

The Dynamics Behind Doctrinal Development

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[0 : 00] This morning's message is entitled, The Dynamics Behind Doctrinal Development. And I'd like you to turn to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 15.

And this morning we'll be looking at verses 1 through 14 in Matthew 15.

Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders?

For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread. And he answered and said to them, Why do yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?

For God said, Honor your father and mother, And he who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death. But you say, Whoever says to his father or mother, Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God.

[1 : 29] He is not to honor his father or his mother. And by this you invalidate the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

You hypocrites! Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you. This people honors me with your lips, But their heart is far away from me.

But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men. After Jesus called the crowd to him, He said to them, He said to them, Hear and understand, It is not what enters the mouth that defiles the man, But what proceeds out of the mouth, This defiles the man.

Then the disciples came and said to him, Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?

But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly father did not plant shall be uprooted.

[2 : 44] Let them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, Both will fall into a pit.

Quite a remarkable passage. Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?

God forbid that anybody should be offended about anything. Crazy time we're living in today, isn't it? People are offended at this and offended at that.

And this passage is not really talking so much about the offense, As much as it is, The tendency that men have to make the word of God mean something that it does not mean.

Someone has said, There is that which God has said. And there is that which man says God has said.

[3 : 53] And sometimes they are miles apart. And that's principally what we are going to begin discussing this morning. And I say begin, Because this is going to be an extensive series.

And I trust it will be as enlightening to you, As it was to me a number of years ago, When I was fortunate enough to discover some of the things That we are going to be talking about today. It is the development of doctrine. And the word doctrine simply means nothing more. It just means teaching. It means like a formal position or statement that is taken.

Doctrine simply is teaching. Content. And the Bible is filled with it. From Genesis 1 through Revelation chapter 22.

It's all about teaching and doctrine. And it is from the word of God. The development of doctrine began in Old Testament times And always centered about the actual meaning of scriptural passages.

[5 : 03] That is, doctrine is found as early as Genesis 1 and verse 1. Where the principle of creation is set forth. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

That's doctrine. It starts there and it doesn't end until you complete the book of Revelation. In the last book of the Bible. There was no question that words of scripture were given by God in the Old

Testament.

The question was and is, what do those words actually mean? The problem is not in reading the text.

The problem is understanding what the text is saying. We call that interpretation. You've heard me say over the years. It is possible to prove just about anything you want to from the Bible.

It's all in how you interpret it. And we've got doctrine all over the map. Everything from Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists and Jews and Roman Catholics and Protestants.

[6 : 18] And everything else by way of splits and splinters and minor sects and groups. And the only thing that they have in common is that each one believes that they are right and the other folks are wrong.

Now the problem is, somebody has to be wrong. And the tendency for us is to say, well it isn't us. It's those other guys.

And they're saying the same thing about us. Yes. So in an effort to, I suspect, maybe ameliorate the situation, some have fostered what I consider to be bizarre ideas of interpretation.

And one of those that is in vogue now is something that you need to be apprised of, even though you may never have really occasion to delve into it. But you need to know this is the way some people are thinking today.

We have taken the position from the outset, as has most of Christendom for the last 2,000 years, that the meaning of a passage of Scripture is supposed to be determined by what the writer of the Scripture intended to convey to those to whom he was writing it.

[7 : 39] We see that played out especially in the New Testament with maybe the Pauline epistles, because it is easy to identify different audiences. We know that Paul, for instance, wrote to saints in the Church of Rome, and he wrote to saints in Corinth, and he wrote to saints in Ephesus and Galatia, and he wrote personal letters to Timothy and Titus and so on.

And when we read those passages in those books, the issue immediately becomes, what does he mean? We read the words.

Everybody can read the words, especially if they're in a language that you read, like English. You can read the words. That's not a problem. The problem is, what do the words mean? What's the interpretation?

And the classical position that has been taken for almost as long as man has been around is, that the meaning is to be determined by what the writer intended to convey.

What did he have in his mind to communicate when he wrote what he wrote? But today, there are those who would turn that on its head and say, no, no, no, that's too simplistic.

[8 : 50] What we really need to understand is, not that the writer is the one who determines the meaning of the text, but it is the reader who determines the meaning of the text.

Now think about that. If you have a half dozen different readers, you may come up with a half dozen different meanings.

