



# *MORE STANDING UP. LESS BOWING DOWN.*

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All right, I'm in a good mood and we're gonna have a good time. Amen. That's just what I'm feeling. So, hey, if you got a Bible, we're in a book of the New Testaments called First Thessalonians. We're in, uh, chapter three if you wanna find your place there. And here's our big subject, more standing up, less bowing down. Here's the big theme. It's a theme throughout your Bible, but it does appear in this section. And that is when you're up against the world, when you're in the world, when you're going against culture, should you bow to it or stand up against it? Stand up against it. If you said, bow, we love you, but you're new, you need to stand up against it. Now, when you come into the presence of God, you should bow. We bow in the presence of God out of submission and surrendered him, but we stand in the face of the world and the culture that is against God. This is a major theme in the Bible, and it's a major encouragement in our chapter that we're studying here today. And we actually get this from the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ is God. He came down from heaven to earth, and our God literally stood on the world and stood against the world. And he stood against the political leaders who were corrupt. He stood against the religious leaders who opposed him. He stood against the cultural and demonic forces that opposed him. He never once bowed down to that which was against God. And he stood against everyone and everything that was against our God. He ultimately stood before crowds that hated and jeered him. He stood before a judge who wrongly condemned him. He stood before, uh, those who were going to execute him. He literally stood pierced through the feet on the cross, dying for the sins of the world. They put him in a tomb, and three days later, he stood in front of an empty grave in tremendous, unparalleled historical victory. So what we learned from the Lord Jesus is we bow down to God, but we do not bow down to anyone or anything that is against God. And the cultural forces in our day are incredibly strong. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, everything from economics to education to culture and entertainment wants you to bow down, to compromise your Christian convictions. And there's a story in the Old Testament that perfectly illustrates this. It's in the days of Daniel. They're in a godless culture, much like ours, and it's in a nation of Babylon. And, uh, the political leader who's also worshiped as a God, he creates a statue of himself and he wants everybody to do what? Bow, bow down. And so roughly 300,000 people bow down except for three guys who love God and they stand. And that is a picture of every generation and every Christian. You're either gonna bow down or you're gonna stand up. And so what we're learning today is how to stand up in a world where sadly, too many who profess Christianity and even Christian leaders are bowing down. I'll share two things with you and then we'll jump into the text. We're living in a day when there are massive cultural forces wanting you to just bow, to surrender, to give up, and to give in. And what we're seeing is a lot of people are bowing down to the world. And so here's, uh, one latest, uh, survey, and it comes from a recent book, the Great De Churching. It's a massive data survey. And here's the summary. It's discouraging, but it's enlightening. More people have left the church in the last 25 years. Some of you're young. That seems like a long time. I've been preaching for more than 25 years. It's not that long. It goes pretty quick. Uh, then all the new people who became Christians from the first great awakening, second great awakening and Billy Graham Crusades combine. What we're seeing is the world is converting people to be against God faster than the church converting people to before God. What we're seeing is a mass exodus from the church as people bow down. Lastly,

the 2020 faith communities. Today's study found the median congregation in the US is down to 65 people. It was a hundred thirty seven two decades ago. Here's what we're seeing. Lots of people were saying, I'm a Christian now. They're bowing down. They are leaving the church, they're leaving the Bible, they're leaving prayer. They're leaving Jesus Christ in record numbers. It is concerning. What makes things even more frustrating and concerning is this is being led by clergy. I I hate to tell you this. There will be a lot of pastors in hell. Some of them are gonna get a a, a, a a first class ticket to the fire. And and here's why. There was a survey done, I'll share it with you. It just came out this week. And it talks about, uh, mainline Protestant clergy. So this would be your liberal Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, some of the big beautiful traditional buildings, but the public, I'll read it to you, the Public Religion Research Institute, uh, of these quote unquote Christian pastors, Jesus would call them blind guides. Uh, they find 90% are pro L G B T Q 79% support gay marriage. 73% are pro-abortion, and 44% have considered abandoning Jesus and joining another religion. So, so here's what I'm telling you. The bowing down it is in record numbers. Entire denominations have bowed down. Entire networks have bowed down. Whole churches have bowed down, and a record number of pastors have bowed down. And these are people that are supposed to be opening the word of God and they're opposing the word of God. They're supposed to be serving the people of God. And what they are doing, they are serving the agenda of the world and they're harming the people of God. And and for those who have the, uh, the, the great honor of allowing me to teach you the Bible online, lemme just say something. If you're two things, if you're in a church where the pastor's, not even a Christian, don't follow them. They're going to hell. You do not want to follow them. They don't know where they're going. They don't know what they're saying. They don't know what they're doing. And so there, there, and I just get so frustrated because some people are like, I can't believe