

A Famine in the Land

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[0:00] In Amos 8 verse 11 it says, The Lord God forecasts a famine here, a spiritual famine, a spiritual drought, if you like.

And we see, as I referred to someone this morning, how the world is changing massively. In lots of ways there's an erosion of values on so many fronts and a denial of truth.

And historic Christianity seems to have lost its influence. It seems like we've lost our savour, our salt, our salty influence. And the preaching of God's word seems to be less manifest.

There's preaching but it seems to be more preaching humanistic kind of ideas rather than the faithful preaching of God's word. And every church could do better.

I think our church could do better. I think I could do better. But there's a lack of the hearing of the words of the Lord. And it's all about a changing environment, a changing kind of culture, a changing world view.

[1:41] I read this quote what UNESCO have said. UNESCO, the United Nations Organisation. UNESCO, they've said, Interesting quote, isn't it?

The United Nations thinks we need new ways of living. Trouble is these are godless ways. Godless ways. The old paths are not popular and the road less travelled these days, isn't it?

The road less travelled as the old paths. In Jeremiah 6 verse 16, it says, Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the paths and see, and ask for the old paths.

Where is the good way? And walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls. But, they said, we will not walk therein. The old paths have been abandoned.

And the old truths have been replaced with new truths, which aren't truths at all. The old paths are what we desperately need. And they said, we will not walk therein.

[2:52] These days, it's like it's becoming a thought crime. As if it's something that the government or the authorities can read your mind. And it becomes a thought crime to disagree with what the consensus is.

With what the majority wants. Or what is popular. But, we must disagree. When it's the wrong path. We must disagree with that. And, I suppose there's a degree of conscience as we decide what is God saying, what is God not saying. But, some things are very clear as far as what the Bible says. That must be our guidebook. And, I talked this morning about significant changes occurring across the globe. Agents of change at work. And, I don't want to rehash that so much.

But, there is this sense that there's agents of change. Change agents that are at work. And, a change agent must be totally committed to their strategic mission or purpose.

[3:58] And, that's what these godless change agents are all about. They're trying to change things according to the puppet master who's really Satan. Who's behind them.

And, there's this battle raging. Sometimes it's not so evident to our eyes. But, there's a battle raging in the voices that we hear through the media. In the forces that are bent on ensuring this conformity.

They want everybody to conform. It's like the UN. UNESCO says, new ways of living. They want these new ways of living. And, they're bent on ensuring conformity to their new ways of living.

And, they are against those few voices that dare to raise in resistance to that. But, brothers and sisters today, as the church of God on planet earth.

As this church, as other faithful churches. As godly people in all manner of churches. We need to dare to raise our voices in resistance. We must be part of the resistance movement.

[5:03] And, stand with the non-conformists, if you like. With the dissenters. You know, back through church history. Back through church history. There's these groups that were called the non-conformists.

You know, John Bunyan was such a man. He was a non-conformist. He didn't conform with the institutional church of his day. He actually dared to preach without being authorised.

Authorised by the establishment of the time. And, he ended up in prison because of it. Simply for that. And, so we see that often that God is with the non-conformists.

With those who dare to raise a different voice. And, why are these things so? Why is this change happening? Truly there is a famine in the land. A famine in the land.

The truth has been lost. And, there's a spiritual vacuum. When you take something out, it creates a vacuum. And, the vacuum. The spiritual vacuum is bringing in all kinds of weird teachings and ideas.

[6:01] Where you see some crazy things going on in many places across Christendom today. But, God has given us his word. He's given it to us. And, it's our authority source.

You know, it grieves my heart. When loved ones that I know are being devastated in their trust in God's word by scepticism.

And, it grieves my heart deeply. And, I feel really enraged at the way the devil has done that. So, people that I love very dearly. That we must trust God's word.

Implicitly trust it. It's our authority. And, we must be accountable to its message. To its truth. 2 Timothy 3. That familiar one. It says, All scripture is given by inspiration of God.