Well, which one is right? And their answer is, all of them. They're all right. That way, nobody has to be wrong.

Isn't that wonderful? Nobody gets offended. Nobody has to be told, you're wrong. Everybody's right. Because when you read the scripture, it says one thing to this person, says something else to this person, and you ask person number three, what did you get out of it?

Well, to me, it is saying thus and so. Now, here's where I want to make a very careful but important distinction. And it is this. There is but one meaning of a passage of scripture.

[10 : 12] That is the meaning the writer intended to convey. What was in the mind of the person writing the text? That's the interpretation.

And it is singular. There's just one meaning. That's the intention of the writer. There are a multitude of applications that may be drawn from that verse or from that passage so that it reminds one person of this, reminds somebody else of that because people have different backgrounds and experiences and they read the text and it brings to mind different things in the minds of each person.

So it reminds this one of thus and so and it reminds this one of something completely different. And those are all applications. And they're all legitimate. None of those are wrong.

They are personal. But they have no effect upon determining the actual meaning of the text. That's the distinction that must be made.

Applications, many. Almost endless. And given the culture that you're living in, it may have different applications in one culture than it will have in another culture.

[11:29] Nothing wrong with that. That's fine. That affords latitude and variety for individuals. That if they read a passage, it may bring certain things to mind that they've experienced or things that they thought of they can make a connection with.

That's fine. And the scriptures are profitable that way. But that does not mean that's the interpretation of the text. The interpretation of the text is singular.

Applications may be multiple. And they usually are. Now this deals and of necessity brings into play the idea of inspiration.

There was no question that the words of scripture were given by God. The question was and is what do those words actually mean?

And what, if anything, do they require of me? Does this passage simply give me some information?

[12:30] You know, FYI. For your information. Does it just give me information something that I am to just know about? To increase my knowledge and understanding? Is that all it's doing?

Or, is there something in this passage that requires a response from me? Is there something I'm supposed to do about what I read? These things come into play.

Jesus faced this issue when he was here among men from the passage that we asked Gary to read this morning. And if you will look at Matthew 15, I just want to point out a couple of things.

And then we'll move right along. So, this is an issue of the abuse. The abuse of interpretation.

And it goes all the way back to the Old Testament. Because you see, in our fallenness, and those in question here in this passage, the elders, the scribes, Pharisees, they all had the same kind of fallenness that we do.

[13:31] They were all fallen too. That means we are flawed. We are imperfect. We are inadequate in our understanding. And we are prejudiced.

We are all biased. And the person that we are biased toward is ourself. As I pointed out earlier, perhaps the most significant and far-reaching consequence of the fall is the whole idea and principle of self-centeredness that it imposed upon all of humanity.

We are all self-centered, essentially. We are all selfish people. And we have to exercise discipline to get out of that selfish mode that would allow us to be generous and kind and giving, etc.

But our natural inclination is to be self-centered. And the person says, well, speak for yourself, preacher. I am not self-centered at all. Well, you are not only self-centered, you are also self-deceived, which is a double whammy that you have to deal with.

This is just inborn to humanity. This is the way we are. The only person who ever escaped a self-centered ego was Jesus Christ.

[14:50] And in order for him to do it, it had to be arranged through a virgin conception. Otherwise, he would have been contaminated just like the rest of us. And he was saved from that.

So this self-centeredness also extends to, would you believe the way we interpret Scripture? Yes, it does. And the way it does is that I would prefer that the Scriptures mean what I want them to mean. What does not upset my comfort zone that allows me to find reinforcement for what I want to be and what I want to do. And if I can find the Bible seconding that, that's for me.

We all have that natural tendency. It's a scary thing. It is a scary thing to realize that we are capable of rationalizing just about anything we want to.

Sometimes that even comes to the interpretation of Scripture. And that's exactly what's taking place here. If you look at chapter 15, why do your disciples, verse 2, transgress the tradition of the elders?

[16:01] Oh, God forbid that you transgress the tradition of the elders. What does this mean? This has reference to those previous individuals who were revered and acknowledged and understood to be the greater lights among men.

They were those who were endowed with wisdom and articulation and they were able to express things and they reached conclusions and they put them in writing and this became known as the tradition of the elders.

