

Distorting The Truth

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[0 : 0 0] Before we hear the preaching of God's word, let's take our Bibles again and turn to Matthew. The book of Matthew, chapter 23. Matthew 23, and I will be reading from verse 16 through to verse 22.

Matthew 23, verse 16. Let's hear the word of God. Woe to you, blind guides. This is talking to the Pharisees or of the Pharisees.

Woe to you, blind guides. You say, if anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing. But if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.

You blind fools, which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, if anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing.

But if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath. You blind men, which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

[1 : 0 6] Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it.

And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. Amen. Let's hear the word of God. This week I listened to or actually watched some of the footage that was taped of the coronation of King Charles III of Great Britain, in which they used the same basic words as have been used for over a thousand years.

Now that's tradition, British style. And at that coronation, King Charles actually stood and swore an oath.

An oath to maintain the laws of God and the true profession of the gospel in his realm. And to uphold the Protestant and Reformed faith. Its doctrine, worship, discipline and government.

So help me, God. He solemnly and sincerely declared in the presence of God that he is a faithful Protestant and will secure the Protestant succession to the throne.

[2 : 2 7] Now this whole idea of swearing an oath comes straight out of the word of God. Yes, it's found in the long established tradition of the British Empire.

But their fathers got it in a better era from God himself, as is found in the Old Testament scriptures. There in Deuteronomy 10 and verse 20, God commanded Israel to take their oaths in his name.

Solemnly calling on God in whose presence they stand to be the witness of what they claimed is true or what they promised to do.

Calling on God to judge them according to the truth or falsity of their words. Now it's no small thing to call on God as witness and judge of what is spoken.

And that's why swearing falsely profanes the holy name of God that is used in the oath. Leviticus 19, 12. Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane my name.

[3 : 3 6] The name of the Lord your God. To profane the name is to treat it with contempt. It's as if it doesn't matter that he's listening.

That he's present and watching what I'm saying. Saying, I'll lie if I want to. He's nothing to me. You see what an affront it is. And no wonder God's wrath is provoked to anger when his authority is so despised and his name is misused.

Indeed, the third commandment tells us you shall not misuse or profane the name of the Lord your God. To treat it as something common. Because the Lord will not hold him guiltless that uses his name or profanes his name in vain.

So the oath was meant to make people careful about what they said. Realizing that God is present.

And here's every word we speak. And will hold us accountable for it. So the king of the United Kingdom will have a lot to answer for when he stands before the king of kings.

[4 : 47] In whose presence he swore those oaths. And so will we. And so will we. And with that background we return to Matthew 23.

Where Jesus is exposing the hypocrisy. And the whole false religion of these Jewish teachers of the law. The Pharisees. Indeed most of the teachers of the law were Pharisees.

And at verse 13 he began to pronounce seven woes of judgment upon them. Last week we saw that they not only refused to enter the kingdom of God through the one door of Christ.

They not only refused to enter themselves. But they did everything that they could to try to keep others from entering into the kingdom. From coming to the Lord Jesus. So here they are.

These men who claim to know God's law. And therefore claimed to be trustworthy guides. For the people to follow them to heaven.

[5 : 52] When in reality they were leading them to hell. That's the reason for these curses. These woes upon them. And we saw the first two last week.

Now we come to the third woe of judgment. And it begins here in verse 16. And it's a woe or a judgment. Because of the way that they had perverted the use of oaths.

They had so treated them in a way that destroyed the importance of speaking only the truth. And keeping one's word. Now Jesus had confronted their perversion of the oath.

As early as Matthew 5 in the Sermon on the Mount. So I'm going to ask you to hold your place here. We'll be back. But to turn to Matthew chapter 5. And in that Sermon on the Mount.

We see Jesus contrasting in chapter 5. What the Pharisees were teaching about God's law. With what he, Jesus, the only law giver, is teaching about the law.

[6 : 57] Jesus is not here giving a new law. A different law from the Old Testament. He's not changing God's moral laws. He's just correcting the Pharisees' faulty interpretations.

And twisting of God's law. And giving his own true interpretation of it. So throughout, Jesus will say, You have heard that it's been said.

But I say to you. And he speaks with authority as if he were indeed the only law giver. For us to pay attention to. So here we have it.

