

THE BEGINNING OF THE BIRTH PAINS

SERIES: END TIMES | WEEK 2 | 4.18.2021

Hey, everyone, good morning. You guys feel tired and, and – did you not get enough sleep? I gotta wake you up. To everyone online, thanks for joining us. Hey, you know what I love about when I get to watch it online, just the interaction in our chat, so during this message feel free to interact, pray with each other, we have online pastors here, we know a lot of you are joining us online and on site as well. If you have your Bibles, if you wanted to pull your Bibles out or your phones or your iPads or whatever you use, YouVersion Bible app is my favorite. There's devotional plans that I recommend as well. So pull your Bible's out to Matthew Chapter 24, that's where we're going to be this morning, Matthew Chapter 24.

How many men in this room were able to be in the hospital room when you saw your children be born? How many men were in the room when your children were born, raise your hand. Good for you. I know that sometimes there's like an age where they weren't allowed in the room, which was crazy, but, so some of us, you know, didn't have it. I was privileged to be able to see my children be born and it was wonderful and terrible and awful and wonderful and amazing and then awful, and that was my experience in a nutshell. That was how it worked.

But anyway, let me just give you an example here because Jesus is gonna give this example. How many men, how many of you were able to kind of see the monitor, remember the monitor in the room when your wife was giving birth? And it had like the spikes of the contractions, do you remember this? Okay, so my second, this was the most entertaining birth—not for my wife but for me—my second, my second, my wife's amazing by the way, it's my second girl, I have four little girls, so yes, I have four girls, and the second one was born and I remember there was a monitor to the left of her bed. And we just got into the hospital and what we noticed was the monitor had all the other hospital rooms—you guys know what I'm talking about? All the other hospital rooms you could see their monitors, and so after the hours and hours of kind of waiting you started to really, like, understand this monitor. So let me break it down for you who aren't monitor people.

So the monitor had contractions of other rooms and what you noticed was when the pregnancy got to a point where they were about to have the child the contractions—you know what I'm talking about?—just started going crazy and they were close together and so you knew, oh man, they just had their kid. And so it got kind of like an entertaining thing, we would see that some of them were like there for 24 hours plus and we're like, *Oh, bless your heart*, you know, and they just have the little dashes and you're like, *Come on*. And then there are others that like just got there and it was like five minutes and then all of a sudden they were going and you're like, *That's totally unfair*. They paid the hospital to do something, give them medicine, so you started getting a little jealous.

And I just remember it was so entertaining, and for us, you know, ours was [GESTURES MONITOR BLIPS] and you're like, *Come on*. And so my wife was frustrated but also was kind of happy that it wasn't going crazy, but it was fascinating to see how in birth pains – right? – it ramps up to the point where the child is born. And I really learned a lot over that 24 hours of being in the hospital and it was very entertaining for me until the end and then it wasn't because it was terrifying, but it was amazing, my wife's amazing and she did a good job. So that's the end of that story.

But the reason I say that is because in this passage actually, Matthew 24, we are starting our END TIMES series. Pastor Lee last week talked about the end times and how powerful it is because these are the words of Jesus, so this is Jesus talking about His end, talking about how He's going to come back. And so out of everything in Scripture when Jesus, you know, the red letter when Jesus talks, man, we need to perk up and we need to say okay, if you want to know about the end, the person who authored everything in eternity is the guy to kind of go to. And so Jesus is going to talk about the end, but the

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disciples here ask Him three questions, and so for the next couple weeks we're going to have Jesus answer these questions and we're going to guide us through it. But here are the three questions in case you guys forget, Matthew 24, verse 3, they basically said these three questions: When will these things take place, meaning the end times. What will the signs be of your coming back? And what will be the sign of the end of the age? And so what will the signs be, what will be the signs of the end of the age, and so they're asking Jesus these questions and Jesus is going to respond. And we're going to talk about a little bit of how He responds today and then continue for weeks ahead, but before I do that I want to also just highlight that the goal of this teaching is really to lay the foundation for what's to come in the weeks ahead. So you gotta come back because we're talking about the Antichrist and the destruction of the temple, it's gonna be a lot of good stuff. So I'm really laying the foundation with this birth pain illustration because Jesus does it and I think He knows more than me.

