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You know, this theme of revival that we just sang about is one that is heavy on my heart. And it's one that I believe that God is speaking to us about in this moment wanting to get to our minds in this break in action that we have in our lives that we could have never seen coming.

One of the things I noticed this week as I was having conversations is that each week the conversation changes a bit and the questions change a little bit and the needs change a little bit, and it's one of the reasons why we decided we wanted to come to you live on Sunday morning because by the time we get to Sunday morning a lot has changed than what was happening even earlier in the week. One of the things I observed this week was a number of conversations that ended up with some concerns or questions or comments and as I was hearing them it dawned on me that these questions are answered in our text, 1st Peter. Remember, we're studying the book of 1st Peter. Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus who was really close with Jesus, spent all of his time with Jesus, saw all the miracles, heard everything that Jesus had to say. Later on when the church is going through some heavy-duty persecution and being scattered, he's writing them this letter saying, "Hey, there's some things we need to talk about," and he addresses some things that I'm hearing from you this week, questions that I'm hearing from you that I would absolutely love to talk about today.

Some of the questions that have been coming up to me are things like: "When do we get to come back to church?" "When are we gonna get to meet again?" And, "Can we like move that date up? Can we roll further faster on that?" I've heard questions and comments, had a very long, actually two or three different conversations, actually from different angles, on workplace experience this week, and mostly work at home. But some of the issues and tensions that come with working in a time like this or being put in a spot where all of a sudden you're not working in a time like this, and the boss and some of the things relating to that. I also heard some [*he laughs*], um, quite a few conversations about how things are starting to go at home, just the tensions that are raising just all being cooped up in the same house together and some of the things that are going on there. And then I've been getting a question that gets asked more and more often than I've heard over the weeks leading up till now, it's coming more often this week, and that question is: "When is everything gonna go back to normal?"

I think this was the week where one of the deadlines came up where we thought maybe we would get the opportunity to move to yellow and so when that didn't happen everyone's like, "Oh, what's it take to get to normal?" And then the question seems to get amped up and I get asked as a pastor, one who studies the Bible, "Are we in the end times?" "Is this leading, like, to the end? Are we are we on the cusp of that?" And you only have to read your Facebook feed to see people asking that question, throwing out things and people responding and, you know, the whole range of responses to that type of thing. And so as I was thinking about that I thought, *I want to answer a whole bunch of those questions*. And the only way to do that is to go to our text.

The first three questions I asked, you know, about whether we come back to church, how things are going at work and in the family, that comes right from where we were supposed to be in 1st Peter today. The last question—Are we in the end times? Is everything coming to an end really quick?—is actually in 2nd Peter. Second Peter he writes another letter to these people and he says, "Hey, there's some other things we need to talk about. There's some false information out there, there's some stuff you're hearing, I want to talk to you about it." And in 2nd Peter Chapter 3 on this subject of are we in the end times, are these the last days, he says, "Hey, I want to bring you a reminder of something that has been told to you that you have actually heard in the past, but some people are gonna try to confuse you on. I want to remind you on it." And when I looked at that I said, "Oh, we need to start with that question first." And I need to talk with you and I have to talk to you as your pastor because this is so incredibly important

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### 2nd Peter Chapter 3

that we as a church know about this and have had a conversation about this. So I'm gonna go to 2nd Peter Chapter 3 and I'm just gonna read to you some verses. I'm gonna read a lot of Bible to you today and probably here's why that matters—we are a church that is all about the Book, we talk about that all the time, we're about the Bible, we open up the Bible. So if you have a Bible nearby grab it and open it up. If you're doing it on your phone, that's fine. It's also on the platform that you're watching right now. By the way, we're gonna open this up in the chat, feel free to ask as many questions you want. Our pastors are on that chat right now and would love to interact with you on those questions, and I'm gonna just keep on pointing to you what God's Book says.

