

Instructions for the Preservation of the Church: Watch Out

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[0:00] We're reading together today, 2 John. I'll read the entire letter. The Elder, to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth.

! And not I only, but also all who know the truth,! Because of the truth which lives in us, and will be with us forever. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.

It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command, but one we have had from the beginning.

I ask that we love one another. And this is love that we walk in obedience to His commands. As you have heard from the beginning, His command is that you walk in love.

Many deceivers who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

[1:05] Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God.

Whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take Him into your house or welcome Him. Anyone who welcomes Him shares in His wicked work.

I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face so that our joy may be complete. The children of your chosen sister send their greetings.

Every magician is a con man. And every con man's motto is, Trust me.

Trust me. So the magician takes his perfectly good top hat, shows you the inside of it, and he says, Nothing up here. Nothing up here.

[2:08] And voila, he pulls a rabbit out of his hat. Or so it seems. Or maybe he takes a woman, and he puts her in a box, and he shuts up the box, and he runs a hula hoop all around it, and then he cuts the woman in half.

And the woman smiles. Must feel good. So he wheels her legs around on one part of the stage, and her body on the other part of the stage.

Then he brings them back together. And we love it. We love it because it's entertaining. He tells us to believe him.

And it looks so true. But we know it's not true. But the magician tells us to trust him. And so for a while, we trust him.

But the truth is, we've been deceived. We've been deceived. But we don't mind because it's all in good fun. Most of the time, deceivers are not so fun.

[3:13] Most of the time, when we run into a deceiver, it costs us dearly. And John, in his second epistle, is having to deal with some deceivers that will cost this church, and the church that he was writing to, dearly if we believe them.

So remember last week we said that 2 John is a book written for the reason, it's a letter for the reason of keeping a church from dying.

It's about keeping a church from dying. So in the first six verses, we showed what are some of the problems that can come from the inside that could kill a church. Well, in these next seven verses, what we're going to cover today, the rest of the book, John warns us of a different danger, a danger that doesn't come from the inside, from among the members, but from the outside.

We want to look at the rest of 2 John under three headings. The deceivers, the danger, and the defense. So let's first talk about the deceivers.

In verse 7, it says that many deceivers have gone out into the world. John wasn't addressing a small problem. It wasn't that there was only a few.

[4:35] Many deceivers have gone out. So a single bee can be dangerous in its own way, but a swarm of bees can be deadly.

So there's not just a few deceivers floating around, there's many. So this local church was definitely going to run into them.

Sooner or later, they would run into them. And the local church that John was writing to had to know how to deal with the deceivers. So if it was true then, 2,000 years later, how much more true is it? There's been years and years to perfect deception. So deception and deceit comes in all shapes and sizes. And you will certainly run into it.

You will run into the deceivers. You run into them all the time. Most of the time, or many of us, I should say, send our children to public school. Many of us here do that. And there's deceivers in our education system that unwittingly, maybe, lie about the creation of our world.

[5:43] And they might not come out and say that God had nothing to do with it. But they say there's natural causes to explain why our world exists and how we got here.

Others in the church say, God can't know the future because He's dependent on my free will. And others in our culture say that Christianity is true, but Islam is true too.

They're both true. They're equally true. So deceit is real. It's out there. And there's many deceivers. But what about these deceivers that John is talking about?

Where did they come from? What was their message? And that's what he's going to talk about.

John says, where have they come from? He says they've gone out into the world. And probably that means the deceivers have gone out into the world from the church.

These men didn't come from the world originally. They had their origin in the church. In 1 John, he says this, speaking of the false teachers, they went out from us, but they didn't really belong to us.

[6:55] So in the evenings, we've been talking about deceivers and false teaching. And there was two, Hymenaeus and Philetus. And Paul says, they've wandered away from the truth.

They started out in the truth and they've wandered. They've wandered out of the truth. And these deceivers in 2 John started in the church.

They started in the truth. And now they've embraced worldly thinking. They've wandered out of the path of the truth. They've left the church. So they've left the church and now they're coming home to roost again.

And their origin in the church made them all the more dangerous. They knew the lingo. They knew how to sound like a Christian teacher.

And so they were like undercover agents. They were able to blend in. You never knew who they were. They could enter into the church and they knew the right things to say, the right time to say it.

