

# 2 Timothy 3 – Living Unashamed in a Confusing World

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[0:00] It's good to see everyone. How are we? The sun came out yesterday, so I'm told. Like, yeah, that big burning ball in the sky, that's called the sun.

And come mid-June, we'll be complaining about it. So welcome. It's good to see you. If you have a Bible, turn with me to 2 Timothy chapter 3. We are kind of, I want to say we're technically halfway through our series through 2 Timothy, but actually we've only got another couple of weeks in it. This morning, we're going to tackle chapter 3 in its entirety. And before you breathe deeply, we are having lunch afterwards, and that will still be on schedule.

So what I want to do is pray, and we're going to get straight stuck into the Word and see what God has for us. Father, thank you. Lord, as we open your Word, Lord, we want to be, Lord, not transformed by my words, but by yours.

So, Lord, we come to you, Lord, and we ask you that you would just speak to us this morning, Lord. Lord, we're hearing that song being played, better as one day in your courts and a thousand hours where, Lord, our confession is where else can we go?

[1:27] Where else would we go? Lord, you alone have the words of eternal life. Lord, we want these words to be life to us. Lord, help us and protect us against believing that learning is a substitute for growth.

Lord, that learning is a substitute for transformation. Lord, we want to encounter you in your Word this morning.

And so, yes, instruct us, we pray. Lord, we need correcting. Lord, we need something more than that.

We need life, your life. And so we pray, Lord, breathe life into us today. Lord, we ask this in Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So I want to begin, because this is such a kind of big passage, a wide passage.

I want to begin by giving you the big idea of the passage and then kind of working from that, if that's okay. So the bigger, and I didn't wait for you to agree, I'm just going to do it anyway. So the big idea of the passage is that in a world that is losing its way, God calls his people to stay true and honest and rooted in Christ.

[2:52] That's the big idea of the passage. I know. It's okay. That's fine.

Look, you'll immediately notice, as you look at verse 1 of chapter 3, that Paul is continuing his thought from the previous chapter.

And we know that because it starts with the word but. All right? No one really starts the sentence with the word but, unless you've been thinking, this is what we often do in our house, right?

We'll be thinking something, and then we start verbalizing what we've just been thinking about, and the other person has no clue what we've been thinking about. That's not Paul. Paul's not doing that. He's already told us what he's thinking about in chapter 2, and this is a continuation from that.

So this isn't a new conversation at all. It continues the one Paul has already been having with Timothy. And just to remind you, just flick back in your Bibles, and you'll see in chapter 2, Paul told Timothy in verse 22 to flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace.

[3:53] And he warned him in chapter 23 to avoid foolish controversies, to lead with gentleness, to trust that God grants repentance through faith. And now in chapter 3, Paul kind of pulls the camera back a little bit,

and he's going to show Timothy the environment he will be living and ministering in, as if he didn't know.

And why pursuing righteousness will not be easy? Are you finding that? Like pursuing righteousness is not easy, is it? Like when someone says to you what hobbies you do, you don't say pursuing righteousness, right?

Because like you would hope that there'll be some little victories that you can have on the way when it's a hobby, right? There's something you do vaguely well. And so Paul is absolutely honest with Timothy, and he says, look, this is the world you're going to be ministering in.

And oh, by the way, to go against that, that's going to be difficult. Now, look, the chapter is not written to scare Timothy.

It's not written to scare us. He's already said that we haven't been given a spirit of fear, but he is writing it to steady him. And so Paul is saying, look, if you're going to live unashamed of who you are, before God, because of God, that's been our kind of theme as we've been going through this book.

[5:17] You need clarity about the times that you're living in, the world that you're living in, and confidence in what has shaped you. Okay? And so here's the first thing, verses one to five.

This is what he says. He says, recognize the world you're living in. Just recognize it. He says, but understand this, that in the last days, there will come times of difficulty.