Chapter 5, verse 33. Jesus has been using this. You have heard, but I say. Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago.

Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord. Indeed, Numbers 30 and verse 2 said, If a man swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word.

[7 : 59] He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. Leviticus 19 and verse 12. You shall not swear by my name falsely and so profane the name of the Lord.

Now, the scribes and the Pharisees had quoted the scripture. Their summary of it here is correct. But they had so placed the emphasis on the wrong words in the law of God that it twisted the law of God to mean this.

That if you've sworn an oath in the name of the Lord to do something, well then, you must keep the oath.

You must do everything that you said. Ah, but if you didn't swear an oath in the actual name of the Lord, well then, you don't need to be so careful to speak the truth or to do everything that you said you would.

This was just another way around the difficult demands of God's law. So the scribes and Pharisees, with their misplaced emphasis, twisted the law of God to mean what it never was meant to say.

[9 : 12] And this resulted in the Jews multiplying oaths in their ordinary conversation. You'd be in the market. You'd be in the home. You'd hear these oaths flowing from their mouths when they wanted to sound like they were really serious and what they were saying was the truth.

They'd add an oath. When they wanted you to know that they meant business and were going to keep their promise, they'd add an oath to their promise. They'd spruce up their language, in other words, with these oaths.

But not actually using God's name, but other words substituted for God. I swear by heaven I'm telling you the truth.

I swear by earth this is the truth. I swear by Jerusalem I'll do this for you. And so it had a sound of lending weight to what I say, but I know I don't need to be so careful with the truth because after all I didn't use the actual name of the Lord in my oath.

You see how they twisted it? If you make an oath in the name of the Lord, you must keep it. But if not, well, it's not so binding.

[10 : 26] And Jesus here condemns out of hand all such distinctions between binding oaths and less binding oaths as flagrant violations of our duty to always speak the plain truth to one another and to be careful to keep our word.

Jesus says here then in verse 34 and following, But I tell you, do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is God's throne, or by the earth, for it is His footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

So you cannot, by your subtle word selections, lessen the importance of truthful speech. God is always the present witness and judge of all you say and then what you do.

So, simply let your yes be yes and your no be no. Anything beyond that comes from the evil one, verse 37. The devil, the father of lies, the father of all non-truthful speech, He's behind all your clever ways of getting around God's demand of truthful speech.

And the Pharisees then, for all their professed spirituality, were only serving the devil's cause, the father of lies. So turn back then to chapter 23.

[11 : 57] We're now at the end of Jesus' ministry, just days before His crucifixion, at the hands of these scribes and Pharisees and priests. And as we come to chapter 23, we find that it only gets worse.

And isn't that the nature of sin? That once you start to play fast and loose with the truth, you only get faster and looser with the truth. And that's what had happened here.

Not only did the Pharisees distinguish between oaths that were binding and those that were less binding, we now see that they went all the way to distinguish oaths that were non-binding at all.

Binding, less, and there's even oaths that you can say that don't bind you at all to tell the truth. Verse 16, Matthew 23, Jesus, woe to you blind guides.

You say, if anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing, zilch. Oh, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he's bound by the oath.

[13 : 08] Verse 18, you also say, if anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing. But if anyone swears by the gift on the altar, he's bound by his oath.

Now, do you know where these distinctions between binding and non-binding oaths are found in the Old Testament? Nowhere.

Nowhere. These are man-made rules. This is man-made religion. It stirs the anger of our Lord Jesus.

They had worked out this whole convoluted system of hair-splitting distinctions between oaths, some binding, some less binding, some non-binding. And nobody knew them and used them as much as these religious Pharisees.

So let's say you live next door to a Pharisee, and you helped him bring in the harvest one year. But he didn't have any money to pay you. So he said, well, I've got a mare in full.

[14 : 14] I'll promise you to give the foal in the spring as payment. And he even swears an oath to do so. But when spring comes and the foal is born, it's a nice one.

And so he decides to keep it himself. And you go have a visit with him, and you say, oh, but you promised. You even swore an oath to give me your foal.

Ah! I swore by the temple, and not by the gold on the temple. Non-binding, you lose. That's the kind of thing that was happening in Israel.

