

Matthew 6 Part 1

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[0 : 00] So I've entitled this Giving and Prayerful Hearts. We've actually got to the end of chapter 5. We did a lot on chapter 5. It was full of some really meat and stuff.

! Jesus pointed out that committing the action of sin did not exonerate us because of what's going on in our hearts.

That if we were thinking murderous thoughts or if we were thinking adulterous thoughts, then we were committing the sin in our hearts. And it's in our hearts that counts. He attacked unrighteous behaviour by attacking all the teaching of the Pharisees at the time.

So he spoke of the disingenuous swearing of oaths as an unrighteous practice. Whereas the Pharisees had led people to believe that it was possible to swear a non-binding oath.

If you choose your words carefully, you could get around the holding power of sticking to your word, if you like. And he also spoke of what our attitude should be to getting sued.

[1 : 33] Where if someone sues us for our shirt, we should give them our coat as well. Where we should, by our overwhelming love and generosity, overcome problems and disempower them.

He addressed the religious Jews' attitude to their enemies, who said, love your neighbour but hate your enemy. And we looked at Deuteronomy, the passage in, was it Deuteronomy or was it Leviticus?

Not sure now, but it was a passage that clearly said you should never hate another human being. You should love your neighbour and you should never hate another human being.

And we looked at this passage that said that if somebody requires us to go with them one mile, we should offer to go with them two. Which once again disempowers the compulsion, doesn't it?

Someone says, right, I want you to go with me a mile. And you say, actually, I'll go two. It disempowers their authority over you. And it shows kindness and love to them. So, this, at the end of chapter 5, we realise this is a high calling that leads to us being perfect, like our Father is perfect.

[2 : 45] However, we did touch on the fact that that doesn't mean sinless. Sinless is a state we will achieve one day when he turns this corruption into incorruption and this mortality into immortality.

At the moment, we're still sinners. But the word perfect is actually the Greek word teleos. And teleos means complete, fulfilled. It means having the right or righteous intentions in heart.

And one of the central themes so far has been that that change in the heart is made because God himself was going to write a new covenant. And we read about that in Jeremiah 31, verse 31.

And he's going to write his laws on human hearts. Take it off the page. Write it on human hearts. So, with that, he then goes into some other stuff.

He moves on to talk about what righteous conduct looks like. He's talked thus far about the need for a change of heart. I believe what he now goes on to talk about is what that changed heart should produce by way of behaviour.

[3 : 58] And he starts with, he compares righteous behaviour with what they have been witnessing from the Jewish religious people thus far.

So, if we read it, and it's Matthew 7. And I'm going to read the first four verses. And I'm going to... Six.

Six, rather. Sorry. I'm getting ahead of myself. I'm thinking of Joe in two weeks' time when he's got to do Matthew 7. Matthew 6. My mistake. We'll read the first four verses, talk about them, and then we'll go on to do the rest of the chapter.

I'm hoping... Well, not the rest of the chapter, but we'll go up to verse 15. I'm hoping to get that done today, but if I don't, I'll finish it off next week. So, the first four verses say, Beware of practising your righteousness before men to be noticed by them.

Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. So, when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogue and in the streets, so that they may be honoured by men.

[5 : 06] Truly, I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

I want to make one observation before we unpack the text. And that is, he says, when you give. Not if you give.

And this little theme goes on through, because later on he says, when you pray. And he assumes that you will. He doesn't say, if you pray. And he also goes on to say, when you fast.

Which is an interesting one. Deal with that when we get to it. But he doesn't say, if you fast. He says, when you fast. So there's a presumption that you will. And then he tells you how that should be conducted.

In terms of self-glorification, the Jews were right up there. They were gold medalists.

[6 : 13] They would stand on street corners and shout out loud prayers and be very demonstrative and theatrical in their prayers. And everybody going past was supposed to think, oh look, what a holy man.

I wish I was as holy as him. Now they were used to that. That's what their priesthood did. That's what the Pharisees did. And anybody who aspired to be a holy man would make these demonstrations of so-called holiness on street corners and in the synagogue.

And so what Jesus was saying is, this is not the way to do it. And when it comes to giving, and notice in this passage he says, in verse 2, when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogue.

And in the street, so that they may be honoured by men.

Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. In some versions it says, I'll go back to verse 1.

[7 : 29] Be aware of practising your righteousness before men to be noticed by them. In other words, sorry, I put something wrong with my glasses.

Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in heaven. This bit to be noticed by, or to be seen by, on the bull day you'll see there are three Greek words that could have been used.

The first is blepo, which means to watch or observe something. The second is choreo, which is to perceive.

It generally refers to when you kind of get it. Oh, I see. Oh, I understand. It's that kind of see. The one that's used in this passage is that bottom one, which is theomai.

And it's the word from which we get our word theatre. And so what's being said here is don't make a theatre of it. Don't put on a performance for everyone to watch.

[8 : 29] When you go to watch at a theatre, you kind of study the performance and take in the story, don't you? And what he's saying to these so-called righteous men is, this is not the way I want you to give.

And that theme carries through in everything else that we talk about, whether it be praying and later on fasting. So the point is to give generously and sensitively and humbly, but not use it for social elevation, not using it to lift yourself.

There are quite a few legalists who would say that all giving should be anonymous. So you kind of sidle up to the offering box and slip it in when nobody's looking.

And if you want to give anybody something, then you do it anonymously. And quite often that's a good thing to do because you're not taking any glory for yourself. You're only glorifying God because that person's need is being met.

And they can't give the glory to you for that if they don't know that you gave it. That said, at the time, for instance, when Ananias and Sapphira died, people were coming and laying their gifts at the feet of the apostles.

[9 : 41] It was a public thing. It doesn't, it doesn't, this is not telling us it must always be secret. It's telling us it must always be humble and not demonstrative and not theatrical.

And I would, I would liken it to needs that you find you can meet. And you just kind of go, well, I can sort that.

And you walk away. You sort it and you walk away. Done. No theatre, no drama, just done. And I think people get tied in legalistic knots sometimes when there's no need.

God isn't trying to put a burden on you to, whatever you do, keep it a secret. He's trying to put a burden on you to not be a show-off. And there are people in the kingdom who show off a lot.

And in fact, there's an awful lot about so-called Christian faith in the wider church of this country that is very showy and show-off, but actually meaningless.

[10 : 46] And it's that heart that Jesus is getting at. So verse 3 seems to mean if you can see a need and meet it, just meet it without making a public fuss.

Put your hand in your pocket and be spontaneous. It's also true. It's not included in this passage, but it's worth thinking about. Some giving is planned.

Tithes and offerings, for example. You know how much you earn. If you're a tither, you put your tithe aside. We'll do a study on tithing a different day, because that's worth an hour of its own.

But it shouldn't be showy. It's not to pump you up in the eyes of other Christians. Then we go on to talk about praying.

And this is the meat of today, really. Verse 5. Now, hypocrites is a Greek word that sounds very similar.

[11 : 54] I think it's hypocritus or something like that. And it means doing something that isn't really you. We use the word hypocrite to mean, well, in Greek it means actor.

And if you think about an actor, when they're on stage, they're playing somebody that isn't really them. Usually. I have a theory that Hugh Grant always plays himself.

But that's beside the point. An actor normally plays someone other than themselves. And the hypocrite does that. It makes, he or she makes a show that doesn't reflect their heart.

It just reflects what they happen to want to reflect. So it's a kind of a lie. And when it comes to praying, these religious Jews, they would stand up in the synagogue or stand on street corners and make a big theatrical show, long, loud prayers.

If it was a matter of repentance or grief, they would get ashes and put them on their head. They would wear sackcloth. And they'd wear sackcloth in a manner that everybody knew they were wearing sackcloth.

[13 : 08] And sackcloth is itchy and scratchy and horrible. The nearest practice I can link to it today is what some Roman Catholic priest used to do, where they would wear a spiky belt that would irritate them around the middle.

Or they'd wear something uncomfortable as an act of penance. And they didn't always make a big show of it. But nevertheless, it's a bit like self-flagellation.

It's some way of saying, if I beat up my flesh, that's a showing that I'm repentant. And it's not what God has asked for. What God has asked for is a change of heart, not a scraped middle or to be in pain.

Now, in the Old Testament, and used with a sincere heart, it showed a right and humble response to a situation where repentance was called for.

It was considered to be a way of showing God that you meant business, that you really were sorry, or that you really were in grief. And I've put some scripture references there.

[14 : 16] We'll just turn to one, Isaiah 37, verse 1. You can look up the others in your own time, but they're all different uses of sackcloth and ashes. But if we go to Isaiah 37, verse 1.

