

# A Doer Who Acts

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[ 0 : 00 ] James chapter 1 verses 22 through 27 will be the text that I'm preaching from, but I'm going to begin reading in verse 19.

! If you would stand with me now as we honor the reading of God's Word together. Know this, my beloved brothers, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word which is able to save your souls.

But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away, and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

[ 1 : 15 ] If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this.

To visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. May God add a blessing to the reading of his Word. Would you please be seated? Amen. The greatest sermon that ever was preached was preached by Jesus, and it's called the Sermon on the Mount. In that sermon, Jesus covered a wide range of subjects as he taught about what it meant to follow him. And he closed that sermon with a look towards a future day, a future day of judgment. He said in Matthew 7, 21 through 23, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?

[ 2 : 36 ] And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.

Then Jesus ends that sermon with an illustration. In the preceding verses 24 through 27, he says, Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

So here Jesus is talking about two groups. One group that has done some pretty remarkable things in his name, or so they claim.

[ 3 : 44 ] But Jesus says to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. On the other hand is this other group who hears and obeys Jesus' instruction and do things, acting on his words, doing the will of his father.

This group's works are compared to a man who built his house upon a rock. They hear Jesus' words, and then they act on them, practicing them, applying them.

And endure the same storms, which destroys the dwelling places of the other group who built on the sand.

Now, without knowing the rest of the sermon or the rest of scripture, you could read his closing remarks and be left in a quandary.

Both groups have works. Externally, they are done or appear to be done in the name or for the cause of Jesus. But one group enters the kingdom of heaven, and the other is banished eternally to hell.

[ 5 : 01 ] In addition, believers are confronted with an emphasis here on obedience to Christ's commands with the kingdom of God being at stake.

And this can be perplexing when we take into account what the rest of scripture has to say about salvation and that it's by grace alone.

How is it possible for Jesus and other biblical authors to teach that salvation is by grace alone and yet make entrance into heaven seem to depend on works too?

Is Jesus contradicting himself? Does the Bible contradict itself? Well, both Jesus and the biblical authors of scripture speak and write on the assumption that there is an inherent cause and effect relationship between regeneration and obedience.

Genuine faith, saving faith produces fruit. Salvation is by faith alone. Faith alone justifies. But genuine faith is a working faith.

[ 6 : 12 ] When gospel seed lands on good soil, it takes root. It grows. It blossoms. Works. Good deeds done in Jesus' name in obedience to his word according to the will of his heavenly father.

They don't earn salvation, but are evidence of a life of someone who has received salvation. The salvation that produces a harvest of action.

James will go on to say in chapter 2 that genuine faith without fruit, without evidence, is dead. It's nothing.

It's worthless. Now, what does this mean for the person who will claim on that future day of judgment that they've done good things in Jesus' name but won't enter into the kingdom of heaven? Well, that the motivation behind their works were sinful. At the root, at the core of their works is a selfish desire.

[ 7 : 22 ] Seeking maybe to convince themselves that they are a good person. Or that they can put God in their debt. Or thinking that they can earn their way to heaven.

Perhaps it's a desire also for people to see their good deeds and to receive praise from men for them. Much like the Pharisees who were consistently in conflict and in confrontation with Jesus. As he would repeatedly expose their hypocrisy. James' concern in verses 19 through 21 is the proper reception of God's word.

And if you recall from last week, we saw that to properly receive God's word, it requires a submissive, a purified, and a humble attitude. It is the person who properly receives God's word that correctly applies God's word to their lives.

And this demonstrates the genuineness of their faith. And so the main idea for this sermon this morning is applying God's word to your life is evidence of genuine salvation.

[ 8 : 38 ] Applying God's word to your life is evidence of genuine salvation. In verses 22 through 27, James reveals three ways that those who have been truly saved apply God's word to their lives.

So what, you might think? Why does this matter? Well, because a day is coming. A day that God has scheduled in your future.

A day when Jesus, the Son of God, will return. And he will return to judge us all. And that day will reveal the true intentions and motivations behind everything you ever did or everything that you ever said or claimed to do in Jesus' name.

