

# Do we scoff or do we submit?

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 03 February 2013

Preacher: Graham Smith

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good morning. Good morning, Watermark. My name's Chris. I help oversee community groups here at Watermark Church. You're very welcome this morning. We're going to move into a time of communion in a minute. And communion is a family meal. You can't take communion by yourself.

And right at the heart of this family meal is two elements, the bread and the wine, which symbolize Jesus' death on the cross for us. Jesus' death, which makes us a family, which brings us together from many different backgrounds. If you look around at each other, you're not all the same. We're different. But the one thing which has brought us together is Jesus' death on the cross. Sociologists say that most tight-knit social groups identify themselves in opposition to lots of other people. So for example, Hong Kong people against the mainland government, or expats against locals, or employees against employers. But when Jesus instituted this meal, he was saying, my death breaks down every barrier, every social, every economic, every moral, every racial barrier, and brings you together to be one family because of my death.

Now, communion is both a challenge to us and a comfort. In 1 Corinthians, Paul talks to a church in Greece which has actually got this meal very wrong. Because at the time in the first century, people would come together and they would have a meal because meals symbolized welcome and acceptance and belonging. And that's the context in which they would take communion. But he talks to this church and he doesn't have many good words to say for them. Because when the people arrived for the meal, the rich people tended to arrive maybe first. And they would be there in their corner and they would be eating all the food for themselves. The poorer people, the domestic workers would be, they would have only be able to leave when their employers let them leave. And so they would come in and there'd be no food left. Or the food that was there, the rich people were not sharing with them.

And Paul says to them, listen, you haven't understood what this meal is all about. In fact, he says some quite strong words to them. He says, therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, just as they're doing, they're showing division, not unity, sins, is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. Now I'm not going to go into all that he's talking about there, but basically Paul is doing a play on words with the body. The body is both Jesus, symbolizing Jesus' death on the cross. But it's also symbolizing the family of God, Jesus' body, his family. And what he's saying here is, you haven't understood what this meal is all about. You haven't understood that Jesus died to make you a family, but you're not living as a family. That's what Paul's saying to this church. And the rich people were so concerned and so wrapped up in their own things that they'd forgotten about all the others. And here's the challenge of community, because I find this really challenging when I think about myself.

Because I find that I'm often so wrapped up in my own world that I forget about the people in my church family. I forget about how do I love the people in my community group. Maybe they've become frustrating and annoying to me sometimes. Maybe I don't look to encourage them or serve them, but I'm more concerned for myself. And the challenge of communion here is actually Jesus died to make you a family. So Paul says, examine yourself and repent where we haven't done that. But it's not just a challenge, it's also a comfort, because honestly, all of us have not been what we should be. But actually, communion reminds us that Jesus' death wipes away every sin. He takes the guilt. You can have a new start, a fresh start. The shame is gone. You don't have to live feeling as a failed Christian any longer. You can be free to walk in this next week to learn how to love each other as Jesus' death has bought for us. So as the communion stewards come up, I'd like you just

to think about that. How have I loved my church family this last week? And repent if there's ways you haven't. And enjoy the forgiveness that God brings in that situation. This is a family meal, which means that if you're not a follower of Jesus, we just ask you to not take the elements, but to watch and to ask questions, to ask people, what is this all about? What is

[ 5 : 31 ] Jesus' death all about? If you've got kids as well, we ask you, you know where they are spiritually. If they have not yet made a profession of faith in Christ, bring them up, but don't let them take the elements, but use it as a time to teach them about what it means, what Jesus' death means for them. So when you've just had some time just to examine yourself and just ask God to forgive you where you need that, come up and take the communion. We'll all take it together in a minute.

On the night that he was betrayed, Jesus took the bread. He gave it to the disciples and he said, take this, take this, eat it. This is my body, which is given for you. Take and eat.

And on that same night, he took a cup and he said, this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, to bring you, to make you one, reconciled with God and reconciled with each other. Take the cup. Father, we thank you so much that your death is the center of our life. It's the center of everything we are, Lord. Forgive us where we don't always live as the family you've made us to be, but thank you so much that your grace extends to us, Lord.

