

The Wrath of God

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[0 : 0 0] Well, as I said today, we are going to be continuing our study on Romans and we have come now to the second half of chapter 1 and we're going to look at really this section as a whole but we can focus in particular on the words of verse 18.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Last week we were looking at the great words of verses 16 and 17 where Paul declares that he is not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, for in it that is in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith as it is written the righteous shall live by faith.

And we were highlighting the fact that it is the gospel that is Paul's great theme in Romans. There are several themes running through the book but really the main one is this theme of the gospel. Paul's desire is to explain how the gospel works and we saw last week that in verse 18 Paul introduces a key word that lies at the heart of the good news of Jesus Christ that is the word righteousness.

[1 : 3 1] In the gospel God's righteousness is revealed to us and even more remarkably God's righteousness is shared with us so that we may now have life.

So Paul is talking about the gospel, Paul is talking about righteousness and as you read verse 17 you would expect Paul to go straight in to a detailed explanation of how God's righteousness is revealed and how God's righteousness is given to us.

But he doesn't do that until chapter 3 verse 21. And so in between Romans 1:17 and Romans 3:21 Paul does something different.

What does he do? Well before telling us how the gospel works Paul begins by explaining why the gospel is needed.

In other words before the good news being explained in detail in chapter 3:21 and onwards before that good news there is bad news.

[2 : 4 9] And we highlighted this in our very first sermon when we summarised the structure of the whole letter. We can just look at this slide again, you've got the introduction at the start. Romans can basically be separated into two main parts, part one knowing the gospel and the first section of that part is the part beginning at chapter 1 verse 18 where Paul explains the problem of sin.

He's telling us what's wrong. And as he does so in this section, this sort of three chapters, two chapter section Paul surveys the whole world.

He looks at Jews, he looks at Gentiles and he highlights where we have all gone wrong and he eventually reaches the conclusion in chapter 3 where he says, none is righteous.

No not one. And we'll spend a couple of weeks on this section and today we're going to focus on the second half of chapter 1 from verse 18 to verse 32.

And as we do so we're going to ask two simple questions. First of all, what does this passage teach us about God? And secondly, what does this passage teach us about the world?

[4 : 1 1] So first of all, what do we learn about God as we look at this passage? Well, when we think of the attributes of God, we often focus on things like his love, his wisdom, his power, his holiness, his glory.

These are the attributes that come to mind when we dwell upon the nature of God. And each of these is amazing. Each of these is a sort of wonder and worship if we examine them and look at them in more detail.

But verse 18 of Romans 1 is a very significant verse because it is teaching us about another attribute of God and that's an attribute that we don't tend to talk about very often.

It's talking about God's wrath. I think one of the reasons why people don't talk about it often is that it's very often something that people find hard to accept.

People like talking about God's love, his power, his strength, his wisdom and we can see why God would have all of these attributes. But for many people, wrath is harder to understand.

[5 : 23] Is it possible for the God who is love to also be the God who shows wrath?

Romans 1 18 is telling us that wrath is an attribute of God. But how are we to understand that? What do we make of God's wrath? Well I want us to just think about that for a wee minute together. And in order to understand God's wrath, there's a key concept that we need to become familiar with and that key concept is antithesis.

Now if you're probably looking at thinking what on earth are you talking about Thomas? What on earth does that even mean? It's not a word that we tend to use very often. What is antithesis? Well antithesis basically means opposite.

For example right and wrong are antithetical. Right and wrong are opposite. So when we say that word antithesis we are thinking in terms of opposites.

[6 : 29] Right left, light dark, right wrong. Now antithesis is a very very important concept in theology because when we define what God is which is something that we often do, we are also defining what God isn't.

There's things that God is, there's things that God isn't. And this is something that runs right through scripture. Do you remember what God's covenant name means?

All the way back in Exodus God reveals his covenant name. Can you remember what that means? I'm sure you can. It means I am who I am.

God is who he is and scripture is the special revelation where we discover the nature of who God is. But by default when we discover who God is we also discover that there are many many things that God isn't and it's vital that these are also understood.

If God is who he is that of course means that he is not what he isn't. Antithesis is fundamental to understanding the nature of God in the Bible.

