

Strive to Be an Instrument to Make Others Godly

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Date: 02 May 2021

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[0 : 00] Well, we continue on this morning, and we've been studying the godly man's portrait or picture, what that man looks like.

What does that man look like who confesses Christ as Lord? What does his daily life look like? And we've been following through Thomas Watson's book by that title, *The Godly Man's Picture*, as he's presented, and we've been presenting the various character qualities that make up that picture of a godly man.

This morning, we want to hear what Watson titles, *An Exhortation to Godliness*. We've been hearing about all these qualities, and each lesson certainly has contained an exhortation, but this chapter is dedicated completely to that exhortation to godliness.

And he writes that the purpose of this chapter is to persuade men to become godly. He acknowledges certainly that ultimately it's the Holy Spirit who does the persuading and convincing in the hearts of people, but as one who through the Holy Spirit, through whom the Holy Spirit works, he does all that he can to provide what he says or describes as forcible motives and arguments that the Holy Spirit will use to accomplish the persuasion.

So that means he believes that what he writes, this exhortation of godliness, has the capacity or the force to move a person from one state of mind, one persuasion, to another, this persuasion to follow after godliness.

[1 : 48] So that's what I want us to consider this morning. But even before we go to the various elements of the exhortation, I just want to focus a little bit on that whole matter of what he describes as the forcible motives and arguments.

When he considers that, what is it that gives these motives or arguments such force?

Well, it's the source from which they come. Not Thomas Watson or not me this morning, but from God himself. God is the source of his exhortation of godliness.

That's what we're encouraging one another to pursue, a life of godliness. Well, what is that? Well, I just tried to come up with a definition.

In love and reverence for God, I make it my goal to reflect the very nature and character of God or Christ in my daily life and what I love, think, say, and do.

[2 : 54] That's the pursuit of godliness that we are on as those who confess Christ as Lord. And for such an exhortation of godliness or to godliness to carry any weight or authority or force to persuade individuals or someone to turn from their present persuasion to the persuasion to love God and to pursue and follow after godliness, such an exhortation must come from God.

I mean, if I'm just giving you an exhortation from myself, really ultimately carries no more weight than your exhortation to me to not follow godliness or follow something else.

We're just toying with each other and thinking that we each have that force or power, capacity, authority to convince you to follow my way of thinking.

Well, believing God and who he is as God, he is the one that has the authority to make forcible motives and arguments.

And in his word, he has graciously provided. And I say graciously provided. You know, he has not kept hidden from us the way of life.

[4 : 19] He has not kept hidden from us what we need to know about him. And he's sweet counsel to us while we're in this world. He's graciously provided the information that we need to hear and believe, to turn from a life of ungodliness and be persuaded to follow this life of godliness.

And this is what he presents in this chapter that I want to present this morning. And so, of course, to give an exhortation of godliness or to godliness means that there's someone receiving this exhortation.

And so that's what we consider first. Who needs to hear this exhortation? Well, certainly unbelievers need to hear it. Or we could say the unpersuaded.

It's not that people who are not pursuing godliness aren't persuaded about something. They do have a persuasion. They have a persuasion, a frame of thinking, a system of belief that they follow in what they think, say, and do.

It may not be written down like our document is written down, actually. The unpersuaded may not have this document of belief and persuasion, but they are persuaded about how to live life.

[5 : 42] They're persuaded that the life of godliness is really not for them. It's not worth pursuing at this time in their lives. They're persuaded their present approach to life is just fine.

Hey, we were all there at one time, and we were of that persuasion that my way of life is just fine.

It will accomplish for me what I long for and what I desire in life. And really, the persuasion of following God or Christ and the way of godliness really does not fit right now in my life.

That's the mindset of the unbeliever. They're persuaded that the counsel they give themselves for the direction of their lives, apart from God and his word, is sufficient.

All is well in life for me now. I really don't need God. He really can't give me anything that I think would really make my life better.

[6 : 40] In fact, it would hinder me from getting what I want, what I believe, what I'm persuaded I can get apart from him. Again, we were all there.

And so Watson writes that these people need to seriously weigh their misery while they remain in a state of godliness. Seriously weigh their misery.

Well, they are neglecting and rejecting the information of God about the reality of their condition.

And so the light needs to be shined in their hearts and their minds of what the reality is of their condition.

