

Oaths

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- [0 : 00] So I'm just going to read this and then we're going to get straight into the sermon.
- From verse 33, again, you've heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.
- But I say to you, do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it's the throne of God, or by the earth, for it's his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it's the city of the great king.
- And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply yes or no.
- Nothing more than this comes from evil. Amen. And we pray that God will bless his word to us as we spend some time looking at it just now.
- [1 : 03] Now, this section in the Bible is headed oaths. And obviously, as we read it, you could see that it's about oaths, taking vows.
- Now, I don't know the last time you swore by an oath to do something. I suspect it was a long time ago, if you've ever done it at all.
- It's not really a practice that we're familiar with. It's not something that you regularly do, I would imagine. But maybe closer to your own experience is making a promise.
- You know about that, don't you? So people have made promises to you and you've made promises to other people. So that's a bit more familiar to us, but even more than promises, this passage, if you think, well, okay, it's about oaths, that's got nothing to do with me, so it's irrelevant, think about promises, but even more than promises, this short section where Jesus is talking, Jesus really wants to focus on and what's underneath what he's saying, the whole issue of truthfulness.
- Now, truth, I think, is something that we all know about, something that matters very much to you and to me. You want people to be truthful to you and you know that you should at least be truthful to other people.
- [2 : 21] So that is where we're going tonight. I want to say that that is Jesus' primary aim in this section to talk about truthfulness and to expose in the culture in which he's speaking in this sermon, to expose the hypocrisy that's going on in that culture with regard to truthfulness.
- And where I want us to end up tonight, where we're going with this, is to say that being one of Jesus' people, being a Christian, being somebody who's been changed by the Gospel, also changes your attitude and the way you deal with the whole issue of truthfulness.
- So the Gospel changes us fundamentally with regard to so many things at heart level, but it changes our attitude to truthfulness. So what I want to do is spend the first little while looking at what Jesus says.
- Let's just open that up and see what he's saying and the points that he's trying to make and then I want to simply to apply that. Say how can we take that for ourselves? In two ways, first of all, we're going to look at the whole question of why we're tempted towards untruth.

Why is it that keeps leading us down that path? And the second applicatory point I want to make is simply how can we be freed from that compulsion to lie or to words untruth?

[3 : 41] So that's a wee sketch of where we're going tonight. But as I said, I want to focus first of all on what Jesus says. So we're going to get straight into the first few verses here. And you'll see that what it looks like when we start this little section is that we have a quote from Jesus.

So please look when we verse 33, again, you've heard that it was said to those of old. Now he starts off by saying again, because you may remember, if you remember back to some of the sermons we've had, and also if you're familiar with this sermon, Jesus is using a particular way of speaking.

So if you look back to verse 21, this is a little section about anger. You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder. And then he goes on, but I say to you, then it says in verse 27, you've heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery.

But I say to you, divorce, it was also said, whoever divorces his wife, et cetera. But I say to you, and so again in our passage here, so you see what Jesus is doing.

He keeps hitting his audience with this particular formula and it's designed to say, okay, here's an assumption you've got, particularly about what God's will was for them and what the Scriptures revealed.

[4 : 56] Here's an assumption you've got. Here's a way that you're living your lives. But here's what I want to say to you about this. So Jesus is bringing, we've used this phrase before, this kingdom ethic, this description of what it looks like to be one of his followers, this description of how his people should live, he's bringing that which challenges the people that he's speaking to because a lot of the time they had formulated their own complicated system of religious rules that they thought they should abide by.

He's challenging that and he's also speaking with authority, isn't he? Who can say, okay, well you've heard this, this is your system of teaching, this is your interpretation of the law, the Torah, that I say, Jesus can say that because he comes as the Lord.

So that means that the people had to listen to him. Now that offended them. That means that we should listen to him also. So Jesus's words are authoritative to us tonight.

So this is what Jesus is doing and this section we're in tonight is in that train, if you like, of thought that Jesus is in. He's wanting to communicate a challenge to the culture that he's in.

So he says, you've heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not swear falsely but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn. Now actually that's not a direct quote so you won't find those that exact form of words somewhere in the Old Testament.

[6 : 23] But really what Jesus is doing here just to get a brief understanding is he's summarizing what is true from the Old Testament. So the Old Testament, God's word, does speak about vows and taking oaths.