Sometimes it's in the Jewish theology and doctrine. It has to do with the Talmud, the T-A-L-M-U-D, Talmud, which consists of rabbinical writings, that is, the writings of rabbis, Jewish religious priests,

etc., who read the Scriptures and wrote out their interpretation, their commentary, on what the Scriptures mean.

There is the Talmud and the Mishnah and the Gemara and all of these things were designed to elucidate or illuminate the Word of God. They also included all kinds of nonsensical interpretations that were very convenient.

And here's one right here. Look at this. Jesus said, Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?

[17:28] Now, what they are doing is they are criticizing him and his disciples for not properly washing their hands before they ate. Now, everybody knows today that germs are, you know, disseminated through people not washing their hands.

And we hear how important that is and everywhere you go there are little sanitizers to sanitize your hands and so on. And that's all well and good and we ought to do that. Maybe back then they didn't have as many germs and microbes as we have today to be aware of.

But at any rate, they had a prescribed ritual that they would go through that was considered the official act of washing your hands. Now, mind you, scriptures say nothing about this.

The Bible does address the issue of cleanliness, of washing, of contamination, and it addresses all of those things and it requires the priests and the worshipers to cleanse themselves through a multitude of washings.

But what we're talking about here is a nitpicking practice that they had reduced the washings to where you have a certain kind of basin and you wash one hand one way and one hand another way and then you hold the hands up and then the water is poured and it's just a rigmarole that you go through and that's the official way of washing your hands.

[18:55] Strictly, humanly, contrived. And when the disciples ate of whatever the food was that was provided, it doesn't mean that they didn't wash their hands.

I don't know. The text doesn't say that they did or they didn't. They're accused of not washing their hands. But rather, not washing their hands in the official prescribed way according to the elders.

So what they are doing is elevating the elders and their demand above the demands that Scripture makes, that God makes. And when we read on, Jesus answered and said to them in verse 3, why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your traditions?

And all he's saying is you set God aside and you replace him and his authority with the tradition of the elders. The elders are just mere men, just human beings, that's all.

And you are taking their authority as opposed to God's authority. And now he's going to give an example of how you do that. And this is embarrassing and it's offensive.

[20:07] A lot of times people are offended because they are embarrassed. And they are embarrassed because they've been found out. They've been called out on something and it makes them very uncomfortable. And this is exactly what happens here.

Jesus gives an illustration of how they set aside the commandment of God for the sake of their tradition. The Bible says, God says, honor your father and mother and he who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.

Wow. That's pretty strong. Now we don't have any record that anyone ever was, but that was the penalty that was imposed upon them. But, you say, you is as opposed to what God has said.

You say, whosoever shall say to his father or mother, anything of mine you might have been helped with has been given to God. He is not to honor his father or his mother and thus you invalidate the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

This was nothing but a neatly contrived little loophole that these rascals had come up with so that it would legally allow them to deny and refuse the assistance that their parents needed and were entitled to because of this loophole that they have created.

[21:37] And what's the loophole? The loophole simply says, all you have to do before a religious authority is say, I bestow all my earthly goods, all my worldly possessions to God.

They are officially his. Now, they don't give them to him. They don't bring them to the temple. They don't bring their animals to the temple and say, here, these are all gods.

No, no. It's just on paper. It's just legal and official. According to whom? According to the elders.

elders. And what that does, it allows you to conveniently, selfishly, ignore the needs of your parents for whom you are duty-bound and morally obligated to care for in their old age.

As they cared for you as a child, now you care for them as a parent. This was a convenient way out. So, the son could go to his mom and dad and say, gee, I'd really like to help you.

[22 : 49] But everything I have has been given to God. You wouldn't want me to rob God to give to you, would you? Of course, he goes right on using his assets and everything just as per usual.

So, what are we talking about here? We're just talking about a finely contrived legal loophole that was as sinful as it could be. But, for some people, what is moral?

doesn't matter at all. The only question is, is it legal? And who is it that makes the laws?

Men do. This is why, and I've made this statement in the past, and the longer I live, the more convinced I am that it is true, that in so many ways, every day, man has demonstrated that he is absolutely incapable of governing himself with equity and justice on a consistent basis.

He just can't do it. And the reason he can't is because flawed men make flawed lives that are applied by fraud prosecutors and flawed lawyers, and we come up with flawed sentences.

