

The Difference Between Faith and a False Profession

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[0 : 00] A small detail that we want to draw your attention to. Children are to be dismissed at this time. Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 8.

Let me begin reading for you in verse 28 because I want to set the frame in which we're going to spend our time studying the Word of God this morning.

So Jesus said to them, If you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

They answered him, We are the offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say you will become free?

Verse 30. As you take the text up this morning, it's pretty hard not to at least find some enthusiasm with verse 30.

[2 : 02] Let me read it to you again because it's interesting. You can imagine that the disciples, when they saw the buzz going on in the crowd, they had some interest in what was playing out.

Read the verse. And as He was saying these things, many believed in Him. And you can see Peter nudging John and saying, Hey, do you have the decision cards? Let's get out there in the crowd and pass them around.

You know, I trusted Jesus, the date, and that kind of stuff. And I'm not listening carefully. I'm not opposed to all of that. But I want to tell you something, that signing a card doesn't make you saved.

And it's pretty interesting that in every case, when you have this kind of rolling interest and even belief, that in the Scriptures you find the Lord Jesus taking careful aim at helping people understand what genuine conversion looks like.

I flew out to California this week and came back again. And being the person that I am and having an obsessive concern that I would forget the details that are essential for flying, I have to tell you that I checked like about a dozen times before I got on the airplane to see that I had one particular item with me.

[3 : 24] Does anybody know what it is? A driver's license. Do you know you cannot fly? Who said ticket? I, you know, I've carried my driver's license for a long, long time in my wallet, but it's not enough to patch your wallet.

And yeah, my wallet's back there. You know, there's probably some little troll that would crawl into my wallet and steal it so that I get up to the gate and, what? So anyway, I got to tell you, I'm not just padding my wallet.

I'm checking over and over again just to be sure that I have my driver's license. Now, I got to tell you something. It's interesting to find out in Scripture just how often the Spirit of God goes to great lengths to challenge us to consider the authenticity of our faith.

2 Corinthians, the last chapter. The apostle, in writing to that church in Corinth, says, examine yourselves to see whether or not you are of the faith.

1 John, the entire book, in essence, revolves around this recurring question of, are you really saved? Jesus had individuals come to Him and say, hey, we believe in you.

[4 : 46] And He says, hey, let me tell you something. Those who really believe in Me are the ones who abide with Me and follow My Word.

And so, one of the things that has been at the center of my prayer this morning and has been at the center of my prayer throughout this week is that all of you who listened this morning to the teaching of the Word of God would allow what Jesus has to say to be applied to your heart personally and you would go out of here having a sense of insight and understanding what does real faith look like and do I have it?

I want you to recognize that as we look at this passage, we could put it another way, genuine faith brings profound change that is recognizable and blessed.

Genuine faith brings profound change that is recognizable and blessed. I can't tell you how many times I've heard people tell me when I talk to them about the question of the certainty of their confidence in eternity and what they tell me is, well, I've been a Christian ever since I can remember.

I mean, I grew up in a Christian home. I learned the Bible verses. I went to Awana. I was baptized by a Baptist pastor, you know, blah, blah, blah. And, you know, whatever. It's like, what? What? There are some of you sitting here this morning.

[6 : 18] The truth of the matter is, is that on the basis of what the Word of God has to say here this morning, you would be well served to double check your birth certificate.

Because can I tell you something? Getting it right is a matter of life and death and heaven and hell. Well, let's look here and pick up, first of all, on the many professions of faith that Jesus faced.

There in verse 31 or 30, it says, Many believed in Him. And on the face of it, you would think that the belief of the throng would have been viewed favorably by the Lord Jesus.

I mean, their belief was more informed by this point than their belief had been back in John chapter 6, John chapter 5.

There had been a progressive declaration of the certainty of who Christ was. There was undeniable evidence of His messianic mission and His power. And so, when He made the statements that He did there in the temple, I'm the light.

[7 : 29] I'm the bread, He said earlier. I'm the water. There was good reason for people at least to have an informed decision of who they were listening to. And I think it's interesting to see that instead of just becoming overjoyed at the fact that there were people who were saying they believed in Jesus, I mean, Jesus actually, right on the basis of what they were saying, Oh, yeah, we believe, He challenged them and cautioned them to consider the authenticity, the reality of their faith.

