

How Christians Change

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[0:00] In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. All right. This is not my sermon page, actually. My daughter! Just ran up thinking I left a sermon page. This is something else. Thank you, sweetheart.

! I appreciate that. Yeah! Family in a pinch, baby. I love it. All right. So good morning, everybody. It's good to be with you. Today, we're going to be talking about a topic that is near and dear to my heart, and that is the question of how we change. Or perhaps you want to think of it as how we grow or how we pursue holiness or how we pursue maturity. The Christian word that we use for it often is sanctification. Whatever word you'd like to use, what we're going to be talking about this morning is how we as Christians seek to grow more in the character of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. So I'm going to be pulling some ideas from a TDI class that I taught earlier this year. TDI stands for the Discipleship Institute, which sounded cooler than adult Sunday school class. But that's basically what it is. So I'm pulling some ideas from that. The class that I taught was largely based on material from David Powlison, who is a professor and a biblical counselor who I have just deep appreciation for. So this morning, we're talking about change. Our culture has got all kinds of ideas about how to change.

It's got self-improvement strategies. It's got atomic habits and successful mindsets. And we can actually find kernels of wisdom in a lot of those ideas. So that's important to recognize.

But when our culture thinks about pursuing change, it ignores or sometimes it even suppresses three key realities. And those three realities are, and I'll be reminding you of these as we go through, one is the necessity of God's Word, second is the significance of the heart, and then third would be our dependence upon the living God. Okay? So James Clear's Atomic Habits. It's a great book. It provides a super helpful framework for considering how to build good habits, but James Clear is not going to highlight the sufficiency of God's Word. Stephen Covey, or Covey, however you pronounce his name, he's got some very helpful ideas for how to become a highly effective person, but he's not going to talk about the heart as the governing center of your desires. Sahil Bloom, he's got some great ideas about how to prioritize a meaningful life, but he isn't going to point you to a relationship with the living God as one of his five types of wealth. Okay? So I've benefited from all of these authors. They have some good things to say, but they're missing the most important parts of what it means to truly change. And what I want to point you to today, in today's message, is that for the Christian, the Christian who has been ransomed, saved, claimed, adopted, rescued, and born again through the precious blood of Jesus Christ, for the Christian, pursuing change means tethering yourself to the truths and promises of God's Word.

It means understanding the nature of the heart as it's taught in the Bible. And it means seeking after the living God who loved you so much that he gave himself up for you.

[3:44] So that's the threefold focus we're going to be focusing on, is the Word, the heart, and the Lord, the living God. That's where we're going today. As Christians, we don't reject those realities, like our culture does, but we do tend to forget them. We tend to neglect them, and sometimes we can misunderstand them. And I put myself in that category, by the way, as someone who far too easily forgets and neglects these truths. So I need to be reminded of these things as I'm preaching. I am preaching to myself as much as I'm preaching to you this morning. Okay? We are all learners here.

Before we dig into these, I want to start by saying why we change in the first place. Why do we even bother with pursuing change? Are we seeking to become our best selves? Are we trying to live our best life now? Are we wanting to change our lives just to make them better and more fulfilling? Like, what's the reason that a Christian would pursue change? Here's the target. It's given to us by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 16. He says this, Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works and do what?

Glorify your Father who is in heaven. So the reason that we're pursuing change is so that we can become more like Jesus and so that we can reflect his character and his ways and his priorities in such a way that God is glorified. Okay? So we're not talking about mere self-improvement here today.

We're talking about the glory of God. That's what we're going after. So with that in front of us, here's what I want you to do this morning. We're going to get a little personal.

I want you to think of a besetting sin in your life. I want you to think of an area in your life that you know that you are deficient in, that you know that you need help in.

[5:47] It could be something as simple as just addiction to constantly checking your phone. It could be raising your voice with your kids when they disobey you. It could be a tendency to slip into words and behaviors with your friends at school that you know that God and your parents would not approve of.

