

Test the Spirits

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[0:00] I'll be honest, family. This week's been a bit of a ride. We're like T-1 now. And as I was preparing this, the hardest thing was, am I even going to be here to be able to share it?

And if not, then who can I drop this on with like two hours notice? So I texted Aaron late last night. I said, hey, if you get a text from me in the middle of the night, you're preaching.

You're up. But thankfully, I'm here. Just so many voices. So many things going on. And this ties into what I'm going to be sharing about today. But thanks, Sigmund, actually.

You grabbed me this morning and you reminded me what I talked about last week, which is love, right? Put your hand. Last week, I talked about we must go out of our way to love people around us, especially the people in here and also, of course, the people outside.

Put your hand up if you were a recipient of love this week. Have a think back to this week now that you've had. Who really felt as though they've received love from someone in this church family this week?

[0:57] Come on. Homework time. Okay. Let's go the other way at risk of being a little bit prideful here. Who in this congregation felt as though you went out of your way to show love to someone else?

Don't be shy. You can do this. You can show it. You can show it. Excellent. Good, good, good.

That's good. Sigmund, I'm going to pick on you. Tell us what you did. How did you show love? How did you show love and go out of your way?

and go out of your way? Did Alex just force you to put your hand up? Tell us one thing.

Oh. You and God three having some bromance, showing love to each other by giving each other time.

By giving each other time and attention. That's huge. That's not something that we even take for granted in Hong Kong, right? To be able to give each other time, probably the most valuable thing that we can give. Thank you. Thank you for that. And as I'm talking about how we love, really, that's what Jesus' message is.

[2:03] That's what God's message is. Love me. Love me with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love me with everything that you've got. Love your neighbor as yourself. Why? Because actually, if you love me, you will be fully satisfied.

But if you don't love me, if you love the other things of this world, then actually those things, the things that you love, the things that you end up worshipping that are not of me, is dangerous because they actually, they're the things that consume you.

They're the things that corrupt you. They're the things that break your heart. So don't love those things. Silas and I spent our teen years in love with Arsenal. And every weekend, every Saturday afternoon, every Sunday, our hearts would be broken and we'd be questioning our purpose in life, our meaning in life, because they would disappoint.

They would break our hearts. The reason why God says, love me, is because I'm the only one that doesn't corrupt you. I'm the only one that doesn't disappoint you. I'm the only one that won't let you down. And you might say, well, actually, I don't even know really what I worship.

And there was a quote that I shared a couple of weeks ago by a writer, a professor called David Foster Wallace, not a Christian, not a Christian actually. And he was saying, hey, we all worship something.

[3:10] We all worship something. Even the atheists worship something. Let me read you the quote again. There is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships.

The only choice we get is what we worship. And most of the things we worship end up eating you alive. 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, clichés, epigrams, parables, the skeleton of every great story. The whole trick is to keep the truth up front in your daily consciousness. Sadly, this guy who wrote this, David Foster Wallace, non-Christian, but he actually passed away at the young age of 46 in Claremont, actually.

He took his own life. We all have this hunger, this yearning that we need to worship something. Tribes that have nothing to do with each other, in the history of mankind, we'll know there's something that's beyond them.

[4:18] There's a higher power that we need to connect with. We all have that. Ecclesiastes 3 is, he's planted eternity into the heart of man. So God says, love me.

Worship me. If not, everything else that you worship will corrupt you, will consume you, will destroy you, and you will die a million deaths.

And we move on now, and John kind of here moves into a little bit of a, something else. He talks about, the title of this part was actually, Test the Spirits, because what he recognizes is, in that church at that time, there were tons of voices.

Tons of voices about the things that you worship, things that you follow. Now, we all worship something, and we all follow something. John Mark Comer was the one that said, actually, we all orient our lives around something.

If an alien was to drop into this world, and to shadow you for a week, they would be able to analyze, and evaluate, and go, what does this person orient their lives around?

[5:19] Have a think. I won't pick on you, but if you have a look at the people of Hong Kong, you have a look at the people of the city, you have a look at the people, even in this space right now, if someone was to sit and just go, actually, what do they orient their lives around?

What do you orient your life around? What would that be? See, from the way, let's say I see how people use their time, let's say my beloved Cuban right here, I know that God is a big part of his life. In fact, so much that he gave his life to come and serve, to reach young people. But I also know BJJ is a big part of his life, right? And it's something that you love, and so you orient your life around that.

