

Holy women of God, holy men of God

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Now we turn again to the 1st Epistle of Peter, 1st Peter chapter 3, and we'll get from verse 1, 1st Peter chapter 3, and verse 1.

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. [00:01:05] For after this manner, in the old times, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. Now, the second epistle, chapter 1, verse 19.

[00:02:05] We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well, that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation, for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

We began the meetings this morning with references to what is incorruptible, and I want to continue on that theme for the short time we are together.

It is very important that we consider this, because I believe that if there are incorruptible features connected with ourselves individually and our gatherings, then there will be an adequate testimony rendered for God's pleasure and for the blessing of all concerned. [00:03:21] But the moment we allow corruption of any kind to come into our lives or into our companies, then things are lost for God. Let me remind you of one incident in the scriptures that proves what I am saying. You remember when Moses went to the top of Mount Sinai to receive the law from the hand of God? When he was there, the people below, they asked for a golden calf to be made, Aaron made it, and the people bowed down and worshipped it. And God's word to Moses was, make haste, get thee down, thy people whom thou didst bring out of Egypt have corrupted themselves. What a sad moment that was in the history of Israel. [00:04:09] God was displaced in their lives, in their affections, and judgment came into

their midst instead of blessing. Sad, sad moment when corruption comes amongst the people of God, either individually or collectively. Now I've read these two passages just to draw attention to two things, holy women and holy men. That takes account of each one of us, holy men and holy women.

But before we say that, I want to speak a little about our Lord Jesus Christ. You remember in the tabernacle system, the Ark of the Covenant was made of chitin wood, overlaid with pure gold. A reference, we believe, to the humanity and deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, through nature's one glorious person. And that chitin wood was a beautiful picture, a beautiful type of the imperishable, indestructible nature, human nature of our Lord Jesus. [00:05:14] It wasn't only that he didn't sin, it was that he couldn't sin. Spotless, pure, holy in every sense of the word. What a glorious person. Someone might say, well, if he couldn't sin, whatever was the point of the temptation? There was no real testing in that, but there was. The first man was innocent. He was in the most congenial circumstances. He was tested and he failed. The second man, out of heaven, wasn't innocent. He knew good and evil, perfect knowledge of it.

And he was in the wilderness, the place where Israel was tested so much and failed. And under every temptation, he was victorious. The imperishable, indestructible, if you like, the incorruptible wood, the chitin wood, no inlet there into that spotless life of purity. [00:06:14] I understand that no decay could attach itself to the chitin wood. It was impervious to the attacks of insects. And so in that sense, it was a beautiful figure of the spotless life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we remember that when he was born, it was said of him, that holy thing that shall be born, not the innocent thing, not shaping an iniquity, but that holy thing intrinsically so, not a spot or a blemish attaching to him in any way whatsoever. And in his lifetime, again and again, he's referred to as the holy one of God. And just as holy when he died on the cross as he was when he was born into this world. The spotless Christ, it was his blood that cleansed us from all our guilt and sin. [00:07:10] Now, when we come to the boards of the tabernacle, we find they are made of the same kind of material, the same wood, the chitin wood covered over with gold. And this is to remind us of our standing before God, this place that we have and the same kind of nature that we have so that we are able to represent God, able to be here for his pleasure. So we commence from this standpoint that we have the same ability as Christ had, and I say this reverently, to live lives here that are pleasing to God. He, of course, in perfection, we very much in imperfection. Nevertheless, the same kind of features can be expressed in us as were expressed in our Lord Jesus Christ. So it's from this standpoint that we commence speaking about this great subject of holy women, chapter 3 of 1 Peter and chapter 1 of 2 Peter, holy men. [00:08:15] Before we do so, we would say that all the persons of the Godhead are marked by this great feature of holiness. We are reminded, I think someone said this this afternoon, that the Father is referred to as Holy Father, John 17. The Holy Spirit is referred to in this way, perhaps more so than the other persons of the Godhead. I think some 93 times, if I remember correctly, the Spirit is referred to as the Holy Spirit, his characteristic name. And we've already said that the Lord Jesus is referred to in the same way as the Holy One of God, the Holy, the True. Many other scriptures could be referred to. So we are in the realm of holiness that is so pleasing to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. [00:09:10] It's impossible to think of any sin attaching to them. They repel sin. It has no inlet into their lives or circumstances or ways. Sin is kept at bay perfectly in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

