

The Truth Shall Set You Free

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- [0 : 00] Scottish Psalter, Psalm 105, that's on page 374, Tunis, Glasgow.
- Give thanks to God, call on his name, to men his deeds make known. Sing ye to him, sing psalms, proclaim his wondrous works, each one.
- Come, see that ye in his holy name to glory do accord, and let the heart of everyone rejoice that seeks the Lord. The Lord Almighty and his strength with steadfast hearts seek ye, his blessed and his gracious face seek ye continually.
- Think on the works that he hath done, which admiration breed, his wonders and the judgments all which from his mouth proceed. For ye that are of Abram's race, his servant well approved, and ye that Jacob's children are, whom he chose for his own, because he and he only is the mighty Lord our God, and his most righteous judgments in all the earth abroad.
- 1, 2, 7 of Psalm 105, the Tunis, Glasgow. Give thanks to God. Amen. Give thanks to God.
- [1 : 27] Call on his name. To men his deeds make known.
- Sing ye to him. Sing psalms, proclaim. His wondrous works each one.
- Seeth that ye in his holy name. To glory do accord.
- And let the heart of everyone rejoice that seeks the Lord.
- The Lord Almighty and his strength with steadfast hearts seek ye.
- [2 : 39] His blessed and his gracious face seek ye continually.
- Think on the works that he hath done, which admirer.
- His wonders and the judgments all which from his mouth proceed.
- O ye that are of Abram's race. O ye that are of Abram's race. His servant well approved.
- And ye that are Jacob's children are, whom he chose for his own.
- [3 : 59] Because he and he only is, the mighty Lord of God.
- And his most righteous judgments are in all the earth abroad.
- That is a Oh, gracious God, again we ask for the grace to enable us to worship in a right way.
- We give thanks for the opportunity of being able to sing your praise. And we pray that that singing will have come from a heart that has been touched by your grace. We pray, oh Lord, that our worship will be spontaneous and spiritual.
- And that we will delight in the knowledge that this is something that has been given to us. That you have given us this opportunity, this privilege of coming to worship the King of Glory.
- [5 : 11] That although there are many areas of our life that we can look on as worship. Yet here this is a specific time of public worship.

And it's a wonderful privilege to be able to draw a side. And to come and to meet together collectively, personally, individually.

With one mind, seeking to bring honour and glory to the great name of our God and our Lord and Saviour. And we ask that we might indeed sit under the word tonight.

And that that word will be blessed into our heart. Oh Lord, how we need you. And we have to confess, oh Lord, that we are not what we want to be. We confess, oh Lord, our sin.

Again, we do so individually and we do so collectively. We do so nationally. Help us, Lord, never to have a them and us attitude to our sin.

[6 : 13] Where we may think of ourselves better than others. But that we may identify with our nation. And that we may ask for forgiveness for all our sin.

Forgive us, Lord, for our lovelessness. Forgive us for our carelessness in what we say. Our carelessness in what we do. Forgive us, Lord, for our wrong attitude of heart.

Forgive us, oh Lord, for the way that we assess and view people. Our attitudes which are hidden away from others. And often even hidden away from ourselves.

Because what we may see at a surface level is speaking of something at a much deeper level. We know, oh Lord, that you know us. Know us completely what we are.

And so we ask that we might indeed be forgiven. The psalmist said, Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up. The psalmist was aware that there wasn't even one thought that ever flashed through his mind.

[7 : 25] But was known to you. And so we ask, oh Lord, that we might come to the God before whom nothing is hidden. And ask that our sin be forgiven.

And we give thanks for the fullness and sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Because we are assured that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.

That there is not one sin that will be hidden away. Which will eventually bring the people of God into condemnation. There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

And may we rejoice in that truth. In the liberating fact that Jesus alone is able to set us free. And if we are set free in Jesus, then we are truly free indeed.

Grant us grace, oh Lord, to experience the liberty and freedom that is found in the gospel. Deliver us, Lord, from being shackled by trying to fulfill the law.

[8 : 28] And forgive us, oh Lord, for the times that we do not enjoy that freedom. Because we are bound by things we shouldn't be. But that we may come to discover more and more.