It could be an irritation that you carry in your spirit towards your spouse. It could be anger that you have towards a co-worker. In this little bit of time that we have together, I want us to try to make this personal. CCEF, they use this wonderful phrase, the personal God gets personal with us, which I love. I love that phrase. And in order for the personal God to get personal with us, we have to be honest and vulnerable with him about ourselves. So I'm going to invite you to do that this morning as we go through this. First reality of change is the sufficiency of God's Word.

It's the sufficiency of God's Word. Let's look at how Jesus Christ, the God-man, the second person of the Trinity, the man who the winds and the waves obey, the one who is holding up the universe right now by the Word of his power. Let's start by considering what he says about the nature of his Word, the Bible, the scriptures, the 66 books that are given to us in his Word. So would you turn with me to Matthew chapter 4? If you've got a Bible in front of you, Matthew chapter 4, because I want you to see this.

If you're using a pew Bible, you're going to go to page 809, Matthew 4. It says this, Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

And after fasting 40 days and 40 nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.

[8:09] But he answered, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

So in Matthew 4, we see our Savior facing his greatest temptation in the wilderness, battling not only the physical weariness of a 40-day fast, but also the seductive words of his great enemy, the devil. And with every temptation that the devil throws at him, Jesus responds like a drumbeat. It is written, it is written, it is written.

And the first passage of Holy Spirit-inspired Scripture that he fires back at his enemy, is it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by what?

By every word that comes from the mouth of God. So I want you to see this. I want you to feel the weight and the goodness and the goodness of what Jesus is saying here.

Because according to Jesus Christ, God's word is to our souls what food is to our bodies. Okay? God's word is to our souls what food is to our bodies.

[9:35] Which means that you and I, brother and sister, are utterly dependent on the Bible.

Because these are God's words. This is not a book of opinions.

This is not man's best attempt to try to understand who God is. This is God himself speaking to you every time that you open up this word.

from Genesis to Revelation. So the personal God gets personal with us as we read his words as found in the scriptures.

Which means that if you want to change, if you want to grow and you're not anchored in the wisdom of this book, then your growth is going to be stunted.

You're never going to get very far. I've never met a mature believer who isn't knee-deep in this book. God's commands and God's words are not burdensome.

[10:41] They are life-giving. You cannot live by bread alone. You live by every word that comes out of this book, and you can't live by it if you don't read it.

Here's another astounding claim from God's word that I want you to see. Go with me to 2 Timothy 3, 16 through 17. 2 Timothy 3, 16 through 17.

Again, if you've got a pew Bible, it's going to be on page 996. This is the Apostle Paul talking. He says this.

All Scripture, all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness that the man or woman of God may be complete, equipped for every good word.

So hear the totality of that statement in 2 Timothy 3, 16 through 17. Here's what that means at a minimum, is that if the only book that you had was a Bible, you didn't have any self-help books, you didn't have any financial advice books, no books on leadership development, you would still have everything that you need in order to faithfully and rightly obey and follow the Lord Jesus Christ in every situation that you encounter in life if you have this.

[12:23] That's the claim of 2 Timothy 3, 16 through 17. So if we want to change, we need to be always growing in our knowledge of the words that God has spoken to us through the Scriptures.

There's just no replacement for getting in this book and feasting on this daily. Only man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Okay. Now before we move on, so we're talking about the sufficiency of God's Word. Before we move on, I want to be clear about something. I want to be clear about what the sufficiency of God's Word doesn't mean.

Okay? Here's what it doesn't mean. It doesn't mean that there's no wisdom to be found in books outside of the Bible. It doesn't mean that. It doesn't mean that we do not need the counsel of wise friends or that we don't need community, because in fact, you've got Proverbs 11, 14, which says that in an abundance of counselors, there is victory.

So that verse right there would point us to humbly seek out the help and wisdom of others, especially those who are anchored in the wisdom of this book.

[13:47] So get good counsel from friends. Read good books, and then weigh everything that you were told by God's Word.