So, Hezekiah has just heard the words from Reb Shaka.

And I'm not going to go into what Reb Shaka had said other than to say, it was sufficient to cause Hezekiah the king to repent of whatever had gone before.

Verse 37, verse 1. And when the king Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and entered the house of the Lord.

Then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, with Shebna the scribe, and the elders and priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. It was a way of the king and the king's servants saying, we are truly sorry, and we've really messed up.

[15 : 37] And to prove it, we're going to debase ourselves. And it was an act of self-debasement. The king of all people should be the last one to be debased in front of his subjects.

But Hezekiah considered whatever had gone on here to be so serious that he should be debased in front of his own people. And it was a way of showing sincerity and humility.

But in Jesus' day, what they did was they used it to draw attention to themselves. They wanted to be seen as holy, but their hearts weren't holy at all. It wasn't after the heart of Hezekiah, who was devastated when he realised what he'd done.

It was a way of simply drawing attention to themselves. So it was actually an act of pride, putting on sackcloth and ashes to show they were so humble. But they were doing it in a spirit of pride, showing themselves to be holy men, in inverted commas.

What it reminded me of was, if you've ever seen one of the Dickens films that's got the humble Uriah Eep in it, and it's that kind of, everywhere he goes, he's intent on demonstrating to everybody that he's an humble man, but in reality he's not an humble man at all.

[16 : 58] And he says, I'm only the humble Uriah Eep. And it's, if you haven't seen the film, it's probably lost on you, but it was worth a try. It was a way of saying, look how humble I am.

They don't come more humble than me. Jesus makes it clear that the only reward for this was from the audience. There was no reward from God for this kind of behaviour.

Because it wasn't from the heart, it wasn't true. So the one true God rewards what is true. This is not true, so it doesn't attract a reward from God.

You may or may not get a round of applause from the crowd you've drawn. And then he goes on to direct prayer. And honestly, let's go back to Matthew 6.

And this is, I found this a real challenge actually, to produce a sensible study on.

[17 : 55] However, he says, When you pray, you're not to be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues on street corners, etc.

Verse 6. First point, this is not a scripture that speaks against corporate prayer.

I have heard it used like that. It's not the point. The point is, you've got something to pray. Pray quietly, unseen, and trust that the Lord hears you.

And one of the outcomes of doing it that way is that when your prayer is answered, you will know it's God, because you haven't told anybody else. Years ago, Sharon and I were in great financial difficulties.

And we prayed that the Lord would meet some needs. And out of the blue, we received gifts. In one case, an amount of money in an unmarked envelope through the letterbox.

[19 : 10] We had not told anybody. Because we had agreed, we're not going to tell anybody, because we want to know that when this need is met, it was God that met it. And sure enough, God met the need.

And it deepened our faith, because he met the need. And we knew it wasn't just somebody being kind-hearted, or somebody we'd told, who'd decided to slip a bit of money to us to meet our need.

It must have come from answered prayer, because that's the only... God was the only one we told. So, to follow this instruction on prayer helps to deepen one's faith.

He says... Verse 7. When you're praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

So do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. There is a scripture somewhere that talks about a lady who kept on at God until she got her prayers answered.

[20 : 24] But in the main, we don't need to nag God. And the religions that embrace these repetitive mantras are almost always pagan.

Or if Christians do it, they kind of do it like the pagans. They don't... And I'll have to use the Roman Catholics as an example. They don't...

Actually, Church of England is not much better. They get into repetitive praying of the same thing over and over and over, which actually serves the purpose of blanking out your mind.

When you... When you used to go to a Roman Catholic confession, and I've not been to one, but this is... I had a girlfriend once who was a Roman Catholic, and she used to go to confession.

And depending on what she confessed, she would be told, Your penance is, you've got to say, five Hail Marys and five Our Fathers. So she would go away and she'd say, Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

[21 : 31] Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. And so on. And then she would say, Our Father which art in heaven, I'll be in their name. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And she would say it so fast, because A, she knew it by rote.

B, she had to get this penance out of the way so she could get on with things. So there was nothing sincere about what she prayed. Isn't it ironic that Satan would use the Lord's Prayer to become meaningless repetition?

I mean, it's a satanic ploy. Jesus says, don't get into meaningless repetition, but pray like this. And we use the very principles that he gave us when he instructed us to pray like this as meaningless repetition.

