



MORE COURAGE. LESS COWARD.

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Well, who's excited to start a brand new book of the Bible? Amen. Such a good time. Hey, if you're new, we're so glad to have you. My name's Pastor Mark and I love teaching God's word. And uh, today I start my 36th book of the Bible. It's called Second Thessalonians. It's in the New Testament. And while you find your place, I've got a free gift for you. It's a study guide, kind of an introduction, overview, and explanation of the book of Second Thessalonians. If you just scan the QR code, I'll send it to you for free. And as I always say, uh, you get what you pay for. Lower your expectations. I did my best, but I'm trying to help. Amen. Here's what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna pray for you and we're gonna jump right into God's word. Amen. Alright, father God, thank you so much for an opportunity to jump into a new book of the Bible. Holy Spirit, we invite you to help us to learn about who Jesus is and what Jesus does. And Lord Jesus, this is your house. These are your people. And the story of the scriptures finds you as the hero. So Jesus, we ask when all is said and done, the people would know you and love you and serve you and have joy and hope in the Holy Spirit. We ask for this grace in your good name. Amen. Alright, we're gonna jump in in just a moment, but what an interesting time to be alive. What a unique period in human history. I mean, if you're looking at the news, there's a lot of reason for anxiety. We're three weeks into a war in Israel. We had a mass shooting in the United States of America. Anxiety is an all time high. We know that the world is not a safe place and it seems to be getting darker and more deadly and more discouraging and more dangerous. And it brings a lot of fear and anxiety to people. And my hope and prayer and goal today is to lift that burden from you and to say that overall is Jesus Christ. And he is good and he is in control and he has a plan for everyone and everything. And what we feel in our day, these, these, these wars, these conflicts, these divisions is something that Paul in one Thessalonians called Labor Pains. And what he says is, as we near the end of human history, there's an intensity and a frequency where it feels like we can no longer continue. And that's exactly where the world finds itself today. And even non-Christians are coming to this conclusion that we're nearing the end human history as we know it cannot continue. We're coming to a place of great transition. In 1947, uh, there was a group of atomic scientists, including Albert Einstein, they came together and they put together something called the Doomsday Clock. And they were looking at world events and they were trying to ask, how close are we to a cataclysmic event or the ending of human history as we know it? And every year in January, they reset that clock at the beginning of 2023. You can find it for yourself online. They said that we're 90 seconds to midnight. And midnight is their language. For some cataclysmic event and some alteration or ending of human history as we know it, they moved it to 90 seconds, to midnight because of the invasion of Ukraine and war with Russia. Now I promise you this, now that Israel's at war, we are going to move it again in January. And what that means is we are living at the end potentially of human history as we know it. And so where we find ourselves today, and you've all been watching the news, we're three weeks into a war in Israel, first time in 50 years that there is war in Israel. And what we see is that this is a nation that is about the size of New Jersey and about similar population. And now it is the fulcrum and the fault line for all the nations of the earth. This is deeply and profoundly spiritual. Uh, the Bible is written in the Old Testament by Jewish people in the Hebrew language it tells of the coming of Jesus Christ, who his Jewish in the Hebrew to fulfill the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament. The first converts were Jews.