[24 : 08] We've got people right now who are rotting in prison, who shouldn't even be there. And we've got people out roaming the streets, probably a whole lot more of these, who ought to be in prison, but aren't.

Someone has said that American justice is the best justice that money can buy. You know that's true. It really is. If you can hire a high-powered lawyer who with a big reputation and a lot of assets, the chances of you making out very well are a whole lot better than if you get some green kid just out of law school who's serving as a public defender.

We all know how that works. That's not justice, but you know what? That's about the best we can do. Well, I don't want to berate the criminal justice system except to say that it needs a radical overhaul like a whole lot of other things, including our educational system.

Well, we could go down the list. Okay. Anyway, let's get back to the text here. What you do is you nullify, you disallow, you cancel out, you invalidate the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

And what's the issue here? Same as it's always been. Authority. Whose authority are you going to accept and respect? This is why it always comes back to the authority of scripture.

[25 : 32] Because only in the authority of scripture do we have that which is inspired of God. And this word inspiration means literally to breathe into, to when you inspire someone, and the word spire by the way is related to the spirit, to the human spirit.

When you inspire someone, it doesn't affect their body. It affects their spirit.

It affects where they really live and function inwardly. It affects them internally. This is where all of our emotions are kept. this is where elation and euphoria and sadness and all of the range of human emotions, they are all tucked away in your human spirit.

And we reflect them or manifest them through a body. We call this body language. Sometimes it might be tears or laughter anger or a look of disdain or surprise or whatever.

And all of these facial expressions that we transmit one to another all began, the root of them, began in your human spirit where you feel things and then you show people what it is that you're feeling outwardly through your facial expressions.

[26 : 59] when the scriptures are spoken of as being inspired, it means that God breathed into the writers of scripture his power, his authority, so that what they wrote, and this is an amazing thing and please I'm not suggesting at all that I understand all of this because I have more questions about this than I have answers, but he utilized the vocabulary of that writer and his historical background and his experiences all come to play in what is written.

But along with that, along with that inspiration is the principle of infallibility and inerrancy so that what God communicated through using the personality and the writing style of that person because all the writers of scripture have different styles and those who are experts in this can point out the stylistic differences between Luke and Paul and John and they are as clear to them as they can be. But for those of us who aren't trained in that, we don't see that much difference and yet they each have their own style and they have their own vocabulary and terminology that they utilize. And what God does with that is he uses those human aspects to give the Bible a human element.

But it comes with divine authority. So we've got the best of both worlds. We've got God's word, God's authority poured in and through a human being so we have the authority being God's and the flavor and the communication and the stylistic differences being human so we've got a human book and we've got a divine book.

Both of these married in one volume. And in reality that's nothing more than a picture of the living word Jesus Christ who is God in the flesh.

[29 : 21] he is a human being fully human and he is fully God. And we have both represented in this one person. And we have both humanity and deity represented in the word of God.

And this inspiration what the writers wrote is referred to as the breath of God. And when you and I speak and when I'm speaking right now all the while I'm speaking I'm breathing.

Unconsciously automatically I'm just breathing. And if I ever stop breathing while I'm speaking you know we're in big trouble. At least I'm in big trouble. Because we just we have an absolutely amazing mechanism that God has built into these bodies that allows us to breathe while we're talking and you are not even aware that I'm breathing.

You know I am but you're not aware of that. You're just aware that I'm talking. And when the Bible is referred to as the word of God it simply means that this is the breath of God.

And what was written as a result of these men being breathed into with the word of God is that which is inerrant. And that means it is incapable of error or of communicating error.

[30 : 46] error so that thy word is truth. And it's pure truth. It is not contaminated with human error. And when we talk about the Bible being infallible we mean that it is unfailing in all that it presents.

And this is lost on the vast majority of the public because most people think the Bible is just a wonderful old ancient book that's got a lot of interesting stories in it and some good morals and so on.

But they do not accept it as the word of God. And I want to just give you an illustration of how radically this has changed over the last 50 years. If you would go back with me 60 years.

I was well actually let's go back 62 years. 63 years. I was stationed in the army in Alaska, Fort Richardson, and just a young single soldier boy living in the barracks there with a bunch of other guys.

And near the end of the month we would get desperate for something to do because everybody was broke. Everybody was out of cigarettes. This was back in the days when everybody smoked, you know, pack a day and this kind of thing.

