

So That It May Go Well With You

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Date: 22 January 2017

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[0 : 00] Good morning, Watermark. My name is Graham, and I'm one of the elders here. Last week, Chris mentioned an expectation when we come to hear God's Word, and I'd like to really continue that expectation that we set when we sit before God and His Word.

We want to hear Him speaking to us. I'd like to pray. I'd like to speak to Him before I speak to you. Father, we thank You so much that You are a God who is real, who is a Father who wants to have a relationship with us.

Lord, I pray prepare our hearts and our minds for Your Word. I pray help us to hear what You are saying to us, and Lord, not only to be hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word.

I ask that if there's anything that I say that is not true to Your Word, that You would help us forget it before it does any damage. But I do pray that if Your truth comes out today, that people will forget me, but they will remember Your Word.

In Jesus' name, Amen. I want to begin by asking you to imagine with me that I have the means and the power to make you a millionaire.

[1 : 21] Well, let's up that a bit. I have the means and the power to make you a billionaire this morning. All you need to do is get out of your seat, walk up on the stage, and take it.

Let's up that a little more. I have the means and the power to make you a trillionaire this morning. But all you need to do is get out of your chair and come and take it.

Okay, let's test that. I have the means to make you a trillionaire this morning. All you need to do is get up and come and take it.

Oh, good. Lorna was first. I saw that you moved. Come. Well, you have to move. This is a trillion dollars on offer here.

All right, yeah. Let's get very clear. Oh, Lolly, you're too slow. No, no. It's just the first one. Sorry. Even if you're pregnant, it doesn't count.

[2 : 28] Sorry. Got to go sit down. All right. Moment of truth. Am I true to my word? Well, you've got to ask for it, Janet.

Okay. Not only am I going to give Janet a trillion dollars, I'm going to give her \$20 trillion. This is legal tender.

It really is \$20 trillion. Unfortunately, it's Zimbabwean dollars. Okay. But it is real and it is legal tender. So, Janet, there you go.

That's yours. That's Watermark's first trillionaire. Before you get too excited, it's only worth about \$80 Hong Kong, right?

So, before you start asking her to buy you a car or take you out for lunch or anything like that, a trillion dollars. But that's exactly the situation the Israelites faced.

[3 : 29] God had promised them that a land flowing with milk and honey, a good land, all they had to do was go in and take what God had promised them.

But they failed. God had promised them. They got to the promised land and they said, we're not going in. We're too scared. We're not going in. So, God sent them on a 40-year journey and he said all the adults in that generation would have to die out except for two.

And then we would try again. And that's where we find ourselves now. The Israelites are camped on the side of the Jordan, ready to go in to the land of Canaan and take the land that God had promised them.

And Moses is giving them the book of Deuteronomy. Okay, now have any of you ever been into a synagogue? Anybody?

Okay, a couple. Now, if you go into a synagogue, what you'll see is a cupboard, right? And in that cupboard, you open it up and there are scrolls. I have a little miniature copy of what they would look

like.

[4 : 37] So, they would take out these scrolls. There were five of them. They would contain what the Jews called the Torah, the law. And to make sure they got the right scroll that they were looking for, they would open it a little bit.

Okay? And they would see what the words were. The first words that they read, they would just give the name to that book. So, for Genesis, they would open it up and it would be in the beginning. And that's what Genesis means, in the beginning. And with Deuteronomy, you'd open it up in Hebrew. It means these are the words. Because that was the first word on the scroll.

But when it came time to translate it from the Hebrew to the Greek, they changed it. And they took two Greek words, *judo*, which means second, and *numos*, which means law.

The second law. Now, the reason it was called the second law was because, if you know, in Exodus, the law, the covenant, was given the first time. And now it was being repeated to a new generation.

[5 : 43] Because they forget, right? And Moses was giving them all the encouragement, all the decrees and the commands that they would need to go in and live in the promised land.

It was theirs. God had promised it to them. But they needed to go in and take it. And he says, if you go in, there are two areas which you really need to take care in.

