

# The reason for writing

## Part 1

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Duration	00:43:26
Online version	<a href="https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/jsc010/the-reason-for-writing">https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/jsc010/the-reason-for-writing</a>

*Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.*

[00:00:00] The reading that's before us this afternoon is found in the first epistle of John and chapter 2. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And hereby we know, we do know, that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word in him, verily is the love of God perfected. Hereby know we, that we are in him. He that saith, he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he [00:01:05] walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which he had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which he hath heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him, and in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith, he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, [00:02:07] fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, is not of the father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. But he that doeth the will [00:03:04] of God abideth for ever. Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard, that Antichrist shall come. Even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would not, no doubt, have continued with us. But they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar? But he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is Antichrist [00:04:04] that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.

But he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye

also shall continue in the Son and in the Father. And this is a promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abides in you. And ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie. And even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, [00:05:08] abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. It seems to me that there are several ways in which we can read the scriptures.

And I mean now, in our private reading, we can take the scriptures and read them quietly to ourselves, and allow the Lord to speak to us through them. Or we can take the scriptures, and we can read a passage, read it again and again, and parts of it [00:06:01] again and again, and think about it. And let the message of it really penetrate into our hearts and minds. We can even go one more than this. We can read it analytically. We can study it. We can dissect it, reverently of course, but we can dissect it. And we can find out how the Spirit of God has pieced it together, and how his divine mind has been working in causing it to be written. And just what the words that he uses mean in their context. Now this afternoon, I think we might get to the middle one of these things. We might think about this passage of scripture, and meditate about it. I'm not proposing to unlock its wonders for you, because I feel that the writings of John, whilst they're in simple terms, [00:07:07] are so tremendously profound, that they're almost too holy for us to handle. You remember how the ark was taken on that cart, and how the man put up his hand to steady the ark. We have to handle these scriptures in a reverent way. I feel that for us to dissect them, and to look at them carefully and critically, is something for us to do privately. And perhaps we can take down somebody's commentary from the shelf, or borrow one from one of the elder brethren, and see what they've said about it. And then pray about it, and think carefully what this scripture has to say to me, and just what it means. But this afternoon, but this afternoon, I say a little meditation on this profound scripture. It was a matter of [00:08:04] some grief to me that I wasn't able to be with you on the Monday evening of the conference. I understand that you thought a little about some of the earlier part of this letter of John. Various comments have been passed on to me from one and another. For instance, one brother came up onto the top of a hill with me, and we listened to the lark singing in the sky. And we had a part of that address then, and thought about some of the thoughts that you had then. And so I'm not able to pretend that I'm following on from what our brother had to say to you. But why I chose to take up this scripture, or shall I say, how I was led into this scripture, was through those words in the twelfth verse of the second chapter. Where it says, I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you, for his name's [00:09:02] sake. And I don't know what we could have more beautiful than that. We don't want to be sentimental about it. But this touches our hearts. The Apostle, no doubt in his advanced years, says to them all here in this twelfth verse, I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you, for his name's sake. And you might say to me, well he goes on and he writes to other classes of people as well. Yes, well of course he does. There are three groups that he selects, and he addresses them each one twice. But you know, if we look at this a bit harder, we find in verse 14, that he changes the tenth. And so our more careful reading than the first time we read it through, says, well this is strange, why does he change the tenth? And then if in our critical reading [00:10:07] we've taken the commentary down off the shelf, we shall find that her brother so-and-so tells us why. He tells us that really this twelfth verse stands on its own. And as far as I'm concerned, this afternoon, this twelfth verse stands on its own. And it's written to the old ones of you, that I could address perhaps as father, in one sense. And it's written to the little ones among you, that I can perhaps sit on my knee. And I had this privilege this afternoon. And it's written to the middle ones, the middle-aged ones, like me. It's written to us all. And it's also written to those young men that are

strong. All grouped together in this twelfth verse, I write unto you little children, because, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

[00:11:04] And it's this great truth that groups us all together. We all have to take our place amongst the children in God's sight.

We stretch out our hand to him, and we put our hand in his. And we say, Abba, Father.

And unless we are in this position, then I can say, I think confidently, that this chapter isn't written to us.