[7 : 52] And there's an example of antithesis right here in Romans 1. You look at verse 17 and 18 it says, for in it in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith as it is written, the righteousness shall be lived by faith.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. There's an antithesis.

Righteous and unrighteous. And that antithesis is fundamental to the nature of God. He is righteous therefore he is not and never can be unrighteous.

Righteousness and unrighteousness are antithetical. And so you can see it there. I've put them on either side of the screen with a line across them and the wee dashes to show that that ultimately these two are incompatible opposite antithetical.

God is one of them and he's not the other. And there are many, many, many more examples.

Here's a few. Holy. God is holy. That means he is not profane.

[9 : 02] Truthful. God is truthful. That means he cannot lie. He's not a liar. God is wise. Therefore he cannot be foolish. God is infinite.

Therefore he cannot be finite. And these are just a few examples. The attributes which God possesses logically imply an antithesis which he does not.

And the ultimate antithesis is God and sin. They are absolute opposites. Now, there's an important point that we have to highlight here and I hope I explain this clearly.

It's very important to recognize that it is the nature of God that defines these antithesis.

Not the other way round. In other words, God does not do things because they are righteous.

[10 : 02] It is that certain things are righteous because God does them. It is God who is the great definer.

He is not defined by something greater than him. So we must not think of righteousness as being above God. As if to say there's this criteria of righteousness and God fits it. It's the other way round. God is the one who is at the top. God is the one who defines what righteousness is. We know what righteousness is because that is the way God behaves.

And the only reason we have any concept of what is good or right or true or any concept of what is loving is ultimately because of God.

He is the one who is the source of these things and he has made us in his image and he has revealed these things to us. So I hope that makes sense.

[10 : 59] Got this concept of antithesis in terms of the nature of God. There's things he is. There's things he isn't. That I hope is very logical and I think really is something that seems pretty straightforward.

I hope. But this concept of antithesis can be taken to another level because it also helps explain how God relates to the world.

If we go back to Romans 1, God is righteous and he's there for the perfect antithesis of unrighteousness. And that means of course that God loves righteousness as Psalm 33.5 and many other places in the Bible tells us.

And of course logically it means that he hates unrighteousness. And there we discover another antithesis, love and hate.

God's nature means that he has an antithetical view of antithetical behavior. Isaiah 61 verse 8 highlights this.

[12 : 05] I the Lord love justice. I hate robbery and wrong. You see that's antithetical behavior, justice and robbery.

And God has an antithetical reaction to each. He loves the one. He hates the other. It all fits together. So in terms of righteousness, God is righteous and he loves righteousness.

Obviously he's not unrighteous and his view of unrighteousness is the opposite of love. He hates it. And so we can see things start to fit together.

God is righteous, he loves righteousness. He's not unrighteous, he hates unrighteousness. We can go to another level now and see how God responds to these things.

And we find another antithesis. We see that God delights in righteousness. It provokes righteousness, provokes God's delight, his pleasure.

[13 : 10] Unrighteousness does the opposite. It provokes the opposite of delight. It provokes anger. It provokes wrath.

And so now we have several layers describing the nature of God, the viewpoint of God. The response of God and each follows on from the other.

As you can see on the Arrows there. I hope you can see how all that fits together. Because the point I want to make in all of this is that when we talk about God's wrath, we are not talking about some wild irrational fury on the part of God.

That's often what we think of when we talk about wrath. We think of somebody raging who's just flying off the handle and losing the plot. That is absolutely not what God's wrath is like.

God's wrath is a pure, controlled and holy response that is absolutely consistent with the nature of God.

[14 : 16] God is utterly holy, utterly righteous, utterly good. Therefore sin and wickedness and unrighteousness provoke in him the very antithesis of delight.

They arouse his wrath. And this is confirmed by verse 18 and in particular by two key words. The word revealed and the word against.

God's wrath is revealed. That's highlighting the fact that God does not turn a blind eye to sin. When wickedness and injustice ravages through the earth, God doesn't just turn away and say, oh well it doesn't matter.

I'm not bothered. When God sees the devastating effect of sin, it provokes him to anger.

And the reason it provokes God's wrath is because he is against unrighteousness. That's what that word highlights. He is against unrighteousness.