These two things are the foundation. You have to get them right to live how I want you to live in the land. And that is, you need to get your duty towards God right.

You need to understand your relationship with Him. That is your foundation. And then the second thing you want to get right is your duty towards your children. Because you need to pass on this message to the next generation.

Because they are going to be foundational and live in the land. Two things. Your duty towards God and your duty towards your children. And he tells them, the reason, the reason you need these is so that it may go well with you.

[6 : 52] So that it may go well with you. Have any of you seen a Singaporean movie? It's quite old now. It's called, *I'm Not Stupid*. Anyone seen it? It's a good movie.

Quite funny, right? But there's a scene in it. I love it. You constantly get these parents who are forcing their kids to study. And whenever the kids protest, the parents would say, for your own good, la.

For your own good, la. And that's exactly what God's saying, right? It wasn't about studying. But he's saying, get it right. It's for your own good, la. So that it may go well with you.

And God hasn't changed. He still desires the same thing. He wishes and desires that it may go well with you.

Now, we might need to readjust what we think well means. But this year, God wants it to go well with you.

[7 : 53] And God wants to do things for you, in you, and through you this year. So, your duty towards God and your duty towards your children.

But first, before he tells them, he details what he means by that. He needs to remind them of who he is. Because the Israelites had this tendency to make God small.

And we tend to do the same thing. So, he reminds them. He says, I am the creator. This little ball that we are on in space, just floating through space at millions of miles an hour.

God made that. And not only did he make that, he made the heavens and the stars and the moons and the planets and the universe. He made that. He's powerful. He's big.

That's the God who is making this covenant with you. And he gives them this little prayer, right? This little saying.

[8 : 54] It's probably one of the most famous verses in the Torah. And it's called the Shema. And it goes like this. We read it today. It says, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

In English, hear, O Israel, sounds very polite, very proper. But in the Hebrew, it's a word that's kind of like, listen up, Israel.

Pay attention, Israel. This is important. This is the foundation on which we will build and will go forward. This is it. The Lord our God, the God who created everything, he is ours.

We belong to him. He belongs to us. He's relational. He cares about you. He knows you. He is ours. And the second thing, the Lord is one.

Meaning he is the only God. There is no exception. There is no other choice or add on. It's God and God alone. Now, to put that into context, the Israelites were about to go into the land of Canaan, which was full of idolatry.

[10:09] And idolatry always leads to immorality. And it was the idolatry of many gods. They worship lots of gods. And God is saying, don't. Don't even ask how they serve their gods.

Don't do it. I am the only one. I'm the only true God that really exists. Do not be tempted by what you see. However good it looks. However good that sin that leads from their idolatry looks.

Don't do it. I am the only God before you. And then he reminds them of who they are.

So first he reminds them of who he is. And then he reminds them of who they are. And he says, you were slaves in Egypt.

You were nothing. You had no power. You had no place. You had no influence. You were nothing. But God chose you.

[11:09] There's a lovely verse that says, I love you because I love you. Right? Not because you have anything to offer God and say, God, look at me. I'll give you this.

No, you were nothing. And yet God chose to love the Israelites. He chose them. And he made them great. He made them into a great nation.

Right? They had nothing to offer him until he came and entered a relationship with them. And if you look today, they were in the might of Egypt. Powerful, powerful nations around them.

And yet God has been faithful and he has made the Jews into a powerful nation. Even today, the Jews, their influence in this world is exceptional.

Right? In the areas of art, entertainment, culture, finance. There's Jewish names all over it. So I read a statistic that in Harvard, they actually had to put a quota on it.

[12:05] But at Harvard, there were about 25% of their students are Jewish. But only 2% of the population in America.

Hugely influential. Because God is faithful to his promises and he's faithful to us today. Because get this. Fast forward into the new covenant and we read this.

It comes from 1 Corinthians 1. It says, Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards.

Not many of you were influential. Not many of you were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of this world to shame the wise.

God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose you. I think it's such a humbling reminder that all the gifts and the talents that we possess, all the things that we're tempted to become prideful and arrogant about, are ultimately given by God to you.

