

All Talk

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning to those of y'all hadn't talked to yet or hadn't said hey to. It's my privilege this morning to continue in the book of Titus.

We, for those of y'all who hadn't been here, we've been in a series in the book of Titus. This is our third week. And what we'll see this morning is this message of the centrality of the word of God. The importance of God's word to his church. And so before we look at the passage, before we read it, I want to share a warning that we see in other passages.

And it would be a warning that Paul would share with Titus. This is a pastoral epistle. This is Paul giving instruction to his son in the faith, Titus.

And we know Paul did the same to Timothy. He gave instruction to Timothy on things that he needs to be aware of, on warnings of the work of the enemy.

[1 : 08] And that's what I want to start with this morning by looking at a couple of other passages. It would remind us that the enemy hates the church.

And surely Titus knows that truth. It's that the enemy has a plan and has a purpose in opposition to the church.

And so the writer of the book of Hebrews says this to the church. He says, remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God.

Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings.

So the writer of Hebrews warns the church to not be led astray by strange teachings.

[2 : 02] And then we will remember, as we've talked about this before, the warning that Paul gave to the elders of the church at Ephesus. So he is in Miletus and he calls for the elders of the church and they come to him.

And he shares this with them by way of warning. And church, this is for you and I today as well. As we look at the message that Paul gave to the elders, he says this.

He says, pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock. In which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.

To care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you.

Not sparing the flock. And from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things. To draw away the disciples after them.

[3 : 10] Therefore, be alert. You hear the message to these elders? Paul saying to them, it's your responsibility as the caregivers for the church.

God has called you to lead. He has called you to shepherd. He has called you to care for the people. Beware. There's grievous wolves coming.

And they're not just coming from the outside, but from the inside. Fierce wolves in among you. Doing what?

Speaking twisted things. What does that mean? Twisted things. It means twisting the truth. Twisting God's word. Saying those things which are not true.

And then we look in 2 Peter. This is Peter in his general epistle to the churches in Asia Minor. And he says this about God's word.

[4 : 14] About the scriptures themselves. He says this. No prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. Isn't that comforting?

That the word of God does not come from man's own interpretation. Instead it says no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Isn't that beautiful? That the scriptures that we have in hand are the very words of God. That through his Holy Spirit he put into the mouths and the pens of his men. Of his prophets. But Peter goes on to warn these churches. The elders and the leaders of these churches. And he says this. But false prophets also arose among the people. He's talking about the people in the Old Testament days. And he says this. Just as there will be false teachers among you. And he means inside the church.
[5 : 20] And he says. Who will secretly bring in destructive heresies. Even denying the master who bought them. Bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

And many will follow their sensuality. And because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Did you all hear the warning? You know what we see here is we see a method of the dark kingdom. We see a method of Satan. In his desire to destroy the church. What does he do? He brings in lies. He brings false messages. He speaks this thing through the mouths of his servants. As if it were true. When all along it's a lie. You know what's important church? That we stick to the word of God. That we don't stray at all.
[6 : 19] How important is it for us to understand the word of God? How important is it when Paul speaks to Titus. And he says to Titus this.

That's why I left you in Crete. Why Paul? So that you might put what remains into order and appoint elders. Why Paul? Because elders are God's gift to the church. That they would maintain the doctrinal integrity of the church. That they would make sure that what is taught in the church is according to the word of God. How important is that for you and I? Well these warnings make it clear that if we're not careful as a church. We will go off believing myths and all these other things that are spoken of in this passage. It's true then in the early church. Think about the book of Revelation. The seven epistles to the seven churches in Asia Minor. And what do you say?
[7 : 22] I commend you for this. But I call to attention these things that are not according to truth. You've left your first love.

And other messages, other warnings that he gave to those churches. Here's what's true church. We have an enemy that desires for us not to be faithful as a body. And he's going to do it by way of lies. False doctrine. False teaching. That would come into the churches. And where are we in our day and time? Do you think that's prevalent now? You know the state of the church. The wide state of the church. Is under attack. By these false messages. By this departure. From the word of God. And so this morning as we read our text. We're going to see the centrality of the word.
[8 : 18] The importance of the word. Directing everything we do in the local church. You know how important is it for us now. In this stage of the life of this church. You know we've been a campus.