That day will reveal who truly is in Christ and who isn't. All counterfeits on that day will be exposed. You know, I fear that there are many people who occupy spaces in pews and churches who spend a lot of time serving in the church.

[ 9 : 49 ] But who are deceived into thinking that they are saved because they've recited a prayer. Because they've walked down an aisle. Because they've taken communion.

Or they were baptized. Or they gave money. And they just busied themselves with the work of the church. Trusting that those things have saved them.

Only to realize on that day that they never truly received the gospel. They never truly applied God's word to their lives in ways that demonstrated genuine, authentic, saving faith.

And so my desire for you this morning is twofold. That the Holy Spirit will either confirm to you the authenticity of your faith or the inauthenticity of the faith that you proclaim or profess to have.

I hope that if your faith is proven authentic today by God's word, that you will be inspired to apply God's word more fervently to your life. If it's proven inauthentic, then I pray that you will no longer be

deceived.

[11:10] And that today will be the day of salvation for you. The first way those who are truly saved apply God's word comes from verses 22 through 26.

Their application of God's word is undeceived. Their application of God's word is undeceived. And so James begins by saying, but be doers of the word and not hearers only.

And here I prefer the New American Standards, more literal translation of this verse, which says, but prove yourselves doers of the word.

See, it's possible to fill your mind with Bible knowledge and to be self-satisfied with that knowledge, but not to apply the profound truths it contains.

Again, the Pharisees struggled with this, and Jesus was not afraid to call them out on it. In one instance, in Matthew 23, 1 through 7, Jesus said to the crowd and to his disciples, the scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat.

[12:17] So do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to bear and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogue, and greetings in the marketplaces, and being called rabbi by others.

I understand that the Pharisees would have obliterated just about anyone in a Bible quizzing competition. They would have had their hands raised to answer correctly any question posed to them if they were in a Sunday school class.

But Jesus knew that though they knew God's word, they didn't truly know God. Their works were done to receive praise for themselves.

They made up their own traditions, and they passed them off to others as if they shared the same authority as God's word. But they did it all for show, deceiving themselves and others.

[13:38] They were hearers only, not genuinely doers of God's word. James' word for hearers in the Greek is a croates. It was used to describe a person who sat passively in an audience as they listened to someone speak or someone perform.

Today, we'd think of someone who audits a college class. They are required to attend the class, and they pay for the class.

So that means that presumably they want to be there, and they want to listen and to learn. But if you audit a class, you aren't required to do any additional study outside of the classroom, to take quizzes or tests or turn in papers or anything.

In other words, they are not held accountable for what they hear. And tragically, most churches have too many auditors. They attend.

They listen. But that's it. They have no desire to obey, no desire to apply God's word. Years ago, and in my previous church, we had a couple who attended every Sunday.

[14:56] Rain, sleet, snow. They were there, and they were sitting in the back pew. But at 1130, they got up and they left.

Every single Sunday. No matter where I was in the sermon, no matter how passionately I was preaching that morning, I didn't have to look at my watch.

I didn't have to look at the clock on the back wall. When they got up to leave, I knew it's 1130. And it drove me crazy. Because to me, the last part of the sermon is often the most important part of the message.

It's the time when the closing instructions, the closing appeals are given. And so finally, I had to talk to them about it. I told them that they were missing the most important part of the message, the instruction on how to take what has been preached and then to apply it to their lives.

And they told me that the reason why they left early, and you probably can figure it out, was so that they could get a table at IHOP before all the other churches dismissed.

[16:21] Now, imagine people attending Jesus' sermon on the mount and listening to him preach, but missing the end, missing his dire warnings about the coming day of judgment, and not knowing, not understanding how it all ties together.

Because they couldn't wait to get their pancakes, or their bread and fish, or whatever they ate for breakfast back then. And this couple thought that that was a totally reasonable explanation to leave when they did.

And it seemed like they were just coming to church just to check boxes. Is that what you do? You know, I remember going to Sunday school as a kid, and they used to have boxes that teachers would check off.