everybody's left the church. Well, if the pastors left, God, you probably should leave the church. Just something to think about. Okay? Now, um, another one is this. If you're, if, if, if you're, if you're in a church for those who are online or visiting and and your pastor doesn't know and love the Lord, there's no anointing. There's no presence of God, there's no blessing of God. There's so many churches. It's just so, I don't know. I just feel frustrated. And since it's just us girls, I'm just gonna vent for a moment. That's okay. You drive by all these buildings and you're like, God's people paid for this building. And now we're not talking about Jesus and we're not opening the Bible. And there's nowhere else for God's people to gather. It's just really frustrating. You. People are precious. God loves you. Jesus lived for you. Jesus died for you. He paid everything for you. God wrote a book to help you learn who he is and how to live your life. And God sent the spirit to help unburden and heal and direct you. And if the church doesn't have a commitment to these things, where else are you gonna go? And so here's what I love, though. There are places you can go. There are faithful Bible teaching, Jesus loving spirit-filled churches. Amen. And the thessalonian churches, one of those churches, and by God's grace, we want to always be one of those churches. So he says it this way in First Thessalonians three, eight, he says, they were quote, standing, there's our word, standing fast in the Lord. He's encouraging them. What he's saying is, in a, in a culture where so many are bowing down, the good news is this, there are some faithful churches. There are some real Christians, and there are some people who are gonna stand up for

what's right. And I would just tell you this, you've got a choice to make my friend. You either choose an easy life that opposes God and ends in hell, or you choose a hard life where God is with you and for you. And then he rewards you forever. I don't know about you. I would rather choose a life where God was helping me rather than me fighting him. You're quiet. You should have seen the three o'clock. They were very excited and enthusiastic. Um, so here's, some of you are new to church. You can say amen. You can laugh, you can, you can clap, um, in, if you don't like something, I forgive you. Okay? So that's what we're doing. Alright? So here we're gonna jump in. First Thessalonians three, one through five. And the big idea is this. You go through a little hell on your way to heaven. If you're a Christian, you're going to heaven, but you're going through a little hell. Okay, here he says this. Therefore, when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind in Athens alone. Lemme give the context. It's in Acts 17. Paul comes into town with Vena and Timothy. They teach the Bible. There's a bit of a revival. Some people meet Jesus. A church gets started, then there's a riot. Now, enemies come and opponents come and a mob rises up and they're threatening to kill the Christians and murder the pastor and close the church. So Paul left to protect the people, to protect the people. Ultimately, he would get arrested many times. And then, uh, he was ultimately beheaded by the Roman government. History outside of the Bible tells us the point is this, some people in the Bible, they're very controversial. They get in trouble. Those are my favorite people. And so that's what Paul does. And so now he's out of town and he writes the letter. And what he says is, I'm worried about you 'cause I can't be there with you. So I'm sending Timothy to check on you and give me a report. And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ to establish and exhort you in your faith, that no one be moved or bow down by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction. What he says is, I told you Christianity includes suffering. We'll talk about that just as I, it has come to pass. And just as you know, for this reason, when I could bear no longer, I was worried about you. I couldn't be there with you. I didn't know how you were doing. I, I sent to learn about your faith for fear that somehow the tempter we're gonna talk about him, that's Satan had tempted you and our labor would be in vain. Here's what he says. I told you as new Christians that you were quote unquote, destined to suffer and affliction. Those are his words, destined to suffer and affliction. Now, how many of you, you don't like those two words, suffering and affliction, right? We don't. I and here's the big idea. We don't love suffering and affliction. We don't look for suffering and affliction. But when it comes, don't be shocked because Christianity prepares us not just for heaven, but how to suffer affliction that we are destined for on our way home. And so what he's saying is, you're not just destined to salvation, but to suffering. And you just need to know this, Jesus Christ suffered. Uh, Isaiah says, he's a man of sorrows. So if you're gonna follow Jesus, there's going to be some suffering and affliction. And you need to know this so that when it comes, you're not shocked. And, and this always happens to new Christians, like, oh my gosh, I gave my life to Jesus and it got worse. Welcome, welcome to the team, because now Satan and demons are against you. Before that, it was just the world in your own foolish, you know, decisions. And, and just know this, when it comes, the good news is this, it's destined meaning God has allowed it to happen for this reason, so that you could grow and mature, that