And we're getting ready to become an autonomous church. How important is it for us to understand this. That the word has to lead everything we do. So read with me. Starting in verse 9. Of chapter 1 of Titus. Going down through the second chapter. Verse 1. And he's talking about the elders. And in verse 9 he says. He must hold firm. The elders must hold firm. To the trustworthy word. As taught. So that he may be able to give instruction. In sound doctrine. And also to rebuke those who contradict it. For there are many who are insubordinate. Empty talkers and deceivers.
[9 : 14] Especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced. Since they are upsetting whole families by teaching. For shameful gain.

What they ought not teach. One of the Cretans. A prophet of their own said. Cretans are always liars. Evil beasts. Lazy gluttons. This testimony is true. Therefore. Rebuke them sharply. That they may be sound in the faith. Not devoting themselves to Jewish myths. And the commands of people who turn away from the truth. To the pure. All things are pure. But to the defiled. And unbelieving. Nothing is pure. But both their minds and their consciences.

Are defiled. They profess to know God. But they deny Him in their works. They are detestable. Disobedient. Unfit. For any good work. But as for you.

[10:15] Teach. What accords. With sound doctrine. Let's pray. Father this morning as we. Look at this passage in Titus.

I'm struck with the need. For us to be. Faithful to your word. And Lord I remember. What the scriptures say.

Is that. Your word. Is what sets us free. We will know your word. And we will enjoy the freedom. Of living according to your word.

Father. I love the psalm. And especially Psalm 19. That says I love your word. And I love your statutes. And I love your doctrine. And I love your truth. Father it's what.

Brings us into your presence. It's what honors you. To walk and live by your word. So God I pray. For us. For this body of believers. God. That by your grace.

[11:13] And by your protection. Father we ask. That we would always be faithful. To your word in this place. That Father. We would live according to your word. And we would walk according to your word.

And we would not stray away. Father I pray that. You would protect us in such a way. That if there's ever. A doctrine that is. Not true. That Father you would expose it.

And Father you help us to be. Faithful. In our commitment to your word. For Father your word is. Quick and powerful. And sharper than any two-edged sword. It pierces to the dividing of soul and spirit.

And the joints and marrow. And it helps us discern. The thoughts and intents. Of even our own hearts. It's a living and active God. Your word is profitable.

Your word is. A gift to us. Father that we might know you. It's your revelation of yourself. That we might know you. And so God I pray that you do that.

[12:14] In us God. You would draw us close to yourself. And Lord as we open. The word this morning. As we spend time in this passage. I pray that you would. Help us understand God. I pray that you would speak.

To each one of us. I pray that you would move us. To be faithful to you. To be diligent. To be alert. And I pray in your name. Amen.

What tools. What are the tools. That Satan uses. How is it that he infiltrates. This false message. Well our passage. Speaks about this. And we need to understand. That as we read this passage.

We're talking about those. Who are inside the walls. Of the church. And you know.

There's those. Who can be associated. With the church. And not be believers. True. There's those. Who come. For whatever reason. Hopefully it's because. God is drawing them.

[13:15] And their heart is pricked. And they desire to hear the truth of God. But believe this. Is that Satan. Sends his servants. Into the churches. With the messages.

Not true. Hence we read. In Peter. In his warning. He said. False prophets. Are among the people. Those who. Proclaim these things. As true.

And they aren't true at all. And we look at this. Church. This. This island of Crete. And it's interesting. What we learn. About the Cretans.

That is. Those who live. On the island of Crete. They. Had a reputation. And it wasn't a strong. Godly reputation. Was it? As we looked at the passage.

What was their. Reputation. Reputation. And it was even. Shared by their own people. One of their very own. And he said this. Cretans are always liars. Wow.

[14:11] What a. Rough thing to be said. About a group of people. And you know. Paul confirmed. That that's true. He said. This testimony is true.

That they are liars. That they're. Comfortable. With. Speaking lies. Lies. And that being a part of the culture. In which they live.

What an indictment. Against the culture. But not only those who lie. On a regular basis. He says they're. Evil beast. There's this. Evilness that drives them.

And the way they live their life. And they're lazy gluttons. You know. If we would have known. In that day. The. Other. Um. Writings. Reveal.

That. The. Those who lived in Crete. Were. Were slothful. They were heavy. They were. Fat. They were. Meaning that they didn't exercise. That they. Literally were. Lazy gluttons.

[15:10] That. That were. Liars. And. And they had that reputation. And it was. Common among. Most. In that island. One. Now that. Doesn't.