MATTHEW 24:3 (ESV)

As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

So in that here's what I want to do today, I want to lay out the context of why Jesus responds the way He does. It's really helpful when you read the Word of God to know the context, the why, why are the disciples asking that question? Why does Jesus respond that way? And we know a lot about the why. We know a lot about how the disciples were thinking and their state of mind, and what Jesus was thinking and His state of mind, and we can bring some clarity to what you're about to read. So we understand the context, then we're going to go through just the Scripture passages and kind of understand what they mean specifically, and then we're going to do some takeaways, some practical applications – does that sound good? [MAN IN AUDIENCE: "YES!"] Awesome. Okay, let's get out of context.

So this passage here is called the Olivet Discourse and so it's really again, Pastor Lee talked about it, they're standing on the Mount of Olives and they're overlooking, it was a very scenic view, they were overlooking the temple, they're overlooking this kingdom that was established by man, and Jesus is going to speak into them about what they're seeing. Okay? So it's a very scenic scenario here and in that context Jesus is going to talk about the Second Coming. Now in this we have to understand a couple things. Jesus was known to be—and He is—the Redeemer, the Savior, the Deliverer, the Messiah, the King, all of these things they expected the Messiah to be, but in the Scriptures what we find is Jesus is setting up judgment upon Israel. If you look at Chapter 23 or even 21-22-23, He is talking about the judgment on Israel, and so in that He talks about—these are going to be His final words before He comes back.

Now here's the important part, the disciples when they hear these, because they're with Him during the last of His 33 years here on earth, when they hear that the disciples right now in this passage at that moment thought, *Okay, this is the ultimate hope we have*, when it comes to following Jesus. Jesus did some weird things—He talked about drinking His blood, eating His flesh, okay, we'll put that aside, *this is what we were following for*, and in their mind they thought, *Okay, Jesus is speaking this over Israel, now He's going to put His Kingdom here, He's going to go after Rome, He's going to set up His Kingdom*. And so in their mind—this is important—they thought that this idea of the Messiah coming was one unit. So in their mind when Jesus goes in and He says okay, I'm gonna—the prophets, the Old Testament prophets—the Messiah is going to come in a time of great tribulation, the disciples in their mind were like, *Yes, the Greek and Roman culture has persecuted Israel, this is great tribulation*. Okay? That fits, and so in their mind they're like – check . And then when Jesus is told in the prophets to be followed by a messenger, by a herald, they think, *Okay, that was John the Baptist* – check .

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And so in their mind Jesus is checking all these boxes of what the Old Testament prophets are saying about Jesus – Isaiah, Daniel. And so then He goes and He says okay, we are going to purge the godless nation. They're like, *Oh, I remember the prophet saying that.* And so they see again in Chapter 23 He is speaking against the nation of Israel and they're ready to have Him usher in this new Kingdom, and so in their mind they think, *Okay, the last thing is Jesus, in the prophets they said that He will gather the dispersed Jews together and then He's going to take over,* and they were like, *Okay, we're the dispersed Jews,* His disciples. And so just find this in this text. The Peter mindset here is *Okay, check check check .* All that's left is Jesus kind of bringing in the fire and we're going to come alongside of Him.

And so in this passage we understand that the gap that we know today, and here's what I mean, the first time Jesus comes – right? – He came in a manger. What did He come to do, church? He came to preach; preach hope and forgiveness and love, He came to save. The second time Jesus comes what is He going to come to do? Judgment, and we know that and we understand that knowing what Jesus did, what He taught, we understood that. But here's what they didn't get, even in the prophets, they didn't see the gap. They didn't see the gap of Jesus coming to preach forgiveness, but then Him leaving and then coming back, they didn't see the promised spirit, this age that we are in today. They didn't see this. They thought it was going to happen right then. So Jesus is going to have to teach them that what's to come, the end times, is a future thing. You guys following me?