And so the reason it does that, the reason it speaks about oaths is because there's a deep concern in God's word for truthfulness. The whole purpose of this was that so when people were making promises, they would see the importance of truthfulness and of doing what they said.

You get, I won't go into them just now but there are different references, say in a book like Deuteronomy or Leviticus, to taking vows, particularly to taking vows in the name of the Lord. And what it says in each of those instances is basically if you take a vow, keep it.

Be truthful. A lot of them also will say if you take a vow, keep it quickly. So don't take a vow lightly and think, ah, I'll deal with that when I feel like it or when I remember and treat it as if it doesn't really matter.

Taking a vow is a serious thing and it's an important thing and truthfulness was an important thing. So Jesus is summarizing this practice, saying it's important.

[7 : 43] Vows are to be honored. But Jesus also, what's interesting about this is he challenges the practice that they have. He challenges the practice but he wants to retain the principle.

So what he says is you've heard that it was said, you shall not swear falsely but shall perform to the Lord what you've sworn. Okay. But then he says in verse 34, but I say to you, so there's a challenge, I say to you, don't take an oath at all.

Either by heaven or it is the throne of God. And then he goes on to give different examples. So Jesus is saying, okay, the scripture is a firm, at least they contain this idea of a vow. It's important.

It has to do with truth, but I'm saying don't take them. So why is he saying that? What's Jesus doing at this particular point in time? He's challenging the practice that they have.

But he retains the principle. He wants to cut and you will see this as we go through this short passage. He wants them absolutely to become aware of their own hypocrisy and committed truth. But he's saying the way that you're dealing with the vows that you're taking is an affront to me.

[8 : 54] So it's all wrong. They're all messed up. He wants to challenge the way that they deal with their vows. And they want them to get real about this and he wants them to change.

In all of the different examples, really, that Jesus is talking about here, he's talking about scriptural truths, biblical principles that are taken particularly by the religious teachers and misapplied or misappropriated.

And really these people who are misapplying the scriptural principles and truth are leading so many other people astray. And Jesus wants to come and correct this with his teaching.

So he challenges them and he says, I say do not take an oath at all. He then describes four ways in which they take vows.

So you would have seen that as we read through it. I just want to read briefly these couple of verses and then just explain why he says this. Again, it might seem a strange practice to us. It's quite culturally different from what we're used to.

[10 : 00] Because he says, I say to you, don't take an oath at all either by heaven, he's the first one, for it's the throne of God, or by the earth, for it's his footstool, or by Jerusalem.

And finally, don't take an oath by your head. These four ways in which people were swearing by these different things. He says, don't do that. Don't do it by any of these ways that you may do it.

You may be tempted to do it. Why again? Well, there's a couple of things going on here. They're swearing by these different things.

Swearing, I promise to do such and such by Jerusalem. I promise to do such and such by heaven, or however they would have phrased it. There was a concern, which really came from a good place initially.

There was a concern not to say the name of God amongst the believing community. So God's name, the name of God, was seen as so holy that there was a desire not to say it.

[10 : 57] And so in some senses, this could be seen as an attempt not to desecrate the name of God by saying it out loud, and so they would swear by different things. But there was also a real problem here, because what in fact was happening is that people were making kind of gradations of vow.

So if you didn't swear by the name of God, you could swear by something else. And if you didn't swear by that thing, you could swear by this thing. And what was actually happening was that these different things had different values or different levels of truthfulness attached to them.

So if you swore by one thing, that was seen as a more binding vow than if you swore by another thing. It became a whole complex system of vows that were going on.

And Jesus sees that, cuts to the heart of that practice and says, that's hypocrisy and it's nonsense. And it's not biblical, and it's not what my father would have you do, and it's not what should exist in my kingdom.

So you need to stop it. We get another, I'm just going to read a verse from Matthew chapter 23, where Jesus again attacks this practice. And in some senses, you get a clearer picture of it here in Matthew 23.

[12 : 13] I'll just read from verse 16. Jesus says in very strong language, woe to you blind guides who say, if anyone swears by the temple, it's nothing. But if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he's bound by his oath.

You blind fools, for which is greater, the gold or the temple? And then he goes on in verse 18. If you say, if anyone swears by the altar, it's nothing. But if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he's bound by his oath.