[7:53] They knew what certainly not to say. And even all the while, they were spreading their lies. So just because someone has a fair face and someone can sound like a Christian, it doesn't mean that they're true.

And this line, they've gone out into the world, probably also has reference to their satanic origin. To their satanic origin. Jesus sent his apostles out into the world with his message of the gospel.

And Satan, in the same way, never to be outdone, the father of lies, the head deceiver himself, sends out his apostles. And they go bearing his message.

And as Satan goes robed in light like an angel, his apostles, they are dressed as teachers of the gospel. So we ask, who are these men?

Who are these men? And John answers, any person like this deceiver, or any person like this, is the deceiver and the Antichrist. They belong to that same group of people as the Antichrist that will come at the end.

[9:04] Paul calls him the man of lawlessness who will exalt himself over everything that is called God, proclaiming himself to be God. And this Antichrist that's going to come at the end of the age will come with many counterfeit signs and wonders and every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing.

And so the Antichrist is a real figure. He's really going to come. And in the same way, these false teachers, these deceivers, are precursors of that final Antichrist.

They're the little Antichrist. They're cut from the same cloth. They come out of the same mold and with the same intentions. The Antichrist and these Antichrists use lies and trickery to ensnare their hearers.

So John doesn't want us to be tricked. He doesn't want us to fall for the deception. And so he's going to do us a favor. He's going to tell us and he's going to expose their deceit.

So think again of the magician that we talked about in the beginning. If you know what's behind the trick, if you understand what the magician is doing, it's not nearly as entertaining.

[10 : 13] And John doesn't want us to entertain these deceivers. The lady, I hate to break it to you, she's really not cut in half. She's scrunched up front.

And those legs and those shoes, those are fake. She's really scrunched up. And so when she's put back together, there's been no magic. Whatever else seemed the truth, whatever seemed like it was true, it wasn't.

And so now you know, you'll never be deceived again. And John tells us the trick behind these deceivers' deceit, behind their deceit.

Look at verse 7 with me. He says, this is how they're going to try to deceive you. They will not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh.

They will not acknowledge that Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh. Now the first time I read this, maybe the second time I read this, this is how I translated it in my brain.

[11 : 17] Many deceivers who say Jesus Christ didn't come in the flesh have gone out into the world. There's a little subtle difference. So I was thinking that these people are going to be easy to spot.

They're the ones saying, you apostles, you're wrong. Jesus Christ really didn't come in the flesh. He wasn't really human. He didn't really come in the flesh.

They're saying something. But that's not what John says. That's not what John says. He says, they don't acknowledge that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. They're mum on the subject.

They're silent. They don't say anything about it. They won't confess it. They will say lots of things about Jesus. They'll say lots of true things about Jesus, but they just won't confess this one truth.

They'll say that He's God. They'll say that He's the Son of God. But they won't say that He came in the flesh. And so they're shady characters. Their lie is in what they don't say, in their silence.

[12 : 19] Now we all know that kind of lie because we've all lied that way. Now children, your parents are gone and there's a fight in the house and something gets broken and your parents come home and the seven-year-old is crying and your parents want an explanation.

Since you're the oldest, you give it to them. And so you exaggerate the role that the others played and you don't, you're just mysteriously silent about what your role in the matter was.

The fact is that you originally tripped her. You originally were the one teasing her. It's left out of the story. And you lie to your parents in what you don't say.

So you tell them the truth, but at the same time, you don't tell them the truth at all. You lie in your silence. And that's what kind of teachers these were. They could peddle their lies out in the open, in front of everyone, because they weren't saying anything that was wrong.

They were lying of what they didn't say. They wouldn't say that Jesus came in the flesh. And so what does that mean? That means they denied the incarnation of the Son of God.

[13 : 30] They wouldn't, and they couldn't accept that Jesus was a human completely. He was God. He was the Son of God.

He was the Son of God in the appearance of a man. So he was sort of dressed up like a man. But he wasn't a full human. He wasn't the God man. He wasn't God and man, two natures in one person.

They weren't willing to say that. They weren't willing to say that. Is that important? We'll find out later. So that's who these deceivers are.

They're satanic in origin. They come from Satan. They come from the church. They're cut out of the same cloth as the Antichrist himself. And their lie and their error is in what they don't say.

