

Negotiating the World

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[0 : 00] Turn with me this evening to the passage that we read in Ephesians chapter 5.

And I want us to consider the whole of that passage following on, of course, from what we said last week. And how all of what Paul is saying in this passage is grounded on the cross, not only as the means of our forgiveness, but as the model for our obedience and for our lifestyle.

We saw that last week. We saw that the cross was the place where God came in his love and gave his own son so that we might be washed and cleansed and so that our lives might be transformed.

And we saw also that it was the model, the basis for the Christian life. And that is what Paul is talking about here in these words, in this passage from verse 3 onwards.

That begins with sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness, but must not be named among you as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness or foolish talk or crude joking which are out of place and so on.

[1 : 12] If I was to take a text, I suppose it would be the parenthesis, perhaps, in verse 9, in brackets, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true.

That's the theme of that passage. And here the apostle is developing his argument that we saw last week by taking count of the realities of living in the world.

And this whole section is about how a Christian copes successfully, how he negotiates his way through a world that is often difficult, is full of temptation and obstacles and images and ideas and voices, and in which behind there is an enemy.

In chapter 6, we read about how we must put on the whole armor of God in order to take our stand against the enemy in the evil day and having done all to stand, and hopefully, God willing, we'll reach that at some point.

But an enemy who is seeking to destroy us. And this chapter seeks to set down some principles as to how we are to make our way through that world and what we are to avoid and what we are to shun and what we are to lay hold upon.

[2 : 31] It's all about, of course, the classic argument as to how we can be in the world and yet not of the world. That's what the Bible expects us to be.

That's the principle by which a Christian lives, in which we're in the world and not of the world. And, of course, our supreme example is Jesus, who was in the world and who took as full a part as he possibly could in daily life.

He worked, served his apprenticeship, we believe. He ministered amongst people, spoke to people, knew people. He moved amongst people. He healed them. He answered their questions.

He related to them. He engaged with them. And they came to him gladly. He wasn't someone who was on his own, who was a way off there, someone who was aloof and not approachable. He was someone who you could go to at any time with any question and know that he would give you his undivided attention.

There was nothing hypocritical about him. He was completely without sin. And yet he was so different from the world. Everybody knew that there was something about this Jesus of Nazareth that was...

[3 : 38] And we have to copy him. We are to be imitators of Jesus. So, I guess, at the very outset, we have to start in the right place. And if you want to know how to negotiate your way through this world, you ask how Jesus lived and what was on his mind.

What principles occupied his mind? Because the life of the Christian is a life of imitation of Jesus Christ. Yet, we want to come to this passage and we want to try and understand it a bit more and we want to try and take from it what's necessary for our lives in this world.

I want us to think about six things, just six very brief things within half an hour as to how we can extract guidance as to how we live.

First of all, Christians... Let me say this. Christians are not taken out of the world. Christians are not taken and they're not expected to be separate from daily life, the life that is around them.

They're not to live monastic life. You know what I mean by a monastic life? I'm talking about the kind of person who in various times has said, no, I want to live a separate life altogether.

[4 : 49] I'm going to go into a monastery and I'm going to live the rest of my life under certain vows and I'm going to be separate. And the idea has been that if you live a separate life, you somehow live a more dedicated life or a more holy life to God.

Well, that's simply not the case. The Bible never tells us to separate ourselves physically from the world around us. But we don't need to go to a monastery to live a monastic life.

You can separate yourself, as you can live your life supposedly as safely as possible, but by separating yourself from everything. I remember I went for a job once way, way back when I graduated from university.

I went for a job in a power station and got an interview. And I said to the man who was interviewing me, I said I was a Christian. And he said, well, I have no problem with that at all. Well, as long as you're not the kind of Christian that doesn't eat, that doesn't have lunch with the rest of us.