And so in this passage this is the context that we have, they don't understand this gap between so Jesus has to introduce it. And what's actually fascinating is if you study Scripture and you see, for example, in the gospel of Luke, or really, a couple other places, you see that in Luke 19:11 he quotes Isaiah but He leaves out a part of Isaiah's passage, and this is why it's interesting is because Luke is now – right? – in the gospels, he's understanding this because Jesus came back to life and He ascended up to Heaven so he now knows the gap. And so when he quotes Isaiah in the New Testament he leaves out verse 2 because he realizes that verse 2 is to come. And so what we see is that the disciples get this, they get the idea that okay, even though they thought Jesus was about to go down the mountain and take over, Jesus says no, there's a plan for Me and there's gonna be this season where I'm not gonna be here and this is what to expect until I come back. So this is the context in which Jesus responds.

And so with that He says that the end will be like birth pains and then He gives examples of the spikes that we're going to see as the church that are not the end but are signs of the end. And so the disciples actually never got to see a lot of these signs, but we today maybe we're going to see them, maybe we have seen some, does that make sense? But it's future so as a church we are to see these things as what's to come just as the disciples were to see those things as what to come. So let's get into it here in the Olivet Discourse as it looks to the future. Look at verse 4 with me, Matthew 24:

⁴ And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray."

– MATTHEW 24:4 (ESV)

So stop, here's the first thing He says about the future in the end times that you will have many that will try to lead you astray. What does that mean, church? Here's what it means; it means that people are going to come into our world as "Christians" who are going to be charismatic, charming, deceitful people and they are going to try to lead you astray. And listen, does that mean that there's never been anybody in our past that have led people astray? Of course. Right? You think of all the cults that have been there. You think of, I would argue, a lot of the false doctrine that kind of came out of Scripture and then they manipulated it. A lot of Scripture where, "I had this special revelation from God and this is what He says," and then people follow that and they abandon the Word of God. So there's a lot of that

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in our past but the Scripture says that in the future it's going to ramp up. There's going to be more false people, we're talking about teachers, but just theology right now, false theology.

Like, how many of you have noticed – young people – how many of you have noticed on some of the social platforms that you're a part of that people are trying to make light of the Bible? They're trying to say to you that the Word of God isn't authoritative and it's just an ancient book written by somebody a long time ago and there's no authority in it, and what they're not doing is they're not giving God's Word credit. Because I always say to them read Isaiah 53 and get back to me. Read the prophecies in Scripture. Do you understand that the Word of God was written over 1,500 years but it's unique and unified in the prophetic accuracy of Scripture, and the fact that everything Scripture says still works today. Do you understand that the Scripture is not only a Book but it's living and active? The world is going to say, "No, it's just an old book written by cavemen," and that's because they're trying to deceive.

Here's what Jesus says is going to happen in the end times, men are going to say, "You know what? Technology is the answer." Yeah, church, I know you have these old ways, but go after this, this is the answer." Or society is going to say, "Hey, listen, you know, church, you know you guys are just so old school with your morality and your standards, but listen to this government leader, man, he has the answer." Or maybe, some of us, we may even find that within our own circles of influences in the church there is somebody who's going to come out and say that I have an extra word from God and this is what it is. And Jesus is going to say, "Listen, in the future, church, you will have a potential to be led astray."

Here's my fear, and I always say this to small group and young people, my fear is that if we're honest a lot of us are biblically illiterate – we are. We're not in the Word, we're on Netflix, we're on Amazon, we're watching some shows or on social media, and we don't – we're not in our Word. And so the posture of us as people is to say hey, listen, if somebody comes and they sound like God, we don't know the difference. We don't actually know what Jesus says, so if somebody says, "Jesus says this," how are we going to know the difference? And that's what Jesus is talking about, many are going to come and say, "This is of God," and we're going to not know the difference.

So if anything this series, if anything the series, here's the first lesson: Regardless of what somebody says to you, mark that with what Jesus said.

**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits
to see whether they are from God, for many false
prophets have gone out into the world.**

– 1 JOHN 4:1 (ESV)

Even when I say something to you, if you get anything from today it is: It doesn't matter if it's a pastor, a priest, a rabbi, a government official, it doesn't matter who says it to you, you go back to the Word and you seek truth. The Word is the authority. The Word is eternal. People are fleshly, they're sinful, they're deceitful, and Jesus says in the days ahead one of the contractions, one of the pains is going to be a lot of deception. So get ready, church, know truth, guard it in your heart, understand that you need to have the weapon and the armor on because there will be many that try to destroy you in that way. This is what Jesus says is gonna come. We get that? Okay. Here's another one He says, really, really important, verse 5:

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5 "For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray."

