

Warning Concerning Antichrists

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 February 2024

Preacher: James Tang

[0:00] Happy New Year!■■■■! Of course, we're trying not to say the usual ones like! We're trying to be a little bit more Christ-like in our blessings.

Who's got some... I mean, all I've got is!■■■■! And...■■■■!■■■■!■■■■! Whoa! Aussie ball coming in! Yeah, I don't have many other ones.

I mean,■■■■, but that only really works for Julian. Who's got some good Christian Chinese ones? Zhu Yan Sanjai. Zhu Yan Sanjai. What does that mean, Terence? God's grace is with you. God's grace always be with you. That's good. Zhu Yan Sanjai.

Jill? Singling. Singling. Chongwen be filled with the Holy Spirit. Whoa! Good. A couple more. Come on, Chinese people. What else have we got here? Gabs, what do you got? No sh...

[0:57] Agnes, give us a Chinese Christian one. Fokbui Munya. Fokbui Munya. What does that mean? Gab.

Gab. I'm asking you. What? It means your cup overflows. Yes. Yeah? With blessing. Cup overflows with blessing. One more, one more.

Come on. Come on. Connie's looking away to avoid eye contact, but I'm coming right at you. No? No other Chinese Christian one? Come on.

One more. That's it? Oh man. I think that actually might be it. I might have woke up. Anyway, all of those things. Blessings to you. Blessings to you. The title of today's passage is a very out for Chinese New Year.

It's warning about the Antichrist. Yep. That's what... We're going to go for it. But I promise you there will be a Chinese New Year theme somewhere that pops up. But we're going to be looking.

[1:53] We're just going through one John. We're going through one John. And now we've hit this one, which is really interesting. And he's warning. He's warning the people in the church. It starts with, actually, he says, I want you to know him.

Not just know about him. I want you to know him. I want you to know God. Because when you know God, then actually it will impact the way you live. It will impact the way you behave.

So he addresses the moral. And then he addresses the social, which we did a couple of weeks ago. And then, of course, Aaron led us in a great time of discovery Bible sermon, which I think, from what I hear, has just been great.

The whole heart of that is, actually, when you come in here, can you leave here with the tools so that you can open the Word of God up yourself? That you are able to understand this book yourself and digest it and feed from it yourself.

That's the whole point of why we're going to be trying this. I know it's uncomfortable, but I think Nathan said one thing that I love. It's like, it's uncomfortable, but I love it, is what he said. And so be prepared for a little bit more of that.

[2:53] Aaron, thank you. Doing a great job. When I came back after last week, I was referred to as Mini Aaron instead. Oh, there's Mini Aaron. Anyway, thank you. It must be a hair joke.

Thank you. And then he says, when you know God, it will impact the way you behave. And it will impact the way you associate with other people. That's the whole point.

You're not supposed to fight anymore when you know who God is. When you keep his truth at the front. And this week, he's actually talking about that. He's talking about the truth. He say, hey, in the last days, there's going to be an antichrist.

There's going to be an antichrist. And actually, there's going to be many antichrists. What are these many antichrists and what do they do? I really want to just hone in on one verse. And we're going to talk about it. Verse 22.

1 John 2, verse 22. Who is the liar, but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the antichrist. He who denies the Father and the Son.

[3:52] He's saying, hey, as your church grows, and this is the context. The church is growing, but then something happens. There's people from the world come into the church, and then they start leaving. This is the context of it.

So he's writing to these people. He's saying, look, I know that you're growing, but I also know that there are people leaving. Why? Why are they leaving? They're leaving because they don't believe what you believe. What's happened here?

There's an antichrist, or there are antichrists who are denying the truth. Who are denying the truth. And I want to talk today about the truth. What were they denying? They were denying that Jesus is the Christ.

Now, if you've got to just remember, this is around 100 AD. The church is growing, but there is no canon yet. They've not agreed on which books make the Bible.