That the freedom in the gospel eventually comes through obedience rather than independence. And so we pray, Lord, for that obedience to your word.

We pray then to bless us and to help each one of us. We pray, Lord, for those who are struggling in life. Whatever is causing it. Whether it's physical or mental or spiritual or emotional.

Whether it is through work or lack of work or relationships or whatever the issues may be. We pray, oh Lord, for grace and help. For deliverance and for strength.

We pray, Lord, for those who are ill. Pray for those who are having to go to hospital. We pray for them and ask your blessing upon them. Give wisdom and guidance to surgeons, consultants.

[9 : 31] All who make decisions and all who operate. And all who are involved in the giving of treatment. Lord, we pray for success in all these things.

We pray for those who have undergone surgery. We pray, oh Lord, for those who are ill. And there are so many these days are ill. We pray for those whose hearts are heavy and mourn.

Even within our own congregation where death has again been. And where those gathered tonight, their hearts are heavy and sore as they miss loved ones.

And we are so conscious, oh Lord, of the voice of death which is never far away. And we think of those who are so much part and partial of our own lives.

And we pray for the respective families. That they will indeed be blessed of the Lord. We ask that we might understand your gracious hand upon us.

[10 : 30] Because sometimes, Lord, we look at things and we don't understand the way God works. And we pray that we might be submissive before your hand.

Bless young and old alike. We pray to spread the gospel throughout our land. May we be willing to be used in the spread of that gospel. Keep us then safe.

Do us good. Bless our homes, our families and all that we love. And take away our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to sing again in Psalm 147.

Psalm 147. And we're going to sing from verse 15. I'm sorry, this is in Sing Psalms.

Psalm 147. And at verse 15.

[11 : 32] It's in page 193. To all the corners of the earth, the Lord's commands proceed. For when he speaks, his word goes forth through all the world with speed.

He spreads his snow as wool, the frost like ashes on the land. He hurls forth icy hail like stones who can such cold withstand.

But when he sends his mighty word and makes the warm winds blow, the frozen waters start to melt and once again to flow. To Jacob, God declares his word and makes his doctrines known.

His ordinances he reveals to Israel alone. He has not dealt in such a way with any other race. To us alone he shows his laws.

O praise the Lord of grace. Psalm 147 from verse 15. That's on page 193. And the tune is Arlington.

[12 : 39] To all the corners of the earth. Amen. Amen. Amen. To all the corners of the earth.

The Lord's commands proceed. For when he speaks, his word goes forth.

Through all the world with speed.

He spreads the snow as wool, the frost. He hurls forth icy hail like stones.

He hurls forth icy hail like stones. Who can such cold withstand.

[14 : 10] But when he sends his mighty word. And makes the warm winds blow.

The frozen waters start to melt. The frozen waters start to melt. The frozen waters start to melt.

And once again to flow. To Jacob God declares his word.

And makes his doctrines known. His ordinances he reveals.

His ordinances he reveals. To Israel alone.

[15 : 33] He has not dealt in such a way. With any other race.

To us alone. He shows his laws. To us alone.

He shows his laws. O praise the Lord of grace.

Let's turn now to John's Gospel. And chapter 8. In the mornings we've been working through this Gospel.

We're going to look this evening from verse 31 of chapter 8. John chapter 8 verse 31.

[16 : 45] And the section through to the end. So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him. If you abide in my word. 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 offspring of Abraham.

And have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say. You will become free. Jesus answered them. Truly, truly I say to you.

Everyone who commits sin. Is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever. The son remains forever.

So if the son sets you free. You will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham. Yet you seek to kill me. Because my word finds no place in you.

[17 : 44] I speak of what I have seen with my father. And you do what you have heard from my father. They answered him. Abraham is our father.

Jesus said to them. If you were Abraham's children. You would be doing what Abraham did. But now you seek to kill me. A man who has told you the truth.

That I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing what your father did. They said to him.

We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one father. Even God. Jesus said to them. If God were your father. You would love me.

For I came from God. And I am here. I came not of my own accord. But he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say?

[18 : 42] It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil. And your will is to do your father's desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning. And has nothing to do with the truth. Because there is no truth in him. When he lies. He speaks out of his own character.