[32 : 08] And when things got really desperate and we were really bored, somebody would get out one of the little Gideon New Testaments that they gave us when we were inducted.

Fort Knox, Kentucky. Little Gideon New Testament. And invariably we would end up in the back of that little book, in the book of Revelation, that none of us knew beans about it, you know.

But we were fascinated with the content because of all this really exciting stuff going on and all these beasts and calamities and the Antichrist and all of this stuff.

And in our barracks, we get in a corner, maybe 15 or 20 guys, and somebody would start reading and everybody would chime in with their comments, you know. And it was just absolutely remarkable.

Now, I did not know the Lord. Not at all. I wasn't saved until sometime later. But I had an interest in spiritual things. And in our unit there, and the guys there, we had some Protestants, we had Catholics, we had Jews, we had nothings, just about everything that you could imagine.

[33 : 21] And we would all read these verses and talk about them and all we were doing was pulling our ignorance. Guys had different ideas and some things. But the thing that I so vividly remember was I do not think there was a single one among us that did not believe we were reading the word of God.

If anybody questioned that, it was never voiced. Nobody ever said, ah, what are you reading that stuff for? You don't believe that stuff, do you? That's not true today.

Today, the Bible is discounted in many circles. Even in some pulpits, the Bible is discounted or minimized or just treated as an ancient document that, yeah, it's got some good stuff in it, some good principles, but you don't govern your life by the Bible.

I mean, you don't live your life and make decisions based on what the Bible says. Nobody does that. And that's precisely what we are expected to do.

And that's why the book was provided, so that we might do that. So the Bible comes to us with complete authority. It is God speaking to man.

[34 : 53] It is the word of God. It is the planet's most precious possession. We don't have anything that is more valuable than truth.

And here is where you find the embodiment of truth in this book and in the Savior that this book says forth. Now, let me put it this way.

Either it is or it isn't. you cannot have it both ways. You've got to make some kind of a decision. I remember years ago reading the testimony of Billy Graham and this was something that he came to early in his life and it was a crisis for him. And this was in connection with a friend of his, a colleague, who had already kicked over the traces and given up on the Bible, on God and everything else.

And this was the man that I was telling you about earlier, I think, when he saw this picture on Life or Look magazine of the starving child in Africa with a distended belly and the article talking about thousands of people and children starving in Africa.

[36 : 12] And he read that. and he, if you can imagine, this was his testimony and he said, I just came to the conclusion right there, that if there is a God in heaven, a God in the Bible portrays, that would be willing to allow innocent children like this in a faraway country to starve to death without intervening and miraculously providing for them.

After all, he's supposed to be the God of all power. God is able to do anything. And he lets this kind of stuff go on in the world. Either there is no God, and I've just been kidding myself, or if there is that kind of a God, I don't want anything to do with him.

Either way. And we pointed out to you how that this is one of the besetting problems that humanity has with the existence of God. How can we account for a good God who is loving and all-powerful? coexisting in a universe that is so filled with evil and hatred and death and disease? How do you square those two? Because if I were God, I'd change those things.

But I'm not, and I can't. And if he is, and he won't, I don't want anything to do with him. And that's precisely why many have come to atheism, and that's precisely why many Jewish people in particular have a high percentage per capita of atheists because they cannot correlate the Holocaust, where the God of the Bible supposedly stood by and did nothing and allowed Hitler to eliminate six million of his so-called chosen people?

[38 : 13] When he's supposed to have all of this power and authority at his command and he allows that to happen? That's crazy. So, either there is no God, he doesn't even exist, or there is a God, but he isn't all-powerful, and he isn't all-good, and he can't do anything.

So, why have anything to do with him? That's where so many people are today. And what it all boils down to, bottom line is this, either this book, with our admitted misunderstandings, with its acknowledged issues that we have been unable to plumb the depths of, because there are things in this book that I've been studying for 60 years and still don't understand, either it really, truly is the word of God, or it is not.

You cannot take it that the Bible is true, kind of. It either is or isn't. And that's the crisis that Billy Graham had to face when his friend, who was considered to be a better preacher than he was, and they were holding these meetings together, abandoned the faith, went off to live in Canada, and he died recently of Alzheimer's disease.

And when he left the Billy Graham team, before it actually even became a team, Billy was shaken to his roots.