[15 : 21] In other words, God is never on the same side as wickedness. He is always opposed to sin. God's wrath is his holy reaction to evil.

It is his personal, vigorous opposition to all that is wrong. And if we're going to understand this, there's two things that we must make sure we remember.

First of all, we have to recognise that our anger is corrupted by sin. But God's is not.

So often when we get angry, we are paranoid, we're selfish, we're vindictive, we're judgmental and we lack self-control and we go into an irrational rage.

Our anger is corrupted by the fact that we are sinners, but God's anger is not like that. God's anger is pure, consistent, holy, controlled and righteous.

[16:27] Our anger is corrupted by sin, God's is not. But we must also remember, our understanding of evil is blinded by sin.

But God's is not. One of the big hurdles of understanding the wrath of God is the fact that we play down the seriousness of sin.

So things like telling a lie, gossiping, coveting, refusing to forgive. We all too often find ourselves thinking, that's not that serious.

And if we think that sin is not that serious, then we can easily think that God's wrath is unjustified. But that is a problem with our understanding, not with the character and nature of God. The problem is that we are numb to evil.

[17:37] Isn't that true? We tend to be casual about sin. We tend to accept injustices as long as we're not the victims.

And we take pleasure in things that deep down we know are wrong. We are numb to evil.

But God isn't. And thank God that He isn't.

Would you really want a God who is not bothered by sin? Of course you wouldn't.

And this raises a vital point that I think is a very important point. And I cannot take credit for it. This is something that I heard in a sermon by Eric Alexander, who's a retired Church of Scotland minister and someone I'm sure many of you are familiar with.

[18:39] I was listening to a sermon. He was talking about anger. And he said something really interesting. He said this, what is the real test of a person's character?

How is it that you can discover what really matters to somebody? How do you discover what they really care about?

And he says the answer is to find out what makes them angry. That's where the real test of character lies.

I thought that was so interesting. What makes you angry? What makes me angry? Because whatever it is will tell you what your priorities are.

So if you get angry when somebody accidentally scratches your car, then that's perhaps telling you that your possessions are maybe a little bit too important to you. If you get angry when someone takes your parking space, then perhaps you are a little bit selfish.

[19:43] If I get angry when somebody makes a mistake, then I show that I'm impatient. If I get angry when somebody corrects a mistake in me, then I am displaying the fact that I am insecure.

But if you get angry when someone is bullying your child, then it shows how much you love them and you want to protect them.

If you get angry when people are being exploited, it shows that you have a sense of justice. If you get angry when lies are being told, it shows that you care about the truth.

And we should all ask ourselves what makes us angry? Because it's a penetrating test of our character.

But what makes God angry? Well Romans 1 tells us God is angered by the ungodliness and unrighteousness of humanity, as verse 18 tells us.

[20:59] And then in verse 29 to 31, he gives us more detailed examples. Unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness, gossip, slander, hating God, incident, and so on and so on.

All of these things provoke God to anger. And other parts of scripture tell us more things. Idolatry provokes God to anger.

Pride provokes God to anger. Exploiting widows provokes God to anger. So if you are a widow here today, if you are ever exploited, that makes God angry.

The neglect of people who are vulnerable, orphans is an example that often comes up in scripture. These things make God angry.

And here is where we see that God's wrath is something that we should actually take delight in, because how awful would it be if God didn't care.

[22:11] But blessed be God, he does care. He cares about right and wrong. He is not numb to evil. He has a holy and a righteous wrath.

And as verse 18 tells us, that wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

And we need to pause there and just ask ourselves where we stand before God.

Because ultimately if we push God away, and if we say that we do not want Jesus as our saviour, ultimately we are doing something that will inevitably and justifiably leave us exposed and deserving of God's wrath.

That's something that we must, must think about. That is not what God wants for you. God wants to save you from his wrath and to take you to be with him forever.

[23 : 43] So Paul is teaching us about the wrath of God. But he then goes on to describe the devastating effect that the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men has had.

And in doing so, he teaches us about the world. So not only does Paul teach us about God, he also teaches us about the world, which if you remember was our second question, what does this passage teach us about the world?

At the end of verse 18, Paul says something very significant about the world and particularly about humanity. It says that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Now in many ways, those three words sum up the root of what is wrong with the world. Humanity suppresses the truth.

