

Freedom from False Worship

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- [0 : 0 0] The scripture reading comes from Deuteronomy chapter 5. Please follow along on the screen. And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, Hear, O Israels, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them.
- The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Herob, not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today.
- The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, while I stood between the Lord and you at that time to declare to you the word of the Lord.
- For you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said, I'm the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
- You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth.
- [1 : 1 6] You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the equities of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to the thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
- You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not behold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Observe the Sabbath to keep it holy as the Lord your God commanded you.
- Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh is the Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.
- You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.
- Honor your father and your mother as the Lord of your God commanded you, that your days may be long and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God has given you.
- [2 : 4 8] You shall not murder, and you shall not commit adultery, and you shall not steal, and you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor, and you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.
- This is the word of God. Great. Thank you, Sylvie. And good morning, Watermark Church.
- It is great to be back with you, I guess in a technological sense. It's wonderful to be able to gather as a family and around God's Word and to praise Him and to pray together as a church family.

We were so hoping to be back together this week, but as Oscar said, alas, not yet, but hopefully soon, we'll be back at Ebenezer together. Just one last thing up front.

I hope that you were as encouraged and edified as I was last week by the One Church Hong Kong service. It was so wonderful gathering as a church across the city together to celebrate what God is doing in our city, and I hope you were encouraged.

[4 : 06] It was a wonderful service for our city. Will you join me as we pray? Let's pray together, commit our time before God, and ask Him to speak to us from His Word, and then we're going to dive into the second of the Ten Commandments.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus Christ, Sovereign Father, Holy Spirit, we come before you this morning, this 10th of May, to worship you and to praise you, to give you the worship that you are due, but also, Father, to align our own hearts towards you.

God, as we look at your Word this morning, we right up front need to acknowledge that we are so often tempted to stray and to put our hope and trust in all sorts of false gods and idols that really cannot satisfy.

But you, Christ, have the words of life. You, Christ, are life. You, Christ, are the life-giving, life-breathing, sovereign God. And as we come and align our hearts with you, our own hearts and souls are filled with life.

God, we pray this morning, do that to us. God, as we come back to you and listen to your Word, won't you breathe your life into us? Won't you give us fresh life this morning?

[5 : 18] God, give us fresh hope. Give us fresh confidence. Give us fresh security and peace in you. God, open our eyes to see your majesty and your glory. Help us, God, to trust you.

We acknowledge, Father, that we have so many doubts and questions at times. God, open our eyes to see your glory. Just as we sang that song a little while ago about you deserve the greater glory, I was just reminded, God, I need to see your glory.

I want to see your glory. God, do that for us this morning, we pray. Not just this morning, this week. Tomorrow, the rest of this week, as we prepare for kids to go back to school and offices to resume.

God, show us your glory. Help us to see your majesty and therefore to worship you. We pray these things in your wonderful and powerful name.

Amen. Amen. As a church, we are looking at this extremely well-known passage of Scripture in the Old Testament, this set of instructions that has come to be known as the Ten Commandments.

[6 : 25] But they're not commandments in any kind of arbitrary sense of the word, like ten rules or ten pieces of legislation. These are God's words that are given to us for our abundance, for our flourishing, and really intended for God's people to prosper.

Now, one of the great privileges that we have is we get to see these ten words for abundant life in the context, the historical context in which they're given.

And that's really important. In fact, these ten words are given twice in the Old Testament. The first time, they are given in Exodus chapter 20, which happens right after Israel leaves Egypt.

They are saved by the blood of the Lamb. They leave over Passover. They pass through the waters, and they enter into the wilderness. And there they are constituted as the nation of Israel, as God's people.

And God gives His people these words of instruction for their flourishing and for abundant life. And that's really important, because what that tells us is that these words aren't given in order that Israel might become God's people.

[7 : 34] They're given because they are God's people. These words aren't given in order that Israel might earn or merit God's favor or His acceptance. They're given because they already have His favor.

They already have His acceptance. They already are His chosen people. These words are intended for God's people to become everything that He wished and wanted for them to become.

