

The Present and Coming Hour (Part 2)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 May 2020

Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0:00] John 5, 25-29, and if you would please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together.

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. And He has given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

God had a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? Prior to 1492, Spanish coins depicted the Straits of Gibraltar, and they had a Latin inscription on the same coin that said, Ni plus ultra, which means no more beyond.

[1:32] But many of you are aware of the events that happened in 1492 when Columbus sailed the ocean blue, and he landed on the coasts of America, the new world.

And when He returned with reports back to Spain of what He had found and of this new land that they had no idea existed before, because prior to that, they thought that the end of the world, truly the last bit of land before you got there, was Spain.

And when they got this information, they recalled those coins, and they issued new ones with an inscription that said, Plus ultra, more beyond, more beyond.

And so, I bring that up because as we saw last week in this text, Jesus speaks of the certainty of there being more beyond this life.

There is more beyond our lives here on earth. And so, first, He's addressed the present hour. The present hour.

[2:35] And the importance of coming to faith in Him, in it, before the coming hour when Jesus says He will return, and He will return in judgment.

In verses 24 through 26, Jesus spoke of the spiritual resurrection, the miracle performed by the Holy Spirit, whereby He transforms a person, taking them from spiritual death and making them alive, giving them spiritual life, this spiritual resurrection.

And then, in verses 27 through 29, Jesus changes His focus over to this coming hour. This coming hour when He will return, when all people will undergo the physical resurrection, and all people will appear before Him in judgment.

And so, here in these verses, Jesus urges and issues warnings to all who hear the gospel that they believe it, that they believe Him, because in the coming hour, He says, when we all undergo the physical resurrection from the dead, we will all stand before the risen Son of God, Lord of Lord, King of kings, in judgment.

Those who underwent the spiritual resurrection in this life, in this hour, Jesus will, He says, resurrect to eternal life.

[4:09] And those, Jesus said, who did not experience that spiritual resurrection will be physically resurrected in the coming hour to endure His judgment and just punishment for their sin.

And so, today, I'm going to talk about a very uncomfortable subject. And that subject is death. And to be more precise, the subject I want to talk to you about is your death.

Your death and your eternity. What comes after it? And are you ready for it? The subject of death, especially our own death, is not something that many of us like to spend a lot of time thinking about. Because if we do, we are soon forced to confront questions that require deep thought. Questions about the afterlife. Questions like, is this all that there is?

What if there's more? How can I know? Can you know? Will I go to heaven? Will I go to hell? And with these questions, follow more in-depth questions about existence.

[5:23] Why am I here? What difference does my life make? Does it make any difference at all? Will people go to my funeral when I die? Will anyone come?

In years from now, when my life is over, and has been over here for a long time, will anybody remember me at all?

These questions require, like I said, deep thought that honestly, most of us would rather not entertain. We'd rather not spend that time thinking about it. Talking about death, even for many of us, seems to be a morbid thing that we shouldn't do.

But let me tell you that the Bible says a lot and speaks a lot to death. It speaks a lot to the life that comes after death. Jesus had much to say about this subject.

The questions require deep thought, but often, like I said, we don't want to give them that deep thought because if we do so, we're forced to think about God.

[6:36] Think about things that honestly, Satan would rather not have us thinking about. Because, again, when we think about these things, we wrestle with these questions and we desire answers.

And so then we, often in those times, go to the church or go to God for those answers to try to sort out what comes after this life.

And again, Satan would rather keep you ignorant to that topic. He would rather keep you confused over it. And in fact, he'd rather you just not even think about it at all.

He'd rather instead you think about living your best life now. And he would rather you thinking and adapting the philosophy of life that you only live once.

We go back to Genesis 3. We see that this is a lie that Satan has propagated from the very beginning. And I believe that it's a lie that he presents to us every day to try to get us from thinking about this, keep us from thinking about this very important matter.

[7:50] Genesis 3, 1 through 6 is Satan confronts Eve. It says, Now the serpent was more crafty than all the other beasts of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be open and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to desire to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate and she also gave some to her husband who was there and he ate too.

So in other words, what Satan is doing here when he tempts Eve is to tell her, You know, forget about that whole dying thing that God talked about.

[8:59] Just forget it. Put it on the back burner for now. Look at how good that fruit looks. Imagine what it must be like to feel it, to touch it, and then to eat it.