Even the Church of Thessalonika that we're learning from in Acts 17, uh, they started as a synagogue of Jewish people looking at the Old Testament scriptures, the centerpiece of human history spiritually is Israel. It's where Jesus came to. It's where Jesus died and rose. And it's where Jesus Christ. I promise you this is going to return perhaps very soon. All of this is deeply and profoundly spiritual. And now we're seeing the nations align and we may be living at a prophetic moment in human history. The Bible says that there will be the war of Armageddon in Revelation. It also says in Ezekiel 38 and 39 that in the end all the nations will come against Israel to destroy and eradicate the Jewish people. And then Jesus will return to save them and to save us from the world ending. And where we find ourselves right now is standing with Israel is the United States, France, Germany, Italy, and Great Britain. On the other side, we see with the Palestinians, Lebanon, Syria, Qatar, uh, Turkey, which today said that they were considering invading and attacking uh, Israel as well along with China that is going to potentially be drug in. And even this week, Hamas, the terrorist organization, they had a meeting with uh, Russia and they brought the Iranians and they're aligning together. And so what we see right now is the United States is preparing for war. Uh, we have sent them missile defense systems. We are sending the Gerald R. Ford uh, carrier with 5,000 crew. We are sending the US Dwight d Eisenhower, uh, as well with 5,000 crew on that ship. 2000 soldiers are to standby. The Air force is in position and is now adding FF sixteens and C seventeens. And what we're looking at is birth pains. We're looking at the potential for international global conflict in a very tumultuous time. And let me say this, friends, this is profoundly deeply spiritual. Hamas is not just a terrorist organization. I said this a few weeks ago. It's also a word in the Old Testament and it means violence. It is a demonic spirit that was present in the days of Noah in Genesis six, it tells us that the whole world was filled with Hamas. So God flooded the world. It tells us as well in the days of Moses when he was a baby boy in the Egyptian government, tried to eradicate him and kill all the Hebrew boys. It says in Joel three 19 that they were working by Hamas. This is a spirit of death and destruction and the denigration of the Jewish people in the Jewish state. All that to say, if you're feeling it and sensing it, there is a sense that we're living at this acal moment of human history. And here's where people are thinking history is going. According to a recent survey of 6,200 Americans, 71.2% say they have no faith in the US government to save them. And let me say this, the government can't save you, but Jesus can to save them from or p prevent a doomsday event. What I find interesting is there's 20 some percent of people that still think that the government is helpful. Um, and and if you're with us, this will be an encouraging next statistic of that same survey. The state that most distrust the government to protect them is the state of Arizona. Okay? We know that, right? You're like, that's what I'm carrying. I know, I know, I know. Okay, so that's my introduction. I'll get to my sermon in a moment. But three things I want you to know. Number one, evil is real. We're seeing it. You can't deny it. Number two, the end is nearing. I don't know how close we are, but we feel to be very close. And then the third question is, are you ready? Are you ready? Because here's what happens when we don't know the future, it causes anxiety. When we do know the future, it removes that anxiety. I don't want you to have anxiety. I want you to have joy and hope and courage. And to do that we're gonna open the word of God and we're gonna receive a word from God, but we're gonna receive it as the church of Jesus Christ. And there is a big difference between the

world and the church. And that's where Second Thessalonians begin, second Thessalonians, uh, chapter one verse one, Paul Sylvanus and Timothy to the church. That's what we are. We're the church. We belong to Jesus. We're part of the kingdom of God. Uh, to the church of the Thessalonians in God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace to you and peace. That's what we're gonna talk about from God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, we ought always to give thanks to God for you brothers as is right because your faith is growing abundantly. Lemme say this, in this church, you are growing individually and we are growing numerically because God is alive and he is changing lives. It goes on to say, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Thank you for being a loving, joyful, kind, generous, wonderful church family. Therefore, we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. He talks about two things here, the world and the church. And what he's saying is that the world is against the church. And the church suffers because it is surrounded by the world. And so you need to know this. There is a spirit at work in our world and it is bringing persecution and affliction to those who love God. This world system is a codified unified whole. The world system has overtaken education and is brainwashing children at the youngest of ages in government schools until ultimately