you could have a deeper love and appreciation for Jesus affliction and suffering, that your character would become more like Christ, that you'd have compassion and empathy and wisdom to help others. And what God is going to do, he's going to use all of this to cause you to have a better life, be a better Christian, and do better ministry. And what he warns about is this. He says, I, I was concerned that the tempter had gotten in. So let me, let me say this. Satan whispers when you're wounded, okay? They're undergoing suffering and affliction. And he says, I knew the tempter was going to show up, and I was wondering if you would listen to him or not. Let me, lemme just make this really practical. When you are hurting, you're vulnerable. Maybe you're tired, maybe you're emotionally distraught, maybe your marriage is in crisis, or divorce has happened, or your spouse has died, or your child is wayward, or you lost your job, or you got physical illness or ailment. It's a tough season. In those seasons, you're weak and you're vulnerable. And, and Satan just preys on those who are suffering and hurting. And what the tempter does, he shows up and he whispers into the wound. Um, I, I'll share something with you, and I've, I've shared it many times over the years, but, but maybe, maybe for those of you who are new, this will be helpful. Um, I have had a conversation as a pastor thousands of times, and it's always the same conversation. I had it literally like 10 times in the last week outside of, uh, real men. I was talking to guys just thanking 'em for coming, shaking their hand, honoring their willingness to join us. And a couple of guys stopped and said, can I talk to you? Yeah. And they told me a story of what they were dealing with. Met with some people this week, various meetings. They're going through hardships. Some have lost jobs, some have lost spouse. Their, their, their suffering and affliction is very real. And they all said the same thing. Basically, I'm in a season of suffering or affliction. Something painful and hard has happened, and the way I'm dealing with it isn't healthy. They're like, I, I'm, I'm, I feel depressed or oppressed. I feel confused. I feel anxious. I I, I'm struggling. I'm not doing great. I'm doubting God. I I'm thinking some really dark thoughts. So I, I asked all of these people, and I've asked this question thousands of times. Tell me exactly what you're hearing or thinking. Okay? Uh, one guy in the back of the room, he said, uh, you failed. You're an idiot. You made a stupid decision. Um, you're an embarrassment. And, uh, you're never gonna change. I asked another gal, she said, well, I, I'm, I just think like, you know, you're wrong. You can't trust the Bible. Your God doesn't listen. Your God doesn't exist. Your prayers are worthless. One person said, um, you're a disappointment. You're an embarrassment. You should kill yourself. Okay? So I asked all of these people the same thing. Do you usually talk to yourself? And the second person, I don't, I don't get 'em more and be like, you're awesome. You're gonna have a great day. And no matter what they say on the internet, you're a sweetheart, right? I don't like, like I don't, I don't talk to myself in the second person. So I asked all these people, like, do you normally walk around talking about yourself? And they're like, no, I don't. I was like, okay. So, so there's three options here. Uh, God is speaking to you. Satan is speaking to you, or you are speaking to yourself. It's my first question to them. And to you, You think this is, do you think God would say? And they're like, no, God would never s not God would never speak to me like that. No. 'cause God's a father. You're his kid. God doesn't abuse our father, doesn't abuse his kids. Our Father, our Father isn't, you know, just pouring out condemnation and accusation and, and just shame. It doesn't do that. No. I said, so do you think these things, do you wanna think these things?

They're like, no. Okay. It's a process of elimination. It's God, Satan, you so it's not God. It's not you, it's, it's Satan. They're like, well, I thought it was my mind and I thought maybe I had depression. No, you didn't have depression. You had oppression. That's right. You could feel the same, but it's very different. Well, I thought that maybe I had low self-esteem. No, no, you're being lied to by the father of lies. Well, I thought I doubted God. No, no, no. Revelation 12:10, Satan is the accuser of the children of God. He accuses him day and night. You don't doubt God. Your enemy is accusing you. If you had somebody following you around that was just yelling at you all the time, what would you do? Restraining order. We are in Arizona. It is open carry. There is always plan B. But if someone was just following you around, yelling at you, you this, you this, you should kill yourself. You're a failure, you're an idiot. You'd be like, I'm not dealing with that. But when they're invisible, you think, okay, God, are you talking to me or am I not doing well? Some of you don't need medication, you need deliverance. Some of you don't have mental health. You have spiritual oppression. So, and, and, and I do believe in medication and doctors and all of that. But here's what Jesus says. Um, Satan is the father of lies. And there is the truth. And if you believe the truth instead of the lies, the truth sets you free. It sets you free. So lemme give you an assignment. For those of you who may struggle with this, I tell this to people all the time. Just get a sheet of paper or notebook. Just write a line down the middle, on the left at the top, put lies on the right at the top. Put truth, when you hear something that sounds condemning, say, oh, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. When it sounds accusing, when it's bringing up the past, that God is forgiven, when it's attacking your identity or your faith in God. Just ask yourself, is this a lie? Or is it the truth? If it's a lie, write the lie down in the column of lie. And then do what? Open the word of God and counteract it with the truth. Counteract. So, and this is spiritual warfare. And this is the process of renewing your mind, right? You, you're an idiot. No, no. I'm, I'm a child of God. You're never gonna change. No, I, no, I'm a new creation in Christ. You should kill yourself. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. You're supposed to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. Right? And, and if you will just choose in those moments, I'm gonna believe the truth and I'm going to reject the lie. What'll happen is the tempter won't be able to whisper into your wound. Okay? Some of you, I just really want you to do this exercise. And what he says is this, I know you're hurting, but when you're most hurting, the enemy is most speaking. Next point he says, and it's a little equation learning plus obeying equals blessing. And so one of the myths in churches, well, if I learn, then I'll change. No, no, no. Learning plus obeying equals blessing. Okay? Let me ask you this. How many of you have a gym membership? Okay. Okay. How many of you don't really go to the gym, right? So for those, for those people, like every month I pay a fee is a penalty for not working out. I have a gym membership. I don't go to the gym. I feel bad. So I give the gym money to make up for the guilt I feel for not going to the gym. Okay? So it's not just learning, it's obeying. Here's what he says. But now, uh, first Thessalonians three, beginning of verse five. But now that Timothy has come to you from us, he said, I sent Timothy. 'cause he's less controversial. There won't be a riot. He can come teach and then give me a report. Uh, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love, and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us as we long to see you. They love each other. This is a loving church for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction, we have been comforted about you

through your faith. For now we live. If you are standing fast, there's, there's our big idea. Standing fast in the Lord for what? Thanksgiving. He's joyful. Can we return to God for you? For all the joy? Lemme say this, God's people should be marked by joy. Okay, joy. The fruit of the spirit is joy. The world doesn't know joy 'cause the world doesn't have God. So when we come into the church, the environment should be joy. We should be laughing, having a good time. We should be loving each other. Even if we're having a hard day, we're, we're going to be joyful people. That's what he's saying. The essence of church life is for the joy we feel for your sake. Before God is we pray most earnestly day and night, that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith. And so here's the context. Paul started the church, mob rises up, riot happens. Government takes the side of the enemies and protestors, Paul leaves. And he's concerned. He's like, well, how are they doing? So he sends Timothy, and what he says is, I have joy. So much joy. I'm so thankful. I'm so glad when you guys learned the word of God and I left, you still kept doing what the word of God said. And, and people just often forget, and I've said this a lot, but for those of you who are new, this is the Bible. This is the word of God. It's the only perfect thing on Earth. It's the highest authority. And if you want a word from God, open the word of God. And a lot of people are like, I want God to bless my life. Great. Then place your life under His word. A lot of people are like, how come God doesn't bless my life? Well, if you're living in disobedience, he can't bless that. I'll give you an example. How many of your parents, parents, okay, thanks for bringing your cute kids. They're having a blast in the backyard. But how many of you would you would help your child hurt themselves? No. You're like, no, no, no. I would never help my child hurt themselves. When we sin, we hurt ourselves. God's a father. And when he says, do this, don't do that in the scriptures, what he's saying is, do this and you'll have a good life. Do that. You're gonna hurt yourself. So don't do that. Do this. I love you. Please obey me. And what happens is people are like, I want God to help me do what he tells me not to do. Well, that's a terrible parent. A terrible parent would help you hurt yourself. God's a father. And what he's saying is, no, no, no. If you wanna obey me and live under the authority of my word, I will bless and help you. And that's what Paul is saying is Paul's saying, I'm so excited. I taught the Bible and you guys believed it and you obeyed it. Let me ask it another way. Uh, for those of you who are parents, what if you told your child to do something, okay? And then your child came to you and they said, okay, I wanna obey you. Can you help me to do that? What's the answer? Yes, totally. I'm gonna do that. Go tell your siblings that this is the new deal for all the children. Like everybody does what mom and dad says, and we help them. Okay? God's a father. And if God says, do this and don't do that. And you go, okay, father, I want to obey you. Will you help me? What do you think God's answer is? I'm gonna help you all day. And this is what Paul is saying. It's the same thing, uh, that Jesus says, John 13:17, if you know these things, blessed are you. If you do them. Uh, Jesus says this in Luke 11:25, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it. And Jesus, brother James says it this way in James 1:22, be doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving yourselves. So here we are, we're studying the word of God. And then you've gotta figure out, okay, what do I, what does God want me to do? So here's my question for you. Um, what's your next step? And you'll hear a lot in the Bible, your walk with God. The key to a walk is just figure out the next step. Okay? Just what's the next step? For some of you, this is the first time you've

come to church. Welcome. We love you. What a big step. And a guy recently, he's like, I can't go to church. It'll, it'll, it'll lightening will come from heaven and burn it down. I said, we have a concrete church. You should come to our church. You know, it won't burn. You'll be fine. Some of you welcome to church, some of you, your next step is you need to get a Bible and start reading it, uh, between real men and women. This week we had 26 people come up and they're like, Hey, I heard the sermon last weekend. Mark said, read the Bible. Uh, where do you get one? They've never even seen one. Like, okay, here's the Bible that that's next step. Praise God. Start reading. Some of you, it's prayer. You're like, I'm burdened or I need wisdom. I need God to direct my steps. Okay, pray. Listen, some of you, it's worship and starting to sing and let your soul connect with the spirit of God. For some of you, the next step is I need to forgive them. I've just kind of held onto that and I've been sort of emotionally locked up and bound up, and I need to forgive them as God has forgiven me. Some of you, the Holy Spirit's convicted