It might be, perhaps, I hope not, and I trust not, that there's an old brother here this afternoon that says, why this isn't written to me, that you're reading this about the little children. I come in that other verse. But no, my brother, this is written to you. You're a little child, just the same as I'm a little child. And those little ones, further back, they're little children. And if they know the Lord Jesus, then they can come through him to God. And they can reach out [00:12:05] their hand in simple faith. And they can say, Abba, Father. And they know that their sins are forgiven them for his name's sake.

Have you noticed that in both those chapters, in those two great epistles, the Ephesians and the Colossians, in the first chapter of each of them, we have that wonderful verse, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. And this verse is so absolutely central to the Christian message, that when the Holy Spirit is unfolding to us the most profound truth, then this has to come in as a central thought in the doctrine which is being set forth to us concerning the glorious [00:13:01] person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and concerning the blessing of the church, and concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the believers. This has got to be there, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins.

In the first verse of the chapter, he says, I write unto you, little children, that ye sin not. That ye sin not.

We might say, well, he's changing his ground. Isn't he changing his ground between that first verse and the twelfth verse? But no, this won't do. He's not changing his ground at all. He's not changing his ground at all, because you see, one concerns the standing of the believer before God. Our sins are forgiven for his namesake, the sake of the name of the Beloved Son.

[00:14:04] And the first verse is concerning our practical walk in this world. That ye sin not. That ye sin not. And he hastens to add that he is the propitiation for our sins.

And if any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. There's no question, my brother, my sister, my young friend, there's no question of you or I of you or I breaking up that wonderful position in which we stand before God. Our sins are forgiven us for his namesake. Don't let us look for a fresh application of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to cleanse our souls from sin. It was done once, the finished work of Christ, applied once to my heart, has perfected forever those that are sanctified. [00:15:01] Our sins forgiven for his namesake. But because of this, and because of this, he writes to us and he says that ye sin not. That ye sin not. How many scriptures there are in the epistles which speak to our heart and say how unsuitable it is that one whose sins have in the past piled up and have been answered for in the precious sufferings of our Saviour on Calvary's cross should then be one who lives in sin. Further on he says, he tells that those who

practice sin, while it's a sign that they're not truly born again, if they practice sin, if they make a practice of sin in their lives, if their lives are characterized by sinful practice, then it's evidence that they're not born again. [00:16:03] How unsuitable that the child of God whose sins are forgiven for his namesake should be living and practicing sin. And yet he goes on, if any man sin, if any man sin, you see you and I, we always have the old nature with us, and God knows it, and he's made provision for it in the word. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And so you see there's a continual practical cleansing process for our hearts and lives, a continual washing of our feet in the word of God. The provision is made for the stumbling one, the one whose sins are forgiven but who walks the paths of this life in weakness, with the old nature still present with him, the advocate with the Father, [00:17:02] Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins, the mercy seat, the place where God has met with the sinner, is in the person of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then that third verse I would point you to, hereby we know that we know him. Do we want evidence that we know him? Do we know him? Paul writes, that I may know him. Do we know him? The evidence that we know him, in the third verse, if we keep his commandments. If we keep his commandments, evidence that we know him. How else can we keep his commandments? 15th of John, the gospel of John, talks about our keeping his word, talks about our abiding in him and his abiding in us.

[00:18:06] And then, in the fifth verse, he goes on, he says, whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.

How can the love of God be perfected? Isn't the love of God already perfect? Isn't the love of God the one thing in the whole universe, which is unspoiled and unsullied? Of course it is. But this love of God, Romans 5 tells us, it's shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us. And here it tells us, that if we keep his word, then the love of God is not only perfected in the general sense, it is already perfect, but it's perfected in a practical [00:19:05] way, in us. The work of the love of God, shed abroad in our hearts, if it leads us to keeping his word, then it's perfected in us. And you say, well, this is tremendous. Well, it is tremendous. And we need to think about it more. It's not enough to listen to the preacher. We have to sit and we have to read this word and we have to think about it. We have to let it enter into our hearts. And we say, here is a divine process of the love of God being perfected in the hearts of the little children whose sins are forgiven for his name's sake. Now, in passing, I just want to say a few words about these others that he writes to in 13th verse. He does write to the fathers.