Now he's got a crisis. What's he going to do? And he describes this as going out in the field one day and kneeling at a stump and having it out with God.

[40 : 06] Long story short, he told God, either this book is true and you are true and you're going to have to reveal that to me and show me or I'm not going to be able to go on.

And God did come through for him and confirm to his own heart and mind that the book was not only the truth of God, but that it deserved and required propagation and that God was calling Billy to do just that.

And that was the beginning afresh and the new of his ministry. And shortly thereafter, the incident took place in Los Angeles with the meeting that was attended by so many thousands of people. Nobody could find any rational excuse or reason for it. And I have often said, there is no human explanation for Billy Graham.

There just isn't. for his impact, for his successes, for his tremendous influence upon the world.

[41 : 23] There is no human explanation for it. And it all came down to this one singular crisis point. This book is or is not.

Make up your mind. It's kind of like the saying that someone uttered, I don't know who, but it's a good one. If there is no God, nothing matters. But if there is a God, nothing else matters. Think about the implications of that. This book is true, dependable, reliable, trustworthy, inerrant, infallible, or it is not. It's not. Got to make up your mind. If it is, then we are duty bound to its precepts, and whatever it is, it demands from us. But be advised that God makes no demands that he has not provided us with the ability to meet. Isn't that wonderful? That too is grace.

[42 : 36] So, we've just scratched the surface on this, and I want to pique your interest in it because it is going to be an extensive series that we're going to engage in as we continue developing this whole concept of the origin of doctrine, the dynamics behind doctrinal development. How did these people arrive at the doctrines that they embraced and accepted as the truth of God? What was it that made Roman Catholics Roman Catholics? What was it that made Protestants Protestants? How did they arrive at their conclusions? And we're going to be delving into what I call faulty assumptions that are made by almost everybody. Does that include us? Oh, absolutely. We are not exempt from making faulty assumptions that have no basis in fact. I'm guilty of that, and I'll share some of those with you that I have discovered along the way.

[43 : 51] And what we need to do is be able to get beyond a and above those faulty assumptions and look at what the word actually says. And we're going to be doing that with a number of issues. I can't tell you how many, but it will be extensive. And I trust that each of them will be as eye-opening to you as they were to me, because it completely revolutionized my life and my understanding of the Bible and my appreciation of the Bible and my propagation of the Bible. It is just absolutely, well, words fail me to describe it. I just can't. I despair of even trying to tell you. But I have some idea of what you are in for, and let me tell you, I'm excited for you, because if it impacts you like it does me, you are going to see things come together and fit in the Bible in a way that is, wow, you know, that really makes sense. I get the connection. I see now how that works. It is amazing. And all it does is it stimulates you to further study, investigation, appreciation, and thanksgiving.

[45 : 14] It's just, there is absolutely nothing like it. Nothing like it. And it's all going to stem from this principle that Paul wrote to Timothy. When a man knows that he's writing the last letter of his life, he's not going to mince words. He's going to make what he says count. Plus the fact that he was inspired of God, and he told Timothy, Timothy, I want you to study. The word means concentrate on, focus on, be diligent, to rightly divide the word of truth. Wow. Rightly divide the word of truth. What does that mean? This is the word of truth. What does it mean, rightly divide it? Well, we've got an Old Testament, and we've got a New Testament. No, no, no, no, no. That's not what he's talking about. But we will develop this and get into it, and I am absolutely thrilled for you.

[46 : 21] So, if you will stand, please. We'll be dismissed. This has just been introductory, and I trust it's just whetted your appetite a little bit for what's to come. Thank you, Father, for the sufficiency of your word.

Each time we come to it, and each time we expound upon it, we never feel that we've done it justice, because this is humanity working with the divine, and there's no way we can do that justice. But such as it is, we offer to you, and we ask that you will take it and use it to stimulate the hearts and minds of people who are looking for truth. May we be able to recognize the truth when we see it and separate it from the air. Thank you for being able to stand upon the shoulders of men and women of God who have gone by in earlier days, who came to some of the truths that we are going to be sharing with these folks. We are grateful for their ministries, for their lives, and we look forward to one day being able to thank them personally when we see them. So we pray, Father, that you will use what we've shared today to simply stimulate and incite us to further study and investigation, which we know will result in a greater appreciation and love for you.

[47 : 41] In Christ's name, Amen. You are done.