So there's another example. There was a general practice of saying, we can be more truthful here and less truthful here. This vow has more weight than this vow.

And Jesus says, rubbish. So Jesus is challenging the practice that exists. And he's also saying, of course, and that comes out in the text.

He's saying that all of these different things that you're swearing by, you're trying to avoid my name and you're saying all these different things, heaven, earth, Jerusalem, their head, however they would say their name or whatever.

[13 : 15] These are all my things anyway. You can't swear by all of these things as if you control them. So I swear by such and such a thing that I will fulfill this vow.

Jesus is saying, well, that belongs to me. You see the way he says that? Verse 34, don't take an oath either by heaven, for it's the throne of God or by the earth, for it's his footstool or by Jerusalem, for it's the city of the great king.

Jesus wants to remind the people that he's speaking to of the fact that all of their world belongs to him and he wants to challenge the attitude that they have where they seem to think that they're able to pick and choose when they tell the truth.

All of these different things by which they're swearing belong to him as well as their own heart attitude to what they say and how they say it.

So this is the challenge that Jesus gives. Also what we see in this short passage is kind of as in the same way that we see with divorce.

[14 : 30] Jesus is saying to the people, you know when we were looking at the passage on divorce a couple of weeks ago, Jesus is really saying you're spending so much time focusing on the different caveats that you might put in place, the technicalities that could allow you to get divorced.

You've forgotten that it's all about marriage. Stop spending all your time discussing all the different yeses and noes of why you might or might not get divorced and being selfish and not caring about your marriages and the promises that you've made and focus on marriage as a reflection of the relationship that exists between Jesus and his church.

So he's saying with this whole thing of oaths, you've got so many technicalities going on around your oaths, you've forgotten it's all about being truthful. The way you speak to somebody, you shouldn't have multiple contingencies in place depending on how you feel or what you're trying to get out of them.

Be truthful. Be truthful. So really we call my name then in verse 37, Jesus says, it's very stark really isn't it?

It's quite clear to us what he says, let what you say be simply yes or no. Saying more than this comes from evil. Let what you say just be yes or no. He wants to cut through.

[15 : 52] What effectively had become, you can imagine their conversations and the scenario that he's painting here was as if they're conversations, they're ordinary day to day conversations where they were making these vows, they're dealings in the marketplace, they're conversations even amongst the worshiping community where they really should have been truthful to one another, their conversations have become like diplomatic wranglings.

You know two different countries who utterly don't trust each other. The conversations that exist, hugely complicated, full of mistrust, full of problems, full of half truths and guesses as to what on earth is going on.

Jesus says your conversations should not be like that. Those who are going to be part of my kingdom community, I don't want you to speak like that.

I don't want you to be known in the marketplace, in the public sphere, in your homes as those who can't be trusted.

And so really what he's saying just as we finish this briefs of sketch of Jesus's point is that he wants his people to be those whose words can be taken at face value rather than with a pinch of salt.

[17 : 11] You know what it's like if you've ever known somebody who's said something to you, they made a promise or they've said, I'll see you at the weekend or whatever and you think, no they won't.

I can never trust that person because they always give up on me at the last minute. It's disappointing isn't it? Because Jesus is saying to his people, don't be, I mean that's a trivial, that's a very kind of localized example, trivial example, don't be people at any level whose word means nothing.

So I want to just spend a little bit of time now applying that a little bit more closely. Taking what Jesus says, which on the surface is about oaths and vows, but which really in the situation that he's speaking about is about truthfulness and say how do we take that and apply that further and think about it in our own lives.

So first of all, like I said, I want to think briefly about why we speak untruthfully. What is it that motivates us? Because it's easy in some ways to say, okay, don't lie.

Just don't lie. We understand that. Our young children understand that at some level. But what is it that leads us, draws us towards being untruthful?

[18 : 27] There are many different things. I'm just going to mention three. So the first one I think is that we can be afraid. I think we can be afraid if we're honest of what the truth about ourselves will reveal and what it will mean for ourselves.

Because we're afraid to admit it to ourselves and sometimes we're afraid to let the truth come out before other people because of the way it will touch on who we are, how we're known.

And so what we can do, the way that we're tempted maybe to distort the truth in that situation is just to cover up. We can do that in all kinds of ways, can't we? We can just cover up.