I still, having been a New King James reader for many, many years, I love the word perilous times. That's what it reads, right? In the last days, there will be perilous times. I much prefer that reading. I don't know why. It's just a personal preference. Look, Paul is not predicting some distant future. Okay? Okay? He's not saying, look, when you've died and been buried long, long, and long time after that, in the last days, there will be perilous times.

He's not saying that. He's saying, look, in the now, this is your world, Timothy. And actually, that word last days refers to the entire period from the resurrection of Jesus all the way through to the coming again of Jesus.

[6:29] So what day are we living in? The last days. So is this text good for us? Yes and amen, right? And so Paul is meaning to describe Timothy's world and our world.

And so then in verse 2, Paul begins to list a series of kind of character traits that are a threat to the character that Christ is making in you. You could say, here is resistance.

Here is struggle. Here is persecution. Here is challenge to all of the things that you hope that God is doing in you. Right? Because he says, look, for people.

Now look around. I know it's a Sunday morning. And I know for those teachers, it doesn't, you know, it feels less than people. You feel less than people right now. But we're all people here. So Paul is saying, for people will be. This is one of those ouch moments. Because there's part of this that Paul is describing that is part of us.

[7:33] And so he says, for people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents. Like, I've never been disobedient to my parents.

And I'm like 50. How old am I? Thanks, 52. I'm still disobedient to my parents. Well, someone did. Ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness but denying his power.

Avoid such people. And the whole room leaves. Now look, rather than go through each of one of these and highlight them and have us all leave this place feeling pretty rotten about ourselves, I think what is striking to me is how normal and ordinary these sins are.

What's striking is not how extreme they are, but how normal they feel. Because what Paul is actually doing is telling us that pursuing righteousness is difficult because there are so many other things that are demanding our love.

[8:52] We are to love God. And then Paul says, yeah, but there's going to be some things that are going to challenge that, your desire to love God. And they're going to be loving other things.

Right? So it's helpful for us to read, I think, probably this through the lens of what C.S. Lewis called disordered loves. He said we're always going to love something.

We're made to love things. And we're always going to love things. But sometimes those loves become disordered and we love the wrong things.

And we then love things in the wrong order. And so each phrase, if you like, of what Paul has just said is flowing from loving the wrong thing most.

Okay? So loving the wrong thing most. And look, even in how he constructs the sentence, even in English, it's pretty striking. Lovers of self. Lovers of money. Then a negative.

[9:56] Not loving good. Lovers of pleasure. Then a negative again. Rather than lovers of God. What is it all about? It's loving stuff. Those five phrases are kind of almost the engine to the thought that Paul is wanting to convey.

When the self becomes supreme, everything else bends around it. When we love something other than God, everything else bends around that.

Pride, arrogance aren't personality quirks. Did you know that? Then what happens when the self is enthroned? Abuse and harshness grow when other people are no longer neighbors to be loved, but obstacles to be managed.

Disobedience to parents and ingratitude reveal a heart that believes it is self-made. I don't owe my parents anything. Don't make that a meme. Owing nothing to anyone.

As love continues to drift out of order, relationships fracture. He says heartless, unappeasable, slanderous. What are they? We're at marks of people who must protect what they love most at all costs.

[11:08] If comfort and control is your highest love, then forgiveness feels threatening. Truth feels dangerous and gentleness feels weak. Lack of self-control and brutality show up when desire becomes king and restraint feels like death.

Even not loving good isn't about hating virtue in theory. It's about resenting anything that competes with what we want most. What may be most sobering is how Paul ends the list.

Having the appearance of godliness. But denying its power. This is what disordered love looks like, not outside the church, but inside the church.

God is still spoken about. Songs are still sung. Sermons are still preached. But he's no longer central. God becomes a means to another end.

Success. Belonging. Influence. Moral superiority. Peace of mind. And we could keep going and filling in those blanks. C.S. Lewis would say, this is not atheism.

[12:26] This is, in fact, he coined the phrase, I think, Christian atheism. It's living our life with religious language. Calling it God. But denying the power of God.

And that's why Paul calls throughout this letter. He doesn't say, look, just try harder or believe. Believe or behave better. But reorder your love.