And, is profitable for doctrine. For reproof. For correction. For instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect. Truly furnished unto all good works.

[7:07] Notice what it was given for. For doctrine. For reproof. For correction. For instruction in righteousness. And, why has he given it?

That the man of God may be perfect. Truly furnished unto all good works. So, brethren, it says to scripture, it's profitable. It's profitable.

It's valuable. It's important. It's profitable in four ways. Sound doctrine. The God-ordained path is sound doctrine. In other words, healthy, wholesome teaching.

Our church needs sound doctrine. And, it's not just a set of facts. It teaches us how to live. There's an application. There's an application.

We shouldn't be just hearers, but doers of it. We should put it into action and make our feet walk in that direction that he sets for us through his word. That every individual believer has that sound doctrine.

[8:06] That, as a church, we have sound doctrine. In what we practice. In what we believe. In how we're administered. In how we operate. In how we live our lives.

Sound doctrine. It should impact our way of life. It's our teaching. It matters. It matters. And, the teacher that we need to give attention and heed to.

It needs to be in accord. With sound doctrine. This is critical. And, secondly, we're saying it's profitable for reproof. For reproof. It tells us where we've taken a wrong turn.

And, how to get right on the right path again. It gives needful warning. Reproof. Reproof. It's profitable for correction. Helps us. Guide us back.

Onto that right path. And, it's profitable for instruction in righteousness. To know. To be trained in that right way of living.

[9:03] That right way of thinking. And, if we neglect God's word. We miss out on all these truths. That profitable scripture. We must hold it dear and fast. It's sad to read.

There's some statistics I read. About. The lack of. Biblical. Grounding. That is evident. In Christendom today.

There's some trustworthy survey. That was undertaken. Of some church members. Some. Attenders of a. A typical evangelical church. They called it. Of some 100 adults.

And, they surveyed these 100 adults. And, they found only 16. 16 of them read the Bible regularly. And, 35 of the 100 never read the Bible at all.

These are church going people. You know. These are members. I suppose. They're committed. Yet, they. Never read the Bible at all.

[10:03] 35 out of the 100. Are you one of the 35 tonight? Only 63 of the 100 believe. That the Bible is completely accurate.

63 of the 100. Only 55 of the 100 believe. That Jesus Christ was sinless. Only 48 of the 100 believe. That Satan is real.

And, 57 of the 100 believe. That good works play a part. In gaining eternal life. 57 think. Good works are part of your salvation.

Only 10 of the 100. Cite the Bible. As the primary basis. Of their world view. And of what guides their behaviour. 10 of the 100. That's a small amount, isn't it?

10%. 1 in 10. And, 19% of those who are living with a partner today. Outside of marriage. Identify themselves as evangelical Christians.

[11:03] 19%. They don't see anything wrong with that. And, among the children of the 100 adults. In the typical evangelical church. Nearly 70% leave the church when they reach adulthood.

That's a shame, isn't it? It's a reproach. It's a sad, sad fact. 70% of children attending a church. Leave the church when they reach adulthood.

Why is this so? These are damning statistics, aren't they? They're dreadful, dreadful statistics. And, the main reason. The main reason is that they do not believe the Bible is true.

They say the church has done little or nothing to answer those doubts. That's of those who doubt the Bible. And, despite the growth of mega churches, overall evangelical church attendance.

So, churches in, you would say, churches that have got some adherence to the Bible, is down 15% since the 1990s. That's a big drop.

[12:09] It's down over 60% since World War II. And, today, there's fewer than 17% of evangelical churches growing numerically. Only 2.2% are growing through conversion.

So, these are woeful statistics, brothers and sisters, that show a decline in churchdom. And, I know, I read figures this morning how it's the worst it's ever been. In Britain, for example, with such statistics.

It's a sad fact today that many who profess to know Christ are uninformed and apathetic. You could say they're biblically illiterate.