Now in thinking about this and in applying it, we have to get to the point where we're saying this could be a direct lie, but I want us to think more subtly than that. And that's the way untruth works, isn't it?

It's not just all about telling big black lies. We're so complicated, sinfully complicated sometimes, often, that the way that we tend towards untruth can be complicated also.

[19 : 32] So the way that we cover up things about ourselves or the way we cover up truth can also be complex. Now what's the problem with that?

I mean, why do we do that? I think we do that because primarily we kind of kid ourselves about the way that we're seen.

We forget, first of all, ultimately I suppose that everything about us is already laid bare before the one who made us. That kind of fundamental level, that's a thing that we can so easily tend to forget.

It can be possible for us to want to create a self. And we all understand why we do that, don't we? We want people to think well of ourselves.

We want people to think well of us. But if we're doing it to the point where we're actually covering up who we are and what we're like and we distort the picture of ourselves, then what we're doing is we're forgetting that God already knows everything about us.

[20 : 37] And it may be that for a time we can make somebody else think something of us. But when we get to the nitty gritty of the heart level, when we sit before God, we just have none of that.

All of that just falls away because we recognize, well God knows everything about me. And so it can be pretty hard hitting, can't it?

When we try and maintain a public face or create a certain impression about ourselves or worse, lie badly, get into a circle of lying about a particular aspect of our lives, and then feel the call of God reminding us that He just knows us.

He knows who we are. He knows what we're like. He knows everything about us. Better than we know ourselves. So sometimes we're afraid. Secondly we lie because we're trying to get ahead, we're trying to get advantage.

We can get advantage or we can try to get advantage in a couple of different ways in relationships. We try and get advantage over somebody else so we lie or we embellish who we are or what we're doing to get ahead of somebody else or to get somebody else.

[21 : 52] Or we can do that in business, in your work. You're trying to get ahead in terms of who you are or your career or what you do. That's a huge challenge in our culture where there's a big draw on us to be successful in our culture.

A big draw to be successful, to do well. And always, isn't it the case in community? We're a community. This is a community. Your workplace is a community.

It's so difficult not to feel the pressure of somebody else who's getting ahead more than you. Somebody else who's doing better than you. Somebody else who's more popular than you.

Whatever it is. Comparison can really mess things up for us. But I think what we can do sometimes in that situation is we can simply be tempted if not to outright lie and just embellish who we are.

So the CV is the most obvious example, isn't it? And you're trying to get employment. And who you are matters to your potential employer.

[22 : 59] So what you say about yourself on your CV is crucial. I heard, I think it was when I was in the States recently, somebody was talking about a big problem in the workforce, whatever I was.

I can't remember who told me this. But people who were high level professionals who were hugely stressed out and potentially ill because of the pressure that came from their work, because they were in jobs that they weren't qualified for, because they lied to get those jobs.

People who are just not qualified to do the jobs that they were doing. So they got their sheer grit and ambition to get ahead and to get to that place.

I read something online that says, this was a survey of business owners by a payroll provider. Says that 79% of those surveyed said that they had hired employees with mismatched skill sets or who displayed underperformance on the job despite the claims made on their resume.

So I just put that out there as one example, perhaps one challenge that you face, how truthful to be as you present yourself at work.

[24 : 14] It doesn't have to be your CV, you apply it to your situation. This is just starting that whole process of us thinking, how am I challenged in the way I present myself and in my truthfulness in my life?

Why do we do that? I think the tendency to do that comes from a place of idolatry where we feel the pool so much of that job or that whatever.

And I know there is huge pressure to get employment and we have to be professional and good and put our qualities out there absolutely.

But there is a huge pressure, I think, to say we are more than we are in order to get ahead. And I think a third way that we can tend towards untruth is simply by being influenced by the people we speak to.

Have you ever found that? You've been in a conversation with somebody and you've been talking about yourself. Maybe you've met somebody and introduced yourself and you maybe knew about them and you came away from the conversation thinking, that was weird the way I spoke about myself.

[25 : 31] I said more than I normally do about that aspect of who I am or actually that wasn't quite true. I kind of made that bit up a little bit. I hope not. But sometimes when we meet somebody and we are impressed by them or we want their favour or we want their attention or we want them to be on our side, it completely affects the way we speak.

And what we do at that point in time is we see that person as the one who controls who we should be. And that can happen in all kinds of different ways.