This is the chapter. Reorder your love. When God is loved above all, the self is put in his proper place. Money loses its mastery. Pleasure loses its tyranny.

And righteousness, love, faith, love and peace can finally grow. And this is Paul's message. He's saying, look, don't be shocked by this. But don't be shaped by it either.

Begin with sober discernment and ask the question, what is it that you love most? And then in verse 6 to 9, he's going to tell us how to discern.

[13:29] Because you might go, well, I don't know. I don't know what I love most. And normally there are indicators.

Normally if someone gets defensive about something, they're protecting something. They love that. They get angry about something or upset about something.

They love that. And so there are some good indicators. But look, notice how Paul talks in verses 6 to 9 where he says to understand how deception works.

And the big idea, again, is that you can tell what someone loves by the truth that they tolerate. That's Paul's point here.

You can tell what someone loves by the truth that they put up with. Look at verse 6. For among them. So, pause there. Among this group of people described in verses 1 to 5.

[14:30] Among them are a separate group of men. And they are men. And that's clear from verse 8. So these now aren't people in general.

They are men. And he says, what do they do? Among them, they creep into households. So Paul is now probably, as he has done before, in previous chapters, been describing church leaders. And these leaders don't storm the church. They creep into the church. He has this idea of worming their way in.

We use that phrase, don't we? They worm their way into something unnoticed and unannounced. And what they do is that they capture. And that word capture literally does mean capture. It means to take hostage. And he says, they take hostage weak women. So Paul is saying that, look, there are people who take hostage certain kinds of women.

[15:36] Paul isn't describing all women. Amen, ladies? I know that because if I suggested that, you would no longer be weak and you would see me afterwards. And I'd be running out of the church with a towel between my legs.

He's talking about a certain group, a certain type of people. He's not talking about all women or women in general. He's saying, look, that there is a tactic of those with disordered loves. And the tactic of those people is to creep up on certain kinds of women and take them hostage. And then, look, he uses two phrases that I think is helpful to apply what is going on.

He says that they are burdened with sin and led astray by various passions. And the Greek is clear that the people he is describing are the women rather than the people who are targeting them. Okay? He says that there is a kind of women that are being targeted. And they are burdened with sin and led astray by various passions.

[16:40] He's describing a group of women in two ways. Firstly, he says they are loaded down. And we get the picture that Paul is kind of painting here. He says that they are loaded down.

They are carrying a weight around with them. And then the second way Paul describes them is that they're not only carrying a heavy load of weight.

And this weight is they are burdened with sin. So it's a heavy load of past sins. They are also struggling under that weight in the present.

So their past sins are affecting their present attitude, their present circumstance. And then this causes them, Paul says, to be led astray by various passions.

Paul is describing these women in this way. He is reaching for an image that is painfully human. Whether you are a man or a woman. He's describing a soul bent under a weight that it was never meant to carry.

[17:43] He's describing a life hauling around shame. Like an overstuffed pack that never gets put down. This isn't like guilt that leads to repentance.

This is heavy, accumulated shame. Failures unspoken. Wounds unresolved. Choices regretted but never healed.

It's the ache of trying to be okay while feeling fundamentally exposed, vulnerable and tired. These women are not rebellious.

These women are burdened. They're not defiant. They are desperate. They are looking for relief for something, anything that promises peace without requiring truth.

Why? Because truth exposes. Paul's words here are not harsh. They're heartbreaking. He's showing us what happens when truth is avoided.

[18:49] That the soul stoops lower and lower under a load that it was never designed to bear. And then verse 7 shows us its result.

Verse 7, always learning and never able to arrive at the knowledge of the truth. That is a terrible, terrible cycle. And so look, these men and all who are like them, they are avoiding truth.

It's avoided. Why? Because as we've been thinking through this series of 2 Timothy, truth is avoided because we have fear. This is what the grand scheme, if you like, of Paul's letter to 2 Timothy is about.

is that truth is really, really important. But truth isn't important just to stand on our pedestal and say, well, truth is important. That happens too much. And then you get this fracture in society that we're seeing now, where you have, you know, the guys over on one side, the guys over on another side,

they're both declaring whatever they think truth is.

