you to grow. Let us pray. Let us pray.