As Watson and ultimately God himself describes graciously again in his word. I remember. And we can give thanks that God is that gracious to reveal the truth about ourselves.

It's hard to hear. I mean, when years ago my surgeon called and let me know that I have cancer.

[7 : 47] I have kidney cancer. Well, that was not an easy thing for him to do, but it was a gracious thing for him to do, to let me know of my condition. Because if I had continued on in my present course of life, it would not have been good for me.

I needed to be persuaded through his hard information that something had to happen. And I had to understand the reality of my situation in order for my life to be better.

And so it is. And God's word. So let's consider the condition of the ungodly, the unpersuaded. Well, they are in a state of spiritual death.

Ephesians 2, 1 and 2. Paul writing to these believers, helping them reflect back on what their condition was. As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.

Ephesians 4, 18 through 19 goes further, describing this individual, what they were in the past.

[9 : 07] They are darkened in their understanding, separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Describing that inner condition of that man, that individual, having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to now the outer sensuality.

So as to indulge in every kind of impurity with a continual lust for more, that inner and outer combination, who we are inwardly will manifest itself outwardly.

That is just the way it is. That is the way we are. We live out of the nature that we have. And that is the nature of the unpersuaded, the unbeliever.

And that is why Jesus said to Nicodemus, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. He is dead, separated from the life of God. He cannot enter into and perceive the things of God in that condition.

And they live their lives separated from God and his covenant of grace. Ephesians 2, 12.

Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise without hope, without God in the world.

[10 : 26] So they have no part in any of the promises of God. I mean, that's a desperate condition, really. We all love promises and what they bring to us in our daily lives.

If somebody makes a promise to you, it kind of springs some hope within you of something good to come, something that you look forward to, something that you would like to have. Well, the unbeliever, the unpersuaded, really has no hope of anything like that because he's separated from

that covenant of grace.

They have no hope for a flourishing life now and eternally. Look at the force of that declaration again.

As I say, they are without hope, without God in the world. Separated from the covenant promises and any claim, again, to any present or eternal benefits that can come through knowing God and Jesus Christ and the precious promises of his word that we need for a flourishing life now in this world.

No hope for the unbeliever. They are corrupt, wicked, evil person, stained by sin, hostile to God. Psalm 14.3. All have turned aside.

[11 : 48] They have together become corrupt. There is no one who does good, not even one. Proverbs 4.19. But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness. They do not know what makes them stumble.

So there they are. They think they're walking confidently through life, but because of this deep darkness in which they exist and they're thinking, they don't understand why is this so difficult? Why is there no satisfaction from all these things that are making promises to me that the satisfaction will come? The peace will be there. The fullness of life will be there.

They can't understand, why am I stumbling so? Because of this darkness. Luke 6.45. The evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart.

Romans 8.7. The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. So these are strong words and hard to hear.

[12 : 56] And really, all of us, when we were in that condition, would never describe our situation and condition in this way. But again, God has been faithful to speak the truth in love so that we can know our true condition.

That's which we desperately need to know about ourselves. But again, the unbeliever does not see it. He cannot perceive the things of God.

The unpersuaded individual cannot make sense of spiritual things. Why would you say that about me? Aren't you being somewhat intolerant and unkind in the way you're speaking about someone that doesn't believe the way you believe?

That's the way it sounds to them. Because they're hearing it with a different mind. A mind that doesn't perceive the things of God.

The truth. Reality. 1 Corinthians 2.14. The man without the spirit does not accept the things of God that come from the spirit of God. They're foolishness to him.

[14 : 05] And he cannot understand them. Why? Because they're spiritually discerned. Remember? He's dead in trespasses and sins. Has no life toward God.

Cannot perceive the reality of the kingdom of God. 2 Corinthians 4.4. The God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

You know, you ask your believer, How come you're not following Christ now? I just don't have time. It just doesn't fit in my life right now. See, he doesn't, even by that answer, doesn't understand the condition that, No, you don't believe because the God of this age has blinded your mind.

They don't give an answer like that. Because, again, they don't perceive the reality of the spiritual world and dimensions that are out there.

Ephesians 4.17 and 18, when Paul's encouraging the believers to continue on following Christ and godliness, describing the way, the life of the Gentile, the thinking of the Gentile, the unbeliever, he says, describes it as futility of their thinking, darkened in their understanding.