The fact that their belief was challenged is significant for several reasons. For one, it forces us who are here this morning under the hearing of the Word of God to very practically consider our own lives and to come to grips with the question of, Do I really know Christ?

And I want you to think about that regardless of who and where you are. There's nothing wrong with pausing for a moment and asking yourself that question objectively, Do I really know Christ?

Do I really know Christ? And is my confidence in the reality and the certainty of my salvation a mere dependence upon some historical moment or some emotional high or some background issue?

I grew up in a family. You know, that's good. That's good. The second thing is that as I preached this morning, I have no doubt that there are some of you that are sitting here this morning.

[9 : 13] The reality of it is that you've never really had any confidence at all in your salvation. And my prayer for you is that today would be the day of your salvation, that you would come to know Christ as your personal Savior.

I do want you to understand that the enemy of our souls, Satan, loves deceiving us. He loves deceiving us. And he finds no greater...

Well, who knows what Satan really finds? Yeah, he doesn't like Jesus. How's that? But he does find pleasure in deceiving people into thinking that they've got it when they don't because they will be utterly stunned at the last moment in death and they find out they're not going where they thought they were going.

And so what we recognize in our text as we look at it is that some kinds of faith in Christ don't bring salvation. Well, let me give you some substance or some backup for that.

Let me remind you, for one, Judas was a disciple. He saw Jesus' miracles. I have no doubt that when he was sent out with the 12 and with the 70 and all that to preach, he was part of the crowd that came back.

[10 : 35] And you know what? We saw this and it's like, man, this is exciting. And he saw the miracle. He saw a lot of the good things. But there's no question that Judas wasn't saved.

It's interesting also you stop and realize that over in James 2, verse 19, and I'll not have you turn there, but you may want to mark that down and look at it later on. But in James 2, we find James pinning these words.

He says, hey, listen, the demons believe and tremble. The demons believe in Christ and they tremble, but their belief is not a saving faith.

Their belief is a resentful grasp of the reality of the sovereign glory of Christ and their own eternal judgment. Our text this morning is yet another illustration of the fact that people can believe and not be saved.

There in verse 30, it says, many believed in him, but look over at verse 44. Here's what Jesus has to say to the same group. By the way, how many of you have ever thought that Jesus kind of went around just throwing flowers in people's pathways and just saying nice, sweet things and never putting people on the spot with the reality of the darkness of their soul?

[12 : 08] Now, I want to tell you that Jesus was not a drive-by shooter and he was not a brutalizer of broken mankind. Let's get that clear in our minds. But on the other hand, Jesus was undeniably clear in making the condition of a man's heart desperately plain.

And so here he is saying to those people who said, we believe. He says, yeah, you are of your father, the devil. And so I want you to understand that Bible preaching longs to see people come to Christ.

And it follows Christ's model in that it strives to make the reality of a man's soul undeniably clear and to help individuals distinguish between the false and the true with the enabling of the Spirit of God.

And so my heart's desire this morning is as you sit where you are, that one of the thoughts you would settle in your mind with the power of the Spirit of God is, am I saved?

Am I saved? And don't tell me, yes, I was baptized at such and such an age. There are some people I've baptized twice and they're not walking with Jesus now.

[13 : 24] I'm not sure it's my fault either. Okay? Bad baptism technique? No! Bad heart! I want you to recognize back in John chapter 8, what Jesus has to say as he moves through this passage.

He says there, If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. And so let's recognize as we kind of step beyond the fact that there are many people who profess to recognize that obedience is the fruit of faith.

Obedience is the fruit of faith. Jesus, in this passage, draws attention to the fact that genuine faith is a faith that couples its reality with obedience.

Let me have you look at verse 31 again and mark it in your own Bible. If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciple. So it's practical for us to think, well, what is abiding?

Well, for one thing, abiding is more than deciding. Can I put that to you real clearly? Abiding is more than deciding. And so I want you to recognize that events such as summer camps and revivals and Christian concerts and all of that, it's all good, but the decision you made then is not necessarily a guarantee of your salvation.

[14 : 49] Do you understand that? We all have had emotional highs and lows. And even in our perverse culture, how many of you know that after you sign a contract, in most cases, you have three days to change your mind.

You know that. I used to be a vacuum sweeper salesman knocking on people's doors. Would you like to buy Electrolux?