There'll be times I'm like, hey, Cuban, want to hang out? No, I can't. I'm not BJJ. Because that's just something that he loves. What's the thing that you spend your time with? Because that's the thing that you love.

That's the thing you're orienting your life around. And John Mark Holmes was going to say, we all follow something. We all orient our lives around something. God is saying, Jesus is saying, don't just listen to my teaching.

[6:18] Don't just identify with me as a Christian. Follow me. Orient your whole life around me. Come and be with me. And I am with you.

God with us. The question is, how do we know? How do we know which things to follow? How do we know through which things to believe? And this is where I think what John is doing here as he moves into this next passage. So we're going to read the Word of God.

It's only six verses. So can I invite us to stand for the Word of the Lord? Again, for those of you new and you're begritting that I've got you a few of your beanbag again, we just believe that the Word of the Lord is sacred.

It's powerful. It's holy. And sometimes I treat it for granted. And this is just a sign for us to remind ourselves that actually God is here. God is real. And he's speaking. If we would listen. 1 John 4, verse 1 to 6.

Let's read it together, if you can. For those who can see the screens, read loud. Verse 1. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.

[7:16] For many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the Spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them. For he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world. Therefore, they speak from the world and the world listens to them.

We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us. Whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of error.

This is the Word of the Lord. Take a seat. Let's just pray. Lord, we know this is your Word.

[8:15] We cling on, we hang on to every word that you say. Holy Spirit, would you guide us your Spirit of truth.

May you guide us. May we not follow the Spirit of error. We're here for you. Even with all the excitement and friends and family and not just being the weekend that we can gather.

But Lord, most importantly, you are here. So would you speak to us? In your name we pray.

Amen. So my point today is there are contending voices everywhere. Everywhere. In your workplace, there are bosses who tell you certain things about how they think that you should live. As you walk down the MTR and you see all the adverts, you see all these things that tell you what your life should be like, what everyone else's life is like, even though that is completely photoshopped and manufactured, yet there are voices everywhere telling you.

[9:25] And there are voices in our own minds. Come from maybe our family backgrounds. We talked about this a couple of weeks ago. The way we grew up, the voices that we heard around there affect, affect our mindset, affects the way we live.

What are the voices that you've got going on in your mind? John here tells the church, he says, Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.

There are false prophets, there are false truths. Test every spirit. That tells me there are spirits around, but we've got to figure out how to test, how to know what is what. In verse 3, it says this, this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

And a couple of weeks ago for Chinese New Year, we shared about the Antichrist a little bit, but really it sounds very serious, it sounds like this devil with horns and where the pitchfork, but actually, at least for the Chinese culture, we talked about face, the idol of face, the spirit of just not wanting, avoiding shame.

And then we talked about fortune, just craving health, craving wealth. Those are some of the idols of the day. What about some of the other ones that we have? What are some of the other spirits that are happening?

[10:35] Maybe one that really sends shivers down my spine, Ephesians 2, and you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

There is a, without being extra mystical here, there is, there are powers that are at work. Of course, Ephesians 6.12 talks about that, that we're not fighting against flesh and blood.

There's a realm that we don't know about and all of these are trying to do one thing. What is that one thing that they're trying to do? Pull us away from God. Pull us away from God. Anything but God.

And John's here telling his church, test the spirits. There are so many voices that you've got around in your minds, in your society, in your culture. You've got to learn to test them. You've got to learn to know which ones are right.

I think about the, what's the spirit that we have here in this city? Any ideas? What are some of the spirits? What are some of the things that really govern the way people live here?

[11:36] I'll tell you one. Busy. The spirit of busy. I mean, again, when I'm talking about a demon with horns here, we're talking about nearly every person we meet, everywhere we go in this city, you ask how you're doing, you say, I'm good, I'm busy.

I'm busy. I think Dallas Willard was the one that said, actually, busyness, hurrying, is the greatest enemy of spirituality. Who's busy here?

You can confess. You're busy. Of course, in Hong Kong, you kind of define busy. Like, growing up in the UK, busy was maybe having seven things a week.

Like, for meetings, for busy in Hong Kong is seven things a day or more. It's kind of busy. Right?

When we were in California in January, just going anywhere, you could only do two, three things a

day because everything takes an hour drive and then there's LA traffic, so that means it's two hours.