they are fully brainwashed in college. We see this on college campuses where antisemitism is on the rise and everyone is just against what the Bible is for. We see this same spirit at work in Ed, not only in education but in entertainment anymore. If you have a child, you need to closely monitor all that they consume. It is overtaken media and social media to where now lies are promulgated and things that are antichrist are preferred on the platforms. This has also taken the the economy where we're spending more money than we make individually or collectively to do things that bring about harm and self-destruction. We're living in a day where the world's system is run by Satan himself and it is harming and damaging people. And he goes on to call this persecutions and afflictions. If you're, if you're a Christian, you feel this. But if you're just a sane, healthy human being, you sense it as well. Like how dark can the world get? How? How bad can things become? Where is history going and is there any hope of a turnaround? In the remainder of Second Thessalonians, he uses these words about the world system, conflict, distress, darkness, evil, persecutions, suffering, rebellion, lawlessness, wicked deception, unrighteousness. Now our world wouldn't use those words. Instead, the word of God judges the world and he says, these come from wicked and evil men and quote from Satan himself. Make no mistake, the world that we live in is not a good place for human life and flourishing. If you follow the plan of the world, you will end up in despair and eventually in death. So conversely, there is the church and the church is the place for God's people. Just as the world brings the culture of hell up, the church is the place where we want the culture of God's kingdom to come down. We wanna live in joy and freedom and life in the Holy Spirit. And so he's writing to a church and he's writing to a church so that we would know what God's plan is. So as we look into the future, we would have faith and not fear. We would be encouraged and not discouraged and we'd be able to enjoy our life until we see Jesus return. And so the leaders here are Paul Sylvanus and Timothy. Uh, these are the senior leaders or lead team of that church. And I would encourage you to read the book of Second Thessalonians for yourself. Takes 10, 15 minutes. It's written by the apostle Paul, one of the

most brilliant significant minds in the history of the world, uh, of the, of the New Testament books of which there are 27. He writes 13, possibly 14 of them. The two longest books are written by Luke. That's Luke and Acts. He is friends with Paul Paul's doctor and traveling companion. And in the book of Acts from chapter 13 to 28, it largely centers on the missionary journeys of Paul including to thessalonika all that to say after Jesus Christ, the biggest impact and footprint on the Bible in the New Testament is the Apostle Paul. And here's what I really want to talk about. He talks about grace and peace. Our world needs this perhaps more than ever. Let me first speak about grace and the heart of Christianity is the grace of God as he says through our Lord Jesus Christ. The opposite of grace is something called works. And here's the big idea. There is God, there is us. God is holy. We are unholy. God is sinless, we are sinful. God is right, we are wrong. There is distance separation, alienation. And the question is how will that gap be closed? Every other belief system other than Christianity says that we need to do something. We need to fix the mess we made. We need to pay God back. We need to reincarnate and pay off our karmic debt to God through our good works. We can climb a ladder up to God and that is friends simply not true because God is perfect and his kingdom is a perfect place and no imperfect person can ascend into his presence. So Christianity has a different plan and that is grace. Now let me just say this quickly as well. When it comes to works, there are two kinds of works. There are religious works and there are secular works For those who are religious works. This would be those who formally join a religion thinking that if they devote themselves to its principles, eventually they will find themselves acceptable in God's sight. The second is secular. There are people that believe there are social justice caused their political orientation or simply their personal ethic will cause them to be right in the sight of God. That's why what we're seeing in our day are people devoted to social justice causes, to saving the environment, to all kinds of conflict politically. They're entering into those fears with a religious level of zeal. And the point is simply this. They know that there's something wrong and they want it to be right. They know that they are part of the problem and they want to be part of the solution. But ultimately works. Do not save only the grace of God through our Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ saves anyone. And and grace is this, we don't go up to God. God comes down to us and we don't do anything because Jesus did everything. And so it's not about what we have done for God, it's about what God has done for us. And his name is Jesus Christ. And and Jesus was in heaven and he made us and he loved us and he created a perfect environment and he looked down and he saw that we sinned and rebelled against him. And