And I was taken aback by this. I was saying, what do you mean? Oh, he says, we had a guy in here, he says, and he was a Christian, but he wouldn't eat with the rest of us. He wouldn't have lunch with us. I was completely floored.

[6 : 00] I didn't even know there were such people. Because the Bible is completely opposed to that kind of living. The Lord Jesus ate with publicans and sinners. He was happy to do so.

He was happy to mix with all kinds of people, even people who didn't follow him. He was still happy to meet with them and to eat with them. And we must be the same.

We're not to live a monastic life or a separate life in that sense. And there are other senses as well in which we can wrestle with the idea of living some kind of separate life.

Recently, I listened to a discussion between two students. It was a very interesting discussion in which they were arguing over this question, what is our first priority? Becoming the kind of people that God wants us to be or reaching out to other people who don't have Christ?

And one person, one of the students was trying to argue that the most important thing was to reach others with the gospel. And the other student was saying, well, no, that's not the important.

[7 : 09] I'm not saying that it's not important to reach others with the gospel, but it's more important to become the kind of person to grow in your holiness first before you can reach out to others with the gospel.

It was a fascinating discussion. I spent the time just listening to each argument. I was quite encouraged that that's the kind of argument that they were having. But the fact is, and thankfully we came to this conclusion at the end of the day, it was a long drive along the A9, and we came to this conclusion at the end of the day that both, you cannot have one without the other.

You have to grow as a Christian and you have to reach out to other people. And both can help and support each other. It's as we reach out to other people that we grow in our likeness to Jesus at the same time.

And it's as we grow in our likeness to Jesus that we feel compelled to reach out to other people to win them for Christ. You cannot say one is better than the other. You can't set one over the other.

You have to have the two things side by side. So Christians are not taken out of the world. The second thing I want to say this evening is that the world which we have to avoid is not the physical world that we live in, but it's what the world represents.

[8 : 33] In other words, when John tells us, and again, I think there's a lot of misunderstanding as to what the Bible means when it talks about the world. It talks about the world in two senses.

There's the world which was created by God and admittedly has become a fallen place, but there's also what the world represents, the selfishness, the godlessness of a world that has turned its back on God.

That's what we're to avoid, not the world. Here's what John says, do not love the world or the things in the world. He's not talking about whether we go and listen to some music or whether we watch a program on TV or whether we go to a football match.

He's not talking about that kind of thing. He's talking about the force, the influence that is behind the way the world lives. And he goes on to say this, for all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Look at what he brings as an example. The desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, the pride in possessions. You can live the most separate life that you want to live and you can still be plagued with desires of the flesh, desires of the eyes, the pride in possessions, in which case you're the most worldly person.

[9 : 58] That's what worldliness is. That's what we are to avoid. That's what we're not to love. The desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes. These three things, they all describe the kind of sinful motivations which are part and parcel of the world around me.

They boil down to two phrases. Me first and I want. That's worldliness. That's what we're not to love. That's what we're to avoid. Me first and I want.

If you think about it, that's what sin is. When you put God to one side and put yourself in God's place. When you do that, you're living like everyone else around you who doesn't have any time for the gospel.

That's what the world is and that's the world that we're not to love. When you think about it, it's all summed up in the very first sinful act in Genesis chapter 3. God said, do not eat the fruit and Satan says, eat it and you will become like gods.

The woman looked at the fruit and she saw that it was good for food, delight to the eyes and it made one wise. And she took it. In other words, her action was motivated by herself and her own selfish desire, not what God commanded.

[11 : 13] That's the lifestyle we're commanded not to love. A lifestyle that puts God to one side and lives on the basis of me rather than what God commands. And that's what the world represents.

Now, I'm not saying that there isn't kindness and a certain measure of goodness in the world. I'm not saying that the world is completely and ultimately, it is not ultimately a, there is a measure of goodness and kindness in the world and yet there's a world that is characterized by putting God to one side and replacing him with what I want.