Okay? I also want to say this. I think that this is important about the sufficiency of the Bible. The sufficiency of the Bible also doesn't mean that Christians should avoid medication to help with things like anxiety, depression, or other mental hardships.

Okay? I want you to hear this. God's Word is very honest about the fact that we live in a fallen and sinful world. And one of the effects of the fall is that sometimes our brain can turn into our enemies.

Okay? That's an effect of the fall. There are situations where the wisdom of God's Word would encourage you to take medication that helps you to get your head above water so that you can think clearly.

But you never stop being dependent on God's Word or on His Spirit. So whatever sin, struggle, that you thought of when we started this sermon, God's Word is up to the task of giving you the wisdom that you need to be complete and fully equipped for every good work.

[15:16] That's what the Bible claims for itself. Now, as you get to know this book, if you're paying attention, you're going to notice that the Bible talks an awful lot about the heart.

Okay? So now we're into our second key reality for pursuing change, the importance of the heart. When I say the heart, you probably have some sense of what I mean.

That word gets an awful lot of mileage in the English language, and it does in the Bible too. Across the 66 books of the Old and New Testament, the word, the heart, shows up nearly a thousand times in Hebrew and in Greek, a thousand times.

The first time that the heart is used in your Bibles is in Genesis 6, 5 through 6. This is in the account of the flood. It says this, the Lord saw the wickedness of man, that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thought of his heart was only evil continually.

And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. And then at the end of the flood account in Genesis 8, it says, the Lord said in his heart, I will never curse the ground again.

[16:42] The Lord's resolve. He said in his heart. And then after that, it's just off to the races with the phrase, the heart. If you pay attention to it, you're gonna see that all over the surface of the Bible.

So what does the Bible mean when it says the heart? We tend to divide the heart and the mind, the heart and the mind in a way that the Bible does not.

We tend to classify emotions and feelings and desires, and we put those within the bucket of the heart. And then our thoughts and our reasoning and our decisions, we put those into the category of the mind.

And the Bible says that all of those things originate from within the heart of a person. All of those things, mind and heart go together. They're not against one another.

We could say it like this. The heart is the fountainhead of your deepest thoughts, your greatest loves, your strongest emotions, and your every desire and decision.

[17 : 52] The heart is the fountainhead of your deepest thoughts, your greatest loves, your strongest emotions, and your every desire and decision.

Or we could say, if I know your heart, then I know you. Now, as Les covered last week, before Jesus saved you, what was the state of your heart?

He was dead. Right? Let's do a quick review from Ephesians 2, 1 through 3. The Apostle Paul says this, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Which means that before you came to Christ, your heart was dead. Dead to God, dead to the ways of God, you had no desire to truly love God, or worship God, or follow God.

That's the state of every human being when they are born into this world. And then we get to the glorious verses of verse 4 and 5, which says, But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved.

[19 : 32] Which means that if you are in Christ, you've been born again, and you have a new heart. This is what the Lord spoke through the prophet Ezekiel back in Ezekiel 36 when he wrote this hundreds of years before Christ's arrival on this earth.

This is the Lord speaking. He said, I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you, and I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules.

So this is the same thing that Paul is talking about in 2 Corinthians 5.17. A lot of us love that verse when he says, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, right?

And this changes everything about how we pursue change. If we are in Christ, our hearts have been transformed, and they have been made new.

If you are a Christian, your heart that once cared only for yourself, that was ruled by evil desires, your heart that was once dead, is now under the rule and reign of your Lord Jesus Christ.

[20 : 55] And now in Christ, you have a desire to know God, and to worship God, and follow God, and trust God, and live your life for God, because your heart has been radically reoriented towards him.

That is good news. Now here's the hard reality. All right? And I like how Les put this last week. you are a new creation, and you still have grave clothes that are sitting on you.

You are a new, you have a new heart, and there are dead sin cells, not skin cells, sin cells, that are still clinging to you.

You've been made new, and God is still at work, he's still in the process of transforming you into his image and likeness. So we call this the already and the not yet, right?