he could have left us to our own devices. He could have left us with no hope. Instead he came down on a rescue mission and God became a man and he lived the life that we have not lived. He lived the life without sin. He was perfect. He never rebelled. In addition, we then thought that there was a problem with him because he was different than us. We didn't consider that perhaps he was right and we were wrong and that all of humanity should look more like him. So we sentence him to death and we killed him. And on the cross of Jesus Christ, he took our place and he put us in his place. He died so we could live. He endured wrath so we could receive grace. He was separated so we could be reconciled. And the reason we love Jesus is because he took our place and put us in his place. And now we receive grace. That's forgiveness, that's love, that's relationship, that's hope. That's eternal life that never ends. Amen. Amen. That's the grace of God. And what he says is

if you receive the grace of God through Jesus Christ, 'cause not only did he die, he rose and he returned to heaven and he's alive and well right now he's hearing prayers, he's healing people, he is saving souls. And we know that one day he will return. But between now and then, we need to live with peace internally until the prince of peace returns. And he talks about how the grace of God brings about peace. And there's two kinds of, uh, elements to peace. One is we have peace with God. If you belong to Jesus Christ and he died in your place for your sins, God is not angry with you. He loves you. God is not going to punish you. He has forgiven you. God is not going to abandon you. He promised to never leave nor forsake you. There is peace with God through Jesus Christ. In addition, you can have the peace of God. You can know that as the world reaches its nearing end that you're gonna be with Jesus. Even as you are sick and dying, you can know that you're going to be with Jesus. And it brings a peace that surpasses all understanding. And what we are experiencing right now, we're experiencing a world that has no peace and no grace. People are not treating one another with grace. And people are not living their lives with peace because they don't know Jesus Christ. Once you know Jesus Christ, you have the grace of God and the peace of God. And so now as he's speaking to the church, what he's going to do is he's going to give them prophecy. Lemme explain this. The Bible is ultimately written by God through human beings. It's the book that God wrote. And throughout it there are prophecies. This is God anticipating, predicting and preparing us for the future. Now we have anxiety 'cause we don't know the future. Prophecy lifts that anxiety because it tells us the future. And in the end, Jesus comes back and he saves all of his people. And if you're on team Jesus, you're on the winning team forever. That's good news for us. And so ultimately when it comes to prophecy, the Bible has 2,500 prophecies. 2000 have been fulfilled, 500 remain to be fulfilled. Much of the book of Second Thessalonians is prophecy. It's telling them that Jesus is returning. And so I want to talk about prophecy in two forms, events and and words. Events are prophetic. Things that occur that reveal to us the plan of God. Words are ways that God instruction informs us in the future of what is going to happen. Let me start with a prophetic event of Jesus' resurrection. And then let me go to the prophecies about his second coming. So here's what I want to do. I want you to know that as our world is just sort of gripped with the fear of death and, and what a few years we've had, I mean we shut down the world hoping that people would live. And let me tell you this, if you don't know Jesus, eventually you're gonna die. And this life will be as close to heaven as you have ever been. We saw it in our world this week. Tragic, horrifying, uh, a man hearing voices. Demonic shoots 18 innocent people. We're seeing it with war in Ukraine. We're seeing it with war in Gaza, in Israel. Every day we're just flooded with, with anxiety and death and destruction and fear. And it causes people to ask, where is history going and where am I going? And I wanna answer those two questions for you so that you can receive the grace of God and enjoy the peace of God. And so I'm gonna talk about the resurrection of Jesus as the greatest prophetic event in the history of the world. If Jesus came back from death, then we can know what awaits us on the other side of death. And if Jesus can conquer death, Jesus can conquer anything. And resurrection is this friend. Someone is dead and then they physically die and are dead for a period of time. And then they return to life never to die again. That is eternal life. This is not the same as a near death experience. This is death, burial, resurrection. And let me say this about Jesus. If he rose from

