Matthew 26:47-56

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Preacher: Ray Kelly

[0:00] Matthew 26, part 4. Oh, the speaker must be dragging his heels to take 4.! Well, it'll be 5 because we're not going to finish the chapter today. But when I think back, Joe mentioned loneliness.

And I came to Christ because I was lonely. And I wasn't even lonely for long. My wife had gone away with the kids and I was left on my own for a fortnight. And I'm not normally a lonely man. But I was beset by loneliness for that fortnight. And it brought me to Christ because I went looking for company and finished up in church. Won't give you the whole story.
But God uses these things. We look on the troubles that we get. And we look on the troubles that we get and we get kind of bogged down.
But I have to say, I'm looking for what God's trying to teach us at the moment. Because yesterday, and it seemed to me to be out of the blue, decided he needed to take his daughter out for a meal.
[1:25] Now, he hasn't walked anywhere in months. And he didn't go with his wheelchair and he didn't go with his walking frame. He went with a pair of crutches and I dropped them off at a restaurant and they had a meal together.

And then they walked over to Sprinkles, which was, for anybody who can walk is a 10-minute walk. But for him, it was probably half an hour or more. But he hasn't been able to do that for months. So there's a really encouraging sign of recovery. And I praise God for that. And I have absolutely no doubt that through it all, we are learning a lot.
It's probably not the pathway to learning I would recommend. But it's effective. We learn. And we learn to trust him. Because actually, there's no one else we can trust.
We can't solve this one. So, there's one particular slide. Could you put the multicolored photo up? Right. I'm starting with this, not because it's got anything to do with the text, but because it has a lot to do with the Word of God.
[2:30] And some of you may have seen this before. But the point is, 63,779 at least cross-references in Scripture.

And that includes Old Testament to Old Testament, Old Testament to New Testament, New Testament back to Old Testament. And whichever way you look at it, this book that was written by 40 different authors over 1,500 years in three different languages on three different continents is absolutely internally consistent.
And it's miraculous. And Adrian mentioned, I think it was a couple of weeks ago, he said that somebody had once said to him, you just worship the Word, Adrian.
And I've had the same thing said to me, Ray, you just worship the Word instead of the Lord. I'm sorry, but there's no difference. He is the living Word. And the only reason that that is possible when you, I mean, I can't even begin to count those cross-references.
Well, there are 63,000 of them, I'm told. But when you look at that, only one mind could have written this book. And he may have used 40 different authors to do it.
[3:50] But it's a miraculous book. It isn't just another book. And when people come to you and say, oh, you don't believe in that old book, you know, old wives tales, old fables. You try doing this with Grimm's fairy tales, it doesn't work.

Try doing it with the complete works of Shakespeare, that doesn't work either. This is utterly miraculous. And towards the end of today's talk, we're going to be seeing why it had to be so.
Anyway, let's read the verses in question. And just before we start reading, the last two sessions, we've dealt with Jesus shedding his blood in the Garden of Gethsemane, as well as the prayers he prayed at that time, very close to his crucifixion, yet very selfless prayers.

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The shedding of his blood, if you remember, is significant because it was because of his anxiety or anguish at the approaching trial he had to go through.
And we know from various Old Testament references that he knew everything that was going to happen to him. And so in his humanity, it was not surprising that he suffered that anguish.
[5:05] But he shed blood over that anguish. And wherever Jesus' blood was shed, that is significant because it delivers us from that. And whether it's in this life or the next, and my experience of my own Christian walk is that it can easily be both.

But he went through it so that we don't have to. And so eternally, there will not be anxiety. And when you read about the new heaven and the new earth, there's not room there for anxiety. There's not room for sin or sickness or pain or anything ungodly or anything unholy. And this reminds us that Jesus was fully human as well as being fully God.
And what we're seeing in Garden of Gethsemane was his humanity coming through. And then we reach this time when the disciples couldn't stay awake. And he tried three times to get them to stay awake.
And they didn't, wouldn't, couldn't. And then in verse 45, we got that urgent phrase, you know, let's be up and about. Let's go from here. The time is at hand.
[6:13] And so then we get into the passage we're going to read now, which is we're moving into the next phase of all the events prophesied centuries earlier.

