

Hold Fast

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[0:00] 2 Timothy chapter 1. Hold fast is the message. That we are made according to the pattern of God.

We're made according to the maker's design. His design for us. And this is the pattern. The word of God. It's full of patterns. Of these patterns. Of these models. Of these templates.

Of lives if you like. We see real lives lived out. And lessons learned from those lives. And the patterns here in the word of God are patterns for us to learn from.

To follow and to obey. Or patterns to learn from and avoid. The pattern is not one that we can change or pick and choose from. It is written. It is written here.

The pattern that we have. The word of God. And these are powerful words for us. What it says we are to do. Thus saith the Lord it says. There's a sure thing.

[1:18] A sure command. And how we urgently need that call to get back to the Bible. To hold fast. To hold fast. What will we do with the word? Paul tells Timothy what to do in 2 Timothy 1 and verse 13.

He says this. He says, Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Hold fast the form of sound words.

That's Paul's message to Timothy. Now this word form is likewise translated elsewhere as pattern. The form of sound words. The form of sound words. The pattern. The model. The template. The blueprint. Hold it fast, Paul says to Timothy.

Hold fast the form of sound words. Elsewhere this word form is translated pattern. Now it's not the same word in this context in this particular verse but Hebrews 8 verse 5 we read that God told Moses of the construction of the tabernacle.

[2:32] And he said to make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount. He couldn't just design it how he wanted to and embellish it here and embellish it there.

It had to be according to the pattern. According to the template. The blueprint that God had given him. And we have here the blueprint for living. It's the pattern for life. It's the divine truth laid out for us as to how we are to live it.

This book is stamped with God's authority. It has full authority. Strong authority. The authority of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. And then it says in Ecclesiastes 8 verse 4 where the word of a king is there is power.

The word of the king is here. And there is power here. You know people today as we think about the world that we live in of our own nation. We're destined for destruction.

The moral slide is ever more evident and worsening as we see all the signs around us of the end times. We see it in the news headlines all the time.

[3:37] And within the professing church too we see this great lack of spiritual authority. Why is this so? I put to you that there's a great lack of spiritual maturity because we've lost the sound words.

We've lost the Bible in our day. The Bible's missing. It's like that back in King Josiah's day. In King Josiah's day the Bible had been neglected. And some have reckoned it was about 75 years that this scroll was lost.

It was missing in King Josiah's day. And then the people found God's book. Where it had been lodged away and hidden in Josiah's day they found the book.

And it caused great reform and revival. But sadly the reform was short lived. It was only for a while and then Judah reverted back to the evil that it had before.

And its nation was then led into captivity. But the point is that we can get into trouble when we get away from God's pattern. When we get away from God's pattern.

[4:41] When we fail to accord with the Bible. And Australia today is ripe for God's judgment. There's a great lack in our nation today.

We need to find the missing Bible if you like. And get our lives back into shape with God's design, God's pattern. It's here that our true source of freedom and life and truth is found in God's word. We see that our Lord says as he spoke to the Jews which believed on him. He said if you continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

Here in the message of this book we find our true freedom. Here is the answer for modern man. Yet for many they have no time for the Bible. It has no place in them.

As our Lord continued. He says if the Son therefore shall make you free you shall be free indeed. I know that ye, talking to the Pharisees, are Abraham's seed.

[5:48] But ye seek to kill me because my word hath no place in you. It is what makes the difference whether the word has got place in us.

And our Lord saw the Pharisees that the word of God didn't have any place in them. But for those who did believe he says if the Son therefore shall make you free you shall be free indeed.

And we see right through the scriptures that it's our accord with the word that shows where we're at. Who we belong to.

And the true people of God are those who will hear the voice of their shepherd. They'll be his sheep. As our Lord says in John 10, 27. My sheep, my sheep. Hear my voice.

And they follow me. I know them and they follow me. His voice. Where is his voice? You know there's many that are crying out. Making out there that they are his voice.

[6:51] You see many TV preachers today. And some will say I've got a word from the Lord for you. And they'll rattle off something that's quite extra biblical. Well I've got a word from the Lord for you and it's here.

This is the word from the Lord for you. His voice is here. He says my sheep hear my voice. And they I know them and they follow me.

His voice is here in these perilous times in days of apostasy. In days of self-deception. How vitally we need to hear his voice. To truly hear his voice.