Those two together, which means that your heart, even though it's new, is still capable of desiring sin. All right? One day it won't. New heavens, new earth, glory, after this life, when you're in the presence of Jesus, that's gonna be gone.

[22 : 09] But right now, your heart is still capable of supplanting God and putting idols in his place. Supplanting as in quotes. Of course, you can't totally dethrone God. This is how Jesus puts it in Matthew 15.

He says, but what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart. Proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

These are what defile a person. So what he's saying is that anytime you sin, it is out of a desire that originates in your heart.

Anytime that you think or speak rightly, okay, you do what is right, that is also out of a desire that originates from within your heart.

Jesus puts it like this in Matthew, or I'm sorry, in Luke 6:45. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil.

[23:19] For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. So again, you have a new heart, but on this side of heaven you are still capable of desiring and choosing sin.

And the Bible is very honest about that. That's why in Ephesians 4, Paul says, he says, put off your old self which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires and instead put on the new self that is created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

And this is why Hebrews says, put aside every weight in the sin which clings so closely. This is why James says to put aside all filthiness and rampant wickedness.

You are a new creation, but you are still in a battle. There is still a fight to press into as a Christian. And so that sin that you've been keeping in the back of your mind that you've been thinking about as we've been talking, the desire for that leads, the desire that leads to that sin is primarily about your relationship with the living God.

[24:38] So if you're following my points, we've reached the third key reality. Without question, this is the most important reality in our pursuit of change and that is your relationship with the living God.

Change for the Christian is not primarily driven by habits or disciplines. Those things are important. They are necessary.

But real change, true change, the kind of change that God is after in us is primarily relational. It's primarily relational.

So Jesus makes this gloriously clear that the foundation of obedience to God is to love God. When he was asked the greatest commandment was, what does he say?

He says, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it.

[25:45] You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets. So love God, love your neighbor.

Jesus was saying that if you want to follow the Lord, if you want to walk in holiness, then love God with all of your heart and love your neighbor as yourself.

So he's making the core of obedience to God relational. The personal God gets personal with us. which means that we don't think about facing our sins in terms of a self-improvement project.

Instead, we honestly and openly and probably a little painfully search our hearts with the help of the Spirit to see what we are treasuring more than the God who loved us and gave himself up for us.

So I want to give you an example of this from my own life. Those of you who know me pretty well, you're going to be aware that this is an ongoing struggle for me.

[27:01] I have a tendency to fall into a pair of sins that run parallel with one another and those are anxiety and irritability. They tend to run along the same track.

So here's a very real example from my wife. From my wife. From my life. This involves my wife. Ooh, all right. Could have changed that phrasing. All right. So my wife calls me while I'm in the office.

My wife calls me while I'm in the office. She has good news for me and that good news is that we have a pipe leaking in our basement. All right. And the moment that I hear that, the agitation starts to sink in.

Right. I've got this phrase that I like to use when things break down in our house and that phrase is, you've got to be kidding me. Does anybody else use that phrase?

[28:07] You've got to be kidding me? Right. After a while, I'm sure that my wife has begun thinking, no, I'm not kidding that our house that was built before the moon landing has a leaking pipe.

But in that moment, in that moment, I do not care that my frustration makes no logical sense because all that I see in front of me is a house project.

It's going to cost me time and it's going to cost me money. So what's really going on behind you've got to be kidding me is, how dare this home steal my time and my money and my comfort and disrupt my day and my plans?

That's what's going on behind you've got to be kidding me. Which means that functionally, at that moment, the God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills and is working all things, including a leaking pipe in my home, all things together, for my good and his glory, the God who rescued me from my sins, who has showered me with grace, who loves me, who is so patient with me, who has good purposes for me, even behind the inconvenience of a broken water pipe, I have dethroned him.