It'll suck the dirt out of your floor. He'll sprinkle a little bit behind you while you're talking. And he goes, whoa, look at your carpet. And people, I could talk people into buying ice water in Alaska, but they had three days to change their mind below life, and it really wasn't fair.

Here's the deal. Decisions are not the same as genuine conversion. And there may be some of you here this morning that when you think about the reality of your salvation, you recognize, well, I made that decision back then, but nothing's happened.

And I want to be careful that I make it clear there's nothing wrong with many of the activities where the gospel is presented by an evangelist. Now, I'm not throwing stones at that. But recognize that just the decision in and of itself doesn't guarantee that you're saved.

[16 : 02] Well, let me add another thing. Abiding is more than grudging submission. Now, understand, Jesus was talking about the fact that if you abide in my word, he was talking about obeying his word. And so there may be some of you here this morning that when you really think about your Christian life, well, yeah, I'm saved because I do the right things.

You know, I mean, I go to church on Sunday, and, you know, I did show up for the move. How many points do I get for that, God? You know, and you're kind of working your way through that. Let's get this.

Obedience is not the means of abiding. Obedience is the mark of abiding. Your obedience should flow out of your affection for Christ, not from your sense of dull and demanding obligation that clouds your life and kind of frustrate you because, well, I've got to do this, and I've got to do that, and, you know.

There may be some of you here this morning that really when you stop and think about it, you can't really put your finger on a time where obeying Christ has been a pleasure and a delight to you. And that should give you pause and cause you to kind of revisit the subject and say, what's wrong with me?

What's the deal with my relationship? Statements like, well, I have to help a brother move. I can't believe I was asked to take a meal to another sick person. You know, they're always calling on me to do, you know.

[17 : 37] You probably should say, what's the deal with your heart? Now, my wife is in the nursery. I'm confident of that this morning. I saw her down there. So I can talk about her. We're getting ready.

I'm getting ready to go to church. And did you know, in case you didn't know, Sunday is a big day for me. You know, it's like I'm really pumped. I go to bed generally early. Things are really clued in on Sunday. And here I am.

I'm getting ready to go. And Judith has prayed for me. That's part of the logic. And I'm getting ready to book out. And she says, oh, would you get me a cup of coffee? Yes! I mean that.

Of course! Why did I have that kind of attitude? It's because I love her. And I find pleasure in satisfying her needs.

In fact, even her whims. Whatever she wants. Right? You know, when I find a husband that is grumbling about his wife.

[18 : 41] You know what I mean by grumbling? None of you guys here have ever done that in my presence. I know that. But when I find a husband that is grumbling about his wife. I think the problem is with him.

Listen to me. Abiding makes obedience a joy and not an irritation.

And I want you to understand something about that. The only way we go from being self-serving to being Christ-serving. Everybody listen so you don't miss this.

Is through the power of the Spirit of God transforming a broken, ruined, ugly life. Everybody agrees with that, right? Remember what the new covenant says? I will give you a new heart.

And the new heart is one that finds pleasure in doing the things that please Christ. By the way, I do happen to like Philippians chapter 2, verse 13.

[19 : 43] It says, 12 says this, Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. But the next verse says what? For it's God that is at work in you. What? What? What? How many of you know the rest of it? Both to will.

That means I want to. Both to will and to do is good pleasure. So there's some of you sitting out here when you're thinking about, Well, you know, I'm a Christian.

Yeah, I'm a member of the Baptist Church. You know, blah, blah, blah. Yeah. But you have no pleasure in doing what pleases Christ. I would challenge you. Don't fool yourself.

Jesus was not impressed by all those who said, Well, yeah, we believe. He said, Let me tell you something. If you abide, if you abide, then you're truly my disciples.

Well, there's something else I want you to understand. Abiding is staying in the relationship with Christ and obeying His word. Abiding is staying in the relationship with Christ and obeying His word. And why do you stay in that relationship?

[20 : 49] You stay in that relationship because He is your Lord and your Savior, and He is the one who delivered you from the pit. You never get over the unbelievable awe and miracle of His power to train and change a broken life like the one you have.

Isn't that right? I got to tell you, I had a fire from heaven opportunity to proclaim the sweetness of the gospel Wednesday and Thursday in a very dark corner of the world.

And I was sitting at a table eating with three very unhappy people. And I'm just sitting there being Tim. And I'm listening to them going on about how much they don't enjoy what they're doing and how much they don't enjoy what they have and how much they don't enjoy the life that they have.