Enjoy, Eve, the pleasures of today. Seize the day. Grab that fruit. Take hold of it and eat. Live the good life now and worry about dying some other time, some other day.

In fact, in most of our minds, death seems far off. We imagine many of us living to an old age and then peacefully drifting off when we're asleep into what comes next after we've already checked everything that there was to check off of our bucket list.

And so for many of us today, it seems like our death that day is far, far away. But then tragedy strikes.

Somebody whom you know, somebody who's your age, somebody who maybe is even younger than you, they die. And you realize in that moment that if circumstances were different, you could very likely share their fate or could have shared in their fate.

[10:37] And when that happens, we're reminded of the fact that we are not immortal, that life is fragile, and that we're not guaranteed even tomorrow, especially whenever it's somebody really young who dies, like a teenager.

I remember a couple of instances when I was a teenager, I had a good friend who died tragically. She was 16 years old in a car accident.

And then I remember a couple of years later, I had a friend who was 18, a freshman in college, and he died in his sleep, in his dorm room. He had a heart condition that nobody knew about.

And I remember in both of those funerals, and then later on, when I was a pastor, a girl who had been in my youth group who was still about 18, 19 years old, and she also died tragically in a car accident.

I remember being in those funerals, in those cases, and just the shock on the faces of those young people and the fear. Because to them, death seems like it's decades and decades and decades away.

[11:46] And then to see somebody whom they knew so well, how fragile life truly is, it's shocking to them. I think we see this even when we go through some kind of a shocking experience culturally.

Many of you remember 9-11 and the tragedies that occurred on that day. Many of you know what happened afterwards. In the church, a lot of people started showing up because they realized how evil and fallen this world is, how fragile life truly is, and they weren't sure what happens after it, and so they went to the church for answers.

I think we've even seen that during this current pandemic, that a lot of people in the world are tuning in to the services that we're putting online because they are looking for answers.

They want to know. And in times of tragedy, the world often looks to the church for answers.

Because I think every one of us knows, again, that life truly is fragile, and as they wrestle with these things, I think they also wrestle with a notion that they just know that there is more to life than this.

[13:05] So now with our attention focused on the matter of death and what comes after it, we're ready to come to this text and find the answers that the Lord has for us in it about the reality of the resurrection that we will all undergo and the reality about the eternity that awaits you and I after it.

And so here's the main idea for this morning's sermon. It's the same as last week, and you'll see this is really just one mega sermon preached in three parts, and today is part two, so Lord willing. Part three will come next week. The main idea is that Jesus has the power to give spiritual life to the spiritually dead and the authority to execute judgment over those resurrected for eternal life and those resurrected for eternal punishment.

And so just to review last week, remember when we looked at the first half of this truth that Jesus says there that he has the power and only he has the power to give spiritual life to the spiritual dead.

So the first thing we saw there is that in this present hour, Jesus has the power to give spiritual life to spiritually dead people, and then he talked about next the people who receive spiritual life.

[14:24] He talked about the fact that he alone has the power to give spiritual life, and then he said and explained his purpose for why he gives spiritual life in verse 25.

So now this week, we focus on, again, the second half of this truth. That was in reference to this present hour, and now the things that Jesus has to speak about are in reference to this coming hour.

And he says that in the coming hour, Jesus will execute judgment over everyone through the physical resurrection of the dead. So again, as we saw last week, just as Jesus has the authority to give life, so too in verse 27, he says that God the Father has given him authority to execute judgment over everyone in this coming hour.

in verse 27, this is precisely what he says. And he says there, and he, speaking of God the Father, has given him, speaking of himself, God the Son, authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man.

And so here, if anyone was to ask Jesus, well, who, what makes you fit to judge anybody, he's already given the answer. He says, because I am the Son of Man.

[15:52] And so for Jesus' primarily Jewish audience, they would have understood what he meant when he made that claim that he was the Son of Man. In fact, Son of Man was Jesus' favorite designation for himself.

And it's a designation that arrives from Daniel, which again, his audience would have been aware of. The point, the connection that Jesus was making in what he was saying. And so let's look at Daniel 7, 13 through 14.

Daniel there, in his vision, he prophesied, he said, I saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven, there came one like a Son of Man.