So they're dangerous. Let's move to the second point, and that is their danger. What is so dangerous about their teaching? Well, John tells us there's a couple dangers that if we buy into their teaching, we're going to run into problems.

[14 : 40] If you buy their lie, then look at verse 8. It says, Watch out that you do not lose what you work for, but that you may be rewarded fully.

Watch out. Watch out. Because if you buy this lie, you're going to lose everything that you've worked for. Now, the church that John was writing to, they had worked hard. They had worked to be a God-glorifying church. They worked hard to be a good witness for Christ. And they worked hard to keep peace, to be peacemakers. They had to go through church discipline.

These were probably some of the churches that had to send out some of the false teachers. So they worked for their purity. They worked to live together. They had endured persecution. They had worked for their holiness. And John is saying, if you buy into that lie, then everything you've worked for, the smile of God, eternal life, everything you've worked for will be for nothing. [15:41] You'll lose everything. So brothers and sisters, what have we worked for here? Grace Fellowship, I thank God, we are a hard-working church.

We can do more. We certainly can do more. But as we look back over our life together, we have worked hard. We've worked hard in church discipline, in teaching our children, in taking the gospel to the nations.

We've worked hard to have love and peace here. We've cared for each other. And by God's grace, we have worked for His smile. So we've been working to gain an eternal crown.

And John says, if we labor, or if we buy into this deceit, we'll lose everything we've worked for. So Grace Fellowship, we could be working for nothing.

It will all disappear in the last day. Now, I hate working for nothing. Don't you? I hate it. So I've had experiences where I've worked on this project for four hours, and I've worked with all my heart and soul, and then I find out at the end of four hours that I did it all wrong.

[16:54] And it was for nothing. And it's such a disappointment. Such a waste of time. It's so pointless. And I know God is using those occasions to test and to give a trial, but it doesn't feel any better at the end for all that.

And maybe you've been there. Ladies, you've worked on a cake for three hours, and it's coming to the final stages, and it falls in on itself. And you can't rescue it. Three hours of baking for nothing. You've worked for nothing. And that's the danger of falling into this lie. Everything you work for, it could be for nothing at the end. If you turn aside from the truth, you turn aside from the path of God's reward.

You lose your reward of what you've worked for. And not only that, you lose God Himself. And that's the greatest danger. If you buy into this deceit, you lose your reward, but in the process, you lose God Himself.

Look at verse 9. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God. Does not have God.

[18:06] Now, most of the commentaries are all agreed on this, that this running ahead language is probably a play on what these deceivers were saying about themselves. They were the go-ahead people.

They were the ones that were ahead of the apostles. They had run ahead and found new truth and new knowledge. They were the advanced ones. They were the ones in the know. And John is saying, yep, you've advanced.

You've ran ahead. And you've ran completely away from God. So, you bought the deceit and you lost God in the bargain. So they didn't continue in the teaching of Christ and so they lost God. They didn't keep the right doctrine of Christ and so they lost God in the process. And if we don't continue in the teaching of Christ, we can lose God too.

So do you see what John is saying? This is probably the most important truth of this whole message. Is this, if we have Christ, then we have God.

[19:11] And if we don't have Christ, we don't have God. As we continue in the truth, as we walk in the truth, like what we talked about last week, we have fellowship with God the Father and God the Son.

We have fellowship with Jesus Christ. And in our fellowship with Jesus Christ, we have fellowship with God. But these teachers, they wanted more. They wanted to know more.

And so they wanted to run ahead. And they thought by running ahead, by coming to something new, by leaving Jesus Christ, the historical figure, the God-man behind, that they could come to something new, to something better.

They thought going on was the way of advancing. They thought leaving Christ was the way to find God. And John says, no. The way you advance in the Christian life is you stay put where you are. You stay put where you are. You advance in God as you go deeper into Jesus Christ. So they wanted to get past Jesus Christ. They weren't happy with Him.

[20 : 19] And they were wrong. They should have dug deeper into Christ. Because Christ holds all the riches of God. So in Christ, we have the wisdom of God.

We have the power of God. We have the love of God. In Christ, we are sanctified. In Christ, we were adopted. In Christ, we were justified and made alive.

We were given new life. We are given a life together. The reason we're together is because of Jesus Christ. So we receive all of God's blessings in Him.