[15 : 20] So, again, because of this incapacity to perceive the spiritual realities, such an individual lives under a completely different persuasion or a belief system.

They still have to follow some way of life, some way of thinking. That's the way we are as human beings. God designed us as rational thinking human beings to see things, perceive things, to draw conclusions about issues, situations we're in, and conclude this is the way I should go.

He's trying to make sense of and order his life apart from his creator God and the counsel that God provides in his word for his flourishing in the world.

And as a result, he lives as a fool. A fool is one who, having seen or heard the way of life, way of truth for life, rejects it and goes his own way.

Jesus tried to help the people and listeners and disciples to understand the difference between a wise man and a foolish man. In Matthew 7, we've heard this so many times before and even sung it. [16:33] Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. That's the wise man. We'll see him later on. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

The rain came down, the streams rose, the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with great crash. So this foolish man builds on sand, his own reasoning apart from God and God's counsel.

As he moves through life, all kinds of things happen, and his belief system is tested, and ultimately his life crashes big time.

I mean, the crash will reveal itself in various ways throughout his life. But ultimately, when he stands before God, he has no foundation, no foundation for acceptance with God.

He has no foundation for a sufficient accounting for the payment of his own sins. No receipt that he can provide that gives evidence that sins have been paid for.

[17:43] No receipt like that. No certificate of righteousness that makes him fit for life with God. No foundation because no adoption papers that show he's a child of God.

No proof that he's at peace with God, and on and on we could go. Therefore, he has to pay the wages of his own sin. He's living while he's in this world under God's condemnation.

And at death, the unpersuaded individual must experience God's fury and wrath and receive the wages of his own sin. John 3.18, whoever does not believe, whoever's not persuaded, whoever continues on in their own persuasion, apart from God and his truth and Christ, stands condemned already.

Why? He has not believed. He's not given into this persuasive information, truth, good news, that he must turn and turn toward Christ.

He's not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. In John 3.36, whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

[18:57] In Revelation 20.15, if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. And so that is the condition of the unbeliever, the unpersuaded.

And God, again, graciously revealing to us through others who have come faithfully and presented the truth about ourselves in our unpersuasion and unwillingness to follow the gospel, even suppressing it, pushing it away.

And then, again, graciously revealing it away. We needed to hear that truth. Well, if the person truly believes God is who he says he is, what they learn about themselves from him is reliable.

And it's worth serious consideration, even to the point of being persuaded and turning from their present persuasion to Christ and the truth and pursue God and godliness.

And such as people we were. And yet we have become persuaded. Well, Watson moves to present the contrast to such a miserable condition and present the condition of the godly, those who are in Christ.

[20:19] But this information, not only good for the unpersuaded to consider, because that's what he's showing, this is who you are and this is who you could be, but it's also good for us as we sit here this morning, those of you who have put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, to remember, because there are times that we need to be, can I say, re-persuaded or reassured or reminded of what we've been persuaded of in the past.

Right? There are times that that task, that persuasion, that faith, that persuasion is put to the test. When we're challenged in our thinking and tempted to go a different way.

I mean, that's what that temptation is doing, trying to convince us that what I've been persuaded about in the past, really, there's reason to doubt that. And if you would follow this new persuasion, it promises far more for you now while you're in this life.

And we have to be reminded, re-persuaded, if I can say, no, that's not true. And to call back to our minds the things that are true.

So we continue on in this persuasion, following after Christ and pursuing godliness. So what is the condition of that godly person, the believer?

[21:47] Well, they're precious and set apart unto God. Watson writes, we set apart things that are precious. The godly are set apart as God's peculiar treasure.

Psalm 4.3, know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself. We're familiar with that. You know, if something's precious to us, you have this favorite candy and the kids are running around the house.

And you want to make sure you get some of that candy. So you set it apart someplace in the house where the kids won't find it. And because that's precious to you.

A little extreme, but which ones of you have not done that before? We're set apart unto God for himself.

1 Corinthians 1.2, to the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, sanctified. Set apart from sin and set apart unto God and godliness.

[22 : 55] Second, God makes them the persuaded, the godly, honorable, full of splendor. Children of God. Heirs of God. Chosen people. Royal priesthood. I could go on and on and on.