I pray that you would bless the kids as they go out now to their classes. I pray that they would have a greater understanding of what it means to be forgiven, to be reconciled with you and to learn to live together as a family. Lord, thank you so much for the cross. Amen.

Watermark kids and I think youth, you are dismissed this way. The scripture reading today comes from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 16. Please follow along in your bulletin.

[ 7 : 49 ] He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much, and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and wealth. Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at him. And he said to them, You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts.

For that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.

[ 9 : 01 ] But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to fail. Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery.

And he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery. This is God's word. Good morning, Watermark.

It's a privilege to be standing in front of you again. I'd just like to begin by telling you a little bit more about myself. I grew up in South Africa, obviously, and I spent my early childhood on a banana farm.

And later, I went to the University of Natal. Now, that would probably mean nothing to most of you, but the University of Natal is famous.

Because in the mid-1990s, from my university, we produced a professor who invented a machine that was able to lower your IQ for a brief period of time.

[ 10 : 05 ] This wasn't about me. I said, I'm serious here, right? And so what he did is he invited all the professors from all over the world to come, and they were going to conduct an experiment. So they all came, and he got his PhD students.

Now, these were guys, 145 IQ plus, real geniuses. And he rigged them up to the machine, and they asked a series of questions. And then they would lower the IQ, like, how are you?

How are you feeling? Where are you? And started off, put them on, and these guys gave very elaborate answers. I'm in full function of my capacity. I am full aware of my surroundings.

And they gave these good answers. And they thought, well, let's take it down. And they took it down to about 90, asked the same questions, a little less, just, I'm fine. No problem.

And then they took it right down to about 45, and they asked the same questions. And then the answers were a little bit different. Yeah, I don't know. Okay, and then they thought, well, let's take it down even further.

[ 11 : 05 ] So they took it right down to about 20, asked the questions, this time just a grunt, nothing. These guys were just drooling, nothing there. And they thought, well, that's the end of the experiment.

But we've come this far. Let's take it right down to zero and see what happens. And they did that. And for the sake of the experiment, they asked the questions, how are you feeling? And they go, howdy, ma'am. Welcome to Dallas, Texas.

All right. Now, just before any Americans want to jump on the stage and attack me, I have to tell you, the first time I heard that joke, I was sitting in a group of South Africans, and an Australian came in and sat amongst us.

But it was a different punchline. Just by the way, that is a joke. The university I went to is famous for absolutely nothing. And there is no machine that can lower your IQ.

The only thing that can lower your IQ is something called baseball. But anyway, just by the way, I did get permission from Tobin to make fun of the people from Texas.

[ 12 : 11 ] And just so you know, at Watermark, we use humor as a sign of affection, never as a weapon. Okay. But I want to ask, those of you who are from Dallas and you heard this punchline, how did you feel when you heard that punchline?

My guess is that you probably felt a little bit offended and thought, who does that farm boy think he is? You know, is he implying that we from Texas are not that bright?

Doesn't he know we're geniuses down here? And this is exactly how the Pharisees would have felt when Jesus got to his punchline. And Jesus said this.

This was his punchline. He said, you cannot serve both God and money. If you do, something will happen to your motives, your thoughts, your feelings. There's just no room in your life for both.

And the Pharisees heard this and it says they scoffed. Now, to scoff literally means to lift your nose up. So, who does this carpenter from Nazareth think he is?

[ 13 : 24 ] Doesn't he know we worship God and we have lots of money? Doesn't he know? And we have to understand something about these Pharisees.

They were very influential in their society, right? They were wealthy and they were religious and people looked up to them. But we have to ask the question, how did they get their wealth?

And unfortunately, they got their wealth in the wrong way. So, they got their money from religion because they were in charge of the temple activities and all the sacrifices and worship that went on there.

So, these pilgrims would come and they would bring their sheep and their goat to offer as a sacrifice. And they would be standing and say, sorry, that goat's not good enough. You need to buy ours.