But then they're given a second time in Deuteronomy chapter 5, and that's the passage that we're looking at in this series. And what happens is that the book of Deuteronomy serves as a kind of pivot or a hinge between two sections in Israel's history.

The first section we've just spoken about, they leave Egypt, they go into the wilderness. And after the book of Deuteronomy, Israel enters the second portion of their history, which is when they go into the promised land, they settle there, they establish the kingdom under Saul and David, and they really become the nation of Israel in the promised land.

And in between these two sections of the history lies the book of Deuteronomy. And in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses gives the sermon to the people of God, reminding them of God's faithfulness, His goodness, and His good words to them, and encouraging them and urging them that as they go into the promised land to remember God's words, to obey them, that they will prosper.

[8 : 55] And the book of Deuteronomy is Moses' sermon, his parting words before he dies, to God's people saying, as you go into the promised land, remember your God and remember His words to you.

The question is, how's Israel gonna respond? Are they gonna obey God's word and experience prosper and abundance and flourishing?

Or are they gonna reject it and experience demise? And the rest of the Old Testament, from Deuteronomy onwards, really catalogues Israel's decisions of how they respond to God and His word.

And that same question applies for us today. For those of us that are part of God's people, how are we gonna respond to God's word and His track record of faithfulness? Are we gonna trust Him and obey Him, experience His flourishing and His abundance?

Or are we gonna reject it and experience demise? Now today we get to the second of these 10 commandments. And there's three things I want us to see in this passage.

[9 : 59] What is the second commandment, firstly? Secondly, how do we break it or why do we break it? And thirdly, where do we find our hope? Where do we find the solution?

So what is the commandment? Why do we break it? Where are we gonna find our hope? So what is the second commandment? Well, Sylvie read it to us, but this is what it says. Do not make an idol for yourself in the shape of anything, in the heavens above, the earth below, or underneath the earth and the waters beneath the sea.

Do not bow down and worship them. Do not serve them. Because I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the father's iniquity to the third and fourth generation for those who hate me, but showing faithful, steadfast love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands.

Now, straight away, you should see this very clear connection between the first and the second commandment. The first commandment we looked at two weeks ago, you shall have no other gods before me.

And Moses is saying here that it's impossible to break the second commandment without breaking the first one. You can't have other gods or idols in your life without also, not, without breaking the first commandment of having no other gods beside me.

[11 : 19] In many ways, the first and second commandment are two sides of the same coin. They are intrinsically linked together. When we worship or revere idols or false gods in our lives, the one true God is no longer first in our heart.

He no longer has exclusive rights to our affections and our devotions. Now, in the second commandment, there are actually two things that God is forbidding. On the one hand, the second commandment is regulating what we worship, that we worship the one true God alone.

By forbidding idol worship, God is forbidding His people from coming to church on Sundays, declaring their allegiance and their worship to God, and yet on Monday to Friday, going and finding our hope and our trust in other gods.

God is calling us to live all of our lives devoted to Him. You see, we may functionally call ourselves Christians, but actually, if our hope and our confidence isn't something else, your children or your career, that is functionally your God.

We could call ourselves atheists, agnostics, worshipers of no God, but actually, if our hope and trust is in our career, our work, our money, our social approval, what people think of us, functionally, that is our God.

[12 : 37] That is what we worship. Now, I'm sure we realize that whatever thing takes on a God-like status in our life, whatever thing becomes our God has its own version of the Ten Commandments.

For instance, picture your children being the most important thing in your life, the thing for which you live and exist, the thing that gives you hope and security and peace.

Maybe some of your Ten Commandments might sound like this. You shall have no other interests besides your children. You shall make sure your child has all the opportunities they can.

Maybe social approval, society's approval of you, is the most important thing. Then the Ten Commandments might look like this. You shall always look your confident best.

You shall never make sure anybody sees any faults in you. But hoping and trusting in anything other than the sovereign God always leads to our demise and our ruin.

[13 : 39] But there's actually something else going on in the Second Commandments here. God is not only regulating what we worship, Him, the one true God, He's also regulating how we worship.

