

2 Peter 3:8-13

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[0:00] So that you can undergird and support this team as they make their way in prayer. The great revivalist Leonard Ravenhill in his book *Why Revival Terry* is referred to the church prayer meeting as the handmaiden of the Lord.

It is the often neglected, often mistreated, and most often abused part of the service. And the very first thing that he spoke of, of *Why Revival Terry* is now about *Why Revival*, we did not mean the schedule of events or having someone come in.

But the true movement of the Lord among the people of the Lord. The greatest call was to be a people of prayer and to lead to unction in the pulpit. It is a word that we do not use often much anymore.

The word unction, that is the power and the moving of the Holy Spirit. And really that would only begin as the people began to pray. Every great movement throughout the history of Christianity can be traced, as it has been said, to a kneeling figure.

You can find them in the book of Acts when they were persecuted and neglected and mistreated. And they would gather together and they would pray. It's one of the early principles or foundational elements of the gathering together of the church.

[1:13] And the walls would be shaken and the people would be encouraged. And immediately following each one of those would be the outpouring of the Spirit as the Spirit spoke through his people for his glory and his glory alone.

It is the great calling of the church that too often is neglected. And it is something that is hindered by our own preoccupation with the concerns of the world.

Because let's be honest, prayer is a hard discipline. It is something very difficult to get into. You are not aware of it and I do not expect you to be aware of it.

Some of you are aware of some instances and some are not. Several months and weeks back, myself, elders, and deacons took a pretty hard stance on what we considered to be the traditional home and what the family looked like.

It was not a public stance, but it affected some. And we understood that. Through much trial and tribulation, we labored and ensured that we were right. We took a look at each other in the eye and made sure that what we said was both biblical and accurate and we did so.

[2:16] Full transparency is since that moment, the enemy has wreaked havoc in the families of our homes. There has been much that has taken place among the congregation of this building.

We have not seen that. I will just be transparent. This is my 20th year in pastoral ministry. And yes, this is a little bit off script. I have seen time after time again of where the Lord moves, the enemy always counterattacks.

We know that we are wrestling not against flesh and blood, but against the powers and principalities of the air and the spiritual forces of darkness. We know that. We know that our enemy is not the one that is always before us, but rather the one that is moving the circumstances around us.

So in doing so, I prepared for battles to be fought. I prepared for instances to happen because we saw the Lord's movement.

We also saw the Lord's guiding and leading, but the attacks came in a manner in which I was very unprepared for. For it was not a public matter within the church.

[3:18] The church responded with grace and beauty and truth. And as we should, I had to answer tough questions, and I'm thankful that I had to answer tough questions. I've told people over again, I do not mind hard questions, and I do not mind being confronted with questions.

As a matter of fact, I would rather you do so. The really easy way of saying it is, I'm a big enough boy to take your tough questions, and it's not going to hurt my feelings because feelings really don't

have anything to do with it.

It is our job to sharpen one another, and when I'm wrong, I will confess when I'm wrong, and we will look at the word of God. So as God led the church, it was powerful, but it was behind the scenes and the things that were happening in homes that really started happening that the majority of the church does not know about, and I'm thankful that you do not, and I'm not here to call attention to those.

But what I am here to do is to call and remind you that we are called to prayer. So in light of that tonight, our service tonight will be a prayer service. We will spend time together corporately praying, led by the word.

We will pray through the word. We will pray through specific instances, and we will have a prayer service tonight. We will not have a Wednesday night scheduled service because of the events that are going on in our fellowship hall, and it is a risk management issue.

[4:34] But we will be very soon organizing intentional times of prayer in which we can become a genuine praying people, not something that we say, yes, that's good, we need to do that.

But I mean a crying out people. It has been quoted, and I have seen it, that when we depend upon organizations, we get what organizations can do.

When we depend upon programs, we get what only programs can do. When we depend upon man, we get what only man can do. But when we depend upon prayer, we get what God alone can do.

And so I'm thankful that God is moving us as a church to a place where we depend upon prayer.

And that's where I'm at as a pastor, and hopefully that is where we will be at. So tonight we will take time. I invite you to come join us for one of those old-fashioned, often very ill-attended prayer meetings.