And they were in charge of the money changes. So, they would say, you know, you can't use your money. You need to use the temple shekel. So, you need to change your money. And they were charging this high rate of interest.

[ 14 : 26 ] And you can just imagine what was happening. These guys were lining their pockets. And it's kind of like if at Watermark next week we decide we're going to introduce the Watermark dollar.

Okay? And so, we still want you to give exactly the same amount. But because it's kind of holy money now, the Watermark dollar, you're going to have to just, before you come in, you're going to exchange your money.

It'll probably be a South African working at the exchange desk. But you need to exchange your money. And because it's holy, we're going to charge you a little bit of interest. And someone's going to get rich out of it, as you can imagine.

And this is exactly what was happening. And, you know, the point of this is you can have little and love money.

And you can have plenty and not love money. The point here is the Pharisees loved money. Okay? And they had this idea deep down in the human heart, sometimes it happens to us, that wealth is a blessing and poverty is a curse.

[ 15 : 34 ] That material wealth is a sign of God's blessing. And this is exactly what the Pharisees were thinking. So, we are proof that God blesses us financially. And, you see, when you love wealth

and you gain wealth and you gain more, or something begins to happen to our hearts, and we become a little bit proud, and we start thinking, well, you know what?

I deserve it. I work really hard. I deserve it. Or maybe we start thinking, you know what? I'm just a little bit better than other people, and that's why I've got it, right?

I'm just a little bit better. Or we start thinking that perhaps we're doing something right. You know, God must look down at our lives and think, wow, they're just so amazing, and therefore I'm just going to bless them financially.

And Jesus says to them, you may have impressed men, but you haven't impressed God. In about 2005, I had my 10-year high school reunion.

So, you can do the maths. And I couldn't go, unfortunately. So, I phoned a friend of mine who had been to find out what men are. Unfortunately, this was the day before Facebook, right, where you couldn't find out what someone you went to school with just had for breakfast.

[16:56] You actually had to phone someone who had been there. So, I phoned my friend, and I'm chatting. His name's Grant. And I said, hey, Grant, how was the reunion? He said, oh, you wouldn't believe it. It was fantastic.

It was so good to see everyone again. And so, I really, the only reason I found out is I just want to know what happened to people, right? That's why we go to our reunions. We just want to find out what's coming from everyone.

So, I kind of asked a few questions. I said, well, Trevor, what's happened to Trevor? He goes, Trevor, you wouldn't believe it. This guy here arrives. He's got a big 5 Series BMW, and he's got, oh, his girlfriend. She's just beautiful.

And he started his own business. He's making so much money. He's done so well for himself. And, all right, well, what about Gareth? Gareth. Oh, Gareth. Remember how clever he was at school? Well, that guy, he's already a junior partner at PwC, one of the youngest junior partners they've ever had. And so, our conversation went on.

[17:51] And you see, our definition of success was who had made lots of money or who had advanced really quickly in their careers.

And, of course, who had a pretty girlfriend as well. But, you see, that's what impresses us. That's what impresses us. Wealth impresses us.

Nice homes, nice cars impress us. Natural talent impresses us. Fame impresses us.

And you know what? We can fool ourselves. And we can think that these are the things that really matter in life. These are the things that give us significance and make us who we are.

But we can't fool God. Jesus says to them, You think the love of money has no effect on you.

[18:50] But it does. And they go, Jesus, how? How on earth can the love of money, can't you see we respect it? And he said two things. He said, your attitude to the gospel and your attitude to the law of God is wrong.

The gospel. I'm going to tell you something now that might get me killed later. Okay. But here we go. In the mornings when I wake up and I'm looking at my wife, I want to lean over and I try to give her a kiss.

Right. Because she's cute and cuddly and I love her. And because the weather's a little bit cooler at the moment, it's nice to cuddle. So I lean over. But my wife is amazing. Right. It's like she has this sixth sense or something.

And just as I'm about to kiss her, this hand shoots up over my mouth. And she said, I'm not kissing you. You've got morning breath. Go and brush your teeth. So disappointed. I get out of bed.