you. You need to go tell somebody you're sorry cause pain or relational strain. And you need to just go be honest with them as God's been honest with you. And the key is this, just figuring out, okay, God, you've spoken to me. Now, what am I going to do in obedience to the word that you've spoken? And I don't know what that is for you, but I know for each of us, there is a next step. And here's the good news. Um, love grows deeper when things get harder. So their church has got suffering affliction. They're in a rough season. But how many of you have seen this even in your own family? As things get worse, the love gets deeper. And and this is where sometimes the hardest seasons create the sweetest relationships. And that's what happened here. First Thessalonians three beginning in verse 11. Now, may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all is we do for you. Here's what he's saying is, God loves us and we love each other. That's what it means to be the family of God so that he may establish your heart's blameless and holiness before God and Father. And here's the big line, and this sets up the theme for the rest of the book. And the second Thessalonians. So we'll revisit this in a moment, but this is where we're gonna be going for months at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. He's talking about the second coming of Jesus Christ. And what he says is, until Jesus returns, the church needs to focus on loving one another and having a spirit of joy, encouraging and caring for one another. And here two things I wanna say. One God can be present even when you can't. This is really how many of you right now, there's somebody you love, they're in a hard season, they live somewhere else, they're on military deployment, or they're in the hospital. You're like, I, I wanna be with them, but I can't, I can't be there right now. God can and God is, and what Paul is saying is, I can't be there right now, but I'm so glad that God is there with you. And I see God working through each of you to love and serve and enjoy one another. And this is where as well. Number two, even if you can't be with someone physically, you can be with them spiritually. And that's what Paul is saying. And what he says is he says, uh, I've been praying for you day and night. And so if you can't be there physically, you can pray and you can be there spiritually. 'cause then the Holy Spirit goes to comfort or to encourage or to bless the person that you're praying for. This is where I always like to say it this way, the shortest distance between two people is prayer. How many of you, if people are praying for you, even if they can't be with you, you know that God is with you and God is answering their



prayers and he's present with you. And so this is where, what prayer does. Prayer causes our hearts to be aligned. You can't be angry at somebody you're praying for. You can't be done with somebody you're praying for. Um, you can't be bitter against somebody that you're praying for, but you can be present with someone that you're praying for. And so what Paul does here, he writes a letter and he prays. And what he says is that he's looking forward to one day being with them, quote unquote face-to-face. And I like to call this the ministry of presence. There are times that we can't be present, but we can pray. And I've seen people that have been prayed for, and they will literally say, I could feel the power of prayer in my life. I just knew that people were interceding and the Holy Spirit just strengthened me as they were praying for me. Even if they couldn't be present, he was. And ultimately, Paul says, my goal is to get to you and to see you face to face. And this is the ministry of presence. And friends, there are times when we can't fix it, but we can pray or we can be present. There are times that we don't know what to say, but we can pray and we can be present. And what Paul is doing, he's sending them Timothy to be what I like to call a non-anxious presence. They've got a little anxiety, they're in a rough season, and they hear Timothy's coming answer, great, please send Timothy, how many of you have got people in your life? There are, let's just be honest, we're in church. They're a presence, but not a non-anxious presence, right? Like, we're coming into the holidays, and let's be honest, we won't put this on the internet. We'll just be honest. Um, so somebody's like, Hey, hey, we're gonna come to town and see you for Thanksgiving. You're like, ah, we gotta move. We totally gotta move by November. Right? Right. Or you've got certain, I can see it on your face. You know, I mean, you know these relatives and there are certain people that are like, oh, so hey, we're let's hang out on Christmas. You're like, no, no, no. Aren't you gonna pray about it? No. Don't even need to pray about it. There are certain people, they bring an anxious presence, right? If you're having a bad day, they show up. It's not better. I heard you're having a bad day. I'm here. You're like, no, I'm having a really bad day right there. But there are people that, they have the spirit of God, they're prayed up, they have joy, and when they arrive, they bring the ministry of presence. And it's a non-anxious presence. Like, oh, I'm so glad you're here. Thank you. And so what he's preparing them for is suffering and affliction until Jesus' second coming. That's what he's preparing them for. And so the last line of chapter three, he talks about the coming of our Lord Jesus. This sets up the mega theme for the next two chapters. And we're gonna get into the antichrist and the man of lawlessness, and the last days and the end times, that's where we're going. But here's what he's doing. He is helping them to understand the end and then live in light of the end. It's reverse engineering life. And people will look and they're like, where's history going? What's gonna happen? And if you don't, lemme just say this, if you don't know what the future holds, it causes a lot of anxiety in the present. If you know what the future holds, you're preparing yourself to live in the future that is eventually coming. So here's what he's telling them, Jesus is coming again. Amen. Amen. So here's what I want to do. Uh, in a bit of time, I got together and then a few extra minutes after that, um, uh, here's what I want to talk about. So he talks about the coming of our Lord Jesus. And, uh, and we're gonna talk about six signs that the world is ending, Okay? We got nothing else to do. Six signs that the world is ending. And I was thinking about it. We could just throw up the photo of six politicians. I mean, we could do that just any random six. But, But here's, here's what I know, that God