And this is, it's important because that picture that was on the wall, it's only because of that interconnection that they knew these things were prophesied centuries earlier.
And all the events that were about to take place were in some way prophesied over preceding centuries. And so Jesus, Judas, now returns to the garden to betray him with a kiss, feigning friendship.
Arguably the very worst form of betrayal when someone betrays you with a kiss. You know, I'm your friend. I love you so much. While stabbing you in the back.
Now the crowd that came with him must have been something of a giveaway. I would have thought. You know, oh, hi, Jesus. I'm your mate. And there's this huge crowd of people behind.
[7:22] And picture it as we speak about it, because it must have been a huge crowd. Because we know that his accusers were in that crowd. And there were lots of those. But there was also a rabble as well.

People with swords and clubs. You wouldn't normally have a high priest carrying a sword in a club. So it was a gang of thugs, basically. Alongside some dignitaries and people who just didn't want the interference that Jesus would bring to their lives.
So with that. Verse 47. While he was still speaking. So that is. He just said, get up.
Let us be going. Behold, the one who betrays me is at hand. While he was still speaking. Behold, Judas. One of the twelve came up. Accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs.
Who came from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now he who was betraying him gave them a sign saying, whomever I kiss, he is the one.
[8:24] Seize him. Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, hail rabbi. And kissed him. And Jesus said to him. And this blows me away. Jesus said to him, friend.

Do what you have come for. And he knows what he's come for. And yet he calls him friend. It's a loving greeting. Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.
And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to him, put your sword back into its place for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.
Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my father and he will at once put at my disposal more than 12 legions of angels? How then will scriptures be fulfilled which say that it must happen this way?
At that time, Jesus said to the crowds. Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize me.
[9:32] But all this has taken place to fulfill the scriptures of the prophets. Then all the disciples left him and fled. Now, I want to use this session to tee up some things for the rest of the crucifixion account.

Because this is the first bit of the account that deals with the illegal ways that Jesus was dealt with. And I think in terms of what goes on in the world at the moment, we're seeing a lot of this.

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We're seeing people set up. They'll invent a crime and then arrest people for it. Hence the lady who got imprisoned for saying hurty words on her Facebook account.
And this recent, she's not gone before the courts, but this Vladinebruch Dutch girl who has been banned from the United Kingdom because she's not conducive to good society.
She's far more conducive. The reason she speaks up so much is because society needs a bit of what she's got to bring. But what we do is we shut them up. And if we can't shut them up, we lock them up.
[10:46] We've seen it with President Trump having his house raided. They're looking for a thing, trying to invent a crime to find him guilty of. Now, Jesus's arrest and trial was a complete load of illegal proceedings.

First of all, he was arrested at night. Now, under Jewish law, arrests and trials were supposed to be conducted during daytime hours. This was so that everything was transparent and everybody knew what was going on and anybody could attend.
But the fact that he was arrested at night was illegal. Among those who were arresting him were the chief priests and the Pharisees and the elders of the people. They were his accusers.
Whoever arrests and then tries somebody has to be unbiased. The trial has to be conducted in front of a neutral judge, if you like.
And the chiefs and priests and the Pharisees and the elders of the people were going to be his judges. So they shouldn't have been there at his arrest. And in many ways, they weren't.
[11:54] I'll get onto this in a minute. But they weren't qualified to hear the charges against him because they were making the charges against him. So the indictment against Jesus was illegal because the judges themselves brought up the charges without any prior testimony.