But listen, truth is avoided. Why? Because we have this fear. Not a biblical kind of fear, but a fear that once our lives are exposed, God is going to reject us.

[20:17] So truth is really good. But Paul's point is that because we fear, we avoid truth. We don't want to be exposed. We don't want to be vulnerable.

That scares us. We're scared that we're not going to be accepted. We're scared that we're going to be rejected. And we've been talking about we have the wrong kind of judge.

Because when we understand God as a good judge, we can be completely exposed in front of him. And so the Christian is to live who they are before God, because of God, because of what he says to us, because of the reality that he places on.

He says we're children of God. We're seated in the heavenlies. That's a truth that he declares over us, that we're his children. And so the issue is, we fear that once our lives are exposed, God is going to reject us.

And so we live under a mask. We live behind a mask. As John so wonderfully led last week, if I can learn about God, and I can learn about the Bible, then that's all I need.

[21:39] And listen carefully to this. If I can learn about God, and I can learn about the Bible, the thought is, well, that's all I need.

If I can quote back to you, some obscure verse, in the Old Testament, in the minor prophets, in the Hebrew, I can make you believe that I am more godly than I actually am.

There's a form of godliness but it denies its power. And I think this is a warning for all of us.

Sometimes we love the feeling of learning more than we love the cost of transformation.

It's possible to grow in biblical knowledge, and please don't misunderstand me. Like, I think we should be able to quote minor prophets in the Hebrew. Just putting it out there, okay?

Like, I can't, but, like, Mike can, so... But listen, I think that we run to that as a reason, excuse, mask, because we actually, we don't want to deal with what's going on inside.

[23:07] And this isn't about making other people think that we're more godly. It's about us thinking we're more godly. Like, I'm the biggest problem of myself. It's possible to grow in biblical knowledge without growing in surrender.

You know that, right? To appear spiritually strong while still guarding the heart from the Spirit's work. To stay informed about God yet distant from Him.

And look, here's a question worth sitting with today. What kind of gospel do we actually want? What kind of gospel do we actually want?

A gospel that reshapes us or one that reassures us? One that calls us to die to self or one that simply makes life easier?

Paul exposes disordered love and he's saying, look, this kind of love always gravitates towards teaching that leaves idols intact.

[24:27] And that's why these leaders resist truth. And as an example, in verse 8, Paul then talks about two men, Janus and Jambres, who resisted Moses.

Check it out. He says, just as Janus and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also opposed the truth. Men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith, but they will not go very far for their folly will be plain to all as was to those two men.

So Paul mentions Janus and Jambres. And we haven't got time for a quick pop quiz, but I wonder whether you could tell me where these two, Janus and Jambres, appear in the Bible.

I'll give you a quick answer. They don't. And you'll be like, really? And I'll be like, yeah, huh. That's why I asked the question. It was a setup because I'm not that foolish.

So this is tradition. So these two guys, their names are never recorded in the Bible. This is completely from tradition. These are the two guys, believed clearly by Paul, that were the two magicians in the court of Pharaoh when Moses went in and went, let my people go.

[25:46] Right? And he's using these as an example, almost like an object lesson. Paul is bringing them up because they're an object lesson about disordered love.

So if you record a story in Exodus, these two men opposed the work of God, didn't they? So can you see how we are not a picture of Moses, we are a picture of Janice and Jambres?

Yes. Okay. So Janice and Jambres here, they opposed the work of God. They didn't openly revolt. They had a form of godliness. They didn't bring up the Egyptian army.

It wasn't rebellion. But they opposed God through the mimicry and manipulation. It was a work of imitation. Every miracle that Moses did, what did they do?

They copied it, right? They could imitate the look of power, the form of miracles, but they could never replicate the life-changing authority of God.