They've not agreed on that yet. They've also not created the creeds where they can actually decide, okay, this is what we believe. So there's this kind of like back and forth that's going on. What is true? What is true? And then there are people, there were people coming out from that time and saying, actually, you know what?

[4:52] And actually a lot of these people were described as the Gnostics. The Gnostics were people who believed that the spirit and the flesh were completely separate. That you were not, they would not be merged together as one.

So whatever you do in the physical realm does not affect your spiritual consequence or your eternity. That is essentially what they're saying. They were also saying that Jesus is not God. Why? Because they believe that Jesus can't be both spirit and flesh because they're separate things. So what they said was Jesus was a good man who, when he was baptized, you know, when the dove descended on him, and that moment he became a divine being.

But then that spirit left him just before he was crucified. Because they were like, well, if he was God, then he wouldn't die. That's not possible is what they were saying. So they were saying Jesus cannot be fully spirit, fully God, and also fully man.

And so that was what they were believing. So they were saying Jesus isn't the Christ. He was a good man that we can be inspired by, but he is not God. He is not the one who saves us from our sins. Now, that's the core doctrine right there.

[5:56] We don't use the word doctrine a lot, but that's the core doctrine. Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, that he was fully God and yet fully man, and that he came to die on behalf of all of us and paid that debt, and then died the death, and then came to life, and so that we would live?

There was a group that didn't. Because in that time, they were the Gnostics. They lived in a world that was inspired by Greek philosophy. It was just the Roman Empire and all the values that came with it. The world has seeped into the church.

And so today, as I was looking at this, and actually, the Lord really gave me a bit of a slap this week as I was reflecting on this, because I think there's something that I have adopted from the world that I've let seep into the way I approach God.

I think there's things that we've adopted from the Chinese culture that has caused us to live a certain way when it comes to us being Christians. So I want to really kind of wrestle a little bit with that.

But maybe just the first of all, I love the Chinese culture. I'm about to talk smack about the Chinese culture, but I do love the Chinese culture. We were in America a couple of weeks ago, and I realized how much I miss the Chinese culture when the restaurants don't serve warm water.

[7:09] And there are not toothpicks anywhere and everywhere for you to access. You're looking for it everywhere. And when you ask for warm water, growing up in England, asking for warm water was just like speaking another language.

They do not understand what that is. And so I love the Chinese culture. I love the community. I love the family. I love all of these things, the reverence and the awe.

And actually, Chinese people are very just honoring, respectful in so, so many ways. So I love those things, but I think there are things in the culture that really has impacted the way we live.

In fact, one of the books that I was reading over Christmas was Malcolm Gladwell's Outliers. Who's read that book before? It's a great book, and there's one chapter on Chinese people. You have all

heard the stereotype that Chinese people are good at math.

Have we heard that? And he kind of dives into that a little bit more, and he thinks it's about the way, it's just how our language is made up. So if you think about, actually, I do this.

[8:06] If you tell me your telephone number, I will remember it in Chinese. Even though my native tongue is English, who does that? Who naturally remembers numbers in Chinese more?

Absolutely.

I don't know why, and I can never explain it until Malcolm Gladwell told me why. It's because the language is just so much easier to learn numbers with. Actually, all the numbers are one syllable.

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■. So they did a test where if they showed you a series of numbers, the people who have Chinese as the native tongue are much better memorizing that sequence of numbers, because it's so much easier to just have it reel off the tongue.

Whereas in English, it's different. You have seven. And the other thing is, as you grow up, even as a child, it goes from ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■. And then it goes ■■.

Which actually makes absolute sense, because ■■ is ■■■. And so actually, as a Chinese kid, numbers come easy to you, because it just is logical.

[9:06] It's rational. It makes sense. Oh, what's ■■■? Well, it's ■■■■. Whereas English-speaking kids suddenly have to start learning new words, like 11. What's 11?

Oh, I don't know. 11. I guess it's another word I have to remember. 12. You're right. And so then you have this thing where actually, even from a very young age, those Chinese people almost have the advantage.