Now here Paul is getting us to take a step back and think about our world view. In other words, he's getting us to think about how we view and understand everything that is around us.

[24 : 59] Now world view is a really important concept to consider because everybody has a world view. Whether you realize it or not, whether you've thought about it or not, everybody has a world view.

We are here in this world, we observe what is around us and we have a world view that shapes our understanding of the environment in which we are in.

Some people have thought their world view out in detail. Other people just allow their world view to be shaped by media and culture and don't really think about it that much. But everybody has a world view and it's a really important thing to think about because history is shaped by competing world views.

And the Bible tells us that there is only one world view that is the truth. And that is the truth that the world has been created by God and for God.

This world is God's creation. He is the Creator, we are His handiwork. We call that the Creator-Creation distinction. You can put it in a diagram like this where God is the Creator and the universe is the creation.

[26 : 16] So the whole universe is in the small circle and God is separate from that but He is the source and explanation of it and He is involved in it.

God is our Creator, we are His creation and it is only when we recognise this truth and live in our right relationship with God, it is only then that we fulfil our true potential and find our true identity. That according to the Bible is the truth but ever since the fall humanity has tried to suppress that truth.

Isn't that how the serpent deceived Eve? He cast a doubt in her mind that led her to suppress the truth and sin against God. The serpent infected her mind with a false world view and ever since then humanity has failed to recognise and understand the truth of who we are.

And Paul explains that in verse 19 to 20. He says, for what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them for his invisible attributes namely his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made so they are without excuse.

[27 : 38] Paul is saying that the truth of the Creator creation distinction is evident to everyone. Now even though the whole, well not the whole world but even though vast parts of the world once want to deny it, if we just take a step back and look at things at a basic and simple level we see that Paul is absolutely right.

Because if you look at the world around you, if you just stand and try and just look at the world around you, look out the window, look at what you see and ask yourself the question which of these explanations makes the most sense.

The world that you can see out there is a complete accident where absolutely everything has come from absolutely nothing as the result of total chance. Or you can say that the world is a total illusion. What you are looking at out there is a total illusion. You should be doubting everything you can't be sure of anything. You can't even be sure that you are here and that what you see is real.

Or you can look out the window and say the world itself is a God and so the grass and the stones and the rocks and the sky are all things that we should worship.

[28 : 48] Or you can look out the window or look at the people around you and say well the whole world is meaningless. Nothing has any value. Everything is empty and pointless.

These are all world views that people have. They are all potential explanations for reality. You could adopt any of these or you can look out the window and say the world is a marvellous creation designed, made and sustained by a God who is all powerful and fully able to design, create and sustain a universe such as this.

I can't help but feel that just basic intelligence tells you surely that that is the most coherent, logical and understandable explanation of the world around us.

It seems so obvious. Paul says it is obvious but humanity suppresses the truth.

And that suppression of the truth has a devastating effect. And Paul describes that effect in verses 21-28.

[30 : 10] Although they knew God they did not honour him as the shooter, give thanks to him. They became futile in their thinking, their foolish hearts were darkened, claiming to be wise they became fools and exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things, therefore God gave them up to the lusts of their hearts to impurity to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions for their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another.

Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error and since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

That is the devastating effect that takes place when the truth is suppressed and there is an awful lot we could see here and we are running out of time so I just want to highlight a couple of things very briefly.

If you look at those verses in more detail you will see that Paul identifies three areas in which a defective worldview affects humanity.

[31 : 38] First of all, our thinking becomes futile. Now that is very, very significant because a lot of people think that it is Christians who are the ones who are not thinking clearly but the Bible never ever asks us to think blindly or irrationally.

The Bible makes perfect sense, logical sense and Paul is reminding us that it is actually those who oppose God who have become futile in their thinking because without God's truth in our worldview we lose the ability to think clearly in terms of our understanding of the world and the result that Paul describes there is the fact that instead of worshiping the Creator we worship the creation.

Now that seems the most unbelievably ridiculous thing for anyone to do. We have a Creator but let's worship the creation. You think how would anybody do that?

And yet it is exactly what they do. All around people's thinking has become futile, their worldview has been turned upside down.