Now here's the deal, Bible says a lot about how things are gonna wrap up in the end of times. There's a lot of differing opinions on it—we just need to go to the text, read it for what it says and understand it. You may want to get a pencil and paper and just jot down a couple of these texts to study it today. But the easiest thing I can tell you is 1st Peter 3, we're gonna get to in a moment with our questions, and 2nd Peter 3 is where I'm gonna go to right now. And in 2nd Peter Chapter 3, verse 1, it says, "I am stirring up for your sincere mind by way of reminder."

*<sup>1</sup> This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, <sup>2</sup> that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,*

— Peter says I want to remind you of something about what we've talked about before. And again, we haven't talked about it enough as a church and I just felt like, wow, with the possibility that we very well may be at the beginnings of what may be moving towards the end times we need to talk about it and we need to begin to think about it because I think it has some ramifications. He says this in verse 3:

*<sup>3</sup> knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. <sup>4</sup> They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."*

— and Peter says:

*<sup>5</sup> For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, <sup>6</sup> and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.*

– 2 PETER 3:1-6 (ESV)

In other words, the great flood where God was dealing with issues on this earth, he says, there is going to be a judgment. This is going to happen again in the future and, you know, don't just pretend that this isn't going to happen.

So here's why this is important. There will be those who will say to us, "Yeah, I've heard about the return of Jesus. I got excited about it. I studied it. I found some information about it, became interested a while ago, and I thought it was now, I thought it was coming and nothing happened and here we are." I can tell you myself personally every generation of true Christ followers believes Jesus is coming in their generation. The first generation of apostles they knew from Jesus that He was coming back and the Bible tells us to be watching and waiting for Jesus. That's why this is an important conversation even if Jesus doesn't come back for another thousand years, He's gonna teach us to be watching and waiting for

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Him. And that's why Peter says there's going to be some that say, "Stop it. Stop it. This has been talked about before." This is important, we need to be watching and waiting. But then he says this:

***<sup>7</sup> But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.***

So there is coming a day of judgment. We know that that will begin with the beginning of the Great Tribulation and that's seven years of God pouring out His wrath on this world. It's a difficult, difficult time. It will begin with the revealing of the Antichrist and if you see that happen, you need to be prepared for that time. And I encourage you, be looking at the signs in your Bible for what will take place in this time so we can be alert and awake. And that's why I wanted to talk to you about this today. But then I looked at verse 8 in 2nd Peter 3, I think it's so important, he says:

***<sup>8</sup> But do not overlook this one fact, beloved,***

— I love this; this is so important. He says this:

***that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.***

— and then he says this:

***<sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.***

***<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.***

– 2 PETER 3:7-10 (ESV)

There's coming a day when God says that's it and the end will come and it will be a difficult, difficult time. But I believe that God is calling each of us to Himself and these moments remind us to come to Him, to respond to Him, and these verses say listen, God is slow to anger. God takes no pleasure over the death of the wicked. Look at Ezekiel 33:11 sometime when you have a chance. God doesn't want the wicked to go to eternal punishment. That day is coming but He's giving opportunity after opportunity.

First Timothy 2:4 says He wants everyone everywhere to be saved and God does not desire—these verses right here say—that any should perish, and so as a result God has delayed His judgment to give us a moment for repentance.

You know, we just talked about revival. There are certain things in our lives that are a wake-up call. You and I have had those experiences where all of a sudden, you know, you come into a close call in an automobile where you almost get hit or you almost hit someone and

Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

– EZEKIEL 33:11 (ESV)

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

– 1 TIMOTHY 2:3-6 (ESV)

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you were half asleep, you were driving a long time and you almost run into someone, and it wakes you up, the adrenaline starts pumping and you are wide awake for the rest of the trip. And it's almost that moment where everything starts firing and now you are more alert than you've ever been. I believe the Word of God is telling us in a moment like this—and I believe Peter's telling us in a moment—don't let people go, "Ah, no, no." This is a reminder to us. No, God's at work but He is calling us towards repentance. He is calling us to get right with Him. These are important days.