But there's so many descriptive words God uses to describe the reality of this condition of the godly. Isaiah 62.3 and 4.

You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand. A royal diadem in the hand of your God. For the Lord will take delight in you. Romans 8.17.

Now if we are children, then we are heirs. Heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. In 1 Peter 2.9 and 10. But you are a chosen people.

A royal priesthood. A holy nation. A people belonging to God. See what they're doing. Peter's, you know, dealing with people who are in a state of being persecuted.

[23 : 53] And really ridiculed for who they are. Seeing them and declaring to them that you're second-rate people. You're not as we are.

We Romans and honored people. You know, if a person was a believer, was to take on that persuasion, how is he going to live in the world?

Is he going to live as one as a child of God? No. He's going to become weary, discouraged as he tries to move through life. And so he needs to be reminded.

Reassured of, no, this is who you are. Do not listen to this thinking and reasoning of the world system in which you're living. You can't base your life and what you pursue on that.

If you're going to be pursued after godliness, this is who you are. This is the person who is able to pursue that. And so understand that this is who you are as people of God.

[24 : 57] But also beloved by God and brought near. Remember, the unbeliever was separated from God. He had no part in the covenant of promises. Colossians 3.2, Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy, dearly loved.

Ephesians 5.1, Be imitators of God. Therefore, as dearly loved children. You see, the basis for their motivation to pursue godliness is this concept, this understanding that you're dearly loved children of God.

And so on the basis of that reality, now imitate God. Run after godliness. You're one of his children, right? And maybe some of you have had fathers and parents that say, Hey, listen, remember who you are.

And when you go to school or your job or wherever you are in the neighborhood, remember that you bear our name. You're my child. You're my son or you're my daughter.

And so God makes that connection to us as well. You're dearly loved children of God. Therefore, be imitators of God. Live out of the reality of who you are as one who is a child of God.

[26 : 09] Don't lose sight of that. Be reassured of that when the temptation comes and you're tempted to live as a child of the devil, one who is not really intimately connected and united to God by faith in Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2.13, But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord. So it didn't matter. We're seeing a reoccurring exhortation and reminder here, whether it was to the people in Thessalonica, the believers in Ephesus.

It seems to be a common situation that many believers are dealing with, that we all need to be reminded that we're dearly loved children of God. So it could be this week, as you're faced with different temptations, you may have to be reminded and remember, listen, you're a dearly loved child of God.

As Paul is doing here, and then in Ephesians 2.13, But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away, have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

So we're beloved by God and brought near. We're also prudent and have spiritual insight and wisdom for life. Remember that ungodly man was having to deal with life, evaluate, discern the situations and circumstances of life apart from the Spirit of God, apart from the wisdom of God. [27 : 37] But now the believer has riches that are his, Matthew 7.24. Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

And what happened? It didn't fall. It shouldn't be surprising. You know, why are we surprised? You know, we have directions to build something, if you follow those directions. You put it together and say, Hey, it works! Why should you be surprised? You know, the maker of it gave you directions as to how it goes together.

And if you follow those directions, it works. Doesn't that make sense? When it comes to spiritual things, if we can make that application for simple, temporary things that vanish, that men put together and write in a book, doesn't it make sense that the God, creator of the universe, will send us a document, preserve a document, that will explain to us something of himself and how we can live in this life, in this world?

Should we be surprised that life goes well, that we can flourish and have eternal life? No, God is reliable. We have the wisdom from God for life.

[29 : 02] Proverbs 1.7, To fear the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. Yeah, and we're on the other side.

It makes sense to us now. But we were back then as well, prior to faith in Christ, living as fools, seeing the wisdom of God and despising and pushing away.

I'm not convinced that it really is essential for me and my well-being in life now and throughout all eternity. James 1.5, If any of you lack wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given him.

And then Colossians 3.16, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom. So we do have that resource of wisdom from God, the spirit of God dwelling within us, who enlightens our mind to the truth, the counsel of God and his word.

And now we can counsel one another with all wisdom, with insights that we all need for life and godliness. So we need to have ears that hear and love enough in our hearts that we're willing to counsel one another in such a way as to share that wisdom of God.

[30 : 19] But the condition of the godly is also blessed. He's blessed to have new life, a new mind and great promises. 2 Corinthians 5.17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation.

The old has gone and the new has come. Romans 5.8, 5 and 6. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what the nature desires.