That is what the Bible is against. That's the second thing. The world which we have to avoid is not the physical world we live in but what it represents. And yet, Christians have to live in that world and they have to love in that world.

Remember the key ingredient we spoke about last time, the love that motivates us as Christians. Love, first of all, for the Lord with all our heart and mind and soul and strength and love for our fellow being.

We have to work alongside others. We rejoice to be in this world. I hope there isn't a Christian this evening among us that doesn't give thanks to God for the place that you have in this world and for the people that are with you in this world even if they drive you around the bend.

[12 : 44] The Lord has put you where you are tonight for his purpose and his providence and we're not to live the whole of our lives wishing we were a million miles away. We're to accept the challenges that God has given us and we're to see the opportunities that God has given us.

We have to work alongside and live alongside and we're commanded to love other people irrespective of who they are. We are to love other people and irrespective of whether the person has a respect for the gospel.

Some people do. We're thankful that we live in a community. We are still some people, many people have a respect for the gospel. Many of our communities do not have such people at all.

We are to live as part of these communities. We are in the world. We are the light of the world and irrespective of whether the person lives a respectable life or whatever that person is, we are to love.

When Jesus came into the world he found all kinds of people, people who followed him, people who hated him, people who plotted against him, people who said we will not have this man to rule over us and as we move our way through this world we will come across people, many of them, who will be so totally against what we stand for that it will be really difficult for us to stand on our own as Christians and yet that's where Jesus has placed us this evening.

[14 : 16] Fourthly, there is so much in this world to be thankful for. there is so much and we must remember that. There is so much to be thankful.

There is so much that God has given us not only to meet our needs but to enjoy. Pleasure in itself is not wrong.

God has given us the capacity not only to make use of something but to enjoy something in a measure to his glory. but he has given us the physical pleasures that he has given us in this world for the good of mankind and there is nothing in the Bible and I hope that people don't come away when they so many people have come away with the impression that somehow Christians are averse or they think that pleasure in itself is wrong.

You'll find people who accuse they go through history and they accuse the Puritans for example of being against pleasure. Well, I'm not entirely sure what the circumstances were but what I am sure of is that the Bible is not against pleasure as such.

What it is against is sinful pleasure. What did I say before? What it's against is taking God out of the picture putting him to one side and living for my pleasure. There's a vast difference between enjoying what God has given me to his glory in which case I can enjoy it even better than I would if I was living for myself.

[15 : 48] There's a vast difference between living for God and living for myself in which I put pleasure first and which I live each day to try and get what I can for myself.

As soon as I start that go down that road it's a never ending road. I'll never ever get what I hope for or what I want. But pleasure in itself is not wrong if it's lived and if it's enjoyed the way God intended us to enjoy.

The fifth thing is this that Christ Christians rather are to strike a balance between what they can take part in in this world and what not.

You notice how many times in this passage Paul refers to being involved or taking part. For example in verse 7 he says therefore do not become partners with them for at one time you were darkness and now you are light in the Lord.

Verse 10 try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Verse 11 take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them.

[17 : 02] So what we're discovering in this passage I think I hope is that the Christian is always alert and he has to be learning and discerning all the time as to what he can take part in and be involved in and be part of and when he has to come to the point where he says no I can't do it and believe me that point will come.

There are things that we can take part in and there are things that we can't take part in. Now I would love in a way I would love to have a big long list on my one hand and say here's what we can't take part in.

I would love to have a long list on my right hand and say here's what we can take part in. That way I could make a whole bunch of copies for everybody who would go out the door you could just learn them off by heart and you'd live the Christian life perfectly.

That would be so easy wouldn't it? But that's not what the Bible tells us to live at all. We have to use our minds and we have to use our consciences and we have to use our understanding of the Bible to live the kind of life.

Of course there are some things that are absolutely non-negotiable. When the Bible says something is sin it is sin. The Bible says do not steal it is sin to steal.