But then we ask ourselves, is this true of us? Can it be said of us that we are walking in this world in a holy way that meets with the approval of God and keeps at bay those evil influences that so sadly affect the testimony? This is what we desire to speak of for a few minutes.

The Holy Women. Peter gives them a very good commendation. A commendation that every sister, I'm sure, would covet. This meek and quiet spirit that in the sight of God is most precious. More precious than all the outward adornment, however nice, however valuable, however good it might be.

[00:10:18] Here is something that God looks at. And we are always reminded of what God said to Samuel, that man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. And here is something that God wants for every dear sister. A life of devotedness to the will of God. A life not with outward show, but with inward reality. A life that is pleasing to his eye, and his eye can discern as no other eye can discern. And he looks into the heart, he looks into the conscience, he looks into the mind, and what he sees there he approves of when it's a meek and quiet spirit in his sight most precious. It says that they hoped in God. I'm going to refer to a few women in the scriptures who exhibited this feature. I believe Holy Women. And while we are speaking specifically about women, that doesn't mean that those of us who are men are exempt from this exhortation. Not one bit of it. Because it speaks in connection with women, let it be the hidden man of the heart. So I think this takes us all in. [00:11:28] First women I want to speak about are the midwives in the early chapters of Exodus. What courage they showed. Women who really trusted in God. Took a great deal of courage to go against the authority of the king. The king had passed laws. All the male children of the Israelites were to be slain. Very astute move. Kill all the male children. Why? There won't be a nation left that's worthy of its name. Kill the male children and the power of the nation goes. [00:12:06] Well these midwives, they feared God. That's what it says of them. They feared God. They accepted the authority of God above the authority of the king. And this has always been so in the history of the testimony, whether in the Old Testament or in the New. That while there is an authority that we bow to, where it's legitimate and right and proper, there's a higher authority that we bow to and that is the authority of God. And these women, they feared God and they protected those male children. Well of course when the nation grew strong, it was partly because of their efforts and the power that God gave them in protecting them. Dear sisters, what an encouragement for you to pray and to protect the children who grow amongst us. To teach them. To show them an example. To help them in the things of God. Because I believe that that is what is involved for us. They were protected from the wrath of the king. They were protected from that cruel law. And they were protected for God. That they might represent God. [00:13:20] I don't know much about the nation of Israel and the way they bring up their family, their parents. But I understand that this is one of the secrets of the strength of the nation. That the children are taught the traditions of the nation. The children are taught Hebrew so that they can read the scriptures for themselves. They are taught discipline. They are taught the things that are really worthwhile. And so they grow up in this atmosphere and what a profound effect it has upon their lives. Is there any nation that has withstood such attacks upon it? Is there any nation that has been subjected to such pressure and persecution and yet still retain all its national characteristics? [00:14:04] And we believe this is why. The children were taught properly and they grew up in the atmosphere that belonged to their nation's traditions and they defended them and so they are maintained in spite of the long, long years of persecution and trial. Thank God for the Christian homes where the things of God are maintained, where they are taught, where the children grow up in an atmosphere where they learn to fear God and stand for the things that are really worthwhile. Thank God there are many such homes. We sometimes hear that the third generation gives things up. Some families can look back and say, well, I'm the fourth and fifth generation amongst the brethren. Or some say, well, we're the third generation and we're getting weaker. I find in the scriptures that there is a third generation that is very, very strong. And that's Timothy. His mother and his grandmother were noted for their faith. [00:15:02] And Paul says, I am persuaded in thee also. Here was a third generation that was strong and healthy in faith. And Paul had every encouragement from