And in verse 11 he says here's why. We need to be thinking in moments like this:

***11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,***

— and then he says this:

***12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.***

– 2 PETER 3:11-13 (ESV)

You know the Lord's Prayer,<sup>1</sup> "give us this day" and then He says this, "thy kingdom come." We're praying God, bring your Kingdom in. Can we move forward? Lord, we know this evil, wicked world – is there a time when You can do what You promised? I go to prepare a place for you and if I go I'm gonna come back and I'm gonna take you to be with Me so that you'll be where I am.<sup>2</sup> And in 1st Thessalonians Chapter 4 it tells us when He talks about coming back to take us to be with Him, he say:

***18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.***

– 1 THESSALONIANS 4:18 (ESV)

There is coming a day and in the midst of things getting darker and darker and harder and harder, we're saying come back, Jesus. And twice in this passage he says waiting for that day. Church, we should be a people not wanting just to get back to normal and just sort of maintain, we need to be a people calling on Jesus, "Come back soon!" And he says somehow here, and I don't understand this, he says hastening the day by praying that His Kingdom will come sooner, that He'll come sooner.

In verse 14 it says:

***14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.***

– 2 PETER 3:14 (ESV)

And it's just this reminder in the midst of this time would we be a people that are preparing our own hearts to be right with God? There are things that we need to change, and I think early on in this whole experience a lot of us really started moving in that way. And then we got in some new patterns and we went back to some of our old ways, just in new patterns. And he calls us here, listen, Jesus is coming back soon. Church, let's get ready. And I feel like He's given us this moment to just radically shake us up to cause us to turn to Him, to cause us to repent, and to cause us to look inside and say, "I gotta get it

<sup>1</sup> The Lord's Prayer passage is in Matthew 6:5-15

<sup>2</sup> John 14:3

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right." And so many of us are taking this opportunity. And I just wanted to be as your pastor to say to you: Jesus is coming back soon. Be watching and be waiting. Be digging in your Bible and studying the text that talk about His soon return. I would encourage you to be looking at 1st Thessalonians Chapter 4, verses 13 to the end of the chapter. I would encourage you to be looking at 2nd Thessalonians Chapter 2 and the first part of that chapter. I would encourage you to be looking at Matthew Chapter 24. All these passages of Scripture have a lot to say about the end times and about what's coming next and we believe that it could very well be near and on the doorstep.

By the way, at the end of Chapter 3 of 2nd Peter, again, Peter talking—a guy who spent a lot of time with Jesus, he heard Jesus' words, and now he's talking to a group of people and reminding them that Jesus is coming soon. At the end of the chapter he says:

***18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.***

**– 2 PETER 3:18 (ESV)**

So he's just reminding us: Grow in Jesus, grow in Jesus, grow in Jesus.

Okay. I told you there were some questions that have been asked me this week that are very relevant to our time and really relevant to the passage that we're studying. And probably the first question that I've been asked more than anything else and this was the first week I was asked a lot about it is: When are we gonna start meeting live in church again? When can we start coming back to the auditorium? And by the way, I know that the moment that question is asked there are radically different, divergent opinions of when we should and when we could. I've had people this week putting the hard core press on me that we need to come back NOW. Like, we need to like do it! And being told yeah, you know, we've been actually given the green light by the governor, we actually—with the right, you know, proportions of people in the room and social distancing and all that kind of stuff—could come back, which we appreciate the governor allowing us to do that. But there's others going, "Don't you dare!" Crazy. As a leader those pressures weigh upon me. But I've been thinking a lot about that and those questions that are coming up and, you know, if we just take the political piece of this and set it aside for a minute, let me throw something out to you. Chapter 2 of 1st Peter, we're just gonna continue on and we're gonna get into Chapter 3 today, at the very end of Chapter 2 it says this, Chapter 2, verse 12:

***12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.***

**– 1 PETER 2:12 (ESV)**

In fact. So what I say, it's like we as Christians, we as followers of Jesus need to be living our lives so, so good and in a certain way that everyone looking in goes, "Something different with him," "Something different with her," "Those Christians, they're acting so differently than everyone else right now." So I ask you this question: How do we do that? How do we do that? What happens next in this text he gives us three ways to do it, and I'm just gonna tell you I think these three ways are so incredibly countercultural and so incredibly difficult for us that you're going – to a couple them you'll probably go, "Yeah, that's cool," and a couple of them you're gonna go, "Oh, wow, yeah, no, no, no, no, no." So let me give them to you real quick. So here's the things, this is how he says to live your life so good among them.