[13:14] So no one can boast. No one can really say, you know, I'm actually pretty impressive. The only duty we have is to respond to God. You gave me the gifts and talents.

Mold me. Let me use them for your glory. I think it is a great leveler. Really helps us to see who we are and just how good God is to us.

So God makes this incredible covenant with his people. It's a great deal. So it's kind of like, I want you to imagine again, it's kind of like a king who has this incredible palace in his kingdom.

There are vineyards and wells and animals and lush green grass. But outside is absolute poverty and squalor and nothingness.

And the king himself comes out of his palace and he goes in to this poverty and he sees a boy who is an orphan.

[14:19] He has nothing. He is hungry. He's starving. And this king comes to him and says, you, I want you to come and live with me in my palace, in my kingdom.

I will give you things that you did not work for, but I'm going to give them to you. And I just want you to come and I'm going to provide for you. I'm going to give you food and shelter and clothing and love and care.

But all I want from you is just to remember that I'm the king. I have the power to execute judgment and punishment.

And I just, I want you to love me. The love that I've shown you, I want you to respond to me with that kind of thing. I mean, can you imagine that kids' eyes, like, wait, wait, hang on, let me get this right.

So I'm living here. I got no food. I'm living in dirt, no clothes. And you just come up and you say, can I live there with you? It's an amazing deal, right? I mean, if you think about it, what God is asking of

that boy or the king, sorry, what he's asking of that boy, it's an incredibly just thing.

[15:30] He's just saying, show a little bit of gratitude for what I'm giving you. It's completely reasonable. But the benefits, who benefits from it? The benefits are purely in our favor, incredibly advantageous to us.

So here it is. These are the things that God lays out. It's our duty towards God. And he gives it in three words. He says, fear, love, serve.

Fear, love, serve. The fear of the Lord. Every day, I meet people who are afraid. They're afraid of sickness.

They're afraid of financial collapse. They're afraid of their children not getting into good schools. They're afraid of the future. They're afraid of air pollution. And ultimately, they're afraid of death. But I meet very few people who are genuinely afraid of God. If you are afraid of God, you will fear nothing and no one else.

[16:35] Let me say that again. If you fear God, you will fear nothing and no one else. Here the Israelites were.

They were going to go into the promised land. And they had every temptation to be afraid. Their parents' generation had got it wrong. They walked in and said, yes, everything God had promised. Hey, there's grapefruit, everything. But we're afraid. We're afraid. The people there, they're scary. We're afraid. And they were going to be tempted to be afraid again. And God's saying, do not fear them.

Do not fear them. Fear me. I'm the only one you really need to be afraid of. Because if you're afraid of me, you're not going to be afraid of them. But what is this kind of fear we are talking about?

Because I really see that the fear of God is kind of a controversial thing. And it's something we're a little bit uncomfortable with. So we tend not really to talk about it.

[17:34] But it's actually incredibly liberating and powerful to walk in the fear of the Lord. So what kind of fear is it? It's not a phobia that paralyzes you, that holds you down.

It's the kind of fear that will lead you to the right action. So let me put the thing. As a father, there are times I need my children to be afraid of me.

It just sounds weird, but it's true. I need my children to be afraid of me. So I'll give you an example. About two weeks ago, I'm sitting in our living room and I'm working at the desk on my computer and our balcony door is open.

And my three-year-old, which is quite an adventurous little girl, she, I look, and she is now climbing up the railing of the balcony. Okay, now you're thinking bad parent, bad parent.

Okay, I was, yes. But in that moment, I just shouted her name and called her here. And she obeyed, right? There was fear in her eyes.

[18:41] And she came straight to me. Now, if she hadn't been afraid of me, afraid that I had power, she would have just ignored me. Oh, yeah, who are you?

And carried on doing. But she didn't. There was genuine fear that led to the right action. The right kind of fear will lead you to the right action.

If you ever see a snake, that's a healthy fear. Okay, the right kind of action will tell you, run away. Run away. That's not a good idea.