that young man, Timothy. Now, we don't believe that faith is hereditary. Thank God the teaching of faith can be carried on down through the generations. And I believe this is what happened in the life of Timothy. So we look for midwives, midwives who are courageous, who don't fear the wrath of the king, but who are prepared to protect the children and help them and be a blessing to them. Just as the mother of Moses carefully made that little basket and she put him amongst the reeds, not into the center of the River Nile, a god in Egypt. The River Nile was worshipped, not there, not in the midst of what was idolatrous, but just at the bank where he could be protected from the current of the river. And there he was until the moment came when he was secured and grew up to be a man of God. [00:16:07] Oh, what potential there is in every child. What potential in every boy, every young man, every young girl. What potential if they are schooled correctly, if they are guided correctly, if they are handled properly. Oh, what potential there is to be men and women of God and to bear testimony if the Lord doesn't come. Now, Sarah is mentioned here. What a delightful woman she was in many ways. She wasn't perfect, neither was her husband. And this is true in our homes. Husbands aren't perfect, wives aren't perfect. But it's good to see husband and wife pulling together in connection with the things of God. In some cases, the wife can be more spiritual than the husband. As Sarah was in this particular incident that I'm going to refer to. And that was Abram desired, oh, that Ishmael might live before me. Ishmael was no good for God. He didn't come of the right seed. He wasn't of the right line. He was the son of the bondwoman. [00:17:15] It was the promised seed, Isaac. That was the one through whom the blessing was to come. And, says Sarah, that child's got to go. He's a bad influence. He won't help. There won't be any blessing through him. And Abram says, oh, I can't do that. He's my son. He's my flesh. The power of nature was strong in Abram, but he didn't realize what the mind of God was. And Sarah, she was the more spiritual at that juncture. And Abram bowed to the instruction, and Sarah proved herself to be a woman of discernment, a woman understanding what the will of the Lord was. So, dear sisters, you can encourage your husbands because sometimes they can be wrong. And if you discern that they are wrong, put them right from the word of God and be a help and encouragement to them. I believe Sarah feared God. I believe that Sarah really was desirous of doing what was pleasing in the sight of God. [00:18:19] Abram, he failed in nature so often. Great man of God that he was. Failed in relation to his father. Failed in relation to Ishmael. Failed in relation to his wife. The power of nature was so strong in him. Mind, he succeeded in many other ways. And at the end, when that supreme test came, he soared above the power of nature and was ready to offer up his well-beloved son, Isaac. What a man of God. But in this particular case that we are referring to, Sarah was indeed a holy woman. She understood the mind of the Lord. Think of Deborah in the book of Judges. What a sad day that was in the history of Israel when there wasn't a man with any initiative, with any energy, with any desire to do right. [00:19:12] And I, Deborah, arose, prophetess indeed in Israel, sitting and judging Israel under a pantry. What a wonderful woman of God she was. It's always a sad reflection upon the brothers when a sister has to take the initiative and show them what is right. And yet it was so in Judges. But then Judges is the day when everything's upside down. There's nothing normal. Everything seems to be haywire. Nobody seems to know what to do. And if so was so in Deborah's case, she arose and she gave the initiative. She gathered the army together and she gave direction to Barak. And what a wonderful triumph was secured in Israel's day. Now I believe that this shows a woman of God, a holy woman with some idea of what is necessary, some idea of what requires to be done. [00:20:06] And thank God Deborah was ready to do it. What a wonderful woman. And we know the result. We know that the enemy was discomfited. The enemy was overcome. And a great triumph was secured amongst the people of God. Deborah, truly a holy woman. Our brother was referring to Hannah this afternoon, and she's another delightful woman in the Old Testament. A holy woman indeed. A woman who was habitually at the worship of God with her husband. She was there beside him, taking her place with him. Year by year they went up to Jerusalem according to God's will. Delightful thing to see husband

and wife together in this connection. And time came when she entered into a very, very severe exercise. Oh, how much she longed for a son.