You know what it reminds me of? It reminds me of young liars in a backyard clubhouse. A neighbor boy says something, and we find out he was lying. Or he promises to do something, and now he refuses to do it.

And so we confront him on it. Say, you promised. You even said, what was it? To stick a needle in my eye, hope to die if I don't do it?

[15 : 24] And he pulls his hand out of his pocket and says, ah, but I had my fingers crossed. These Pharisees, dressed up in their holy garb, were simply old boys playing their old lying, cheating games.

Playing fast and loose with the truth. Bending it at their will. No wonder Jesus calls them hypocrites. Pretending to be supporters of the truth, all the while destroying it with these fine distinctions distinctions and lying teachings.

It's interesting that J.C. Ryle, the commentator, says that even the heathen were well aware of the Jews' distinctions on binding and non-binding oaths.

This was something the Jews were infamous for. And Ryle quotes a Roman poet named Martial who specifically refers to this practice of the Jews.

In other words, no doubt some of the heathen had been taken advantage of by these Jewish people saying, oh, well, I swore to do it, but I swore by the altar and not by the gift on the altar.

[16 : 39] Again, sorry, it wasn't binding. And that's the way legalism works. So God's name was blasphemed among the Gentiles by these Jews who professed to be God's people and to be so holy.

Jesus calls them blind guides, misleading people, drawing them away from the true religion revealed by God into their own man-made false religion, as if these distinctions made such a difference in our obligation before God to speak the truth and to keep our word.

We have a saying, none so blind as he who will not see. These men were willfully blind. And so Jesus calls them blind fools, and then he beats them at their own little game.

So you who say that swearing by the temple is nothing, but swearing by the gold in the temple is binding?

Which is greater? The gold or the temple that makes the gold sacred? That gold is not something sacred outside the temple, but because it's set apart and brought into the temple and meant for the worship of God, that's what makes the gold even sacred.

[18 : 03] And he who swears by heaven, or excuse me, which is greater, the gift on the altar, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and everything on it. And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it.

And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. Two can play this little game, Jesus is showing. And he makes fun of them, shows them how stupid, how foolish, and how arbitrary these distinctions that they had made really were.

And so by their, what was going on was this, by their hair-splitting distinctions distinctions on swearing oaths, they were redefining sin. They were determining what is right and what is wrong in the eyes of God.

God said in the ninth commandment, it's wrong to give false testimony against your neighbor. God said it's wrong to lie. It's wrong to not keep your word. Psalm 15, ask the question, Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary and live on your holy hill?

[19 : 32] Answer, he who speaks the truth from his heart and does no wrong to his neighbor and who keeps his oath even when it hurts, even when it's costly.

But the scribes said, excuse me, but don't forget the exception unless you use non-binding words. Then of course, you don't have to speak the truth from your heart.

And you can do wrong to your neighbor and you can get out of any oath that costs you something, you see. That's just calling evil good something that Isaiah condemned the Jews of his own day.

And that's what's happening throughout our own godless culture. And even in churches today, tweaking God's moral laws that we find undesirable and making them such that they please us and our lusts.

Where James 4.12 says, quoting from Isaiah, there is only one lawgiver and judge. The one who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you?

[20 : 47] Acting like gods. Acting like lawgivers and judges. So here's the first lesson we must learn from our text today.

God alone has authority to make laws in his kingdom and in his church. God alone has the authority to make laws. And all such lawmaking by man is here condemned.

Whether it's the Roman Catholic Church telling its people that it is a sin to eat meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent.

Or an Amish bishop saying it is a sin to own and drive a car or to have electricity in the home. Or a legalistic fundamentalist Protestant pastor who defines sinful behavior far beyond what God ever defines it.

You see what's happening. The majesty. The glory. The authority. The prerogatives of King Jesus are being insulted and usurped by all who would redefine sin by adding or subtracting to God's law their own laws.

[22 : 06] And so the Pharisees though not the first were some of the worst and they're not the last. As I've just pointed out we still have it this yeast of the Pharisees among us.

So Jesus says to them in Matthew 15 you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You've elated your tradition and put down God's word.

You hypocrites. Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you. These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. How do you know that? Because their worship is in vain.

Their teachings are but rules taught by man. Imagine a king ruling over his kingdom and he's got his law books like every kingdom does.

