

Citizens of Heaven Here on Earth (Part 2)

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] Music. Philippians chapter 3, beginning in verse 17 and going through chapter 4, verse 1.

! For many of whom I often told you and now tell you even with tears walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction, their God is their belly, and they glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy in crown, stand firm thus in the Lord my beloved. May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word.

Would you please be seated? So, we've been in the book of Philippians for some time now, and I've been going through a series of sermons on this passage that we just read together, and it's all about what it means to live as a citizen of heaven here on the earth.

[1 : 33] How are we to live for Christ in this world and during this time? My dad grew up in a town called Dundalk in Maryland, and Dundalk is not far from Baltimore, and that's where my dad grew up.

And my dad moved to Kansas City, eventually with my mother and with my oldest sister, because of work. And my dad's work is that he's in radio.

He's a radio personality, or another way to say that, he's a disc jockey. And so, he's been on radio for over 50 years. He's been in Kansas City for over 35 years.

And back in the day, when he was on radio, they didn't like his name. We have the same name, Mike Scrivani. But they said, well, that's too hard to pronounce, and it's too hard to remember.

So, they either would give him a name, or they would eventually, they asked him, why don't you come up with your own? And so, he chose Mike O'Brien, because there's a couple other radio guys that he liked who had that last name.

[2 : 40] And so, all growing up, my dad had this alias. In fact, on his checks, I thought it was cool. It said, Mike Scrivani, a.k.a. Mike O'Brien. When we would go to the restaurants, we would often say, you know, O'Brien Party of Five.

That's just a name that was synonymous with him that we kind of took on as well. And so, now he's on Facebook, and he uses his radio name, Mike O'Brien, on Facebook.

Now, I'm on Facebook, obviously, too, and my name is Mike Scrivani. And so, I tell you all this because last week, in fact, this past week, somebody reached out to me on Facebook over Facebook Messenger and asked me, are you the Mike Scrivani from Dundalk, Maryland?

And that got me to thinking, and I remembered that on my cover photo on Facebook, it's me, my dad, and Jack, my son, our three generations.

So, I thought, well, that makes sense. You know, if you're looking for Mike Scrivani from Dundalk, Maryland, you search for that, and you find my picture with him in it, and you'd associate, well, that must be him.

[3 : 46] And then it got me to think even more, you know, because we have a lot of distant relatives. I do, growing up in Kansas, and all my relatives being back east. A lot of them I haven't met or don't know very well, and they've asked me to be friends on Facebook.

And so, I was thinking, you know what? I bet a lot of them don't realize that who they're friends with is not my dad, but his son. Then I started to think, well, what have I been posting about, you know? Because there's nobody who I love and respect more as a man than my father. And so, thankfully, I haven't done anything that I think he would be unproud of being a Christian man and having a son as a pastor.

There's been some times I've been upset about some KU games, but nothing too bad. And so, I think you understand where I'm going with this, right? I wouldn't want to do anything to bring dishonor to my father's name.

And you guys know that as Christians, we have a heavenly father who we also, likewise, don't want to bring dishonor to his holy name.

[4 : 50] And so, as citizens of heaven, we are living here on the earth. And we've gone in depth through these verses. We'll spend at least one more Sunday bringing to a close with verse 1 in chapter 4.

But we see that as citizens of heaven, we have a goal and we have a prize. That goal in this life is to become like Christ. And it's a prize that we will not achieve until we go to be with the Lord where he comes back and brings us to him.

When we will be finally, completely, and totally made like Jesus. That's the prize that we are longing for, that we are looking for.

And so, here on earth, we are living as citizens of heaven with that goal, looking forward to that prize. But until then, we've been given a mission to share the gospel and to make disciples.

You know Matthew 28, before Jesus ascended, he said, Go therefore to his disciples. Go therefore to the ends of the world, sharing the gospel, making disciples. And so, this is our task that we have been called to do as we await the Lord's return or our going to him.