Don't touch the snake. That's what it is. The fear of the Lord. Here's the question for us. What are you afraid of?

I ask myself this question. What am I afraid of? Because how I answer that question will determine if I'm really fearing God or am I fearing the circumstances around me or the people around me.

[19:43] What are you afraid of? The second thing God tells them, He says you are to love the Lord your God.

Now, we hear the word so much. It's everywhere. Love, love wins. Love's great. But the thing with this kind of love, it's not an emotional love.

It's much more of a devotional love. It's a love of obedience, a love of reverence for who it is that is speaking to you. It's a love that creates in us a desire to want to be close to that person.

And it's a love that is responsive to the love that has been shown in you. God first loved you and how we respond to Him is an expression of that love.

How we live is proof of this response. Jesus said it like this in John 14. Jesus replied, Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.

[20 : 52] Let me read that again. Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. I don't know if this has ever happened to you, but you meet someone who is knowingly and blatantly living with sin in their life.

They know it's wrong. They're living it. Whatever it is. Sleeping with your girlfriend, cheating on your taxes, whatever it is. You know it's wrong. You say, You know, I love Jesus. I still love Jesus.

No, not really. You love your sin and you might love Jesus a little bit, but you kind of love the sin.

And Jesus is saying, That's not what I'm about. Love me.

Love me. And all this other stuff will not matter. Love me out of a sense of reverence for Him. The question we have to ask ourselves is, Do we love Jesus or do we love our sin?

Which one are we holding on to? And the third thing it gives Him is this, Serve Him with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

[21 : 58] It's about giving God everything. Everything that's inside you. One thing about being a servant, the very first step in serving is to imply that you serve a master.

You serve a Lord. Right? There is someone greater than you. You have to recognize that He's the Lord and you're not and I'm serving someone greater than myself.

I like sports. I like watching sports. At the moment, it's the Australian Tennis Open. Anyone a tennis fan? Okay. There's about three of you.

The rest of you just go along with the story. Okay. So, at the moment, there's the Australian Open and there's this, it's actually an Australian tennis player. It goes by the name of Nick Kurgis, right? 21-year-old. Anyone heard of him? About two months ago, he was playing in a tournament where he just gave up and he wasn't trying anymore.

[23 : 02] He was still playing tennis, but he just gave up and they actually found him. You go on YouTube, type in Nick Kurgis, just some of the language he uses is not appropriate, but he's there, right?

And you see, you get to this match and he just gives up. He's still playing tennis, but he's not giving his all. It's just a little part of him, the little bit of effort that he puts in.

And God is saying, I don't want that. Give me your all. There is no area of your life that is not worthy of service to him. You serve him in your work, in your relationships, in your finances.

Every area of your life, it is in service to the Lord. It's not just the sacred Sunday thing that we're serving the Lord. It's every moment of every day you walk and you live your life in service to him.

And the exact opposite of that is to test him. And this is how the Israelites tested him. It comes from Exodus 17. Listen carefully. It says, they tested the Lord by asking a question.

[24 : 09] Is the Lord among us or not? Now put that in context, right? Everything the Israelites had seen God do, every time he had provided for them, he had shown them the miraculous.

And they asked this question, you know, is God really amongst us? Has he gone on holiday and left us? It's the ultimate disrespect and doubt to the Lord.

Yeah, I don't know. I'm not really sure if God's here or not. I just, as a father, I just like to think, if my six-year-old suddenly got up and down and said, you know, Dad, I'm not really sure that you're the father of this house.

I'm not really sure that you actually care about our family. It would hurt. As a dad, that would be, it would hurt me to know that kind of thing. And in that moment, we get a little bit to see God's heart here and know that God has feelings too.

Do you know that? We're so wrapped up often in our own feelings, how we feel about God. But do you know that God has feelings? And he says it here. He says, I am a jealous God.

[25 : 21] Now, right, again, that has lots of negative connotations. Oh, jealous, that's not a good thing. Let me put it to you like this, right? If I saw someone else's wife that I like more than my own, which I don't, honey, I don't, but if I did, that would be envy.