– MATTHEW 24:5 (ESV)

What is He talking about there? He's saying that there will be people that say, "Listen, Jesus came to our church and He told us that He's coming back this month." Or, "Hey, I had this dream and Jesus said that He's going to come back in 2023 so be ready." "Hey, I have this radio broadcast and God told me, because I looked at the Scriptures and I added two times two and I added a multiplier of four and this is the day, and I know it's the day." Or, "Hey, listen, um, you know that, like, I'm a doctor and you wouldn't understand but because I'm a doctor I know that this is when Jesus is going to come back." Or, "Hey, I'm a pastor..." or "Hey, I'm a theologian... and this is what Jesus told me. Yes, that He says that no one's going to know, but *I* know." And God says, "Listen," – it sounds funny, right? – but God says, "No-no-no, listen, I want to make this very clear."

MATTHEW 24:36 (ESV)

"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."

If anybody says that Jesus came to their church—look at me—it's not Jesus. You know why? Because when Jesus comes you're not going to mistake it. The clouds are opening up, church, so Jesus isn't coming in secret. If they say He did, it's not Jesus. He says when I come back I come back on my throne in judgment with the angels and the believers—you get what I'm saying here? It's not a little thing. He's not gonna be born in a manger the second time. And so there will be many, church, again, were there false teachers before? Absolutely. Have some of us seen false teachers influence people? Absolutely. But again, like birth pains, He says in the future, church, it's gonna get worse and there'll be a lot of false teachers ultimately culminating in the Antichrist, which we're going to talk about.

But a lot of people, and here's what I want you to understand, they're not just the people that you look and you're like, "Oh, that's silly. That's totally of the world." There are people that are going to happen in our circles of influence like books that you read, devotional books, the person who wrote that; the conference pastor that stands in the conferences, some of those people are going to say, "This is of the Lord," and they're going to be of the enemy. And so be careful, be watchful of false Christs because here's what Jesus says – many will be led astray.

What does that mean? It means that many people who are walking with Jesus, or think they're walking with Jesus, are going to hear something that's going to tickle their ears and they're going to say, "Uh, I know what Jesus says but this sounds a little better. This works for my life because I want to be rich and follow Jesus. And I don't just want to be rich and give it to the Lord, I kind of want to give it to me and this guy says I can." Or, "Man, I really don't like the idea of Hell and the permanent-ness of eternal Hell and so this guy says there isn't and I like that better." And Jesus says, "No, no, listen to My words, trust in Me, there'll be a lot of false teachers to come that are going to try to pull you away from My words. Make sure you anchor yourself in what I said, not what they said.

Church, are you following me? This is key. This is key because so many of us are deceived. I just talked to somebody who said, "I left the church because of what the church believed." I said, "What about what Jesus believes? It's not about what people believe, it's about what Jesus said." If you're coming to church because you want another theology, listen, there's a lot of theologies in the world, there's only one truth. I'm going to say that again: There's a lot of theologies, there's only one truth, and truth isn't found by people's interpretation. Truth is found in the Word of God, and Jesus and His authority and what He meant and what He said. And so this is what the Bible says is gonna come, a lot

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of false teachers and these teachers may even be in our surroundings. Listen to what 2nd Thessalonians says here in Chapter 2:

¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

– 2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-2 (ESV)

So Paul's just saying the same thing—be watchful, understand if somebody says, "God told me," that's a warning. "God told me this, I know it's not in His Word, I know that's not what Jesus said, but God told me this." And so this is what He means: Be careful. Or if somebody says, "I heard God say this to me," be careful. Be careful about that book that says, "God just gave me this special revelation." Be careful not to know that more than you know the Word. Are you following me? Or the prophet says or the doctor says, be careful. Listen, it's amazing how when you look at Scripture and you see these things like many will fall away.¹ I don't know about you but when I want to see that I'm like, "How can I not be the many?"