[6 : 00] But in order for this to be achieved, we must reflect our heavenly Father here on earth. We must reflect our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

When people see how we live, they should see Christ in us. By the way we speak, by the way that we talk, by our actions. They should see something different about us, and that reflects the fact that we've been transformed.

We've been changed by our Lord and Savior. We, as Christians, are different people. And we must reflect that in this world. When people see how we live, they must see Jesus in us.

If we are living for the world, though, instead of him, then we will bring dishonor to his great name. And as Christians, we shouldn't want that. In fact, we want the opposite. We want to be living as we ought to, as citizens of heaven in this world, so that our lives bring greater honor to our Lord's name.

People will, again, see that we've undergone a transformation. They've seen that the gospel then must be true. That, in fact, Jesus is the way. That Jesus is the truth.

[7 : 09] That Jesus is the life. And they can tell that through us if we are correctly and appropriately living our lives here on earth for him. And if you remember, we talked about this last week and the week before.

We are in the world as followers of Christ, but we are not of the world. There's a difference. We're in it, but we're not of it. But until we realize that basic truth and live it, we will be ineffective in our world as we try to reach them with the truth of the gospel.

And so here's the main idea that we've been going through, again, the past few weeks. Same today. This is what we need to see. In this world, either you live as a citizen of heaven or you live as an enemy of the cross of Christ.

Enemies of the cross live for this world, but citizens of heaven live for the world that is yet to come. Christians must understand then their roles as citizens of heaven here on the earth So that they can maximize their full potential as one who has been called, as one who has been commissioned to go and spread the gospel to the ends of the earth.

And so if you should know by now, and as we recall together this morning, our vision statement for our church is this. It's the four E's. Remember, we're engaging.

[8 : 35] We are enlightening. We are encouraging. We are equipping. Those are the things that we are about. And so this morning, I want to focus on the fact that as a church, our vision, our mission is to also be encouraging one another to live this way.

We need each other's encouragement. And so that's what I want to do for you this morning. I want to encourage you today. I want to encourage you from God's word to live as citizens of heaven here in this world.

Because we face, the Bible says, three enemies. We face the enemy of our own flesh. We face the world, not the planet earth, but the world system that is controlled and dominated by Satan.

And then we face Satan himself. We have three formidable enemies in this world. We've got to remember, though, that greater is he who is in us than he who is in the world. And so God has equipped us.

He has given us things that help us to fight back against the enemy. He has given us his word. He has given us, obviously, himself. And he has given us each other.

[9 : 46] We don't fight these battles alone. You're not left to yourself to fight the enemies of this world. In fact, we need each other to fight one another's battles.

Because the fact of the matter is, let's be honest, sometimes we get tired, don't we? Sometimes we get tired of it. Sometimes, like Doyleen said, we say, you know what, Lord, I've had enough today. I don't feel like opening my Bible. I don't feel like doing much of anything. And so we need to come alongside each other and encourage one another to keep on fighting the good fight.

And so that's what I want to do this morning. I don't want to beat you down. I don't want to kick you. I don't want to make you feel like you're a terrible person. I want to encourage you as you do what the Lord has called you to do.

And so we better understand this text of Scripture when we understand the context, the original context to which it was written. And you know this is coming from the Apostle Paul.

[10 : 56] He's in prison in Rome. And he is going to be there for some time. He's writing letters to the church. And he's encouraging them. He's also challenging them. And so he's writing this letter to the Philippians.

And Philippi was a city that was far from Rome, but it was a Roman colony. It was a Roman city. And so the people who lived there were considered to be Roman citizens.

And this was a big deal during that time. If you were a Roman citizen, you had a lot of freedoms. You had a lot of rights. You had a lot of privileges that nobody else had. And so this was a relationship that they were proud of.

In fact, they were so proud of it that even the architecture in their own city was a copy of that of Rome. So when you came to there, if you had been to Rome before, you would walk into that city. And you'd say, hey, this reminds me a lot of Rome. So they built like the Romans. They spoke like the Romans. They dressed like the Romans. They were proud of this relationship.