So if we don't have Christ, we don't have God. God's blessings And now, we're not just talking about any old Christ. Not some particular, some Christ of our imagination.

We're talking about the historical Jesus Christ. And people are happy talking about God. They're happy talking about spiritual things. But they don't want to talk about Jesus Christ, the man who lived on earth, who came into the world, who became flesh, who is still in the flesh, who's completely God and completely man, two natures and one person without mixture, without confusion.

[21 : 41] He's both true God and true man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man. That's from our confession. So now, you can see why this deceit was so dangerous.

Because if we lose the Jesus who came in the flesh, we have no mediator. We have no mediator. You have no one to stand between you and God.

There's no one to stand in the breach between you and God. If Christ isn't fully man, then you have no high priest who can sympathize with you. You have no sacrifice that's been made for your sins. The cross, what does it mean if Jesus isn't a man? It means nothing. It means nothing. There's no propitiation for God's wrath. There's no salvation. There's no second Adam to redeem us.

And we stand guilty. And there's no resurrection from the dead. Because whatever and whoever was resurrected back then, it sure wasn't someone like me.

[22 : 48] There's no new creation. There's no gospel. So that's why we can't fall in line with these people. people. They say there's lots of ways to God.

And there just isn't. There isn't. If you don't continue in the teaching of Christ, you do not have God. Jesus Christ is the only hope that any of us have.

And there's no other gospel. There's no other gospel besides this one that Jesus Christ was both God and man and he came in the flesh. And if you don't entrust yourself to him, you will perish. But if you do, if you believe in him, you will not perish but have eternal life. And so I ask, what are you doing with this Jesus Christ?

He came. The Son of God became man to save sinners. We sang about it. So have you trusted yourself into his hands?

[23 : 52] Or are you still thinking your own thoughts about how to be saved? And thinking about your own thoughts about the kind of Jesus that you want? And the gospel messages just forsake those ways.

They're not true. It's a lie. Forsake your own thoughts about Jesus Christ and dive into the Christ of the Bible. The God man. Because he's God.

And so he can save us. He's a mighty Savior. And he's a man. So he can sympathize with us in our sin and in our misery. He's a wonderful friend.

He's a man just like you. So he can save us from our enemies. He can save us from Satan because he's God. And yet, he can bear our sorrows because he's man.

So, you don't run ahead. You don't come into the know by running away from Jesus. You get into Jesus.

[24 : 52] You dig deeper into him. And he's deep enough to dig as far as you want and to have your heart satisfied. You'll never have to turn to someone else or something else to find life and to find joy because he's God.

He's a man. So, all of our hopes for eternal life, brothers and sisters, everyone here, all of our hope for eternal life is resting on this stone of Jesus Christ being God and man.

And so now do you see the danger of these teachers? They start with silence. They start with silence and pretty soon they've lost the whole gospel itself.

You've seen avalanches on TV where just a little bit of snow kind of breaks off and it's no big deal but pretty soon that little bit of snow dislodges more snow and pretty soon the whole mountain is falling down and it's burying the skiers alive.

Well, that's what this silence was like. It was like the small pebble. It was the small bit of stone that if it lets go you've lost everything.

[26:09] The avalanche begins. And so these deceivers had an agenda. It was a satanic agenda. It was to overthrow the gospel but they weren't going to do it in the most obvious way.

They were going to do it with silence and with a lie. And so if the church bought what they were selling they would lose everything. They would lose their reward.

They would lose the gospel. They would lose their life now together and they would lose their life to come. But thankfully John doesn't leave these people here.

He doesn't just tell them well you've got to watch out. He tells them how to do it. And so our third point is the defense. The defense. If you look at verse 8 it starts out watch out.

Watch out. Be on the guard. Take heed to yourselves. Watch out for yourselves is what he's saying. The key to the defense is seeing the enemy before he comes.

[27:09] If you want to be saved in this battle you have to make sure the battle never takes place. That you see the enemy coming. And they're deceptive. They're slippery. They're cunning.

And so you have to watch out. If you knew exactly when a thief was going to break into your house. You knew exactly when and how he was going to do it. Well you know what you could do?