I want something that's not mine, which somebody else has. But if I saw someone with my wife, that would be jealousy because she belongs to me and I belong to her.

She's mine. I should be jealous. If I wasn't, my wife would be asking questions. You know, that's a bit of a problem if you do not feel in a slight bit jealous that I'm with someone else. And that's how God's feeling.

He's showing his heart. He says, I'm jealous, guys, don't you get it? That you're mine and I am yours. Don't flirt with other gods. Don't test me and say, are you really in this or not?

I'm jealous because you are mine. Don't flirt with other gods. They've got nothing to offer you. And we do it, right? We might not have the gods that the Israelites were facing like proper Asher poles and stuff, but the gods of power, status, money, sex, they're all around us.

[26 : 39] And sometimes, if I'm honest, I kind of flirt with them a little bit, right? Or maybe a lot. God's saying, don't do it. I'm jealous for you. You're mine. They're not. They pale in comparison to who I am to you.

Fear, love, serve the Lord. That is your foundation. That is what you are to live in the land. And if you live like that, it will go well with you.

If you live like that, it will go well with you. And I want it to go well with you. But don't just stop there because you need to think about your kids. This is your duty to your family.

And this is the verse. It says, impress them, the decrees and the commands of the Lord, impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up.

Now, to impress means to make an impression. Right? Like an imprint. It leaves a mark. And I don't know if you've ever been to a farm and you've seen cows being branded.

[27 : 49] Right? They belong to this farm and they kind of brand them on the bum. But they leave this mark. They leave an impression. And that's the word here. Leave an impression on your kids.

So that's what you to do. And he says, like, when do we do this? Right? When you talk, when you sit, when you walk, when you lie down, when you get up. Basically, he's saying every moment of every day is an opportunity to leave an impression on your children.

All of life. It's not just quickly send them to Sunday school. It's all of life that leaves an impression on your kids. And kids are going to learn two ways.

They're going to learn by what they see and what they hear. And they're far more likely to learn by what they see. So, as I was preparing this, my first draft, I thought, I'm going to give you great tips on how I parent and how I want to leave an impression on my children.

And actually, it was very short. So, I then was reminded what left an impression on me. What impressed me as a child?

[29 : 00] So, I'm going to share a little bit of my story with you this morning. So, bear with me, okay? But, my parents got divorced when I was three months old.

So, that left my mom with a newborn baby and my four-year-old sister. And my mom, who's now a retired nurse, was nursing.

And nurses don't get that well paid in South Africa, so she had to take a second job, right? So, my mom would work night duty, come back, and then go and work another job, and so, I have huge amounts of respect for my mother, but she didn't know Jesus.

And when you don't know Jesus, you can't introduce your kids to Jesus, right? So, at about the age of seven, we made a critical move from Johannesburg to a small little coastal town.

and my sister, my older sister, was invited to a birthday party by one of her classmates, and we went to drop her off.

[30 : 06] And the family that she was, had been invited by, they were farmers, they lived on this big farm, and when we got there, the couple came out to meet us, a couple by the name of Gary and Heather Cook.

And it turned out they didn't just have a daughter, they had three other sons. And they looked at me and they said, would you like to stay too? And I said, yes. And we always joke that that's kind of the day they adopted me as their fifth son.

They didn't realize what I was saying yes to, right? But I kind of became their fifth child. And I stayed, I spent all my weekends on the farm, often when my mom worked night duty, I would go and sleep over.

So we did life together. They took me to school, they took me on holiday with them. But Gary was also a lay Methodist preacher.

He was a farmer and he was a preacher. So I'd go to church with them as well. And we just, I did family with them. So these are the five imprints that they left on me.

[31 : 13] So I was about seven years old at this time. There are many more, but these are the five that left a big impression on me. The first one is they taught their children the commands and the grace of God.

They showed their kids what the relevance they have in everyday life. They taught them the difference between what is really right and what is really wrong. They modeled how to honor your parents by modeling, by honoring their parents.