[11 : 57] However, many of them had never been to Rome before. They had never stepped foot in that place. And so these people, Paul is using this example because these people knew what it meant for everything in their lives to be shaped by another kingdom.

Far off in the distance. That they had never even stepped foot in before. Does that sound familiar with what it means to be a Christian? Right? We haven't been to heaven.

But we're going there. And we know that we belong there. And we're thankful for that association that we have because of Jesus Christ. And so we, like them, have an understanding in a way of what it means to live for another kingdom while we are in a different place.

So again, in the same way, Christians and their local churches are members of another kingdom. We do not belong to this world. And so our churches are like little heavenly outposts.

And they're filled with heavenly citizens who serve as ambassadors in their communities. Not only that, but we are warrior citizens.

[13 : 05] We are soldiers for the Lord. And so we are called, again, out of this world. But we're also sent back into it. To lead people out.

To share the good news of Jesus Christ. And we take ground back from the enemy as we do that. But the weapons of our warfare aren't guns and grenades.

But truth, grace, and love. That's what we use as our weapons. We go to war with evil just like Jesus did. Jesus overcame evil with grace.

And so likewise, as his representatives here, like Jesus, how he overcame evil within us, by the grace of the cross, we will overcome evil in others by doing the same thing that the Lord has done for us.

So how are we going to do that? How are we going to go about that? Well, last week, if you remember, one of the ways we do that is that we imitate other Christians. Other Christians who have come before us and who have passed on to the glory.

[14 : 15] And other Christians who are living presently. And we find somebody to serve as a mentor of sorts for us. Somebody whom we can go to for encouragement.

Somebody we can go to with our problems. And somebody who will be there for us to encourage us and give us godly wisdom as they do that. We need somebody to be pouring into us.

And then likewise, we need to be pouring into somebody else. This is good for us. The church was made for this. We are supposed to be disciples who make disciples. That can be the very same person.

The person who you can be pouring into can be pouring back into you. It doesn't have to be two different people. But we need these relationships the Bible makes clear. Also, our attitudes and our mindsets as we live for Christ in this world must be different.

And so, as citizens of heavens, our minds are to be captivated by the things of God and not of this world. So, what does that mean?

[15 : 24] What does that look like? Well, as we read in verse 19, Paul reflects upon two different kinds of mindsets. And he contrasts them.

The first is the mindset of the enemy of the cross. The mindset of the worldly person. And he says there that their end is destruction. Their God is their belly. Their glory is their shame with minds set on what?

Earthly things. And then he contrasts that to what a citizen of heaven, their mindset should be in verses 20 through 21. Saying that they live differently.

Their minds are different. That citizens of heaven eagerly anticipate the future. That makes us different.

Again, look at verse 20 there. The very beginning of that verse. Paul says, right after talking about how their minds, the earthly mind, is set on earthly things.

[16 : 24] But our citizenship is in heaven. And from it we await a Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ. And so Christians, citizens of heaven, anticipate the future.

When Christians think about the future, they should not think of it worriedly. Filled with worry. Filled with fear. Filled with anxiety of what is going to happen next.

Filled with uncertainty. That is not to characterize the way that we live. Man, it is hard to not live with a sense of worry in the United States of America right now.

Isn't it? Man, it's hard. Because you know what? There are people who profit off of making us fearful and full of worry.

This is, worry is big business in the United States of America. A few things that I wrote down. The security industry. They make a large profit off of making us feel like our cars are going to be stolen or we need security cameras or nanny cams.

[17 : 29] Not saying that these are bad things. But make us fearful of our own neighbors. They profit big time off of our worries and our fears.

Here's another one. The beauty industry. You're getting old. You're getting wrinkles. You should be worried and afraid about that. So here's a cream.

Here's a balm. Here's a spray. You just cover yourself with it and it will take care of your fears and your worries. Or the stock market. Banks.

Doctors even. They give you all of these tests. You go to the doctor to rule out all these things that you could have but it seems like they never find out what you actually do have. You know what I'm saying? They fill those things.