They didn't put it that way. But, you know, I'm just listening and, oh, man, I feel sorry. You know, it's so sad. And I meant that. And I said, I really feel bad because I love what I do.

There's someone in the restaurant that actually likes what they do. Now, what is it that you do? Well, I get to talk about the only person I know who can fix broken people.

[22 : 11] I put it this way. I'm a broken person who gets to talk to broken people about the only person who can change a life. What do you do?

Well, I happen to be a pastor. In one case, flying on an airplane, the guy next to me said, well, I only have one problem.

It's this chewing tobacco. He was spitting into a cup. I knew what was going on. And he said, well, the only problem I have is this chewing tobacco. I said, you know what? Nah. That chewing tobacco is not a problem at all.

It is not your problem. I said, I don't know you very well. I mean, we've been talking here for about 15 minutes, you know, and he's a pretty significant guy on the West Coast. Strange that I would be sitting by him.

And, you know, he says, what do you mean? I says, well, I don't know you well, but I'm guessing that your problem is like mine. He says, what do you mean? I said, well, the biggest problem I have is me.

[23 : 10] And he said, I got to tell you, I couldn't fix myself, and Jesus came along and helped me. You see, I want you to understand that abiding is staying in the relationship with Christ and obeying his word because of who he is and what he's done for you.

I want to stop and think about this. There are some of you here, truthfully, that cannot think back to a time of pleasure and delight in obeying the word of Christ.

Your life is pretty well consumed with your own ambitions and your own affections and your own interests. And I would just challenge you to ask yourself the question, am I a believer or have I been playing a game?

Well, let's talk about the blessing of true faith because I think it's important to kind of work our way through the passage and understand that as Jesus kind of takes that opening statement there in verse 31. Everybody listen to me. I want you to kind of get a picture of how to study the Bible on your own.

I mean, after all, my job is to preach, preach, preach, bring the word clearly. But one of my ambitions is to coach you in how to find it yourself. I want you to be having devotions in the morning and get cold chills because it's so good.

[24 : 37] I mean, not three verses and out the door kind of thing. You know, it's like, get into it. So, verse 31 is kind of the opening statement.

Jesus says, hey, let's get this clear. If you're my disciple, you're going to abide. What's the outflow from abiding? Verse 32, you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.

So, here is Jesus explaining what comes out of abiding. Abiding is the state, truth, and freedom are the fruit.

You got that? Now, you would think that Jesus would follow the outline, but he allows the attitudes of his listeners to determine the change of order.

You see there in verse 32, he says, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. And if you're following in the typical order of logic, after you've said point one and then point two, you go back and you start with point one and you work your way and then come to point two.

[25 : 38] That's not how it happened here. Because when Jesus hit the word free, he had a solar flare in the hearts of his Jewish listeners. Freedom.

I mean, they were really into that word. And you have to understand that they really had the idea that they were free. And you stop and scratch your head when you think about it.

The Jews at that time had Roman soldiers stomping all over the place and they were not free. And if you're a student of Old Testament history, you know that the Jews had many, many instances where they were not free.

But see, they had the kind of attitude of, well, we really are free. We're free in our hearts. We're free. I mean, slaves that they were, we're free. We're free. And so here is Jesus.

He makes a statement. And then look at verse 33. They answered him, we are the offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it?