[18 : 23] When the Bible says do not commit adultery there's no negotiation. That's it. There are certain areas in which it is clear. There are also other areas in which is clear.

What I do and what I can take part in miss the work of the missions of the church for example when we come to worship God commands us to come to worship. It's wrong and it's sinful for a Christian not to come to worship.

That's clear. And yet there is a whole world out there of normal routine and daily activity in which I'm going to be faced with the choices do I go this way or do I go that way?

Do I make this decision or do I that? Do I go to this place or do I go to that place? And what is right and how can I best live for the Lord? How can I make sure that I put God first in everything that I do and yet at the same time make the kind of decisions which will result in the kind of balanced life that God wants me to live?

And that is not an easy thing at all. And you have to take a whole lot of circumstances into account. And the easiest thing in the world is to look down on other Christians and to say well the easiest thing in the world is to cast judgment to make a judgment on someone else without taking his or her circumstances into account.

[19 : 46] It's enough for me tonight to look at my own life and I hope that that's the spirit in which we come here tonight. Looking at our own life and examining my own life and asking the Holy Spirit to cleanse me and to sanctify me and to make sure that I make the right decisions.

That's not to say that if I see my brother or my sister going wrong that I'm not to go to them and say to get alongside them and to ask them to look for an opportunity to say well do you really think that that is the correct thing for a Christian to do or for maybe and it's only when you can get alongside people that you have the opportunity to do that.

We're not to shun people when we see things going wrong. That's the time to get alongside people. To seek to help them and to win them back. What is the Galatians tells us?

If you see your brother overtaken by a fault, what are we to do? Run a mile? No, of course not. Go and gossip about him to someone else? No, we're not. We're to go and we're to restore him gently.

That's what the Bible tells us to do. We're to go and get alongside that person and to make sure that we display the love of God, the restoring power of God to that person and to seek to do everything we can to.

[21 : 05] And yet, I've gone off course a wee bit, we have to strike a balance between what we can and can't take part in. Now, what is it that governs our choices in this world?

What principles govern our choices? Well, first of all, we're governed, I hope we're governed by our example to other Christians and our concern for their conscience and for their well-being.

What do I mean by that? Well, what I mean by that is that God never chose you to be one of his people to be on your own. He chose you to be alongside other Christians, your brothers and your sisters in Jesus.

And you're not to live your own life as if you were, as if you had no bearing on them whatsoever. ever. We're all to be examples to one another. And we're all to encourage one another, not just by what we say, but by how we live.

And we're to live our lives on the assumption that other people are watching us. Very, very important. Other people are watching us.

[22 : 16] Other Christians are watching us. What we do. And very often when another Christian watches us, what they're looking for is an example of how to serve God and they may very well follow that example.

And that works both ways. And it also affects that person's conscience. For example, let's look at what Paul said one time about the situation that existed in his day.

If, for example, I'll just give you the example that he gave in Corinthians. if you were invited to an official dinner in Paul's time, say a council dinner, you would go in with everybody else and before the dinner started there would be a religious ceremony in which the food that you were going to eat was first of all offered to the gods.

And everybody had to take part in that ceremony. It was part and parcel of society in those days. It seems weird to us, but it wasn't weird to them.

That's how they grew up. In other words, you went to a dinner, the first thing that would happen is almost like before your starter, you would be required to go through this religious ceremony.

[23 : 36] You would first of all have to offer the food to the gods. Now, when you were converted, what were you to do when you were invited to such a dinner?

Because it was a great privilege to be invited to such a dinner. But the question is, can I be involved in this or not? Because I know, on the one hand, I know that there's no such thing as another god.

So there's a sense in which whatever these people do, it's empty, completely meaningless, so it doesn't matter whether I take part in it or not. You could have thought like that.

But there were other Christians there, there would be someone else there for whom, who didn't think as clearly as that, and for whom it was just so unthinkable, it would have been sinful for that person to take part in that ceremony.