So under all normal process of law, you have charges brought against someone. And those charges are presented. And then they're tried based on somebody who is an unbiased judge saying, yes, these charges are viable charges.
None of that process took place in Jesus's trial. His preliminary examinations were at night. Jewish law permitted only daylight proceedings.
So, and we'll go into a little bit more depth, but the court illegally proceeded to hold its trial of Jesus before sunrise so that no one would be able to testify on his behalf.
We'll see more of this as we go through the crucifixion account, but it all started in a completely illegal way. And there are probably 20 different ways in which this trial was illegal.
[13:10] But it goes further than this. And this is where you realize this was no mistake. This was very deliberate flouting of the law. Jewish law did not permit the trial of a capital offense to begin on a Friday or the day before an annual festival day.

Now, Jesus was arrested and tried the day before the Sabbath. And it also happened to be the first day of the festival of unleavened bread. The whole thing they knew because they were the ones that put that law together.
And you read about the time of his arrest in John 18, 28 and John 19, 31. It was the timing of it was right next to the festival and during the festival.
The other thing is Jesus's trial was concluded in a single day. But the law in the Mishnah says if a death, if a sentence of death is to be pronounced, it cannot be concluded.
This criminal charge cannot be concluded before the following day. And this was done to allow sufficient opportunity for any witnesses in support of the accused to come forward and present their evidence.
[14:25] Well, Jesus's trial was conducted in private and completed in less than nine hours. So this was we all knew this was a setup, but this was very carefully crafted.

This setup by people who knew the law to avoid applying the law. Two false witnesses charged Jesus with saying he would destroy the temple.
This is in Mark 14, 58. Yet he was condemned by the court on a charge of blasphemy. So the accused, the accusation bore no relations of the charge with which he was eventually charged.
And he was condemned on his own testimony. And, you know, this is a principle that exists still in our law today. That you can't be convicted on your own testimony alone because they have to make allowances for the fact that you might be mad.
So you need, as the courts in those days, and as we read in the book of Deuteronomy, needs two witnesses to convict somebody, at least two witnesses.

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[15:28] He was convicted on his own testimony alone. There was no consideration of his defense. The high priest didn't inquire and make diligent searches.

And if you read Deuteronomy 13, 14, you'll see that they're supposed to do that. To see whether Jesus' statement was blasphemous. In the Mishnah, if you want to go hunting for it, it's in Sanhedrin 4 and verse 5.
The judges shall weigh the matter in sincerity of their conscience. And instead of that, the court pronounced sentence instantly and unanimously. There was no consideration of his defense.
Those who would have voted against the condemnation of Jesus weren't even there. So, for instance, Joseph of Arimathea wasn't there. Godly man, the man in whose tomb Jesus was eventually buried.
But they made sure with their timing and the place of the arrest and their initial examinations that nobody who could defend Jesus would be there.
[16:34] Complete travesty. The sentence was pronounced in a place forbidden by law. The trial took place at the high priest's house, Luke 22, 54.

And according to the law, a death sentence could only be pronounced in the court's appointed place, not in the high priest's house. Most of those judging it were not legally qualified to try Jesus because most were his enemies.
So they should have recused themselves. Only once have I, when I was doing court cases and things, I once had to recuse myself just because the person on trial was a health and safety, I was in the jury or going to be in the jury, but I had to recuse myself because the person on trial was committing a health and safety offense and I was a health and safety professional.
So I had to say, sorry, I can't, I can't be in the jury here. I would be considered biased. That's, that's written into the biblical law has been transferred to the UK law has been around for donkey's years.
So, yeah, most of the judges, strictly speaking, could not try this case because they had a vested interest in the outcome. And the court illegally switched the charges from blasphemy to treason when the case went before Pilate.
[17:54] And of course, that's not part of today's study. It's one that we'll come to. So he was charged with treason in Luke 23, verse 2, a crime against Rome. So the Romans would be responsible for his death and no evidence for treason was ever presented.