So the first thing is he says—and I'm in Chapter 2 of 1st Peter, verse 13—he says:

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***<sup>13</sup> Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God,***

—Well, if you like what every human institution is doing, if you agree with the political authorities, this is easy to follow. On the day that you don't like what they're doing and you don't agree, this is hard to follow and we can have a whole boatload of excuses why we will not follow or what I call, "yeah, buts." And so when we look at that "*be subject for the Lord's sake,*" we think of being subjects as fall in line. There's someone over us. It's a military term and we are under that person. It's what we would call positional authority, when someone has rank or they have title they are over us and we struggle with that sometimes. Sometimes we don't. I mean, a police car pulls up behind us, their lights are flashing, we pull over, they come up and we observe that they have a badge and this kind of thing. We respond to that. You know, just any old car pulling up behind us flashing their lights we don't necessarily respond to them, they don't have rank, they don't have the authority. And so some levels of authority we're okay with, but what we find is there's other levels of authority we struggle with, and he says here when it comes to positional authority I want you to follow it. When you follow that positional authority, whether you agree with it or not, and verse 15 says here's what's gonna happen:

***<sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.***

– 1 PETER 2:13-15 (ESV)

That people are going to say horrific things about you but when they see you being so good towards those who are in authority, they're gonna see that something is different about you. Okay, so they're positional authority, they're over us, and he's saying to follow that—but there's something else and I'm gonna explain this to you a couple different ways in the next few moments—that has come across my thought process that I think is huge. It's two words in this first sentence here that normally blow over my head it says, "*be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution,*" and here's what I realize is that the Lord has placed authorities over us. The Lord has placed us under certain authorities in our lives and He's going to list some of those authorities in this text. I want to read to you just a couple words from 1st Thessalonians Chapter 5 that I think will say the exact same thing but put it in clearer terms. First Thessalonians 5:12 it says this:

***<sup>12</sup> We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, <sup>13</sup> and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.***

– 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-13 (ESV)

And here's what I realized, what he's saying here is I have placed authorities over you. These are my authorities, even though you don't agree with them, even though they may not be who you want to have in authority, I am placing them there and if you'll follow them—and by the way, here's the piece that is I think hard for you and I to understand, I think we're gonna have to just believe the Bible on it—if you will accept those authorities and respect those authorities, in so doing God is going to put protection on you as His follower. And there's something about falling in line under authority that when a Christ follower does that good things come as a result of that. And what I just read here in 1st Thessalonians 5 was one of those results is peace. And who among us is not looking for peace?

Let me use this as illustrative with the second one he says, verse 18 of 1st Peter Chapter 2 says this:

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*<sup>18</sup> Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. <sup>19</sup> For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.*

– 1 PETER 2:18-21 (ESV)

So now we're in an employment situation, you're dealing with your boss, this was a conversation I've had all weeklong that just keeps coming and coming and coming after us and people are struggling with this: What do I do? I mean, some people have been laid off and I've been talking to a number of people who have called me or felt very unfairly laid off. Most people feel that way when they're laid off, but they're struggling with what that boss said, what that boss did. There's others who are sort of getting, you know, 7-8 weeks deep into this work-from-home thing and they're less and less happy with their boss, they're less and less happy with some of the things that they're being asked to respond to. And, you know, since I've been in this text this week I've been talking to them about positional authority. But the verse that we just read in 1st Thessalonians 5 says spiritual authority, that somehow if we will respect and that's the word used here in verse 18, if we will respect that authority, that master, that boss, that will bring about peace.