In other words, in the Second Commandment, God is not only forbidding His people from worshiping false gods, He's also forbidding us from worshiping Him, the one true God, in a false or illegitimate way.

How so? By creating objects or images that we think represent God, infusing them with special powers or ascribing to them spiritual properties and using them in our worship through which we worship God.

It's not just that God is forbidding us from worshiping false gods like money or sex or career or power. He's also instructing us not to worship Him by taking some object, some image, infusing it with power and using it in our worship of Him.

In Exodus 32, there's this famous example of this. And it actually happens while Moses is on the mountain busy getting the Ten Commandments. He's up there for about six weeks, 40 days.

[14 : 53] The Israelites are below and they feel like, where's this Moses guy? We haven't seen him for a long time. Maybe he's died up there. Maybe he's forgotten about us. And so they come to Moses' brother, Aaron, the high priest, and they say, Aaron, make a God for us that will go before us.

And so Aaron makes this golden calf and Moses comes down the mountain, sees this golden calf and completely freaks out. But what's interesting is that when Aaron makes this golden calf, he's not suggesting that Israel stop worshiping Yahweh and now worship something else.

In fact, he says to them, as he makes this calf, he says, Israel, here is your God. Here are the gods that have delivered you from Egypt. And then he says this.

He says, Tomorrow there will be a festival, a celebration to Yahweh. You see what he's doing there? He's taking this golden calf and he's saying, here is Yahweh. He's not urging them to worship Baal or Melech or some other god of the nations around them.

But he's taken some physical thing and he says this represents God. Now why did the people of Israel want that? Because as they go into the promised land, they want some physical, tangible thing that they can look to, hold on to, something that will assure them that God is with them, that God's presence is with them.

[16 : 14] As they journey on their way, they want to know that God is with them, something they can look to or hold on to for that security and that assurance that everything is going to be fine in the future.

Friends, we actually find that we do this all the time. This thing of finding some object and ascribing deity to it is more common than we realize.

Maybe, for some of us, we have some special object, maybe a special ornament, a pendant that your mother or your grandmother gave you and when you hold it, you feel closer to God.

You feel His presence. For some people, maybe a silver cross that gives them comfort while they pray. They feel God is closer to them as they hold this cross. For some people, maybe it's a certain person.

They spend time with a priest or a pastor. They feel closer to God like that person has a direct connection to God and can help them. But friends, all of that is infusing in some created thing divine and sacred properties and treating them reverentially.

[17 : 19] We're breaking the second commandment. Now, we may think, but hang on, I don't do that. I don't have any special pendants, special ornaments. I don't pray with the silver cross or beads.

I don't worship God like this. But what about mental images of God? How many of us have created an image of God in our mind, an image of who God is and we worship and adore and revere that God rather than the one true God?

How often do we find people saying, well, the God that I believe in would never say something like that or the God that I believe in would never allow that to happen or I don't believe in a God who does this or who judges people.

My God accepts everybody unconditionally just as they are. What have we done? We've created a God in our minds and we're worshiping and bowing down a created God, a God that is no God at all.

Maybe the God that you've created in your mind is a God who is just always loving, always accepting and will never judge anybody or hold anybody accountable. Well, look at what our passage says here.

[18 : 26] It actually says very interesting. God says, I am the Lord your God, I'm a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

Now, what's God saying here? Well, what he's not saying is that there's such a thing called generational curses. He's not saying that we need to repent for the sins of our ancestors, the third and fourth generation.

He's not saying that if one generation sins, well, sorry for the next generation, you're just going to have to bear the consequences of your parents' sins. In the book of Ezekiel, chapter 18, God is very clear that he doesn't punish children for the sins of their parents.

But what he's saying is that as one generation rejects God and worships idols and false gods, as the next generation follow in the footsteps of their parents, they're going to bear the same consequences.

You can't just say, well, I'm sorry, that's my upbringing. That's the way my parents taught me how to behave. You can't excuse your disobedience by pointing to your childhood or your personal history.