[00:20:03] And he writes to the fathers because they've got a special privilege. A special privilege. The little children know the father. But the fathers have known him, that is, from the beginning. And it may be that in writing this letter, he has in mind that he's writing to some who were actually alive on the earth and in their life have seen the blessed person of the Lord Jesus Christ in his incarnation here on earth. It may be that he has this in mind. If so, well then he's writing to his own generation and those who share the privilege which he himself enjoyed. And when we think of John writing, well then, we always have to remember that John is the one, not one of those, but the one [00:21:05] who leaned on Jesus' bosom. And if any man could say that he knew the Lord Jesus, well then John could say it because he was what we might call on whispering terms with the Lord Jesus Christ. You remember at the supper he leaned on Jesus' bosom and he said to him privately and in confidence, Lord, is it I? That special nearness which he enjoyed to the person of the Lord Jesus. And here he

writes to the fathers, I write unto you fathers because ye have known him, that is, from the beginning. But then you see he may not be thinking about this direct and practical knowledge, but it may be that he's writing with a mind to a spiritual knowledge of him that is from the beginning. And you see, [00:22:01] he may be here addressing the fathers as those that have the spiritual maturity to have been brought through spiritual activity and by the revelation of the Spirit of God into this personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you know we meet up with those brothers sometimes and as we speak to them and as we hear them pray and as we listen to them ministering the word, we almost gasp in wonder and we say, why, how that brother knows the Lord.

And our hearts go out almost enviously to them that they should be so close to the Lord.

You know it's been written about some of those that have gone in a previous generation or two back houses in their daily life. They've lived and conversed with the Lord as one that was a companion with them, even speaking in such terms to the Lord, it's a hot day today Lord, like we [00:23:06] would to our friends, those that we're walking with or driving in our car with. So they would speak to the Lord. And this wouldn't be an outward show, nor would it be a claim that they couldn't substantiate, but this was because the Lord was so close to them. And these are the ones that he addresses as fathers. It isn't those who have a great shelf full of leather bound books and have learnt them by heart and can trot them out from any part of the scriptures by the hour or as we sometimes say by the yard, they're not the fathers. They may think they're the fathers but they're not the ones that are the fathers. The fathers are those that have the deep personal spiritual knowledge of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have written unto you fathers because ye have known him that is from the beginning. And then he goes on and he says I've [00:24:03] written unto you young men, young men because ye have, because the word of God, no I've gone too far, because you have overcome the wicked one in verse 13. Ye have overcome the wicked one. You know when they taught me Latin at school, we came upon a word I think it was juvenis, j-u-v-e-n-i-s, and we used to translate that as youth. And we read about the exploits of these Greeks and various other people that lived in the ancient times and we found that the ones that did the mighty deeds were the youth. But the Latin master said to us it's no good you boys thinking you're the juvenis because you're not the juvenis. The juvenis he said is the young warriors, the young warriors. Isn't it in Peter where it says that you're to add to your faith [00:25:08] virtue and that word virtue is something to do with this word for a young man. It's the strength of the young man. And you know it's characteristic of young men that they're strong, they're in the full vigor of their manhood, they're athletic, they're angry, they're going places, they're eager.

If you want to employ somebody in your business, in your firm, in your office, you try not to take on somebody of 60 years of age. Although he might have a head on his shoulders which is full of wisdom and experience, but you want somebody that's eager, somebody that's leaning forward. And the Apostle says here by the Spirit he says I write unto you young men because you're strong, because you're strong. And don't let any of you young men be set back in your activities for the [00:26:06] Lord, because the Word of God says to you here that he writes unto you because you're strong. You're strong, but you're only strong in one sense and that is if you've overcome the wicked one.

And you can only prove that you're strong by demonstrating that you've overcome the wicked one. And the tragedy of our generation, of my generation, is that as I look around how many there are of my previous friends and colleagues that have turned aside from this pathway of obedience that we're walking in. Not that we're boasting of it, but by God's grace we are walking in a pathway that we found in the Scriptures. And how many of the young men have turned aside from this pathway and

they've looked for a broader pathway. They've looked for another avenue of service. They've looked for something which you and I would say this afternoon is perhaps second [00:27:04] best. And you know we've got a feeling in our hearts that they've been turned aside by the enemy, by the wicked one. He wants them to follow something which is second best. He wants them to be sidetracked from a straightforward clean-cut following of the way that the Lord Jesus has set our feet in. He says I write unto you young men because you're strong, and because you have overcome the wicked one. And a young man who's overcome the wicked one is the sort of young man that God can use to go and do exploits. Joshua was a young man, young man when the captain of the Lord's host appeared to him before he took the city of Jericho and said to him those words. I think it was three times but I'd be corrected by any of my elder brethren, Be thou strong and very courageous. I write unto you young men because you're strong [00:28:02] and because you have overcome the wicked one. And then he goes and said it again. He goes back to the children. I write unto you little children and here they tell me that these little children are not the general classification of all the believers here, but here there is the little ones. The ones of tender spiritual years. Little children because ye have known the Father. Because ye have known the Father.