Those things fill us with worry. The environmental agencies. Right? Global warming. The ice caps are melting. Climate change. Everything is doom and gloom if you don't do something about it.

[18 : 27] The self-help industry. You aren't enough. You can't be enough. Here. Follow these ten steps and we'll make you a better person. Collections agencies.

Right? Pay us back or we're going to come and get you. Make you feel fear and worry and trepidation. Insurance companies. The news media. Politicians even.

All of these people profit off of our fears and our worries. Now I know what you might be thinking. Well wait a second Pastor Mike. Are you trying to tell me that I shouldn't have insurance?

Are you trying to tell me that I shouldn't protect my assets? Are you trying to tell me that I shouldn't have a plan for my retirement? That I shouldn't be taking care of my body? That I shouldn't have concern about things like pollution?

No. That is not what I am saying. But what I am trying to say is that these things shouldn't fill us with fear and uncertainty about our futures. We shouldn't live our lives in fear of trepidation of what might happen to us.

[19 : 31] Or what will become of this world. We have the Bible. We know the end. We shouldn't be surprised that sin is wreaking havoc in this world. But we have an ending and we know what is going to one day happen.

And so we should live our lives with confidence. Life is hard and we'll get into that. But we don't live our lives in fear because if we do we will be ineffective in our mission for the Lord here.

We can't be caught up in our own problems and our own worries all the time of what might happen to us. We've got a task and we've got to be about doing it every single day. And so Jesus really clearly hits on this point in Matthew chapter 6 verses 25 through 34.

And so this is kind of a sermon within a sermon because I want to talk about what it means to live with an earthly mindset. And a lot of times Christians struggle with this earthly mindset when it comes to worry.

When it comes to being anxious. So let's look at what Jesus has to say about what it means for a Christian or how a Christian should not be living with these things. So this comes from the Sermon on the Mount.

[20 : 31] In chapter 6 as he's preaching he says this. Therefore I tell you do not be anxious about your life. What you will eat or what you will drink. Nor about your body what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns. And yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not more valuable than they? And which of you by being anxious can add even a single hour to his span of life?

And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field. How they grow. How they neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven. Will he not much more clothe you? Oh you of little faith.

Therefore do not be anxious. Saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things.

[21 : 36] And your heavenly father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things that you worry and stress about will be added to you.

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow. For tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own troubles.

What is Jesus trying to tell us here about our worries? About our fears? Well here he's talking about an issue that clearly all Christians face.

Let's not pretend like we don't struggle with worry and fear from time to time. And I'm sure that some of you here in this morning are filled with worry and fear. Because you're dealing with some really serious issues.

You're fighting some really difficult battles. So let's not pretend like we don't struggle at time to time with worry and fear. But what is Jesus telling us about this struggle that we face?

[22 : 43] He understands that in this world you're going to face the temptation to do that. He knows that. We are tempted to worry about the future. And when we do that we create these scenarios in our minds.

That causes us to fear and worry even more about what could be. Many of you guys do this. I know I do this. You play the worst case scenario. What's the worst that could happen?

We like to do that. We have this weird obsession with that. Well this is bad. But I bet it could get a lot worse. So I'm going to think about it. You know this is bad. But I'm going to make it even worse in my own mind.

That's what we do. We create these scenarios in our minds. And again there's a time and a place for doing stuff like this. I come from Leavenworth where there's a lot of military men and officers. And they've got to play these war games.

They've got to be planning and preparing for what could happen. But we aren't to live our lives like that as our default setting every day. You hear me? That's not our default setting every day.

[23 : 43] What could happen today? Things could get really bad today. My wife, my husband could die. My kids could die in some kind of tragic accident. I could look at my bank account and it could be at zero or in a negative.

We aren't to have that be our default setting. We aren't to always be expecting and dreading that the worst that could happen will happen. That is not the mindset of a follower of Jesus Christ. But I will say if I was an unbeliever, man I would be fearful. I would be worried. Because if that was the case, if there was no God who was sovereign in control of every event from beginning to end, then that means that our lives, our futures are completely in the hands of sinful mankind. And we have some crazy people at the controls who are able to press a button at any moment and send nuclear missiles into the air. You know what I'm saying? I would be scared if there was not a God.