And so you can only really do two or three things a day. I call myself doing 11 things one day because I can zip around Jordan, Admiralty, Sunshine Pole, Monk Kong, just keep going.

[12:50] The spirit of busy. There's a story I wanted to read you and this is an old fable that tells of three apprentices who were devils to come and finish their apprenticeship on earth and they were talking to Satan, the chief of the devils about their plans to tempt and ruin men, to turn men away from God.

The first one said this, I'll tell them there is no God. That'll work. Satan said, that will not delude them for many, they know there is a God. The second one said, oh, in that case, then I will tell them there is no hell.

Satan answered, you will deceive no one that way. Men know, even now, that there is a hell for sin. There is a cost to pay for sin. The third said, well, you know what then?

I will tell men that there is no hurry, that there is no urgency, that they can get on with their busy lives to do all the things that they want to do in this world and that the matters of the kingdom of heaven, the things of God, are no hurry, no priority, no urgency.

They can just be busy with their own lives. then Satan said, you will ruin them by the thousands. The most dangerous of all delusions is that there is plenty of time to do a million other things.

[14:06] The spirit of busy, we keep ourselves busy that way. And of course, another one is the busy, the spirit of money. The spirit of money that seems to govern the city. Everything that we do has something to do with money.

We talked about the Chinese culture and honor and shame. What does that lead into? It leads to people wanting more money so that they can have more honor. If they don't have enough money, then it's more shame.

Maybe on a similar line to that parable there, one of my favorite books is by C.S. Lewis called Screwtape Letters. Who's read the Screwtape Letters before? Fascinating book. It's about Screwtape, who's a very senior demon, and he's training his nephew, Wormwood.

And he's training his nephew to pull people away from God. That's what he's doing. And they have these fascinating conversations. It's satirical, but it's actually theological as well.

It's a fascinating read if you wanted to read it. And Screwtape talks about how money is the thing. And he says this, that I think, when it comes to the spirit of money, he says this, prosperity knits a man to the world. He feels that he is finding his place in it while really it is finding its place in him.

[15:10] Whoa. The spirit of money. The spirit of money where actually it's, that's what, that's what, that's what, God says, don't look at money. Look at me. You can't serve both because money will ultimately corrupt you.

It will consume you. And you think you've got a hold on it, but actually it's got a hold on you. These are the things that we face in this world. And of course, there's another one which is just religion. Maybe Keller talks about this. 30 years ago, if you ask people, what's the enemy to world peace, people would probably say politics and communism capitalism and capitalism.

But now it's, actually it's religious diversity. People think, actually it's religion that causes wars, that causes all these problems. This religious diversity that we have, that we live in a post-truth culture where actually, oh, your truth is good, you can stick to yours and you can stick to yours and all of us can just live in harmony in some way, but it doesn't happen that way.

John Stott was the one who said, religious diversity is not really just that. There is so much more to it. There is a spiritual realm to it.

[16:16] All of it. All of the spirits do one thing, try and pull you away from God. All these contending voices that go on in society, even good ones, they seek to pull you away from God.

And John says, test, test these spirits. Just the context here as he's writing this in 1 John. It's in the Roman culture where actually, it was a polytheistic culture.

What does that mean? That means they would tolerate all the gods. The Roman culture would be like, hey, you believe this, that's cool, you believe this god of fertility, you believe this god of fertility. Everyone can believe everything and that's okay.

Do you know why they did that? Why did the Romans let them do that? It's because when you let people just have their own religions, it's actually the easiest way and the best way to control a whole group of people.

Back to the screw tape. A quote, a book. A screw tape says this, a moderated religion is as good for us as no religion at all and more amusing. If the Romans could just let everyone worship their own things and get busy with their own things, then they will live peaceably within this empire and not cause any trouble and the Romans would remain in control.

[17 : 25] So they encouraged all these religions. So then you have a gathering like this, people who are following the way and they wander in and they wander in and some of them start saying, oh actually, oh I have this God as well, treating them as Pokemon cards and saying, oh this Jesus one is good, I'd like to collect this Jesus one.

This Jesus card seems powerful but just in case, I've got the other cards that I need as well. And so that's what was happening within the church and then John's saying, no, you've got to test the spirit because there is only, there is only one.