Now, Paul said this, he said, it's all very well for you to say that there's no other god, you know that there's only one god, and that the gods to whom they are offering these sacrifices to, they don't exist, so in one sense it doesn't matter, but it does matter because your brother is watching you and he is appalled, you are destroying his conscience, and he's seeing you, what you're doing, and he's doing something that to him is actually sinful, he's taking part, because at the end of the day, that's what it was, it was a pagan ceremony, you could give all the reasons in the world why it didn't really matter, but your brother, who didn't think as clearly as you, for him it was a pagan ceremony, and you're leading him into taking part in a pagan ceremony, and Paul says, don't do it for the sake of your brother, remember him, don't do it, because if eating meat causes my brother to stumble, he says, I will not eat meat, what I'm saying is this, and what I believe the apostle is saying is that we can't just do things on the basis of whether we think something is technical, whether we think we can argue it in our own minds, we've got to take into account whether someone else is going to benefit from my actions, or whether they're going to perhaps stumble because of something I am doing.

[26 : 21] Do you understand what I'm saying? I hope we understand what I'm saying. We're not loners in this world. God did not call us to be loners. He gave us responsibility for the well-being and for the care of other Christians.

Remember that other Christian brothers and sisters are watching you. And you're responsible for the example that you set to them. Following on from that, of course, is our witness. Are we witnessing in whatever we do?

Are we taking Jesus with us? Are you happy to go to whatever place you go to as a Christian and knowing that Jesus is going with you? That's a great question, isn't it?

It's a really, really important question. What kind of witness will I be? wherever I go? I've heard so many times people talking about football and in this respect, people who are perhaps a young Christian, well, older Christians don't play football so well, but young people do and they're converted and very often there's an argument as to whether it's profitable or right or continue to play football.

football is certainly an issue when I was younger and it can be argued, well, it's only a game. It's neither here nor there.

[27 : 42] It's neither good nor bad. It's a game. It's a recreation. It's a sport. And that's correct. That's absolutely correct. And for the most part, if that's what it is to you, not a problem. But supposing there's a person who takes it so seriously, and there are apparently people like this who take it so seriously that if they're playing football, that the chances are that they're going to either lose their temper or play dirty, and at the end of the game everybody's talking about them, and that person's supposed to be a Christian.

Look at the way he played. Your witness is gone. You can argue all you like, well, there's nothing wrong with playing football. You can argue that, but you've just destroyed your witness of the way you played.

Or because you lost your temper. And if you can't control it, then even if it's right, if you can't handle it, you may have to come to the point where you say, got to stop for the sake of the Lord.

And I could give you so many different examples of areas, like that's only one example of areas in which it may be right, but if you can't be a witness in what you're doing, if you can't take Christ with you in what you're doing, then Christ must come first.

And we have to deny ourselves. The third thing we have to consider is a relationship to God. If by doing something or going somewhere, my relationship to God is going to be spoiled, then I can't do it.

[29 : 16] because my relationship to God is the most precious feature of my life. Remember Daniel when he was taken into captivity in Babylon, and where he was selected as one of the king's special, clever elite, and where he was to be fed a particular food.

He was to eat from the king's table. He said, no, I can't eat this food again, because, I guess, because it was associated with idol worship. He couldn't eat it. If he had his relationship to God, it would have been spoiled.

He put his relationship to God first, and God honors those who honor him. Paul says, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

And I think it's important not to do anything that's going to destroy the peace or to affect the peace of God, the peace of Christ, which is ruling in my hearts.

peace. And then there's our worship. How much time do we give to the various areas in our lives? Have you ever taken stock of what you do in any one given week and ask yourself, how much time do I give to this or that or the next thing?

[30 : 31] And how does that figure in relation to how much time I spend with the Lord? Is it not true that we give ourselves to so many different things?

And many of those things are really not very important. And prayer gets squeezed further and further, pushed into the periphery so that we have no time left to give to the Lord in Bible reading and in prayer.