the dead, then he is who he said he is. And if he rose from the dead, we now have a picture and a portrait of the future that awaits us as the children of God if we receive grace from him. And so first and foremost, let me just tell you a little bit about Jesus. The first thing I want you to know is that Jesus Christ said he was the only God. This claim is without precedent or peer in all of human history. No founder of any major world religion ever said they were God. And here's what Jesus said. Uh, John chapter 10, verses 31 and 30 through 33, they picked up stones to stone him. This is death penalty for declaring yourself to be God. Jesus answered them. I've shown you many good works from the Father. I've fed people, I've healed people. What? Why are you so angry with me? For which of them are you going to stone me? The answer to him? It is not for a good work that we're going to stone you, but for blasphemy because you being a man, what make yourself God. Jesus, our problem with you is this. You say you're God. Let me just say friends, this is the most significant claim in the history of the world. There is no one else who has stood on planet earth with any credibility, who declared themselves to be God. No religious leader or founder of any significance has ever declared themselves to be God. This means that Jesus' declaration is either true or false. He is God or he is not God. And ultimately you need to know the reason that he was put to death was because he said he was God. It was a threat to the religious leaders. It was a threat to the political leaders so they can conspired together to kill Christ. Number two, uh, here we read in Mark 8 31, Jesus began to teach them that he must suffer many things be rejected by the elders, chief priests and scribes. Those are religious leaders. And let me say this, friends don't reject Jesus because of religious people. Sometimes religious people are cheerless and joyless and graceless. And it was religious people who murdered Jesus Christ. Some of you need to know that there is a difference between religious people and a relationship with Jesus Christ. And I'm sorry for the way that some religious people have perhaps treated you. We're not talking about you joining a religion. We're talking about you having a relationship with Jesus Christ. And it was the religious people who opposed him most consistently. And he said that he would be killed and after three days, he would rise again. Let me tell you friends, that's a massive claim. And again, it's either true or false. You're gonna kill me. 'cause I say I, I'm God. Three days later I'll come back and say, I told you so that's how this is gonna play itself out. So Jesus died on a Friday. He rose on a Sunday. That's why Christians started meeting on Sunday instead of the Sabbath of Saturday. And so Jesus here is prophesying. He's saying, I know the future. I rule the future. I control the future. I will die and I will rise. Jesus then was crucified and he most assuredly did die. Lemme explain what happened to him. He was crucified in the most sensitive nerve centers in the human body, the hands and the feet. Uh, he ultimately had a, a spear run under his ribcage, puncturing his heart sack. So the water and blood flowed from his side. He was then wrapped in upwards of a hundred pounds of burial, linens and spices, essentially like a mummified state. He was then laid in a tomb hu out of rock for three days with no food, water, medical care or a functioning heart. He's dead. He's dead. And we know exactly where he was buried. That's the next point. Jesus died and was buried in a well-known tomb. What happened was after Jesus died, he was poor, not rich. There was a prophecy given 700 years prior by the prophet Isaiah that when Jesus died, he'd be buried with the rich, but he was poor. So after he died, there was a more quiet disciple that followed him at a distance. A man named Joseph of Arimathea. He was an

affluent man and a well-known man. And he gifted to Jesus postmortem his personal burial chamber. Jesus was laid there. Well now everyone knows where Jesus is buried. Joseph owns it as a piece of property and it's registered like the deeded deer home. In addition, the Roman government had seal and soldiers, they put a seal over the entrance saying it was now property of the government. And they positioned a soldier in front of it. So everyone knows where Jesus Christ is buried. Next, Jesus returned to life. Friends, do you know what awaits you on the other side of death? Jesus Christ. Amen. Jesus Christ. And Jesus rose from the dead and he appeared to crowds upwards of 500 people at a time over the course of 40 days. And so he was open and public. Everyone knew that he was alive and well. He saw his family, people hugged him, he showed his crucifixion scars. His enemies even came to believe in him and his family trusted in him. And then he returned to heaven. And what was said when he ascended is that he would also descend to that same place in Israel. That's why there's this battle for this land because the devil wants it to be a place that belongs to him. And he knows that Jesus Christ is coming to claim all of creation for his dominion. And he will start his rule in reign by his nail scarred feet landing in the nation of Israel. This is all profoundly and deeply spiritual. In addition, Jesus' tomb was not enshrined. Uh, when Jesus died, uh, no one went to his tomb to enshrine it. The historians tell us that in those days there were roughly 50 tombs of deceased leaders that were enshrined in the same way. Today, if someone dies, we mark their graves so that we can visit and memorialize them. Near my home, there's a patch of desert where someone tragically died recently in a motorcycle accident. If you drive by, there's a memorial there. There was no such thing for Jesus. And such a significant