Flip the coin for a moment, remember a time when you were the boss or maybe you *are* the boss but you—all of us have a boss over us, doesn't matter who it is—when those who were working with you respected you for your position it went pretty well; when they started fighting against you it went ugly and you got little frustrated and you started behaving a little bit differently towards them and it started going south. If you want peace, bring that respect to the boss. Again, I would tell you based on 1st Thessalonians 5 that what he's saying here is there is a spiritual authority that God has placed in charge of us. The physical authorities of our nation, of our country, of our state, of our local municipalities—those are authorities God's placed in charge of us. Then on top of that He has placed our bosses and these are not only positional authorities where they're called boss or they're called governor or president or mayor, these are spiritual authorities over us, and when we respond well to them things go well; when we—to the very words here in verse 18—respect them, there's peace that is developed and they see us as different.

You know it's like at work. Everyone's calling each other, everyone's texting behind the scenes because you can do that now when you're on your Zoom meetings, rolling their eyes, making comments, sending memes to each other, ripping on the boss, ripping on the decision that's just been made, and you know what? The boss may not see that, but the boss senses that. But when someone's there going, yeah, let me work with you on that, I respect you, I respect your position, it changes the temperature in the room. When we respond to our authorities in the country, it changes the temperature in the room.

Now, let's just give a little caveat because I'm gonna give you a caveat here in just a moment: We're not talking about when they ask you to do something sinful. We're not talking about when they ask you to lie. We're not talking about when they ask you to do something that you know is moral morally or ethically wrong. Yeah, at that point you have to say no to that, but most of our problems are not based on those things. Oh, we try to make them about that, but most of our problems just have to do with our sinful nature just getting into the gossip of the system, jumping into the fray, running our mouths, being

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frustrated, blood pressure going up, and not stopping and just respecting. Let me read to you the next one.

By the way, that one regarding the boss, here's the crazy thing about it, the rest of that text there talks about and puts it right up against how Jesus responded when He was being placed on the cross. Jesus' response was not to revile when He had been reviled, it was not to speak back. He entrusted Himself to the One who judges rightly. I find it fascinating that He puts our work day activities up against what Jesus did on the cross. In other words, the way we behave at work very well could be the best Gospel message we could give because we in that moment imitate Jesus, we mirror what Jesus did, and in so doing we project the Gospel which is exactly what verse 12 is saying of Chapter 2. It says:

*<sup>12</sup> Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*

– 1 PETER 2:12 (ESV)

Why are we still talking about Jesus two thousand years ago? They realized He was God. He behaved in such a way that we look at that, that by the time He dies on the cross we realize He IS God, He did love us, He did forgive us, He did pour out His grace and love on us. Can you imagine if our government leaders, if those who are in charge of us, if our bosses saw us as people who were self-sacrificing? I wrote down the word under the word subject of self-sacrificing; so it's not only to fall in line in just a positional thing, but when we think about being under that spiritual authority we're being most like Jesus when we are self-sacrificing, when we're giving of ourselves in that kind of way.

Okay. Let me go to the last one, Chapter 3, verse 1, says this:

*<sup>1</sup> Likewise, wives,*

— by the way, when it says "Likewise" it's saying *in the same way*, if you want to show how to come to Jesus, if you want people to see Jesus in you, you've gotta be subject to the governors, you want to be subject to your boss, and then he says, "Likewise" if you're a wife:

*be subject to your own husbands,*

— and I probably could not have just made a comment that to some is much more scary than that statement. Here's what it says:

*Likewise, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup> when they see your respectful*

— by the way, he used that same word under bosses —

*and pure conduct.*

– 1 PETER 3:1-2 (ESV)

And what he's going to just start saying is what's happening is going to come from within. That's what this passage is all about. It's one thing to respond to the government or your established leaders or your boss or your husband, but what's really going to start showing up is what's really going on in the inside, and he's going to talk about that here in a moment where he says it's not about your external appearance, it's about your internal appearance. It's about what God's doing inside of you. And when those around you start seeing who you really are with inside of you and what God's doing inside of you, rather than



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you fighting back and you beating back, they start seeing your godliness and it is going to begin to preach the Gospel to them and they're going to go, "That's the real deal." What's going on inside of her is real. And all of a sudden it becomes an absolutely beautiful thing.