And we will pray. I will not exegete any portion of scripture, but we will pray through the word of God with one another. So that's my invitation. But this morning, if you are physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God found in 2 Peter chapter 3, starting in verse 8.

[5:58] The word of God says, But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt away with intense heat.

But according to his promise, we are looking for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day.

We're thankful for the opportunity of gathering together. Lord, we rejoice in the privilege it is to open up the word of God with one another, to be challenged by it, to be moved by it, and even to be confronted with it.

[7:16] We pray now, Lord, as we have read it, that you give us eyes to see it, ears to hear it, and a mind and a heart to receive it, and a willingness to apply it.

We ask that you get the glory in the midst of this, that you get the glory through our understanding and comprehension of this, and, Lord, that you are exalted in our presence as we look at this.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Peter is writing this second small letter to a group of believers who are of the diaspora.

It tells us there in 1 Peter chapter 1. Those who are dispersed among the known world at that time, the early church world.

He is not writing to a particular people in just one particular place, but he is writing to a particular people who are scattered abroad among the face of the world. Its application was more than just one central location, but it was an application for people of the Lord for all time in all places.

[8:26] And it brings its application unto us. And throughout this writing, he has reminded them of who they are in Christ. He has reminded them that they are first the slaves or the bondservants of Christ, that they have been redeemed, they have been bought with the precious blood of the Lamb, that they are holy and fully his and his alone.

And once he has redeemed them, then he has sent them from his presence. He refers to himself as the apostle. We have said it before. We do not hold to the apostolic office still in existence in the church, but we do hold to the reality that each one of us have been commissioned and therefore sent from his presence to declare these things.

We refer to that as the great commission found in the end of the gospel of Matthew. We have been sent out from him unto the world. And therefore we find ourselves as a part of the diaspora at times. We find ourselves in various places among various people. And Peter writes and he encourages them to focus on the prophetic word of God. Not so much their experiences, the experiences which they have had with the Lord, even referring to his literal mountaintop experience on the Mount of Transfiguration.

For the mountaintop experience may last but for a moment, but we always walk down into the valley of confusion because as soon as they left the mountain of transfiguration, they were confronted with the possession of a young boy which they were unable to do anything with.

[10:03] And it is there that Christ says, because of the smallness of your faith, you could not do it. Now think about that just for a moment. Three of them have just beheld the transfiguration of Christ for the glory of Christ which has eternally been his in eternity past, in eternity present, and in eternity future.

The glory that was veiled with his humanity began to shine through. He was not radiated on, he was radiating from within. And they have just seen Moses and Elijah speaking to him about his soon coming exodus from the world.

They have heard the heavenly voice, this is my beloved son, listen to him. But then in the valley they had such small faith they could not even cast out the demon.

So experience alone does not equip us for the work we have been called to do. For Peter would live such an exemplary life after the resurrection of Christ that people, much like they did with Jesus, would begin to bring the sick and the hurting and lay them on their cots so that maybe the shadow of Peter would pass over them and the faith that is now evident in this individual's life would bring the miraculous healing as a testimony to the work of Christ.

It wasn't the Mount of Transfiguration that brought Peter there, it was rather the relationship he had with Christ, a relationship that is through what Christ taught him and empowered him and the Spirit moved him to do.

[11:32] It is therefore to our great advantage that we understand the Word of God. But the warning is that where there is the true prophecy of the Word of God, there is the false prophecy of the enemy.

And Peter spends the entirety of the second chapter highlighting for us the work and even the description of the false prophets, those who would seek to lead us astray through their cunning, lustful ways, appealing to the desires of our flesh and our mind, appealing to the lust that is natural to this world.

And then he returns in the third chapter and he speaks of those who live as if Christ is not coming back. In the first seven verses of the third chapter, he refers to them as who knowingly, in verse 5, they intentionally do not want to believe that Christ is coming back, so they live accordingly.

But we are not such people. We sang a hymn just a little bit ago. By the way, I love it when the hymns line up with the message and thank you for that leading. Soon and very soon.

We sang that. We left off the first two hallelujahs because someone in the background was supposed to be going, hallelujah, soon and very soon. We're going to see the king.

[12:48] You might not have seen it down there below the stanzas. Somebody should have shouted hallelujah. And then soon and very soon we're going to see the king. Hallelujah. Why? Because it is a glory. Let it be soon and very soon.