And then in the 14th verse you'll notice if you're meditating seriously on this chapter that there's a change in the tense. And the critical renderings tell us that this is not a translator's error. We might say here he's referring back to what he's already said. [00:29:03] I wrote unto you. I have written unto you fathers because ye have known him that is from the beginning. He's said so much to the fathers he can't add any more. And then he goes on to the young men. I've written unto you young men and here he brings this in because you're strong. Because you're strong. First of all it's because they've overcome and secondly it's because they're strong. His second thought his recapitulation because you're strong. And so let us young brothers let us feel our strength in the Lord. Let us realize that the Lord Jesus said to the disciples in the upper room before they went out. Or was it sitting on the hillside looking across the book he'd run. But be of good cheer for I have overcome the world. I have overcome the world.

And remember that he writes in those early chapters of Revelation. I think it's to the [00:30:06] church of Laodicea. He writes to him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne even as I also overcame and am set down with my father in his throne.

Well now I see that if I talk to you about all the things that I wanted to talk to you about this afternoon. I should fall into that dreadful trap of going on and depriving you of your tea.

And I'm sure our brother over here had run out of tape and he'd be very upset with me. And I think perhaps I must hurry along and speak very briefly about the rest of these thoughts. I would like to leave them with you for your meditation. First of all in verse 7 and the following verses. He writes there and he says I write no new commandment unto you but an old [00:31:03] commandment which ye had from the beginning. We know what this is don't we? We don't have to look in this chapter to see what it is. We know that this old commandment which has become the new commandment for us. It's not a new commandment and yet it is a new commandment. Is the commandment which the Lord Jesus has laid upon us that ye love one another. That you love one another. And why is that? It's because we're the children of the light. The darkness is passing away and the true light is shining. And we're those that are walking in the light. And if we're walking in the light then we must love one another. And you know it's not enough for you and me to love one another as a matter of dogma. And let's be frank about it brethren. Very often I'm afraid this is what we do. We love one another [00:32:03] because the scripture says we love one another and because we repeat to each other that we love

one another. But how many of our gatherings are there today which are split right down the middle between two factions of the brethren and they don't love one another. They've put up a barrier. They've put up a wall. They haven't separated. We're so weak that we don't separate. But they put up a barrier. And we say well I'm on this side of the barrier. And we say well I'm on that side of the barrier. And you see the reason why the barrier is there is because there's a point of view on this side. And there's a point of view on that side. And there's only one right point of view and that's my point of view. Now I'm speaking frankly with you brethren because I feel that if there's anything that distresses the Lord about our way of going on it's because we don't keep this commandment, this new commandment, this old commandment. We don't know what it means to love one another. You remember how the Lord spoke to the Pharisees and he said go and learn what this [00:33:02] mean is. I will have mercy and not sacrifice. He says to them if you had known what it meant you would not have condemned the guiltless. You see I say there's a barrier in the middle of the meeting and the barrier is there because there's a different point of view on each side of the barrier. And there's only one right point of view and that's my point of view. And there's only one way for the brethren to live together in unity and you'll find it in the second of Philippians. Each esteeming the other better than themselves. And after it's told us about the humility of the person and the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in those downward steps to Calvary's cross, even the death of the cross, it tells us go and work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God that works it in you. And so my brother and my sister because it applies equally to the sister and the brother. Love your brethren and your sisters and don't allow that barrier to [00:34:05] exist. And if your point of view is not the same as your brother's point of view then you allow him to have his point of view and you keep your point of view. And I feel that under our humility and under God's guidance and under the subjection of our hearts to the Spirit of God we shall find that both points of view can usually go along quietly side by side because after all our points of view are the points of view that God has given us and there's room for both. And if we're humble and we give place to one another then we can take the barrier away and we can live together the one with the other and we can show this love, this love of God first shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. And when it's the question of hating our brother remember that the hatred came in right at the beginning, Cain and Abel. [00:35:02] It's an old problem, it's one that we've lived with right down through the ages ever since man was first brought into that or first fell into that dreadful condition of sin. The hatred of our brother and this is the commandment, the old commandment that we love one another. And now in the 15th verse we're told that we're not to love the world. Oh we say we always hear this don't we? We always hear this.