Not something a pretense of others. Or some extra biblical revelation that might be aside or away from his word. But to hear his voice. And we'll know that most truly and distinctly as we read his word.

People these days are so busily going around in their own eyes. Doing what is right in their own eyes. And we're witnessing this wholesale destruction of a nation.

[7:50] Bit by bit by bit. Our nation is losing ground to the relentless enemy that is attacking us. And all the while believers are just playing church.

It seems in many quarters. And are just swallowing whatever they're sold. Swallowing whatever they're told. In Jeremiah 5 verse 30. The prophet tells of such a time.

How it's a wonderful. In other words. You wonder how on earth is this happening. And it's a horrible thing committed in the land. And I've used this verse lately. The prophets prophesy falsely.

And the priests bear rule by their means. And my people love to have it so. Everyone's just jumping on the bandwagon. Whatever the latest fad.

The purpose driven. Instead of God driven. Instead of Holy Spirit driven. Instead of Scripture driven. It's just whatever the purpose is. Purpose driven.

[8:47] But friends. We've got to be Scripture driven. Spirit driven. And this is how we'll know whether it's right or wrong. It's a wonderful and a horrible thing.

So we must speak out in these days. Where we're seeing these like things happening. Even in our time. As God set apart people. We should be a people of the word. A scriptural people.

Who will not deviate from the biblical pattern. Will accord with the pattern. Just like the dressmaker. Has to accord with the pattern. As she or he makes that garment.

They build it. They make it. They construct it according to the pattern. And likewise too. As Moses. He had to build according to the pattern. We need to build according to the pattern. And here it is.

That form. That pattern. Of sound words. And in this book that tells us how to live. It says in 2 Corinthians 6. Verses 17 and 18. Wherefore come out from among them.

[9:47] And be ye separate. Saith the Lord. There's need for a pretty straight down the line kind of message. And that's what I'm bringing here tonight. As God helping me.

I'm trying to put into words. What these sound words are telling us. The form of sound words that we are to hold fast. So what does this mean?

It means strong preaching. We need strong preaching. Strong preaching. Whenever we open this book. We have the power of God at our fingertips. We have God's dynamic truth.

That transforms hearts. And it should be on our lips. And in our own hearts. We need strong preaching. There's one preacher put it this way. He says what we need is a revival of powerful preaching of the pure word of God.

Preaching with fervour and conviction for the purpose of getting people saved. And putting some spiritual meat on the bones of the saints. What we need is a revival of powerful preaching of the pure word of God.

[10:48] That is what we need. How we need it today. Saints of God. We need the spirit sword. It's sharp. Sharper than any two edged sword.

We need the spirit sword. And we see the pattern through the scriptures of how this sword was applied. How it was used. Peter was such a powerful preacher.

He was straight down the line in what he said. And what he taught. In 1 Peter 4 verse 11. He says if any man speak. Let him speak as the oracles of God.

Let him speak as the oracles of God. You know. I tremble that I'm here speaking to you. That the word of God. Is the message that needs to come across.

Not me. Not my visions or revelations. But the clear crystal word of God. That is what the people of God need. And I want to be a communicator of that message. This vital message of truth.

[11:51] I must not compromise it. But deliver it plainly. Forthrightly. Faithfully. It's got to be according to the pattern.

The pattern. The pattern. You know. Have you ever unboxed something that you brought home from the shop. Something that you bought. And you had to assemble. It's like it happens all the time now.

Doesn't it? As you get these flat pack furniture. It's just about everything comes flat pack now. In a box. And what are you meant to do? You're meant to read the instructions.

Read the instructions. And people tonight. This book is the maker's instructions. We are to build and make our lives in accordance with the maker's instructions.

They are right here. God sets the pattern. God's direction. The counsel for life. The direction of God. For a life well lived. If any man speak.

[12:50] Let him speak. Let him speak as the oracles of God. This is too critical. Too foundational. Too fundamental. For us to play around with. But to take it as read. And put it into action.

That's what Paul did. Paul is another pattern. Another example. Another model for us to follow. Paul did not pull any punches. He said. For I have not shunned. To declare unto you.

All the counsel of God. I've not held back. I've not held anything back. I've just given you everything. Of God's counsel. The whole lot of it. All the counsel.