It's so sad. And it actually stops people from holding fire and thinking, What do the words mean?

If people want to learn the Lord's Prayer by rote and say it with a sincere heart, I don't have a problem with that. What I wish every one of us would do is look at the principle in the Lord's Prayer and adopt the principle when we pray.

[22 : 50] Because that was what Jesus had in mind when he gave it to us. Pagan religions, for instance, transcendental meditation, they will take a phrase, sometimes it's just on, but sometimes it's a phrase, and they'll repeat it and repeat it and repeat it and repeat it until they go into some kind of trance-like state.

But they're not using their mind. They're bypassing their mind. They're parking their brains while they get into this trance-like state that lays them open to any sort of spiritual interference.

What Jesus is meaning here is, think when you pray. And then whatever you're thinking, and whatever is in your heart, pray that.

And what he suggests is a kind of order for it all. So, it's not a mindless practice. I took this quote off the Got Questions website.

Got Questions is an interesting website. It does answer some really good questions sometimes, but sometimes it's a little bit Calvinistic for me. But it says this. The Bible teaches the opposite of repeating this.

[24 : 00] Right? God is far more interested in our hearts when we pray than he is in our words. And he says, but when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen.

Then your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. Now, remember, he said previously that people who were showy about their religion would get no reward from God.

They'd only get reward from their audience. What he's saying is when you pray secretly to God, he will reward you. And certainly that's my testimony that there are many times in my life when I've kept something between Sharon and me and we've waited and God has answered prayer.

And we've been able to have confidence that it's been God that's rewarding that. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

In prayer, we are supposed to pour out our hearts to God and not simply recite and memorise words to God. And if we just turn to Philippians, which is to the right of where we are.

[25 : 17] Philippians 4. This is the Apostle Paul's exhortation to the Philippian church.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

So what Paul is teaching is, tell it to God. Not to everybody else, not to the streets, not to the unsaved, not to the pagan priests.

Tell it to God and he will deal with your prayers in private and he will bring you peace. Many times we've had that too.

So this is a model structure for prayer, not a prayer that should be repeated verbatim. That said, if you do repeat it verbatim, as long as you are considering it, and it's coming from the heart, and not just because you learned it when you were three, then I can't honestly say it has no value.

[26 : 30] It loses its value when it becomes mindless repetition. Now, the pattern set by Jesus. We were supposed to address God as Father.

Just think about this. For a Jew, Matthew's Gospel is written to Jews by a Jew. For a Jew, the idea of God being Father was quite alien.

Now, it is there in the Old Testament, in places. But you've got to remember, whenever a Jew went to God, he couldn't go to God. As soon as he approached God, there'd be this big curtain that was about 70 feet high and about 4 inches thick.

And he wasn't allowed in the presence of God. Who has a Father in whose presence you cannot go? It was an alien concept to the people this was written to, the idea of Father in Heaven.

They knew God was in Heaven, but he was the one who struck dead... What were the names of the two? Abihu and the sons of Aaron.

[27 : 49] Nadab and Abihu. Right? He struck them dead. That's the God they served. And Jesus is saying, and I think prophetically, because he hasn't yet gone to the cross and paved the way for us to approach God yet.

But what he's saying is, when you pray, and I think he meant when you pray in future, because he would then go to the cross. And that curtain would be torn in two and access to God would become more available.

But they were supposed to say, Father. Our Father. When you think about it, for a sinful man to approach God, God should have had the position of his executioner.

And yet he's saying, call me Father. That is a huge mental leap. Especially for Jews.

Less so for Gentiles, because they didn't have this fearful relationship with God from the past. So, many human fathers would die for their children.

[28 : 59] And of course, in Jesus, God's father died for us. So, he is a true father.

And the Jews were being taught here by Jesus, calling father. And then he goes on to indicate that the first thing in your prayer should be praise and worship.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Hallowed means honoured, exalted, lifted up. The Bible exhorts us to praise the name of Jesus or praise the name of the Lord in many places.

If you turn to Psalm 148. Psalm 148.

Verse 13 is the key verse. Which says, Let them praise the name of the Lord. For his name alone is exalted.

[30 : 25] His glory is above the earth and the heaven. And you'll find something very similar written in Psalm 135. And you'll find something very similar written in Psalm 113.

Where it's the name of the Lord that we praise. Now, why would that be? Well, one thing that comes to me is this.