I'm reminded of this picture here. Has anyone seen this before? This is a picture of an idea that actually I think came from Indian culture which was one that said, hey you can worship all these other gods and actually all these other gods lead to the same thing.

Everyone's just giving a different aspect of reality, of divinity. They just don't see the whole picture. So that's what they're saying. So what it says is a few blind men analyzing an elephant and touching different places and he's got a tail and he's going, okay, this being is, it's actually just a rope.

This one's right here and it says, it's a wall. This one is, oh, it's a fan. It's a spear. It's a snake. It's a tree. And basically the premise is, hey, you can believe whatever you want. You've just got one side of the truth and that's okay.

[18 : 41] If we combine it all together, then we'll have the truth. We are all heading to the same place is what all the religions say. And then Christianity comes on the scene and John writes here in the scene saying, no, that is not the case.

There is only one. Of course, the problem with this, the problem with this picture, which seems quite respectful, which seems quite tolerant, you're also assuming actually here that you're standing outside of this picture and that you can see everything.

So there's an absolute pride that's implied in this analogy that there is someone sat here going, hey, you guys, you're all blind and you're actually all looking an elephant and you don't see clearly, but you're assuming that you do.

So this claim in itself is a prideful, ignorant one of sorts. So this doesn't work. And John's saying, test the spirits. There's only one.

I was talking to a friend the other day at the hospital and he was asking this question. How do we know? How do we know that Christianity is the only one? I've got some good friends who are maybe Muslims and Hindus and the atheists and the Buddhists.

[19 : 44] How do we know that Christianity is the one? How do we test all these spirits? How do we discern which is the actual truth? That's why we're here.

If you're here going, actually, I'm okay with a bit of all these different ones as well, then I'm here to lovingly, respectfully, politely say, no, there's only one. There's only one. Well, yeah, unfortunately, if you walk in here and you want to meet the Lord, you're going to let all the other Pokemon cards go.

You do not catch them all. There is only one to catch. There is only one. The question there is, okay, James, what's the answer to that? How do I know which the one is?

And that is really the question that we all have. How do I know Christianity is the only one? How do I know it? And actually, John here really says one key phrase that I'm going to finish on here, which is, Jesus, you test by this.

Jesus has come in the flesh from God. That is the statement if I just keep going back to the verse. I've completely ruined my order now. And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus is not from God.

[20 : 50] So basically, what it's saying here is it has to be this is it. Every other spirit that isn't true will not confess that Jesus is not from God.

In fact, I've left the slide two here. Verse two is the one that says that's the key phrase here that it is all about this sentence right here. Jesus has come in the flesh and is from God.

As you test and see what is true and what is not, this is the one. Now, this is the one where a lot of apologists go, this is crazy. You're sat here because you believe that there was a Jewish man 2,000

years ago who came to this earth and declared that he himself was God.

That's what you believe. Sat here in 2024 in Adbalty, in Adbalty Center, Tower 2, 14th floor, you believe that there was a Jewish man 2,000 years ago who turned out who was born in Bethlehem who declared that he was the son of God, died for the sins of many and then came back to life. That's what you're proclaiming here. You're proclaiming here a couple of things. You're proclaiming here that Jesus is from God. From God. See, all these other religions were founded by men. [22:01] They were founded by different people. We have a religion that separates it because our religion was founded by God himself. That's the claim. That's the claim. That's what separates it apart.

As you discern, now we're going to meet people who, especially in this new age, who are open to all kinds of ideas. We're in the new age where we can accept everything and we can tolerate everything.

We must learn to test the spirit and go, actually, does this one confess this? Jesus has come in the flesh and is from God. That he was the founder of our religion.

You see, in that time, the Gnostics were the ones who believed in spirit realm and flesh realm. They were separate. You can do whatever you wanted in the flesh realm and it wouldn't affect your spiritual realm at all.

And actually, they actually looked with disgust on the flesh realm. It's dirty. It's nothing compared to what they will have in the future so they can do whatever they want. Christianity is unique because Christianity is saying this religion was founded from God and that this God chose to come and take on man, take on flesh.

[23:10] The word became flesh. God incarnate. Why? Because it recognized that we could not save ourselves. Jesus recognized that we could not save ourselves, that he had to come and identify with us so that then he could represent us so that then he could save us.