And, they don't know and they don't care. They're uninformed and apathetic by and large. So, why is this so, brothers and sisters? These are sobering statistics. Why is this so?

Because there is a famine in the land. A famine of hearing the words of the Lord. In other words, there's a lack of biblical preaching.

[13:09] Many churches are not preaching the Bible faithfully and forthrightly today. Scripture is meant to be the standard, the standard by which we set our lives. You know, we have that which is a common statement of faith, that it's our rule of faith and conduct.

It's our rule. It's that which guides and sets and measures and dictates the stand that we take as far as what we believe and what we do. Our rule of faith and conduct of practice.

And so we see that it's meant to be the standard by which we evaluate what's right and wrong. We put that measuring rod. We put that plumb line, if you like, as the Bible calls itself.

We put that. It says what's up and down, what's straight down the line. And when it deviates, we know it's wrong. It's not in accord. And the Bible is our critic.

It's a good critic. We need good criticism. I need criticism. I need criticism. I value criticism. I take it honestly and I take it on board.

[14:09] I evaluate the criticism that I receive. And the Bible is our critic. But we can't argue with this. It is our critic. And it's a good thing that we take it and heed it.

It's essential that we do. And so being in God's Word is the only way that we can grow as Christians. And that the church can know the difference between the real and the counterfeit.

Between the right and the wrong. You know, what do people in banks do to be able to spot counterfeit money? What they do is they study the real thing. They study the real money and they get intimately familiar with the real money.

So that when something passes their hand, there's something different there. Feels different. Smells different. It looks different. There's something that's different.

Even though it might be a very good copy. A very good counterfeit. So they can detect the counterfeit and take it out of circulation. Likewise too, the church of God needs to study the real thing.

[15:10] Sound doctrine. And get grounded in it. And so that then they can spot the counterfeits before they do harm. And God's promised to give us His Word. He's promised to give us a word.

A sure word. A more sure word. And we have that word. He's promised to preserve it and keep it pure. And we can know we have the Bible today. We can know it's authentic and true.

As our Lord Himself declared. That heaven and earth shall pass away. But my words shall not pass away. And not a single letter. Not a single stroke of it.

A jot or a tittle. Just the minutest element of it. Shall not pass away. Until He come. Well, until heaven and earth shall pass away.

None of His words shall pass away. And He says in John 10, the scripture cannot be broken. You know, if it's not broken, don't fix it. You know, the scriptures can't be broken.

[16:09] In other words, God will safeguard its integrity. And the Word of the Lord shall endure forever. You know, there's a wonderful assurance that we can have. That we have God's Word.

And sadly, it seems in churchdom today, we've lost the sense of scriptural authority. The authority is lost. It's like we don't believe it anymore.

The untainted, authentic Word of God, we have it. And we're going to be assured of it. And we should obey it. Because it endures forever. It's the Word of the Lord. And some people ask, Does it hurt much to have maybe a little false doctrine?

Just a little leaven? Just a little leaven? Is that really so insignificant? It's just insignificant, you know.

If I start preaching something that's just a little bit wrong. I'd like you to correct me. Please correct me. Please exalt me.

[17:11] Rebuke me. If I veer from sound doctrine, please forgive me. Does a little false doctrine hurt that much?

Does a little leaven matter? Now, some people say, Don't throw the baby out with the bath water. Let's just agree to disagree. But when it comes to false doctrine, we simply can't look the other way. We just can't. You know, I heard this story. There was a woman whose family were looking to attend a particular Christian event. And the mother had reservations.

She said, There's some false teaching that's a part of this. You know, there's some particular false teacher that was coming to this event, which might have been otherwise quite good, you could say. Might have been quite a good idea.

And she and her husband wanted to teach their young daughters to remember the dangers of false tinctures. So she got them to help her one day and make some biscuits. And they added all the ingredients.