But we do not shout hallelujah because we do not live as if it is a reality. We are not yet filled with the weight of this world that wants the soon and very soon.

We're like, Lord, yes, let it be soon, but give me time. And here, Peter is speaking to those people. He is encouraging those people to be people of a steadfast mind.

And he tells them what it looks like to be individuals of a steadfast mind fixed upon the promise and the hope that awaits us and what it looks like to be such people living among people who could care less if it ever comes about.

In a nutshell, he is speaking to us, speaking to those who live among a people in which the world is on a downward spiral. And in those days there is no king in Israel and every man does what is right

in his own eyes.

[13:57] That's the book of Judges, but it could also be penned across the world in which we live in. In this day there is no king in all the land and everyone is doing what is right in his own or her own eyes.

Well, how do we live with a steadfast, fixed mind in times such as that? I am thankful that the book of Judges is followed by the book of Ruth because if all we read through the book of Judges and the disparity we find ourselves in in the latter chapters where five times we find that repeated refrain, no one is doing anything right.

Everybody is just doing what is right in their own eyes. Everybody is doing what is right in their own eyes. But then we flip the page and we come to the book of Ruth and we find a Limelech who does what is right in his own eyes and takes his family to a foreign country and there he dies, his son dies, and his wife has to come back.

And she comes back to the land where everybody is doing what is right in their own eyes, but there happens to be a man, Boaz, who is doing right in God's eyes, who is a direct descendant of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And it reminds me that God always has his people. No matter how dark the time, no matter how desperate the age is, God always has his people with a fixed mind and a fixed heart in the midst of the dispersion.

[15:22] So how are we to be such people? Well, the text before us gives us a clue because in verse 8 he says, but do not let this one fact, this one fact, now that is a play on the literal words found in verse 5 where it says that they knowingly reject the fact.

Now it doesn't read that way in our language, but verse 5, those who are living as if Christ is not coming are knowingly rejecting the fact, but the believer will not let this one fact escape their notice. And the one fact that he introduces to us is the uniqueness of God. The unique, distinct character of the Almighty.

And he introduces it to us this way, but do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved. A reinforcement of the reality that Christ, that God through Christ sees us as his own children.

Because on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter had said this, we heard the voice from heaven that said, this is my beloved son, that is Jesus. And when he looks at you and I through the blood of Jesus Christ as we have been redeemed, he says, this is my beloved son or this is my beloved daughter.

[16:56] And beloved one, do not let this fact escape your notice. What is it? It is all about the character and the uniqueness of God that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like one day.

Now we need to go ahead and tell it that some people have used this verse to justify progressive evolutionary theories found in the book of Genesis and that God did not literally create the heavens and the earth in six literal days and rest on the literal seventh day.

They said, well, since a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day, then that could have been six thousand years. Difference is a different word. Words matter. The word in Genesis means a literal 24-hour day.

That's what it means. And difference is different context because it says in Genesis, in the beginning, right? Now we're talking about, what about the ending?

We're not even talking about the beginning. So do not eshegeat the passage. Do not read 2 Peter into Genesis 1. Rather, it would be better if you would read Genesis 1 into 2 Peter.

[18:07] And therefore, you are following the consistent pattern of progressive revelation in Scripture. Do not use a New Testament revelation to dictate, to determine a passage of Old Testament revelation. Just don't do it, my friend, because you're reading your text backwards.

You say, doesn't the Bible say one thing consistently? Yes. You do. But even humanity shows us that. We do not have the same expectations from a college graduate as we do a kindergarten attendee.

Why? Because they have learned more as they have went along. And therefore, do not run into kindergarten and start beating up the little children because they do not know as much as you do. Matter of fact, don't do that because that's against the law.

But don't do it anyway because that is unfair. But that's what we do when we twist and distort our text. But we're looking at the ending here.

And what does the ending say? That God is so unique and so distinct from us that we may say, well, where is this delay? It's been over 2,000 years and we still haven't seen him. And all this craziness.

[19:09] He says, you do not understand. It's not even really about how many days and years it's going to take. What he is saying here is that God is other than us. And that's just a simple way of saying God is outside of time.