Thankfully there is. And so we do this. We create these images in our mind of what could happen. What Jesus is saying here is that worry has an active imagination.

[24 : 59] And as we've been talking about, it creates these scenarios in our minds. What it does is it transports us mentally into the future.

A future of our own making. Of our own creation. A future in which everything that could happen to us that could be bad for us has happened. And we live in that future while we're here in the present. And in that future, it could be you're laid off from your job and you lose everything. Your spouse divorces you. You're left with nothing. Your family leaves you. Or your family dies in some kind of tragic accident and you're all alone and by yourself.

Or the stock market crashes and you lose all your retirement. You lose all your investments. You've got to go back to work or you've got to keep working. When this happens, we find ourselves worried. Even more worried.

Even more troubled. Even more stressed out. Even more anxious about something that has never happened. What a waste of time. That's what Jesus is saying here.

[26 : 03] The more you worry about these things, the more you live in this kind of future of your own creating. And as we'll see in a moment, the less effective you're going to be in the present. In the United States of America, we are living in the most affluent country in the history of the world.

We have more than any other group of people in the past, certainly in the present. Is it interesting to you that while we have all these things, yet we still are more despairing, more depressed, more anxious, more fearful, more worried it seems, and more concerned than any other group of people in the world?

So Jesus is saying that worrying is completely useless. Here he says it's a waste of your time because it achieves absolutely nothing.

We're slow to believe that. I look at your faces and I see that. I don't know if I believe that that's true. We think that worry prepares us to handle problems so that when they come, we're better equipped.

But does Jesus give that advice to us here? Jesus says here that worry has no value. He says that it's a waste of our energy because no matter how much we worry, we have no power and we have no ability over future events.

[27 : 34] We don't control the future. Michael J. Fox isn't going to show up in his time machine ready to take us back or forward to fix things and set things right.

You understand what I'm saying? We have no control over our future. Jesus also makes the point when you have such an earthly mindset filled with worry and fearing the future, what you end up doing is you mortgage your present.

You're so focused on what could happen, the worst that could happen, that makes you even more worried. And when you do that, you stop thinking about your present day and what is happening in your very midst.

When you do that, you are lessening your ability to be effective in your day today. Because you're being so preoccupied with these imagined scenarios of future catastrophes.

As a result of that, you're less prepared to handle the future when it comes. Because you're living in your life. Because you're living in this world of your own creation.

[28 : 45] Filled with your own worries and fears of what the worst that could happen. You understand Jesus seems to picture life on earth like this.

As a result of the fall and as a result of sin, right? The fall is a result of sin. What he's showing us here and what we should understand is that because of the fall, because of sin, there will always be problems in life.

Always. No matter what you do in this world, you will encounter problems. Because we live in a fallen, sinful world. It's inevitable.

You will face problems. You will face difficult times. As a matter of fact, when Adam and Eve sinned, God said to him that he was going to live and heat his bread by the sweat of his own brow. God doesn't miss words. He tells them, listen, as a result of this, you're no longer going to live in paradise. You're no longer going to have the enjoyment and the ease of simply waltzing up to the tree of life and picking from its fruit and eating and being at peace with me and having the ground produced for you without thorns and thistles.

[30 : 00] It's going to be difficult now, your life, because of sin. Your life is going to be a task. Your life is going to be filled at times with trials and troubles.

You're going to wake up in the morning, running late to work, and turn to start your car, and it won't start. That's going to happen. You're going to, especially living in Oklahoma, I found out, there's going to be storms.

And they're going to be severe. And they're going to knock branches down on top of your house. You are going to, you are going to see, especially, again, living in Oklahoma, your favorite team is not going to win, make the winning shot, especially if you're an OU fan, right?

I got to get, I got to get the digs in where I can. Difficulties in life are going to happen. That's going to happen. These things are going to happen, and you don't have any ability to control them.