We become futile in our thinking. That leads secondly to the fact that our desires become impure. If we're not careful in the way we think all too soon our affections, desires and emotions will become distorted and that leads thirdly on to actions which become shameless.

[33 : 10] It's all very logical. We suppress the truth about God, our thinking becomes foolish which in turn corrupts our desires which then leads on to all sorts of immoral actions.

And that makes perfect sense in our experience because for example if I ask you where is it that a terrorist takes his first step? Think of a terrorist who has committed some awful act.

Where was it that he took his first step in his mind, in his thinking? And that's exactly what Paul is saying.

Our thinking becomes futile and it has a knock on effect, a knock on effect and a knock on effect. And in these verses we see a key phrase repeated three times, verse 24, 26 and 28.

It says, God gave them up. When we oppose God, when we reject his truth, when we rebel against his rule, we provoke God's wrath.

[34 : 19] But God's response is not to destroy us and God does not want to destroy us.

But he does respond and he responds by simply giving us what we want. He leaves us to cultivate our futile thoughts, to stimulate our twisted desires and to carry out our dishonourable actions. We must make sure we recognise this truth, if we keep pushing God away, he will ultimately give us exactly what we want.

God has told us what unrighteousness is, but if we don't listen, he will give us up to our own ways and we will soon discover for ourselves how awful sin really is.

Now all of this I'm sure you can see is incredibly relevant to 2017.

[35 : 42] I don't think these verses could be more accurate in describing the world in which you and I live in today. As verse 32 says, they not only do them, but they give approval to those who practice them.

Paul is describing modern Britain in very, very accurate detail. And that's reinforced by the fact that the specific issue that Paul highlights in these verses is the very same issue that we confront today. And I want to just spend five minutes on that. I know I really should be finishing just now, but I want to spend five minutes on this because this is one of the places in the Bible where this issue comes up. And that of course is the question of our sexual behaviour and in particular the issue of homosexual relations.

How is it that we as Christians should engage with a world that not only does these things but gives total approval to those who do them?

That's the world we're in, that's the world we've got to engage in. What should you do? What should you do as a Christian if you get into a discussion with somebody about whether or not it is right or wrong to be a practicing homosexual?

[37 : 04] What do you do? Does the Bible have anything to teach you or to help you or to guide you? Well of course it does. And the Bible's got lots to help us, lots to guide us. And there's three things from this passage I want to highlight very, very quickly with each one, but I hope that they're helpful.

I think they're important. First of all, this passage reminds us of a vital truth. We do not respond to sin with sin.

Now that's a vital principle of Christian living. We must not respond to sin with sin. In verse 29 to 31 Paul lists a host of things that are utterly wrong.

And we must remember that our disapproval of homosexual behaviour does not justify any of these. So that means that a Christian should never gossip about a homosexual. They should never slander a homosexual. They should never be heartless.

[38 : 07] There's that word. Second last word. Should never be heartless towards someone who struggles with their sexual orientation.

Sin never justifies sin. And as we deal with people who have a different view from us on issues like sexuality or gender or marriage, they must never be made to feel that we hate them.

We must always, always show a genuine care for them. That means we have to be incredibly sensitive to the fact that these people are not devils.

These people are people who have questions and struggles. And they are of course all people who are precious and who have been made in the image of God.

So that's the first thing. We must never respond to sin with sin. That's our general principle. But more specifically and secondly, we must be ready to engage in thoughtful discussion. Now by thoughtful I don't just mean considerate, I mean intellectual and rational.

[39 : 14] We must be able to engage in an intellectual conversation. If we get into the conversation about the rights and wrongs of sexuality, if we simply say it's wrong, then we're probably not going to get very far at all and we are probably going to reinforce the stereotype that Christians are bigoted and judgmental.

We don't want to do that and that will be unproductive. We need to look at what Paul is saying. And if you look at what Paul is saying, he says that the dishonorable action of homosexual practice has arisen from impure lusts and passions.

These impure lusts and passions have in turn arisen from futile thinking. So what do we need to do? We need to get people to think.

And you know so many of the massive, moral and ethical changes that are sweeping society nowadays are doing so because nobody ever stops to think.

So how do we get people to think? Well, one of the best ways to get people to think is to come back to the word that we learned at the very beginning, that word antithesis.