Remember those? You received a check next to your name just for being there. You received a check next to your name also for bringing a Bible. You'd receive a check for bringing an offering.

[ 17 : 43 ] You'd receive a check for bringing a friend. And it felt good seeing all of those check marks next to your name, didn't it? Or doesn't it? And I'm not discouraging any of those things because it's good to teach our children to have those disciplines.

But I think an unintended consequence of that is that's what some people believe being a follower of Christ is about.

Checking boxes. I came, I saw, I heard, and I brought my Bible. Therefore, I'm a good Christian. And I have the check marks to prove it. But James points out that such people deceive themselves. Deceive or delude in the Greek means to reason falsely or to miscalculate.

Thinking that hearing the word and knowing the word equates to genuine salvation, but not obeying it is a serious spiritual miscalculation. Satan knows God's word.

[ 18 : 56 ] Satan quoted God's word to Jesus when he tempted him in the wilderness. James' point is that any response to the gospel that does not include obedience is self-deception.

If a profession of faith does not include a changed life, that hungers and that thirsts for God's word and desires to obey his word is empty.

Like the Pharisees whom Jesus described as being whitewashed tombs full of dead men's bones. The outside looks good, but the inside is full of the stench of death and decay.

Satan loves empty professions. Because they give people the false belief that they are saved when they aren't. To explain this self-deception more clearly, James uses an analogy in verses 23 and 24.

He says, The word James uses for look in the Greek describes a careful and cautious consideration of what is being looked at.

[ 20 : 15 ] The hearer of the word who is not also a doer is like a person who carefully observes his face or her face in a mirror, but as soon as they turn away, they forget what has just been observed in the mirror.

You know, I'm sure that you, like me, when you wake up in the morning, you see a face in desperate need of being put back in order. In the New Testament, mirrors were typically made of highly polished brass or bronze.

They didn't have glass mirrors. Glass mirrors weren't developed until about the 14th century. So mirrors during the time that James wrote gave a dim and a distorted reflection of the person who was using it.

So you had to carefully manipulate the mirror. You had to carefully turn it to find the best light to reflect the best image of your face. And that's the idea that James has in mind here.

By careful and patient observation, the person could see what they actually look like in the mirror. But for whatever reason, because of distractions or a bad memory or refusal to accept the reality of what they've just seen in the mirror, the person in James' analogy puts the mirror down and forgets what they've just seen.

[ 21 : 48 ] The person who looks at God's word, even if it is carefully and accurately done and does not apply the truths they have discovered to their own lives, is like someone who immediately forgets what the mirror has revealed.

Except the consequences are immeasurably worse than someone seeing you without your makeup on or with a serious case of bedhead. This is the kind of person who reads about the horrible thing that their sin is.

And they also see God's gracious provision in Christ as a remedy for that. Yet they go on their way, living their lives as if they were never exposed to these realities.

Conversely, James goes on to say in verse 25, Now here James uses another word for look, not the same one as before.

This word describes someone who looks intently, bending over, carefully examining something from every angle, from every vantage point, in order to get the best view of it.

[ 23 : 12 ] And when I think of that, it reminds me of golf. Now, I like playing golf, but I hate watching golf on TV.

Because it drives me crazy whenever they line up their putts. You see them line up their putts? I mean, they're bending down, and they're putting their golf club out, and I'm like, what does that help, you know?

And then they go the other way around, and they do it from the other vantage point. And it drives me crazy, because all we're doing is watch this guy look intently at his ball for what seems like 30 minutes or longer.

And then when they miss the shot, it makes you even more frustrated, doesn't it? But I understand why they do it, because that's how they win.

You know, they say in golf, you drive for show, but you putt for dough. And so they squat down. They line up everything. They are very careful about looking at that shot from every angle.

[ 24 : 15 ] They look at their ball in the lineup intently. The person who looks not just carefully, but intently like that at God's word examines it to discover its deepest and most complete meaning.