[18:15] It was smelling really nice. And they were just starting to smack their lips and think there's these lovely biscuits they're just about to eat. And then the girls were shocked when the mum added a small piece of dog poo to the batter.

You know, forgive me for using a bit of a coarse word. But that's what she did. She put some dog poo into the batter. And she told them, Don't worry about that. You might not even taste it.

You know, this was truly a disgusting but an effective lesson that she was teaching them. You know, you can't put a bit of something foul into something you want to eat.

Amen. Alright. And our Lord warned us. He warned his disciples, Avoid the teachings, the yeast of the Pharisees. You know, yeast, it talks about false doctrine.

It can talk about sin as well. It can be applied in a wholesome way too. But it's talking about a small element in something large that makes a big difference.

[19:19] And a small bit of yeast of leaven in a batch of dough can make a big difference to the whole recipe. And likewise too, such an addition to the recipe of that woman.

And so we need to be guarded. These are things to be mindful of. Very mindful of. And consider these things deeply. And some of them are personal things. You know, your personal decision about something might be different from mine.

But we want to be urging one another. Exhorting one another. As you see the day approaching. These are days not to be swayed. We don't want to be a purpose driven church.

A market driven church. We want to be a scripture driven church. A scripture driven church. That this is what sets what we decide and what we want to do. And that guides every choice we make. And not displace that. The signs of false teaching all around about us. And we must avoid that. To be a church. A scripture driven church.

[20:20] I heard someone spell it out like this. What is a scripture driven church? One that honours God. It says a church committed to scripture alone. As our authority. That understands God's purpose for his church.

That rightly handles the word of God. That operates under the Bible's authority. That identifies and rejects illegitimate authorities. That practices Bible based evangelism. That answers anti-Christian positions with apologetics. In other words a biblical defence of the faith. And friends we need that today. There's a famine in the land. A famine of hearing the words of the Lord. You know as a nation we were once much stronger. Now it seems like we're heading down the road of Sodom and Gomorrah. Where personal pleasure and man's humanistic ideas are replacing the honouring of God.

And the honouring of God's truth. And in numbers of churches these days it's all about being sensitive. And about feelings. Rather than sound doctrine and truth. It's not a priority to many. [21:28] And biblical truth is being blasted and undermined and eroded. Questioned, abandoned on so many fronts. It's like we're being drawn away by the pagans of our day.

The worldly barbarians if you like. As we've talked this morning about the media control. And it's like a virus has been unleashed on planet earth.

And within the church a virus has been unleashed. And it's like people just can't get enough of the entertainment. You know in the old days there was the arena and the stage.

People fought with beasts to their death. And plays were filled with violence and fornication. And adultery and idolatry and such things.

And it's happening on the church scene too. The church scene. We've got to keep up with the times. We've got to run with the times. We've got to. We don't offend anybody.

[22:24] We won't talk about things that will offend people. It could damage our success. We might lose a bit of esteem for that. But what of offending a thrice holy God?

What of that? Isn't that far more important? We don't offend a thrice holy God? That must matter more than anything else. Than anything else at all. And so we must be sure.

So not act contrary to the word of God. There's a war on biblical Christianity. We must hold our course. There's a war on. A war against biblical Christianity.

And it's spreading like wildfire. What does the Lord say in Hosea 4 verse 6? In part he says, My people are destroyed through lack of knowledge. Biblical knowledge is so important.

Bible knowledge. We're witnessing a deconstruction of Christianity. A destruction of Christianity. So we want to get a hold of the Bible. Take heart.

[23:23] And take hold of the Bible today. And be alert to the dangerous forces that are all around us. The counterfeits.

Many churches are sacrificing truth on the altar of unity. There's a wholesale departure from the faith. The Bible says there will be a departing from the faith.

And there's an infiltration of error. And so we always must be guarded. We should be those people who tremble at his word. Tremble at it. We take it really seriously.

And we want to stay true to it. And use the Bible for doctrine. For reproof. For correction. For instruction in righteousness. To hold fast the biblical standard. I just want to urge you tonight.