Necessarily. Speak. To spiritual things. But it. It does. Speak to their. Vices. Doesn't it? And. Isn't it interesting.

What Paul says. To Titus. About those. Who. Are. Living. In that type of way. He says. Rebuke them. Sharply. As an elder.

As a leader. In the church. For men. That are walking down. This road of vice. Rebuke them. Sharply. Confront them. You know.

We think of elders. Being. Gracious. And generous. And caregiving. And that. True. They are. But when it comes to. Men. In the church. That are living. This vice filled way.

[16:04] This life of. Slothfulness. This life of. Indulgence. This life of. Greed. He says. Rebuke them. Because that's not. A way that honors God. You know.

I think the scriptures. Would reveal. That. For those. Walking in this. Vice filled way. That yes. It would take this. Direct. Straightforward.

Strong. Confrontation. But lest we. Misunderstand. That's not the way. That we should. Care for everyone. In the church. As elders. Is it? For those.

Who are in error. Do it gently. Because. We also. Even as elders. Have issues. In our life. I want you to notice.

What I see. Inside of the church. As tools. Of Satan here. Notice. It says. There are those. Who are insubordinate. Inside the church.

[17:01] What does it mean? They're not willing. To submit to authority. And then he says. There's those. Who are empty talkers. You know. What an empty talker is? One that's talking. All the time.

And never saying anything. Anything. They just talk. Talk. Talk. Talk. Talk. They want to be noticed. They want to be important. But they don't ever say anything. Meaning. There's no. Value. To what's being said. It's a desire. To be noticed. And he says. There's deceivers. Those who. Intentionally. Deceive. They are there. For the purpose.

Of deception. Do y'all see. That those are tools. Of the enemy. People. That are being used.

Whether they know it. Or not. By the enemy. To try to. Break the unity.

Of the church. To try to. Reduce. The church. To this place. Of. Walking. In sinful life. To. To be an insignificant.

[17:53] If you will. In. In what honors God. To not live. A God honoring way. To believe. These things. That aren't true. The enemy. Satan. Has tools.

Methods. To try to break up. The unity. In the church. To try to. Destroy. The church. And we see. In verse 14. He talks about.

Not. Devoting. Themselves. To Jewish myths. Saying that there's some. In the church. In that day. In that culture. Jews. That said yes. Jesus is the Messiah.

But you have to be circumcised. You have to do all these. Jewish traditions. To be. Honoring to God. Is that true church? No. What is it.

That yields salvation? What is it. That honors God? Do you have to do all these. Traditional things? You have to be faithful. To his word. Right? Faithful to his word. Surrender to Christ. And he goes on to say.

[18:51] In the commands of people. Who turn away from the truth. Do you. You hear what's being said here? Do you hear. What's happening in this church? Do you hear what Paul is saying. To Titus.

Titus. Be aware. That these things. Are going on in the church. And you have to confront it all. You can't let these people. Propagate these lies. Among the children of God. You've got to confront it.

You've got to lead. You've got to. Lead in such a way. That you lead with sound doctrine. Do you see it in the text? The importance of God's word. Look what he says.

In verse nine. He says. He must hold firm. To the trustworthy word. So that he may be able. To give instruction. In sound doctrine. I'll talk more about that.

As we go forward this morning. He must. Be able. To instruct. With sound doctrine. What does that mean? Faithfulness to the word. I want us to look at.

[19:50] Timothy. Another pastoral. Epistle. And Paul is saying something. Very similar to Timothy. I want you to hear it. Out of the book of Timothy.

In chapter three and four. And I would ask you to turn there. Turn to the book of second Timothy. Hopefully you've got the scriptures in hand. It's not going to be on the screens in front of you. If you don't have a Bible. There's a few Bibles in the chairs. I want you to be able to look at the passage. And I want you to look at the instruction. The fatherly instruction that Paul would give to Timothy.

As he's given it to Titus. And I want you to see verse three of chapter four. It's interesting. This has already been read this morning. We've already heard it.

I want you to look at it again. It says this. For the time is coming. Here's Paul saying to Timothy. Timothy beware. The time is coming.

[20 : 45] What time Paul? The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching. But they have itching ears. And they will accumulate to themselves teachers. That suit their own passions.

Church. Does that happen today? I don't like what that guy says. I don't like the fact that it. Fill in the blank. I don't like that guy.