Laws for his citizens to obey. And then he assigns certain servants with the task of going throughout his realm to instruct his people on what the law says and how to obey the laws of their king.

[23 : 21] Only to find out that those very servants have erased some of his laws that they didn't like and made up their own to replace them all contrary to his will.

What will that king do to those servants? They will be punished most severely is what Jesus says. No man be he pastor or pope has authority to add or subtract from the commands of God and the worship he has ordained.

Jesus alone wields that authority as king and head of the church. He's the one who says but I say to you simply let your yes be yes and your no be no.

And when he was done preaching that sermon on the mount the crowds were amazed. What they were amazed at they were amazed at his teaching because he taught as one who had authority and not as their teachers of the law who were forever quoting Rabbi so and so and Pharisee so and so and Rabbi this and Rabbi that and Jesus says but I say to you as if he were the one law giver and judge.

So let us own no religious commands laws practices but those of God's word. That's the first lesson. Secondly from this passage we should learn to treasure the word of God as the great privilege that it is that we have it in our hands to save us from blindly following any religious leader into the ditch of hell.

[25 : 10] That's what was going on in a wholesale fashion in Jesus' day. Oh what a privilege to have this book. It was toward the beginning of the coronation ceremony that King Charles sat on his seat and an open Bible was laid on his lap and then the minister said these words receive this book as the most valuable thing that this world has to offer.

Here is wisdom this is the royal law. These are the lively oracles of God. Friends because of this book you're not at the mercy of blind guides who would lead you astray changing the laws of God changing the gospel of God.

Why need you not be led astray? Because you have the book. You have the book from heaven. The truth the words of the true and living God it's the perfect law of liberty the law that gives freedom freedom from the bondage and the tyranny of men and their man-made religion that leads to destruction and yes freedom from the way that seems right to a man to yourself that too leads to destruction.

Here's a lamp to our feet and a light to our path to lead us safely home to heaven. It's here. It's written in a book. Oh give me that book John Wesley said.

At any price give me the book of God. I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Oh may I be a man of one book. The most valuable thing the world has to offer.

[27 : 05] Are you treating it that way? if somebody followed you around for a week would they come to the conclusion he or she handles that book like the most valuable thing she has in this world.

Holy Bible book divine precious treasure thou art mine. yes let's treasure this book from heaven precious because Jesus Christ is revealed here to me as my greatest need as my best friend as my only savior.

Here I listen to the voice of my good shepherd who speaks to me that we might hold sweet communion together. I wonder you spend more time with this than you do with this.

Does this determine your use of this? Is the word of God that which you meditate upon day and night sucking it in thinking about it praying back to God listening to the truth walking the truth because you have the truth the written word of God.

it's the only infallible standard 100% truth the only infallible standard of truth in a world awash in relativism where truth has fallen in the streets.

[28 : 43] What is a woman? Can a man have a baby? People don't know. How many genders are there? How would you know which yours is? When does life begin? What is the reason for life?

Well you see having abandoned God's word we've lost all truth and now it's just your truth and my truth but the problem is Jesus Christ has not relinquished his truth and he's coming back to judge you on the basis of his truth not yours.

So let's live let's let's treasure this word. The word of God is flawless forever established in heaven.

The grass withers the flowers they too will fade but the word of our God endures forever. The third lesson from our text let's learn the importance of truthful dealings with our fellow man.

It used to be that a man's word was his bond. Did he say so? That's enough. Maybe he's sealed with a handshake. Those days are gone in our culture sadly.

[30 : 00] And here's the thing society community can only survive where people speak the truth and keep their words. Think of intimacy and marriage and the family.

They're predicated on truth telling. Lies destroy relationships wherever they're found. What happened to the promise till death do us part?

Or we go to commerce and business deals depend so much upon the truthfulness of what one is claiming is in this product or what they promise to do and fully fulfilling what they said they do.

The government is to be a public trust something that we can believe believe that when they speak to us they're not lying to us. And now we have politicians who are making up their own identity and telling us things about themselves that aren't true at all.

The news outlets are supposed to be reporting the truth and they're so coloring it and sometimes just blatantly giving us lies that it's hard to know where the truth is.