So the question isn't whether or not problems will arise. They will arise. The question is, how are you going to face them when they do? How are you going to face them when they do?

[31 : 08] How are citizens of heaven, living here on the earth, to face these inevitable problems? Well, according to Jesus, we shouldn't spend our present day imagining every possible scenario, every worst thing that could happen to us, and how we would handle that.

Trying to do so will crush you. We've got a present day, and we've got work to be doing, and so we've got to focus on that. Even in the midst of trials and troubles, we as Christians have reason to be joyful.

We have reason to be hopeful, because we know the end. We know that the future is secure. And so we should look forward to the future. And we shouldn't take for granted our present day, because each day, as Jesus said, contains enough trouble on its own for us to face.

So don't add trouble to tomorrow, because you're not handling today's problems. So what does any of this have to do with Philippians chapter 3, which we have just read? Well, if we're going to be effective witnesses for Christ, our churches will continue to plateau, they will continue to decline, they will continue to die, if we are consumed by worry.

If we're not getting to work, doing what he's called us to do, our churches will continue to plateau, decline, and die. Citizens of heaven don't need to worry about the future.

[32 : 37] We don't. Jesus displayed this in his life. Right? He knew that the cross was coming. He knew that's what he was sent to do. And there was a time, remember Lazarus, when he brought Lazarus back to life.

And he gets news that he's sick, and he knows what's going to happen. He's God. He knows that he's going to die, and he knows that he's going to go, and he's going to bring him back to life. But he just came from that area, if you remember.

Not too much earlier than that moment, where he's telling his disciples, we're going to see Lazarus. They reminded him, hey, we were just there, and you know what they tried to do?

They tried to stone you to death. You crazy person. You're going to take us back there, where they just tried to kill you? You remember what Jesus' response to them was?

He's saying, in effect, yeah, we're going. We're going to go there. And you shouldn't be concerned about that, because each day, right, has 12 hours. While there's light, there's time to do good, but darkness is coming.

[33 : 42] And he knows what's coming. Yeah, I'm going to die, but I'm not afraid of going and doing my Father's will. And while there's time to do it, that's exactly what I'm going to do, because I trust, because I know what's going to happen.

And you should, too. And so they went, and you know the rest of the story. So what Jesus is telling us there is that every day has like a 12-hour quota, so to speak. It's got enough problems there.

And while we have time to deal with those problems, we deal with those problems. We don't push them off to tomorrow, because we're so worried about what could be. And we add problems to

tomorrow, because we're not taking care of them in the present.

So we need to learn to trust God with our problems when they arise. I want to share a quote with you from Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones. He said, Worry is always failure to grasp and apply faith.

Faith does not work automatically. Never think of faith as being something put inside you to work automatically. You have to apply it. Faith does not grow automatically either.

[34 : 42] We must learn to talk to our faith and to ourselves. You must ask your soul, Why is it cast down? And you must wake it up. The child of God talks to himself, reasons with himself, shakes himself of his faith, and when he does so, his faith begins to grow.

Life is not controlled by blind necessity, he concludes, but certain things are certain, because we are in the hands of the living God. So let's live our lives that way.

We are in the hands of a certain living God. Secondly, when Christians think about the future, they should think about it with hopeful anticipation.

They should think about it with hopeful anticipation. And here in the Greek, this is a rare word. And what it describes, it's a compound verb, what it describes is somebody who is looking for someone in such a way where they're standing on their tiptoes, they've got their neck stretched out, and they're trying to see them.

They're waiting for them, but they're anxious to see. So like your child, when they graduate, and you're ready to see them walk down the aisle, and you're looking, you know, where is he or she? Or you haven't seen somebody in a while, and you're at the airport, and you're waiting for their return, and you're looking for them to come out of the tunnel.

[35 : 56] It's that kind of waiting. We're waiting, we're patient, but man, we are excited about what we will one day see. In 2 Timothy 4.8, Paul characterized this kind of attitude.