You could take a few days off. You could not worry about a few things because you knew he wasn't going to come in that way and he wasn't going to come in on that day. But you don't know when you're going to run into this seat with these lies.

So you have to watch out. You have to be on your guard all the time and in every way because you don't know. So how do you watch out? How do you watch out?

You watch out like your life depends on it. So these frauds, these con men, they're playing for keeps.

[28:12] They're playing for your soul. They're on an errand from hell, remember. And they want to ensnare you. And if they can get you ensnared, then you lose everything.

You lose your soul. So watch out like your life depended upon it. In the time of John, when John was writing this, there was a splinter sect in Israel called the Sakari.

And they're not very well known because there weren't very many of them. But Sakari means dagger men. And they were basically ancient assassins. and what they would do is when, well, let me tell you, they hated the Romans.

They hated Roman sympathizers. And their goal was to terrorize all these people and hopefully to free Israel. So what they would do, they would go into a crowd, say we're milling around out there, and they would stab someone and kill them in broad daylight.

and as soon as the person went down, they would fall back into the crowd and start mourning and wailing like everyone else. And then, they'd walk away.

[29:23] And no one would know any better. Now, if you were a Roman sympathizer in this time, and you knew there was a mark on you, they wanted to get you, how would you watch out?

You'd watch out like your life depended on it because it does. You'd take steps to protect yourself. You would hire a bodyguard. You wouldn't go into crowds unnecessarily.

You'd watch like your life depended on it. And brothers and sisters, these deceivers that we're talking about, and not only these, but all those who preach a false gospel, they're not out for your body.

They want to drag your soul to hell. They want more than your life. They want your eternal life. They want to drag you away from Jesus Christ, away from the truth.

And so you must watch out. Well, how do you watch out? Well, you watch out with your hand on your sword. If they're going to try to kill you, you keep your hand on your sword.

[30:29] So that means you keep your Bible at hand. If you're going to watch out and you're going to see these teachers coming, you must know the truth. You must be familiar with the truth.

Do you know how the Secret Service trains counterfeit, their counterfeit agents, to see a counterfeit? They don't show them a whole bunch of counterfeits.

They just keep on showing them what real money looks like. So they have to know what money looks like in every detail. How many numbers are in the serial number of every dollar bill?

Which way does the eagle face? Whose head is on the dime? And when those things are second nature, when they can spot a fraud any time because they know the truth so well, they're ready to become an agent.

They're ready to spot the fakes. And if you're going to see the lie, you too must know the truth. You have to know the truth. So could you explain, we'll have a little quiz, could you explain in a few sentences the person of Christ?

[31 : 34] Could you tell me, just about him in a few sentences? Could you tell me why Jesus is not a name for God? Could you tell me what's wrong with thinking that God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are just three different ways that God can be God?

Can you tell me what's wrong with that? Because all those things are out there. They're lies and they're floating around and if you're ignorant to them, then you're not watching out.

If you're ignorant, then find out. Take a class, read a book, ask your pastor something. Have that Berean spirit. Remember when Paul and Silas, I believe, came to the Bereans?

They searched their scriptures intently. And that's what kind of heart we need to have. You must be familiar with the truth if you're going to watch out. Well, how do you watch out?

You watch out by not getting too close to the deceivers by not unnecessarily having dealings with them. Look at verse 10, and that's the point of verse 10.

[32 : 42] If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house, or literally into the house, into the church house, or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

So if you're getting up close and you're getting friendly and you're letting them teach, then you're not watching out. You're actually aiding and abetting the enemy.

So this directive is most pointedly directed towards the leaders of the church and the church itself.

So if they come to you, if they come to the church, don't welcome them.

Don't have anything to do with them. Don't support them. Don't listen to them. They're like fire. And if you take fire into your lap, you're going to get burned. So you keep them at arm's length.

Now maybe some of you, and maybe some of us here, could handle hearing some false doctrine, but some people can't. There's lambs that need protected.

[33 : 46] And there's the curious that they have just an itching ear for these things that need watched over. And there's weak-willed women, as Paul says, that need protected.

So you don't let them teach. You don't welcome them in. You don't show them hospitality. You should show hospitality to the legitimate teachers, the legitimate missionaries that are coming through, but send the liars packing.

They don't have a place. You don't be polite to them. You send them on the way. Now, I say that, and I say that from the church's perspective.