For he is a liar. And the father of lies. But because I tell the truth. You do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin?

If I tell the truth. Why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God. Hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them.

Is that you are not of God. The Jews answered him. Are we not right in saying. That you are a Samaritan. And have a demon. Jesus answered.

[19 : 40] I do not have a demon. But I honor my father. And you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it.

And he is a judge. Truly, truly I say to you. If anyone keeps my word. He will never see death. The Jews said to him.

Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died. As did the prophets. Yet you say. If anyone keeps my word. He will never taste death. Are you greater.

Than our father Abraham. Who died. And the prophets died. Who do you make yourself out to be? Jesus answered. If I glorify myself.

My glory is nothing. It is my father who glorifies me. Of whom you say. He is our God. But you have not known him.

[20 : 37] I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him. I would be a liar like you. But I do know him. And keep his word. Your father Abraham.

Rejoiced. That he would see my day. He saw it. And was glad. So the Jews said to him. You are not yet fifty years old. And have you seen Abraham?

Jesus said to them. Truly, truly I say to you. Before Abraham was. I am. So they picked up stones. To throw at him. But Jesus hid himself.

And went out of the temple. Amen. And may God bless to us. This reading of his own holy word. I am going to sing again from. The Scottish Psalter.

In Psalm 119. Psalm 119. And we are going to sing verses 57 to 64. That is on page 404.

[21 : 37] Junus Belmont. Psalm 119. And at verse 57. Thou my sure portion art alone.

Which I did choose. O Lord. I have resolved. And said that I would keep. Thy holy word. With my whole heart. I did entreat. Thy face and favor free.

According to thy gracious word. Be merciful to me. I thought upon my former ways. And did my life well try. And to thy testimonies pure.

My feet then turned I. I did not stay nor linger long. As those that slothful are. But hastily thy laws to keep.

Myself I did prepare. Bands of ill men me robbed. Yet I thy precepts did not slight. I'll rise at midnight thee to praise.

[22 : 35] Even for thy judgments right. I am a companion to all those. Who fear and thee obey. O Lord thy mercy fills the earth.

Teach me thy laws. I pray. These verses of Psalm 119. 57 to 64. In the tune of Belmont. Thou my sure portion art alone.

Of my sure portion art, O Lord.

Which I did choose, O Lord. I have resolved and said that I would keep thy holy word.

With my whole heart I did entree. Thy face unfavour free.

[23 : 50] According to thy gracious word.

Be merciful to me. I thought upon my former ways.

To undo my life will try. Until thy testimony is pure.

My feet then turn and die. I did not stay nor linger long.

As those that slothful are. But hastily thy laws to keep.

[25 : 09] Myself I did prepare. Bands of will men me robbed.

Yet I thy precepts did not slide. I'll rise at midnight.

Thee to praise. Even for thy judgment's right.

I am companion to all those. Who fear and they obey.

O Lord thy mercy fills the earth. Teach me thy laws I pray.

[26 : 24] O Lord thy mercy. I am going to look again at this section of John chapter 8.

It's a large section but I'm just going to go over it very quickly. And in a sense just by way of overview picking out some of the points in it.

In the beginning of what we read there we see. So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him. If you abide in my word you are truly my disciple.

And you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free. And so on. Now obedience to God's word is a. We could say a fundamental principle of being a Christian.

A Christian who loves the Lord Jesus Christ is somebody who is desiring to obey Jesus. And it causes a heart grief when we fail to obey, when we disobey the Lord.

[27 : 34] But there is the desire within the heart. And there is a movement within the life. Where obedience is at the very heart of what the Christian is.

Because God's word is fundamental to the life of the believer. Because God's word has come to abide within. That's the very thing that Jesus is actually talking about here.

He's talking about if you abide in my word. Every Christian will call Jesus Lord. In fact Jesus said that later on.

As he was speaking to the disciples in the upper room. That they would call him Lord and Master. And that is what the Lord is. Where a passion has ownership.

And that's where a Christian is. That they are happy to be owned by Jesus Christ. Let me ask you that question tonight.

[28 : 37] Is that where you are? That you would be happy to be owned by Jesus Christ. And you know that is a big problem with becoming a Christian.