And if you have an advantage of that age, it then just speeds up. And of course, the other thing that he talks about in the book is the work ethic of the Chinese people. And he actually ties it back to the fact that we're in the few countries who obviously come from rice paddy farming.

Rice paddy farming being something that's very hard work. It's very hard, whereas the West, in the agricultural farming world, they started inventing machines. And technology to help them farm in a much easier way.

But rice farming is very hard. And the fields that they did it in were very small, so they couldn't bring machines in. So his argument is that's where the Chinese ethic comes in. There's no shortcuts to farming rice.

[10:08] And so the ethic came in for the Chinese people to have that. So there are absolutely good things. There are cultural legacies, his case is, that actually impact the way we live. The question for me is, are any of those cultural legacies bad?

John here is talking about, hey, there are going to be people who lead you astray, who lead you away from the truth, who distort the truth. I wonder if there's any cultural legacies for us, as I wear these and as I throw these around everywhere.

I wonder whether there are any cultural legacies that are actually not of the truth. But actually, if you keep peeling back, you keep peeling back. What we're actually saying is Jesus is not the Christ. Jesus is not the Lord.

Jesus is not the one who saves us. If you ask anyone in this city here, who is God of Hong Kong? They would probably say money, right? They would say all these different things.

And I realized that actually, how we let some of those principles that we learn, maybe are innate to us as Chinese people, we let it seep into our culture in the church.

[11:15] And so the two I really want to focus on are faith and fortune. Faith and fortune. Now, of course, faith is an interesting thing. And here is the lie. The lie is we need the approval of others.

We need the approval of us. This is everywhere. Minji. Everyone needs Minji. Everyone needs faith. If you think about all the actions and all the behaviors that happen around, what's the reason why China have canceled the game that Argentina are due to play in China?

Because they didn't get faith from Lionel Messi. So they canceled the game. It's all about respect.

Now, this appeals to me because if you are interested in Enneagrams at all, I am an Enneagram 3.

Does anyone know what an Enneagram 3 is? Gabs does. What's an Enneagram 3? Achiever.

Achievers, Enneagram 3s care a lot about what people think. Now, the West calls that people pleasing.

But in the Chinese community, in the Chinese world, which is so heavily oriented on people and community and family who are from an honor-shame culture, that is faith.

[12:23] And actually, it drives everything that we do. So the point where if someone is naughty, if a child is naughty, what do we say? They bring shame on the whole family.

Because when you see a naughty kid, you're kind of associating that naughty kid with everything that that family stands for almost. That honor-shame culture is so strong when it comes to the way we operate as a culture.

Our social value, our social status is so important to us. Why do we want the jobs that everyone is chasing for? Is that we can bring honor to our family.

But when we don't do the things that bring honor, we bring shame. Because now, the culture here is all about relationships. Guan hai. But of course, the flip side of that, the unhealthy side of that is we just keep chasing for the approval of others.

Everything we do is based on, can I avoid shame? The French philosopher Descartes said, I think, therefore I am. Have we heard of that before?

[13:24] Whatever your thoughts are, that is who you are. Maybe the Chinese twist to that is, I belong. Therefore, I am. Some have just this great sharing just about, just one of the first gifts you get from your family is the name.

You know me as James Tang. Why? Because when I was one, we moved to England. And my parents decided that actually my real name would be too hard for the English kids to pronounce. And it wouldn't allow me to assimilate into culture. So they appointed, gave me the name James, which actually does not exist on any of my identities. So actually, I am not James. You guys, you don't know me at all.

My real name is Tang Yatman. Tang Yatman. You see, in the English culture, the Western individualistic culture, my name comes first.

I don't really worry about who you are. You're James. You have the stickers that says, my name is James. But my real name, the culture that I'm from, my clan starts first.