[19 : 29] What this means is that as each generation participates or perpetuates the sins of their parents, they face the same consequences. But the point is this.

How many people say, well, God, I believe and would never judge anybody. I don't believe in a God like that. What have we done? We've created an image of God. We've created a God in our mind, a God that we worship, a God that is no God at all.

Now, why do we do this? Because, like idols, it's so much safer, so much easier to control a God that is manageable, a God that we imagine, a God that suits our needs, a God that never disagrees with us or contradicts us or challenges us.

And so just like people in the ancient world would create a physical, material God that they could bring out and worship, a God that would serve them, a God that they could serve in their own comfortable, convenient way, so we do the same with mental images of God.

We create a God in our mind, a God that is no God at all. And yet, as Tony Reinke reminds us, there is nothing more dangerous than religious confidence in a fake God of our imagineering.

[20 : 46] This is a problem. Now, as we said, we may be tempted to think, but I don't do this. 500 years ago, a French pastor by the name of John Calvin, very famous and brilliant man, very perceptively said this, this human heart is an idol factory, a perpetual creator of God's.

And what he's saying here is that every human being from the time the world was made cannot help but find things to hold on to, to look to, to put our hope and our confidence in, things to trust, things that we look to to guarantee us a secure and prosperous future, things that we worship.

John Calvin shows us that we actually all look to things to serve with the hope that it will serve us in return. Why do we do this? Well, here's a couple of reasons.

First reason is because we're made in the image of God. As human beings, we are made to worship. It's part of our DNA. We cannot help but worship because we're made to worship the one true God.

Now, of course, the fall has distorted that and so we worship created things rather than the creator himself. But part of our DNA, our heart's wiring is to worship. El Mola said it like this, the human soul will find an object of worship whether on the shelf in the store, whether in our bank statements, whether in the mirror in front of us, whether in the temple or in the heavens, we were created to worship.

[22 : 20] It's part of our DNA. But here's another reason why we do this. Because idols, the false gods that we create, whether material in front of us, whether existential or whether mental images of God, the idols that we think represent God and that we worship and serve, that we hope and trust in, always lie to us about the ability to give us life.

You see, false gods and idols always promise us an abundant life, a life full of joy and prosperity and peace. Don Frame, who's a brilliant theologian, said it like this.

He said, idols lie to us, not because God is invisible and cannot be pictured, but because idols fail to picture what is most important about God, His personality, His ability to see, to hear, to speak, to interact with His creatures.

Without personality, God cannot judge, which may seem like good news to hedonists, but it's bad news for the rest of the universe or anyone that's suffered injustice. But without personality, God also cannot love, which is bad news for all of us.

You see, friends, lifeless idols cannot impart life to us. They promise us the world, but they never deliver. One of the distinctive things about the God of the Bible is that He's personable.

[23 : 45] He's relatable and He infuses us with life and fullness of life. The one who knows us the best and loves us the most, as we worship Him and come and serve Him, we find that we become more fully human.

We become like Him. We become the people that God's called us and created us to be. We experience fullness of life. And on the contrary, the false gods that we are so tempted to hope and trust in are lifeless beings.

They promise us the world, but actually, they suck life out of us. They suck joy out of us. They suck hope out of us. Just think about the person that lives for the next promotion at work.

Someone who lives for advancing in their career. Are they more gracious? More understanding? More gentle? More sympathetic?

More compassionate with those around them? Of course not. Think about the person that lives for their children's success. That their very meaning is found in their children being successful and doing well.

[24 : 50] Are they more gracious and understanding when their children make mistakes? Are they more compassionate when things don't go well? Are they more forgiving when things go wrong? Of course not.

Idols promise us life and joy and freedom, but they do anything but that. They suck life out of our lives. Here's another reason. Why do we find this so tempting?

Because idols promise us the illusion of being in control. The great temptation, of course, of worshipping a false god is that it promises us that we can be in control.

Think about in the ancient days. You carved this idol out of a piece of wood or silver or stone. You can bring it in when you want, but you can also put it away. You can hide it when it's inconvenient, but you can also bring it out when you want to show off to others.