We need to go get a guy that's like this. We need to get a guy that shares something that is warmer. That is more general. That is the good God. The God who's.

And they accumulate teachers. Based on their desires and their wants. Not based on those who are true to the word. Do you hear what it's saying?

They turn away from listening to the truth. Verse 4. And they wander off into myths. Church. You know this is happening our day. That there's so many people.

[21 : 47] That are in the pews of churches around this country. That are wandering off. And believing these myths. That they're not chasing hard after the word of God.

They don't want to hear the truth. Because the truth is painful at times. It's confrontational at times. It's revealing at times. It shows us our depravity.

It shows us that. Our sin. It shows us. Who we really are. It exposes. Who we are. On a heart level. And people don't want to walk that road.

They just want to do their own thing. And so if we look at this passage. These charges to Timothy. Notice the charges. We back up into verse 14 of chapter 3.

And it says. But as for you Timothy. And he says it again. In verse 5 of chapter 4. As for you Timothy. And then in verse 4 chapter 1. I charge you Timothy.

[22 : 50] So we see these exhortations to Timothy. What does he say? Here's the exhortation to Timothy. Timothy. As an elder. As a pastor.

As an overseer. Of the church of God. Which he bought with his own blood. It's as if Paul is saying. This is important. This is worth giving your life away for.

And he says this. But as for you. Continue in what you have learned. And have firmly believed. Knowing. From whom you learned it. And how from childhood.

You've been acquainted with the sacred writings. Church. Are we acquainted with the sacred writings? Have we spent time. In the sacred writings.

That is. The word of God. Are we acquainted with it? Is it familiar to us? Not just the stories. Of childhood. But the depth of the doctrine.

[23 : 49] You know. That's why we do this every week. Is we have someone preach to God's word. Because of the great need. For it to be central in our lives. This is the way we live.

We live according to his word. And we need. The washing of the word. Don't we? We need it. And he says. I know how from childhood.

You've been acquainted with the sacred writings. Which are able to make you wise. For salvation through faith in Jesus. All scripture is God breathed. And is profitable. For what? For teaching.

For reproof. Isn't it interesting? The word of God is profitable. For reproof. Isn't that exactly what he's telling Titus to do? Titus. There's issues in the church.

And you're the leader. You've got to stand up. And you've got to rebuke where rebukes needed. And you've got to embrace where embrace is needed. But ultimately. What it's for. Is for the sake of the flock.

[24 : 48] God's word is profitable for reproof. And for correction. And training in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete. Equipped for every good work.

Here it is. Verse 4.1. I charge you. Timothy. In the presence of God. Hey. We're always in the presence of God. Aren't we? But he reminds him. Listen. God.

God is witness to what I'm saying to you right now. And I charge you as a pastor of this flock. As an elder of this flock. I charge you. Timothy. And my page flipped over. I charge you in the presence of God. And of Jesus Christ. Who is a judge of the living and the dead. And by his appearance in his kingdom. Preach the word. He can say a lot of things. But what do you say? Timothy. Preach the word. Certainly he says to Timothy. Live it. Don't just speak it.

[25 : 44] Live it out. But don't hesitate to preach it faithfully. Don't shy away from what people think. Don't walk down some crazy road. What others want to hear.

You preach God's word. And God's word will do the work in the hearts of the people. Preach the word.

Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove. Rebuke. Exhort. With complete patience and teaching. And in verse 5 he says.

And as for you Timothy. Always be sober minded. Endure suffering. Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill the ministry to which you've been called.

You know what? It's not easy to be an elder. Is it? How often do we like to go to people and rebuke them? And confront them? Hopefully it's with gentleness.

[26 : 42] Sometimes it can't be with gentleness. Think about how Jesus confronted those who are in the temple. Who were selling. He said my house shall be called a house of prayer. And what did he do? He made a cord.

A whip out of cords. And he went in and he was knocking over the tables of those who were degrading what was supposed to be done in the house. It's a house of prayer. It's God's house. It represents the presence of God. And they're in there selling animals and stuff. They've made it a business. And how he went with directness to them and he ran them out of God's house.

But yet at times he's very gentle in the way that he approaches. Listen to how Christ approached and how important it was for Christ to be able to recognize the lies.

Subtle lies that can be brought into the church. Y'all know how subtle lies are at times? Think about the way that Satan tempted Christ on the mountain.