He's about ready to die. He gives Timothy some words of advice, and there he says, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness with the Lord.

The righteous judge will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but all those who have loved his appearing. This applies to us as well. We are looking for with anticipation for that day.

So, how can you better live your life that way? Where you're not living in fear and dread, but you're waiting and hopeful and anticipating the Lord's returning or you're going to him?

Well, three things. First, reflect upon the gospel every day. Reflect upon what Jesus has done for you and what that means for you.

[36 : 56] Do it every day. The more you're in his word, the more you will be reminded of this. The more you're in prayer, the more you will be reminded of this as well. Reflect upon it every single day.

Secondly, rejoice over his coming. Rejoice over his coming. You are looking forward to his coming quickly.

I think of like a grandkids being united with their grandparents that they haven't seen each other in a while. You know? I know when we pull up into my parents' driveway, the kids know where they're at. My parents hear the garage door going up, and it's like, bam, they just rush.

They can't wait to see one another, and there's just this mess of arms and legs. They're just so excited. So that's the way it is with us. We are rejoice over the fact that our Lord is coming, and one day we will be with him.

So rejoice over that. And then third, remain obedient. Remain obedient. The eager anticipation that we have for our future with Christ should motivate us towards obedience.

[37 : 59] Matthew 24, verses 42 and 44 through 47. There the Lord says, Therefore stay awake, speaking of his return, for you do not know of what day your Lord is coming.

Therefore you must also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom his master has set over his household to give them their food at the proper time?

Blessed is that servant whom the master will find so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. So we've got to be ready.

We've got to be obedient. We're looking forward to his coming. I want to close by talking to you about John chapter 20, verses 19 through 23.

Jesus has been crucified. The disciples have gone to the tomb. They've seen that it's empty. And they don't know what to expect, right?

[38 : 59] Some of them Jesus has appeared to. Some of them are, you know, what happened to his body. Certainly what does this mean for us? We gave up everything to follow him. And so if you remember, they're in a locked room.

And they're hiding. And Jesus appears to them. You know the story. And so what's interesting about this is he appears to them.

They see him. This isn't some vision. This isn't some, you know, apparition. He is there in the flesh. They see his wounds. They hear his voice. And he stands there within their midst.

And he gives courage to these fearful disciples. Like I said earlier, I know that there are those of you in here this morning and you're facing difficulties.

You're worried. Maybe even afraid. You don't know what tomorrow will bring. You're dealing with a difficult person in your life.

[40 : 05] A relative. It could be an endless amount of different things. We need to look at this passage and be encouraged by what Jesus is able to do. First of all, he is able to go into places where we aren't able to go.

The door is locked. Jesus isn't knocking at the door. Hey guys, would you let me in? I'm here. I came back from the dead. Let me in. It's cold outside.

Right? He doesn't do that. Boom! He's there. And they're afraid. But you know what? He also, he's not hiding in the corner. He's not peeking his head out under the table.

He's not playing games with them. Boom! He's right there in the very center of that room for all of them to see. He's able to go to places that you and I aren't able to go. And he's going to show up with you in your worry and your fear.

He's not a distant deity. He's there with you as you go through whatever it is you're going through. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when they went through the flames of the furnace, he was there with them.

[41 : 17] He's with you. He's able to go to places that you're not able to go to yourself. He knows what's happening. And thirdly, he gives them courage.

They're encouraged by the fact that he is with them. They're encouraged by the fact that he is not a dead man. And you and I, followers of Christ, we don't worship a dead guy.

You understand me? We don't worship some dead guy who is a good moral teacher who lived about 2,000 years ago. We worship a risen Lord and Savior.

The King of kings. The Son of God. And if God is with you, it doesn't matter who's against you. And so I hope that encourages you.

You don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow.

We don't even know that tomorrow's even going to come. But we know that when we wake up tomorrow morning, that God is already there.

[42 : 20] He already knows what's going to happen. He's going to be with you through it. And you can trust him to go in the places where you cannot go. So be encouraged by that. Thank you.