And he came to the Ancient of Days, and he was presented before him, and to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. So again, here Jesus speaking to his primarily Jewish audience who were aware of the scriptures, aware of this prophecy.

[17:00] Here, he connects that prophecy in their minds to himself, that he is the Son of Man, that he is the one who has come, that he is the one who will one day come again.

His first coming was of a mission of peace. His second coming will be that of judgment. In addition to that, what makes Jesus fit to be our judge is the fact that he is God.

He is fully God, and he is fully human. As the author of Hebrews tells us in chapter 2 and in chapter 4, that Jesus entered into human life.

He experienced all that we as humans experience. He was tempted as well, yet there is one major difference between he and us, and that being that he is completely and totally without sin, whereas we are completely and totally sinful.

And so Jesus is fit to judge for that reason. If you remember in John 8, we will get here eventually where Jesus is preoccupied drawing something on the ground, right?

[18:16] We don't know. He is doodling something, and if you remember the Pharisees come to him and they have caught a woman who has committed adultery, and it seems like they have committed her red-handed. They have taken her from the act and they have dragged her before Jesus and they have thrown her at his feet.

And you remember the question they asked to him. They said, you know, our law tells us that the punishment for this crime is death by stoning. What do you say?

Remember, Jesus continues to write, some people give a hypothesis what he was writing about, right? Nobody knows. You can ask them when we get to heaven. So anyhow, he eventually answers their question.

Remember what he said? He said, he who is without sin casts the first stone. One by one, the woman's accusers left dropping their stones because they knew that they were not fit to judge according to Jesus' standards.

But Jesus was. If anyone had a right to throw a stone in judgment, it was him. But he didn't. He chose instead in that moment to have mercy upon this woman and to forgive her of her sins.

[19:30] And so in this present hour, Jesus does the same for you and I. He extends his mercy. He offers his forgiveness. But there is an hour coming when that offer will no longer be extended.

When you will stand before the righteous God of the universe. I find it interesting that you've probably heard, you maybe have said it yourself, I know I did when I was a rebellious middle schooler, this statement, only God can judge me.

Only God can judge me. You know, what's humorous about it is those who live by that motto, those who say that a lot, they live and they act as if God is not ever going to judge them.

But he will. And he will judge us all. And he is fit for that task. And so again, Jesus tells us, he urges us that in this hour, we must call upon the name of the Lord for salvation.

We must believe in the gospel and be saved. We must undergo the spiritual resurrection and receive his mercy and forgiveness and have eternal life so that we know in that coming hour where we stand with our Lord having been forgiven for our sins.

[20:57] because again, in that hour, this offer will no longer be extended. In verse 28, Jesus moves on to speak about the physical resurrection that we will experience in that coming hour.

And the first subject he addresses there is the people who will receive his judgment in verse 28.

There again, they're shocked by what they've heard this man say, Jesus tells them, do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice.

And so again, while the unbelieving Jews were outraged by the claims that Jesus had made that he was the one who had life in himself and had the ability to give spiritual life and that ultimately he was the judge of all people, here there are even more shocked and incensed by Jesus' statement when he boldly claimed that he would one day raise all dead people from the grave to stand before him.

As he did with the spiritual resurrection, which he talked about in verse 25, Jesus said that the hour of bodily resurrection is coming. While the time of spiritual resurrection is now, the bodily resurrection that is coming is still in the future, spoken of in the future tense.

Right now, the Bible says that when believers die, their souls go either to heaven or to hell or Hades, as some of your translations translate that word, which is a Greek word that describes a place for the dead.

[22:47] And this truth is taught in many places of scripture, that when you die, your soul either goes to heaven or it goes to hell.

And there it is until this day comes. And so one of the places where we see Jesus talk about that is Luke 16 when he's talking about the parable of Lazarus and the rich man.

If you remember, they each went to either heaven or to hell when they died. But there is more in store after that event.

But here, here is the place where often, if you've tried to share the gospel or you've talked with people about God, here, when you start bringing into fact the reality of hell, the reality of judgment, here is where oftentimes, I know in my experience, you get the biggest pushback from people. And usually what they push back against what you're saying with is this, God is love and a loving God does not condemn nor judge anybody.