[14:34] Tang. And then it's Yatman. Because when they hear, oh, you're a Tang. Oh, you're so-and-so's son. Your grandfather is so-and-so.

They start to build a picture of you from the name that you have, which has to do with the clan. And actually, the identity that comes, maybe just to twist again Descartes' quote, maybe the quote is, I am because we are.

And since we are, therefore I am. I am because we are. And since we are, therefore I am.

We get our identities from the communities that we're in, which is a beautiful thing. Because it shows you that the world is bigger than you.

You know, I shared last week at another church that I was visiting that actually the way of just families have changed in one generation is just incredible.

[15:33] Our parents, our dad was the youngest of 10. My mom was the second youngest of 11. So if you think about the ratios between adult and children back then, when the foreign domestic helper situation had not taken off, the grandparents were basically 2 to 11 in terms of the people that they had to care for.

Within one generation, that has completely flipped. And now you see five adults, six adults caring for one child in this society right now. And then you wonder why the kids grow up thinking that everything is about them.

And this isn't just on them then. It's actually the pressure that that comes in. Can you imagine the pressure and how it would crush you knowing that all the hopes of the 4, 5, 6 adults around you are on you?

The pressure that is. And then we wonder why they have mental health issues. But if we can remind them that actually life is bigger than them, that within this community, you can find your place and this is where you belong.

And that the pressure isn't all on you. Face. Face is such an important one. But here's the problem. When we then therefore feel threatened, then there's a couple of things that happen.

[16:47] The first thing that can happen is we just get defensive. When our face, because we've made it an idol, because that's essentially the God, that how do other people perceive me?

Do I get the respect of other people? Because that is so important. And that has dictated the actions of man over all these generations. When someone's face has been attacked and hurt and that causes them to retaliate.

Because we've made face the idol. I think that's one of the idols that we've adopted. That's one of the antichrists of this society. That we think that we need to protect this.

Is it yours? And I say that the Lord kind of gave me a bit of a wake-up call. Because I think this is what was exposed for me this last week. As I was preparing the sermon.

Actually, I was telling Christina, I had this really fun sermon that we were going to do. Where I was going to bring out all the say-t-t-t-u, all the Chinese proverbs. And we're going to discern which one's false and which one's true.

[17:45] When we measure it to the Bible. And I thought it was going to be a really fun input. Like, not personal at all. Just a really fun activity that we could all do. And then the Lord comes and challenges me about face. Because I realized this is one of my idols.

And I realized it when I'm having conversations with people who are talking and critiquing about the things that I'm doing. And then suddenly, I'm like, ooh, something in me just doesn't quite feel right. And I realized it's because it's attacking my face. Do you have that? I tell you, mind, having a conversation with someone. And they hear from someone else that something that I'm doing, let's say this church, is not really their cup of tea.

They don't really like it. Oh, and so they tell this person that, oh, yeah, yeah, the gathering isn't really that fun thing. It's not really my thing. They do this weird thing here. They do this weird thing there. And then I hear it this way around.

And I'm like, oh, that wasn't supposed to hurt. But that hurts. And I was thinking about why it hurts. Actually, it doesn't hurt if that person comes to talk to me and say, hey, the thing you guys do is quite weird.

[18:56] It hurt because that person told that person who then told me. And I'm like, oh, that's my face. Because now, what does this person think of me?

Do you get that? Have you seen that? And I realize that's exposed my eye. And then I realize when I get criticism, I'm like, why does it crush me so much when someone says the most offhanded thing about something?

And actually, for those of you who are preaching, you'll know this. A preacher is the most precious, the most fragile the first few hours after the sermon. Because it's that moment where you've just poured your heart out.

And then you're walking out. And then usually you get shouted, oh, great sermon. Even if it's not great, people are nice. People are nice and people are fake. And so they say, oh, yeah, that was great. So glad it was only 10 minutes.

And then in that moment, of course, the praise you find, even if it's fake, you're like, oh, just please just give me the praise. And then until someone says, oh, yeah, I didn't quite get what you said.