Time does not matter to him. Time is something that he has given for our benefit. Let there be day and then let there be night. Why?

So that we can do. By the way, we just need to go ahead and say this and we may not get past the first one. We'll see how it goes because when we start getting into the character of God it is so rich. Why do the heavens even contain the sun and the moon and the stars anyway?

Why are they there? Just so God could show off so you could walk out into the sky at night and go, wow, God knows every star by name and yet he's concerned about me. He puts them there.

He calls them forth and he places them there so that we can understand the vastness of the heavens that sometimes the very star we're looking at is not even in existence anymore because by the time that light gets to our eyes it has already exploded and burned up.

[20:15] Is it there to amaze us? Is it there to astound us? Well, the word of God tells us that he puts them there for the seasons and why do the seasons exist? The seasons exist, continue your revelation of scripture, so that we would know when we should have our festivals and the festivals exist so that what?

So that we would know how we should worship him and when we should worship him. The seasons existences for our own benefit that we may be called to worship him throughout the year. God could care less if there is a sun and a moon and the stars and the night sky because when we get to heaven we don't need them.

He is light. He put them there for our benefit. He is outside of time. You say, well, I cannot comprehend that. Well, neither can I but we can accept it and we can nod our head to it because if he is the creator and originator of time then he has to be outside of it.

You cannot create something that you are not apart from. And therefore, he is outside of time. So when we begin to question God and the word of God and we begin to dictate our understanding based upon our perception of time, we are speaking of God as if he is like us.

But he's not. And we need to steady our mind on the reality that God is unique. There is none other like him who is like the Lord God Almighty.

[21:41] None. For he is outside of time and therefore he is not in a hurry. He is never rushed. He is never late. He is never restrained.

He is never confined. For time is at his beckoning. He says, so you do not count his delay as slowness.

You do not count his delay that because, he says, the Lord is not slow about his promise as some would count slowness. Why?

Because he is patient. So now we have this other unique character of God. God has time. He is patient. But notice who the patience is for.

He is patient for you. Now Peter is writing to believers. He said he is patient for you.

[22:45] To do a work in you that he has taken the time to do what he has to in you. Not wanting for any to perish but for all to have to come to repentance. Now we could really dive into this text and get into it.

I'm not going to take the time to do it for you now but we will at some point. Some people use this text and say one way. Some people use this text and say another way. I think this text has a very clear meaning in what it is but to put it in a nutshell it's like this.

Because if we read it consistently with other scriptures he is, as Paul would say in the book of Romans, waiting until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. Do a word study on that sometime.

Do a study sometime on the day of the Lord. One of the best studies I've ever done. I had Brother Kenneth Swan. You know him. You've met him. The first person that ever told me publicly and told the church publicly I didn't vote for that guy.

He doesn't need to be our pastor and ended up being his pastor. I love him dearly. I was 26 and I wasn't ready. One of my dearest brothers, he pulled up the other day right here in the parking lot. I was talking to someone and he came by and I said, you know, you still have the recognition of

being the only guy that told me I wasn't ready to be a pastor.

[23:50] He said, you weren't. He said, but I love you, brother. But anyway, still love him dearly. Great, great brother in Christ. And I remember one of the things he gave me as a young pastor to do.

I was probably like 28. He said, what does it mean by the day of the Lord? And he had me do a word study on the day of the Lord. And he was honestly asking me. By this time, I kind of won him over just a little bit.

And one of the greatest words days I've ever done is consistency we find in scripture. That was many years ago, but it is astounding what we find is that there is a day set aside.

It is a day already determined that he knows about that is why it is referred to as the day of the Lord. It is also referred to in our passage as the day of God. That is that the Lord God Almighty already knows the day.

We do not know the day. We do not pretend like we do. But it is a day when the fullness of the Gentiles has already come in and he's patiently waiting until that day. And he knows exactly what it is. And in all in all, when we see it, it is an active working of the Lord God Almighty in his patience forbearance of us.

[24:52] So God is other than us. He knows exactly what he's doing. We do not. In one way, we steadfast our mind is that the loving kindness of God is new every morning.

Some days he has to have greater patience and mercy for me and on me so that I would become what he's calling me to be for his glory. Not for my benefit, but for his glory.