[24:04] And so in answering that question, I think it's first important that we understand that the offense that people take in our culture to the judgment of God, to the wrath of God is really something that's culturally driven in the United States of America and being in the western half of the world.

Because if you go to the eastern half of the world, if you know anything about their culture, a lot of their culture is based upon shame and honor. Shame and honor.

What brings shame upon you or honor upon you and your family primarily, right? If you're shamed, you bring shame to your family. If you're honored, you bring honor to your family. And so for them in these cultures, what they're offended by is not that God would judge.

What offends them is that God would forgive, that God would have mercy, that God would come and that he would willingly subject himself in weakness to die on the cross for other people's sins. That's the message that offends them. So when we're talking about what offends us, we've got to understand that maybe what offends us truly is something that has been ingrained in us, this culture that has been indoctrinated within us since we were young.

[25:25] You know, and who's to say that what we take offense to in our culture is greater or exceeds what another takes offense to in their culture.

The second thing that we need to talk about when we address those who push back with this belief is that all loving people are sometimes filled with wrath.

All loving people are sometimes filled with wrath. And if you're a child who had a good mother, a good father, you've experienced their love and you've also experienced their wrath.

Because if you love a person, if you truly love a person, you will seek to protect that person. If there's somebody else who's harming them, if they themselves are the person, if they're ruining themselves, you out of love, out of anger for what you see happening to that person that you love, you step in to do something about it.

In fact, the Bible says that God's wrath flows from his love and his delight in his creation. He is angry at evil and injustice because as the prophet Habakkuk stated in chapter 1 verse 13, you who are purer of eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong.

[26:50] Speaking of God, God's wrath flows from his love. Third, loving someone does not mean that you allow them to do whatever feels good to them.

And so if you came to my house and let's just say, for example, that my daughter loves playing with guns. And she loves playing with guns so much that we decided let's get her a real gun and let's put real bullets in it and let's allow her to go around the house playing with this real gun and, you know, shooting whatever she wanted to, right?

Because she enjoys it. It makes her happy. And then you come over to our house and you see my daughter running around with a gun in her hand, right?

And maybe you say, well, that looks really real. And I say, oh, yeah, she loves guns. We got her a real gun. It's got bullets in it and everything. You know, you want to play Russian roulette with her? I'm sure she'd enjoy that.

You would think that I was an unloving father, ill fit to continue to parent and you'd call the police. I hope that you would, right? And you'd be justified in doing so because you know that I don't really, if I don't really love my daughter, if I'd be willing to allow her to continue to use something or be a part

of something that could do great harm to her.

[28 : 13] It's no different with our Lord. And then also, the belief in a God of pure love who accepts everyone as they are and judges no one takes more faith than the faith that we are called to believe in Christ, in God's word, because it's unfounded.

It's an unfounded belief. You cannot go to scripture. And if you read it front to back, you cannot come away with that kind of assumption because that is not what God has said about himself in his word.

And so, if you're believing that, then really what you're believing and trusting in is your opinions, your thoughts, your feelings, and I can guarantee that you, like me, have thought wrong and felt wrong before.

And so, can you really trust in your opinions and your thoughts and your feelings for something that is so important as your eternal life? And ultimately, we understand in reading God's word that God's love and God's justice have met at the cross of Jesus Christ.

Where there, we see how much God loved us, that he was willing to send his son, who was willing to die in place for sins that he did not commit, for sinners.

[29 : 40] God loved us so much, yet he had to because he's just and righteous. He can't just pretend or act as if the sins that we've committed didn't ever happen before.

He must do something. And so, we see that the judgment and the just righteousness of God to crush sin is there at the cross as well. We see God's love and we see God's justice and we see them meet in our Lord Jesus Christ at the cross where he died for sins that he did not commit.

And so, when you believe, when you've trusted in Christ as your Lord and Savior, again, it wasn't as if your sin wasn't punished at all. No, it was punished.

It was meted out upon Jesus Christ. He truly died and suffered for your sins because God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him will have eternal life.

And so, what Jesus is asking us here and he asks us repeatedly through his word is, are you ready for this coming hour?

[30 : 53] and his question to you is in that coming hour, will you receive God's mercy? Having believed in Jesus Christ, having understood that he's already suffered and died in your place for your sins?