I stumble out of bed. And I go into the bathroom. And when I get to the bathroom, turn on the light. And I look. And there's this thing looking back at me called a mirror. And when I first look at the mirror, I'm stopping it.

[20:06] That's not too bad. That's quite a good South African piece of beef right there. But then I take a step a little bit closer. And I look and I start.

Actually, my hair is not all that great. And there's a big piece of sleep still stuck in my eyes. And then I take another step closer. And I start to see, well, there's a little bit of last night's dinner still stuck in my teeth.

And there's a little bit of snot left on the side of my nose. And my eyebrows are sticking up. Like my wife says, they look like little cockroach feelers. And they start. And the closer I get to looking at this mirror, it's just like I get to see more and more of this ugly stuff.

And it's like this mirror's just start shouting at me. And it's shouting this. It's just deafening. And it's shouting, you need help. You really, you need help. You need soap. And you need water. You need to get cleaned up. And you know what? That is like the law of God. The law of God. There's nothing wrong with the mirror, right? The mirror is perfect.

[ 21 : 07 ] But the mirror is just saying, you need help. Okay? And that was like the law and the prophets, like my wife's voice shouting at me, go and do something. Get help.

It's like help is coming. Jesus is the soap and water coming to wash you. And the Pharisees, they stood in front of the mirror. And they were the sole interpreters of God's law.

And they thought they actually looked pretty good. And, but what they didn't realize when they looked in the mirror and they just couldn't see it is they had this big, fat, ugly pimple right in the middle of their head.

And they just couldn't see it. And it was a big, fat pimple called self-righteousness. Because this is the thing, right? The closer we get to keeping the law of God, the more proud we become.

And we start thinking, well, I did that. I'm pretty good. Gee, I'm a lot better than my neighbor. And we become filled with self-righteousness.

[ 22 : 08 ] I have a little two and a half year old boy called Elijah. And the other day I get home and I open the door and he's just so excited to see me.

He goes, Papa, Papa, come see, come see. And he's into cars and trains at the moment. So anyway, he's leading me by the hand. And I say, is it a car? And he goes, no, Papa, no, Papa, come see. I say, is it a train?

No, Papa, no, Papa, come see. And he's got me by the hand and he's leading me. And he leads me into the bathroom. And I'm looking there. And then suddenly I'm looking over his potty. And I'm staring down at this big, stinky pile of, you know what I'm looking at, right?

And my little boy, he's so excited. He goes, Papa, I poo-pooed. I poo-pooed. And I just, you know, I'm looking at it. It doesn't smell good. And I'm trying to be a good dad. And I say, well done, my son. That's good.

Can we flush this and move on? And you know what? That's exactly what our self-righteousness is like to God. It's like a little boy filling up his potty and going to God, look, Papa, look what I did.

[ 23 : 15 ] Okay, Paul says it like this. He says, whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the support greatness of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them, probably in your versions is the word rubbish. But actually, it's a very crude Greek word for human, okay?

There's a very good English equivalent word, but we're in church, so I can't use it. But you know what it is, right? I consider them crap, okay?

There's another word, but crap. 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 is by faith. And it says, the law and the prophets were proclaimed up until time of John.

[ 24 : 21 ] And then, since then, the good news of the kingdom is being preached. And this is the good news of the kingdom, right? Jesus is personified in the kingdom. He is there in the flesh.

And people were hearing this, and it says they were forcing their way in. And actually, the word is snatching. They were snatching the good news of the gospel. Okay, but who was snatching?

Was it the Pharisees and the Sadducees who loved money? Unfortunately, it wasn't. It was the tax collectors and the prostitutes.

The people who deceived and cheated and did all things wrong. They knew they were bad people, but they found they could be righteous. They could be righteous.

You don't need to tell a prostitute that she's a bad person. Excuse me. Have you ever thought about your life? They're not going to say, well, actually, I'm quite a good person. You know, they know they're bad.