man surely would have those who would come to remember his life. And they did not. The reason that they didn't enshrine his tomb is why he wasn't there. There's no need to go to the tomb and cry. You can go have breakfast with Jesus. He's doing very well. In addition, Jesus' resurrection is unique in history. For those of you that may have objections, you say, you know what? I, I think that he, they just borrowed this myth from other religions. Well, let me just summarize for you. Uh, there's a man named NT Wright. He is a world class scholar. He when he studied at Oxford, he taught at Cambridge and he wrote a giant book called *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. And what he did in that book is he traced historically, philosophically, and spiritually what various people have had to say regarding resurrection throughout human history. And here's what he determined. Not only had no one ever taught the singular resurrection of an individual in the middle of history, the truth is most people in the days that the New Testament was written, not only didn't believe in it, they didn't want it. See the ancient Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, epi amenities, Alexander the Great much of which you can study in college, they believed that you were one person in two parts, a body and a soul. They believed that the body was bad, but the soul was good. So the goal was to die and to leave the body and just live your immaterial spiritual life in your soul forever. They didn't wanna come back and they didn't want to get their body back. So this was not something that Christians invented. This is something that Christ created when he defeated death and his body and soul came back together and conquering the grave. And so some of you again will say, well, pastor Mark, you're, you're in the Bible. Yes, yes. Because it's true. But in addition, outside of the Bible, there are historians that confirmed the account. I'll give you one example. There was a Jewish historian named Josephus. He was born shortly

after the resurrection of Jesus. And the government asked him, they said, we hear about this group of people. They say they're Christians and they meet and they worship this guy named Jesus. Could you go figure out who they are and what they believe and how they got started? So he was deposed and sent on an investigation. And here's what he writes. He says, there lived Jesus a wise man. If one ought to call him a man, he was one who wrote surprising feats. Those are miracles. He was the Christ, the one that the Old Testament was awaiting in promising Pilate, the political leader that the Bible mentions, it's all historically accurate, had condemned him to be crucified exactly what the scriptures say. But here's what he says. On the third day, he appeared to them restored to life and the tribe of Christians. So-called after him has still to this day not disappeared. He said, well, I went and interviewed them and there was a guy named Jesus and he did miracles. And he said he was God. So we killed him. And then he came back. And there's a group of people that are very excited about that. And they're meeting together and singing songs and praying prayers and having parties. And they believe that when they die, they're gonna be with him and he's coming back for them. And 2000 years later, we're still throwing that same party, isn't it? So lastly, regarding this prophetic event, um, the burden of proof is on those who deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Jesus didn't rise, then how do we get the Christian Church, the biggest global movement of any sort or kind in 2000 years of human history? If Jesus didn't rise, why did the Jewish people stop worshipping on Saturday and move their day of worship to Sunday? If Jesus didn't rise, why do we have baptism showing the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus? If Jesus didn't rise, why did his family start worshipping him as God? If Jesus didn't rise, then why did his brothers write books of the New Testament if they knew that their brother was just a conman and a liar? And ultimately I would just ask you, has Jesus Christ changed your life? Would anyone here testify that Jesus has changed their life and Jesus has changed my life? And my question is, if Jesus is dead, who changed my life? Who forgave my sins? Who? Who healed my hurts? Who lifted my burdens? Who changed my soul? I'm telling you, Jesus is God. Jesus conquered Satan sin, death hell, the wrath of God. I'm telling you that the future is with Jesus. And Jesus has gone through death back to tell us that he awaits us. On the other side, do not fear, have faith, don't be discouraged, have courage. And here's what uh, sir Thomas Arnold, he was the professor of modern history at Oxford, said, he said The number one fact in the history of mankind is uh, proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort that Christ died and rose from the dead. Jesus died. Jesus rose, Jesus ascended to heaven. Jesus is alive and well right now, Jesus is ruling and reigning right now. Jesus rules history right now. And the Bible tells us that the next prophetic event will be his second coming. That's where we find ourselves. That brings me to Second Thessalonians chapter one, verses five through 12. This is a prophecy about history and eternity. It's telling us what's coming with the second coming of Jesus Christ. Let me read it to you. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God for which you are suffering. Sometimes you get in trouble for doing the right thing, not the wrong thing. Sometimes you get in trouble for saying that which is true rather than that which is false. I'm in a place where I believe if a pastor and Christians don't get in trouble, I believe they're probably not faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. And what he's saying is that they're suffering some things because they're faithful to Jesus Christ. If you're going to be faithful to Jesus Christ,