These are things that are so pressing. They're so pressing in these times. It moves me deeply. Deeply, deeply. That there is a lack of biblical literacy.

[24:21] And how can we learn to think biblically? Being at the Bible study. Being at the Bible study. Wednesday, 7 o'clock. How can we learn to think biblically?

We need to study the Bible. It's so important. How can we develop biblical convictions? Biblical convictions. We want to be grounded. How do we make right choices about life?

About marriage? About ethical decisions? About those quandaries that we have through life? How can we know the right path? Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed their tomb according to thy word. Psalm 119 verse 9. And that familiar on thy word is a lamp unto my feet. A light unto my path.

That's 105 of Psalm 119. Brothers and sisters tonight. Ask homework if you like. I'd urge you. Please. Read Psalm 119.

[25:20] Read Psalm 19. To develop a true appreciation for the word of God. You know, the Psalm 119 is just jam-packed with so many praises of the word of God.

And how precious it truly is. And as a church we want to follow the Bible. Its authority. So we don't get off message and off mission. We want to be warned by the word.

Warned by the word. I'm not talking about personal preferences or opinions of men. But that the word. The word will be centre stage.

The word will be what grounds us. What firms us. What assures us. That makes us steadfast. That we have the Bible's authority. We don't question the Bible's authority. We believe it.

We believe it. I think it's a sad reflection that there's some Bibles that cast doubt on the Bible. I think that's wrong. I think that's wrong. Very wrong. We can take the Bible and believe it and be assured of it and be true to it.

[26:24] Friends, there is a famine in the land. A famine in the land. And the choices are clear. Either we believe absolute truth. We set our values according to the Bible.

Or we go with human idealism. Human idealism. Which changes with the wind. And it's easy to manipulate. You know, the puppet master changes such things. Human ideas change from time to time.

From season to season. From fad to fad. But God's word does not change with the fashions of men. How can we see our marriages strong? Be a Bible believer.

Be a student of the Bible. How can we get a fresh appreciation of the word? Take time to study it. Take time with the word. Develop a fresh desire to feed your soul.

Be where the word is being preached faithfully. Be where the Bible study is. And the church, friends today, by and large, it's been hijacked. There's a famine in the land.

[27:26] We've lost that. There's an experience-orientated message. A feel-good gospel. The battle lines are being drawn. They've been drawn long ago. And we need to be a people under subjection to the word of God.

You know, there's many churches where you go to, they scarcely open the Bible. And scarcely people have a Bible that they bring, let alone read through the week. We need to be a people of the book.

A people of the word of God. You know, the world is going to be moved towards a strong delusion. God is going to send a strong delusion. Delusion. That's strong words, isn't it?

A strong delusion. So that people will accept a lie. This is 2 Thessalonians 2. People are going to accept a lie.

And we're seeing this now. A global transformation. And a transformation of the church too. Where the church is becoming like a rudderless ship. Drifting along with every shifting wind.

[28:29] And the winds of change threaten biblical Christianity today. They want to redefine it. A paradigm shift. A stray from the word. From ultimate truth.

The Lord Jesus says in Luke 18, When he comes, will he find faith on the earth. That's amazing, isn't it? That's our Lord's lips. These words come from our Lord's lips.

Compromise is so rampant today. You know, it staggers me. A church that I grew up in in my boyhood is one I would definitely not recommend to you today.

You know. For all the good that they might do. We cannot. We cannot accept that. I think some of the people who founded some of these churches would be turning in their graves today.

At what is going on. Brothers and sisters, you know. Or what might have started with much godly intent And fervour and zeal for the truth.

[29:34] You know, Wesley. I mean, Booth. There was some good godly stuff back then. And what do we see that remains? Much to be desired.