They seek to understand whatever they're reading in the context that they're reading it. They use other scriptures to gain better understanding of what they're reading and what it means. And when they discover that truth, they abide by it.

Understanding that this truth was revealed to them by the Holy Spirit for a purpose, to apply it to their lives. God expects them to do something about or something with what they've been shown.

And so the key to James' analogy here is this. The faithful hearer and the faithful doer of God's word doesn't study the mirror, but what the mirror reflects back to them.

James' description of God's word as the perfect law emphasizes the commands that are contained within it as being given by God, his requirements, his expectations, and what it should produce in their lives.

[ 25 : 32 ] And by referring it to the law of liberty, James is focusing on its redemptive power in freeing believers from their bondage to sin. Now, Satan wants to deceive you by making it seem like it's the other way around.

That obeying God's word is bondage, and that disobeying God's word and living your life, pursuing whatever you desire is where you find freedom.

We are encouraged in this world to elevate our feelings and our emotions and our opinions over God's word, trusting that we know what is best and we know what is best for us, that sin will produce freedom.

Now, I think every youth pastor at some point has encountered a nice young girl or a nice young man who began dating an unbeliever.

And you had concerns about that, right? Because you know what typically happens. And they say, well, no, I'm going to get them to come to church, and it's going to be good.

[ 26 : 48 ] But before long, and maybe they bring them to church once or twice, but before long you see that that person has pulled them further and further away from the church and from the Christian life.

And I think that they're convinced that, you know, this person and the things that this person wants to do with me in this relationship, it's going to be freeing for me.

It's going to be better for me. I'll find happiness in that instead. Now, we had a girl in our youth group, Danny and I, and this happened to her.

And we warned her. She brought him to youth group. But eventually that's what happened. She just stopped coming. And eventually, after a while, she came back, and she informed us that she had become pregnant.

And her boyfriend, along with his family, were encouraging her to get an abortion. And thankfully, she didn't follow through with that.

[ 27 : 52 ] Thankfully, our church rallied around her. But, you know, he promised that he would marry her. He promised that he would be a good dad. But it wasn't long after the baby was born that he was nowhere to be found.

All of us, I'm sure, have experienced the consequences of thinking that sin would bring some kind of liberation to us.

You know, I went through a period like that in my life. Where I thought, you know what? I'm going to be the captain of my own ship. I'm going to make my own decisions. I'm going to go my own way.

And I thought that I'd find freedom in that. But I'll tell you, I've never felt more lonely than I did during that time. More miserable. More depressed. More unfulfilled.

Looking in the mirror and not liking the person that I was seeing. That was a dark time in my life. Don't be deceived into thinking that your sin is the path to freedom.

[ 28 : 55 ] It's truly the path to bondage. As Jesus said in Matthew 8, 34 through 36, Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

The slave does not remain in the house forever. The son remains forever. So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed. The person who receives God's word submissively and purely and humbly stoops over like a golfer lining up his putt to get a better look at it.

Their concern isn't to acquire facts, to impress others, to win arguments, or to use it as ammunition against their enemies.

They look at it to see themselves first. And they detest the sin in their own life that his word reveals. And in detesting what they see, they desire to have every sin, every moral blemish removed and replaced with God's righteousness. They see themselves.

[ 30 : 04 ] And they say in effect, Oh Lord, forgive me. Cleanse me. Fill me with your truth.

Your love. Your righteousness. I desire to be like you. I want to reflect your image. I want to be more like Jesus.

And such a person is not a forgetful hearer who is deceived, but a doer who then acts. Knowing their need. Seeing their remedy, their cure in Jesus.

And understanding, trusting, and believing that God's word is right and obedience to it brings blessing. In verse 26, James adds, If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

Did you know that the average person speaks about 7,000 words per day? 7,000. Times that by 365 days, That's 2,555,000 words spoken by the average person every year.

[ 31 : 18 ] Now the Bible that you have, right? This is a big book. And it contains over 783,000 words.

And so the words that you speak in a year, that's comparable to three Bibles and a New Testament. Worth of words that you speak. James' point is that eventually a person's words will reveal the true state of their spiritual condition.