Makes sense to me. But those who live in accordance with the spirit are something different there. They have their minds set on what the spirit desires. The mind of the sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the spirit is life and peace.

All that an individual wants and longs for in life and the unpersuaded are pursuing different ways to get it, but they can't get it. But the believer in Jesus Christ, the follower after Christ, is one who has the spirit of God in him and is able to obtain that life and peace that comes from the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1.3, His divine power has given us all we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these, he's given us his very great and precious promises so that through them, you may participate in the divine nature and escape corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

[31 : 43] So all those things that the unbeliever, the unpersuaded, was stumbling over because he was separated from the life of God and was trying to operate and was operating in the futility of his mind, darkened his understanding.

Now the believer has these precious promises that he can look unto and draw upon and he can escape all these obstacles and hindrances, the corruption in the worlds caused by evil desires. Ultimately, this individual also has eternal life in the kingdom of Jesus Christ and share in his glory. John 5.24, I tell you the truth.

Whoever hears my word and believes him is persuaded, hears the good news, is persuaded certain truths about himself, truths about God and Jesus Christ.

that person who hears my word and believes him who sent me, he has eternal life. He won't be condemned.

[32 : 54] He's crossed over from death to life. You see that glorious transition? The crossover has taken place. This is what I was in the past.

Desperate, miserable condition. Crossed over to life. In Christ. Colossians 1.13, he's rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

And then that kingdom is written about in Revelation 22. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city and his servants will serve him.

They'll see his face and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun for the Lord God will give them light and they will reign forever and ever.

Wow. What a contrast that we see from such a gracious God about the condition of the ungodly, the unpersuaded, and the godly, and those who are persuaded.

[34 : 14] And these are just a few verses, a small portion of the surpassing greatness of the life of the one who's united to Christ by faith. And that's interesting.

Watson writes, And may this not tempt everyone to become godly? Well, of course. Who wouldn't be tempted by this?

Seeing such a contrast. This in itself is a vast treasure of truth from God that should persuade anyone to turn to Christ and follow him.

In fact, it's the most rational decision a person could ever make. I mean, if you want to make the most rational decision of life as a human being, it's to follow Christ.

To turn from your ways, your sinful ways, apart from Christ and turn unto him and receive all of this.

Watson writes, It's the highest act of reason for a man to become another man.

[35 : 21] If while he remains in nature's soil of this earth, this world, he is poisoned with sin, no more actually fit for communion with God than a toad is fit to be made an angel.

Then it is very consonant to reason that he should strive for a change. Again, it makes sense. It's rational because this change is for the better. Will not anyone be willing to exchange a dark prison for a king's palace? I mean, we would make those kind of decisions playing the lottery, people doing that all the time.

Here I am, have to go to this 40-hour-a-week job, listen to this who-and-who or whatever guy, doesn't know what he's talking about, and I'm going to buy this ticket, and this is going to give me my ticket, my license to the good life.

And let's say a person is standing there with, I do have the winning ticket. Would you like it? No, that's okay. You know, I'll just keep going to this 40-hour-a-week job and listen to this guy over here that's a taskmaster.

[36 : 41] we would say of that guy, are you crazy? This is the way out. It makes no sense.

Yeah. And so when we think and consider those things that are spiritual, counsel, it's coming from the God, creator of the universe, who understands all, knows all, has all wisdom, all power, everything you need for this new life.

He offers it. Does it make any sense not to take it? Well, understanding this with enlightened minds, it makes no sense whatsoever.

It's the most rational thing to do. Will not anyone be willing to exchange a dark prison for a king's palace? If men were not besotted, only they could write this way, if their fall had not knocked their brains out, they would see that it is the most rational thing in the world to become godly.

Well, there are many who have heard God's communication of what is true. Many that have been persuaded throughout the ages and have become followers of God and godliness.

[38 : 12] Let me just name a few here and consider those who heard God's counsel, understood it, believed it, and pursued God and Christ and godliness. Consider Noah, Genesis 6, 5 through 9, the Lord saw how great man's wickedness on earth had become and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

so talk about the majority of people in the world. There was one individual. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

There's a man who had a firm persuasion about the truth, the reality of God, the existence of God, and when God called him to do something that seemed very, very strange at the time, he did it.