Much to be desired. And it's rampant. And it's by design. It's by design. It's planned. And it's everywhere. Compromise is sweeping the church. As Baptist churches that are woeful. Woeful today. As many Baptist churches I would definitely not recommend to you. So I'm not saying that Baptists have gotten monopoly on the truth. By no means.

But friends tonight, we need to be urged to be Bible believers. That's what matters. The wrath of God is going to come on those who do not believe. And this message isn't about building up your ego.

And your self-esteem. I don't want to stroke that. I don't want you to have your ears tickled tonight. I really don't want to do that. I don't want to appeal to your flesh.

[30:37] I'd rather see your flesh hurt. And to see your soul stirred. To see your spirit lifted and encouraged in gospel truth.

There's a poisoning of the well going on. A poisoning of the well. I don't know how I can say it any stronger without... I don't know. But people are swallowing this.

Hook, line and sinker right across Christendom today. The truth is blurred. It's like it's lost its definition.

It's been redefined. Replaced. And churches are resorting to all manner of devices of men. Instead of the real power of God. Even churches that talk a lot about revival.

And talk a lot about the Holy Spirit. I think that they've swallowed a lie. A very cheap, poor substitute for the real thing. And brothers and sisters, we must...

[31:37] We must get back to the book. We must get back to the Word of God. In a day and age when people will not tolerate the truth. We see, and it saddens my heart.

You know, I'm doing a university course myself at the moment. And I see that universities, places of higher learning, have got a lot of good in them.

As have the schools. And there's many good school teachers out there. But we see that the agenda, the agenda, the implicit, covert agenda that is intrinsically taking over these things is anti-God.

And scepticism. Scepticism. It's replete. It's abundant. And I know some of our young people who are going to university at the moment, they're saying how they're getting attacked.

Now there was a testimony one Wednesday night of one of our young men attending university. He's under attack. And he's searching to encourage the professor that's teaching him at university about faith in Christ.

[32:45] About faith in God's truth. And yet there's this agenda that these institutions seem to have. We're being lied to. Is the bottom line.

We're being lied to in our schools, in our places of high learning. We're being lied to in the news broadcasts that we tune into. It's filtered. It's shaped and made to say what the puppet master wants us to hear.

We're being lied to, even from our pulpits. And there's forces that are at work intent on destroying biblical Christianity. Biblical faith, redefining it.

And in some churches, you've got Christians, you've got preachers preaching sermonettes for Christianettes. It's like it's all toned down, done down, made palatable so that no one gets offended. We don't have solid teaching anymore. It's all about making people feel comfortable. Friends, you're being lied to when that happens. Friends, you're being lied to.

[33:49] We need the truth. We need the truth. Desperately, desperately need the truth. Because there is a famine in the land. There is a famine in the land. A famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

And so, brothers and sisters, we need to be urged to a deeper faith, a deeper conviction, a deeper resolution, a revelation of sin and a repenting of it.

What we believe is too hot to handle. This is too controversial. You know, I think if you sacked me, I wouldn't get another job anywhere else, you know, as a preacher because people don't want to hear this stuff.

You know, it's too controversial. It's too offensive. You're going to offend people. We're going to lose people. But, friends, what matters is not offending the thrice holy God.

It says in Ephesians 5.11, And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Stand against those things that are the works of darkness.

[34:52] How I long, how I yearn, how I desire to see our young people grow in godliness, that they be saved, that they trust Christ personally, eternally, trust Him, that they be converted, saved, ransomed, transformed, by the power of God.

And that they seek God, then prayerfully, for that other godly spouse that they'll ultimately marry. I've heard it said, you know, as a young person, a single person, that they start praying for that spouse that they will marry.

They start praying even before they marry. Of that one that God will choose for them, that God will send to them, that they likewise, as their godly, lifetime spouse, will be one who loves the Lord, and loves His truth, and is sold out.

And that our young people and our older people will be stirred up to works of greater faith and zeal, so that we won't settle for second best.

We won't settle for sloppy and slack. But we'll want to have that zeal that matters for what is right and decent and godly and true.