[00:21:04] The fact that she had no son was a rebuke to her. Her enemies, they rebuked her again and again and sneered at her, reproached indeed. And she prayed, as we were reminded this afternoon, and God heard her prayer. What a woman of sacrifice. What a woman of devotion. She got what she wanted. She got what she prayed for, this son. And she gave him back to God. Oh, the son that meant so much to her heart. The son that she had, she weaned him, and then she gave him to the Lord. Oh, the sacrifice that marked that dear woman. We sometimes sing together, the dearest object of our love compared with thee but dross. Just place ourselves in Hannah's position. Would we have given up that little boy? Would we have sacrificed him? There wasn't any doubt at all that he was the dearest object of her love.

[00:22:08] Oh, how she longed for him, and she obtained him. Yet willingly, without reserve or reluctance, she was prepared to sacrifice. I believe that holy women sacrifice. They sacrifice time. They sacrifice the things that would hinder so that they can be for God and give to God their time, their talents, their prayers, their exercise. What a woman Hannah was. One of the links between the promises and the actual fulfillment in the providing of David the king. An exercised woman. She wasn't the only one. Another two that we could speak of, holy women indeed. The exercises of Ruth, the exercises of Nehemiah, and the exercises of Hannah, three remarkable women, and they all paved the way for the advent of David, the mighty conquering king of Israel. [00:23:02] Delightful to see these features in Nehemiah. She made her mistakes. She was governed by a husband who had no appreciation of what belonged to God, and she submitted to his direction wrong guidance, and she suffered bitterly for it. She went out full. She came back empty. I have the slightest doubt that in her association with Ruth, she unfolded again and again the history of Israel, the God of Israel, and all the great things connected with Israel, so much so that Ruth says, I want your God to be my God. I'm going to follow you right to the end. Where thou livest, I will live. Where thou diest, I will die. There will I be buried. Thy God shall be my God. There's a holy woman of devotion, decision, and purpose of heart. She never turned back. She was obedient, and she did the will of God. We've already referred to Lois and Eunice. Paul mentioned them in his letter to Timothy. Women of faith, unfeigned faith. We were speaking today about unfeigned love, that is, love that's not hypocritical. Unfeigned faith, not faith that's just an outward show, but faith that works, that operates. [00:24:24] These two dear women were marked by this kind of faith, unfeigned faith. What a wonderful thing that it was also in young Timothy. Paul appealed to that. The faith that I've seen in your grandmother and in your mother, and I'm persuaded in thee also, was the faith that he wanted to see operating in expression for the glory and pleasure of God. One other woman, Phoebe. In the 16th chapter of Romans, she comes in, I believe, with a letter of commendation. Paul writing a letter of commendation in relation to Phoebe and exhorting the Roman saints to receive her. Very important things, letters of commendation. [00:25:12] I trust that they won't go out of fashion with us. That being scriptural directions, they are things that we'll hold on to. That if people come and present themselves as Christians, then it's better that they have letters of commendation. That they can identify themselves to us as persons who are worthy to remember the Lord. Because it's so easy to be beguiled. It's so easy to be deluded, deceived. And this is a scriptural method, letters of commendation. And Phoebe, she had a letter of commendation. And what a commendation the apostle Paul gave to her. She was worthy because she had been a helper of many. She was a sister. She was a servant. She was worthy to be accepted as a saint. Oh, what a wonderful woman she was in Paul's mind. [00:26:04] Doesn't say precisely what she did, but it did say that she was worthy of reception because of her practical service amongst the people of God. Now the term saint has at its base the thought of holiness. Here