You can worship it how you want, when you want, when it's convenient for you to worship in a way that suits you. Friends, the false gods that we hope and trust in are no different.

[25 : 54] They promise us control, but actually they take control from us. Think of the person for whom appearance and beauty is the most important thing in life.

We might think, it's not such a big deal. I just want to take care of my body. Nothing wrong with wanting to look good. But scarcely can they walk past the mirror without stopping and looking. Almost all day, you're thinking, what do people think of me?

How do I look? How am I perceived by those around me? A few years ago, I read a magazine article in a British magazine about a young lady that grappled with this.

And listen to what she says. She says, sitting on my bed last December, I stared at the stacks of makeup scattered around my bedroom. I'd counted 213 lipsticks, 130 eyeshadow palettes, 102 blushes, 65 eyeliners, 17 mascaras.

And that wasn't even all of it. After doing some initial calculations, I worked out I'd spent 15,000 pounds, 150,000 Hong Kong dollars, in the last year alone.

[27 : 08] I was buying makeup as a way to improve my mood when I was struggling with depression. Buying makeup gave me a high, a feeling of being happy and hopeful, of being in control. That made me feel better after feeling low about my job and my low self-worth.

The shocking numbers confirmed what I'd been worried about. My spending habit had got seriously out of control. You see that? Idols promise us control, but they take control from us.

Well, think about the person for whom wealth and financial freedom is the most important thing in our life. We tell ourselves, I'm just being a good steward. I'm taking care of my family. I'm looking after my family's wealth.

But have we ever stopped to think how much is enough? And when we get there, what happens? We suddenly find it's not enough. We have a figure in our mind that if I get there, I'll feel safe, I'll feel secure, only to get there and not feel safe and secure and need a whole lot more.

John Kelvin reminds us that all of us, our hearts are idle factories, perpetually creating gods that we hope and trust in. Now you may say, Kevin, speak for yourself.

[28 : 19] I've grew up in a Christian family. All I've ever done is worship God. I've never worshiped false gods around me. All my days, since the day I can remember, I've longed to live and worship God.

Maybe you're not religious at all and you say, I don't worship any God. I'm a free thinker. I'm free from all religious devotion and delusion. Well, in the New Testament, in the book of Colossians, the apostle Paul writes a fascinating thing.

In chapter three, he writes this. He says, put to death what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, affairs, pornography, lust, impurity, passions, evil desires, and covetousness, all of which is idolatry.

And then he goes on to speak about the way that we use our mouths. He says, do not lie to one another, speaking untruthfully. Don't get angry. Stop slandering and speaking about people behind their backs.

What's Paul saying here? He's saying, the things in our lives that we're most ashamed about, the vices that we try and hide and don't really want anyone to see, is actually located in a deeper issue.

[29 : 34] Those aren't just habits. They're not just personality. It's not just our upbringing. There's something going on in our hearts there. There's something that we hope and trust in that is driving and forming our behavior.

Why do we lie? Maybe it's because our image is threatened. What people think of us is under threat. I wonder how many of us can relate to this. Your boss says to you, have you got that report I asked you to do and you haven't quite finished it?

And so what do we say? Yeah, I've done it. As soon as I get back to my computer, I'll send it to you straight away. And then we run to our computer and frantically type away. What's going on there? Our image, our sense of having it all together, being a good employee is suddenly under threat.

And so what comes out of our mouth is not quite the truth because we need to protect our idol. Friends, why do we get angry with our kids, with our spouse, with our boss, with our colleagues, with the government?

Is it not because some idol is under threat? Something that we hope and trust in, something that promises us security and peace is challenged.

[30 : 45] We cannot help but the anger in our hearts comes out. Why do people steal money and defraud others? Very seldom is it because they literally have no food to put on the table.

Often it's because that sense of being in control, the freedom that money promises, that millions promises, is too alluring and so people steal and defraud others.

Friends, the bad news is we're all idol worshippers. The heart is an idol factory, a perpetual creator of God's. What I want to do now is I want to ask us just to take two minutes and I've got a couple of questions on the screen and I would love us to, if you're with somebody else, to process these questions together.