And what you end up doing is you end up neglecting your Bible and neglecting to pray and that makes you even more vulnerable than ever before. How much time do we give to our favourite soap?

Again, I'm not casting any judgement. I'm just asking the question. How much time do we give to Eastenders? Not just the time we give in watching something like that, but the time we spend thinking about it afterwards.

The time we spend looking forward to it. Okay, my question is this, how does that relate to the amount of time I spend looking forward to coming to church or reading my Bible?

[31 : 43] That's the question. Who takes the most important place in my life? It has to be God. It has to be God.

And then there's how does it affect my involvement in the church? Is it not true that churches are crying out for volunteers and helpers and supporters for all the various things that they are doing?

And not just this church, but churches all over the country. And people are so busy that they can't give themselves to supporting whatever work is going on.

How much time do we spend? I believe that a lot of the questions we're asking tonight, that the answer to these questions is to make sure that we're as involved as we possibly can in the work of the church and the work of the gospel, not only here, but abroad.

How much time do we give to the Lord's work in all its areas? And then sixthly, the danger of temptation, isn't there? That's what Paul talks about here, like sexual immorality and all impurity and covetousness, not even be named among you as is proper among saints, let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk or crude joking.

[32 : 57] Remember, we mentioned that last week. And basically what Paul is saying and what the Lord himself said on one occasion is if something is going to open me to temptation, then it's not worth it.

Jesus said, if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off. Joseph, when he was in Egypt and when he was in danger of being seduced by Potiphar's wife, we read that he refused, he refused to go anywhere near her.

Why? Because it wasn't wrong to go near his master's wife, but it was wrong for him because it opened him up to the whole possibility of temptation. And here Paul is talking about sexual temptation.

Is there anything more appropriate in this day and age for the Bible to tell us this evening than the danger of sexual temptation? In every age, but particularly in our age, where there's all kinds of media images around us where Christian lives can be ruined because they fall into the trap of sexual temptation.

Whatever form, I don't want to go into this in any detailed way, but whatever form it takes, you know what I'm talking about. Particularly men, you know what I'm talking about. I have made a covenant with my eyes, said Job, not to look at a woman.

[34 : 14] Jesus said, you've heard that it was said, we read it earlier on, do not commit adultery, but I say to you, anyone who looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery, remember that.

It takes place in our minds and in our hearts, and it can destroy us, it can destroy our witness, it can destroy our relationship with the Lord, it can take away all our confidence, it can bring a trap, it can drag us into slavery and misery and guilt and shame.

So the time now is to come to the Lord and to confess our sin and to confess that we haven't lived up to what the Lord expects us to do. And to come back to him and ask him to forgive us and wash us as David did, after thy loving kindness, Lord, have mercy upon me.

And as David experienced once again the mercy and the forgiveness of God, he was able to go out with a new confidence and a new determination to serve the Lord wholeheartedly.

You see, the problem very often arises when we take a kind of a dithering view of the Christian life. When we kind of walk the tightrope, when we live so close to the edge that we're in danger of falling off.

[35 : 32] If you are in danger of falling off a cliff, you don't walk along the edge, you keep well back. That's the way to live the Christian life, to keep as safe as possible.

By all means to be involved and to be part and parcel of this world, but you have to, there's no point in being part and parcel of the world if you're going to be of no use to the gospel.

And the Lord wants people to be ambassadors for Jesus, to be ambassadors for him, and to be used by him and for him.

Christians also have to be moderate in everything. There's a time for everything under heaven, says the Lord, says Ecclesiastes and chapter 3. That doesn't mean that they can't enjoy anything, but to be moderate is knowing how far to go and when you're going to stop.

It involves a disciplined life. Oh, how I need to become more disciplined in the service of the Lord. Some of us are naturally more disciplined than others, and it's great if you have that ability, but we all need to become more and more disciplined in the life of the Christian, and a disciplined life which is governed by our commitment to the Lord's word.