Like, here's my thing, church, I don't want us to be the many. What does that mean? Have you ever thought about that? If many will be led astray that means that some of us feel like we are walking in truth but we're going to be deceived. Man, I don't know about you but that makes me want to put on armor. Okay, I'm going to thicken up my armor because I do not want to be the many. I don't want to be quick to be so entertained and I know how to quote all the secular music and I know about the latest TV show and I don't know the Word. I don't want to be that person that all of a sudden somebody says something and it tickles my ear and I go after it and it's of the enemy. I don't want to be that person. I don't want to be the many so I'm going to start to prepare for what's to come and that's what's to come is their charismatic words, very smart, scientific examples of why you should not believe Jesus—and are you anchored in the Word or are you going to be vulnerable?

Here's another thing, look at verse 6:

⁶ "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.

— Jesus says:

See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet."

– MATTHEW 24:6 (ESV)

This is really important. Hear again, the words of Jesus. How many of you in this place have ever sat around your living room or your kitchen table and you turn the news on and you see that, you know, Iran is weaponizing or China's building their army? How many of you have ever, like, "Jesus is coming back!" I mean, I'll do that all the time. I'll see something crazy and I'm like, "Jesus is coming back." By the way, this is why they do that, like if your parents ever did that and you're like, "Why do they always say Jesus is coming back?" It's because of this. It's because what it says in Scripture and what Jesus says is part of the birth pains is you're going to start to see a rise in turmoil, a rise in nations fighting nations, this idea that the world feels like it's going crazy.

So church, have we seen wars in the past? Yes. Have we seen dictators rise and influence many? Yes. But again, listen to me, Jesus says these are just birth pains, wait for what's to come. It's going to get

¹ Matthew 24:10 (ESV): *"And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another."*

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worse; this could be global. He says but these are birth pains, I'm coming back, I'm coming back, but no, these things will happen. What do we do with that? Here's my advice to you – don't let it get to you because Jesus says it's gonna happen. Don't let it get to you, He's in control. That's when the world starts to fight each other and all of a sudden there's this need for some sort of savior and some leader comes in and says, "I can save you," and all of a sudden the world starts to follow him. And as Christians we're like, "What is going on?" We're like, "Oh, wait, no, Jesus said this is gonna happen. We know and trust Him." And instead of being fearful we're gonna give the fear to Him, we're gonna worship Him despite what's happening around us, and we're gonna proclaim the hope of Jesus over and over again to the world so that they don't run towards false hope. Right? Like, we're not running towards that as Christians, that's false hope. We know that. We know there's nothing in this world that can overcome this world. We know that. And so this is what Jesus says is going to happen.

He also says, look at this, verse 7, that there will be a rise in famines and earthquakes:

7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places."

– MATTHEW 24:7 (ESV)

How many of you have seen this? I don't know about you but, again, I always look back and I'm like *Oh, this this past year has been more earthquakes and craziness around*, but again, I don't think we've seen any of it yet. I think we just saw glimpses of what's to come. And so all of a sudden when you see stuff going on in the world and you see your parents be like, "Jesus is gonna come back," now you know, these are signs. Jesus says there will be wars, there will be famines, there will be earthquakes, but these are just birth pains, these are just birth pains, just the beginning. This is really key, this is verse 8, this is why I've been talking about birth pains. So He uses these examples, false teachers, many will come to deceive you, there'll be earthquakes and famines and wars, and then He says in verse 8:

8 "All these are but the beginning of the birth pains."

– MATTHEW 24:8 (ESV)

Now here's where I think I'm wrong is when I say Jesus is going to come back tomorrow, because in this passage it says that these things are just the beginning. It's like when you're in the hospital room and you're just having these little dashes; what needs to happen is it actually needs to build and build and build to the point where we're screaming, "Jesus, come back!" And so He says just know that these things will happen. Now again, He's talking to the disciples here who thought that He was going to go down the hill and take over. Talk about a birth pain in their heart, like, really, I thought we already suffered. You're telling us that there's gonna be a lot of tribulation ahead, and Jesus says yes, but I'm coming.