Otherwise, if you're on your own, maybe take a journal and just write some thoughts as you process these questions. Three questions for us. What makes you feel secure when you have it and insecure when you don't?

What causes you extreme emotion, extreme joy, extreme despondency, extreme anxiety? What do you think could possibly be an idol, a false god, in your life?

[31 : 59] Let's take a couple of minutes and think about that now. Okay. We've looked at the second command and we've looked at the way that all of us break it.

So where do we find hope? Where do we find hope for idolaters like myself and like you? In the person of Jesus Christ, we have the hope that we're looking for because in the gospel, we have the good news that we don't need to create a God.

We don't need to find a God. We don't need to serve a God in the hope that maybe He will serve us. In the gospel, in Jesus Christ, we have the one true God who came to us to show us what God is really like, that we may come to Him and find the life and the freedom that we desperately long for and we desperately need.

In Jesus Christ, we have the hope that our hearts long for. In his book, Counterfeit Gods, Tim Keller has this amazing line where he says, in ancient times, the gods were bloodthirsty and hard to appease.

They demanded your all. The gods of today still are. Friends, in the gospel, we are given the great news that we don't need to sacrifice our lives because in the gospel, we have a God who came and He sacrificed Himself for us that we may find His favor and His blessing.

[33 : 37] The gods that we look to to save and rescue us, to give us peace and meaning and security in life, are bloodthirsty and hard to appease. But in the gospel, we discover the eternal God, the uncreated one, the one who doesn't demand of us our blood, our sweat, and our tears, but the one who gave of His own.

Friends, don't you see that we don't need to create a God because God has come to us. He's come to show us what He's really like. He's come to free us from the delusions that false gods bring, the half-truths that we tempted to trust in.

He's come to bring us the reality of who God is. But He's also come to give us the peace that we long for. He's come to give us joy. He's come to set us free from shame. He's come to give us a hope, a living hope that can never perish or spoil or fade.

He's come to give us a rock-solid identity as He says, my sons, my daughters, I love you. You are chosen in me. In John's gospel, John introduces Jesus and he says that He's the eternal, uncreated God.

He's the one through whom everything exists. Everything in this world comes into existence because of Jesus. And then John introduces Jesus and says, in Him is life.

[35 : 00] And the life that was in Him is the light of the world, the light of all mankind. The false gods that we so easily tempted to hope and trust in promise us life, but they deliver anything but life.

They promise fullness of life, but actually they suck us of life. But in Jesus Christ, friends, we have true life. Jesus came and He said, I am the resurrection and life.

John writes His gospel, He says, I write these things that you may believe in Him and experience life. Jesus says, I am the bread of life. Jesus came and in John 17, He's praying to His Father and He says, Father, this is eternal life that they may know You and the Christ that You've sent.

Friends, Jesus, the author of life, came to die, to lay down His life that we who deserve death may find fullness of life.

But not only that, John not only says that in Jesus do we find life, fascinatingly, he says, in Jesus, we also find grace and truth.

[36 : 10] In John chapter 1, he says, the law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus. You see, these false idols and the gods that we tempted to trust in, the images of God that we make up, they lie to us.

They promise us life, but they take life. They promise us control and they end up controlling us. In Jesus Christ, we have the truth. Jesus came to show us what God is truly like.

He came to reveal the Father to us. In John, he says, anyone that has seen me has seen the Father. We don't need to be deluded by a false version of who God is, even a version that is 70% true.

When we've seen Jesus, we've seen the true reality of who God is. But Jesus doesn't only show us the truth about who God is, he also tells us the truth about ourselves.

He tells us that we are lost. He tells us that we're not really in control of our lives. Jesus tells us that the more we think we're in control of our lives, the more lost we actually are.

[37 : 14] Jesus comes and he tells us the truth that our sin is a problem. A problem that is going to cost us our lives. Jesus tells us the truth that our independence from him is actually an act of rebellion.