- [26 : 43] You are just, be over the top, you know, telling us that we're not free. How can you say you'll become free? And Jesus answered them and said, truly, truly.
- By the way, did you know that truly, truly is a double tap? You know what I mean by double tap? It's like, get this. Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.
- If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. So I want you to understand that here they were, actually in physical slavery of a sense.
- They had an occupying force in their country. But what Jesus was really talking about was their spiritual slavery. He was talking about the slavery of their hearts to sin.
- And I want you to understand that that slin, sin, slin, S-L-I-N. Okay. Sin enslaves people to do what is dishonorable and harmful.
- [27 : 49] Look at what it says there in verse 34 and mark it again. It says, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. I'll get to do what I want. Hit myself in the head with a hammer.
- You know, really. Now listen to me carefully. Your sin will take you deeper and hurt you far more than you ever imagined. It hurts you in the present, but it hurts you in the future.
- An angry person becomes a slave to their anger and destroys relationships. A self-absorbed person is a slave to their inner sense of self-importance, and they're incredibly frustrated that nobody else joins them in worship.
- They want relationships. They want relationships. They want the blessing that comes with closeness, but they understand that they are consumed with themselves, and they don't know what to do about it.
- The person who is addicted to pornography or addicted to things, whose house is so full of stuff that they don't know where to go and what to move.
- [28 : 59] The person who is consumed by their job is a slave. And I want you to listen very carefully to what Jesus says in verse 36.
- He says this, If the Son sets you free, you'll be free indeed. If the Son sets you free, you'll be free indeed. I love the sweetness of the gospel.
- I do. You know me. I'm kind of a cold chills guy. I get cold chills. Things that fire me up give me cold chills. I get them a lot of times. Yesterday, I'm watching all these kids moving, and I'm getting cold chills.
- It's just the way I am. It's cold chills. And when I stop and think about the freedom, and I know some of you don't have cold chills. I feel sorry for you, but you probably feel sorry for me. I understand that.
- Just listen to me. I love the gospel. What is the gospel? Well, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and what He says is this, If the Son sets you free, you're free, man.
- [30 : 00] So I want you to look a little further as Jesus kind of rolls us out and helps us understand it. You see, the freedom that the believer has is he is no longer an absolute slave to his sin.
- You don't have to keep doing what you've been doing. I can't tell you how many times I've talked to individuals who say to me, and by the way, everybody listen so you hear this. Our vocabulary today is so colored by the world's system of thinking.
- None of us really have sin problems. We have addiction problems. Do you understand that? We're addicted to all kinds of nasty misbehaviors and ugly issues. But you know, you've got the porn addiction.
- You have this. You're just addicted to sin. And we've got all fancy names for it. Now, the truth of the matter is, is that, hey, Jesus came to deliver us from our sin, and I love to say to people, you don't have to stay the way you are.

If the Son sets you free, you're free indeed. Well, let's look at another point, though, because the passage plays out for us a little further. And you look down there in verse 32, the first indication of it says, you will know the truth.

- [31 : 13] For one, genuine salvation brings freedom. For another, salvation brings understanding. Jesus announced that salvation back in 32 brings this blessing, and then he plays this forward, and his logic gets expanded in verse 43.

So look at it. Why do you not understand what I say? Here he is talking. Now, there were times that Jesus used parables that made his disciples scratch their heads.

Do you understand that? But this is not one of those moments. Jesus was very clear who he was, what their problem was, why he'd come, and so here he is talking to these people, and he makes the point that you've got a problem, and your problem is that you don't believe in me, and as a result of that, you're not free, you're a slave to sin, and as a result of that, you don't understand.

Now, listen to me. Telling a Jewish spiritual leader that they didn't get it was the supreme insult. Do you follow that?

It was like, it was a slap across the face with the open hand. Pow! By the way, Jesus did that on more than one occasion.

- [32 : 32] Remember his statement of, have you never read? I mean, they knew the scriptures with their eyes closed. It was in their head. Okay, so here he is. He says, you don't get it.

It's because you cannot bear to hear my words. Now, listen. Everybody listen, because you need to pick this one up. When you decide you're going to play, I don't want to listen to Jesus kind of thing, you begin to shut down logic in your head.

There's some of you here that are just profoundly confused by your disobedience, and you're not getting it. Now, you are suffering the consequences of sin. Do you follow that? But you haven't been able to connect the dots and figure out why it's all turning sour.

It's because you cannot bear to hear my word. And when Jesus said that, he then kind of amped it up beyond that, and he says, you are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desire.

Now, just kind of imagine that. I mean, just think. The whole crowd there thought they were saved. Do you get that? They believed that they were the children of Abraham, and they were on their way to heaven, and here is Jesus pressing their nose into the truth, and he says, you're of your father the devil.

- [33 : 53] You look at the passage, and you recognize, oh, man, what are they going to do? I love their response. You know, he plays on, and their answer in verse 48 is just a little bit of sarcasm.

Have you ever tried to use sarcasm to avoid truth? Huh? Try this one. Oh, yeah? Who are you to talk to me? You know, your life's a mess, too, that kind of thing.

Or who sent you to talk? You know, there's ways we do it. And so here they are. Their answer was this. He said, are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?

I mean, to insult a Jewish adult that they were a Samaritan and had a demon was they reached for the big guns. You know, it was like they expected Jesus to go off the rails at that point.