The Bible quite often names people according to their gifts, talents or failures. If you remember the study of the book of Ruth that Joe did a while ago.

And you've got these two sons of Ruth. And when you translate their names, one's called sickness and the other one's called wasting away. So, people's names emerge.

It might not be the name they were born with. But people's names emerge. And the name tells you something about the person. What we read in Philippians 2.

[31 : 30] Turn there. Verse 9.

Verse 9. One can find many places where the name of God is.

It's lifted up. It's also interesting that he, God, lifts up his word higher than his own name. I was criticised by somebody once.

Well, you don't seem to talk about the Lord. You just talk about his word. Well, he said, my word is higher than my name. In fact, his word is the way he sows into our heart his nature and character.

So, when you think about everything we do, we know one another by name. And that name brings with it associations.

[33 : 10] So, when I think of my own father and I think about his name, has lots and lots of good associations. We used to do a lot of fun things together when I was a kid.

I wouldn't get that association until somebody mentions his name. So, it's the name.

And in fairness, when I was a small child, I used to worship the ground he walked on. And so, he was my dad. And it was his name that brought that out, brought that worshipping the ground that he walked on.

If I'd have had a horrible father that some people have had, I may well have had the opposite response. I might have a recoil when his name is mentioned. But it's associated with the name.

What's associated with the name of Jesus is always superlative. He is El Shaddai, almighty God.

[34 : 14] In other words, there is no one or thing more mighty than God. Right? He is omniscient and omnipresent. He's everywhere and he's present everywhere.

So, there is no way you can go to escape him. And there's nothing you can do that he doesn't know about, even before you've done it.

We read Psalm 139. I think that was last week. And in there, what we read is, before even one of our days had taken place, he already knew it.

He is a superlative character whose name we should honour. And then there's all these other names. And I just picked this off the internet as it seemed to. You know, he is the ultimate provider.

He's the ultimate healer. He is the one who gives us victory eternally. Even if we're martyred in this life, we haven't lost. He sanctifies us.

[35 : 17] He brings us peace. I'm certainly familiar with times in my life when I've run around like a headless chicken trying to solve something. And when I finally come to that point where I bow myself in prayer and say, Lord, I'm defeated here, he brings me peace.

No one else can do that. The Lord of hosts, he is above all the angelic hosts. People talk about Jesus, I think it's the Jehovah's Witnesses that say he's an angel like the archangel Michael.

In fact, I think they say he is the archangel Michael. He's not. He's far above the angels. Read the beginning of Hebrews and it will show you that Jesus is above the angels.

He created the angels. The Lord Most High. He is the Most High. He's also my shepherd and he's the greatest shepherd that ever lived.

He's my maker. He created this whole thing and then created it for us to live in. He is our righteousness.

[36 : 28] He has imputed righteousness to all of us so that though we are not righteous in our own right, we have inherited his righteousness which will be forever.

And we're kind of still getting rid of the old and still moving into that. He's changing us from glory into glory. But there is no one more righteous. And lastly, he is present.

Which means that he's always with us. So we exalt the name of Jesus. Let's go back to Matthew. So, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done. What does that mean? And I kind of struggled with that and I thought I've got to try and get through all of this in 45 minutes.

But he came to establish a kingdom on earth. How long have I got? Oh, right. He came to establish a kingdom on earth.

[37 : 42] And then he went away. And he sent the Holy Spirit. So he's not here with his feet on the earth as king of the earth at this moment.

So when we say your kingdom come, what we're saying is come back and take over your kingdom. The church is supposedly kind of doorkeepers for the moment.

But the king is coming back. I scratch my head when people try to say that there will not be a 1,000 year rule of Jesus on the earth.

Our amillennialist brothers who seem to think there's no need for that. My goodness, he has said he's coming back to take over his kingdom and to rule and reign as king along with his saints, which is us.

Praise God for that. And we want his kingdom to come. And what Jesus has always said is that he loves those who love his appearing.

[38 : 49] 2 Timothy 4 verse 8, the apostle Paul says, and at this point he is facing death. He's about to be beheaded. And he's been in prison a while. And he says, He's coming back to take over his kingdom and to give out rewards to faithful saints.

Moving on, verse 11 confirms it's okay to ask God to provide for us.

So we should ask for his provision and we should give thanks when we receive it. Just draw attention to a small ambiguity here, a deliberate ambiguity, I think. Where he said, give us this day our daily bread.