Is that people, part of them is saying yes I would love to be a Christian. But there is this other part that is saying I don't want to give up my rights, my will.

That's the hardest thing for a Christian to give up is their own will. Because really we want to be masters of our own destiny so to speak.

We want to be in control of our lives. We want to call the shots. And it is the one thing that we really resist. Is having to hand over our will.

And that's where we actually come to the place and the point where a passion says to the Lord, Ah, it's no longer my will but yours.

[29 : 39] Where a passion is saying to the Lord Jesus, Come into my life. Come into my life so that my life will become yours. That's what happens when a person becomes a Christian.

And that is why there is a battle. Because we find it really difficult to yield to that. There is this resistance because we want to hold on.

And that's why Jesus makes it very clear that a disciple is somebody who is prepared to call Jesus Lord. That Jesus has ownership of your life.

And you're happy for that. That doesn't mean that every single moment of every day that you live in complete compliance with every word of God.

And that you are living in an exemplary way. And that you are fulfilling God's word every step you take. Sadly, that doesn't happen.

[30 : 42] Because we're still sinners. And that's part of the great conflict that goes on in the Christian life. You know, when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, when they discover the liberty and the freedom in Jesus, it's like they're ushered into this new world.

But it doesn't take very long for them to realize, Hey, there's a struggle going on here. There's a conflict going on here. There's a war going on. And the longer you go on, the more you discover the ferocity of that war.

And it's brought about by the fact that God's word, and that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the word, has come through the Holy Spirit into your heart, into your life, to abide there, to live there.

But there's still the old passion there as well. And there's war. That's why the Apostle Paul said, you know, he said, The good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that's so often what I do.

There's war. There's conflict going on. And the child of God will always know that conflict, that struggle that goes on in the heart.

[31 : 49] And yet, the overriding desire is to follow the Lord. That's what a disciple is. A disciple of Jesus Christ, there's two things we could say.

A disciple is like an apprentice. And you know, an apprentice is somebody who is a kind of a hands-on learner. Somebody who is involved with the Master.

Somebody who has been shown and is practicing alongside the Master. And in a sense, that's what we're like when we become Christians.

In that form of discipleship, we are following Jesus. We are seeking to follow his example. And we are seeking to live with him by grace.

But we're also followers of Jesus. It's a lovely expression. That's one that we often use in the islands here and say, Oh, when did so-and-so start following?

[32 : 49] And it's a very biblical expression because Jesus himself says that discipleship involves taking up a cross, denying yourself, taking up a cross, and following me.

Often he will say, when he called his disciples to himself, that's what he said, follow me. So when we ever use the expression about somebody has started following, it's a lovely expression.

It's a biblical expression. Following Jesus. And you know, once you start following, you'll always be following. Even although there might be times you drift, sometimes you might follow afar off like Peter.

Peter never, ever stopped following Jesus. But there was a time, there was a big distance between himself and Jesus. He was following afar off. Thankfully, he was still going in the right direction.

But because he was following afar off, he got into trouble. And he ended up denying Jesus with oaths and with curses because he was following afar off. Dangerous place to be following afar off.

[33 : 57] But I'll say this, it's better to be following even afar off than not following at all. And so the disciple is somebody who is following the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so Jesus is here talking to two sets of people. There are those who had come. We see in verse 30. Remember, we're looking at this last time.

As he was saying these things, many believed in him. So Jesus is, first of all, he's addressing. There's a big section, a cross-section of Jews in front of him.

Some of them, as he had spoken. Remember, we looked at this in the last couple of weeks. The light of the world and such like. And where Jesus had spoken, taught them many great truths.

Some of them were so convinced this is Jesus that they believed in him. And so it's to those people that Jesus is, first of all, talking. Now, of course, as we say, there's still a cross-section present.

[35 : 00] His audience is a mixed bag of those who believe and those who are not believing. And so Jesus is saying, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.

Now, of course, we can only abide in the Lord's word when his word actually abides in us. And that's the wonderful thing about God's word.

That when it, when, and when we use God's word in this way, it's personal. Where he, the word, comes into our lives.