[36:09] And be authentic Christians in this land, in this community, there is a famine in the land. We need to sound a warning where illusion replaces reality, when people are saying the church needs to change.

We're on the verge of apostasy. We don't want to change. Revelation 17 tells of a woman drunk with the blood of the martyrs, the blood of the saints.

And John in Revelation 17, verse 6, he was utterly amazed. On her forehead was written, Mystery Babylon, the great. The mother of hearts and abominations of the earth.

Friends, these are days when biblical discernment is needed now more than ever before. More than ever before. Days of apostasy. Rome is the Babylon of the book of Revelation.

Some may question that. That is what I believe. The signs, the symbols, the codes, I believe it all points to this.

[37:17] The colours, it's Rome. Rome is seen many times. As Alexander Hislop, who wrote a book called The Toe to Babylon, said, of the character of this Babylon the great, this mother, this harlot system.

He writes this, he says, the essential character of her system, the grand objects of her worship, her festivals, her doctrine and discipline, her rites and ceremonies, her priesthood and their orders.

These have all been derived from ancient Babylon. These ungodly forces are gaining control today. We need to be guarded. The one world church wants to embrace all religions and bring the spirit of cooperation but really, it's more than just a cooperation.

It's a sellout. And the spirit of Antichrist is leading the world to this system, to this destruction. So Bible believers, I exhort you here tonight to be alerted.

Again, this is not a message that is popular. You might resolve from it. You might shy away from this and think, well, I know lots of so-and-so Christians and...

[38:39] But friends, we've got to be guarded about the truth. We don't want to mess with unbiblical themes because there is going to be this mystery Babylon.

It's going to be hidden. It's going to be covert. Why will this happen? Because of biblical ignorance, biblical illiteracy.

Why? Because there will be a famine in the land. People won't be able to tell right from wrong, counterfeit from true. It will all be just one big blurred blend. And we'll be swept along by popular culture and by the unsaved masses and by the mega church movement and the popular scene and what's popular on the top of the pops down at the Christian concert or the Christian bookstore by the same marketing techniques and changing philosophies that the world uses will be swept right in.

And we won't even know it. Mystery Babylon. The mother of harlots. Friends, we've lost the unadulterated gospel of Christ and we ought to take him.

And the fault lies at the feet of the leadership. The leadership. We have a greater accountability and a greater judgment. So woe be to me if I don't tell you straight.

[40:01] Woe to me. Woe to me. I'd rather you stone me to death than I not tell you the truth. I'd rather tell you the truth and die for it.

Friends, Jeremiah 2, God says, My people have committed two evils.

They've forsaken me, the fountain of living waters and hear to themselves systems, broken systems that can hold no water. There's a sense where we've forsaken the fountain of living waters. We don't want to drink from a lucky, murky, dirty, bitter stream. We want the fountain of living waters. We want that which is pure and true. The word says, Sow to yourselves in righteousness. Reap in mercy. Break up your fallow ground. It is time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness on you. Friends, there's a sense where we've got to break up the fallow ground. We've got to get the pickaxe out and do some manual labour and see that stony, hardened ground that is our soul broken up, as it were, in repentance and faith.

[41:02] A heart-rending, a converting, a changing by God's grace. A pleading for biblical faithfulness. A stirring to biblical accuracy.

To holding fast to God's timeless truth. In a day where apostasy prevails, we need it now more than ever. To refuse to renounce the biblical absolutes.

Doesn't matter what the bishops and the church CEOs say that they think that certain abominations are acceptable now.

If God says it's abomination, it still is abomination. I don't care whether you call it gay, it's called abomination. That's what it is. And there's no excusing it.

There's no accommodating it. And let me say this, that for those that are in that trap, it's no greater than any other sin.

[42:01] It's no greater than any other sin. I don't want to condemn anyone here today. The heterosexual who is astray from God is just as damned as the others.