So what do we do with this? Okay, this isn't gonna fill the seats. Right? I'm not saying, "Hey, you can get rich, church. Hey, good days ahead, utopia ahead." That's not what the Bible says. So what do we do with this? Here's some takeaways. Okay. First is this we need to trust in the authority of Christ. So when we look at this text here's what we need to do, we need to understand what the text says, and we're going to talk about it later, there's a prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, we need to understand that. There's a lot of prophecy about the return of Jesus. The fact that we won't know, in fact, that the Son didn't know, that Jesus says only the Father knew, we need to know these things. So we need to understand what God's Word says because here's what God's Word says that's true, that the world is passing away. I'm going to say that again, I want to take all of your fears and anxieties that you lived out this week with your job, your family, I want you to hear this: The world is passing away but

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the Word of God is eternal. Hear this: The world is passing away. What am I building up in this world when Jesus says this world is going to be destroyed? It's going to self-destruct. I'm coming back and My Word is eternal. What do we do because when the world goes this way [GESTURES TO HIS LEFT], we stay here [GESTURES TO HIS RIGHT] and we focus on God, we trust what You said, this is what's going to happen. Yes, the world is going this way, but we know the end and there's victory in the end. So we trust in the Word of God. This [BIBLE] is first no matter what, no matter what your influence, teacher that helped you come to know the Lord says, if what he says or what she says is not of the Lord, you abandon that and you stay with the Word of God. You hear me? Once they go away from truth you let them go.

Here's another thing we need to do is persevere in the power of Christ. Here's what I mean by that, here's what we're told by Jesus, we will face deception. This is what's going to happen in our futures and it's going to increase, more deception than ever, more false television shows, false politics saying that they can fix our problems, more false teachers, more of this to come. So we're going to face deception, we're going to face tribulation. We're going to talk about The Rapture, but not right now. We just know that in the future the church is going to face tribulation, so we know that in that Jesus is coming back. But we also know that, listen, the truth of God's Word is not passing away and we know that in the trials that come faith is loud, Jesus is loud.

Like, how many of you have ever stopped and said okay, what happens if the American church over the next 20 years gets persecuted in a way that it's never seen before? Have you ever had that thought? I have it all the time, Like, here, I literally have this conversation with my wife. "Sweetheart, I don't know if I could be a vocational pastor in 20 years. I think I'd be thrown in jail for some of the stuff I say." Let's be honest, maybe I'm wrong, but maybe I'm not. What would happen in that? You know what the truth is? Is that though the church and the corporation of the church may change, the church isn't going anywhere. And in fact in trial what happens to the church? It grows. It grows because apathy dies. Church attendance for a church attendance sakes dies because you're going to have to know and really believe what you believe because it might cost you.

And so in that I'm like you know what that might not be a bad thing. Hey, if Jesus is proclaimed more and the Kingdom grows but it's organic in homes because we can't gather, okay, it's not going anywhere. Jesus is coming back. It may decentralize but we'll be all right. But the reality is we may face that trial in the future but we need to understand that Jesus is in control. We'll face temptation, we'll face persecution, but in that the Kingdom will grow. Amen? Like, the Kingdom is going to grow and in the end that's all that matters. It's not going to matter how much money I made. It's not going to matter how many people I pastor. What's going to matter is was I faithful to the call that God's placed on my life? And in that God's going to change circumstances but that call never changes, I'm to make disciples, I'm to build the Kingdom of God, so whether it's in persecution or in Christian [INAUDIBLE] culture I'm going to do it because that's what He calls me to be.

Here's another one, last one, long for the coming of Christ, long for the coming of Christ. Listen, we talked about this throughout this message, the first time Jesus came what did He come in? The manger, right? The second time He comes, man, this gets me so excited, that's why we're going to worship after this, the second time He comes riding on the clouds, church. Like, in that this is so, so key, that in that there's a humility – right? – to say okay, God, You provide salvation and your glory is going to be seen in the midst of the days ahead. Like, like, like when the Antichrist comes and he sits on the throne of this world and the world bows down and they trust him and he manipulates the world into thinking that he is the Savior, Jesus is going to come back and they are going to flee. Every knee will bow, like, that is so important because when you see something that you cannot control as a believer, you see

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something that's unjust or deceptive and you feel like you can't stop it, know that Jesus is going to. He's going to stop it. There's nothing, I mean, when they are in their pride and they smile and they think that they gain the world we mourn because they lost their soul. And in the end they are fleas to Him, pawns to Him. And then that's where we put our faith, that's where we put our hopes.