Comes to live, to abide. And it's the, the, the impact of that. It's, it's, it's, it's wonderful. Because in a sense, we could say regarding the word that it's a, it's a growing word.

You know, when God's word comes into your heart, into your life, it continues to grow. And what do we mean by that is that you're, you're always discovering something new in the word.

[36 : 07] The same word, but you come to it again and again. And the Holy Spirit is opening up your mind to, to new truths. And you're seeing things in a way you never saw it before.

And you're saying, you're saying, you're saying, you know, I, I've seen that so often, but I never understood it that way. And you see, the Lord is a teacher and he's teaching us in this word to see new things out of old truths.

It's always, always new. That's the beauty of God's word is it's timeless. Generations, generations and generations and generations have come to the same word.

And they have been fed and they've been thrilled and they discovered new things. And every single day you open the word, you can discover something new. Because the Lord will give you a word, a portion, just for today.

So that's something for you today. And you know, when you come, every time you come to God's house, I hope you come with a sense of expectancy and say, well, Lord, please, in the word today, whether it's in the singing or the reading or the preaching, please speak personally to me.

[37 : 16] Give me something for my soul. I don't want to go away just the way I come in. I want to be touched. I want to be affected. I want to be impacted. I want to be changed. God's word is a, it's a growing word.

It's also a strengthening word. We get strengthened by the word. And I'm sure all of us have been at places and times where we've felt so weak, so helpless.

And we've come to the word. And the word has, there's just been such an impact in it. It's given us strength. It's renewed us. We've come away from it a different passion.

We picked it up, our hearts in the depths. We closed it afterwards, our hearts singing. Sometimes we come to God's house in the same way. And that's, we must be looking for that, expecting that.

It's also a sanctifying word. It's doing our work. It's cleansing us. It's like a shower. That's part of what it's doing.

[38 : 21] You're going in daily where the word is meeting with you and where the word is challenging you and the word is speaking to you and the word is directing you.

And it is doing this work all the time. And so, this word, which is so important. And I hope tonight that this word is part of your life.

Because you see what it does. This word, Jesus is saying, If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. And you will know the truth.

And the truth will set you free. Jesus, one of the great definitions that he makes regarding himself is that he is the truth.

He is the truth personified. Remember when Jesus said, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. And it's only the truth that will set you free.

[39 : 17] Now, maybe tonight you're here and you don't think you're enslaved in any way. And you're saying, I'm free. I don't really need Jesus.

Because I feel free. You know, I look at other people. In fact, you might be here tonight. And you say, I'm interested in the gospel. I'm interested in what is being said.

And I believe so much in the Bible. But I sometimes look at Christians. And to me, they look as people who are bound. People who are, to me, they just seem bound by all kinds of things.

I feel free. I don't want to be shackled by God's word. My friend, you've got it completely the wrong way around.

Because out of Christ, you are actually enslaved. And you don't know it. And that's the worst kind of slavery of all.

[40 : 15] It's when you don't recognize that you are a slave. And that was the problem with the Jews that Jesus was just going to confront. Or that he was confronting.

They didn't realize that they were enslaved. They thought they were free. And Jesus says, you're anything but. Freedom in Jesus Christ is a wonderful thing.

And you know, it's when you come to faith in Jesus Christ. It's then you realize the freedom. And that freedom gives you... You know one of the things it will give...

There's a lot of things we could... I don't want to start digressing. One of the things of the freedom in Jesus Christ is peace. And I guarantee you, you will never know the peace that can be found in Jesus Christ in anything else in this world.

You can have moments of great contentment. And moments where you feel really at home with nature. And where you feel one with your surroundings and one with your fellow person.

[41 : 24] And I know what I'm saying because there were periods in my life before I became a Christian. And I felt... I thought I was as free as anybody in the world. And I felt as peaceful as anybody.

And one in harmony with everything. But I soon discovered I wasn't. And the Lord showed me that. And convicted my heart of who I was and where I was going.

And you know, when you come to faith in Jesus Christ, it's then you discover what real peace is. I thought I knew peace. But I never knew his peace.

And that's what Jesus said. My peace I give you. Not as the world gives you. And that's the peace that I had before. The peace that was in the world and was great, I thought. Until I discovered the peace that was in Jesus.