Well, I don't agree. I've heard these before.

[20:02] I'm sure you might have had this too, Aaron. You're like, you give it a sermon and there's someone from the back who's just been staring at you the whole time. Just like just disagreeing with you. I think Josh is going to be that person for me as he comes. And he's going to come straight up to you.

And he's like, tell me more about what you just said because I disagree with it. And then just inside you just crushed. Because face is your idol. Because face is my idol.

Do you have that in your workplace? You just so happen to be in my workplace. But in your workplace, do you have the same thing? When someone criticizes you about something, do you feel offended? Because if you feel offended, then I think face might be one of your idols.

As Paul Chambers in his devotional book, *My Utmost for His Highest*, says this. You'll know there's something wrong with you when you feel offended by someone. Because that means there's something offensive to Christ inside you. When you take offense with what someone has said to you, that means there's something offensive inside you against God.

And I was like, oh, because I can get easily offended sometimes, especially after a message. Do you have that? Now, if the lie is we need the approval of others, I think the truth is God's approval is all we need.

[21:15] Galatians 1.10. Am I seeking the approval of people or of God? Who's asked that question to themselves? If you're in the entertainment industry, you will have this all the time.

Who am I trying to entertain? Who am I trying to please? What am I trying to achieve here? I'm trying to see the approval and the likes of man. I think all of us have this.

And if we're from an honor-shame culture, which most of us are, then I think we have this. And I think this is the one we have to surrender. How do we surrender it? We speak to the, in the language of those who come from an honor-shame culture.

You can surrender that. You can repent of that idol by simply recognizing that you were actually one that publicly dishonored God. That actually we have not given him the respect and the face that he needs.

That is number one. Because when you recognize that actually we're the ones that have turned our backs on him. That we have dishonored him publicly. How, you say? By the way that we live.

[22:17] When we say that he is Lord, but then we do everything else that doesn't show, reflect that he is actually Lord. If the Antichrist in this book is basically someone who's denying that Jesus is Lord.

Do we do that with our actions? We may say, oh, of course Jesus is God. But by the way you live, does it look like Jesus is God? Because if you don't, then actually we have publicly dishonored him. Because what we're saying, oh God, yeah, I trust you. I worship you. Worship means ascribe worth. Which means you're the most important thing to me. And then we turn around and live our lives in a completely different way where he is not worth at all.

Think of someone. Think of someone that you know who says, Paul, you are so important to me. You are the most important to me. And then Paul goes, hey, James, can we have coffee?

He's like, oh, well, I'm actually busy for the next seven weeks. But maybe if we talk again in seven weeks, maybe I'll have time. I've just completely dishonored him.

[23:20] Do we, do you, do that with the Lord? Is face one of your idols? The question that I ask myself, or maybe you can ask yourself, is why do I care what people think?

Why am I upset when someone seems to throw some shade at me? And not the loving, joking kind of shade that I throw Julian. The real kind of like personal attack kind of ones.

And it's often not even about you as a person. It's just about what you're doing. Maybe there is something that you can improve on, James, in your sermon. But yeah, somehow it brings up something in you.

What is that? Can we be a people that don't take offense with anything because we were worth nothing? We had nothing. And it was because of Christ that we're even still here.

We publicly dishonored him. We did not show him face, yet he would turn his face toward us. In fact, he went to the, we, none of us, none of us like to be humiliated, especially in an honor, shame culture.

[24:27] Humiliation, just the thought. If you get into trouble, maybe a Western thing, it just feels guilty because they've just violated a moral code that they've been, they've believed in. But a Chinese person, someone in an honor, shame culture, when they've done something wrong, what's the biggest problem?

That they get caught and that everyone will know about it. That's the shame coming through. What will other people think of me? This is going to be so humiliating for me.

Next time I show up to a family gathering for Chinese New Year, I know how everyone's going to look at me. The humiliation that that will be. But if we truly recognize what Jesus did for us, that he took on the ultimate, ultimate act of humiliation.