Our world has taught us to be in subjection to *anything* is not only scary but it's untenable. That's why things are so difficult in your office situation; everyone wants to be in charge, no one wants to follow anyone, and everyone wants to make sure that that person who's in lead is being shown up for not being any good because they want to be in that position. It's like having a football team and having every position on the team be a quarterback and everyone calling the play. It doesn't work. And so God has ordained in His will—and it said, "*this is the will of God*"—that certain people be in charge. In no way does that make that person a good person, that person that's in charge, he never said that. He never said that the decisions that person is making is right. Never said follow those government officials only if their decisions are right. He never said that you're a lesser person because you follow the governor or the president or the leader or the mayor, never says that. Never says that if you're not the boss, you're a lesser person.

In the same way when he says wives, I want you to be subject to your husbands, he never says there's something lesser there. In fact, the description I like to use of that has to do with this verse that freaks everyone out in this passage because it says here that we need to be really, really careful with how we deal in this time because of the wives being in a spot where he refers to them as a "weaker vessel." And people ask me all the time what's this weaker vessel thing? Does that make that wife lesser than?

And I love to use the illustration and Mother's Day is a day when it would happen in my home growing up. My mom had these beautiful crystal glasses. I mean, they were thinner than thin, and I remember they used to wash them with incredible care. They never went in the dishwasher. When all the dishes were removed from the sink and everything was gone and all the little kids were out of the way, they would step in and wash these and dry them and buff them down and carry them and put them into their place carefully. In all of my years of growing up I don't believe one of them ever broke. I remember one time someone was over for dinner and we had those glasses on the table, the only time we had them was when we had guests over, and some guy decided to do something with this fine crystal where he balanced a quarter on it and was doing all sorts of stuff. I thought my mom was gonna die a thousand deaths in that moment. And I remember whenever she served drink out of those fine crystal glasses I loved it, there was something about drinking out of that that was the best. But we know that it would break extremely easily, but it was the finest glass that we had in the cabinet. It was only brought out for the most important times.

But when he talks about a weaker vessel, I often think of that glass. It is the finest glass. God made men and women so differently. You know, you talk to us guys—in fact, it was funny this morning on our lobby time that we do online and we did it here at Calvary Fellowship live before this. We got into this conversation, it was all your pastors, and they got into just as normal a conversation on sports and guy stuff, and that's what us guys talking about. We talked about our jobs, we talked about sports, we talked about guy stuff. And you talk to the mothers today, they're gonna talk about their families, they're gonna talk about children, they're gonna talk about love.

Ephesians 5 where has this same discussion about submission, it talks about husbands love your wives. And here's the caveat that I want to throw out: Ladies, you do not have to be in an abusive situation. And in fact, if you're in a physically abusive situation – get out. God made us men stronger for one reason – so that we could provide and protect our families. That strength was never meant to be leveraged against our wives physically. Men, there is no excuse in this passage for doing that. A lot of guys will

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play this game – you're supposed to be subject to us. That's not what this passage is saying. In fact, in Ephesians 5 it would be clear, it says:

*<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,*  
– EPHESIANS 5:25 (ESV)

In fact, in this passage when we get down to verse 7 in 1st Peter Chapter 3 it says:

*<sup>7</sup> Likewise, husbands,*

— Okay? He just keeps coming back at us —

*live with your wives in an understanding way,*

— What's that? Understand, you know what, it's not sports that she's loving ( – that's not true in my family; my wife likes the sports more than me but that's a whole other conversation that we've had before – ) but live with your wife in understanding. Understand she cares about family, understand that there's emotions, understand that there's feelings. Yeah, I know, you're not like that. You have to live with her in that understanding way and understand how to love her and care for her and you need to do that to a place where, like Christ did, so much so that He would actually die for her. It says here:

*showing honor to the woman*

— and here it is —

*as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

– 1 PETER 3:7 (ESV)

On this Mother's Day morning, men—incredible reminder—none of these situations is this about a person being less, it's rather about a person respecting the God-given spiritual protection that has been placed over them. He explains that that's what government does for us. He explains that's what our bosses do for us. He says that's what husbands do for wives. Our world has taken that and flipped it upside down to try to mess up God's given order. No, this is God's blessing. This is the way God's created it. And God's created us men to love our wives. That's what we're told in Ephesians. God's created us men and reminded us here going likewise to honor our wives and live with them in understanding.