And that is part of the freedom that comes in him. Now that's not saying that you'll never ever in your life have times of trouble or difficulties or sorrows or things that will rock you or shake you.

[42 : 32] But even in the midst of all that, there is still a deep-rooted peace. And you know, this freedom, one of the things we begin to learn and to discover about it is that it's actually a gift.

It's not a pedigree. It's not something that you're kind of born with, something you inherit because of who your forebears are. It is a gift. It is personal to you.

And it's eternal. It's not temporary. It's not something you just get for a wee while and then it goes. It's everlasting in its nature. That's the beauty of it. But Jesus doesn't give it and say, I'm going to give you this for a while and then I'm going to take it back from you.

No, when he gives, he gives it to you forever. And so Jesus is urging that we discover this freedom. But then the people that were in front of him, they're sort of saying, they answered him, We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone.

They took umbrage at the words of Jesus. Now, this is showing, this is giving an idea of how blinkered and blind a person who is actually, how a person who is enslaved, how they're not able to understand the slavery that they're actually in.

[43 : 55] Here are the Jews and they're saying to, they're saying to Jesus, we have never been enslaved. I find that one of the most extraordinary statements because the history of the Jew was one of continual slavery.

They had been slaves in Egypt for generations. They had been taken out of Egypt in a wonderful way, taken through the promised land. And in the days of Joshua and those who had come out with Joshua, had come through the wilderness with Joshua into the promised land and part of the conquest.

As long as that generation were living, things were all right. But then in the days of the judges, you go through the book of Judges and it's one in slavery after another.

Whether it was through the Midianites or the Philistines or whoever. Israel, one generation or one period after another, they were being into absolute bondage.

And then eventually they would cry to God and God would send a deliverer. People like Gideon and people like Samson and so on. Then there was another wonderful period in the time of David and Solomon where there was great liberty and freedom.

[45 : 10] But then following on from Solomon, Solomon's son, remember Solomon's son, where the kingdom, there was Rehoboam, Solomon's son. And then Jeroboam rose up by way of revolution and the kingdom divided.

And the north followed this man, Jeroboam, and the south, Judah, remained loyal to the Davidic line. But the point is that it wasn't that long.

You go through the kings and eventually the northern part, they were taken captivity by Assyria. The southern part, Judah, were taken captivity by Babylon.

Their whole history was one of continued slavery. And at this very moment when they say, we have never been enslaved by anyone, they were actually under Roman rule and occupation.

Talk of being blinkered and blind. But that's what sin does. Sin doesn't see what's staring in the face. And where we don't recognize the captivity and the bondage that we're in.

[46 : 19] And so they're saying to Jesus that we've never been a slave. And Jesus then tries to teach them.

And he says, look, there are two different ways. You look at a house. And you have the slave and you have the son in the house. The slave, however close that slave becomes to the family, that slave never becomes part of the family.

But the son, the son is always part of the family. You cannot, the slave is always, no matter how close they become, no matter how much they've been integrated into that home, there's always will remain a slave.

The son will always be a son. And Jesus is really saying to them, you've got it all wrong. You don't realize. You think you're sons of God.

You think you're of the family of Abraham. But actually you're not. You're slaves. You're outside. And of course they were getting more and more incensed were the words of Jesus. And so Jesus is really saying to them, you're saying you're from your father Abraham.

[47 : 38] Because they took such pride. Abraham, we're Jews. We belong to Abraham. Abraham's our father. Jesus is saying to them, basically what he's saying is, I'm sorry, but you're not of your father Abraham.

Yes, with regard to your race. Yes, you're Jewish. And you can trace your ancestry at a physical level all the way back to Abraham.

But you are not like Abraham in any shape or form. Because Abraham obeyed God. Abraham loved God.

Abraham, we're told actually here, Jesus goes on and he says, Your father, in verse 56, your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day.

He saw it and was glad. What faith Abraham had. Where God, through the amazing birth of Isaac and through the sacrifice of Isaac, all these things, what the role and who Jesus was, was held out before Abraham.