knows the future. God rules the future. God reveals the future so that we know where we're going and we understand what is happening on our way toward home. And, and this allows us, uh, lemme see. I'm gonna verbal process a little bit. Um, I've said, I've said this before, but how many of you, how many of you got any of you guys sports fans, sports fans? I mean, obviously not college football fans, otherwise you wouldn't be the service. But sports fans. So how many of you like watching sports? Like Grace and I were at the Arizona Diamondbacks game last night. They lost two to one. We were surrounded by Houston Astros fans. It really felt like, you know, we were into his spiritual war, and, uh, and it went right up to the ninth inning and they lost. But guess what? Guess what? Guess what the tone was In the ninth inning, there's a guy on, if we score run, it's tight, and then we go into overtime, we go to extra innings, and then if they win, they go to the playoffs. Everything. Guess what? Everybody's screaming and yelling and super enthusiastic in 30 years, last night's game, we'll be on E S P N classics And no one will be freaking out. Why? Because, you know, the end, God tells us the end so that we don't freak out, okay, this, this is where we're going. Okay? One of you like that, one of you like that, and then some of you felt sorry for them. So you thank you for serving them and ministering to them with your fake golf clap. I appreciate that. Okay, so here's what the Bible says, that everything gets darker until Jesus comes the light of the world. And, and he's gonna use in chapter five, verse three, the language of birth, pains, frequency, and intensity. And here's what God wants you to know. Jesus is coming and it's gonna get darker until the light arrives. Here are the six, uh, signs that the world is ending. Uh, number one, an increase in stress, anxiety, and mental illness. Yep. Okay. Uh, second Timothy 3, 1, 3, 4. In the last days, there will come times of difficulty. That word lang literally means mental anguish or stress or depression or anxiety for people will be, tell me if this doesn't sound familiar, lover, lovers of Self, Self just posting selfies. Right? We're the people that voted, we invited the camera that could take our photo? We're those people before that? You're like, oh, there's people, you're like, no. There's just one lovers of self lovers of, Oh, That may lead to debt. Hmm. Record debt. They're talking about shutting down our government because we'd been out of money. And so you're like, oh my gosh. I'm like, please shut down the government. Please shut down the government. Right? Yeah. Pay the soldiers, everybody else, lovers of money, proud. We Have a whole month. I'm just thinking out loud. Uh, arrogant, abusive. Mm, disobedient to their parents. That's the Greek word for teenager. Ungrateful. Unholy. Heartless easable. Never. Happy slanderous. Welcome to social media without self-control. Brutal, not loving. Good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Okay, let's just take a vote. All in favor? Check the box. Okay. Uh, number two, an increase in scoffers who mock the Bible and those who believe it, two Peter three, three scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing following their own sinful desires. People will mock Christ in Christianity. They'll make fun of it. So just us girls. So where's this happening in our culture today? I'm in the mood if you don't know. Yeah. Okay. So, uh, in our culture today, where is this happening? Is scoffers just sort of making sport and light in fun of Christianity? Everywhere. Okay, everywhere. That's yeah, that's, that's true. Uh, how about late night talk show hosts constant Dodgers? Well, and, and, and always too. And what you get is you get these talk shows like I was talking about in the last service I shouldn't have. So I'll do it again. Um, like you watch shows like The View. Yeah. And

the coven just keeps attacking Christianity. It's just, it's just, it's just scoffing and making fun of, and, and it's, it's just, and that just laughter. Oh, the Bible's true. Jesus is God. You know, hell is real. Ha ha ha. Just jokes. I I said the last service. I was on the view, uh, years ago, worst day of my life, I got my makeup done between, uh, joy Behar and, uh, Barbara Walters, uh, girls are getting our makeup done. And, uh, I felt like Jesus between two thieves, if I'm totally honest with you. Since we're not putting this one on the internet, And the whole time us girls are getting our makeup done, it's just making fun of Christ and Christianity just mockery. How about the, so, okay, so all in favor? Is there an uptick in scoffing? Yes. Oh yeah, for sure. Okay, number three, an increase in mocks of Christian, uh, morality who encourage pleasure, especially sexual sin, Jude 18. And the last time there will be mockers following their own ungodly lust in that lust word there. It's all sexual. So what he's saying is, as we get near the end, there's gonna be mocks. Now a scoffer makes fun of Christianity as I, if it's stupid, a mocker actually attacks it, thinking it's evil. So we've now reached a point in our day where there's a large number of people who think that this is actually evil. This is bigoted and narrow and patriarchal and homophobic and intolerant, and it's repressive and all these big words. And if that's true, you don't just make fun of it. You need to deconstruct it, you need to destroy it because it's evil. So now justice is deconstructing Christ in Christianity, especially as he says in Jude when it comes to gender and sex. So let's, let's all in favor, is this happening? Yes. Has anyone seen an uptick in perverts who hate