So in the end, Pilate, interestingly enough, determined that Jesus was not guilty of treason. And you find that in John 18, 38 and 19, 4 and Matthew 27, 18.
What I find really, thinking of what I've done with courts of law in the past, Pilate actually said, I find him not guilty, take him away and scourge him.
I find him not guilty, so punish him as if he's guilty, which is completely incongruous, I think. But interestingly, he was found not guilty of the charge, but he was put to death anyway.
And this all supports the fact that he was sinless. They had to trump up charges. They had to invent crimes and fit them around him.
[19:06] And he was found not guilty of all of them, but they were going to put him to death anyway. So he went to the cross with no mark against his name, no mark of wrongdoing against his name.

But what I would note, and we'll get back to the actual text in question, but I thought that would be a useful thing to do because we're going to come across these things again and again as we go through the crucifixion account.
So, in spite of everything, Jesus himself, full knowledge of everything that was going to happen to him, showed absolutely no bitterness.
You know, there was no, oh, you can't arrest me, I haven't done anything wrong, none of those things. In fact, we read again in the Old Testament that he would be silent like a sheep before its shearers.
And when he greets Judas, he greets him as a friend. And I kind of, I can't help when I read these things and study for these things, I kind of put myself in their shoes and I'd be saying, you're no friend!
[20:15] But he is gracious even when he knows all that is going to happen to him. And of course, some of the accounts of some of the early saints that were martyred, I think it was Polycarp, that was fleeing, being chased by people who were sent out to arrest him, to put him to death.

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And in the end, he just stopped running and waited for them to catch up with him and said, sit down and I'll prepare a meal for you. And he prepared them a meal and then went back with them and then was subsequently burnt at the stake.
And so this attitude of heart that the Lord has is catching. And I admit, I don't always respond in the way that I should against my enemies, particularly if it's someone who interferes with my family.
I get quite Rambo about it. But I shouldn't. And we shouldn't. Jesus didn't.
And so as we read verse 51, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.
[21:36] We know from John's account. And by the way, there is an account of this event or these events in all four Gospels. And you get a bit of extra information from John.

And in John's account, we learned that this chap's name was Malchus and it was his right ear. Which is quite, I love it when God's word puts in that little bit of extra detail that says, you know, falsify that if you dare.
Because to know, to just bandy about, oh, somebody got their ear chopped off is one thing. But to say no, it was the high priest's servant or slave.
And it was his right ear and his name was Malchus. Those are the sorts of things that convict people in a court. That is the word of God showing that it is true. But he extended kindness in a remarkable.
I mean, I don't know about you, but I might tend to say, well done, Peter. Serves him right. He deserved to lose an ear. At very least, in fact, you should have chopped his arm off or something like that.
[22:44] That's the fleshly part of me. But Jesus says, Peter, put your sword away. And then he heals Malchus. And it's actually quite a hard lesson to learn that we shouldn't treat people based upon the way they treat us.

And I'll talk about a very minor victory. Sharon and I were out one day. It was actually in the car park in Bitton. And this chap started ranting and raving at me for where I'd parked.
And I couldn't understand this because I was in a parking space. I legitimately parked. So his ranting and raving at me was completely uncalled for. But it did transpire that he was disabled.
And he was frustrated because my car was close to his and he couldn't get in and out of it very easily. And he was going on and going on and going on. And for a moment, I was thinking of reading and being right.
And then I said, what is the problem? I'm actually parked legitimately. What's actually wrong? I can't get into my car.
[23:54] It's too close. Ah, OK. I'll move it. And all of this anger and all of this frustration, all this boiling just went out of the situation.

And we finished up shaking hands and parted. I mean, I won't say friends because I've never seen him since. But we parted friends. Would I have been quite so magnanimous if they'd been wanting to execute me?
I doubt it. But one of the things we have learned as we've come through this is that when the disciples demonstrated this kind of grace in extreme situations, it was because the Holy Spirit had empowered them to do so.
So it wasn't them doing it because Peter was a wonderful guy. It was a humbled Peter who was filled with the Holy Spirit, who then went out and preached the gospel in a very uncompromising way and suffered persecution for doing so.
It was God's enabling that made sinful men able to be gracious like he was. So he extended this kindness to the people who've come to kill him.
[25:05] And I think that's a remarkable response and a remarkable character trait. He not only showed Judas that he loved him by greeting him as friend, despite knowing everything that was going to happen, but he also showed that he loved Malchus, despite the fact that Malchus was definitely out to get him.