So I urge you today, we must be urged to biblical faithfulness and to renounce that which is not of God. We don't want the warm and fuzzy, we want what's scriptural.

And I just want to say it over and over again until you get it. Because we cannot afford to deviate. We cannot. There's a reframing going on, a distortion of truth where the absolute truth is denied, is denied. How can people be a part of that scene?

How can we be a part of it? Why? Because there's a famine in the land. We're conditioned to accept things like this. And yet the word says Colossians 2, beware lest any man spoil you.

[43:06] To spoil it means to take captive, to imprison you, to trick you up, to ensnare you, through philosophy and vain deceit, through the tradition of man, after the rudiments of the world.

Friends, there is a famine in the land. It makes it ever more critical, ever more vital and essential that we hold fast the faithful word. There's a famine in the land, a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

So we must, we must address this serious issue of scriptural illiteracy. Many are just playing church. They just come to church and they just get their little top up, they just get their little pep talk and that's it.

Until next time. Friends, it's not good enough. It's really not good enough. Brothers and sisters, dust off your Bible at home. Dust it off. Trust in his promises and people of God, it matters.

It's God's love letter to you. You know, there was a time as a young man that I spent seven months away from my sweetheart as I attended a Bible school.

[44:19] It was just a short, relatively short Bible school. And seven months of Bible training which was nothing really, nothing to speak of.

But I was separated from the love of my life, the one, my sweetheart, my one and only love, my beloved darling.

And she wrote me often. And it was very embarrassing really because I got told off by the principal of the Bible school because of all the sappy stuff that was written on the letter.

And it was sealed with a loving kiss, it was on the back of it, and it smelled of perfume and it had all these sappy things like my darling Andrew or whatever it was, something like that.

And it was almost like I was being made fun of, getting these love letters from the other students and from the principal of the Bible school. But, you know, those love letters meant a lot to me.

[45:19] And I sent my darling love letters to him. And friends, this is a love letter from God, the lover of our soul. Shouldn't it matter?

Shouldn't it matter to our soul?

It does matter. It matters so vitally, so truly tonight. And we need to restore a love for the Word of God, a love for its truth, and to belong to the people who believe it and are led by it.

A blood bought people, a persecuted people perhaps. As our Lord says in John 15, if they've persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

If they've kept my saying, they'll keep yours also. So, don't think it unusual, and I said that this morning, that if you get to be a marked man, a marked woman, you don't go with the flow.

You're not one of the lemmings. You're actually saying something different from the crowd. And that's what we ought to be, isn't it? We ought to be that man, that woman, that doesn't go with the flow.

[46:21] We stand up for truth. Even if the world says that biblical truth and evangelism is hatred and intolerance, and even if they declare it illegal, we will not shut up about it.

And we will be that church that will face ridicule, torture, and imprisonment, if need be, if God will it so. We don't care. We will face whatever we have to face to be faithful, even death, if it be.

This is what we must be. We must get to that point where we will go to our grave for the truth that we stand for. We will not renounce it. We will not recant.

And we need to gain that power from above, that power from on high, the dynamic of his word, the convictions of biblical faith. the word should navigate our way.

Now, one of my great failings in life is that I often get lost. I've got this nav man on my phone, but it's not one of the paid ones, so you can't work out where you are on the map.

[47:32] I've got to fiddle around and pull over and try to work out where I am. And, friends, we need something to navigate our way. And this is it. This is how we navigate our way.

This is how we tell the path to take. The glorious truths of God should drive our thoughts, our wants, our desires. An accountability to God and his word should be our bedrock.

And an aspiration to learn Christian doctrine and apply it, to be not just a hearer, but a doer of it. To apply it should be what matters to us. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

That, the man of God, should be perfect, may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto good works.

This is our anchor, our foundation for our thoughts, our values, God's sure, unchanging word.

I urge you to trust it, take it, hold it fast and declare it, live it out. Let us pray. Let us pray.