And as a preacher. I dare not hold back. I dare not hold back. Whether people will listen or not. Is on their own heads. In Acts 20 verse 20 it says.

Paul says. I kept back nothing. And we need. In these days. We need to pull out all the stops. Pull out all the stops. It's like. In some quarters.

[13:46] Many pastors have lost their bark. And bite. Now is the time. For strong preaching. For aggressive preaching. To hold fast. The form of sound words.

Hold it fast. We need. Strong preaching today. We also need. A strong warning. We see. Much of the pattern here. Is a warning for us.

And our Lord calls us. In such times as these. In these darkening days. For a watchfulness. To watch. To be watchful. To be sober. To be vigilant. There's many instructions.

Along that line. And Paul urged the young Timothy. To watch out. In all things. Paul urges us. Watch out. Be separate.

He says. Don't deviate. From God's pattern. He says. Stick with the book. Stick closely. Watch out. He says. Watch out. As our Lord says. To be. On the alert.

[14:42] To be not deceived. To watch. And be sober. Watch thou. It says. In 2 Timothy 4 verse 5. Paul says to Timothy. Watch thou.

In all things. Endure affliction. Do the work of an evangelist. Make full proof of thy ministry. Watch thou. In all things. In other words. Have your wits about you.

Be always on the watch. Always on the lookout. How important it is. Brothers and sisters. That we be a vigilant people. That we be alert. That we be watchmen. Watch women.

If we join with error. We are effectively joining with the apostate church. So we need to watch out for error. Watch out for truth. And search out. And identify with the truth.

And confront the error. Expose it. And condemn it. Honour God. And confront doctrinal error. A big feature of the end times. Is a corrupt church.

[15:36] We see that. The one world church. We see that. It's gathering pace already. As we see this happening. We see the things that are coming out. Of the Pope of Rome's voice.

Out of the Pope of Rome's mouth. And we're seeing the Lutheran church. We're seeing numbers of churches going back. Like they're backtracking. What the Reformation was all about.

And they're coming back under the fold. Of Mother Rome. This is happening in many quarters. We see many signs of this. Some quite explicit. And some more kind of subtle.

Exactly. And so we see of this important strong warning. That as we hold fast the form of sound words. There's need for strong preaching.

And there's need too for strong warning. You know. Woe to me if I do not deliver what I have to deliver. And so it's sometimes hard to be warning people.

[16:34] And people don't like to be. Well if you're warning me that means I'm doing something wrong. Well I can only be a messenger. And so it says in Matthew 16.6. That we are to beware of leaven.

Our Lord tells of how there's the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And he says take heed. He says watch out. Be aware of this. The leaven. And the context is of false doctrine.

Watch out for false doctrine. There's false teaching. Leaven. Now I know Julie used to make some scones and bread at times.

And put the ingredients together and leave it out in the sun. And it was flat when she put it out there. But give it time. And it all swelled up as the yeast started to work.

And the dough grew and increased. And the loaf was made. It only takes a little bit of leaven to make the dough rise.

[17:34] And false doctrine is talked about as being as leaven. There's a number of places it talks about how it spreads. It puffs up. It pollutes the truth with poison.

And effectively it's false doctrine is like leaven. In that it's like a corruption. It gets in and it spreads. And before you know it the whole lump is affected.

So there's need for warning from leaven. There's need of warning from wolves. The Lord tells how wolves will enter in among the sheep. And some of these wolves are the leaders.

And we need warning for such men. Against such doctrines. We need warning. To aspire to a renewed purity and devotion to the word.

We need warning. Because our greatest enemy is apathy. Apathy. You know, I don't know. I don't care. Who cares? I'll just go with the flow.

[18:34] You know, the dead fish go with the flow. We've lost the pattern. That's the problem. And we think that we know better than God. And as a people, do what is right in our own eyes. As a nation we see, you know, what will the plebiscite do?

Who knows? It might go one way or the other. But the majority generally chooses that which is wrong. At Sodom and Gomorrah, God's judgment fell. We must be aware of the seeds of compromise.

Lot was in there at this time. Lot. Righteous Lot, we're told. He's just. He's righteous. He's described as that. Yet Lot fell bit by bit, inch by inch.

He fell till he was part and parcel of the damned sinful city of Sodom. But God in grace delivered him. And it's the same as in our day.