Or will you receive God's judgment because you've rejected the only hope for salvation that there is for you in Jesus Christ?

Christ. Now, there is an order to this resurrection that the Bible speaks of and there is disagreement among believers about what order that all will take place in.

And so, again, the most important thing that we keep in mind when we talk about the end times, when we talk about eschatology, when we talk about this coming hour, is that Jesus is coming back. that's the most important thing to keep in mind.

And then, you know, and this isn't something that should divide our churches, right? We shouldn't end friendships because we are disagreeing over the order of events when Jesus comes back in the end times and whatnot.

[32 : 05] You know what? When we get to heaven, and after we ask Jesus, you know, what were you riding in the sand? You know, some of us will be able to look at others of us and say, I told you so, right?

I told you so, I knew the order and I tried to tell you on earth, but you wouldn't listen, but I was right, right? I don't think that we'll be doing that. But all this to say, we'll talk a little bit more about this next week.

I think that 1 Corinthians 15 is pretty straightforward about the order of these events. And it says there, but in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep, for as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive, but each in his own order. Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ, then comes the end, and when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and every power.

And again, in all of these things, I think that the most important and primary concern that you need to have is to know that the Lord is coming back and are you ready for that moment?

[33 : 34] Are you ready for that coming hour? And Jesus hasn't left us completely in the dark about what will proceed that coming hour and what it will look like in part.

In Matthew 24, verses 29 through 31, and speaking of that day, Jesus says, immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to the other. And then in verses 36 through 42, he continues, But concerning that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were all unaware until the flood came and swept them all away.

[35 : 03] So will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field, one will be taken, one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill, one will be taken, one left.

Therefore, Jesus says, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. And so he tells us with each passing day and hour and minute and second, we are getting closer and closer to that coming hour.

It is approaching. And you know, as we read, as we've just seen some of the things that Jesus had to say about this coming hour, about the things that we're going to see in the heavens and whatnot, maybe at some point in time it seemed far fetched to believe that all of that could happen.

But I'm telling you, and many of you have lived longer than me, so I'm not trying to act as if I know all these things that I don't know of, but I can just say for me, I've experienced in the last 15 years the world getting stranger and stranger and stranger.

Haven't you? Crazier and crazier and crazier. Things that had never happened before are happening. And so we can come to this text and we can read these things and I think we can say, yeah, I could see that happening.

[36 : 36] And you know, maybe, I'm not a prophet, but I imagine things are just going to get crazier until that coming hour. But we take heart and we take hope because we know that when that coming hour comes, we will rejoice because we will know that we are about to go to be with the Lord forever.

And so we are encouraged greatly by that. But Jesus also gives us this warning that this hour is coming. And he asks, are you ready for it?

Are you ready today to meet Jesus? Are you ready today to stand before him in judgment?

Because the fact of the matter is nobody is getting out of this world alive.

And it doesn't matter when you die, if you have rock hard abs and you have keys to a Ferrari in your pocket, you'll die and you'll be food for worms.

and then you will kneel before the Lord in judgment. And all those other things that you based your life upon, all those other things that you thought were important, you'll see how truly of little importance they were.

[38 : 03] And so Jesus asks you today, are you ready? because we're not guaranteed tomorrow. Listen, we may not get to part three of this sermon next Sunday because that hour may have come and I hope that it does come.

So in this hour, we must reject Satan's lies that you only live once. We must reject his lie and his temptation to seize the day.

Instead, we must do what our Lord has commanded us to do which is to seize our eternity. To seize our eternity in this present hour.

To turn to Jesus if you have not believed in him. To call out to him. To repent of your sin. To acknowledge your need for saving from it. And you will be saved in this coming hour.

You will undergo that spiritual transformation. You'll be ready when that hour comes. But if you reject him, the only thing left for you to endure is first his judgment and then eternal punishment forever.

[39 : 24] God has made a way and it's only through Jesus. Will you believe in him? Will you trust in him? And if you do, when that coming hour comes, we will rejoice.

we will receive that perfect resurrection body that we still will talk more about that's totally uncorrupted and incorruptible by sin.

You, I, all believers in Jesus Christ, we will experience life as we've always wanted it to be forever and forever and forever.

And for that, we have reason to always be hopeful, no matter what we are going through in our present way. Thank you.