So that person is the influencer. That person is the one that we want to be like or whatever. And that can play out in lots of different ways also. Obviously that kind of dynamic is hugely present in the workplace.

I wonder if that dynamic is present in church amongst us as a group of people. Are there people who you, their opinion is so weighty to you that you'll change the way you speak.

You'll alter the things that are true about you or the things that you want to say to them because you want them to be on your side. It was an interesting story that did the news almost all week last week.

[26 : 41] It was about a girl in the States who was a fashion blogger. And she basically used to take photos of herself looking pretty, wearing clothes that were expensive, put them online and people would pay her.

And she quit. She said, I hate this. I don't want to do it anymore. And what she did was she wrote this big new thing saying, okay, this thinks this way of life.

It's fake. I've spent my whole time taking photos of myself and writing things about my life and it's not real. I do it because I want approval.

I do it because I get paid, but because I want approval. And so I spend my entire life living a lie and being utterly insecure. Now, the fallout of that was that some people said, thank you for doing that.

You're my hero and some people were very cynical. I make no comment. But the fact is that she was saying that the way I present myself is a certain way and it's a lie because I want X amount of people to love me.

[27 : 48] So she gave the example that if she put up a photo of herself and it got like 80 likes, that wasn't enough. She'd take the photo down because it didn't get her enough love.

So that's a social media example. But again, we have to take something like that, think it through and think, how am I? Am I being so affected by somebody else that it's twisting what I think of myself?

It's making me live a lie in very subtle ways. So I think really the whole idea of truthfulness can take a knife to our culture in lots of different ways.

And a culture that is so obsessed with success, getting ahead, image, personality, the whole concept of truth can be a bit of a wrecking ball in that whole culture.

But also, we have to think also that it is a potential wrecking ball or at least a mirror that gives us a big fright when we hold it up in front of our own faces, our own hearts.

[28 : 55] So thinking about the whole issue of truthfulness is something that we have to take to our own hearts. Now, what I want to do finally is just ask the question, how can we be free from this compulsion?

How can we be free from this? Jesus says, tell the truth, be truthful. How?

I want first of all to suggest that you can't just be a moralist. So being truthful is something that lots of people talk about, isn't it?

We talk about truth tonight, but you could go to any number of religious meetings, philosophical societies or whatever. People will talk about truth because they think truth is a good thing to do, to be.

And that's fine. But it's more than just trying to be truthful because truthfully, if we just try and be truthful, we'll get so disappointed with ourselves.

[29 : 49] If we're honest, surely. And other people will certainly be disappointed with us because we just fail so much. It's so hard to be consistently truthful. And the other complexity that we have, I think, is that when we're trying to be truthful sometimes, we can think, I was so truthful this week.

And actually, all we did was offend people and be rude to them. Or we can be so truthful and so proud of being so truthful. And so our heads just explode when we start thinking like that.

When we actually look at the reality of what we're actually like and the complexity of what's going on in our hearts. So you could, for example, try, you could look at the whole issue of Buddhism and say, OK, well, truthfulness is a good thing to do.

And something like Buddhism would suggest I follow a path and I live better. But what Jesus and what the gospel says to us tonight is it's more than a matter of morality.

It's more than a matter of works. It's an issue of identity. It's an issue of who you are as a Christian. Here's how. The second thing I want to say is we have to understand that this whole thing and all of these different issues, we're talking about truth tonight, but as we apply all of these different things to our lives, it's all a matter of identity, of putting on an identity, not working at an identity, not spending your whole life trying to be something.

[31 : 12] You know, we can do that in a whole load of different ways, can't we? We can spend our lives trying to be successful. We crave attention. We crave a personality. We crave love. We crave likes on Facebook, whatever.

And so it's a question of being. And we can even do that, as was being alluded to this morning, when the whole area of religion, be religious, satisfy God.

And the gospel says no, put on Christ. Because those who are Jesus's people, those who are in this kingdom community that Jesus is bringing out here, these are people who are not just trying to work out their own salvation, but they're people who are Christ's and they are to be as He is, because He's their Lord.

So what we understand tonight is when we think about identity, we're to be, just to take this immediate example, we're to be truthful because He is truth. See? He is truth.