[27 : 47] He says, hey listen, your word says if you jump off then your angels are going to protect you unless you dash your head against a stone. He's like, no, you're twisting the word.

You're saying it but you're saying it out of context. You're not saying it according to truth. He says, no, but you should not tempt the Lord your God. So he corrects Satan in those moments of temptation.

Who Satan is subtly trying to twist the word. You know sometimes some people can say things as they teach the word of God and they cannot be true. They sound good. And we say, well that guy's got all the education.

He's been here, he's been there, he's done this, he's done that, he's older, he's done it for a long time. Surely he's got to be telling the truth. That's got to be right, I'll embrace it. We don't need to do that. So Christ, when he confronted, I'm going to read a bit of a passage here.

I just want you to hear that he doesn't say to all elders, you need to be in the face of all the people. He doesn't say that. But he does say for those who are bringing lies in the church, you need to understand it, recognize it, and be able to refute it.

[28 : 55] The elders of the church need to refute the lies that are being pushed. The false prophets that are coming, they need to be able to recognize it and refute it. But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, the Sadducees brought forth this lie.

It says there's no resurrection, there's no afterlife. And Christ silenced them, how? With truth. And then here it is, but when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.

And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. Teacher, which is the greatest commandment? And he said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

This is a great and first commandment, and the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depends all the law. Now, while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question saying, Who do you think is the Christ?

What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? They said to him, the son of David. So do you understand that they tried to trap him and he answered their question well.

[29 : 58] What's the greatest commandment? Of all the 613 commandments that the Jews recognized, he said, here's the summary of it all. Love and love. Love God. Love your neighbor.

And he says, I want to ask you a question too. He knew the trickery. He knew the lies they were trying to push among the people. And he asked a question. He said, what about the son of God? Who is he? Whose son is he? They said, the son of David. Well, that's what the prophecies declared, that the Messiah would be born to David. And then he quotes from the Old Testament. He said, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet. If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son? And no one was able to answer him a word. Nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions. Listen, those liars, those false prophets, those tools of the enemy were trying to destroy.

[30 : 57] And what did the elder do? That is Christ, the chief shepherd of the flock. What did he do? He was able to speak truth to them. He was able to not only recognize the lie and recognize the deception, but he brought a question to them that they could not answer.

You can't refute the truth. And it's the truth that exposes the lies. And so I turn back to our passage. And I want you to recognize the importance of this.

Recognize what's said about the elders and what they need to be doing. Certainly Titus being one of those elders. And in verse 9 again, hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught.

He says, be able to give instruction in sound doctrine. How is it that a man can give instruction in sound doctrine? How is it?

By being saturated with the word of God. You know what? If we want to recognize a lie, what do we need? We need to know the truth. And every time a lie is introduced that is not according to truth, we recognize it.

[32 : 12] Why? Because we're saturated with the truth. He says, be able to give sound instruction. Be able to do what Christ did.

That is to recognize the lie and to refute it. And then feed the flock. Feed the flock of God. We need church. We need sound doctrine.

We need the truth. And sometimes the truth is not easy to swallow, is it? The passage indicates in chapter 2, as Paul's, the last verse we read says this, but as for you, teach.

As for you, Titus, teach. You know, there's got to be a lot of roles as a pastor. And we think about it nowadays. Unless you're inside the ropes, unless you've been there and done that, you have no idea what all goes on in the life of a pastor of a church.

I mean, you're fielding calls from all kind of things. There's all these logistical things around the church that need to be done. There's planning. There's relationships. There's funerals.

[33 : 29] There's weddings. There's all this stuff behind the scenes that, unless you're there, you have no idea. A man can forget his family. Because he's so tied up with the things of the church.

But you know what the scriptures say here, what Paul is saying? Teach. Don't neglect the teaching of the word. Why? Because the church needs the truth. It's the truth that reveals our own sin.

It's the truth that reaches down to the joints in the marrow. It discerns the thoughts and intents of our hearts. The truth reveals the sin in our life. And we need to confess sin.

We need to live this repenting way, this life of repentance, this life of faith, this life of trust. We need it. And how are we going to get there? It's the truth. We need the truth.

We need to make it central and keep it central. Do you all hear the passage saying that? The need for the word to be the central part of the church. The importance of the word direct in everything.

[34 : 34] And again, he said, teach in accordance with sound doctrine. In accordance with truth. So church, what is that? How does that apply to you and I?