It's like he couldn't handle that logic. And he said, I do not have a demon, but I honor my father, and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory.

- [35 : 03] There is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. Verse 52, the Jews said to him, now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died.

And Jesus talks about the fact that, you know, the one who believes in him will never see death in verse 51. And he says, Abraham died. And the prophets died.

And here you are telling us that if anybody believes your word, they're not going to taste death. Are you greater than Abraham? Abraham? They thought that when that question was rolled out, Jesus was going to say, guess what?

Well, no. No, no, I'm not greater than Abraham. Abraham is better than me. And what did Jesus do? You know, it kind of, I have to say this.

Gary Larson had one of his famous Farside cartoons where there is Sir Isaac Newton and Einstein in a quiz game with Bubba.

[36 : 09] And the score is racked up. You know, Isaac Newton has 841, and, you know, Einstein has 840. And Bubba, he has a big zero on the scoreboard. And he says, I know it's a little late in the contest, but I'm wondering if my button's working.

Okay, listen, listen. You know, these Jews were convinced that they had Jesus in the corner, right? Are you greater than our father Abraham? And Jesus stepped up to that one.

It was like a soft pitch. A whop! He knocked that one out of the park. And what did he say? Before Abraham was, what? I am. I am. So I want to ask you a practical question this morning.

Where are you in this picture? Who are you? Do you know Christ? Go back to 43 just for a minute.

Here's what Jesus said. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. Let me roll some questions out for you to think about.

[37 : 16] Number one, the believer really doesn't like hearing the word. The believer really doesn't like hearing the word. And there are some of you sitting here that, you know, the truth of the matter is, is the plain gospel teaching secretly inside of your heart.

One of the reasons you don't come very often is because, hey, you don't want to listen. Now, the question is, is do I make the word plain and clear? Furthermore, I want you to understand the unbeliever acts according to the nature of his father.

Over there in verse 44, it says, you are of your father the devil and your will is to do your father's desires. It's hard to escape the world that we live in today.

It is ugly. It's cruel, deceitful. It is brutally sinful. And sinners live in that dark swamp, and they're pretty much part of it. You look at your own life and say, you know, am I doing the works of my father in heaven?

Or is my life just as messy and as perverse as the unbelieving world? Now, listen carefully. The unbeliever chooses to reject the truth.

[38 : 25] Look at verse 45. Because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Hmm? Now, you've heard me say it so many times, it's not original with me.

A pastor's job is to make the truth plain and put people on the spot of saying yes or no to God. Not to me. To God. The characteristic of the unbeliever is that he resists the truth.

It's a willing choice. It's a career path. It's a statement of the heart. I don't want to hear it.

So, break it out this way. Those God saves, hear his word and learn to appreciate it.

Those God saves, hear his word and learn to appreciate it. The person who is really saved follows Jesus.

[39 : 41] I love that. I cannot get over the joy of watching people who have come to faith in Christ begin to grow and become someone different than they used to be.

I live for that. It's exciting to watch their ambitions change. To watch their affections change. To watch the things that they used to find pleasure in become less significant.

To watch their conversation change. So, my question to you this morning is this.

Is your faith genuine? Or are you playing a desperate and dangerous game with the darkness of your soul against the backdrop of the certainty of hell?

Let's close in prayer. Father, the purpose of opening your word this morning is to bring glory to Christ. And as we study the word this morning, we see how clearly he who is the lover of our souls and the one who came to save us from our sin made the reality of the deceitfulness with which we can come to this subject of belief in a very shallow way.

[41 : 25] An irrelevant way. I have no doubt that there are some here today that don't know Christ. And my prayer is that this morning your spirit would bring them to conviction that they, under the power of the Spirit of God, would come to realize the darkness and the bankruptcy of their heart and realize that there is no remedy except in repentance and faith.

I pray for some who are here today that are believers. But they've allowed their love to grow cold. That this morning the glory of the Lord Jesus and the sweetness of the gospel would be that which is winsome to their soul and would draw them back and rekindle their first love.

I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. John's going to lead us as we sing together.

And let's stand together as we close. Let me encourage you to know this morning that if you're here and the Spirit of God is a challenging issue in your heart and life that you need to care for publicly, I want you to know that it is a time to make a decision.

You're on the spot. There are some of you here that...