So the original question was, "Things are getting tough in my house right now." And some of you are saying, that's what you're telling me, is it's like it's getting tense, it's small quarters and everyone's doing their thing, the kids are losing their minds, the moms and dads are at each other's throats. What do we do? And men, this is the best gift that we can give to our wives on this Mother's Day—way more important than cooking them pancakes here in a few moments, way more important than those flowers you went and grabbed at the last minute yesterday when all of a sudden you saw on Facebook that tomorrow's Mother's Day—living with them in honor and understanding. And guys, God's given us that strength to protect them, to love them, and He's reminding us here going likewise. We have a huge responsibility and on this Mother's Day we can live with them in honor and understanding, and that is going to change our lives. He says so that our prayers won't be hindered.

Going back to where we started, we're in the end times. I'm convinced we're in the end times. I believe that things are wrapping up in our world and Jesus is coming back soon. There's this text in the New

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Testament where there's this discussion that had they known the master was coming back they would have been doing things differently, they would have been preparing.<sup>3</sup>

And I say these things this morning to think this and to think along these lines, if you knew that today Jesus was going to come back to take His church home to Heaven to be with Him—and by the way, the Scriptures clear, it could happen anytime. I don't know the details around it. In fact, in that passage in Peter that we read earlier it says Paul writes some stuff that's really hard to understand. I mean, when I read this stuff sometimes it's like, *Whoa! Is it this? Is it this?* And, you know, people have fought for years over when does it happen, how does it happen. He says no man knows the day or the hour. It says some of this stuff is really hard, but what the Scriptures do tell us if we had known the master was coming back we would be ready.

If I knew Jesus was coming to get me today, what would change in my life? If I knew Jesus was coming back to take the church home to be with Him today, what would be different? He tells us to be watching for that. I'm gonna ask you this right now: Have you put your trust in Jesus? Is there some sin in your life that's pushing you away from Him? If you want to put your trust in Jesus, we're gonna put a link in the chat box right now and you can respond to that and one of our pastors will just connect with you and just love on you and pray with you and help you through that, to think that through. If you're trying to figure that out—by the way, I know you may just be pressing that going, "I do, I want to put my trust in Him, but I have all sorts of questions." Just press that button right now, there's a place where you can click in the chat box right now for prayer.

Maybe there's a sin that's just besetting you, just messing with you. Maybe some of the stuff I just said it's just hard to put your arms around. You're like, "Yeah, I can get the first one and the third one, I'm fine with that, but that boss thing, in fact, that just angers me. I need to get there, I see what God's saying, I believe it, but could you just connect with me and pray?" Just click on that in the chat box right now and we'll pray with you. We love you. We want you to be ready for the return of Jesus and want to invite you into that moment.

I don't know when we're gonna meet for church next all together, but I want to encourage you for one other thing. If we are in the very near term near the end of times the Scripture says things are going to get darker and harder, that the enemy is going to lose his mind because the enemy knows—he can read the same Book that you and I are reading right here—and it says at the end the enemy loses. He's locked up in a bottomless pit for eternity. And so as it gets closer to the end, evil is going to increase and intensify, and until Jesus returns that is only going to get harder and harder on you and me. And I say that to say this—I don't know what's coming, that's why we need to be ready.

As a pastor, as your pastor, I feel led to tell you this this week if we cannot meet in here, God gave us a gift and it's this online presence and you all have jumped on it. I am so thankful that you've done that. You all have jumped on Zoom with your small groups, I am so thankful you've done that. But I recognize the possibility that the day could come when we may get censored off of the Internet; when the day might come when we come on live with you on a Sunday morning and they turn us off; when we try to jump on Facebook and we're not allowed on there anymore. That day could come soon and then all of a sudden we can't meet in this building and we can't meet there. I'm not trying to be a fear monger, I'm trying to tell you that this is what my Bible says—the days are coming when it's going to get a lot harder and Satan's gonna try to shut down the church.