They taught their children the value of telling the truth. That was imprint number one. They taught their children the commands. And the second imprint they left was a desire for learning.

Now, just to put it in context, two of their children had learning difficulties. They were very gifted at sport, very athletic. So all they wanted to do was the sport, not so much the learning.

The parents said, no, no, no. It says to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, all your mind. Okay, don't forget that.

[32 : 24] So they encouraged this development to love the Lord your God spiritually and intellectually, even when it's difficult and tough. And the third thing they left an imprint on was this was a family of prayer.

They prayed naturally and they prayed all the time. They prayed at meals. They prayed before going to bed. They were a family of prayer. And it wasn't just ritual prayers.

They were kind of heartfelt prayers, right? Not just something that we say. They were thought about. I have this memory imprinted in my head. They took me on holiday once and we went fishing and camping.

And we had this great week, right? And we packed up the tents. We were just about to leave. And Gary says, let's all gather around and give thanks to God for this time.

And we just stood there and for about three minutes everyone prayed giving thanks to God for a holiday. It just left an amazing impression on my mind. Fourth imprint that they left was this was a family of repentance and forgiveness.

[33 : 32] They taught their children that it takes a big person to say, I did it. It was me. I'm sorry. And they did it by as a husband and wife, right?

This wasn't a perfect family. When they fought or they argued, they modeled in front of their kids. I did it. It was me. I'm sorry. And they taught their children to own their stuff.

You did it. It was me. Okay? I'm sorry. You did it. It was me. No, I did it. It was me. Okay? They taught their children to own their stuff. Not to play the victim card but to say, I did it.

And the fifth imprint that they really left on me and this kind of involves me was their love for the outsider. And I was that outsider.

They already had a family of four kids. They already were very busy being farmers and preachers and leaders in the church.

[34 : 34] And yet, they took the time to love the outsider. Hey, let's have a fifth kid who's not really ours be part of our family. And it cost them financially, right?

They paid for me when I went on holiday with them. But they taught me what it truly means to love the outsider. And I want you to notice that you might be thinking here today, okay, I don't have kids. I'm excused from this little bit. But, hey, I wasn't their child and they left an imprint on me. All of us sitting here today, we will have the opportunity, the means, and the power to leave an impression not only on our kids but all the kids out there.

All those kids in Sunday school will have an impression of you. How we live our lives, how we relate, how we love each other, how we do community will leave an impression on our children. We have a very powerful responsibility. I want to say that I only, we only lived in that little town for three years and then my sister went to high school and we moved away. So I only had basically three years of influence with this family.

[35 : 46] And, but they planted seeds. They planted seeds. I didn't become a believer during that time but they had planted seeds. And when I did become a Christian at the age of 21, one of the first things I did was write a letter to this family and thank them of the models they were and their love for me.

I now had a clearer understanding of what motivated them but it was one of the first things I did just to honor them for the impression that they had left on my life.

What impression are we leaving on our kids? Okay, now all this sounds great, right? So that it may go well with you. We do these things, we live them and it's all working wonderfully but it doesn't.

God constantly warned them. He said, don't forget. When you've got it and it's going well, don't forget God but they did. The Israelites did. It's kind of like if that analogy I gave you of the king going and rescuing that little boy from poverty and brought him in.

After a while he's clothed, he's nice and clean, things are going well but after a while he gets bored. He starts thinking a lot of himself and says, you know what, I'm going to climb over the palace wall again.

[37 : 02] I'm going to go and check out the dirt that I used to play in. Maybe I'm going to get dirty again and I'll kind of jump back in over the wall. You know, that king, his demand, I have to love him.

That's exactly what happened to Israel. Time and time again if you look at the history of the thing, they kind of remembered God, they forgot him. Remembered God, they forgot him.

But here was the fundamental problem was the law because the law was an offer and a demand. It was an offer of protection, provision, blessing, but it was a demand of righteousness.

I will bless you, I will protect you, I will be your God, but you need to be holy, you need to live right, you need to respond to me. And they couldn't do it.