I have dethroned him in my heart and my actions and my words reveal that comfort and ease are the greatest treasure to me in that moment, not my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[29 : 49] And when I get home to scope out the leak, and I'm short with my wife, and I'm short with my kids, I am bringing forth evil out of the evil treasure of my heart.

This is what Jesus says, in a situation where God calls me to bear good fruit, instead I bear thorns, thorny, sinful response out of what I'm desiring within my heart.

So this is not fundamentally an anxiety problem. At the deepest roots, it's not an anxiety or anger or irritability problem, this is an idolatry problem.

problem. It's a treasuring comfort rather than God problem. So you might ask yourself, how has the living God gotten personal with me in my idolatrous craving for comfort and ease recently? family. So first off, I'm very much a work in progress, so just honest about that. But here's a way that God has met me. This is James 1, 2 through 4.

[31 : 12] Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds. It just covers everything, which is so frustrating.

when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

So here's what that verse has assured me of, that God is at work. every, he's at work in my character every time that I face a trial of any kind.

So that could be the deepest of sufferings, like the hardest of things that you could go up against. And that could be the most trivial of inconveniences of everyday life. I'm stuck in a traffic jam, right? my God is using that to shape me and to make me more and more like my Savior, who is the one who is truly perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

[32 : 28] I'm not going to pretend that I understand all of the purposes that God has for my trials, but I can take to the bank the promise that he intends to shape me and make me more like him.

And God's word says to face those trials with joy. And so the living God, he meets me with the scriptures and with his spirit and I go to him.

All right? You can't, this is part of it, is you go to him, to the living God who really hears you, who really listens, who is really intimately involved in your life.

And I confess to him, Lord, forgive me of my love for comfort, help me to trust you in this, my heart wants to go this way, forgive me for that, help me, I pray to him, I reach for him, I rely on him, and I increasingly, little by little, this is not a magic wand, little by little, I increasingly choose to seek him rather than ignore him or run from him.

glory. And slowly but surely, he transforms me from one degree of glory to another. And I start treasuring my Lord, I start trusting him more, I start being more patient with my family, less irritable, when something breaks in our pre-moon landing house, and the fruit of the Spirit begins to characterize me more and more.

[34 : 07] more. And again, it's not perfectly, because perfection doesn't come until Christ returns or calls me home, but more and more I begin to look more like my Savior.

Savior. The God who showers me with the grace of his forgiveness, he also showers on me the grace of change. Forgiveness and change, his grace sufficient for both of those things.

Now, that is not flashy on the surface, it's not super exciting or very dramatic, but I am totally convinced that this is where God meets us.

And he helps us to pivot from our thorny, sinful responses and help us to move towards more and more bearing good fruit. And if you are a Christian, I want to say this, if you are a Christian, then you are capable of bearing good fruit and becoming more like Jesus because you have the Spirit of

God at work in you.

So it doesn't matter how deeply rooted your sin is. If you came in with a sense of despair over a besetting sin, God wants you to know that his grace is sufficient to change that.

[35 : 29] It doesn't matter how deeply rooted that is. It doesn't matter if you're 12 or 16 or 45 or 85. If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit of God at work in you and changing you.

He's going to help you to grow in holiness. You're going to have to act. You're going to have to choose. You will have to walk the hard road of obedience, but you will do so in his grace and in his strength, which means that there are no hopeless situations in this room.

Do you believe that about yourself and about the brothers and sisters in Christ that you know?

That's what we should believe. Okay, I want to leave you with some application that I hope will be helpful in terms of thinking about living this out a little practically.

So I've got five applications. I'm going to throw at you fairly rapidly here. Number one, resolve right now to know the Lord and his promises through the scriptures.

[36 : 44] Make that resolution. Take Jesus seriously when he says that you cannot live by bread alone, but that you need every word that comes from the mouth of God. He also said in John 10, 27, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

So God's word is where you hear his voice. If you need help in knowing how to read the Bible and apply it to your life, I've got 20 copies of an article by David Pollison.