Brothers and sisters, judgment looms. There's need for warning. May we serve God acceptably. May we tremble before him. Let's not take this lightly or carelessly.

[19:37] In Hebrews 12 we see another pattern, another warning. It's where the writer of Hebrews says of this kingdom that we have, which cannot be moved.

He says, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Why? For our God is a consuming fire.

Shouldn't we take warning? We play around, play with fire, with a God who is a God who is a consuming fire.

Don't play around with God. We have need to hold fast the form of sound words with strong preaching, strong warning and strong authority.

We have strong authority, not authority from some denomination. The Pope didn't give me any of his authority or some denominational hierarchy.

[20:32] We have an authority crisis today because we've lost the authority. We've lost the authority. My Bible's missing. And things go wrong when there's no direction, there's no authority.

The day we're living in is a day and age where people don't want rules. No rules is the kind of thinking, isn't it? But the Bible does call us to come under God's rule, God's righteous rule, God's authority.

We see in Philippians 3 how it says, nevertheless, where to we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Paul tells the Philippians, walk by the same rule, this rule.

Now we can be unruly or we can come under God's rule. Now God's rule is not a dictatorship, he's not a dictator kind of rule, but it's a loving lordship.

It's a control that we want to come under and freely and gladly come under God's authority. And here we have God's pattern. There's authority here.

[21:43] In our statement of faith it says, the Bible is the rule for faith and conduct or something along that line. It's as most Bible-based churches would have such a statement.

That the Bible is the rule for our faith and conduct. Not some standard of men or some rules of people, but the Bible. This is our rule, our measuring stick.

It's our authority, our authoritative source for our doctrine, for our teaching, for our conduct. And the Bible says it's to equip us for every good work. It's our standard.

And so we cannot accommodate error because the rule guides what is right and what is true. In John 17 our Lord says, sanctify them through thy word, thy truth, thy word is true.

So the Bible teaches us what is good and what is not good, what is right and what is wrong. And it tells us to hold fast that which is good.

[22:43] Here we have absolute authority. It's by which we test everything. God's provided the authority that we need. You know, he has allowed us different kinds of authority in the world we live.

There's authority of the legal system, of the law-keeping system of our world, of government. But the absolute authority is above it all. The absolute authority is the word of God.

And so we need to come under his authority. It says in Colossians 3.16, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in psalms, teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Dwell in you richly. Our world by and large has lost its respect for God and many want no rules, no authority.

And it's no wonder that's why we see order descend into chaos as much as they're saying it's the other way around. We see that people are not taking the Bible seriously.

[23:49] They're not obeying it. The word of Christ isn't dwelling in them richly. That's what God wants for us. The church of God is largely lukewarm and the gospel has been gutted, it's been watered down such that it's scarcely there.

And the people are not faithful in reverencing the things of God. We've got a lot to catch up on, people of God, I put to you. As many just pick and choose the bits they like.

Now in the Bible it talks about the goodness and severity of God. It talks about his love and his wrath, his judgment. It's about getting it in balance, isn't it?

Not missing all of that, the whole story. But the scary truth is what's happening today, there is a moral slide and it's a conspiracy. It's planned, it's deliberate.

The puppet master is pulling the strings behind the politicians and masterminding what will be the ultimate end time Babylon. And it's the enemy of man's souls.

[24:50] We're seeing these things. It's picking up pace today where we're seeing everything's coming together on the political, on the religious scene, across all domains of life.

And many are falling for the lie. But our Lord says clearly to his own people in Revelation 18, a voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins and that you receive not of her plagues.

Don't dabble and dilly with that which is doubtful. Don't do it. Come out. Get out of it. You know, we're called to strong preaching. We're called to a strong word from God.

We're called to the strong authority of his word. And we're called to a strong commitment. These are days that call for commitment for a faithful people. These are times that call for a clear decision, to step over the line and to stand with God, hold fast the form of sound words.

Here's another pattern. In Elijah's day, Elijah came to the people. You know, it was a real testing time as the prophets of Baal were there thrashing themselves with all their religious noises and acts and fans and goings on.

[26:09] They were very religious, very fanatical, zealous. And Elijah said to the people, How long hold you? How long are you going to sit on the fence here between two opinions?

If the Lord be God, follow him. And if Baal, follow him. And the people answered him, not a word. You know, it's crunch time, people.