Does that mean that as long as we got a good pastor, a guy who's teaching according to the truth, then man, we're set. We're good. Right? What is the role of the rest of the church?

Those who aren't called to be elders or pastors. What is the role of the rest of the church? Does that mean that you can just get your learning from the guys he teaches on Sunday morning? Oh, please don't do that.

Please don't wait on the pastor to spoon feed. You know what? God gave us a Bible so that all of us could dig and chase and know who he is. How are you going to get to know him if you don't chase the word, the truth?

You know what this is? It's a revelation of God. It's a revelation of himself to you and me. And I would ask this question to all of us. How much time are you investing in the word?

[35 : 40] What priority does it have in your life? Do we really believe it's going to make a difference? Hey, I'll promise you this.

And I promise this on the word of God itself because the word of God says it. If you will dig and you will chase and you will seek God with all your heart, you know what's going to happen? You'll change your life forever. It'll change the way you live. It'll change your priorities. It'll change the way you think. It'll bring you joy and peace and rest and growth. I promise you, if you will chase knowing him, if you will dig deep in his word, then the Holy Spirit will reveal to you the truth. Isn't that what it says? The Holy Spirit will lead you and guide you into all truth. As you're opening the word and as you're reading, you're saying, I don't understand that. I don't understand it. I don't know.

I can't make heads or tails of it. And you say, well, I'm just going to put it aside then because I can't understand it. Let me just tell you this. If you'll keep reading, then over time, God will reveal to you those passes you didn't understand.

[36 : 45] They will begin to become clear. God will reveal them to you. We simply have to put it as the highest of priorities in our life. Can I say that again? This needs to be the highest priority in your life.

The word of God and knowing him. Nothing higher. This trumps your family. I don't mean you neglect your family. I don't mean you go find a restaurant and you spend 10 days straight and you forget about your family.

I'm not saying that. I'm just saying this has to be the highest priority. Why? Because this is a direction for knowing him. This shows us how to live the Christian way.

Let me close with this verse out of Acts. And I think it's exciting to see the involvement of the church in the chasing and understanding of sound doctrine.

Now, Paul and Silas were always constantly under attack, it seemed. And they were, the brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night.

[37 : 57] Why? Because they were under attack. And so they got them by night. They took them out of there because they heard a plot to come arrest them or try to kill them. And they took them out and they sent them to Berea. And so he goes to Berea.

What do you think Paul's going to do when he gets to Berea? He goes right to the church. Where? He goes to the synagogue, which is common for him. He goes to the synagogue, which is Jewish. It's a Jewish synagogue. And when they arrived in Berea, they went into the Jewish synagogue. And now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica. And why were they more noble? Listen to what the Word of God says, church. And I want you to hear it as coming from the Lord for you and me. It says this. They received the Word with all eagerness.

They wanted to hear the preached Word. And they examined the Scriptures daily to see if those things were true. Church, when Jonathan's preaching or I'm preaching or someone else is here preaching, do you all listen to see if those things are actually true?

[39 : 04] Are you just accepted because we're standing up here? Oh, I would encourage you to never just accept it. I would encourage you to go dig in Scriptures yourself and see if these things be true.

Dig in Scripture. Saturate yourself with the Word of God. It will change your life. Let's pray. Father, I pray that you would put in the hearts of every single person in this room an unquenchable hunger for your Word.

Lord, I pray that you would open our eyes that we could see as we read your Word, that you would reveal what it is and what it means. You would help us to see you in all your glory.

Father, by showing us your Word, you would lead us into worship because, Father, you're worthy. Your Word declares your greatness and your grace and your mercy and your glory and your majesty.

Father, your Word reveals how very, very small we are that, Father, apart from you, there's nothing good in us.

[40 : 21] But by your greatness, God, you've come and you've shown us our sin and you've shown us our need for a Savior. And you've shown us that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

And that it is by His death and His burial and His resurrection and ascension that we know for sure that it is through Christ and by Christ alone that we can be saved.

And, Father, you've called us by your name. Those of us who have asked for your forgiveness who have been redeemed by you. And, Father, you're drawing us into this life of abiding, this life of fellowship with you.

Father, I pray that you would protect us as we together seek heart after you, God. As we, together as a church, we encourage one another and we sharpen one another.

And we care for one another. We pray for one another. God, I pray that here in this place, your Word would always be central. God, we thank you for your Word and we praise you in Christ's name.

[41 : 22] Amen.