Jesus is truth. And if He's our Lord, if He's our King, then we're to be like Him. If He's the one who's given us birth into this new life through the gospel, because He's revealed to us the kind of, the poverty of our hearts, but said, I love you in the gospel, then we take on a whole new character.

[32 : 40] We put on Christ. And so we have this new identity. I'm going to read a couple of verses to you. In John 1 it says, John writes in verse 14, we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

That's Jesus. It's His identity. There's no untruthfulness in our Lord. And then we get this verse in Colossians.

So this speaks to us about us. It speaks to the church in Colossians, it speaks to us about us being Christians. It says, do not lie to one another. So that's very direct, isn't it?

Don't lie to one another. There's that practice. But it says, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator, after the image of its Creator.

We're to be truthful. That's an aspect of who we're to be because it's being like our Creator and the one who's saved us. So think identity. If you're a Christian tonight, get that straight in your head.

[33 : 51] Think about it in terms of being like the one who has gifted you salvation, being like the one who is your Lord. And so thinking like that means that you have to start thinking about being close to your Lord.

It's really difficult to do that if he's miles away from you. If you've been ignoring him and if you've been running from him.

So it's a question of identity. And interestingly, you see at the end here it says, the end of this passage, anything more than just yes or no, anything more than being people of integrity and truth, anything more comes from evil.

We're to be after our Lord because he is truth, not after Satan, who's the father of lies.

And the third and final thing just in terms of how we can be free from this compulsion to lie or to manipulate or to try and get ahead is transformation that comes through the Gospel.

[34 : 56] Know the Gospel really well. Know what it means and what it's done for you. Because we've spoken a little bit about cravings, that feeling we have inside of ourselves to want to be something so often it can be to do with some kind of ambition we have or some kind of persona that we love to think that people have of us in mind.

But the Gospel frees us from that. It sets us free. The Bible talks about that, doesn't it? How does it do that? It says you don't have to keep covering over your deficiencies or pretending to be somebody else.

Here's a quote, quite a famous quote from Tim Keller. In the Gospel we're more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared to believe. So he knows everything about us.

He already knows the reality of our hearts. But at the very same time we're more loved and more accepted in Jesus than we ever dared hope.

That's the good news. The Gospel that transforms everything about us. Because it says Jesus knows every failing that you have. He knows everything about your character that's run, that is not attractive and that turns people off you.

[36 : 10] He knows everything about the potential failings you have in your workplace, your inability to do what is asked of you. And everything else that you maybe even just presume about yourself that's not great.

He knows all these things. And even if they're not true, even if sometimes we can get down on ourselves and we think far too much about this, he says, I love you with an everlasting love and I've redeemed you.

I've set you free from having to create if you like your own persona, your own success story. And so in the Gospel you are ultimately loved in Jesus.

So in the Gospel we're free from having to cover up all our faults because he knows them all and he's still chosen us and called us and loved us. If I can put it like this, we don't need to save face constantly because we've come to understand in the Gospel there is no face to save.

It's like we've come to understand the personas that we can construct around ourselves that just empty and pointless. We don't need them.

[37 : 17] In the Gospel we don't need to lie to get ahead so that ambition that we have drives us towards untruthfulness. We already have every spiritual blessing in Christ.

We have every riches, all the riches of being a child of God. We've been adopted into his family. We've been given a glorious hope for the future and we have the presence of the Holy Spirit with us now.

And so we don't need to create this great success story which drives us and which leaves us constantly feeling empty. And we're free from pretending to be something that we're not because we're adopted children because we have that incredible identity given to us by God.

It goes as you're my child, I love you. And so what could be better for us? That is the greatest identity we have.

That is ultimately what we need. And in that we have rest from the tendency to crave which leads us towards untruth.

[38 : 24] And so the key thing for us is the Gospel, the key thing for us is our identity and the key thing for us is recognizing Jesus says, be truthful and we are able to do that.

We are unable to do that the closer we are to him. The closer we realize all that he's done for us. Amen. Let me pray. Lord, we just asked us now that you'd teach us and help us forgive us when we're outright deceitful, forgive us for when we manipulate the truth and Lord we also pray that you'd show us where we're deceiving even our own selves tonight.

Forgive us if we're being untruthful deliberately forgive us and show us where we're being untruthful and deceitful almost subconsciously and we pray that you would correct us but we pray Lord that you would teach us the Gospel and how that can change who we are and the way we live.

Amen.