If the Lord be God, follow him. If it's Baal, go and follow him. Make your mind up. We're living in a wicked nation and the devil delights in what's going on today. Meanwhile, the Lord is sifting the wheat.

Now, he's got the winnowing fan in his hand and some people are just going to blow away because they're light and fluffy. They're light and just blow away with the wind.

With every wind of doctrine, just blow with the wind. Gone with the wind. You know, a wicked nation, a wicked people. And the devil delights in it all. But the Lord is sifting the wheat.

[27:08] Are we going to be wheat or chaff? We have to get back to the pattern. This must be what sets our doctrine, our faith, our practice, our conduct. And this need to have a strong word.

As in Jeremiah's day, what was he called to? We see, as it tells of Jeremiah's commission here in Jeremiah 1 verse 10, it says, See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out, to pull down and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.

And there's a preacher that looked at this verse and put it like this. He says, In this verse there are around four terms. Three negative, root down, pull down, destroy, throw down.

There's negative words there. And two positive, build and plant. So this preacher makes the point here. Two thirds of Jeremiah's preaching was to be negative and one third positive.

Root out, pull down, destroy, throw down, build, plant. Interesting context, isn't it? Interesting comparison.

[28:22] You know, I see the garden out there. It needs someone to do some rooting out of all those weeds out there. If someone feels the inspiration. You know, some things have got to be pulled out so that the garden can blossom and thrive.

And that's what the preacher, Jeremiah, the prophet was called to, to rip some things out and pull some things down and destroy things, but then to build and to plant. It needs the both, doesn't it?

Preaching needs to do the both of those things. And in Timothy 4 verse 2, as Timothy, another pattern, he was given this commission of Paul.

And Paul tells Timothy, he says, Preach the word, be instant, in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

And this preacher again comments that there's two negative here. Reprove, reprove, rebuke. You know, there's warning there. There's urging there to get back on track.

[29:25] There's correction there. And exhort, exhort. It's the building up. And so, again, two thirds. Two thirds is negative.

And sometimes we get that when we come to church. You're not necessarily going to get everything warm and fuzzy. There's going to be perhaps something that's going to be challenging. Divine truth.

Will we obey it? Will we honour the master who has the rightful authority, the rightful rule over us? Or will we just go willy-nilly doing our own thing?

Does what we do accord with the maker's pattern, with his plan, with his design for life? We must measure everything and build it according to the pattern. In 1 John 4 verse 6 we see that John comments how we know that we are of God and he that is of God hears us, but by this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

You know, I commented this morning about spirituality. There's a lot of... I was tuning into the ABC radio lately and there's someone going on about spirituality and I think he goes and talks to his plants and his garden and all kinds of things.

[30:36] He gets a lot of spirituality about all of these things. But what madness is this? And yet there's a spirit of truth and there's a spirit of error.

You've got to discern... You've got to discern between the two. Not everything that's spiritual is good for you. Now you can go to all kinds of spiritual teachers and gurus these days, but we need to get back to the form of sound words.

Hold that fast. As the early church did, they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. And God calls us to this, to these sound words, to find discernment and to, as John says, to believe not every spirit.

He says in 1 John 4 verse 1, believe not every spirit but try the spirits. Test them out. Check it out. And at the heart of it all really lies the source of our authority.

What is the source of our authority? Is it some teacher, some denomination, some religious outfit that determines what is the authority? Or is it what God says?

[31:39] Is it his authority? That must be what yields to what authority, to what we yield, the source of authority. You know, Naaman was one who was not willing to yield to authority when the prophet told him he had to dunk seven times in that murky river.

And he kind of balked at that. Oh, I'm above that. You know, that's beneath me to go down into that dirty water seven times. But finally he did.

And God blessed Naaman when he yielded to God's authority. We see King Saul, another pattern. He'd argued that he had obeyed. But then there was the bleating of the sheep that he hadn't killed. There was that lack of obedience on Saul's part. He did not fully obey God. He did not yield to God's authority. And we see in Israel countless times the pattern in Israel of their disobedience as they did not obey the law, the Lord.

And they would not hear the law, L-A-W. And in Isaiah 30 we read how the prophet says, as our Lord spoke through the prophet, this is a rebellious house.

[32:54] It's a rebellious people. They will not hear the law of the Lord. And they say to the seers, See not. And to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things. Speak unto us smooth things.