[31 : 14] Education rewriting history. Science making unfounded claims. Sex ed imbibing the latest nonsense about gender identification.

The medical field abandoning truth pushing the new morality or we should say the new immorality making it difficult for Christian nurses and doctors and hospitals to even stay in practice without towing the current lies of the culture.

The judicial system, the courts, witnesses lying under oath, judges abandoning truth, laws not being enforced. Yes, sadly the church often following in suit.

I saw a picture of a sign outside the church on Mother's Day. God can't be everywhere so he created mothers.

Well that's a lie. God is everywhere. God is everywhere. And he even gave us mothers to love us and to bring us up. He's just that good. Therefore a level of trust and truth telling is necessary for society and relationships to survive.

[32 : 30] And that's why God has commanded us to tell the truth and to keep our word. He wants us to thrive. He wants the society to bear his image.

He's the truth keeper, the promise keeper, the ultimate promise keeper. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. So let's live distinctively.

You want to be a witness in this world? Then only speak the truth and always do what you say. You'll stand out like a light in a dark place.

to hear these Pharisees and their subtle distinctions on oaths makes you think these guys just need something to do. Just to sit around and debate on what makes it binding, less binding, and non-binding.

Our Lord's answer simplifies the whole rotten mess. Do not swear at all. Neither by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or your own head.

[33 : 33] Simply let your yes be yes, your no, no, anything beyond that comes from the evil one. Now the fourth lesson is that Jesus is not here forbidding all oath taking.

God himself took an oath when he made a promise to Abraham. The apostle Paul on occasions would call God as his witness, which is the essence of the oath, to verify that what he said was true.

Hebrews 6, 16 quotes approvingly that men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all arguments. And even our Lord Jesus was put on oath by the high priest when the priest said, I charge you under oath by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God, and under the oath as in the presence of God, Jesus said, yes, it is as you say.

That was a humbling thing to put Jesus under oath. Because he always spoke in the presence of God. He always lived Coram Deo before the face of his Father in heaven.

He set him there at his right hand and spoke as such. Our confession of faith summarizes the Bible's teaching on oath saying, God's word sanctions the taking of an oath when weighty and momentous matters are engaging attention and when truth requires confirmation or an end to strife if desired.

[35 : 02] So Jesus is not here forbidding all oath taking. But the fifth lesson is that Jesus is saying that we should not use oaths in our ordinary conversation.

But should speak as if we were always under oath. Always Coram Deo. Always before the face of God who's listening as our witness and judge.

So let your yes and no be spoken with the same truthfulness as if God were standing before you as witness and judge of everything you say.

For in fact he is. He is. You see? That's the truth. That's what Jesus is wanting us to see. That's what God's word is all about.

Calling on God's name in an oath was meant to make you think twice about deceiving or lying after you've called upon God. It was to raise your consciousness to reality.

[36 : 14] The reality is though whether you call on his name and call on him as witness or not. He is there witnessing. He is there judging all that you promised to do and claimed to be true.

And I tell you that men will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken for by your words you will be acquitted and by your words you will be condemned.

Matthew 12, 34 to 37. If every careless word then surely every lying word, every unkept word, every broken word. Do you speak as if you are constantly under oath?

Constantly before God as your witness and judge? Do you keep your word even when it's painful to do so?

Is your word your bond? All that's needed? A yes? A no? I'll do it. Perhaps some of us need to revisit a few things.

[37 : 21] Maybe some of you need to revisit your marriage vows and what you promised at a marriage altar. Maybe you need to revisit some promises made to your children that you've not kept.

Or children, maybe you need to revisit some of your answers given to your parents' questions of where were you? And who were you with? And what did you do? Maybe we need to revisit our commitments to the church and our responsibilities to one another in it.

Statements that we've made on tax forms and business forms. Our financial obligations.

Are we meeting them? Are we keeping our word in our business dealings, at our jobs? This is the royal law, the code of conduct for the citizens of God's kingdom.

They're truth speakers. They're promise keepers. Just as their father in heaven is. They live quorum deo before his face.

[38 : 30] Well, why did the Pharisees, last lesson, why did the Pharisees come up with all these distinctions about the oath?