[ 25 : 17 ] But you tell a prostitute that they can be washed clean, that they can be washed whiter than snow, that they can be righteous, and they will snatch. That's good news, right?

It's good news. Tax collectors, cheats, people who've deceived. Good news. I've got nothing to bring. Nothing in my hand I bring. Only to your cross I cling.

And the Pharisees just missed it. While I was preparing for this, I've been kind of watching people in Hong Kong.

Not in a weird way, okay? Not like a freak or anything. I'm just like, I've been observing people in the MTR, in the buses, and I start thinking to myself, are we living in a society and amongst the people who snatch the gospel, who are so eager for it, or, you know, they just consider it the best pearl that they're willing to sell all other pearls to get.

Do they see the gospel like that? Or are we living amongst the people who would rather spend more time reading the financial times than they would the word of God?

[ 26 : 36 ] Or they spend more time looking at shoe sales and the latest catalog and the discount on handbags and computers than they do thinking about the gospel.

And you know what? This is the most amazing thing, right? They were just, they were people, I think we live amongst a society which people are more eager for a business deal, right? More eager to snatch a sale than they would be to actually snatch the greatest opportunity that would ever be given them. And we have to understand about the Pharisees is that they were very respectable people.

They were there every Sabbath. On the outside, they looked very good. They had it all. They really did. But they missed the gospel.

They missed the central point of the whole thing of the law and the prophets was pointing to Jesus. And they missed it. They missed it. And, you know, it can happen to us too.

[ 27 : 41 ] There's a church that Jesus writes to in Laodicea. And this is what the church thought of themselves. They said, I say, I am rich.

I have acquired great wealth and do not need a thing. And Jesus looks at the church and he says this to them. He says, But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Sometimes the way we see things, the way we see circumstances is very different to the way Jesus sees them. I just think it's the saddest point that we can get to where we say, I don't need a thing. And reading between the lines there, you just get, We don't really need God. I don't need a thing. And I think to myself, sometimes the hardest people to reach are those who have everything money can buy.

Because they don't think they need anything. And they think because they've gained it and they've done well and they've got all this respect because of it, that they're really so good. And yeah, it just kind of, it gets to that point, right?

[ 28 : 57 ] Where you think God is no use to you anymore. You've done it all on your own. And Jesus says, It's not only does your love of money affect how you view the gospel, but it also affects what you do to the law of God.

And this is what they were doing, right? There's this view today that Jesus actually came to lower the standards of God, right?

The God of the Old Testament, he was very strict. He had high standards. And then Jesus came and he just lowered it all. But Jesus makes it quite clear in this passage that not one stroke of the Lord, like literally not one jot or tittle will be changed.

It's more the money lovers who are likely to do that sort of thing. And they're saying, Jesus, what are you talking about? Give us an example. And he says, Right. Your attitude to divorce and remarriage.

And in preparing for this, I looked up the divorce statistics in Hong Kong. And the latest available statistics we have are from 2011.

[ 30 : 07 ] And in 2011, we had the record number of divorces in recorded history in Hong Kong. And we also had the record number of remarriages in the same year.

And I just think it doesn't only happen in Hong Kong. I looked up and then it was the wealthy, the nations in the world with the highest divorce and remarriage rates are all the wealthy nations. It's like we ask ourselves this question, Why does it happen in wealthy societies? Why should the love of money develop a lax attitude to divorce and remarriage?

I can see why and I can see how it happens. You see, because when you have money and you love it, you can buy what you want and throw away what you don't want.

And marriage kind of becomes this business deal or this business contract. And it's no longer a covenant. And, you know, well, it doesn't work out. We just write it off as a loss and we try again.

[ 31 : 19 ] And, you know, we sometimes think, well, you know, Jesus, he just didn't understand. He lives in a different time. And, you know, he can't be compared with the modern times you live in and the stress and the pressures and all that kind of thing.

But you know what? In Jesus' day, divorce and remarriage was rampant. Amongst the Greeks and the Romans, it was crazy. Just high rate of divorce.