A person's speech will eventually disclose whether or not God controls their lives by whether or not God controls their mouths, their tongues. Matthew 12, 36 through 37, Jesus says, I tell you, On the day of judgment, people will give an account for every careless word they speak.

For by your words, you will be justified, and by your words, you will be condemned. So here's the thing. If God doesn't have a hold of your tongue, he doesn't have a hold of your heart.

The person who trusts in church attendance, and activities, and volunteer work, and all of the external rituals, even knowing God's word, will sooner or later be exposed by their mouths.

[ 32 : 36 ] And now I need to hit these last couple of points quickly because some of you may be eager to get to IHOP. So the second way that the person who has genuine faith seeks to apply God's word is this.

The application of God's word is undefiled. It's undefiled. The beginning of verse 27. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their affliction.

Now, the Bible says a lot about orphans and widows. And next week, Tyler's going to share a little bit more about that. But this is James's point here when he brings up these two groups of people.

During this time when he wrote, there were no such things as orphanages. There were no life insurance policies. There was no social security.

There was no welfare programs. And so to assist an orphan or a widow in their affliction meant serving groups of people who had zero ability to repay you back in any way.

[ 33 : 43 ] To serve them meant receiving nothing in return. Serving without any thought of reciprocity. And so I ask you, do you seek to serve others like that?

Those who know the grace they've received from God as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ manifest that by seeking to obey him, expecting nothing in return for it.

In Luke 10, 38 through 42, we meet two sisters, Mary and Martha. You know, Martha is working hard.

Could you imagine having Jesus come to your house? All the things you got to pick up, right? You feel like I got to, I mean, I know when we just had Christmas recently, right?

Many of you had family members come to your house and you drove yourself crazy, picking everything up, making everything was neat and in order. Now imagine the son of God being a

visitor in your house. You would want everything to go perfectly, wouldn't you?

[ 34 : 51 ] And so Martha is doing that. She's busy, she's busy. She's doing this, she's doing that. She's really working hard here. But her sister Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus and that's driving Martha crazy, right?

You should be helping me. Jesus is here. We need to work to make him feel comfortable in our house. We want to serve him by, you know, doing all of these things.

But she sat intently at his feet and Jesus picked up on all of this and this is what he said. In verse 40 it says, But Martha was distracted with much serving and she went up to him and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do the service alone?

Tell her then to help me. But the Lord answered her, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary.

Mary has chosen the good portion which will not be taken away from her. It is possible to serve the Lord and others for all the wrong reasons.

[ 36 : 00 ] Maybe you seek to be a leader in the church or to serve on a committee in the church. But it could be that your true desire to do so is to advance your own agenda.

Maybe you occupy yourself with some kind of service on Sunday morning, either in the church or at home, so that you have an excuse to not come to Sunday school class or to gather with us as a church when we worship.

Why? To keep yourself distracted, maybe. To feel like you're in control in some way, maybe.

To avoid someone or something, maybe. I don't know. But the Lord is not impressed with activity, but devotion.

Devotion to listening, to him, to obeying his teaching, which is best for you and which will most positively affect the way that you serve him after you've listened.

[ 37 : 15 ] The person who has been genuinely saved serves out of compassion for others. Their service isn't done to keep them distracted, but to meet the needs of others.

Like orphans and widows, they're not doing it to get, but merely to give. And they do it gladly. Not huffing and puffing like Martha, I do all the work and nobody else is helping me.

Not seeking accolades, but demonstrating the love they have received from Jesus Christ. And then the third way. Genuine faith is proven through being a doer, is that their application of God's word is unstained.

The rest of verse 27 says, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. The person who does not have compassion for others, who is not concerned about living righteously, and whose satisfaction is found in sin, cannot be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

1 John 2, 15-16 says, Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

[ 38 : 37 ] For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life is not from the Father, but is from the world. The person who is genuinely saved does not seek to find loopholes or excuses to justify disobedience or rejection of God's word, or just to pretend like they didn't read what they just did.