there will be a small price to pay. But there is a great reward in heaven for the small price that we pay goes on to say since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction. Those who afflict you, forgive your enemies, love them, bless them, and let God deal with them. Either they will be saved or they will be suffering. But either way, vengeance is mine, says the Lord. And to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven, that's what's coming in the second coming of Jesus, some will look at history and ask, where is it going? It's going to Jesus. Who's going to save us? Only Jesus can save us. Where does our hope come from? Lift up your head. It comes from on high. We are waiting, trusting, believing in the second coming of Jesus Christ. I don't know when he's coming. I hope it's soon. Come on. You need to know that life as we know it cannot continue. And you need to know that either he is coming or you are dying. Either way, you will be standing before him. And he says He will come from heaven with his mighty angels, an angelic army to defeat all those who would come against God's people. Inflaming fire. This is the beginning of hell. Hell is described in the most excruciating terms, fire, gnashing of teeth, sleeplessness, torment. It is justice right now. We are living under a measure of God's grace. None of us is enduring what we have been deserving. But the day of God's patience eventually inevitably comes to an end. He goes on to say, uh, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God. My question is, do you know God? Friend, I love you with all my heart. I've been praying for you all week. Don't be offended, be converted. Don't argue surrender. He says that there will be affliction and judgment and vengeance for those who do not know God. I want you to know God, I want you to love God. I want you to trust God and his name is Jesus Christ. And on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, they will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction. Friends, what we're seeing right now, we're seeing war. We've seen almost 9,000 people die so far just between Gaza and Israel. We're seeing rubble. We're seeing burning. We're seeing people being held as captives in terror. And all of this is just as Paul said in the previous book, it's just birth pains. It's just showing us that heaven and hell are real and that hell is coming up and that heaven is coming down and that we need to be prepared for the last day. Some will look at the world and they'll say, oh my goodness, it's ending. And my thought is so thank God he's coming. When he comes on that day, that day, I don't know what that day is, but there's a day on God's calendar. It's the day of the second coming of Jesus Christ. It's the day of the resurrection of the dead. It's the day of sentencing to heaven or hell for everyone, forever with to be glorified with His saints. That's us to be marveled at among all who have believed because our testimony to you is believed. It goes on to say to this end, we always pray for you. And I always pray for you that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power. So that the name of our Lord, we're the church friends. It's not just the Lord, it's our Lord. Amen. That's our Jesus. He's our Lord. He's over history. He's over eternity may be glorified in you and you and Him according to the grace. There's the word of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. What he's giving us here is prophecy. He's looking into the future and he's telling us what to anticipate. There are two views of history. One is cyclical. And that is there's no beginning, there's no end. That everything is just a repeating of events. You come from nowhere. You're here for no reason and you're going nowhere. That's why people are stressed and depressed because we can live without food, water, air,

shelter for a short while. But it's hard to live a moment without hope. You come from God, you're here for God, you're going to God. History is not a circle. It's a linear progression. There are two views of this. One is the world that says that it is good and getting better. We call this evolution, which is an illusion. How many of you looking at the world are now thinking we're doing great? And I am very encouraged 'cause it's gonna be great going forward. I'm sure we're making progress. If you still believe that you are completely not dealing with reality, even if you can't move to reality, just visit and look at the world. Right? Here's what we've learned. We're the problem not the solution. The longer we try, it gets worse and not better. And all the progress that we make technologically does not result in progress morally. Now, we can kill people more effectively