And it also became amongst the rabbis. There were three rabbis in particular who were arguing about this whole thing of divorce and remarriage. And they were debating, you know, when can you divorce, when can't you divorce.

And one of them said, well, you know, if you're not compatible, find someone who you are compatible with. That's the basic thing. And then people saying, well, you know, what makes us incompatible?

And then they would come to the rabbis and say, well, you know, my wife's got a loud voice. And that's kind of irritating. Can I get a divorce? The rabbi thinks about it. He goes, yeah, you know, actually that won't do.

[ 32 : 18 ] A loud voice? Oh, that's terrible, right? You can divorce her. And they say, well, you know, they come to the rabbi and they said, my wife burnt my breakfast. I say, what?

She burnt your breakfast? That's terrible. I mean, that's it. Just write a letter of divorce and give her the certificate and send her on her way. Now, you might think I'm joking, but that's seriously what was happening.

That's what it had become. And you see, our love of money dulls our sensitivity to the opportunity to receive grace.

And the question for me, I ask as I'm doing this, I think to myself, are my desires for money, for nice homes and nice cars and nice holidays, are they dulling me to the gospel?

Are they dulling me to the fact that I live in a society where people need Jesus Christ? Do I just block it out of my head and I just don't think about it because I've become so dull?

[ 33 : 28 ] You see, what was the real problem with the Pharisees? Yes, they loved money, and Jesus points that out. Yes, they were full of self-righteousness and just missed the gospel completely.

But those are all just symptoms of a much deeper issue. You see, because these guys, they chose when to submit to God's word, and then anything they didn't like or they disagreed with, just scoffed at, lifted their nose up.

And Jesus is actually hitting them for their hypocrisy, right? They just pick and choose what they like. I like that, don't really like that, doesn't work for me, move on.

And, you know, we can point our finger at the Pharisees, and we can say, well, what dreadful people. And when we hear, you know, maybe the love of money is not an issue for you, so when you hear you cannot serve both God and money, you think, yes, amen.

We can't live like that. We only live for God. But maybe the other areas of the gospel and God's word that we scoff at.

[ 34 : 40 ] For me, there's this one thing that Jesus said, and it just gets under my skin, and I just think, Jesus, you don't understand, really. You don't understand my life.

And I read it, and it says this. Jesus said, do not worry. Okay? And I said, you know, sons and daughters of the kingdom don't have to worry.

I said, Jesus, you just don't understand, do you? And in my heart, what I'm really doing is I'm just scoffing and thinking, yeah, you know, you're right on a whole lot of things, but this, you kind of got wrong.

And, you know, maybe for us, it's not what Jesus has to say about the love of money or maybe divorce and remarriage or worry, but maybe it's what he said about sex.

Maybe it's what he said about loving your enemies or forgiveness. I don't know. See, we have a choice.

[ 35 : 47 ] Are we willing to submit to all of God's word, or do we just choose some and we scoff at the rest? But when we do that, there's really a deeper question at work, and it's this.

Do we really believe that God is good? Paul writes in Romans 11, he says, Behold the goodness and the severity of God.

And sometimes I think I forget and I think we forget that God really is good. He really is good. And sometimes I think we really forget the severity of God. And we think, God, he won't really do what

he says he'll do.

He's just bluffing somehow. Now, and, you know, we say to ourselves what I say to myself. Maybe I'm different. And I just say, I'll trust and I'll obey until a certain point.

And then it becomes a little bit difficult for me. And I start saying to myself, you know what? In that regard, I'll make up my own rules. I'll decide what's right. I'll do what's right in my own eyes.

[ 36 : 55 ] I want to leave you with this. Jesus.

Jesus. He who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, in order that through his poverty we might become rich.

Rich in mercy. Rich in forgiveness. Rich in acceptance. Rich in purpose. Rich in righteousness. Rich in generosity. Rich in peace. That's the God we submit to. And he's wanting to give us these things.

He's wanting to give us these things. Now, I just have to be honest with you. This is a really tough passage. When Tobin emailed it to me, I thought, he's joking, right?