There perhaps are many reasons, but surely this, they had to. They simply had to. I mean, if you believe, as the Pharisees did, that entering the kingdom of heaven depends upon your law-keeping and you being righteous enough and keeping the law enough to get into heaven, well then, you're going to need to lower the standard, aren't you, in order to do well enough to get in.

And that's what they were doing with speaking and doing the truth. Always telling the truth, always keeping their word. It just wasn't convenient to them. And they clearly could not measure up to such a standard, so they bent the rules.

They made up their own. They lowered such high demands of God's commands. And telling the truth was now loaded with all kinds of conditions that really only the Pharisees and teachers of the law knew, all of them.

Oh, yes. If we use the holy name of God, we've got to do what we say. Well, that's easy. You've got it down there so low, we just won't make any oaths in the holy name of God anymore.

[39 : 55] And we're free to do whatever we want and say whatever we want. It's only if we use God's name that we need to be careful. Oh, but there is only one lawgiver and judge.

And it isn't the Pharisees. And he doesn't lower his holy standard of truth. It's important to him. And we will be accountable for our plain yes, as much as if we were on oath before a court.

And we'll be accountable for our no. But you see, the kingdom, the citizens of God's kingdom have been brought to see just how far short they've come to this standard of truthfulness.

Every single one of us. We've lied. We've not kept our word. We've come short of this standard of God's glory and character.

We don't measure up. We're lawbreakers deserving of eternal condemnation. From the womb we go astray speaking lies, David says.

[40 : 56] And for that we grieve, we are sorry, and we repent, and we confess to God our sin, knowing that we can never erase our lies and earn our way into the kingdom of heaven.

But contrary to the Pharisees, man-made and self-help religion, stands across, across. And the one dying on it is the eternal Son of God.

And we say, what is someone like that doing in a place like this? A lying world. Well, he's come. He said, I've come to seek and to save sinners.

I've come to bear witness to the truth. And everyone on the side of truth listens to me. I am the truth. And he's here to work out a righteousness that is perfect.

Do you know that Jesus, as a young boy, children, never told a lie? He always did what he said he would do. He did it as a teenager, as a young man.

[42 : 02] He did it all the way to the cross. He told his heavenly Father, I'll go to the cross and be damned for my people. And he didn't go back on his word. And that's why he's there.

And this stands in contrast to the Pharisees' earn your way to heaven system of religion. We have a cross with the Son of God dying on it to pay the penalty we deserve for our lives and all our other sins.

And here's the glory of the gospel. He has a righteousness to give to us if we believe on him. And he also takes our penalty.

It's a wonderful exchange. I gave him my sins and he gave me his righteousness. And he took my sins to the cross and there was damned for me.

And then was raised to newness of life, eternal life. And I took his righteousness and now I stand justified before the court of heaven.

[43 : 09] Declared right with God. Righteous in the sight of the law. He's just that good that he pays the entrance fee into heaven and doesn't demand it of you.

All he requires of you is to come as a hell deserving sinner and humbly acknowledge that and put all your trust on what Jesus has done for sinners. Isn't he good?

Bless his name. Don't be deceived by the yeast of the Pharisees. You need Jesus. He's the only way into the kingdom. The eternal heavenly kingdom.

And run to him. Trust in him. And be saved. And he'll give you strength to start speaking the truth and keeping your word. As he puts his own spirit within you to the honor and praise of Christ.

Well we only know these things because of this book. Holy Bible. Book divine. Let's sing of it. Number 674. 674.

[44 : 08] Let's stand and sing. Of the precious privilege of having God's own thoughts. And we're 674. Let's pray.

We thank you Holy Father that you've given us your word and not left this to the thoughts of men and their ideas about how we get to heaven. Where we've come from.

How it will go in the day of judgment. How a man can be right with God forever. Thank you for such a standard of truth. Thank you for the way that you've blessed our lives through this book.

And for giving us the spirit to open our eyes to see. We were blind and we were following blind leaders to the ditch of hell. Thank you for Jesus. The truth.

And for this record of him and his word. Help us to treasure it as the most valuable thing on earth. And to live by the truth. To speak the truth. To do the truth.

[45 : 13] To the glory of God. For the good of our families and our neighborhood and our church and our whole culture. Help us we pray. In Jesus name.

Amen. Amen.