It's out on the Connect desk. Printed 20. We can print more if we need to. And it is going to be, I believe, helpful. If you are uncertain of how do I apply the Bible to my life, how does this relate to what's going on, grab that article on your way out.

It's a version of an article that I hand out in the TDI class that I teach. So number one is resolve to know the Lord and his promises through the scriptures. Number two is begin the hard but good work of prayerfully identifying what rules your heart.

Okay, you've got to identify what rules your heart. And one way that you can do that is you ask yourself some difficult but life-giving questions that sound like this.

[38 : 06] What preoccupies my thoughts? What drives me? What do I feel entitled to?

What would put me in despair if I lost it? What do I organize my life around?

And the more specific and honest that you can be about what goes on in your heart with the Lord, the better. Those kind of questions are going to reveal things.

things. Number three is blame the heart, not the heat. Okay? Blame the heart, not the heat.

We are remarkably good at blame shifting when it comes to our sin. That was the first response to the first ever sin in the Garden of Eden.

[39 : 07] Immediately, Adam passes the buck, right? And we do the same thing with our sinful responses. We think, if only I had a different job, if I had more money, if my spouse was more kind, if my kids weren't so difficult, if my teacher wasn't so harsh, if I didn't have this suffering going on in my life, then I wouldn't do or say or think X, Y, or Z.

But Jesus does not say, out of the abundance of your circumstances, the mouth speaks. He says it's out of the abundance of our heart that we respond in sinful ways.

Which means that situations, hard situations, are significant. God is not unfeeling towards hard circumstances or suffering.

He's near to the broken hearted. He saves those who are crushed in spirit. But circumstances are never determinative of our sinful responses.

So our trials, they have a way of exposing what is already happening within our hearts, what we already love and value.

[40 : 18] So own that. Don't let the enemy trick you into blame shifting or excusing your sin or idolatry. Number four, embrace the slow work of sowing and reaping.

Okay? This is slow, steady work. If you think just for a moment about the nature of bearing fruit, Jesus could have picked any other image to describe how we change.

He keeps coming back to bearing fruit over and over in the Gospels. That is a process that's slow. Right? It starts very small.

And over time, it yields fruit. And some people, they bear more fruit than others. But if you are a Christian, you are going to bear fruit. Because at the end of the day, you have a new heart.

You have what you need. But don't be discouraged if that process is slow. Be encouraged by the little pieces of fruit that start to show up in your life. Because that's a sign of the Holy Spirit at work

in you.

[41:32] Embrace the slow work. And then lastly, I just, I can't, I can't overstate how important this is. Is you have to seek the living God.

You have to seek the living God. The Apostle Paul in the book of Galatians, he provides us with what I think is one of the most wonderful verses in all of the Bible.

I've alluded to it a couple of times already in the sermon. It's Galatians 2.20. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. So you, dear brothers and sisters, have been crucified with Christ.

Which means that your old self is dead. In the sense that it no longer rules. Christ does.

[42:41] And the life you now live in the here and now, in the Monday through Friday, in the day in, day out ordinariness, in the pain of your trials and your sufferings, you live by faith in the Son of God who loved you so much that he gave himself up for you.

You are his. You belong to him now and forever. So seek him. Trust him.

Ask his spirit for his help. Find him as your refuge. Learn how to pour out your heart to him. And then you act.

You obey. You live by faith for his glory. And you do so knowing that his grace covers your every step and that he is with you always to the end of the age.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are a God who is right now, right now at work completing the good work that you began in us.

[44:04] You are not a God who leaves us to our own strength. You do not leave us to our own power. You are a God who meets us with grace.

The grace that we need hour by hour in every circumstance or trial. We thank you for being a God who is intimately involved in our lives.

Thank you that you are not a God who keeps us at arm's length. You are a God who draws close.

Thank you for being personal.

Thank you for the grace that you pour out even when we resist you. Thank you for your patience. You are good.

We ask you now for your help as we seek to grow more and more like you. It's in Jesus' beautiful name that we pray. Amen.

[45:02] Amen.