

95-05-07Mark

Assembling with other believers who love you and desire to worship you this morning. We thank you for the freedom that we enjoy that allows us to assemble without fear of persecution, without fear of harm. We thank you that we can worship as we see fit.

We are not placed under restriction. We are not told to conform to the standard. We only have the standard of your word and the example that is left for us in the scriptures.

We thank you and praise you for this wonderful opportunity that we have to gather and to be encouraged by one another, to fellowship, to speak the truth to one another in love. We thank you for the ministries of this church. We thank you that through this church we can participate in the work of missionaries all around the world.

We can participate in the work of missionaries right here in Tahlequah who minister not only to unbelievers but also to believers. Pray for those ministries here at home. We pray for the Goyee Mission in the village.

We pray for Marcoma and for all of the other ministries that have believers who are speaking the truth and are speaking the gospel and proclaiming not only verbally but also through their lives the wonderful light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We pray for our missionaries overseas that will continue to provide for their needs, strengthen and encourage them. We pray that you will bless their ministries with fruit so that many will come to know Jesus Christ as the Savior and grow in grace and knowledge of Him.

Now Father as we turn our attention to this portion of your word, we pray that the Holy Spirit will minister it to our souls. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen. This has been a very interesting section in the gospel of Mark.

It's the first time in this account of the ministry of Jesus Christ that we've had an extended record of Jesus teaching. Several times Mark has told us that Jesus has gone and sat beside the sea or has gone to the synagogue and has taught the truth. But here in these pages in chapter 4, we've gotten to hear Jesus Christ teach at first hand.

Wouldn't it have been a great privilege to have walked down by the Sea of Galilee and looked out and seen a white robed figure in the bow of the boat, surrounded by great crowds on the seashore on a warm, sunny, Mediterranean morning and have heard the resonant voice of the Lord Jesus Christ communicating the truth about Himself from the Old Testament Scriptures. Talking about the plan of God, talking about God's grace expressed to Israel, God's grace expressed to the whole human race. Wouldn't it be great to just do a little time travel and go back and be walking down that seaside road and turn aside to hear the Lord Himself teach the truth.

Well we have the next best thing here because this is an eyewitness account. This is the account

of the Apostle Peter as it was set down by his secretary or his note taker, Mark. And Peter has given us a first hand account of what Jesus said on one of these occasions.

Jesus was teaching in parables and we've studied these three parables that all focus on seed. The first one was the parable of the soils and we saw in that parable that Jesus was making a point of our responsibility to do something with that teaching of truth. It's what we do with the seed that determines how much fruit is born, if any.

What kind of soil will we be? It's our choice. We can be hard packed or we can be receptive. We can be stony or we can be nurturing and allow that seed to flourish.

So the first of these three seed parables emphasized our responsibility. It's our responsibility to be there when the seed is scattered. It's our responsibility to take it in deep and let it change us.

The second seed parable talked about a man who scattered seed in his field and then he went away and he rose and went to sleep and he rose and went to sleep and the seed did its work. It followed its programming. It followed its genetic code and it sent roots down and branches up.

It took advantage of the nutrients in the soil and converted them into materials that could be used to build that plant and to cause its continued growth and its continued expansion. It sunk out more roots into the soil and it provided more leaves and branches and eventually it produces that part of the plant that bears fruit, that bears the seeds and the grain that will be harvested and used for various purposes. And the point of that second parable, do you remember? What is the point there? The power is in the seed.

It isn't the farmer that goes out and turns a crank or pedals some pedals or pumps a handle to get the seed to grow. The seed knows what to do. It knows what kind of seed it is.

If it's barley, it's going to grow into a barley plant. If it's corn, it's going to grow into a corn stalk. If it's wheat, it's going to grow into a wheat plant.

The seed knows what to do and it knows what kind of fruit to produce because that's all God's work. All we do is put it where it can grow and come back when it's ready and reap the harvest. This is the way God's plan works in our life.

Jesus said this is what the kingdom of God is like. The kingdom of God is not like a man who runs a race. Jesus never used the race analogy when he talked about the kingdom of God, did he? It's like a man who races and strives and pushes for the tape and works harder and harder and strives valiantly and uses his energy.

All of these parables that talk about the kingdom talk about God's power, God's work, God's plan. We are receptacles. We hold the treasure of His word in earthen vessels, but we can become vessels of honor in God's house.

That's the analogy that Paul uses. But we are receptacles. We receive and accept what God wants to do.

Paul told us this in Colossians. You recall when he said, as you have received Christ, so walk. How did we receive Christ? How much work did we put into our salvation? You can answer out loud.

How much work did we put into our salvation? None. As you receive Christ, so walk. How much human energy should we be putting into our Christian walk? Oh, hesitation now.

As you receive Christ, so walk. We are to be appropriating the power of God, aren't we? It doesn't mean we won't do anything. It doesn't mean we won't witness or we won't evangelize or we won't study the word of God or we won't pray or we won't minister and exercise our spiritual gifts.

It's not the outward manifestation that we're talking about. Those things will take place. What we're talking about is that invisible reality.

Where does the power come from? Where does the guidance come from? Where does the glory get reflected? It's God's plan. It's God's power. And it's God's glory.

So it's really important for us to know how to let the power of God work through us so that we don't do things that look good and yet they're being done in human strength. As you receive Christ, so walk. We receive salvation by grace, through faith.

And we mature and grow and produce fruit in the Christian life by grace, through faith. Not through works, lest any man should boast. We can't boast in our salvation because it wasn't our work.

And we can't boast in our Christian life because it isn't our work or it shouldn't be. So this is a critical step for us to make and this is what Jesus is getting across in these seed parables. He doesn't say it's like a man who rose the boat across the lake.

He says it's a seed. The life is in the seed. The power and the design and the program are in the seed.

Our job is to receive the seed, nurture the seed, take care of the seed, preserve it, value it, recognize its importance and let the seed do its work. That third seed parable, the mustard seed, what does it say? What is the kingdom of God like? What shall we compare it? Jesus introduces this and that introduction is important. He doesn't start the other parables that way, but He asks the question, what can we compare the kingdom of God to? With what comparison shall I communicate it to you? And then He says it's like a mustard seed, which when it is sown, goes into the ground and produces an herb.

And He says when it is sown two times. Why does He mention that two times? Because that

seed sitting in a jar on the shelf doesn't grow and it doesn't produce. We can come in with our jar to Sunday morning service or to Wednesday night Bible class or to Sunday evening service and we can collect the seed of the Word of God in a nice little jar and go home and set it up on the shelf and say I've got more seed now than I had last week or the week before, but that's not the purpose, is it? The seed, when it is sown, even though it's the least of all the seeds, it sprouts and grows and becomes larger than all the garden herbs and it puts out branches and the birds of the air come and rest in its shade.

That seed has to be sown. The seed in a jar does no good. So that third parable reminds us again, it has to be received.

We have to recognize the importance of the seed and the tiniest amount can produce great results because it's God's work, it's God's power, it's God's design. So now we're going to get the chance to see the application test. We've looked in the past at the principle that once we learn something from Scripture, we learn it as an academic principle.

God will give us the opportunity to apply it, to put it into practice in our lives. He doesn't give us a whole bunch of academic truth and say, well, this is all of the academic principles and you just keep those in your mind. Very soon after we learn these things, we're going to get the chance to make decisions based on them.

Do you believe it enough to trust in it? Do you believe this truth enough to live by it? Is it going to make a difference in our thinking, which affects everything that we do? Well, this is the test that the disciples are coming up on here as we begin chapter five of Mark. You notice at the end of chapter four, we had this journey across the lake. These men are fishermen.

They are very familiar with boats and rigging and currents and tides and winds. And yet they begin to devote this time to go across the lake at the word of the Lord. And this test comes up.

And even though Jesus has said, look, you are children of God, it's God's power, it's God's plan. They immediately think in human terms, we're going to perish. We're not going to make it to the other side, even though Jesus said, let's go to the other side.

And all of this teaching, Jesus has explained these parables to his disciples. This is what the kingdom of God is. It's God's power.

It's God's plan. It's God's purpose. Don't worry.

God has not given us a spirit of fear. He's given us power and love and a sound mind. But immediately those seeds of truth, those mustard seeds got put in a little jar in the disciples souls, and they put a nice watertight lid on it and got into the ship.

And here came the storm. And what did they do? We're just like any other sailors on the lake. We're going to perish.

Lord, wake up, grab a bucket, bail. We're sinking. Don't you care that we're perishing? What do they believe? Do they believe that God has a plan or do they believe that they're perishing? What do they say? Lord, we are perishing.

They don't say, Lord, what is God's plan here? Why are we shipping so much green water over the bow? They say, Lord, we're perishing. That's what they believe. That's their faith.

Now, what is that faith going to produce in their soul? Is it going to produce love, joy, peace, patience, endurance, self-control? That faith, that belief produces fear, panic, uncertainty, confusion, frustration. What we make the object of our faith counts. The disciples have been given these seeds of truth to nurture and to believe and to change the way they think.

But they put it in their little watertight container and immediately forgot. Well, they're going to get a second chance here in chapter five because they have now come to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when he had come out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit who had his dwelling among the tombs.

And no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains and the chains had been pulled apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces. Neither could anyone tame him. And he was always night and day in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped him and he cried out with a loud voice and said, What have I to do with you, Jesus, son of the most high God? I implore you by God that you do not torment me. For he had said to him, Come out of the man, unclean spirit. Then he asked him, What is your name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion, for we are many.

Also, he begged him earnestly that he would not send them out of the country. Now, a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged him, saying, Send us to the swine that we may enter them.

And at once Jesus gave him permission. Then the unclean spirits went out, entered the swine. There were about two thousand and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea and drowned in the sea.

So those who fed the swine fled and they told it in the city, in the country and went out to see what it was that had happened. Let's stop at this point and get a clear picture in our mind of what has taken place. Here are the disciples.

They're probably a little bit bedraggled. They're kind of sopping wet. They've been through this terrible storm that miraculously ceased.

They've had a scare. They've had a panic. They're wondering, Who is this man who speaks to the

wind and speaks to the waves? And they immediately obey him.

But they do ask themselves that question. The miracle doesn't captivate their attention, even though they're sailors, even though the weather is their business in a sense. When they see Jesus calm the wind and the waves, they ask the right question.

What is the implication of what we have just seen? Who is this man? And that's a wonderful question to ask. This is a plus mark for the disciples. We don't always get to give the disciples a checkmark for doing well, do we? They oftentimes are our pictures of failure and of needing further growth.

But here is a good thing that the disciples do. They look at this action of Jesus Christ and they draw the right conclusion. This says something about Jesus himself.

The issue here is who is the speaker, not what did he do? We're going to see a contrast to that here. So they've come out to the other side of the sea. They've gone down.

If you remember, the Sea of Galilee is up at the north end of that Jordan River. And Capernaum is up here. And they've sailed diagonally southeast to the southeast corner of the sea.

And they're disembarking in this region that is called Gadara. There's a town by the same name and the whole region is sort of known by that name. And so they disembarked.

But this is obviously not a town here. It's just a region because there are no inhabitants in the immediate area. So when Jesus comes out of the boat immediately, here comes this man out of the tombs.

And we have seen many times that these details are important. The details in the story tell us what God is getting across, the point that God is making. So let's look at some of these characteristics of this man.

First of all, he is out of the tombs. What are tombs associated with? Death, associated with death. Remember when we studied the leper? Leprosy was a living death.

We saw the paralyzed man on the path. And that paralysis spoke of the inability, the insufficiency that we have in sin. Here's another picture of sin.

Sin is associated with death. It is a picture of our existence apart from God. Even when we are alive, we are dead.

We live in the place of the dead. So here is this man out of the tombs and he has an unclean spirit. So he, like the man we saw back in chapter one, has a demon, at least one.

And notice that this story starts out talking about just one demon because we are looking at this

from the perspective of Jesus and the disciples. When they disembark, it is obvious immediately that this man has an unclean spirit. They can tell by his behavior.

They can tell by his appearance. And so he has his dwelling among the tombs. And watch for our repetition here.

This is the second time we've seen the word tombs, isn't it? Anytime we start seeing that repetition, this is God saying, pay attention. This is important. This is a big point in the story.

This man is out of the tombs. He has his dwelling place among the tombs. And it says that no one could bind him, not even with chains.

Why would they want to bind him? There must be a need to control him. Well, I had a little experience with that this morning. People out of control, needing to be restrained in order to benefit others in the area.

We know from the other godful accounts that there was a highway on this side of the lake, just like on the Capernaum side, and people wanted to travel that road. But because of this maniac, because of this demon-possessed man, people were afraid to travel that road because he was violent. He was terrifying.

He was scary. And so people would not go that way. And occasionally people would say, let's do something about that problem.

We could use that road. We could have a normal life if we could just tie that man up and keep him from hurting people, keep him from scaring people. And so they would get a committee, a little delegation of men, the strongest, stoutest men, and they would get some chains and get some rope.

And they would say, let's go out and capture that man and tie him up so that we can get back to using our road in a normal fashion. And they would go out and do so. And they would catch him.

And it probably took three or four or five men to subdue him and to get his hands together and tied, and get his feet together and tied. And they would say, well, why don't we, we'll just have someone come out each day and feed him, but we'll keep him tied up so he doesn't hurt anyone. And yet the next day when they would come out to bring him his water and his bread, this man would have broken free.

Burst the bonds and burst the shackles. Look in verse four. He had often been bound with shackles and chains.

And these shackles are for the hand. This word in Greek means hand shackles, wrist shackles, tying his hands together. And the chains were on his feet.

And we've seen the importance of understanding what hands and feet mean in Scripture. When we saw the sacrifice for the leper, we saw the blood that was put on the earlobe and on the thumb and on the toe. And hands speak of the actions that we perform, the deeds that we do.

Feet speak of our walk, our lifestyle, the pattern and the climate of our life. And here is a man who symbolizes for us the confusion and the disarray, the disorganization, the lack of control that takes place when we are in sin. His actions can't be controlled.

Even when they restrain him, his hands are broken free. It says that he tears apart these bonds that are on his hands and the chains that are on his feet, the restrictions that people might try to place on a sinful lifestyle to control those who live in sin and evil. The human restraints don't seem to hold, do they? And the word here means to smash these chains that are put on his feet.

He smashes them apart. He beats on them until they crack and break and come apart. So the energy of this affliction that he has, this sin and this evil that this man is in the grip of cannot be restrained by human means.

He tears apart the restraints on his hands. He smashes the restraints on his feet, and he's back out there creating havoc once again. And they had tried this many times.

Always, night and day, he's in the mountains and in the tombs. Mountains are a rugged place, especially in the Middle East. If you've been to or seen the landscape in Palestine, those are mountains.

These are sheer cliffs and great rocky crags, deep crevices. And if you're going up and down in the mountains, it is a hard climb. It's hard to traverse these areas.

And there are many winding paths to try to go around all of these obstacles. This man is always in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. Notice, he is so miserable that he even afflicts himself.

And this is a tremendous picture of our situation when we are in the grip of sin. Whether we are unbelievers or whether we are believers, the principle is the same. Apart from the power of God, human means cannot restrain sin.

How many times do we try human solutions? We look at a situation and we say, that has got to be fixed. That behavior is out of control. There's a wrong behavior going on.

And we try different solutions. Let me offer you just a few of the human restraints that we try. One of the things that we do ourselves is we make a mistake, we sin, we fail.

And when we realize it, we confess it to God and we say, oh, I don't ever want to do that again. I'm going to promise myself I will never let that happen again. I will never do that again.

I promise on a stack of Bibles I will never make that mistake again. We make a vow, we make a pledge. We promise God or promise ourselves that was inexcusable.

I will never let that happen again. But how many times do our pledges and our promises give way the next time? And we say, oh, this time I'm really going to stop. This time I'm really going to cut that off.

Hand that offends me, I cut you off. I cast you from me. I'll never do that again.

And we fail again and again because human strength can't overcome sin. If human solutions and human strength could overcome sin, we wouldn't need a Savior. We wouldn't need the divine power of Jesus Christ in our lives.

Human solutions and human strength can't control sin, can't eradicate it, can't erase its effects. So our resolutions and our vows and our promises, whether it's to ourselves or to others, how many times have you seen either in real life or in the media where they'll be depicting the life of an alcoholic or a drug abuser? And the person realizes that they're destroying their marriage, they're destroying their family, they're losing their job. Their whole life is heading on a downhill turn.

And they say, I've got to stop. I've got to quit. I promise you, my wife, or I promise you, my husband, I'm on the wagon.

I'll never take another drink. I'll never engage in any more illegal drug use. I'll never do this.

I'll never do that. You're right, it's tearing things apart. I'll stop.

And those promises are broken again and again and again as a heartache. And the lack of trust is there because human energy can't control it. A second human restraint that we try is personal accountability.

I'll let someone in on my failure. We'll peek together and ask each other, have you been faithful in this area or have you fallen down on the job? This is the various anonymous groups use this principle, whether it's overeaters anonymous or alcoholics anonymous or drug abusers anonymous or spouse abusers anonymous, whatever it might be. This is a support group approach, whereby getting with other people, the encouragement and support in the human realm is designed to help alleviate this behavior.

And sometimes that succeeds in the visible realm. Sometimes the overt behavior will cease. But what's the problem? We've already reviewed this morning that these behaviors come from something on the inside.

There's a motivation. There's a hunger or a need or a lust pattern in the soul. And that's still there.

And even if we could chain someone to the wall and prevent them from acting out that desire or that form of sin, the thought is still there. And Jesus says if you have the thought, you have as good as committed the act. And so the best of our support groups and our mutual encouragement in the human realm cannot eradicate sin, cannot control, cannot bind that.

So then we move on and we get organized. And we say, well, we're going to have a procedure. We're going to have a program.

We'll run you through a rehabilitation program. And we'll train you to think differently. We're going to give you some self-hypnosis.

We're going to give you some things to think. Anytime you find yourself in this situation, just think this thought. And then we have a list of thoughts to think in a certain situation.

And this is a tricky one because this is in fact what is supposed to take place. This is how our souls are built. When we face a circumstance, there are certain thoughts that we're supposed to think.

There are certain truths that we are supposed to claim. The difficulty in the human realm is that it's not God's truth. And it's not God's power.

And therefore, even if it restrains someone's behavior, God is not glorified because it's human energy. It's a human solution. And it doesn't get inside and address the problem.

People just hypnotize themselves into a different kind of overt behavior. But the inner problem is not solved. It's an external restraint just like these ropes and just like these shackles.

Another thing that we try is punishment. Well, I'll put the fear of incarceration or the fear of pain or the fear of death into someone and scare them into refraining. And once again, this doesn't work.

Even when we had the death penalty in this country, which we basically do not now, even though it's on the books, it is so seldom enforced. And it takes so long that its restraining influence is virtually nil. The studies where they say, well, the death penalty in this country is not working today, they can't use the way that it is administered today to measure it because we don't administer it properly.

The justice is not swift, and justice is not severe. Even when we have the death penalty, even when it is enforced, there are still people who disregard the law, who don't consider the consequences of their actions. So trying to motivate people with fear doesn't control sin.

So these are different kinds of human restraints, the ropes and the chains with which we as human beings, we as a human society, try to control people that are out of control. And yet we see that ultimately, just like these ropes and these chains, these things all fail. They fall apart.

They are smashed. They are torn asunder by people whose sin, whose evil, is too violent for any human power to control it. That's the picture we see.

We see in this man's situation, his circumstances here, as Jesus gets out of the boat. And notice how miserable he is. He is wretched.

He is as miserable as a person can be. He is at the point of gashing himself with stones. He cries out.

And in this terrible situation that he is in, he is self-destructive. There is great misery in a life of sin. There is great misery apart from God, particularly for a believer, but for any human being, life apart from God is wretched, miserable, and out of control.

Turn with me to 2 Peter 2. We tend to think of this principle when we think of unbelievers. And we think a life apart from God, a life without hope, a life without the Lord Jesus Christ, how terrible that is. But there are believers who get in this same category.

And we say, surely not. Surely someone who has been saved by grace would not reach this state of wretchedness, this state of control and living in the grip of evil. But look at what Peter says in 2 Peter 2. He's talking about false prophets among the people.

We say, well, these must be unbelievers. These must be wolves among the sheep here that are not even saved. But what does Peter say here? He says, there will be false teachers among you who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them.

Who has the Lord purchased with His blood? The whole human race? He has purchased believers. We have been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body, the Scripture says.

These false teachers, these heretics, these people that are leading other people astray, have been bought with the blood of Jesus Christ. Now, Peter's trying to reinforce that idea. He talks about their destructive ways in verse 2. And because of them, the way of truth is blaspheming.

If these were unbelievers, why would the way of truth be ill-spoken of? These are believers, and they bring discredit and shame on the name of Jesus Christ because they are believers, and they're behaving in this terrible way. By covetousness, they will exploit you with deceptive words. You can turn your TV on any time of the day, and I can see the fulfillment of Peter's words.

There are people claiming to be Christians who, by covetousness, exploit people with deceptive words. But Peter says, for a long time, their judgment has not been idling. Their destruction does not slumber.

Skip down to verse 10. These people who are under punishment for the day of judgment, those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, they despise authority. They are

presumptuous in self-will.

What is the authority for a believer? What is it that Jesus Christ told us to know and obey? It's His Word. It's the truth of the Word of God. That's our authority.

If we disregard the Word of God, if we make up our own system of religion, our own system of Christianity, with our own rules, our own standards, our own measures, we despise and reject authority. Our authority is the Word of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, in the hands of the Holy Spirit. That's our authority.

That's our guide. That's one of the reasons that we are an independent Bible church. We don't set up a hierarchical system of authority.

Our authority is the Word of God, and we put it in the name of our church, and we look at it every time we need it, because this is God's power. This is the seed. This is that which God uses to change us and to equip us with everything.

This is our authority. But these people disregard that authority. They don't seek the ministry of God through the Holy Spirit.

They do not look into the truth of God's Word like James said, and come away realizing that there's a need for change. Instead, they disregard it. They are presumptuous in self-will, he says in 2 Peter 3.10. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries.

And many of these groups that have departed from the truth talk about the unseen realm, talk about how they are going to whip up on the demons, and they're going to whip up on Satan, and they're going to pray him into a corner, and they're going to bind him, and they're going to do this, and they're going to do that, and the other two demons, and Satan. That is presumptuous. We do not operate in the unseen realm of the demons.

That's Jesus Christ's arena. We haven't been given that authority. We haven't been given that example anywhere in Scripture to talk about how we are going to whip up on this, that, or the other.

That is God's prerogative. Satan will never be bound until the Kingdom of God finds him. There's no human chain.

There's no delegated authority that we can use to bind a demon or to bind Satan. Satan is not bound. The Scripture says Satan roams up and down in the earth seeking whom he may devour.

You can't bind him. God binds him in that thousand year period. No one but God can bind him.

But it's presumptuous self-will. Even the angels don't bring in violent accusations against Satan and the demons. That's God's prerogative.

That's God's authority. Look on down at verse 15. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray.

Now notice, to forsake something, you have to have it. Somebody that's never been married, we don't say, well, they forsook their husband or they forsook their wife. To forsake something, you have to have had it at one time.

To forsake a wife, you have to have been married. To forsake the right way, you have to have been in it at one time. This is another indication that this is believers.

They have forsaken the right way. They were in it and they left. It isn't that they were never in the right way.

They have gone astray following the way of Balaam, the son of Baor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. But he was rebuked for his iniquity. The dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

Balaam was a prophet of God. Balaam was a believer. God taught to Balaam.

God sent an angel to Balaam. God sent Balaam to bless Israel. He sent a person.

They have gone the way of Balaam. They are believers. They have gone astray.

They saw something other than the truth of God's Word. And then notice on down here in verse 20 and 21, it says, "...they have escaped the pollutions of the world." Notice, these same false prophets, these same teachers, these same people that have gone astray. It says, "...they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And now they are again entangled in them and overcome. The latter end is worse for them than the beginning." Some people try to explain this away and say, well, they just heard the Gospel. This isn't the hearing of the Gospel.

It says, "...they have escaped the pollutions of the world." We don't escape hearing the Gospel. We escape accepting the Gospel. We don't escape when someone tells us about Jesus Christ.

We escape the pollutions of the world when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. These people have escaped through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They have again become entangled in these pollutions of the world and overcome.

"...the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it through the Holy Commandments." Now, the Holy Commandments? The Commandments are not delivered on. What is given to unbelievers? One issue, one truth.

Absolutely. Jesus Christ on the cross. God didn't give commandments to unbelievers.

There's only one, the human, the cross. The work of Jesus Christ. These commandments, these Holy Commandments, are the truth of the Scripture.

And in this life, believers, who depart from the way of truth and go into this lifestyle of being enthroned by these uncontrollable orphans, their lives will be worse than if they never came to Christ. It doesn't mean they've lost their salvation. It doesn't mean that they won't be with God for all eternity.

What it does mean is that any day from this life will be far worse than if they had never come to Christ. There are many moral, upstanding, reasonably happy, non-believers in this life. There are many believers who have forsaken the way of truth and are miserable, wretched.

So it's important for us, as believers, to remember the power of repentance, and the power, I mean it, it's important for us to identify it. Anyway, turn with me to Revelation, chapter 3. Jesus Christ himself talks about this to a church. As far as I'm concerned, there's a very limited amount of information that we have directly from Jesus Christ.