His response to everything was to show love. And then he says to Peter, put your sword away. Those who take up the sword will die by the sword. Now, I've heard people use this for all sorts of reasons.
Does this mean we should never defend ourselves with a weapon? I don't think so. I don't think that's the context of this verse. I think this verse speaks to those who are going about with a sword

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being proactively violent with it.
You know, Peter's response was to take up the sword. He wasn't defending himself. He was actually using his power and his ability to try and solve something that only God could solve.
He was operating in the flesh. Had he been defending himself, it might have been a different story. But he wasn't. What he was doing was taking the law into his own hands. And so this isn't an exhortation to avoid conflict and avoid war.
[26:26] This is saying don't take up the sword as a proactive thing to do. You know, come near me and you'll get my sword.

But it's not that. It is reserved for those who are proactively violent. But then, and this is the bit that I wanted to get to.
He says, I mean, I wanted to get to all of it. But this is, for me, we've talked about the amazing interconnected integrity of God's word.
He then says something that's really important to us or should be. And it confirms the immutable nature of the scriptures. He says, how then, this is verse 54, how then will the scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen in this way?
If it is written in God's word that it must happen this way, then it must happen this way. And the word must is key. It must happen this way.
[27:34] And if it didn't happen in the way the Old Testament said it should happen, then Jesus was not Messiah. He was not the Savior. He was not the Son of God. Or alternatively, the word of God, we might as well burn it.

And it's so, I love it because it is so clear. It's like the axe comes down. And if you're on one side, you're in the word of God. And if you're on the other side, you're not.
I've had many discussions over the years where people say, oh, but the Bible is not infallible. It's not absolutely inerrant. Now, one could argue that the English translations are not inerrant.
But the Bible in its original autographs is completely inerrant. And it would not be God's word if it was errant. Because God cannot lie.
He cannot speak non-truths. He is the source of all truth. So the Bible is true. But what almost agitates me about this is he's talking about events concerning his own crucifixion.
[28:41] And he's saying, how can those scriptures be true if I don't go through this? And he's already said to Peter, if I wanted to, I could ask my father.

And he would send 12 legions of angels to deliver me from this. I don't have to face this. In one sense, I don't have to face this. There's no law that requires me to face this.
But if I don't, God's word will be seen, will be found wanting. What the scripture has said, which is God's word, has to come to pass.
How, for example, would Psalm 22 have been fulfilled? Just turn to Psalm 22. We're not going to study the psalm, but just look at some of the things that are said there. And we've, as we've come through Psalms, we've done a little bit of study on this.
And of course, we touched upon it the other week when we looked at the toller worm. Verse 6. I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and despised by the people.
[29:46] All who see me sneer at me, they separate with the lip. They wag the head saying, commit yourself to the Lord. Let him deliver him. Let him rescue him because he delights in him.
And then Jesus is in this psalm talking to God.

Yet you are he who brought me forth from the womb. You made me trust when upon my mother's breast. Upon you I was cast from birth. You have been my God from my mother's womb.
Be not far from me. You know, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? This psalm starts with those words. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Would have been an irrelevance had it been said on the day of crucifixion and not seen in Psalm 22.
And I'm going to do some generalising here. What about Isaiah 52? Turn to Isaiah 52. Isaiah 52 says this.
I don't know if your Bible does the same as mine, but that little passage is entitled, The Exalted Servant. Behold, my servant will prosper. He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.
[30:55] But then goes on to say this. Just as many were astonished at you, my people, so his appearance was marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men.