[ 37 : 58 ] But he wasn't, unfortunately. And it's a tough passage to prepare. I think mainly because it was, it just hit me so much, right?

Because I'm preparing it and I'm thinking, so much of my life has been shown up in this verse. But my prayer is that we will leave today and that we will see Jesus as a good, faithful, and above all, trustworthy king.

Trustworthy king. You know, when we say Jesus is Lord, that's really what we mean. We mean he's Lord of everything. He is master. He is king over our lives.

Not just little bits, but he really is king. The question is, are we willing to be his followers? Are we willing to be the king's subjects? Thank you so much for listening.

You've been very patient. And I wouldn't like to listen to a South African accent for too long, but you guys have. So thank you. I'd just like to close and I'd like to pray for us, if that's okay.

[ 39 : 03 ] So could I ask you to stand? Lord Jesus, we stand before you this morning as your people.

And Lord, we want to say as a people, as a family, as the body of Christ, that you are the king of kings and the Lord of lords. You are ruler of all creation.

Lord, I pray, forgive me. Forgive us where we've scoffed at your word and where we've decided what's right and what's wrong and we've turned away from you.

Lord, we thank you that you are full of mercy. You're full of grace and you're a king who wants to give us so much much more than that.

You're a king who's adopted us as his children. And Lord, I pray for us that as we go out into the world tomorrow, as we go out into our places of work and our schools and our universities, Lord, I pray that we will not be dull to the authority of your word, that we will not be dull to a world that so desperately needs your son, and that we ourselves will not be dull to what you're doing in our lives.

[ 40 : 33 ] Lord Jesus, we love you and we just say thank you. Amen. Thank you. We're just about at the end of the meeting, but what has God been saying to you?

Don't go away from here thinking that was a nice time together. That was a nice talk. But actually, God, who created the universe, wants to speak to you this morning. He wants to change us.

He wants to help us to grow to love Jesus more so that we don't scoff at his word, but we submit to his word. If any of you want more prayer, afterwards there will be people up here who can pray for you through some of these things.

There's just a few announcements before we go. Next Sunday, the 24th of February, there's going to be a members class, a new members class.

If any of you are not members, but would like to find out what is the church really all about, how do I become a member, on the 24th, after the service here, there will just be an hour or so where you can ask questions, and we'll go through what Watermark is really all about.

[ 41 : 41 ] Please, if you're interested, sign up at the welcome desk afterwards. The day before that, on Saturday, the 23rd of February, we're going to run, in the morning, from 9.30 to 12.30, an Old Testament class.

Some of you may have thought, what on earth is the Old Testament all about? You may have read all kinds of things about mildew and just strange sacrifices, and be thinking, is this relevant?

So if that's you, sign up again by the welcome desk, the 23rd, Saturday, 9.30 till 12.30. We'll be having a look at some of the overview, what's the Old Testament story, how is it relevant to our

lives.

Next Sunday, we'll be here again. So don't go to the ninth floor, we'll be in this place. And also, outside, Chinese New Year is coming up.

There are some red packets. I've left mine over there, but there are some red packets. Yeah, if you'd like to wave them. Here we go. Thank you. There's some red packets in here.

[ 42 : 45 ] You can buy some from, just from the welcome desk. Inside, they have something about the message of Jesus in there, which you can share with the guards in your building, with your friends, with your colleagues.

It's a great opportunity over Chinese New Year to do that. We don't take, we don't pass an offering round, because we believe that offering is an act of worship and response to what God has been doing in your life.

There are some envelopes for you just to, as an expression of how you love Jesus, to put in there what you feel is an appropriate expression of your worship.

So let me just close us with praying. Father, thank you so much that you are so gracious to us. Thank you that you are good to us.

Forgive us where we scoff at your word in so many areas, Lord. Please, I pray that you would convict us of those things and remind us that your word is not there to beat us over the head, but it's there because you love us, because you want our best, because you're a good God.

[ 43 : 59 ] Please, I pray that as we go out this week, we would remember just how good you are and your word would begin to shape our lives in every area. Thank you so much, Father.

Amen.