Prophecy deceits. You know, Hey, we want to hear what the megachurch preachers are preaching. We want something smooth, something light and breezy, something that will tickle our fancy and make us feel good.

And this is deception. When it happens, it's when we get away from the truth. It's when we're ignorant of it. We're ignorant, willfully ignorant, as we reject it. And now more than ever, we don't need a toning down of the truth, but a speaking up for it, a standing up for it, a holding fast of it. As these days in which we live, we see we're drawing ever closer to the spirit of Antichrist. We see many false gospels. We see new revelations.

We see a superficial salvation that's being sold to people. And now more than ever, people of God. We need to be, as the word tells us, of a people valiant for the truth.

[33:58] In other words, we need to be sold out to the truth, valiant for it, warriors, fighting for the truth. God's word sets the pattern for us.

And the pattern hasn't changed. The pattern is the pattern. It always has been the pattern. And it always will be the pattern.

It's an objective standard, is what I'm saying. It's the same truth for everybody. It's not a different truth depending on what culture or denomination you belong to.

It's the same truth for everyone. It's right here. And we test doctrine by this. Not by tradition, not by human wisdom, not by what's popular or the fad at the time, not by the fickle feelings of the heart, but we test everything by this book, by the authority of this book.

Because biblical doctrine is unchanging. Biblical doctrine. Our doctrine should be the same doctrine that it always was. And it should always be the same because it's founded on the word.

[35:03] And this word is what saves us. It tells us that we're born again. Not a corruptible seed, not of that which is going to perish and die away, but of incorruptible.

This is everlasting. The word of God which lives and abides forever. For all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth and the flower fadeth.

The flower thereof fadeth away. Fawth away, rather. But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. So this word by which we're born again, it lives and abides forever.

The word of the Lord endureth forever. But as a nation, we've turned our backs on that. You know, I've lived in some country towns where there used to be at times past great revivals and there was packed churches with people flocking to hear the message, the word of God.

And now those churches have been turned into op shops and people's homes. Those gathering places are just buildings no longer used for the glory of God. And we see that trend all over.

[36:14] There's churches closing their doors all across the world where people are willfully ignorant and swept away as the flood of idolatry, as the flood of error just sweeps the land and people care little for the things of God.

This is what's happening to people of God today and we need to be alert to this. You know, one of the signs that we see is increasing drunkenness. It's another sign of the last days.

I keep hearing these reports of people drunk and doing stupid things and it's just another sign that in these days we are to be sober, be sober, be sober.

It's pretty clear. Why is our nation going off the rails? We haven't got the authority. The Bible's missing. It's missing. And we've rejected it.

We've rejected God's rule. The Lord Jesus says, you do err not knowing the scriptures. The churches are astray because they don't know the scriptures.

[37:19] There's a biblical illiteracy, a biblical ignorance out there. And so false doctrine just comes in and people just jump on the latest bandwagon. It's like there's no thinking anymore.

And I've heard reports of... Oh, I don't believe... It's just too heartbreaking to tell you what's going on. You see these reports of the latest weird stuff going on.

It's in America but it's in Australia too. It's all over the world. It's global. Global deception. And the reason is because we've got away from the pattern. We must measure everything by the pattern.

Check out everything by the pattern. Does it measure up? You know, is it... Oh, that doesn't quite line up. It's not in accord with the pattern, with the model, with the form of sound words.

And in closing, friends, we're in a battle. It is a battle. And there's other gospels out there. Paul says to the Galatians, he says, If any man preach any other gospel unto you, then that you have received.

[38:26] Let him be accursed. That was strong words, wasn't it? Strong words. We need strong words. We are going into battle. A battle for doctrine, for the truth of God. Let's build according to the pattern.

Let's make sure that we hold fast the form of sound words. Jeremiah was... Through God, God through Jeremiah said, It's not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that

breaketh the rock in pieces.

This is no time for accommodation, to make room for error, but rather to hold fast the form of sound words, to contend earnestly for the faith.

And that's you and me. It's by us, this contention. We're called to a strong resolve, a strong faith, a strong separation from error, and a strong separation unto God.

It's been said, if you tolerate those in error, accommodate those in error, and cooperate with those in error, it won't be long until you will be contaminated by those in error.