They don't view God's word from a worldly perspective, but they view the world from a biblical perspective. And so I ask you, what has a greater hold on you today?

Is God's word or the world? Is God's word what you seek to inform you about what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false, what is good and what is evil?

No, these days, we are seeing more and more churches and people who call themselves Christians exchanging the truth of God for lies in order to appease the world that the Lord has called us to minister to in the hopes that they will be saved.

Why do they do that? I think they're afraid. I think they're afraid of being viewed as irrelevant. I think it's fear of losing out on what they truly love.

[ 40 : 12 ] Afraid of calling sin, sin. Afraid of speaking about the things that Jesus spoke about clearly. Afraid of affirming and standing upon his word.

And instead they butcher it and they mutilate his word to appease the world because the world is what they truly love. You know, church, brother, sister, Christians, we're not going to save anyone.

We're not going to be used by God to spread the gospel well that people will be saved if we're seeking to tickle their ears and using their methods to do it. I would rather be called names and seen as irrelevant by this world than be seen as someone who supports the things that they're

teaching and they're propagating and they're proclaiming.

How about you? Main point of application is this. How you react to God's word reveals your true spiritual condition.

You've heard God's word, but are you acting on it? Are you more grieved by your sin than you used to be?

[ 41 : 34 ] Or are you flippant in regard to your moral failures? Do you see the speck in other people's eyes but don't see the log that is protruding out of yours?

Do you feel a sense of your own depravity or are you proud of your obedience? Are you more humble and meek than you used to be or does arrogance and self-assertiveness continue to thrive and grow within you?

Do you show more mercy to others or are you self-absorbed with your needs? Are you checking boxes? Are you finding ways to distract yourself with service that truly serves you?

Do you seek to forgive or do you seek revenge? Are you merciful or are you vindictive?

Do you, like Jesus, pray for your enemies in the hopes that they'll be saved or do you hope that God will obliterate them with his wrath? Do you serve to give or to get?

[ 42 : 54 ] Three questions of application as we close this time together. Question number one. How is James' call for obedience different from an attempt to earn a right standing before God that his works faced?

Question two. Can you think of people you know who profess to follow Christ but show no evidence of being saved? How might you approach them with wisdom and boldness?

And then question three. List some areas of your life where you've said you're willing to obey but haven't. How will you move forward to be obedient in these areas?

And let me say this. God is gracious. God is loving. And God is forgiving.

I'm sure that you, like me, sin every day. Wrestle with this word every day. Wanting to come up with excuses and deceiving yourself for a time every day.

[ 44 : 04 ] And so I'm not trying to tell you that moral perfection is what saves you because the Bible says that it isn't. But I ask you, is there that desire? And God being gracious and merciful and forgiving like he is when we mess up, he reveals that to us and he provides us with that opportunity to do better the next time.

So I don't want you to be discouraged if you are feeling like that is you. But this is what I encourage you to do. Pray for the next time.

Pray for the next time. Lord, I'm struggling with this. Give me the opportunity and the next time that I'll obey and I'll trust in you.

Let's pray. God, forgive us. So often in your church, Lord, we can be like Martha.

God, maybe if we stopped and really thought about the motivation behind what we're doing, we might not like what we find out.

[ 45 : 17 ] Lord, I pray for each of us that having heard your word this morning, your spirit will apply it to our lives. that we would, like you, seek to serve, seek to give, not to receive, seek to find what we can do to benefit others instead of thinking about what other people need to do to benefit us.

Lord, we know that right now we live in a time in this country where so many people who claim to know you and claim to serve you have disregarded your word in order to be loved by the world.

God, may that not be us. No matter what the cost may be, may that not be us, Lord, because we know a day is coming. We'll all stand before you. And what will matter on that day is, are we in you?

Do we know you? Have we been genuinely saved by you or not? And so, Lord, may the works that we do be done as evidence of the work that you've done in us to adopt us as your children, to save us from our sins, and to give eternal life to us by faith alone, by grace alone, in Jesus Christ alone.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.