He just finished a book called Humilitas. And it talked about the crucifixion. He said, actually, at that time, if you were a criminal, there were three ways to die. Number one was crucifixion.

Number two was decapitation. And number three was being burned alive. Okay. So all fun stuff. Happy Chinese New Year. And they said, actually, the crucifixion was the worst one.

[25:33] Because that's the one, if you decapitated, it probably hurts for a little bit. And then you won't send anything burning alive. Probably similar. But the humiliation of the crucifixion.

That it could be days. That it could be days that you're just hung on that cross, slowly dying. That's what Ellie was quoting from Philippians 2.

That Jesus, though he had equality with God, did not count it with any significance. And emptied himself, humbled himself, obeyed cross, even to the point of death.

Even death on the cross. We can surrender and let go of any fear of humiliation. Because we know that our Lord took on the ultimate humiliation for us.

We can repent and surrender the need to save face. When our Lord had blood dripping all over his face. So the next time we have a moment where we are threatened, we are attacked, we are

critiqued by anything.

[26 : 32] We don't need to feel that offense because Christ took the ultimate offense for us. That is the truth. Anything else that isn't of the truth, we must let go.

So that's the first one. Face. And the second one is this. Fortune. Fortune. Some ones that I do know in terms of the four words are ■■■■. Which really just talks about, oh, blessed that you would have a lucky year.

And we love that, right? And if you think about fortune, we're thinking about health and we're thinking about wealth. Everyone we're passing these things to, these little red pockets to, we give a blessing.

And we're hoping that they would be healthy and they would be wealthy. I wonder how much of that has seeped into our culture as Christians. I asked this last year, why are you a Christian?

Why are you a Christian? Recently, I had some parents who said, oh, I'd love, I'd love our kids to be able to come to your church.

[27 : 36] Because these kids are older, they're not teenagers anymore. I said, okay, why is that? Oh, well, you see, if they come to church, then that means they'll be a better person. They'll behave better and they'll get a job.

And then they can be hard, they can have a better work ethic and then they'll make something of their lives. I was like, wow. I hope they come to church that they would know Christ, that they would know Jesus.

But if we think about it, if we're very honest to ourselves, often we come to church, we become Christians for all the good things that come with it.

We treat God as a God with benefits. Because we're really trying to get the fortune that comes from being a good person. We're praying, what's your prayer like? God, can you give me this?

Can you grant us good health? Can you allow me to get this job? Brackets, so that I can have wealth. Of course, this ties in with the honor-sharing culture because we want those jobs so we can have the money, so we can have the social standing, so we can have the face.

[28 : 37] And we're back in the same place again. And that's the same antichrist that is hovering around our church. And you know this by the way, if someone walks in here, welcome newcomers, you walk in here and you're dressed nice and you act proper, then maybe people gravitate towards you.

But then suddenly the people who come in who you don't deem to help you in your social standing, you don't get anywhere near. The book of James talks about this. You guys have favoritism. When you open up your church doors, the people who look poor, who are poor, you're staying away from. Yet those who look rich, you stay because, again, the same thing. Because you deem that person to help you in your social standing. You deem that person to help you. And we need to release that idol because the gospel is quite the opposite.

The spirit of the Lord is on me to what? To proclaim liberty to the poor, to the broken, to the captives, to the oppressed. Have we let that seep into our church?

Have we let that distort the truth of why we gather? The lie here is that health and wealth are all that we need. If we're honest to ourselves, like really honest to ourselves, maybe we treat our faith in the same way as those four words, that we're here for blessings.

[29 : 52] Whereas the Christian message is not that. I count as joy, as blessing, trials of various kinds. You won't find a book in the Bible that doesn't have suffering.

The land of affliction, the sound talked about. The Christian message is that we will get blessed. We are blessed even in the midst of the affliction, even in the midst of suffering.