I mean, you only do that kind of thing with a persuasion of the truth. Noah was one that was persuaded. He didn't need a majority to be walking along with him.

And when you're persuaded about the truth, that's the reality of it. You don't need confirmation from a majority of people. You know the truth. You follow it.

[39 : 31] Abraham, the Lord God, had said to Abraham, leave your country, your people, and your father's household, and go to the land I will show you. So he left.

What? He left. He was persuaded of who God is, and God should be followed. Moses, by faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of price as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking ahead to his reward.

Wow, there's a man who's persuaded about what is true. When he had everything else, all the world around him was telling him, you have made it.

You're in the number one person's household. Anything you want, you can have. It wasn't good enough. He saw the reality that it was insufficient,!

[40 : 38] He gave it up and followed after God and godliness. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego living as servants to the king in Babylon.

Maybe not what everybody would want. They were alive. The king made the decree, you know the story, and their answer was, O Nebuchadnezzar, we don't need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king, but even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, here are some persuaded individuals.

We want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. The thing most precious to us is our lives, certainly.

They were willing to give it up because they were persuaded there was something of greater treasure, and that was God, the Samaritan woman at the well. We're seeing people in all kinds of life situations here, but all of them coming to a persuasion of following God, truth, godliness.

[41 : 52] The woman at the well, you know, the confrontation that she was facing, the situation she was facing, Jesus said to her, you're right when you say you have no husband.

The fact is you've had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true. Then leaving her water jar, the woman, you know, I'm skipping some things in the verses for time.

Then leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, come, see who told me, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of this woman's testimony. I mean, she had a convincing testimony that she had met the Christ, presented it to them.

Couldn't this be the Christ? I mean, she wasn't asking for, is he the Christ? She goes, couldn't he be the Christ? Consider this, be persuaded, follow.

[42 : 52] She's given a testimony there. He told me everything I ever did. They said to the woman, we no longer believe just because of what you said. Now, we have heard for ourselves, and what happened?

They have become persuaded to something new, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world. Or consider man desperate, the thief on the cross.

The other criminal rebuked him. Don't you fear God, he said, since you are under the same sentence. We're punished justly, for we're getting what our deeds deserve, but this man has done nothing wrong.

Then he said, Jesus, remember me. He's got a new persuasion here, different one than when he was nailed on the cross. It's never too late, folks. Right there at the end, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Jesus answered him, I tell you the truth. He always tells us the truth. He's telling us the truth today from his word, but he was telling the thief on the cross the truth today.

[44 : 03] You will be with me in paradise. Wow. thankful he was persuaded. Just a couple more. The apostle Paul, according to the standards of success in his culture at the time, he had it all.

It was a great value to him at one time. He ran hard after it, but his persuasion changed when he met Christ and obtained something of far greater value, and he pursued that.

Philippians 3, 7 through 9, he said, but whatever was to my profit, all that stuff in the past, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

What's more, I consider everything a loss. Whatever else you could throw up to me, beyond what was considered of great treasure in my surroundings, whatever you throw up to me to consider, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

[45 : 24] Here's a man that's persuaded, had it all. Nothing could compare to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

These are just a few voices from the past, from the Apostle Paul, but you know, there's other voices that we've heard as well. People that have lived among us, Ed Withrow, Dennis Hoskins, sorry, sorry, Joseph, Jeanette Rerick, all kinds of people who were persuaded there was something better and they followed hard, not perfect, followed hard after Christ and godliness.

So listen and remember some of their voices or we don't even have to go to those who are with us and are now gone, look around you. Aren't there voices of the living here today?

You'll hear it this morning as we sing songs together. Those songs are an expression coming from people who have been persuaded. And we're offering this exhortation.

He is worthy. Sorry, I better just quit. Let's pray. Father, this morning you have done a great work bringing the unpersuaded of which all we were at one time in the past, unpersuaded.

[47 : 04] And by grace introducing us, bringing the good news of the gospel from others who were persuaded, shared that good news, and by the work of the Spirit bringing us to life that we believe.

We thank you for that. Pray that we would be the bearers of that good news now to others who are yet unpersuaded and that even this morning, you by your great grace and mercy would bring them to the place of being persuaded and enter really into the fullness of life that comes through Jesus Christ that they can enjoy now and throughout all eternity.

We ask this now in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you. Amen. Amen.