And we think of food. But Jesus also said when he fed the 5,000, I am the bread from heaven. So this is not just, this is my view and you could argue with this, but he's saying it's okay to ask for our food from Jesus.

But it's also good for us to ask for spiritual sustenance from the Lord. And then we should ask forgiveness.

[40 : 14] As we go on down through verse 12, we should ask forgiveness. And we should understand that we should ask for it and expect it in the same measure and to the same extent that we're prepared to give it.

Right? I could imagine, and this is purely my imagination, but I can imagine saying, Lord, forgive me. And him saying, well, are you prepared to do the same?

So we have to hold other people's sin against us in an open hand and say, Lord, if you've died for this and you're prepared to forgive this, then I must be too.

And it does seem to carry this warning that if you are unforgiving, then you won't be forgiven. I'm not even going to talk about that.

I find it a difficult concept to deal with in my head. Because I guess I don't altogether want to face sometimes, like if I get enraged at somebody and struggle to forgive them, does that mean God is struggling to forgive me?

[41 : 21] It certainly gives me a fear of the Lord and makes me want to say to God, I really want to find a way to forgive this. I don't want to hold unforgiveness in my heart and I don't want to ostracise myself, Lord, from your forgiveness.

So I think the verse that really caused me to struggle was the verse that says, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

And I think James 1 verse 13 tells us that God does not tempt anyone to evil. So why would Matthew say, or why would Jesus say to Matthew, to ask God not to...

Sorry, Charlie. There's some blue car somewhere up here. God tells me to go forward. Let me...

Thank you. Is it just the one? Do we need to be more of a word? Just the one. Yeah. Just the one. It's just the one. So James 1 verse 13 tells us God doesn't tempt anyone to evil.

[42 : 52] So why would this be in there? And I think the word used is periasmos.

Another translation of it is adversity. If you look it up in your Strong's Concordance. You've got temptation, but you've also got testing and you've also got adversity. And by saying to the Lord, do not lead me into testing or adversity, you might be saying, do a work in my heart, Lord, so I don't need testing and I don't need adversity to straighten me out.

That's the best I could make of it. If anybody else has got more to go on that, do interject. So my summary is that God gave us this as a model for prayer.

That we start with worship. Hallowed be your name. We praise him. We worship him. If we need provision, we ask for it.

And of course, this doesn't all have to happen in the same time and in the same prayer. If you think about this morning, we started with saying how great thou art. Hallowed was his name in that song.

[44 : 10] We started with the praise and the worship. We haven't really asked for provision yet this morning. In some of those songs, we've asked for forgiveness. But we shouldn't be afraid to include these things.

We should ask God for forgiveness. We should ask him for provision. We should forgive those who've offended us freely and fully because that's what we will reap in return from God.

And if we do these things, our reward will come from him. And just as we've done it privately, our reward will come privately.

And the one thing that has struck me about my own salvation since day one is that quite often I will pray. And quite often he will fulfil or answer my prayers in such a way that is meaningful only to me.

And it does give me a testimony because once I've had prayer answered, I can go and say to people, God did this for me. You know, I was in this mess and I prayed this and God did that.

[45 : 21] And there's a story to tell, a testimony. But he rewards us when we don't do the pagan religious things. One last point.

I said earlier, most religion and even most church religion can be very showy. And when you think of, if you go into a Roman Catholic church and you watch what the priests do, and the same in high Anglican churches, it's all gold braided garments and tall hats and standing like this all the time.

And it's all very, very showy. But you very, very rarely get deep teaching in those places. It's not that it never happens. There are some.

But on the whole, the life transforming deep teaching of the word of God that will transform hearts doesn't happen. What does happen is a man stands up there in a tall hat and gold robes and waves his arms about and says things in a voice like that.

And you just think, this is unreal. This doesn't really contain much by way of truth. That's what God wants us to avoid. There's no need for us to be showy.

[46 : 36] Father, I thank you for this word. I thank you for the struggle that I had dealing with it. And still have with some of it. I still don't think I fully understand the bit about lead us not into temptation.

But Lord, I pray that you'd bring that to complete understanding in all of us. And that Lord, you would encourage us and enable us and correct us so that we can live and conduct ourselves in a way that is pleasing to you.

Father, we give you the coming week. And I do pray that everybody will have a fantastic week. In the centre of which will be Jesus.

And I ask that in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.