[26:57] And so Moses turned all the water into, I was going to say water into wine. That's a completely different story. Turned all the water into blood.

What did the magicians do? Did they turn it back into water? They didn't, did they? They couldn't, could they? Why? Because they didn't have life-changing power. They just added to the misery that already existed.

And God says, oh, you want gnats? Have gnats. And Janice and Jambres said, oh, you want gnats? We can do gnats too.

Take them away? We can't do that. Form of godliness, but denying his power. Janice and Jambres are us.

We are not Moses, right? Sometimes we like to think we are Moses, but we are not. We are Janice and Jambres. We are, we resist the work of God's spirit in us. And this is why Paul is warning Timothy and us about this.

[27:59] He's saying, look, the world and even the church sometimes is full of people who can mimic godliness. They know the words, they follow the motions, they quote scripture, they show up at church and even can, even teach a Bible study, but the power is missing because they are beautiful people on the outside, just talking about myself clearly, and dead on the inside.

They have the appearance of godliness, but they deny its power. And then here's the issue, like, it's easy for us to drift into that imitation, isn't it? We can do all the right things a church should do or a Christian should do, but still love comfort, approval, or control more than we love God.

We start imitating the life of Christ rather than actually being transformed by his spirit. The spirit of God doesn't just make you look holy.

You know that, right? He actually makes you holy. There's a big difference. And what Paul is saying is simply this, don't be fooled by appearances, even your own.

Don't settle for imitation. The application is absolutely sobering. Just as they opposed Moses. Look, there will always be voices in the world, in the church, and sometimes even in our own minds that will oppose the work of God.

[29:35] Not necessarily outright rebellion, but out of disordered loves. They want influence, affirmation, comfort, or control way more than they want transformation.

And for us, the question isn't just who are Janice and Jambres out there. The question for us is where in my life am I resisting God's power?

And think about it with me, like perhaps it's a subtle compromise that we make to protect our comfort. Maybe it's in the pride we cling to, the need to look good or be right, even if it means softening God's truth.

Could it be in the words that we withhold? The I forgive you that we don't speak. The encouragement that we don't give.

The confession that we keep hidden. Or maybe it's in the habits and desires we justify. Those secret places where we still insist on control, still cling to what we love more than Him.

[30:40] As we sit with these questions, notice how the Spirit nudges you. Not to shame you but to reveal. And then do you feel that resistance?

Sometimes they can be in equal measure, can't they? If you feel the resistance and you feel the nudge, guess what? That's great news. Because that means the Holy Spirit is at work in you.

And He's not condemning you, He's inviting you. And one of the things that prevent us from responding to the invitation is subtly worked into the next few verses.

Where Paul turns personal and exhorts us in verse 10 to follow a pattern and not the crowd. We need to hear that, don't we? The world's full of crowds these days. He says, Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

While evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. Now, look, I want you to notice that verse 13 holds the key to Paul's thought here because he links deception and persecution.

[32:14] And normally, these two things would not normally be good companions in close proximity. But Paul's aim here is to show us that there is a pattern to the Christian experience.

And so he firstly reminds us of his own life and the struggles that he's been through. He's saying, you guys remember I was going through Antioch and Lystra and Iconia and you remember like there was resistance.

Do you remember that? There was persecution because of that resistance. And then he applies it in verse 12 by saying, indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted.

Paul isn't just saying, he's not just giving us a warning about hostile outsiders. Right? Like this isn't a verse as has been maybe preached before.

Certainly, people have told me this before. Like, if you're not being persecuted, clearly your life isn't godly enough. like that's a measure for godliness.

[33:22] How much you're being persecuted. Paul isn't saying that. He's saying, this is an example, he's saying that the Christian life is a life of surrender.

The Christian life is a life of ongoing reformation. And that kind of life, if you're prepared to live that kind of life, is always going to be met with resistance.

Like, always, always, always, always. Like, our ego, let's just start there. Our pride, our selfish desires, even our cultural comforts, they push back against the Spirit's work in us, don't they? the cost isn't always persecution from others. The cost also is on the inside, the inner struggle, the relentlessness, the restlessness, the tension of dying to self so that Christ can reign.