the Bible? Yes. Okay. Me too. Um, how about this one? Number four, an increasing love for false teachers and a hatred for Bible preachers. Second Timothy four, one, preach the word. That's what he says. Now lemme just say this, I promise you, as long as there's breath in my lungs and I'm not crazy, uh, and I've asked grace to tell me when that day comes and take me home and give me a sandwich. But until that day, no. Just take the Bible. Gimme a sandwich. Good job, mark. You're retired. Okay? Until then, I promise you I will preach the word. Okay? That's what we're gonna do. Alright? I've been doing this for 30 years. I, I, every time I, I, I, like, I am a crash test dummy. I just head on collisions all the time. I will call the shots. I will take the shots. I will teach the Bible. I will not repent. I will not recant. There is no reverse gear. We will open the Bible, we will talk about Jesus. And I don't care what is said or done. That's what we're saying and doing. Amen. Ah, every once in a while, people are like, do you need to say it like that? Yes. Because they'll ignore me if I don't preach the word. The time is coming. This was thousands of years ago. You tell me if this is the time, the time is coming, when people will not endure sound, teaching sound there is healthy. That's what the original word means. You can't be emotionally, physically, spiritually, relationally, healthy unless your soul is being nourished by the word of God. Instead, people wanna be unhealthy. He goes on, here's what they will do. Uh, having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves, teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth. Here's what he says. As we get closer to the second coming of Jesus, people are gonna really hate Bible teaching, but they'll find spiritual leaders who will give them motivational talks and tell them exactly what they want to hear, which is exactly the opposite of what God says. Is that happening? Yes. It's everywhere. I mean, whole denominations whole. I mean, there's seminaries that should be retitled as cemeteries. It's where you go to bury faith. There's whole denominations. You're like, you're, you're literally commissioning liars to stand in the pulpit.

You're, you're sending out wolves and calling them shepherds. But let me tell you this, friends, every person who reads the word of God, we're all gonna come to this moment where you're like, I wish it didn't say that. True. I mean, they chuckled it. How about you guys? Do you agree? Okay. You're like in those moments, if you want to find someone with more degrees than Fahrenheit educated beyond their intelligence with a book deal favored on social media, quoted by the mainstream news, you can find someone to contradict the word of God in some creative origami way. Shazam, to tell you exactly what you want to hear. Don't, don't. Right. So if God says it, believe it. And if you disagree with it, change your mind. Amen. And so what we're seeing right now is we're seeing this mass generational apostasy. I told you there's, there's a large number of pastors who are like, I could flip a coin on Jesus. Take him or leave him like, oh my gosh, is this an issue? Let's just vote here. We are all in favor? Yes. Okay, we're four for four. Um, here's number five. An increase in people who are anti-Christ leading a massive counterfeit quote unquote Christian apostasy, which paves the way for the antichrist. Okay? One John two, 18 and 19. It is the last hour, right? We're, we're nearing the end of human history. Now, I don't know when Jesus is coming. Okay? Some of you think you do, you scare us. Okay, we, because the Bible says no one knows the hour or the day. Okay? But God knows. But here's what he says. He says, when you see these things happening, you're getting near, you're getting close. Here's what I would tell you. This was written a few thousand years ago. I know. I just, it just feels like we're close. Amen. Yes. Like, like I'm at the point now, like the alarm goes off, I hit snooze just in case he shows up before I gotta go to work. I mean, it could be any moment. So it is the last hour Antichrist is coming. I'll read it again. Many antichrist have come. It is the last hour they went out from us, but they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would've continued with us. Okay, let me, let me, let me verbal process. Okay? Um, so anti is against and replace place. Satan in heaven was the first antichrist. He's like, Jesus is on the throne. He's like, I'm against him. I want him off the throne and I wanna be on the throne. That's where it all started. To this day, there is a spirit of antichrist that I, you're gonna talk about the man of lawlessness coming up in Thessalonians. And what this is, this is a counterfeit of Jesus Christ. And it brings in the kingdom of hell. Instead of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is fully God, fully man led by the power of the Holy Spirit. The antichrist will be a human being empowered by Satan himself. He will have unbelievable authority and power and paving the way he says are antichrist. And what these are, these are people in government or politics or education or entertainment in every generation. In what, every sphere of influence they have, whatever authority that they have, they use it to be anti-Christ. They're gonna be against Jesus and try and have someone or something be an authority other than Jesus. True or false. That's happening right now today in politics and government, in education and entertainment. There is just a spirit that is antichrist. How do you know if you show up and you're like, Hey, let's talk about Jesus. Let's read the Bible. Let's pray. You're gonna see quite a, a, a pressure to bow down. Um, I, I verbal, processed this at the last sinner, but let me just kind of revisit it. Um, the Bible seems to give the indication that everything is gonna get darker until Jesus, the light of the world returns. And that, that Satan will have one last massive, uh, spiritual warfare effort to create a kingdom that is a counterfeit to the kingdom of Jesus. And to rule over everyone and everything. And, um, see how to say this. Um, this is the spirit of globalism.