An act for which we'll be held accountable. An act for one day which we're going to face judgment. But Jesus doesn't only come and bring us the truth. He also brings us grace.

You see, the problem with the false gods that we attempted to trust and hope in, is that while they promise us so much, the moment we fail them, they'll accuse you and tell you that you're a failure and that you're miserable.

Just think about the person that loves and serves beyond all else, that hopes and trusts in their children's success. That for them, the success of their children is their meaning and purpose in life.

What happens when your children rebel? What happens when your children don't do what you want? What happens when your children don't follow your intended plan and path for their lives? You feel like a failure.

[38 : 17] What happens when your God that you hope and trust in is your career development, your path, and you lose your job? You don't just feel bad. You feel worthless. You feel like a failure.

Friends, Jesus says that all of us fail Him from time to time. We all sin. We've all fallen short of His standards of glory. But Jesus Christ doesn't point the finger showing us what a failure we are.

Jesus comes and He lifts us up. And Jesus is not only truth but grace. Jesus came to die on the cross, to have His hands smashed with nails, to have blood and water poured out of the side.

Jesus came to hang on the cross to take our failures upon Himself. Jesus came to take our death that we may find life. Friends, Jesus is not only the one true God, the one by whom and through whom all things were made.

He's not only the exact representation of God, not only does He come and give us life and truth, He comes to give grace to sinners like you and me, to idolaters like us.

[39 : 24] Friends, in Jesus Christ we have the one true God, the eternal God, the uncreated God, the one who is sovereign and majestic. And yet Jesus didn't hold on to His godliness.

He didn't grasp at equality with God. But He came and He humbled Himself, taking on the form of a servant. And being a servant, what would He do? He would lay down His life, taking on death, the excruciating death of a cross, for you and I, that we might know Him, that we might know His life, that we might experience His peace, His freedom, His joy.

Friends, this Jesus Christ alone is worthy of our worship, indeed worthy of our very lives. Do not make an idol for yourself in the shape of anything, in the heavens above, the earth below, or in the waters below.

Turn to Jesus, the one true God, and find your hope in Him. Let's pray together. Father, oh Jesus, we come before You this morning because You, God, have life because we so need You.

Father, just a few minutes ago, we reflected on the things that we are tempted to hope and trust in. the things that promise us security, the things that promise us joy and peace.

[40 : 57] Father, we want to bring those things before You this morning. We want to acknowledge them, but we also want to repent of them.

We want to turn from those things and turn to You. Father, in my own life, I am so aware that people's approval and what people think of me is often the driving force in my life.

God, so often, I love the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from You. I love the praise and the affirmation from people more than the affirmation that comes from You.

Father, I acknowledge that I feel safe and secure if I think people are pleased with me rather than knowing my security is in You.

Father, in my life and in all of our lives, there are deep-seated things that we hope and trust in. Christ, won't You come and deliver us from those things?

[42 : 07] won't You come and save us? Won't You come and set us free? Father, this morning, we want to turn from those things and turn to You.

We confess that sometimes we don't even know how to do it and so the first step, God, is to confess and repent. Father, forgive us.

Forgive us, God. Father, we ask that You don't just forgive us, You also change us, God. You change us, Lord. God, won't You make us more like You?

Won't the life of God, the life of heaven infuse our souls and our bodies and our hearts, God. God, won't You break the power of sin and darkness as we sang earlier, break the power of these idols in our life and set us free, God.

Set us free. God, I pray that for some of us, even right now, we'll experience a freedom in our life. that, God, this afternoon, we'll be a different person to who we were this morning because that which has controlled our life will be set free, God.

[43 : 35] I pray, Father, for freedom. God, as we turn from these things to You, God, won't You change us? God, come and bring freedom now, Lord. As we repent and turn from these things and turn to You, God, we pray for Your freedom.

We pray for Your joy. We pray, God, for anxiety and despondency to flee and pray for joy and fullness of life to come. Christ, come and have Your way.

Come and be our God. God, come and be our real God, not just in word, but reality in our hearts. Come and be our only God. We pray.

We pray these things in Your name. Amen.