was a woman who was a member of the sanctified company. Not only was she a saint by name, thank God, she was a saint by practice. And what a wonderful thing when such a person can be commended, can be received, and what glory there is for God in it. So, dear sisters, there are a few, and there are many, many more that could be mentioned in the scriptural record. Women who were holy women, who feared God, who showed forth features that we could all take to ourselves. Features that were so pleasing in the sight of God. Now you see, these practical features kept at bay corruption. They kept at bay the enemy. They overcame the obstacles that existed. They overcame the weakness, the difficulties, and they presented what was positive. And every positive act in our life that's pleasing to God is a defeat for the enemy. [00:27:24] And every time that we succumb to sin, to the world, to the flesh, is a victory for the enemy. And so what the Lord wants is holy men, holy women, who will combat the enemy in every possible way and preserve what is precious and holy in the sight of God. We are reminded in Psalm 93 that the psalmist wrote, Holiness becometh thy house forever. I believe that holiness is the antithesis of sin. It's the opposite of sin. And when holiness is inactivity, then sin is repelled. There is no inlet into a person's life when they are acting and living in holiness.

[00:28:12] Mr. Darby said in one of his writings that holiness is abhorrence of sin. Just you think of that, dear friends, that if we went through life with an abhorrence of sin in our minds, it would mean that we would run away from it. We wouldn't play with it. We would run away from it, knowing that Satan is a powerful personage and he can delude us. He can lead us by his wiles into ways that are dishonoring to the Lord. But if we desire us of being holy, as we should be, our members brought into bondage to holiness for God, Romans 6, then we are acting in a normal Christian life. Now I want to speak for a few moments about holy men. We've mentioned quite a few holy women, and now we can turn to holy men. The first one that comes to mind, and I'm sure you've already been thinking about him as we've been speaking, is Joseph. [00:29:26] Now, he wasn't a slanderer. He was telling his father that his father's interests were being affected because the sons were not attending to their work as they ought to have been doing. And this matter, no doubt, was put right. Now, later on in life, Joseph himself was subjected to temptation. How was he going to react? It's all very well to point out the failures of others, but when the test comes to himself, how will he react? And what a serious test it was, the seduction by an evil woman. Thank God. [00:30:05] He fled. He didn't say, I'm Joseph. He didn't say, I'm a man of God. I can withstand this kind of thing. Well, he knew the power of nature. Well, he knew the power of evil, and in the seduction form. And he fled, leaving his garment in the hand of the evil woman. Now, you see, he really proved himself to be faithful, not only drawing attention to the failures of his brethren, but when it came to the test himself, he was proved a man of God, a holy man indeed. Should I commit this sin against God? These are the words of a holy man, a man who, above all things, esteems the glory of God rather than anything for himself. Now, we come to Moses. What a man of God he was, a holy man of God indeed.

[00:31:02] Why? When he had everything at his feet, every opportunity, every avenue open to him to make his way in this world and be a man of great prominence, man of great fame and power, he says, I'm going to give it all up. He says, I would rather suffer reproach with the people of God than in the forefront of Egypt's power and Egypt's gold and glitter. No, he says, I would rather be with the persecuted people of God. What a decision to make. And it's to Moses' credit, he never turned back. Those whom he led might turn back, and turn back they did in their hearts. We wish we were back in Egypt. There we got food for nothing. There we had everything that we required in the way of food and provision. They'd forgotten about the slavery and the hard bondage, but they wanted to go back. Never Moses. Moses kept going on, a holy man of God indeed. And he maintained his life and his pathway for God in such a way that God could speak to him mouth to mouth, my servant Moses.

[00:32:14] Oh, how affectionately God spoke about his servant, my servant Moses.