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<sup>3</sup> Passage is Matthew 24:36-44

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And that there's going to be an Antichrist that rises up to solve a worldwide problem. Could that worldwide problem be the coronavirus? And that in that time there is going to be a massive falling away in the church because all sorts of people are going to follow this world leader who's going to say, "Hey, if you don't put a mark on your right hand or upon your forehead, you can't even buy food, you can't even sell, you can't even do commerce." And we're gonna say, "Hey, that's too important to not take that, I'll figure it out later." And they're gonna fall away from Jesus. I want to remind you of this stuff right now because I'm concerned that that day is coming, it may be coming soon, it may not but it may be coming soon. We're going to need to stay strong in our faith. You need to be studying your Bible right now. You need to be digging deep in this right now. And you need to be getting close with each other.

I want to ask you church to be in a group. I've been speaking with people and I would say, "What group are you in?" And they're like, "Hey, you know, we were sort of in-between groups when this all began and we don't really have one right now." And I just yesterday I told someone, "You ought to lead a group." If you're ready to lead a group, let Pastor Mike know that you're ready to lead a group. And I've been encouraging people recently saying, "Get a group of people that are near where you live and drive 20 minutes to get to each other." The day may come that we can't get together on Facebook or on Zoom, we may need to quietly walk down the street to connect with each other. We need each other now.

The thing I'm so excited about with where we're at as a church is you want to be in this building today because we want to be together. We need each other church, we need to strengthen each other, [AUDIO GLITCH] do it online, but I believe the day is coming we may need to do it in person. We need each other today and I want to encourage you start gathering in groups locally near to your home. If you'll click on the button that's showing up in the chat right now, Pastor Mike will help to connect you in ways like that. I feel very strongly that you need to be aware of this stuff and prepared for this stuff.

Hey, listen, here's the good news. I gotta end with it. At the end of 1st Thessalonians Chapter 4 he says this:

***17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.***

– I THESSALONIANS 4:17 (ESV)

I want you to be excited. Verse 9 of Chapter 5 of 1st Thessalonians says:

***9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

– I THESSALONIANS 5:9 (ESV)

We love you and we are excited Jesus is coming back soon and I don't want you to miss that. I want you to have your eyes open. Keep your eyes open, it's happening soon. Good things are happening. We love you. Let me pray for you.

*Jesus,*

*I pray that no one will leave this message discouraged. Lord, if they're scared or they're discouraged because of anything I said, I pray right now that they would put their lives in your hands. I pray that right now they would make a commitment to follow You no matter what happens in our world. And I pray right now that every one of us will say the words that are*

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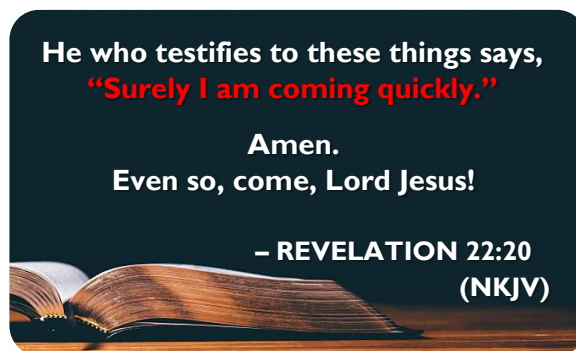
*found at the end of the book of The Revelation, even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus. We want You to overcome death and sin and the wickedness in the world and we look forward to being face to face with You.*

*Your Scripture describes that in 1st Corinthians as the great hope that each one of us have in You, and so we today we don't come here as defeated, we come here as more than conquerors through our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray for anyone who does not know Jesus that they would put their trust in Jesus right now in a powerful way and find the grace and the mercy that only You can give to save them, and they would trust in You alone for their salvation—not our government, not the economy, not their friends, not their pastor, but You, Jesus, You alone. We grab onto You.*

*Lord, for each person listening on that is hurting today, each person that is sick, each person that is lonely, each person that has a need, Lord, I pray that they would feel in a powerful way coming right into the room where they're at right now your Spirit and your power and your strength on their life, which we commit them into your hands for your blessing.*

*It's in Your Name we pray. Amen.*

God bless you.



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