Inherent to Christianity and unique to Christianity is the issue that you cannot save yourself. You cannot save yourself. Every other religion says you can do these things.

If you do these things well, if you got this, then you get to heaven. Christianity is the only one that offers the morally satisfactory solution that we are sinners, that we cannot save ourselves because we created the problem in ourselves and we needed outside help and that's why Jesus has come in the flesh from God.

The question then becomes, do you believe this? Do you believe this? And you can test this, whether you believe this, in the way you deal with your life.

When you're waiting for that job offer to come, when you're worrying about your bank account, when you're worrying about all your future, you can test to see if this is really the thing that you believe because if you don't actually believe this, then you'll start worrying about all the other things because you're, actually, I need to spend myself, I need to scrap as much money as I can because I don't truly believe that Jesus has come in the flesh and is from God, that he loved me enough that he would leave his identity in heaven and he would come and save me and he gave up his life for me.

[24:45] I don't know if we truly believe that, do you get me? If we truly believe that, we wouldn't worry about all the other things. Jesus cared about us enough that he would travel the ultimate distance to come to save us.

That's the thing that's unique about Christianity and the main thing here that is again unique to Christianity is the issue of grace. Have a think just for a second. I want to pause here. We hear the word grace. We sing about the word grace.

What does the word grace mean to you? 60 seconds. Turn this to the person next to you. What does the word grace mean to you? When you think about the word grace, what does it mean? Doesn't have to be a right answer. Just what is it that you think it means? Go. All right.

All right.

[26:22] All right.

All right. Super Bowl. We're still home now.

All right. All right. All right.

All right. All right. All right. All right.

All right. All right. All right. All right.

[27:54] All right. All right. All right. All right.

All right. All right. All right. All right. Yeah.

Yeah.

Wow. Yeah.

Just to try and paraphrase just a sermon, if you summarize the whole Bible, it's the word grace and that it transforms. It's nothing to do with your works, but it's just something that you receive.

[29:10] Incredible. What else is there? What else have we got over there? Let's go over to the sofa side. Darren. Darren. Darren. Undeserved love.

Yeah. So you don't deserve it. It's absolutely more. Absolutely more. I don't know if I have spent enough time mulling over this word grace.

I don't know if you have. Sometimes I think I sit here, we sit here and we're like, I deserve to be here. I'm a good person.

I'm doing enough. And to sit here and go, no, really. I'm a rebel. I'm a rebel. I'm a rebel. I didn't deserve to be here. But now this master gave his son to die for me.

And now I get to be called his son. What? That's grace. It's undeserved. It's generous. Grace. Grace, what does your name mean to you?

[30:21] Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care.

Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care.

Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Take care. Thank you.

Thank you.

Because we don't understand the word grace. And I think, I'll tell you, I think it even happens in our churches. It happens amongst our pastors. It happens where people just don't seem to understand it.

[32:00] Because if we got to grips of what grace actually meant, that we're all sat here. We don't just have to be there. And yet we're here. That's huge. It broke my heart yesterday.

I was talking to someone in a church and they said there's a group of people who just, within the church, who everybody knows that they're just like in an elite group. Just like, you know, one of those exclusive groups that, you know, you've got to be a certain pedigree.

You've got to be born in a certain hospital. You've got to have gone to a certain school. You've got to be in a certain occupation. And only then can you look and see, can you join that. I'm like, man, if there's anything more against the gospel, that we are all sinners.

Like, we all fall short of the glory of God. That we didn't choose to be born here. You'd been born anywhere in the world, but he was born here and you were born here and you have what you have because of him.

That you have the parents that you have because of him. That you get to sit here. You have the job that you have because of him. The spirit of pride exists. That's why we have to keep measuring it up. What's the spirit that is really at work in us?

[33:07] Because if we have this spirit and it can confess this, it changes the way we live. This sentence here feels very Christian-y. We've seen these words before. Jesus has come in the flesh from God. But if we truly grasp what it meant.

That God looked at us and said, actually, these guys, these people are not going to be able to make it. So that he would send his son to come in the flesh. The word became flesh. The light came into the darkness to save us.

He came from God and he's going back to God. If we truly understood what this term meant, then I think I'm starting to get why John wrote this. This is how you measure. This is how you measure whether you're following the right spirit or not.

If this is the name above all names. But the truth is this. Whether it's religion or whether it's just the worldly ideals. The thing that they want you to put your trust in.