So what do we do as Christians? Well, we confidently watch for the day that Jesus comes. We're watchful, we see the things on the news and we say, "Okay, Jesus, You're coming, You're coming soon." We also think about okay, we patiently wait, we patiently wait for the return of Jesus and we know it's going to exceed our expectation. We think that the return of Jesus is one thing, but how many of you have ever really stopped and think about what it would be like when Jesus returns? Like, I'll just give you a fun example real quick.

I didn't say this first service but remember that crazy thunderstorm we had a couple days ago? Okay. How many of you have ever been in bed and heard [SOUND EFFECT OF LOUD THUNDER] and thought, *That's Jesus?* [LAUGHTER] Anybody ever have that? I used to grow up in the woods and trees would fall and I would always be like looking out my window being like, *Is there gonna be a flame of fire, like, any moment here?* Because I always think that. I don't know why, but I always think that because I kind of weigh that decision. I know Jesus is coming back, I don't know when but, man, I want to be faithful when He comes. Like, my dream is that I'm on mission loving people, sharing the Gospel with somebody, and Jesus comes back. I'm like, "Oh, well, [THROWS HIS HANDS UP] there you go, my mission is complete." That's what I want, honestly, church, that's what I want us to be doing. I want us to be on mission and all of a sudden He comes and I'm like great, okay, now He's here.

What I don't want us to be is distracted. I don't want us to be in our room afraid, alone, in fear. I don't want us to be deceived into believing something and all of a sudden see Jesus and say, "What were we doing?" I don't want to be somebody who he was missed what Jesus has planned, I want to be watchful and waiting and thinking about what Jesus has to say. And in that I want to urgently work out my purpose in my life. Every day in my life I want to wake up and I don't want to think about the end times too much, but I want to remind myself that Jesus is coming back and I'm on mission. And so in that what am I doing in my life that matters for eternity? Let's say that again—look at me—what are you doing in your life that matters for eternity? Every time a birth pain happens do you run or do you say listen, this is part of the process? Following Jesus is not comfortable, following Jesus is not easy. It's not.

Guys, every time you read the Word be reminded that most of the men that are writing these are martyrs, they're martyrs, but they did not lose anything in their life – they gained. And so when we talk about birth pains, here's why I love this example that Jesus gave, I was thinking about this all week. Women, help me out here because I never gave birth, but I was in the room and I did a poor job helping somebody give birth, so I have a little contact, but follow me, when the birth pains get harder – right? – and they get harder and they get harder, the guy's job [DEMONSTRATES BREATHING TECHNIQUE] – right? – that's our job. So the birth pain gets harder and harder and I screwed up, by the way, I didn't do my job the second time. My wife was like, "Get away from me." I didn't do the breathing right but that's my job – right?

But it gets bigger and it gets bigger and it gets bigger and it gets more painful and gets more painful and you feel hopeless and you feel overwhelmed but what happens at the end? Life. Life, don't miss this. What happens after the pain? Life, relationship, love, something that happens at the end where you look back on the pain and what do you do? You do not care, it's worth it, you don't even think about it anymore because what happens? There's life, there's love. This is the Gospel. Jesus says I'm coming

THE BEGINNING OF THE BIRTH PAINS

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back and when I come back I'm coming back with all my love, with all my joy, with all my peace, with all my patience, my kindness, there's no more tears, there's no more sorrows, you are with Me forever. And that is the hope in eternity that everyone in this room that claims Jesus is the Lord gets to long for.

So in the midst of the pain and the birth pains to come, Jesus is saying this to the disciples, in the end is Me. It's worth it. So I want you just right now we're going to spend time worshipping Jesus because He deserves our worship. But in that I want you to take some time and say is are there any fears or anxiety you need to cast before the Lord in light of that reality? Are there fears in the future that you have no business being afraid of if you're walking in truth? Is there something you need to give to the Lord right now? Are you being deceived, are you being deceived right now by some false teacher who says the job is to make enough money so your family loves how much money you make? Like your family cares about how much money you make, they want your presence, guys. Are you being deceived by these false teachers that say this is how you get your best life and you ignore what the Word of God says? Come on. So we're gonna give time to worship Jesus because He's worthy of our worship because no matter what happens in the days ahead, He's coming back. Amen? So church, stand up with us as we worship together our Lord.

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