[39:30] It's just a subtle slide. Give ground, and before you know it, it's... you've lost your way. Paul says, I suffer these things.

He talked of the context of suffering. Here he was, locked away in a prison cell. He says, Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

If necessary, we must be willing to suffer for our faith. You know, I know we commonly pray for the persecuted church, as if it's some people, a long distance away.

Well, friends, it may not be far away for us too. It may not be far away, and we need to be unashamed, assured that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

And for the meantime, hold fast the form of sound words. As one preacher put it about the word of God, he said, I know it is pure because it purifies. I know it is clean because it cleanses.

[40:47] It is holy because it produces holiness. It is perfect because its purpose is perfection. It is moral because it demands morality. It is right because it produces righteousness.

It is impeccable because its source is a perfect God. And we must hold fast the form of sound words. Hold the Bible with the respect that it is due because it teaches us on all things.

And it will equip us to be servants of God. It will equip us unto every good work. Friends, our God is a consuming fire. And his judgment, his wrath is about to fall on our land.

And the wake-up call is now. The world around us is damned. And we have the words of eternal life. We have the words of life. God calls us to this task.

He calls us to strong action. We've got need to regain the missing Bible. Let's not put it on the shelf like in King Josiah's day. We need to follow the pattern.

[41:51] Get your Bible and hold it fast. Hold it fast. These days call for strong preaching. These days call for a strong warning. These days call for strong authority and strong commitment.

How long halt do you between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him. If Baal is God, follow him. You know, step across the line. It's time to cross the line. Our Lord and his word are still the same.

His pattern has not changed. It's still the same pattern. We see that the pattern demonstrated in those lives of those people we've talked about tonight. We see it in the life of Timothy, in the life of Paul, in the life of Peter, in the life of Jeremiah.

We see it in the life of Elijah. We see the pattern, the pattern, the pattern. We see Israel and its failings and its blessings. It's all, as it were, in accordance with the pattern.

Moses had to build in accordance with the pattern. It's still the same. The pattern has not changed. Our God is still the same and he still answers prayer and we can still believe him and we can still follow him and know his grace.

[43:02] hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard from me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

My urging to you tonight is this simple truth. Hold fast the form of sound words. Hold your Bible. Hold it close to your heart. Let it live within you.

Let it be an implanted, engrafted word. Let it be part and parcel of your being and put it in your hearts, your minds, your memories. Put it into your lives, into your shoes, into your everyday thinking.

Hold it fast. Don't let it go. Don't slip and slide but hold fast the form of sound words. Let us pray.

Our God and Lord and Master we thank you for your word that it is the rule of faith and conduct.

It's that by which we measure what we do and what we avoid doing. Lord, it's a pattern, a model. It's the templates of the men and women of God that have lived before us and we want to walk in their tread, Lord.

[44:09] We want to follow in your footsteps and follow in the tread of the pilgrims of the saints of old and we want to walk in your truth. Help us, Lord, to hold fast your word and in doing so we'll reject that which is doubtful.

Help us to hold it fast that we'll be strong in our faith, in our preaching, in our proclamation, in our witnessing, in our living. We'll hold it fast, Lord. We'll be strong in our commitment and we'll be strong in that decision that we make that will step over the line.

We pray if there's any here tonight that they're still sitting on the fence, they're still deciding between two opinions as to who is their God.

We pray that tonight might be the day that they say, Lord, you are God. You are God. And you, in Christ, came in the person of your son to die a gruesome death, to bear the weight, the gruesome weight of our sin, all of our sin.

And there you carried it and paid the full penalty, the full price for it. There you laid down your hands and were nailed your feet and were pierced. That rugged cross was the place you took all of our sin.

[45:31] And we can trust you today to know your saving love as we call on you, as your word tells us that if we confess with our mouth, if we believe in our heart, as we trust you, our risen saviour and Lord and Master, as we confess you, that we can know everlasting life by the promise of your word.

And for believers here as we seek to live out this truth, this word by which we're born again, that it still lives and endures forever.

And it is that by which we set our faith, our conduct, our doctrine, what we believe, what we follow. Help us Lord to be mindful that not all that is spiritual is of you, there's the spirit of error and the spirit of truth.

Help us Lord to determine between the two and guide our steps Lord, guide our steps by your spirit we pray. In Jesus name, Amen. Amen. Amen.