The thing we want to put our trust in is our own names. Right? You build yourself up. Get yourself to the point where you are recognized to do these things. That you have a certain level of achievement.

[34:08] Every other religion says you can be saved by your own name. Every other religion says, hey, you can get it done. Every worldly value says you must get it done.

Christianity is the only one that says it is done. That the founder of this religion, this God that we serve, went to the cross for us and said, it is finished.

These people that cannot save themselves because I love them so much. These rebels. These people that keep turning against me. I died for them. Forgive them for they know not what they do. This is the only religion that does that. I'll finish with this. And I want us to really think about this because we know this. We know that Jesus has come in the flesh.

And yet, time and time again, we just let it overtake us sometimes. Well, James, I believe this, but how can I go back in? You know, the forces are so strong. And it's not even my colleagues. It's my family. It's not even my family.

[35 : 11] It's just the city. It's my friends. It's just so hard to push against that spirit. And that's where the encouragement comes in. He says, little children. And he's not rebuking in a way that isn't loving.

He's saying, my beloved. Later, he carries on. Beloved, my dear children, you are from God and you have overcome that. For he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

He who is in you is greater than he is in the world. He is the one on your team. We joke about basketball. And I'm by no means the best player.

In fact, one of the best players I've enjoyed playing with. Joe over there, I've enjoyed playing with him. I'll tell you something, Joe. Every time I go and run, I go to a basketball run with Joe, I am filled with confidence when I see that I've been picked to be on Joe's team.

And I'm like, oh, yeah. You guys are going to get it now because I've got him. And I have that. Do you have that with God? When you walk out into this world, do you go, man, I'm not scared of anything because I have God on my team.

[36 : 12] I have God on my side. All these are the spirits. All these are the values. All these are the contending voices. They don't matter because I have the one whose name is above every name. But I have God himself on my team.

He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. And I'll finish this with this Tim Keller quote. He says, think of it. If there is any other way, what was Jesus doing in God?

What did he say to the Father? He said, is there no other way? Can this cup pass from me? Can I get out of this somehow? Is there no other way? The answer is the cup couldn't because there was no other way.

Do you think if there was any other way, Jesus would have done it? If there was any other way, what in the world is Jesus doing that for? How do you explain the extreme lengths to which he went? You make absolute nonsense of what he did on the cross.

Is there no other way? No. And therefore, there is no other way. Is there another way? No. Jesus himself asked in the garden, God, is there any other way that we can save these people?

[37 : 20] Is there any other way we can show them grace without it costing us? Is there any other way that we can draw them close to us even though they keep running away, pushing back?

And God says, no. There is no other way. And therefore, there is no other name. There is no other name that saves. That he, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, born in the likeness of men.

And he humbled himself to the point of death, even death on the cross. Therefore, God now has exalted him to have the name above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Test every spirit. Shut down all the contending voices. There is only one way. There is only one name. And our founder, before he laid down his life, said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one will come to the Father except me. I am sorry. That is an offensive message to everyone we meet, saying, you're right. There is only one way. Because there is no other founder of a religion who laid his life down for his people out of love, out of grace.

[38 : 41] So would we be filled with that grace for other people? May we be so hungry for the truth.

May we test every spirit. Shut down any contending voice that does not confess that Jesus is the name above all names.

Can I invite you just for a moment of quiet reflection now? Holy Spirit, we ask, Are there any contending voices?

Any spirits that we've allowed in our lives that are not of you? Jesus, we confess.

That you are God. That you are the word that came flesh. That you are in the beginning.

[39 : 56] That in you is life. That you are light. And that you are the word that came flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen your glory. You came so that we would know the Father.

Amen. Amen. and so we receive you we believe in your name we confess we confess and say sorry for all the voices that we've led in all the spirits of this world that we follow we orient our lives our hearts around you and you alone for the sole simple reason that you came from God in the flesh and you gave your life to us there was no other way to save us we are that far away from you and therefore there is no other name we worship Jesus your name the name above every name that nothing compares to you and if you are for us that none can be against that we are more than conquerors that we will never be separated from your love

Jesus you truly are the king of kings and the lord of lords the author and perfecter of our faith the beginning and the end the alpha and omega everything comes from you and you will have the final say so we take heart though in this world we have trouble we take heart because you have overcome thank you thank you it's in your name we pray amen you