[36 : 56] The chapter goes on to talk about alcohol. It talks about, therefore, do not be drunk with wine, for that is debauchery. We'll come on to that. There's perhaps no time for it this evening, but it is an important element.

It's a major feature of our community. It's a feature that affects all of us. Once again, it asks us, what is my example as a Christian? How am I going to set an example, and how am I going to make sure that I live a life that is moderate, in which I make use of what God has given, but not abuse it?

You may be listening to all of this tonight, and you're thinking, well, this is so narrow. This is so narrow-minded. Typical. Typical Christian talk, narrow-minded, moderation, marriage, kind of life I want is one which I'm free from all of these things.

The Bible is so restrictive, and the Christian life is so restrictive. Is that what you think tonight? Is that really what you think? That if you were to become a Christian, that God is going to squeeze you so tight that you won't be able to breathe?

Well, let me tell you how far wrong you are. You're completely wrong. Let me tell you this, your sense of freedom that you have just now, tonight, is a delusion.

[38 : 19] You think that freedom is doing what you want. But what's happening is that you're obeying your own inward cravings and lusts and desires.

And if that's the case, you're a slave to your own excessive and destructive desires. When you give in to them, when you go down that road of immorality and disobedience to God, you never get satisfaction.

Some of us remember the 60s, which were an era. I grew up in the 60s, went to primary school in the 60s, which were an era when young people wanted to break away from all the restrictions of their Christian valued parents.

And so they wanted to break away. They wanted to revolt. They wanted to be completely different. And so you get all kinds of hippie promiscuity came in.

Drugs came in. Not that there weren't drugs before. In other words, the whole message was we want to be free. We want to do what we want to do. And freedom is what we want to do.

[39 : 30] And living the life without any restriction. And one of the great, one of the most notable voices was all kinds of songs and bands and albums at that time.

Probably the most famous voice of the 60s was Mick Jagger. If ever there was someone who spoke for those who wanted to rebel, it was Mick Jagger.

And yet today, 40 years on, 50 years on, it's all history. And in another 50 years, Mick Jagger will be remembered for one thing alone.

I can't get no satisfaction. It's true. It's the most famous thing he wrote. I can't get no satisfaction.

I can tell you tonight that if you go down the road of pleasing your own self and your own cravings, it's a never ending road.

[40 : 36] What's more, it's a road that leads to eternal punishment. Verse five, be sure of this, says Paul, that everyone who is sexually immoral and who's covetous has no, listen, no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

What a fearful prospect that is, friends. But when you listen to Jesus and you come trusting in him to forgive your sin and to create within you a new heart, he promises you if the truth sets you free, you shall be free indeed.

And tonight, true freedom is living for God. You discover that true love is not lust that craves and desires without end.

True love begins with loving God with all your heart and your soul and your mind and your strength and discovering the love of God in which he gave his only begotten son into this world to die for sinners like you and me.

And the gospel tonight invites you to come to know that love, to come to know that truth, the truth that sets you free.

[42 : 02] Let's pray. Amen. Father, once again, we have been thinking about your word and we have, we ask, O Lord, that we will come humbly to it and submissively to it.

We pray that your word will speak to us clearly and powerfully. We thank you that your word is so relevant to every age, including the age in which we live. We ask, Lord, that as we make our way through this world carefully and prayerfully, we ask that we might be filled with the Holy Spirit and that you will give us discernment and the courage to know when to say yes and when to say no.

Give us the courage, O Lord, to stand like Daniel of old and to stand even if it means risking our well-being and our prosperity and even our lives.

We ask, Lord, that you will give us to be totally committed to your kingdom because of the love with which you loved us and gave yourself for us. And, Lord, we pray that you will bless this word to those without Jesus tonight, that they will come and discover and see the greatness and the freedom that they can have by trusting in Jesus.

In him we ask. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.