How would that have been fulfilled if Jesus hadn't gone to the cross and had his face marred? He was beaten so badly that he was hardly recognisable as human. But he, his visage and his form

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were totally marred more than any man.
So that, in order to fulfil that prophetic word, it had to happen. What about the Passover feast? And we're going to do the feast at some point, you know, in about three years time when we finish Matthew.
The Passover feast was a prophetic feast. From wherever a Jew is standing when they celebrate the Passover, it looks back to when they were delivered from, you know, when the angel of death went through the land and passed over the doorposts that had the blood of the lamb on them and brought destruction to the land.
So it looks back to that, but it also looks forward to the time when Jesus will come and shed his blood, the blood of the lamb, for their sins. So how would that prophetic feast have been fulfilled if Jesus had backed out at this point?
[32:24] But it was vitally important. And of course, this is these, the Passover connections are part of that chart we saw at the start. What about the feast of first fruits?

Feast of first fruits celebrates the resurrection. And we'll study it properly when we get to it. But the feast of first fruits celebrates resurrection.
Well, if there's no death, then there's no resurrection. So it would be an irrelevance. What about Zechariah 11 verse 12, the 30 pieces of silver?
If he hadn't been arrested in the garden and if Judas had not been given 30 pieces of silver to betray him, there would have been no fulfillment of Zechariah 11 verse 12.
What about Deuteronomy 21 verse 23 about the fact that he must be nailed to wood? The Hebrew word for wood and the word for the cross is the same word.
[33:26] It's the word eitz and it means a tree or wood. Same word describes both. So he had to be nailed to wood.

Deuteronomy 21 verse 23. What about these prophecies of Daniel? Messiah had to die to fulfill the prophecies of Daniel 9, which spoke about that after the certain number of weeks of years, Messiah would be cut off and have nothing.
What about the prophetic typology of Genesis 22? The offering of the only son on Mount Moriah. It only makes sense if Jesus died on Mount Moriah.
So in order to die on Mount Moriah, which was where the crucifixion site was, but in order to die on Mount Moriah, he had to go through with this. And it's made me aware of this double-edged approach that on the one hand, Jesus knew the word and said, I have to do this to fulfill the word. It was a deliberate thing. We get accused sometimes, don't we, by non-Christians. Oh, you know, they just made up these fables. Well, in one sense, Jesus made it.
[34:45] It isn't a fable, but Jesus did make this up. He wrote it beforehand and then he went and fulfilled his own word for us, despite immense cost.

I think if I'd been writing it, I would have written something that did me a little less harm. What about Psalm 69, 21, which says they would give him gall to drink?
Well, if you're not hanging on a cross, it becomes irrelevant. So even that, and these are awful things. The last thing you want to drink when you're hanging on a cross is gall. So for the word of God to be truly the word of God and for prophecy to mean anything at all, it must come to pass. Even Psalm 22, 16, the psalm we were reading earlier, tells really that people are going to come at him with swords and clubs, that evil men with swords and clubs are going to come and get him. And this isn't an exhaustive list I've given you, but it gives us reason to believe the gospel accounts. The gospel accounts speak of things.
[35:56] I don't know how to put this. I picture Jesus. It's not like this at all, but it's the best way my head can deal with it.

I can almost picture him with a tick board saying, I've got to do that to fulfill that. And I've got to do that to fulfill that. And it's going to hurt, but I've got to do it.
Well, why have you got to do it? Well, because I love them. There's no other reason. Why would you otherwise? Most of us who are parents would die for our kids. But to die for everyone and anyone, to die for the likes of Malchus.
This is a depth of love that we can't really understand. But I would say the application for us as we read this is to understand and to be driven.
To use a phrase I've already used this morning, to be driven to worship the word. Because worshiping the word means getting his word inside our hearts.

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[37:03] In Jeremiah 31, this is not in the notes, so no extra charge for this. In Jeremiah 31, it says he would make a new covenant with his people and he would write his words on their hearts.