One of the things the preachers are always harping about that we're not to love the world. We've got to live in the world, we've got to live with the people in the world, we've got to have our neighbors and our people in our work, our office or wherever we happen to operate we've got to live and rub shoulders with the world. Have we got to be thoroughly objectionable to the unbeliever because we're believers? [00:36:05] I don't think this is what this scripture is talking about at all my young friend. This is not the way we read it. Those things that we love, those people that we love are those where our heart affections are centered. If we go out into the street today here in Catford or in our own hometown wherever that may be and we look around us we shall see all over the place the evidence of those people that love the world. And what are the evidences? Well we've got them here. The lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. You know them as well as I know them. The lust of the flesh is a thing that we find thrown at us. We can't open a newspaper [00:37:04] without having it thrown at us in every direction today. It's almost been deified by the generation in which we live. And the lust of the eyes why in this day of advertising I appeal.

Everything is produced in a form to be attractive. And the pride of life why we just turn our head and

we listen and there's a motorcycle going tearing up through the streets of Catford at 70 miles an hour. It's the pride of life. But my brother you say this is the unbeliever you're talking about. Yes I know it's the unbeliever but we're in danger of having our affections in this direction. And this is why this scripture is written here that our affections should not be in that direction. That when we see these things and we see them encroaching upon our own hearts then we identify them. First of all we identify them. We say that's the lust of the flesh we say. [00:38:03] We say that's the lust of the eyes. We say this is the pride of life attacking my soul. And when we identify them then we can judge them. And we can see to it that our affections are not cultivated in that direction. And we set our eyes against these things and towards the person of the Lord Jesus Christ he's the one way to love. And then also with him to our brethren because we can't love the Lord without loving our brethren. The two go together. And so he says love not the world and nor the things of the world. For the world passeth away and the lust thereof but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. And then notice again in the 18th verse he begins to talk about the Antichrist.

And when it talks about the Antichrist of course the primary reference is to the man of sin who is going to come when the church has gone to glory. But now there are many Antichrists. [00:39:05] And what is an Antichrist? An Antichrist is a spirit which denies the truth of the Father and the Son. And we can judge all things. The writings of John tell us we can judge all things on that one question. What think ye of Christ?

Every spirit that confesses Jesus as the Christ come in the flesh is of God. In this world there are many Antichrists but you. One of these but you's of scriptures. You're not baptized with a spirit of Antichrist but you have a pouring out from the Holy One.

Ye have an unction in verse 20 from the Holy One and ye discern all things. Ye discern all things.

[00:40:02] So that we're again able to recognize when a brother comes along perhaps or we hear a man ministering and we find he doesn't give the Lord Jesus Christ his place as the Christ, as the Messiah, as the Anointed One of God, as the Savior of the world. We say that's the spirit of the Antichrist and we can hear it all over the world today. We can hear it from the pulpit of so-called Christian churches, the spirit of Antichrist. They deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. They deny the efficacy of the precious blood. They deny the eternal life of the believer. It's all the spirit of Antichrist and you and I brother and sister we don't need to be sidetracked by this because the Holy Spirit of God has been poured out, an unction, a pouring out. It's been poured out upon us. What a blessed truth this is. We don't realize it enough that we have had the [00:41:03] Spirit of God poured out upon us. I know it only happened on one occasion but it's made good to your heart and mine. After that you believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, the down payment on your inheritance. Ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye discern all things. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. A dreadful thing that it was ever necessary for such words as these to be put on paper by the Spirit of God.

And now finally verse 28 just to close. And now little children abide in him that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. The Lord Jesus [00:42:09] is coming. I feel that all our ministry ought to be orientated about this truth that Jesus is coming.

He's coming soon. He's coming at any time to receive us. We ought to live all our lives in the anticipation of this moment. So that we're saying every day Lord Jesus come. The Spirit and the bride say come. And now the word says abide in him that when he shall appear we shall not be ashamed



that he's coming. You see it's possible that we might be living our lives in such a way that for him to walk in on us would be a terrible experience for us. We should wish the earth would open and swallow us up because he's come at a time when we're ashamed of ourselves. [00:43:05] Isn't this it? But if we're abiding in him then this won't happen. So he says so he says abide in him that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed at his coming. May he bless his word to our hearts.