than ever, but we still don't love them. The other linear view of history is the story of the Bible. And the story of the Bible is that there is a God who is eternal and precedes all of history, that he speaks the world into existence. He says that everyone and everything is very good. And then we sin against God. We rebel against God, we separate ourselves from God. We commit cosmic treason and then sin and death and the curse. They arrive. And then God comes as Jesus Christ. And he defeats death and he forgives sinners and he opens heaven and he ascends into heaven. And what we're awaiting now is his second coming. And that period between his first and second coming, it is called the end times of the last days. It is the moments between the first and second coming of Jesus. And when Jesus returns, we enter into eternity. Friends, let me just tell you this. The Bible tells us exactly where everyone and everything is going to Jesus Christ. So let me say a few things as we get ready to respond in worship. Number one, Jesus will return possibly very soon. Come on. Number two. Jesus will bring heaven and earth together. Number three, Jesus will put a final end to Satan and sin and death and suffering. And it will be over forever. Jesus will raise the dead and you will be healed and live forever. And lastly, Jesus will judge you and me and everyone. And there are only two eternal destinations. There is heaven and there is hell. My point simply this friend is it's your choice. My job is to tell the truth. Your job is to make the most important significant decision you will ever make. Will you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Receive grace and have peace? Or will you reject him and have judgment and destruction? He told us that hell would be quote inflaming fire, uh, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God. And on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, they will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his mind. Friends, I love you. My my volume is not out of anger. It is out of passion and concern. You need Jesus. You are going to stand before Jesus. The only hope is Jesus. The only Savior is Jesus. And so then the second option he tells us is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you wanna receive the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, all you've gotta do is just tell him that you are a sinner and ask him to be your savior. And then your whole life changes. Your eternity changes. You begin this never ending relationship with Jesus where you walk with him and he walks with you until he walks you home. I don't know when you're gonna die, and I don't know when Jesus will return, but I know one thing is sure we're all gonna see him face to face. So I'm gonna ask them to bring the lights up and I'm gonna ask a few questions and I'm gonna ask you to respond. Number one, for those of you who are prodigals, you have wandered away from the Lord. You know that Jesus is true, but you've walked away from him. You've not been walking

with him. This is the day for you to return. This is the day for you to return as a Christian to the church, to the Word of God, and to walk with the people of God. And in a moment, if you're ready to make that decision, I'm going to ask you to do something brave and bold and to stand because we need Christians who will stand for Jesus in this world. And one day Jesus will cause you to rise from the dead. And in a moment when I ask you to stand, it is to prepare you for that day where you stand before him. Number two, for those of you that have never received Jesus Christ as your personal God, Lord and savior, this is the day of your salvation. This is the day where you turn from your sin to your savior. This is the day when you receive grace and you leave here with peace. And if you've never given yourself to Jesus, I'm going to ask you to receive him right now. Please don't reject him. He loves you. He's literally seated on a throne in heaven. He's interceding for you. He knows your life. He hears your request. He caress for your soul. And I'm gonna ask you to stand if you would like to give your life to Jesus Christ. And then we're gonna give you a Bible so that you can begin reading in the Gospel of Luke and learn more about Jesus. This'll just take a moment, but if you would like to return to Jesus or receive Jesus, would you please just stand where you're at right now so that we can pray for you. Thank you, sir. Thank you, sir. Please get them Bibles. Anybody else want to return to Jesus? Our prodigals. Ready to come home? Please stand. Anyone ready to receive Jesus and become a Christian? Please just stand up where you are. You're among friends. We are the church. We love you. We care for you. Jesus has a great plan for you. I'll just ask one more time. Anyone want to stand and return to Jesus or receive Jesus? We'll get you a Bible. Everyone just join me in prayer. Lord Jesus, just repeat after me. Lord Jesus. Lord Jesus, you are God. You are God. You rose from the dead. You rose from the dead. Please save us from our sins. Please us from we look forward. We look forward to your second coming. To your second coming. And we can't wait. We can't wait to be with you forever. Be with you forever. In Jesus' name Jesus. Amen. You're all gonna rise from the dead with Jesus. So why don't you stand right now?