There is a pathway to that. His word is not written on your heart if you don't look at it and don't consider it and don't pray over it. And as Linda would say, read your Bibles!
But if you... It's a matter of choice. In Colossians 2, Colossians 3, 16, it says, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.
We need to... We need to... We need to somehow be so moved by the fact that God selected 40-plus authors over this 15, 1600-year period on three different continents, in three languages, from all sorts of walks of life, from kings down to servants, and put this together as a love letter to us so that we need never be in doubt.
And when I was a young Christian, people used to say, well, there are times when I doubt. Now, back then, there were times when I doubted too.
[38:32] But I don't anymore. Now, that's not because I'm such a great guy. That is just because, over the years, I've been pounded by Scripture and been blessed by people who pounded me with Scripture and who corrected my thinking by using Scripture and corrected my behaviour by using Scripture and sorted out my marriage by using Scripture.

And if you have a high view of Scripture, which is the Logos of God, there was a point in my walk with God, and as it happened, and this is different for different people, but as it happened for me, I was studying something chronological.
I was actually attending a Bible study that was working out the date that Jesus was born. And that was a fascinating study, and I'm not going to go through that.
But the man that was delivering the study was referring to various Scriptures from Old and New Testament, which came up with a date. And partway through that study, it hit me like a rock.
Only God could have put this together. And it changed my view of the Bible. It changed my view of the Bible to the extent that I could no longer doubt. And if somebody held a gun to my head, I still couldn't doubt, and I couldn't recant.
[39:57] And I began to understand why all these saints went to a martyr's death rather than recant. Because it's true.

And the only thing the truth actually reveals is how much he loves me. And it was Polycarp that when he was arrested, he said, and I think this is a...
It may not be a verbatim quotation because I haven't got it written in front of me, but he said something like, I have... The Lord has stayed with me and provided for me for 85 years until now, and I am not going to walk away from him now.
And I feel a bit like that with all that's going on in... None of what's going on in our lives at the moment changes this view that God loves me. And whatever happens in this life, as Paul said, there is a...
A crown laid up for me because I've walked the walk and I fought the fight and I've been faithful. Now, I suspect I'm very, very junior to St. Paul in these matters, but I've learned over a lifetime to be faithful and I don't fear...
[41:19] First of all, I don't ever look at the Scriptures now and think, well, I wonder if it's true. We know it's true. And studying the crucifixion leads us to the truth of it because all of those Old Testament things that were said were fulfilled, and we're going to see more of it as we go through.

They were all fulfilled one after another after another. And we've often said, in his birth, Jesus fulfilled, just in his birth, he fulfilled about...
No, I've lost track of the number. In his life, he fulfilled over 300 prophecies. But in his death, I read something and I haven't checked it, so please don't write it down as verbatim, but somebody said that he fulfilled just in his death over 150 prophecies.
Now, if that's even close to true, to know how you're going to die and to deliberately fulfil it when you could walk away, too often the crucifixion is painted as, well, it was just a murder of some nice bloke back then.
You know? No. No. It was God the Son voluntarily giving up his life in a most barbaric and painful manner to fulfil the word that he had written because he knew of the hearts of the men who would try him.
[42:50] He knew he would be unjustly condemned. And he could have walked away and for our sake he chose not to. And I've said enough.

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Father, Father, we are so moved and we thank you that you chose not to walk away. Lord, I thank you that you hung on that cross for me.
And I suspect everybody here feels the same. And there could be no greater love. And I just ask, Lord, that you infuse our hearts with that love and with your word and with your desires and with your agendas that, Lord, we can be the harbingers of your good news to anybody that comes across our path.
That, Lord, we can offer your hospitality, your compassion, Lord, through prayer, your healing, your deliverance.
Lord, but please, please, please, let you be the centre of it all, not us. The words of John the Baptist come to mind, let us decrease so that he might increase.
[44:23] Lord, we want to see the name of Jesus written high over this town. We want to see the name of Jesus written high over everywhere we worship and over our friendships and over our marriages and over everything we do as a church.

we want to be those who worship the living word in Jesus name. Amen.

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