And with a javelin, he slew the couple that were bringing such dishonor upon Israel, at least two of them. And God commended him for his action. A priest, he ought not to have had weapons of war in his hand. There were others to do that kind of thing. [00:33:01] Sadly, they were found wanting. But Phinehas stood up, zealous for God, zealous to do what was right for God, and he acted in such a way as merited God's approval. Sometimes to stand for what is right means drastic action in our own lives, as well as amongst the people of God. There are influences, if they are allowed to develop, would destroy the things of God. And this is the kind of day that we live in. Some people, unfortunately, they don't see the consequences of the actions that they seek to bring in, or rather the principles that they seek to bring in amongst the people of God. They only see the particular thing that they are concerned about, and they don't see the logical outcome of such principles being followed. Many with discernment can see, and so it requires drastic action to stop that kind of thing, in order that what is pure and holy, according to God, might be preserved. [00:34:04] And so Phinehas was such a man. Noah was a holy man of God. If you look in the book of Genesis, you'll find that Noah, in all his generations, was found a just man. It was a day of mixture and corruption.

The sons of God were connected with the daughters of men. There are those who believe that here was a peculiar corruption where the angels left their first estate and were connected with the daughters of men upon earth. This is referred to in Jude, the apostasy of the angels. Difficult thing to understand. Those who have read Mr. Darby's works will remember that he has a long dissertation to show that the heroes of mythology in Greek and Roman mythology are descended from this kind of thing. This is where they got their origin. There were giants in the land in those days. This progeny of this evil association, and what a serious and wicked thing it was. And, of course, it resulted in the flood, God removing all vestige of this kind of thing.

[00:35:19] But in the midst of all this, there was one man that God could look down upon. He was a man who was just and pure in all his generations. What an evil day that was. What a wonderful thing it is, dear friends, dear saints of God. What a wonderful thing it is to lead a life of purity in a scene of corruption like we know today. I know we're not perfect. We never will be perfect. But thank God for right desires. Not simply to be upright and respectable. There are many unconverted people who are upright and respectable. But to live lives of holiness according to God, the standard that he sets. And that means every feature of our lives brought into obedience to his word. What a triumph that it should be so. [00:36:12] The only have I found, just, he says, in connection with Noah. Then there was the one before Noah, Enoch. He walked in his day, and he had this testimony, says the writer to the Hebrews, he had this testimony that he pleased God. Oh, what a commendation. Just think of it tonight. If we, through some means, were able to receive communications from heaven and God saying to us, each one, I'm pleased with the way you're living your life. What a testimony. What a commendation. Wouldn't we be proud? I don't mean proud in a selfish way or in a fleshly way, but proud in the sense that we're doing what is pleasing to God. And we can be sure of that. As we obey the word of God, as we keep clear of sin and worldliness, wickedness, anything that is dishonoring to God, we can be sure of this. We have this testimony that we please him. [00:37:18] Because throughout the epistles, we find expressions that we might be well-pleasing in his sight, just like Enoch. David was a man of God, a real man of God. He made sad lapses, but how quickly he recovered himself.

How quickly he got back into communion with God. How quickly he did the things that were pleasing in the sight of God. I remember as a young Christian, I used to hear the old brothers in Port Seton

saying, keep short accounts with God. If you fail, get down on your knees, confess it to God, have communion restored, and continue in the pathway. Don't give up because you're a failure. [00:38:08] And David never gave up. I want to say this, that David's best years were his last years. And I want to say this to you elderly saints, keep going on.

I've been saying this in many meetings now. If the meetings depended upon our young people, we wouldn't have any Bible readings in some places. We wouldn't have any ministry meetings. We wouldn't have meetings of any worthwhile character. But you dear brethren, getting on in years, Lord's Day after Lord's Day, you maintain those meetings. Week after week you maintain those meetings. Keep going on. Don't give up. And you'll preserve something for the young when they suddenly make up their mind that there is something worthwhile in our so-called brethren meetings. [00:39:03] There is food for them if they want it. Preserve it, maintain it, and make sure it's still there when they get disillusioned with many of the will of the wisps that they're seeking to follow. There is food found in the meetings. There is spiritual health to be found in the meetings. And you dear brethren, getting on in years, are the ones who are going to maintain it until the Lord comes. I'm perfectly sure of that. David's best years were his last years. How do you make that out? Well, he prepared all the material for Solomon his son. In his affection, in his power, in his energy, what vast amounts of material he collected. Gold and silver and wood and iron and stone.