[48 : 53] And he saw the day of Christ. And he believed in the day of Christ. And he believed in the promised Messiah. And he rejoiced. And Jesus is saying to the Jews, You're saying you're of Abraham's seed.

You're actually going the very opposite direction. You won't listen to my word. You don't believe it. You're not prepared to hear anything. Not only are you not rejoicing, you want to kill me.

So he says, you're not. That's what Jesus is saying. You are not of the spiritual seed of Abraham. But the amazing thing is that all God's people are.

We are. If tonight you belong to Jesus Christ, you are of the spiritual seed of Abraham. But you know, when you look at this, Jesus then goes on to say to them, Okay, you're saying Abraham is your father.

He said, I'll tell you who your father is. And it's really solemn words. Jesus is saying to them, your father is a devil. It's no wonder there were times that the Jews were just incensed with Jesus.

[50 : 10] And why was he saying to them their father was a devil? Because they likened the devil. Children will always in some way resemble their parents.

There will always be some features or some mannerisms or some characteristics or something. And Jesus is saying, you know by a person's life who they are from, who their father is, who they resemble.

And he said to the Jews, you don't resemble Abraham. You resemble the devil. And what are the two characteristics of the devil?

That he was a murderer and a liar. Right from the very beginning, that's what Satan was about. He lied, he twisted, he distorted everything.

He said at the very beginning, oh, you shall not die. He cast aspersions against God. He said to Adam and Eve, hey, God doesn't want you to enjoy good things.

[51 : 20] He doesn't want your mind to expand. Come on. I'll open the world up for you. I'll lead you on to better places. You do what I say and your world will become ever greater.

What a lie. And by his lie, he brought in death. Death, death, death. The world was plunged into death.

Can't stop it. And so, Jesus is saying, you are bearing the characteristics of Satan. And hey, this is an important thing.

It's a solemn challenge to us. As we look at our own lives, who do we resemble? How does our daily life work out? Is it possible that in our daily living, that lies or the twisting of the truth is a perpetual part of our life?

Is it possible that we're trying to murder? Remember, you can murder people not just with a blade and a bullet. You can murder people with your tongue. If we are in the business of trying to bring people down and distort things and twist things and murder people, character assassinations and all that, that is resembling Satan.

[52 : 44] And Jesus says, if that is a person's life, if that is the main practice of their life. Because Jesus actually, further back, he says, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.

Now, that doesn't just mean anybody who commits sin because we all commit sin. Really, the word there should be who practices sin. In other words, when you practice something, it is something you keep going and doing and doing and doing.

It's something that is perpetual. And if that is your life, if that is the way that you live, then it's serious because you resemble the father of lies who is the devil.

But if it's the other way around, and if you enjoy the truth, if you enjoy Jesus Christ, if your desire, like Abraham, is that all the nations of this world will be blessed, is it tonight your longing to see other people come to faith in Jesus Christ?

Do you pray for other people? Do you see people coming to church and your heart rejoices and you say, Oh, you know what I want? I want that person to come to faith in Jesus Christ. And it's not just people here and there, but you're praying for the town, you're praying for the islands.

[54 : 10] You're praying, there's a burden in your heart. It's a global longing for people to come to faith in Jesus Christ. You long for it. That's what's, that's in your heart.

Well, if so, you are resembling your spiritual father, Abraham. And so this is what, what Jesus is saying. And of course, as we, as he works right through here, and the time is going, one of the things really that, that is showing us the world that, that Jesus was living in and the world that we are living in.

And it shows us the impact that Satan and the whole power of darkness has upon this world.

Because when you think about it, here are these Jews who were steeped in the law. Jews who knew the Bible. These are the people who are privileged. God had given them everything.

And he had told them he was sending his son. And his son was standing in front of them. And they were just ready to pick up stones to stone him. They were so angry.

[55 : 18] They were so filled with hatred and with rage. Because their hearts were so full of sin and darkness. And you know, when you look at this world that we live in, suppose we look back at the 20th century, which is just gone.

And we say to ourselves, right, as we've moved through the generations and through the centuries, let's reflect on the last century. We are now supposed to be enlightened.