[40 : 44] What do I mean? Well, whatever specific issue we are discussing, it is always part of a bigger antithesis.

And it's the bigger antithesis that really matters, not just the specific topic that is under discussion. So the question of homosexual practice is part of a bigger antithesis regarding what is appropriate in regard to sexual behaviour.

Here's the antithesis. On the one hand, no sexual activity is ever appropriate. On the other hand, any sexual activity is appropriate.

Now the point is nobody, I don't think, would hold to either of these extremes. The one on the left would result in the extinction of the human race.

[41 : 41] The one on the right would allow all sorts of horrific actions that we would regard as utterly unacceptable. That means that every single person is somewhere on that line of antithesis between these two positions.

And the vital question is this, where are you on that line? And why are you there?

That's the question that everybody ultimately has to be able to answer. And depending on your world view, you'll be in a different place.

If you have a biblical world view, then you will be at the point on the line which says the only acceptable sexual practice is that which is between a man and a woman who are joined in marriage.

And the reason we hold that view is because our world view is based on the creator-creation distinction and we believe that our best interests are not defined by ourselves, they are defined by God, our creator.

[42 : 48] And we want to listen to him and we want to obey him. And so we can explain where we are on the line and we can explain why we're there. The people who think differently from us need to explain why they are where they are.

And they also need to explain whether or not they can be moved along the line. And the vital point is this, if you do not have God in your world view, then you can be pushed along that line.

You can be pushed along it. Because without the moral limitation that God as our creator has set upon us, where do the boundaries lie?

How can we say it's right or wrong to just have one partner, multiple partners? How do we say all sorts of things? I don't need to give examples, I don't want to.

But you know exactly what I mean. If you do not have God as your reference point, you can be pushed along that line.

[44 : 01] And as people are pushed along that line, they will discover that their presuppositions will ultimately lead themselves to a conclusion that they cannot live with.

And we can push them along that line. But our desire is not to win an argument. Our desire is to make people think so that they realize that without God, life does not make sense.

And our great hope is that people will turn back to God in repentance. So always try and identify the antithesis that lies behind an issue.

Gender is another example, we won't go into it, but there's another antithesis. Male and female exist, male and female don't exist. That's an antithesis. Right now our society is flying along that line, which leads to the logical conclusion that male and female do not exist.

Talk about suppressing the truth, but anyway I won't go into that one. But that's where we're going, towards an irrational, futile way of thinking.

[45 : 15] And we need people to realize that it's not about kindness, it's not about gentleness, it's not about equality, it's not about being just progressive.

It's about antithetical truths that are incompatible with each other and that we are ultimately being forced to choose between.

We need to get people to think. And of course that means we need to think as well, which is why Paul says, do not be conformed to this world, be transformed by the renewing of what?

Your mind. We've got to be careful about how we think. So we have to make sure we don't respond to sin with sin.

We have to make sure we get people to think, I am very sorry for how long this is going on for, my last point, one minute. If we trace things all the way back to the start, we see that the problem arises

from the fact that men and women suppress the truth.

[46 : 19] Therefore we must testify to the truth. And as you live your life as a Christian, you are testifying to the truth that God is there, that God is your father, that Jesus is your brother and that the Holy Spirit dwells in your heart.

As we show that we are different, we testify to the glorious truth that God is our Creator, we are His creation and that is where we find peace and joy and fulfilment and the ultimate coherent explanation for reality.

We need to testify to the truth and as we follow the Lord more closely, we will testify to the truth more clearly and boy, that is what the world today needs.

Let's pray. Lord our Father, we pray that you would help us to testify to the truth.

We know that we live in a world that suppresses the truth but we pray Lord that we would recognise the truth, live by the truth and bear witness to the truth, that you are our Creator, you are the one we are to worship, you are the one we depend on, you are the one who defines right and wrong and how we need to listen to you.

[47 : 50] And we pray O Lord that you would restore us from the futility of our thinking, that you would keep us from the impurity of our passions and that you would lead us away from dishonourable and shameless actions, that we would turn away from worldliness and that we would follow you because you are our God.

Please have mercy on us and lead us in your paths O Lord and forgive us for our sins in Jesus name. Amen.