Um, this is where I get controversial. You know, every sermon, there's something offensive. We're there. So, um, and the myth is this, from people that paved the way for the antichrist. If we could just all come together, if we could all, if we could get all the religions together, all the nations together, if we could get all the people together into one global, unified, political, cultural, economic movement, then, then we could have heaven. We don't need Jesus. We, we could have heaven all by ourselves 'cause we're good people. And if all the good people just got together, think of all the good we could do, it is, it's fable it. In the Old Testament, everybody had the same language, same culture, same nation. They all came together. They were trying to build a high tower so that literally they could sort of get up to heaven and rule and reign like God. And, and God looked down. God said, I've gotta, I've gotta scatter these people and confuse their languages because if they remain unified, nothing will be impossible for them. And they're sinners, unified sinners don't bring heaven, unified sinners only bring hell. And so and so that was the first human attempt at globalism. But what he's saying is there's gonna be all these antichrist that lead to the antichrist. And it's someone with incredible spiritual influence, political influence, economic influence, cultural influence. And they're a counterfeit of Christ and they're anti-Christ. And there are constantly forces that work in our world that are trying to bring everyone and everything together. And Satan is thinking, that would be perfect. I would like to be in charge. So let's vote, are we? Does it feel like that's the direction that we're going? Okay, last one. Um, an increase in wealth, comfort, and a sense that God has not needed for a successful life, or a concern for eternity. Why do I need to go to heaven? I have such a good life. I feel like I've already arrived. James five, three. This is Jesus' brother. Your gold and silver of corroded and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. What he's saying is it's going to get to the point where there's no sense of urgency for God. What do I need to pray for? I don't need anything. Why do I need to wait for Jesus to return? I I'm already living kind of my best life. Why do I need, um, why do I need to, to live a life in obedience to God? I've been doing what I want and it seems to be going very well, actually pays the bills. And you know, I've put on a few pounds 'cause my life is so blessed. I I don't even know what to do. So let's all take a vote. Are we living in those times? Yes, we're living in those times. And so here's what I'm telling you. He, uh, he introduces, he's like, there will be some suffering and affliction. You need to stand. Don't bow to the culture, bow to the Lord. Stand against the culture. Jesus is coming. Reverse engineer your life. Know that you're gonna stand before him and give an account. And as we get closer to the end, the Bible tells us with these prophetic words, here's what it's going to look and feel like as we get closer to the end, as we're getting toward the end. And I don't know when the end is, but I know we're getting closer as we're getting toward the end. Here's what people are thinking, sensing, or feeling. Oh no, the end of the world is coming. I'm like, yes. Finally. Can we get this over with? Can we hit a hard reset? Can we, can we do things the way that God originally intended? So here's the really good news. I've read the book. Jesus comes back. God's people are blessed. You're gonna raise from the dead. You're gonna be perfectly healed. Your relationships will be reconciled. Your emotional health will be restored. Your mental health will be healed. You're going to be blessed in the presence of God forever. There's gonna be no sickness, no sin, no death, no curse, no politics, no interest rates, no elections. Woo. Everybody's like, ah,

it's ending. Finally, I've been, I'm so sick of it. You know, can we please get Jesus back? Because I'll tell you, we've got a God-sized problem. And it doesn't matter who tries, everyone fails until Jesus Christ returns. Amen. Amen. So in the meantime, what we wanna do, we wanna live as the people of God, by the spirit of God. And we wanna have joy and worship and love and hope. Because as we get to the end, here's what we know. That's our beginning for the, the end of the world is actually the beginning. It's not a finish line. It's a starting line for the children of God. We finally get to live the life we were created for and destined for. So here's what we're gonna do. I'm done yelling. This is a hot job. I'm sweating like Mike Tyson is smelling me. But I'm very excited. 'cause here's what I'll tell you. I know Jesus is coming. I know his word is true. I know that my hope is not in vain, and I know when I see Jesus, it's only gonna be a series of good days forever. Amen. Alright, so let's bring the band up and sing. And here's what we're gonna do. I'm gonna ask you to stand, and I want you to stand and think. When I leave here, I'm going to stand against the world and we're gonna worship. And as we worship, I want you to bow, and I want you to just acknowledge the authority of Jesus. Okay? So as we get ready for worship, let me just speak a little bit of God's word over you. It says, when Jesus will returns, every eye will see him. It says in Daniel that he'll be coming on clouds ruling and reigning as king of kings and Lord of lords. It says in Revelation that he'll be riding a horse and then an angelic army will be following him to do judgment and justice against his enemies and ours, the Bible says in Zacharia that when his feet touch the mountain, it splits two. The Bible says, when Jesus returns, he's going to call you by name. He is going to call you from the grave that he is going to look you in the eye, that you will see him face to face, that he's gonna wipe all the tears from your eyes. And all you're gonna do is enjoy his presence and sing his praises forever. Amen. Yeah. Alright, let's start right now.