Okay? I don't say you can be rude to Jehovah Witnesses when they come to your door, because we're not talking about that situation. And we're not talking about if a Jehovah Witness comes to your door, you just slam the door in their face and you don't listen to anything what they say, because they need to hear the truth.

And if you won't tell them, who will? We're talking about the church itself. love. So does that mean, and you're going to know the answer, does this mean that no one should ever listen to or study false teaching?

[35 : 02] To hear and consider what the false teachers are saying? Well, it doesn't mean that, obviously. But anyone should be very careful about themselves, because whoever studies it, should be trained men, they should be prepared men, because they need to be able to know the false from the true.

And so for those people, it's good for them to study what the false teachers are doing so they can help others watch out. Now, if you go down to Atlanta, Georgia, you can visit the Center for Disease Control.

And there they have all sorts of nasty diseases. They have the 1918 influenza that killed millions of people. They have Ebola.

They have malaria. They have AIDS. And you know what? People do study those things, and it's good for them to do that. But they don't go in there without a lot of training and without protection.

Because if they do, someone's going to die. It's going to be a mass outbreak, and certainly that person's going to die. And so if you are going to study these things, you don't do it, and you can't do

it flippantly.

[36 : 14] Remember, in 2 Timothy, Paul says this false teaching is like gangrene. And I made the same mistake that Aaron did, and I actually looked at what gangrene looks like.

It's really gross. It's disgusting. And so when you're listening to these false teachers, think, this is gangrene. This is disgusting, soul-killing, hell-spreading, life-consuming disease.

And if I handle it in the wrong way, I'm going to die. So I better watch out. Well, how do you watch out? You watch out.

This is the final way. You watch out by continuing in the teaching of Christ. You don't focus on what the liars are saying. You focus on the truth.

The ultimate defense against false teaching is to stay so focused on the truth. So focused on Jesus that when the false teachers come and they say, hey, we have something new here for you.

[37 : 17] This is new. This is better. You don't have time for that. The old Jesus, the old teaching, that's good enough. That fulfills me.

That satisfies. And that's the truth. So the best way to be watching out is to continue with Jesus. So you go deeper with him. You have a need.

And you look and you see that he meets that need. And you look and you see the richness of the gospel. Are you meditating on how wonderful the gospel is?

Because if you are, you're going to be protected from those people that would want to foist on you something that's not true. So you strive to know more and more of God's powerful work in your life.

You try to be more holy. You strive by God's grace to do those things. You strive to come closer and closer to Jesus and you'll be protected. You'll be watched out and Jesus will protect you.

[38 : 19] If he sees that you are in earnest about seeking him, he will protect you. And so I ask you, when the magician comes, because they're going to come and he's going to do his hocus pocus, will you fall for his trick?

And he's not going to come with a top hat and a tuxedo with coattails. He's going to be dressed up like a pastor. And he's going to sound like a pastor.

He's going to have all the right credentials. He's going to come from the right seminaries. Will you fall for the truth? Will you believe his lie? Or will you fall for the lie? He'll be saying so many of the right things.

And that's what these teachers were doing. They were saying so many of the right things. They were just a little off. And that little bit could cost everything. So will you be watching?

And remember, he's not a magician that's playing for your applause. He's playing for your soul. He wants to ensnare your soul.

[39 : 24] So watch out. Watch out. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for your grace that you've given to us here. Thank you that you've given us the word of God whereby we could protect ourselves from false teachers.

Father, the last two weeks we've talked about how a church can die and how a church can thrive and grow. I pray that you would watch over us.

Will you add to our numbers? Will you protect us from the evil one? Will you protect us and lead us not into temptation? Because we have too much sin within.

We have too much fuel in our own soul that we are so easily led astray. Will you protect us? Father, there are people here in this room that are believing a lie.

And it might not be a doctrinal lie, but it's the lie that they don't need Jesus, that they're okay on their own. Will you show them the truth?

[40 : 40] Will you exalt your son? Will you exalt him in our hearts? Father, will you work beyond the words that we can say and go into men's hearts and change who we are?

Change the saints more into the image of their Savior and change the sinner and give them a new heart and new life. Father, we want to come here and meet with you and worship you, but we don't want to walk away unchanged.

So will you do your good work? In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.