And unenviously, he collected it so that his son might do this great service for God. Man of God, right to the end. And in an unwearying way, he provided all this that God might be worshipped. [00:40:13] His latter days, getting on in years. He wasn't too old when he died, 70. But in those later years of his life, oh how he provided for the things of God. And what a wonderful end when we read in Chronicles that wonderful ascription of praise that he gave to God. All things came from God, he says. All things are returning to God. And what a full heart he had. What a man David was. A holy man of God.

Now lastly, the Apostle Paul. What a holy man of God he was. What a life of persecution he lived in relation to those who loved Christ. I'm sure he regretted it all the days of his life.

[00:41:03] All the havoc that he had created amongst the people of God. He made them blaspheme. Can you think of that dear friends? Can you think of making someone blaspheme? Making someone say something that is dishonoring to God or to Christ. Wouldn't you be sorry for it? Paul made many blaspheme. He put them in prison. He murdered them. He gave his vote against Stephen when Stephen was slain. What a persecutor he was. Suddenly it was all changed. He met the Lord Jesus Christ. He came under his lordship and he never could have put wrong. I shouldn't say that. He didn't make his mistakes but not many. But he went on not deviating from the one hand or the other. Straight on. A holy man of God. And the consuming desire in his heart was to please Christ, was to represent Christ. In chapter 1 of Philippians he says I don't want to be ashamed. Don't want to be ashamed. Neither do I want to be a hero. He says what I want is that Christ should be magnified in my body whether by life or by death. If I have to die let it be for the glory of Christ. If I am to live let it be for the glory of Christ. [00:42:25] And his whole life was spent in this way. The things that were gained to me those I counted lost on account of Christ. He was ready to sacrifice the very best that he had in order to live for Christ. Now dear brothers and sisters if our meetings were made up of such people as I have mentioned this evening what happy meetings they would be. People who gave up all that they naturally were connected with or desired. People ready to sacrifice for God. People ready to devote their energies for God. People who lived lives that were separate from sin and the attractions of this world. People who were thoroughly committed to God. Oh how powerful the meetings would be. [00:43:19] Such a meeting was I believe at Corinth when it began. But corrupting

influences soon crept in. There were those who brought in bad doctrine. There isn't such a thing as resurrection some said. And so Paul corrected them. There was a man who did the most degrading evil thing, incest, and had to be expelled from the company. There were those who were following leaders, parties, cliques. Terrible thing, painful thing amongst the people of God. These were corrupting influences and they ought not to have been there. And Paul addressed each member of the Corinthian assembly and he says your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. You should be holy. You cannot join yourself to anything that is evil. The Holy Spirit indwells you and so you ought to be holy in practice. And to the company he says know you not that ye are the temple of the Holy Spirit. [00:44:19] You are a holy temple in the Lord. So the company and the individuals who formed the company ought to be holy. Holy in the sight of God. Holy in all their ways. Oh dear brethren what a wonderful thing that would be. We were talking about unfeigned brotherly love. Oh how many things creep in amongst the people of God to prevent this kind of thing in practice. Petty envying, jealousies, distances, lack of confidence, suspicion. All these things can creep in amongst the people of God and create barriers against the free flow of love. [00:45:03] Holiness would keep all these things out. Every one of them. And there would be that condition, that atmosphere that would create the free flow of love in every possible way. But more than that because it is far more important that God and Christ should be honoured and worshipped than that we should be blessed. Too often we talk about our own blessings and we should remember that an assembly is there for glory to God and glory to Christ in the power of the Spirit. And as holiness is in action amongst the people of God there will be this response. Glory to God, glory to Christ, testimony to the world and I believe to the salvation of precious souls. Paul says you know how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you for your sakes and the Thessalonians were converted to God. [00:46:02] So you see dear brethren this matter of incorruption that was brought before us this morning is an extremely important one and may we be encouraged to be holy women and holy men until the Lord comes for his name's sake.