This is the pattern that Paul is highlighting. Pursuing holiness is never passive and is never neutral. God calls us to a godly life but the path is lined with resistance.

[34:35] And you're going to feel it if you haven't already. Living faithfully means pushing through that resistance and allowing God's power to break our idols and reshape our desires and transform us from the inside out.

And then maybe the answer to the question is what loves do we have?

It's found in the answer, excuse me, it's found in the question where do you find most resistance? Where do you find most resistance in life?

Because it's almost guaranteed where you'll find resistance will be about where you love things most. Because then he writes in verse 14 and he tells us to remain where you were formed.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned. So Paul is saying, look, this is the kind of world that you're going to be facing. It's loud, it's confusion, confusing, it's obnoxious and when resistance to the world of the spirit comes when false teachers prioritize information over transformation, there is a temptation in yourself, in ourselves, to reinvent ourselves or to rebrand ourselves in modern social media vernacular or to go a different direction.

[36:03] And Paul says, please don't do that. He's saying, look, faithfulness is standing still in the same direction.

Right? Even when standing feels like that's all you're doing. Trusting that God is moving beneath your feet.

Stand still in the same direction. He says, but as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which were able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Stand still in the same direction. And then finally, Paul writes in verse 16, exhorting us to let truth do its deep work.

And you'll know this verse, if you don't know this verse, where have you been? Where he says that all Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for

training and righteousness that the man of God or the man or woman of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

[37:29] Now, I had a little bit of a conundrum this week because these are probably one of the most quoted in the New Testament and amongst some of the rushed.

I won't be lost on you that we are now drawing the end of the sermon and we've got two verses to cover. But I think it's important that we put these two verses in the context that they belong, which is the entirety of chapter 3.

In fact, it's the end of chapter 2 all the way through to the middle of chapter 4. And what Paul is exhorting us about is to be more than people who are looking for outward godliness but are looking for internal transformation.

He says that all scripture, quick question, how much is all? Good.

All scripture is breathed out by God. Now look, the Greek word there breathed out is *theopneustos* which means breathed out.

[38:54] You're welcome. The literal rendering of it is God breathed. Now, I take issue with the ESV version on this verse because I don't think it does it justice by saying that all scripture is breathed out by God because it's more than simply the idea that the Bible has been breathed by God.

like, you know, the reformers really camped out on this verse rightly because they said they were battling Rome and the authority of Rome and they said well actually we have one authority and it's the Bible and they would go well all scripture is breathed by God.

There's the authority right there and quite rightly putting the Bible back in its proper place. But the verse is not only claiming the Bible as authority of God as spoken by him and therefore whatever says our hearts should submit to that.

He is saying that each and every time the word is opened the Holy Spirit invites us into a transformative encounter with him. That's different than this Bible has these words have authority. Jesus made this connection tangible in John chapter 20 where it says and you know maybe this afternoon just meditate on the connection he says John chapter 20 and it's only John that can highlight this for us because of how John thinks he says that Jesus spoke and after he finished speaking to them he breathed on them and said receive the Holy Spirit isn't that interesting?

[40:48] All scripture is breathed by God Jesus spoke breathed on his disciples and said receive the Holy Spirit so the words that Jesus spoke he then breathed on them and with the Holy Spirit was given to them just as God breathed life into Adam in Genesis 2 verse 7 so Jesus breathed the Spirit into his followers infusing life where death once reigned and look every time the word is read taught or preached there is a spiritual and supernatural invitation to receive God's breath to receive his spirit and to receive his life that's why that writer to Hebrews was able to say that the word of

God is living and it's active and it's sharper than any two edged sword piercing to the division of soul and the spirit of joints and marrow and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart what does that mean well it means that every time we open the Bible we're called to come anticipating a direct encounter with God not a passive reading experience this is a spiritual appointment and I know I know I know I know and again I want to publicly support the reading of the Bible like I'm loving it like I'm you know am I allowed to say this like Laurie has it on her iPad phone she listens to it right and you know I'll be overhearing it and you know she's been whatever your exodus I think it was like this week or something and like brilliant do that keep doing that keep doing that keep doing that but when was the last time we just opened