They couldn't do it because there's something fundamentally wrong with the human heart. The human heart is bent towards rebellion and sin and wanting to do our things our own way.

[38 : 06] We don't like to be told what to do and they couldn't do it. But then the gospel comes along and the gospel is an offer and an offer.

It is an offer of blessing, adoption, sonship, provision, care, love. But it's also an offer of righteousness.

God's righteousness, not your own. This is what it says in Romans 1. For I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, then to the gentile.

For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last. Just as it is written, the righteous will live by faith.

And that means the righteous will live by keeping faith. It is no longer a demand, it is an offer. God is giving you, He's offering you something but He is offering you even more.

[39 : 11] In the beginning when Janet came up and collected her 20 trillion dollars, even if it was really 20 trillion US dollars, it is nothing, nothing in comparison to what you are being offered by God.

The gospel is infinitely greater than that. When we grasp our heads how wonderful God is towards us. An offer and an offer.

But we have to go in and take it. God is offering you something. Will you accept His righteousness? So, maybe there are people here today where you have heard the gospel time and time again, but you are sitting on the opposite side of the Jordan and thinking, I don't know, I'm pretty comfortable, I'm pretty happy here, it looks like a scary place to be.

Will you go in and take what God is offering you? let's think about that individually for us. What is it that God has for you this year that we have the opportunity to go in and take?

Maybe for some of us God is saying, I want you to step up, I want you to be in leadership, I want you to serve. will you take it?

[40 : 43] I've given you every provision you possibly need. Will you take it? Maybe for some of us it's God's forgiveness. Are we holding on to a hurt?

Are we kind of holding on? We're scared to cross over and take what God is freely wanting to give you. Maybe He's asking you in the workplace to be a light for Him.

You're afraid to speak out. Are you prepared to go in and take what God has for you? For our children, for our children guys, the next generation, are we prepared to leave an impression?

It will cost us, right? When the Israelites were promised go in and take the land, it wasn't a walk in the park. They still had to get rid of all the enemies that were there, but God would be with them.

It was still an effort. Guys, to invest in the lives of others, to invest in the children around you, it will be a costly thing. It will require sacrifice, but are we prepared to do it?

[41 : 54] Are we prepared to live lives that point them to Jesus? Are we prepared to model truth and grace to them? Guys, and finally, as a church, are we prepared to go in and take what God has for us?

This is really something that's been burning on my heart. I look around, there's empty chairs, guys. One of the mission of this church is to be a light in this city, in this district.

And the day that we don't have any empty chairs left, then we will build a bigger place or find a bigger place to get more people in here. But that is the heart and soul of why we exist.

are we prepared to go in and take what God has for us? I have to put up my hands to ask my question. God, are we prepared to take it?

Because you are offering us, you've given us everything, but are we prepared to walk in your truth, your righteousness, and be the church we're called to be?

[42 : 58] Are we going to take hold of God's righteousness this morning so that it may go well with you? If we care about the city out there, there are people who are desperate for the gospel.

They're living in their sin. They're bound by so many things. And we have the word of life for them. We ourselves, do we live in that gospel?

Do we live in God's righteousness? Or do we default to our own kind of righteousness? Or do we just blatantly sin? Or are we taking hold of God's righteousness and thanking Him for it?

All right, I've spoken enough, but I really, I'd love to pray for us. Father, Father, I ask for forgiveness forgiveness, where we've, you've given us everything, your blessing, your mercy, and we haven't, we haven't taken it or we've taken it for granted.

But we know that you are a God who is full of compassion, full of grace, and freely forgives us.

Lord, you're a God who picks us up and leads us on and wants us to take and lead others, Lord Jesus, to a relationship with you.

[44 : 24] I pray, give us that power, that joy, that desire to live for you, to serve you and you alone, to give you everything that we are.

Lord, I pray that as we go out this week, Lord, bless us in such a way that there is a desire in our hearts to love you, to be with you, and to know that your desire is that it may go well with us.

Lord, we thank you for the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And in that, in that alone, we have our hope, we have our future, we have our foundation.

We love you. In Jesus' name, Amen.