Health and wealth are not all that we need. Christ is all that we need. Do we have that in our mindset? And if we don't, maybe today is the day where we recalibrate why we approach faith, why we gather, why we believe.

What is the idol that you have placed above God? Is it face? Is it fortune? And I wasn't going to talk about this, but there's one that actually, as Chinese maybe are most guilty of, and it's family.

And hear me out here. Because family is of utmost importance, but still beneath God. But still beneath God. We live in a culture where families value face, value fortune.

[31 : 14] And that's not to say, hey, leave your family. But Jesus did say, if anyone hates his brother, hates his mother, hates his, it doesn't do these, they can't follow me.

He's not telling you to hate your family, but he's saying that he has to be number one. And he also says, honor your father and mother. But we have to ask ourselves, is Christ truly the only one in our lives?

Is he truly Lord? Is Jesus truly the Christ in your life? If he's not, then we repent. That is the truth. So while we may not have an antichrist coming in and preaching and saying, oh, Jesus isn't God. Worship these other things. It's never that obvious. But maybe it's even more toxic that it's not that obvious. Because we that have our senses completely lowered, our inhibitions completely gone, because we're like, oh, it's okay.

These are all good things. But when they're not God, when they're not God, then it's just the same. Would you repent with me if there are any antichrists in your lives?

[32 : 26] Whether faith is the thing that you've been chasing, whether it's fortune, health and wealth, and recognize that only Jesus is the one who has the answer. He says in the Old Testament, you shall have no other gods before me.

That word before isn't, as long as I'm number one, you can have two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. The words before me is, you can have nothing around me. Nothing in my presence. I am not just the number one. I am the only one. That's the truth that we hold on to. See, that's the moment when actually we remind ourselves the real truth and nothing but the truth is a person. And that person is Jesus. There's a quote I want to finish with. They who trust him fully, find him fully true. They who trust him fully, find him fully true.

Don't rely on faith. Don't rely on the approval of others. Don't rely on fortune, health and wealth. Trust in him. We all worship something. Chinese culture is great at worshiping.

[33 : 33] David Foster Wallace is the one who said, everyone worships. We just have to choose what it is that we worship. And I'll finish with this. If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough.

Never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you.

On one level, we all know this stuff already. It's been codified as myths, proverbs, cliches, epigrams, parables, the skeleton of every great story. The whole trick is keeping the truth up front. In daily consciousness. The whole trick is keeping the truth up front in daily consciousness. The trick, the whole trick is to keep Jesus, the truth, right at the front of your consciousness so that you can love him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

He is the reason that we are here. He is the reason that we can still breathe the air that we breathe and that we can live the way that we live. Can I pray for us as I invite Ellie and Grace and the team up as we finish in song?

[34 : 47] Jesus, as we gather here on this special Chinese New Year day, we recognize that you are the only true one.

You are the way, the truth and the life. If there are any things that we've believed, any idols, any messages that have seeped into the way into the way that we do life, do church, follow you, we repent of those right now.

Because of what you did on the cross, we have no need to save face. because when you took on the automatic act of humiliation out of your love for us, we are freed.

We are freed from people pleasing. We are freed from the fear of shame. Lord, as one, I pray, I pray that our hearts are united on the fact that we do not need fortune, we do not need luck, we do not need health or wealth for that matter.

We just need you. So give us neither poverty nor riches and remind us that we just need you.

[36 : 22] Jesus, would you be the truth in our lives? When people walk in here, would you, would they see that you are the only one we worship? You are the only one we worship.

You are the bread of life. You are the air we breathe. We are hungry for you. We are desperate for you and that is the only thing we ask, the only thing we seek after that we would dwell in your house all the days of our lives.

So we gaze upon your beauty now. We inquire in your temple. We thank you, Lord.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[38 : 16] Thank you.

Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
[40 : 46] Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
[43 : 16] Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
[45 : 46] Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
[48 : 16] Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
[50 : 46] Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.