We are supposed to have evolved in a form of enlightenment. enlightenment. So that we should be at the very height of everything. And while that is true with regard to the great advances in medicine and in science and technology, and we live in the most amazing world, morally, we're still in a cesspool.

And you look back at the blackness of last century. You look at the killing fields of Cambodia. And Stalin's Gulag and the horrors of under Nazi Germany.

Millions upon millions upon millions and millions of people shot and gassed and starved. 20th century. The evolved man. No.

[56 : 36] Still trapped and enslaved in darkness. And the Bible alone, it teaches us how it is like this and why it is like this.

Because you can have all the philosophies and you can have all the sort of ideas of sitting down and year by year and generation by generation trying to sort it. You can't. Only Jesus can.

He alone is the light of the world. He alone is the one who can dispel the darkness. And as Jesus is speaking to these people, they're really beginning to struggle.

And in the end, they become, all they can do is begin to slag him. And they call, they begin to say, you're just a Samaritan. That's a worst insult you could give to a Jew.

You're a Samaritan. And then they said, you're demon-possessed. And then Jesus goes to the point where he's talking about Abraham.

[57 : 38] And he said, you know, he said to them, before Abraham was, I am. Here is the I am. Just like when meeting Moses at the time of the burning bush.

I am. I have always been. That's what Jesus is saying to them. Listen, he said. Before Abraham was, Jesus didn't say, I was, but I am.

I am the eternal I am. And at that point, they couldn't take any more. They picked up stones. That was it. They were going to stone him. And you know, there's nothing that antagonizes people quite like the challenge of the cross of Christ.

The cross of Christ will do one of two things to people. It will either break them so that they will bow down before Jesus and accept him.

Or else it will antagonize them like it did to these Jews so that people will pick up stones. That's what the cross of Christ does.

[58 : 48] Because you know what the cross does? It strips away every prop that we have of our own self-importance and our self-esteem.

The cross whacks away everything that we've built up in our own lives. And we can't cope with that. And that's why people hate Christianity.

They hate the cross of Christ. Because it's a rebuke to them. It challenges them. It hits them right where they are. And as we said it is one of two things.

And I hope and I pray tonight that for everybody in here it will have the impact and the effect of breaking us so that we bow down before Jesus the crucified Christ the risen Christ the one who is saying I am and ask him to be merciful to us.

Ask him to come into our heart so that we will discover the reality of him setting us free. That tonight all of us will be able to say ah the truth has set me free.

[60 : 00] Let us pray. Oh Lord our God we pray that we might not in any way push Jesus away from us.

We pray that we will not reject the great work of Jesus on the cross but that we will marvel at God's great love to us. Help us Lord not to be so proud as to reject the offer of salvation.

That we might think that we have to add to it to do something to better it. But that we may simply come as we are with all our failures with all our helplessness and that we might cling to Jesus and discover in him the liberty and freedom in the gospel.

Help us to walk focused upon Jesus and that we might the more we do that the more we will enjoy liberty and freedom. Bless us then we pray. Guide us and take us to our home safely forgiving us our sin in Jesus name.

Amen. We will conclude singing in the sing psalms and Psalm 1E Psalm number 1E and the tune is B's of Harris Psalm 1E Blessed is the one who turns away from where the wicked walk who does not stand in sinners paths or sit with those who mock instead he finds God's holy law his joy and great delight he makes the precepts of the Lord his study day and night he prospers ever like a tree that's planted by a stream and in due season yields its fruit its leaves are always green not so the wicked they are like the chaff that's blown away they will not stand when judgment comes or with a righteous day it is the Lord who sees and knows the way the righteous go but those who live an evil life the Lord will overthrow

[62 : 08] Psalm 1 tune is B's of Harris blessed is the one who turns away blessed is the one who turns away from where the wicked walk who does not stand in sinners paths or sin with those who mourn instead he finds God's holy law for his joy and great delight he makes the precepts of the Lord his study day and night he prospers ever like a tree that's planted by a stream and in due season yields its fruit his leaves are always green not so the wicked they are like a chaff that's blown away they will not stand when judgment comes or with a righteous day it is the Lord who sees and knows the way the righteous go but those who live an evil life the Lord will overthrow now may the grace mercy and peace of God the Father

Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore Amen
Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen