

Matthew 22-04-03b

We're ready now to resume our study in Matthew chapter 24, and we're focusing on this idea, we do not want to be fooled. Jesus says, don't be made a fool of, do not be deceived. Don't let someone hand you substitute truth, corrupted information that deceives, deflects, misleads and renders us ineffective and unfruitful.

Nobody in their right mind wants that if they have any spiritual sensitivity at all. But the question is, how do we avoid that? The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it? Who can understand it? Jeremiah 17, nine. And our heart is generally our truth detector, our compass, our BS identification takes place in our hearts when it hits, is it true or is it not true? And our hearts are unreliable as a compass, they are not reliable.

Have you ever bought a tire gauge and it's the old kind, it looks like a pin with a little funny head on it that you stick onto the valve and a little plastic squarish, protrusion comes out with graduations on it and however far it comes out, it shows you how much pressure is in that particular tire. I've gotten those over the years and I've gotten away from using them because as they get old and if they're in your toolbox, they always under report the pressure and you can wind up over pressurizing your tire. I saw a video way a long time ago, 20 odd years ago of a guy that inadvertently over pressurized a tire and it exploded and a piece of the sidewall hit him and put him in the hospital.

You don't want to over pressurize a tire but you can easily do so if your tire gauge is not accurate and they have better technologies now that you can actually get a digital readout to tenths of a pound of pressure and so forth but those old ones, I've had eight or 10 of them that I just threw away because they don't last more than a year or two, at least not in my toolbox. We need accurate measurement, we need accurate detection of what is going on. The problem with trying to figure out why you're sick and they do a blood test and they're looking for antigens or they're looking for proteins or they're looking for any kind of a sample that you provide and that sample is analyzed, they are looking for certain things.

Well, that's great if the test itself is accurate but if the test doesn't pick up blood in something that's not supposed to have blood in it, if it doesn't pick up pieces of a virus or antigens or antibodies and they embark on a course of therapy based on faulty information because the detection process is bad and you can think back over the last two years of the degree of accuracy of some of the tests that have literally changed people's lives, put them in quarantine and taking them off the job and various things and there's better than a 25% error rate in the test itself, it makes a difference. We need to know when we are hearing truth and we need to know, we need to discern the spirit of truth from the spirit of error. First John talks about this, discern the difference between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

So that's what we're looking at. Jesus says, don't let anybody deceive you. The agency of this kind of deception is not our heart and it's not the devil, it is false prophets.

So we wanna know about these false prophets. How do you pick one out? Well, we saw this earlier and we're gonna review it back in Matthew chapter seven. He starts out with this entering by the narrow gate, which we looked at before the break.

Then in verse 15, beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Now, just for a little bit of context, we started at verse 13, enter by the narrow gate, but look at this, look at the preceding verse. Verse says, ask and it shall be given in verse seven, seek and you will find, knock and it will be open to you.

Everyone who asks receives, he who seeks finds and to him who knocks, it will be opened. This is the positive side. If we are asking and we are seeking and we are knocking, go to the source of truth.

What is the source of truth? It is the Lord God in heaven. It is God the father seated on his throne in the third heaven, surrounded by the cherubim and the seraphim. God is truth.

The Lord Jesus is a manifestation of God's truth. He says in John 14, six, I am dot, dot, dot the truth. Now is Jesus the fullness of God's truth? Let me make one quick side trip on the Jesus hermeneutic.

I saw a thing floating around the internet this past week where you remember the verse that says, God is light and in him is no darkness at all. Well, someone recast that statement from scripture. God is light and in him is no darkness at all to reflect their view of the Jesus hermeneutic.

They go to John 1, 18, no one has seen God at any time. It's the son who has revealed him. Jesus says, if you've seen me, you've seen the father.

So people say, okay, all I need to do is look at Jesus and I know everything I need to know about God. So someone took this God is light and changed it to God is Christ-like and in him is no un-Christ-likeness at all. God is Jesus and in him is nothing that you don't see in Jesus.

This is the idea. It's a summation of the Jesus hermeneutic. If you want to know about God, just look at Jesus.

Not to take away from that truth, but it's kind of like saying of every tree in the garden, you may eat. That is true for hundreds, if not thousands of trees that were in the garden, but there is a caveat. There is one tree that is prohibited.

And while you can look at Jesus and learn many manifold, wonderful truths about God, here's a quick test for you. What is one of the first attributes of God that you can think of? If you think about God, the father, God in the universe, God among the angels, what is one of the main things he does? How is he identified? He is the creator, right? What did Jesus create? Did Jesus create life? He restored life. Did he create food? He multiplied food.

But Jesus, in a sense, was like the Hebrew verb *asah*. You manufacture out of existing materials. You take a dead corpse and restore its life.

You take a few loaves and fishes and multiply them to the many. You take a sea that is stormy and make it calm. You take eyes that exist but can't see and restore their sight or grant them sight.

You take ears that aren't working and make them work. You take legs that are withered or hands that are withered, you restore them. You take something inhabited by demons and you drive the demons out.

But what would you say about the creator God as reflected in Jesus? Can you think of anything that Jesus created? *Ex nihilo*, there was nothing and suddenly here it is. Say again. All things were made by him and without him.

But in his incarnation, we're talking about the Jesus of the gospels. John in chapter one, that's a good point. It was mentioned that all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made.

But the Jesus hermeneutic people, they're talking about the Jesus of the gospels, the historical Jesus, the Jesus of Galilean ministry and Parian ministry and ministry in Jerusalem and so on. And so you lose, if you limit God, if you say God is Christ and in him is nothing unchrist at all, Jesus is a wonderful, beautiful, fulsome reflection of many things about God. But he is not everything about God because he is in human form.

Remember when it says he emptied himself and took on the form of a servant? Remember we talked about the directionality of love and of honor and of fear. And if Jesus took on the form of a servant and came in the likeness of men, can you look at the likeness of any man, even Jesus himself and arrive at the fullness of God? You cannot. There are things that can be known about God by looking at Jesus, but you can't know everything.

Take Romans one, what may be known of God is manifest in creation, his eternal power and his deity. Are manifest in creation, but there are, what about God's justice? Is it manifest in creation? Is God's eternal life manifest in creation? There are many attributes of God. There is, the only thing that is a perfect representation of God is God.

Creation itself is necessarily by definition lesser than God and therefore not perfect. Why

do you think there's imperfection in creation? Why can angels fall? Why can free will go awry? Because creation is less than God. Only God is perfect.

Anything less than God is in some way, shape or form imperfect because the only thing perfect and complete is God himself. Jesus Christ is a wonderful, fulsome expression of God, but he's not everything. Did Jesus ever create an angel? No, God created angels, but in his earthly ministry, Jesus didn't create life.

He didn't create angels. He didn't create a little universe. Does God judge? You wanna talk about a theme in scripture, the theme of judgment.

Just the term, the day of the Lord occurs in the Bible two dozen times. The great day or in that day occurs 75 times, Old Testament and New, in that day. Just for a quick, I'm extending my aside here a bit.

Turn to Zephaniah. Don't get a chance to go to Zephaniah very often. I bet there's maybe 12 churches in the whole country that are in Zephaniah today.

Go to Zephaniah chapter one. This is in the days of King Josiah. You remember Josiah? Look at verse two.

This is God speaking. "I will utterly consume everything "from the face of the land," says the Lord. "I will consume man and beast.

"I will consume the birds of the heavens, "the fish of the sea, the stumbling blocks, "along with the wicked, the scandalous, "that which trips and traps and causes to stumble. "I will cut off man from the face of the land, "says the Lord. "I will stretch out my hand against Judah "and against the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

"I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, "the names of the idolatrous priests, "with the pagan priests, "those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops, "those who worship and swear oaths by the Lord, "those who also swear by Milcom, "those who have turned back from following the Lord "and have not sought the Lord nor inquired of Him." Remember our passage, ask and it shall be given, seek and you will find. Matthew chapter seven. God is going to stretch out His hand and cut off those who have turned back from the Lord.

Notice following is in italics. They've turned back from the Lord Himself and have not sought the Lord nor inquired of Him. Be silent in the presence of the Lord God for the day of the Lord is at hand.

This is one of those 25 references specifically to the day of the Lord. The Lord has prepared a sacrifice. He has invited His guests.

It shall be in the day of the Lord's sacrifice that I will punish the princes and the king's

children, all such as are clothed with foreign apparel, dressed up in the clothes of the world instead of what was prescribed in the law of Moses for Israelites to wear. In the same day, I will punish all those who leap over the threshold. This is even today, walking along the sidewalk.

We talked about this when we did Zephaniah in Kings and Prophets. Remember people who wouldn't want to step on a crack in the sidewalk, you step on a crack, they had superstitions that you would anger the gods of the land if you stepped on the threshold. So those who leap over the threshold, who fill their master's houses with violence and deceit, they're worried about superstitious righteousness, but what do they fill their master's house with? Violence and deceit, the opposite of love for neighbor, the opposite of truth.

And there shall be on that day, the sound of a mournful cry from the fish gate, a wailing from the second quarter and a loud crashing from the hills. Wail you inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down, all those who handle money are cut off. Remember the money changers in the temple? Jesus did echo that aspect.

It shall come to pass at that time, I will search Jerusalem with lamps, punish the men who are settled in complacency, who say in their heart, the Lord will not do good, nor will he do evil. Man's fate is just the result of his own actions. This is a big part of progressive Christianity.

If you sin, God's not punishing you, you're just suffering the consequences of your bad judgment. And it's just not the best way, but God would never intervene. And people who say this are condemned in Zephaniah.

Say in their heart, the Lord will not do good, nor will he do evil. If you do good, good will just sort of out itself. If you love, love will return benefit to you.

And if you do evil, it just has its own built-in consequences. God, because he is love would never punish, would never discipline, would never judge. Have you read Zephaniah? Do you have to cut this out of your Bible? Their goods shall become booty and their houses of desolation.

They shall build houses, but not inhabit. They shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine. God is going to send invasion.

God is going to send loss and blight and destruction. Remember the curse on Edom that we saw in Malachi, the beginning of the first chapter? God says, I've loved you, oh Jacob. And they say, how have you loved us? He says, have you seen what I've done to Edom, who I have hated? Can you not tell the difference between love and hate? God loves Jacob and there is positive benefit.

God hates Edom as a policy and there is judgment because of their godlessness,

because of their animosity and hostility and attacks against God's people, Israel. God has punished them, he has judged them. They try to build, he's gonna tear it down.

But God says to Israel, if you abandon me, if you disregard me, if you say, I'm not there to do good or evil, guess what? I'm gonna do to you what I've done to Edom. I will no longer love you, I will hate you. Look at verse 14.

Once again, the great day of the Lord is near. It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter.

Mighty men are crying out. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers. These who have built and rely on their strength.

You go all the way back to the Tower of Babel for this. I will bring, verse 17, distress upon men. They shall walk like blind men.

Why? Because they have sinned against the Lord. Their blood shall be poured out like dust and their flesh like trash. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath.

The whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy. He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land. Kind of hate to read that without going on to chapter two, which says there is the opportunity for repentance.

You can step out of the target area for this judgment if you will change your mind, if you will repent. That's Zephaniah. How much of that do you see in the incarnate life of the Lord Jesus? Did he devastate? Did he judge? Did he pour out blood like dust? Is he going to the second time he comes? A partial Jesus is not the true Jesus.

Cherry picking aspects that you like and justifying it saying, well, you know, people don't like a judgmental God. And the reason Christianity is unpopular is because they preach a God of judgment. Just preach the God of love.

Just talk about the gentle Jesus. Nobody ever hated Jesus when he had a child on his lap and he was healing the blind and eating with the sinners. And I saw another social media post that talked about the Jesus loves me just as I am.

He loves my brokenness. He loves my flaws and no, he doesn't. That is a lie from the pit of hell.

If God loved our brokenness, he wouldn't fix it. If God loved our flaws and our sin, he wouldn't scrub it away in the blood of the lamb. Would he? God loves us in spite of our flaws, our brokenness, our shortcomings, our failures, our sins.

But because he loves us, he fixes those. He gives us deliverance. It is so dangerous.

The deception that is permeating the modern Christian community online, in churches, in books, from ministries, quote unquote. I am dubious about any ministry that is not under the direct purview and is not an expression of a church. Church is the meal table for believers to come and get fed, be thoroughly equipped for every good work, and then leave the church and go out and live individual lives, community lives that reflect the truth of God and the power of God.

And people can say, well, but aren't those being saved? And aren't there a lot of good things being done through Christian non-profit organizations and non-profits, Christian, and I've worked for several. I only have this to say about that. When Moses struck the rock, and because of that, he was denied access to the land of Canaan, water still came out.

God can use words from the mouth of the prophet Balaam, who is going to die the sin unto death to bless Israel. It doesn't mean it's right. Doesn't mean it's the way to do things.

God can save by many or by few. God will work His will in spite of us, but it doesn't mean that because He works in spite of us, we can be relaxed and say, well, it doesn't really matter what I do. God's gonna get it done one way or another.

That is a path of deceit. Well, back to Matthew chapter seven. I've gotten that off my chest and I feel much better.

Matthew chapter seven. So in talking about the truth and about error and about false prophets, Jesus says, if you then in verse 11, 7-11, you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? Not everyone is going to get these good things.

He gives them to those who ask, to those who seek, to those who knock. Now look at verse 12. Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them.

This is the law and the prophets. The prophets are mentioned there on purpose. This is viewed as simply a variation or restatement of the golden rule.

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them. But he says, this is the law and the prophets.

What did he just say in Matthew 23 about the law and the prophets? What sums up the law and the prophets? Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself. What does he say here? What you would have men do to you, do also to them. This is the law and the prophets, right? So what if someone came to Matthew chapter seven, verse 12, and said, the golden rule fulfills all of God's will.

Just do to others what you would have them do to you, and you have fulfilled the law and the prophets. If I just take this, can't I make that case? Jesus said it, it's in red ink in my Bible. Do unto others, you have fulfilled the law and the prophets.

And not just others, it's men. Treat men the way you wanna be treated, and you've fulfilled the Bible. Is that true? It is part of the truth, but Jesus embeds this.

Look at, if you've got a red letter Bible, you can look at mine. And this discourse that begins back in Matthew chapter five is red ink for the entire chapter five, red ink for the entire chapter six, red ink for the entire chapter seven, all the way to the last two verses of chapter seven. This is context.

This is the fulsome statement in which this is embedded and into which it is set, 712, whatever you want. And notice it says, therefore, which ties verse 12 to what has preceded it, ties it back to ask and it will be given. Seek and you will find, knock and it will be open.

Your father who is in heaven, giving good things to those who ask him, therefore, because of the father, because you are asking and seeking and knocking, because you know the father is going to give you good things and love for God has already been addressed. Now he can say, therefore, with all of that on board and with the father in his proper place, you can do to men what you would have them do to you. And all of this is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets.

But you see how easily this can be twisted into a partial truth that misleads and becomes social gospel. We'll just be charitable, be thoughtful, courteous, and kind, be a boy scout. And thoughtful, courteous, and kind to others, because that's how you would like to be treated.

And you're good to go. Your Christianity is signed, sealed, and delivered. False, deceit, deflection, distraction, and leads to unfruitfulness and ultimate judgment.

You can't just be a nice person and fulfill the law and the prophets. Did you read Zephaniah with me? That's God also. And to pick certain aspects of God that are revealed in Christ and revealed beautifully and wonderfully and fulsomely isn't the entirety of God.

The first advent of Jesus is not the entirety of Jesus. Did Jesus ever operate a judgment when he was incarnate on this earth? Did he sit on a throne, on a bama, and have disciples and sinners and tax collectors and Pharisees and Sadducees and chief priests and elders and scribes come before him and render judgment? Did he ever do that in the incarnation? He did not. But is that Jesus? And is he going to do that? We're about to get to the sheep and goats judgment here within a chapter.

He's going to assemble the nations before him and he is going to send vast portions of

them into eternal fire. And he says so himself while he is incarnate in red ink in the gospels, depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. That's Jesus also.

So what is our conclusion here? The danger of those who claim that Jesus is the Christ, affirm it, lead with that, get their foot into the door, shine the light of Jesus being the Christ into your eyes, blinding us to the accompanying concomitant deceit, half-truths, spin, deflection, distraction, and omission. It is deceit by omission because it is not the whole truth. Yes, doing to others as we would have them do to us is a fulfillment of the law and the prophets, but it is not the entirety of that fulfillment.

Where is love for God? What's the first commandment? Love the Lord your God. Where is that in 7, 11, and 12? There's nothing said about love for God because it's in the context. We've got to take a larger view, get the entire truth into which these statements are set.

I cannot emphasize enough that the Christian world today is rife with partial truth and it fools because people tend to think in headlines, in shallow terms, in memes and tropes and aphorisms and quick quotes, one-liners, two-liners, pithy statements, quote Martin Luther King, quote Dietrich Bonhoeffer, quote Martin Luther, quote Thomas Aquinas. Isn't Thomas Aquinas a great guy? If you read quite a bit of what he wrote instead of just a note, quote Bernard of Clairvaux, get the whole sermon. That sermon 83 is a corker.

I feel like printing that thing out and sticking it on my refrigerator and reading it every day before I get started. These people take and communicate a fulsome truth, a balanced truth, a truth that looks at comparisons and contrasts. That's what we need.

Jesus speaks in comparisons and contrasts. House on the sand, house on the rock, seed in good soil, seed in bad soil, faithful servant, faithless servant, a servant who puts his master first, comes in from the field at the end of the day and makes his master's meal, or the one who's busy trying to stuff himself and beats his fellow servants. Jesus is constantly balancing truths so that we get the full picture.

It's the benefit of having both of your eyes fully functional. You get a slightly different perspective from each eye and it gives us depth perception. It enables us to estimate distance much more accurately.

It is such a wonderful thing to have two eyes. Well, as you continue here to verse 15 in Matthew 7, beware of false prophets. We've already said that they're gonna be in the house.

We've already said that they're gonna communicate via partial truths, right? Now he says, they will come to you in sheep's garments. They come to you in sheep's garments. This beware at the beginning of the verse, this beware is *apa pros echete*, *pros echo* with *apa*.

And it means literally keep a hold of your mind and keep it away from. Pros echo means get hold of yourself. And apa is away from.

Remember, I've many times talked about apostello, send out from, or apostasis, apostasis, apostasy, which is standing away from. When we talk about apostasy from truth, you're standing in a place other than the truth. But the standing away, that day will not come except there comes first the apostasia, the stasis, the standing away from, which is talking about the rapture.

We will stand away from the earth before the 70th week of Daniel comes, apa, away from. So pros echo, get a hold of your mind and preserve it away from, separate and distinct, not standing, don't walk in the council of the ungodly, don't stand in the way of sinners, don't sit in the seat of the scornful, Psalm 1.1. Separate your mind. It's similar to what Jesus says in our passage.

When you see reports, when you hear reports, note them, but don't get troubled. Don't get stirred up and enmeshed and blended in with it. Don't become a part of it.

Needs to be a distinction and a separation. So beware of pseudo-prophets, pseudo-prophetai. This is formed on the same pattern as false Christs that we're gonna see in Matthew 24, 24.

There will be false Christs who are gonna come, pseudo-Christs. Paul in 2 Corinthians 11.13 talks about pseudo-apostles, pseudo-teachers in 2 Peter 2.1. False Christs, false prophets, false apostles, false teachers. Again, 2 Corinthians 11.13 for pseudo-apostles, 2 Peter 2.1 for false teachers, pseudo-teachers.

There were two different kinds of prophets, and we've talked about this before. I'm not gonna review it. Your Old Testament prophets, and then those who had the gift of prophecy in New Testament days.

But even in those early days, they had to distinguish those who were standing up and prophesying out of their own mind and their own head instead of a genuine Holy Spirit revelation. So beware of false prophets since they come to you in sheep's clothing is what the Greek actually means here. It says who come, but they are such as coming in sheep's clothing.

Notice they come, but they are not sent. They come, but God didn't send them. To say regarding any matter, thus says the Lord when He did not say thus, that is a false prophecy.

To put words in God's mouth, to redefine is the essence of false prophecy. How can you identify them? How can you know them? Verse 16, you will know them by their fruits. You will know them by their fruits.

What fruit do we look for? Fruit of the Spirit is. So when someone comes masquerading as a prophet of light or a teacher of light, what is the fruit? Is it that guy over there is doing wrong? Is it criticism? Is it self-righteousness? Is it us and them? Is it divisive? Does it plant the word of God in our hearts in an effective way? This is the difference between describing what ought to be and providing the means for it to be. Many can come and say Jesus is the Christ, but does He become Christ through that identification and through that teaching? Are we drawn to a deeper relationship to the Father through Christ, or are these people stopping us short at a Christ of limited observation and partial truth? I'm gonna give you this cardboard Christ, and I caught just the right profile and just the right angle and these are the features that I really like about Jesus as the Christ.

I want you to stop here and look at this. I want you to embrace this cardboard Christ. The irony of it is one of the people doing this has written a book and it's called A Thicker Jesus.

It's the opposite. This is the thin Jesus. This is the two-dimensional partial Jesus that they're preaching in the book called A Thicker Jesus.

I cannot tell you the irony of those who claim to be expanding the depth of an understanding of Jesus when in fact they are flattening Him down in the way that has happened throughout history where people wanna take God and remake Him in their own image. We are made in the image of God, but man wants to take what he thinks is righteous and good and redefine God into that image. This is the source of idolatry, and you can take the living God and turn Him into an idol by redefining Him into something material, something that exists in the world, something you can look at and touch.

You can turn the Jesus hermeneutic into idolatry because you are making an idol out of the humanity of Jesus and stopping short at the fullness of deity in bodily form that takes us to and through Jesus to the Father. So important to understand the difference. Beware and do not be deceived.

Somebody talking all about Jesus and all about love and all about accepting the marginalized and eating with sinners and being one of the out crowd and speaking truth to power and all the rest of it. These are human ideas of righteousness. They are not divine ideas of righteousness.

They don't connect to God through Christ. They connect to man's social conscience through deception. It is a deception and it is widespread.

It is ubiquitous. It's everywhere. And we look at the words of the Lord Jesus.

Let no man deceive you, not even a man that's in the camp, not even a man that is your familiar friend eating at your table, not even a man who went to seminary, who knows Hebrew and Greek, not even a man who writes a book and is widely published and

popular and approvingly reviewed and is thought to be a wonderful contribution to the Christian community and Christian literature. Some deceivers are obvious. Others are very difficult to detect.

Jesus says, don't let any of them, let no man deceive you. The ones most likely to deceive are often those who's, when Jesus said a man's enemies will be the members of his own household. And the truth of the Lord Jesus is often a sword that will even divide families, whether it's spiritual families or literal families.

And generational divide is inevitable if one side is seeking the truth and the other is happy with a convenient truth, a partial truth, an attractive truth, a truth of light and love that ignores judgment that is just in terms of the day of judgment mentioned over a hundred times in scripture. So beware of false prophets who come to you looking like a sheep. You will know them by their fruits.

If they're a thistle, you're not gonna get grapes. You're not gonna find yourself abiding in the vine with power flowing from that vine, living water transferred from the vine of Jesus Christ into the branches. And there is fruit, there is power, there's strength, there is peace, there is love, there is joy, there is patience, the ability to suffer long, to endure the faults and the shortcomings of others and to overcome the faults and shortcomings in our own souls, self-control, the fruit of the spirit, only the truth of the word of God revealed in Jesus Christ and expressed throughout the scriptures is sufficient to overcome.

In this world, you're going to have challenge. That's the way faith grows. That's the way we learn and have it cemented into our souls.

It's one thing to read about a thing in a book or watch a YouTube video on how to do it. It's something else to get in there and do it. A YouTube video might show you how to install a hot water tank, but it doesn't tell you that when you pull the old one out and you find that the entire floor under it has rotted away, there's more you need to do before you can put the new one in.

We need complete truth, not convenient, sugar-coated, placebo truth. Well, much more to say about this because what Jesus says in Matthew 24 and 25 deals largely with Israel in the last seven years of the tribulation, but it has pertinence and application for us. And we've got to be smart.

We've got to be critical. We've got to be hungry and thirsty for the truth of the word of God. And when we go to God and say, Lord, I am hungry.

I am thirsty. I know I need your power in my life. I need your saving grace.

I need your cleansing grace. I need your durative, ongoing support to live the life to which you've called me. Ask, seek, knock.

This will give us clear eyes to detect falsehood, to detect twisted and partial truths. God will not let us take a flat rock instead of a flat piece of bread. He will not let us take a dead snake instead of a nutritious fish.

It's a promise. And it's a promise we can take to the Lord every single day. I know I should not be deceived.

I know that I should have faith. Lord, help my unbelief. Give me eyes to see and ears to hear and strength for the task.

Give me this day, my daily bread. Just strengthen me, enable me, empower me today. I'll let tomorrow worry about tomorrow, but I know you've made provision today.

This is the gift we have from God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a life unparalleled, unsurpassed, not even known to the angels, the privilege we have of living in this light. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the words of the Lord Jesus preserved and transmitted to us. Thank you for the presence of your spirit to help us to understand them and to remember them and to put them into practice at the appropriate moment in your strength, in your power, and for your glory. We thank you and we pray that these truths will breathe fire in our souls, eliminate what shouldn't be there, and energize and enable what should be there so that we can truly represent the Lord Jesus both now and in the ages to come.

We pray it in his name, amen.