God's word and we said Lord speak to me today breathe life to me today it might be two words it might be one sentence it might be one chapter it might be half a book where we've slowed down and we've said I believe that all scripture is God breathed James James says in James chapter one to receive the meek with meekness the implanted word you love that the implanted word which is able to save your souls the implanted word is not just memorized it's not just heard it is sown into your heart by the spirit of God with the power to save heal and transform and transformation does not happen when we only understand truth intellectually it happens when the spirit breathes life into

the truth that we hear and apply this is why it's so vital that we approach the scriptures expectantly asking God

Lord how do you want me to hear this today what part of my heart needs you to breathe into because look if we was to take a straw poll right now and I was to ask you how many how many of you need the breath of God in you today I dare say every hand would go up and what happens at least in my life way too often is I'll go home I'll start reading and I go Lake Galilee where is that what are the coordinates of that and I get my map out and I have a look and I close my Bible thinking I have godliness it's a form of godliness but my heart doesn't really care where Galilee is even though it might be a helpful thing to know you can see that

God's word is is is not gentle for the sake of comfort God's word is God's word because it exposes it shines it divides the writer to Hebrew says every hidden corner of our lives every compromise every idol every place that we've tried to hide from him or ourselves and yes that exposure can be uncomfortable and yes that exposure is almost always uncomfortable can make us squirm but here's the truth this is not a light that condemns those who belong to Jesus because because of the cross the one who knows every secret thought as we heard last week every failure every sin he's already carried and calls you his own and loves you he's already taken the judgment that should have been ours which means that when

[46:16] God's word exposes us when the spirit speaks to us yes there is resistance but in that moment we get a choice do we surrender or do we put on the mask find a compromise maybe are dishonest with even ourselves see the good news is that when God's word exposes us we don't have to shrink or cover up or perform we can come exactly as we are because God knows us and he loves us anyway we can let the truth do its work in our hearts without fear because of our acceptance because of our righteousness that's been given to us the identity that is already secure in Christ we stand before God because of God and you know increasingly

I think it's true we live in a world that is loud that is anxious and is constantly changing where truth feels negotiable it feels relative and it's shallow and reactions often replace reflection but God's people are called to stand firm he he does not ask us to be louder than the world or angrier than the culture he calls us to be rooted in his word and so as we leave here today here are some questions I want us to carry with us what love in my life is most threatened by God's truth where have I settled for learning when God is inviting me into transformation and in our thought as we close in a song or two because

Jesus or Jesus didn't die so we could know more he died that we could be made new and that's not condemnation that's invitation and so let's come to him again afresh anew asking him to breathe new life into us father thank you for your word lord we want to say that this is true lord we sense the resistance but we also sense your work lord we want to thank you for that and lord we ask this morning lord that you would begin or continue that work of transformation in our hearts lord would you expose those areas in our lives lord that just need your healing your touch lord your work to be done we confess that it is exposing and it might be painful but we know that your work is a good work lord so we we confess those secret sins those hidden things lord we confess those things that we prioritize over real life and relationship with you and call them life and relationship with you lord help us to put down those things they're not bad things mostly work is a good thing family is a great thing lord but there's some things that we elevate over you lord would you forgive us that lord would you expose where we have loved things of this world or loved comfort or loved convenience more than we've loved you lord help us to see that things in our lives lord we we've we've claimed to be holiness and godliness but they lack the power lord and we want to turn back to the power and take off these plasters thinking that they'll fix things and so lord as we are led in some singing lord we pray that your holy spirit would lead us now and lord speak to us lord as we respond lord we don't want to react but we do want to respond to you lord we want to reflect lord and we want to invite you lord to do that work lord we ask these things in Jesus name amen and  
Thank you.