And he's laboring for me so that I would bring the greatest glory to his name. So that I would radiate my light into a watching world so that men and women would be drawn to him for his glory.

He is so other than us. And when we begin to consider and set our minds upon the reality that God is unique, he's not like us, it steadies the mind because we so want him to be like us.

We so want to be able to control and confine him and to dictate what he's going to do, but we have to constantly remind ourselves, but he is not. He is apart from other than us.

[26:08] So when we cannot define it nor explain it, we're okay with it because we're not supposed to. But we steady our mind not with that only, but we can steady it with the sudden oncoming of his promise.

Notice what the text tells us. For the day of the Lord will come. Don't you notice, and maybe if you're in a habit of writing in your Bible, I'm not writing this one, I have other ones that I do write in, but if you're in a habit, just underline all the wills in this passage, right?

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and it is the day that he has promised it will come, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its work will be burned up.

These things will happen. And it is the sudden fulfillment of his promise. We do not look for the progression of God bringing these things about, but the sudden happening.

Jesus said this himself on his great sermon at the end of Matthew, Matthew 24, and following, as he's walking away from the temple for the last times, he's speaking about the latter days and how these things will come.

[27:28] It is where we get the imagery and all this great end time teaching of the one who is grinding at the mill. One would be left and one would be taken in the field. One would be left, one would be taken. That there is a moment that these things are going to happen suddenly.

It is why I believe that the moment the church is raptured, then that starts, it jump starts, the beginning of the seven year tribulation period. And we're not here to get into all that stuff, but that it happens just like that.

That you remove the church, all hell breaks loose on the earth and for seven years it starts. It is not, the church is gone, God delays a little bit. That there is a starting point, by the way, just as kind of a caveat, the day of the Lord begins with the rapture of the church, I believe, and it's kind of the starting of that.

But anyway, we can see this imagery here. These are settled matters. It will come. It will.

You say, Pastor, when? I don't know. And if I was to tell you that I did know, then it would be befitting of you to get up and walk out.

[28:31] Because the word of God says that if any man tells you the day or the hour, then he's lying and you need to flee from him. It is not my job to try to pinpoint the day.

It is not my job to try to understand the day. It is not my job to read into the times of the day. It is not my job to do those. It is my job to accept the fact that there will be a day.

And I believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that if anybody predicts the day or the time, then one promise I can give you, I can guarantee you 100% that it will not happen on that day.

Because when the word of God says no man knows the day nor the hour, the very day someone points out, I can promise you, that one's not it. Because if that's it, God lied.

So if anybody moves you by telling you they know it and they have it figured out, then you say, well, I'm sorry, God said you don't, I'm going to pick another day. Just don't even pick a day. It is not for us to know.

[29 : 36] Jesus himself said, that is not for you to know. Acts chapter 1. The disciples who walked with him physically for three and a half years, those, Peter, you know, walked on the ocean, you know, cut off Malchus' ear, saw it restored.

All these people, you know, they were seeing the resurrected Lord. They said, what about when this? He said, that's not for you to know. Why do we think it's for us to know? All we are to do is to have the settled confidence.

We'll back it up from that in just a moment. The settled reality that it will happen. There will be a sudden fulfillment of the promise of God.

Now, people ask me, Pastor, do you think we're getting close to the end times? I tell them, I think the return of Christ is imminent. Imminent just is a great word of saying there is nothing left to happen in prophetic, biblical teaching that has to happen before he calls the church home.

Nothing. Nothing. There were things that were laid out in prophetic teaching that should have happened. The very last one would be the gathering together of the nation of Israel, that he would call a nation into existence that had not been a nation.

[30 : 46] And that happened a long time ago, by the way. And so that has already transpired. So there is nothing left remaining that must take place. It is imminent. There are a lot of markers that you could look throughout history and say, well, this, this, this, this, this, this, and this.

Paul's first two letters that he wrote, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, first two letters penned by the apostle Paul. Do you know that every chapter in 1 and 2 Thessalonians has a reference to the second coming of Christ?

His earliest writings, he refers to the second coming of Christ in every chapter. It's an impossibility to read those two letters and not consider the fact that at any moment Paul thought Christ could come.

Why? Because Jesus had said, I will come. You go all the way back to the book of Isaiah, the last two chapters of Isaiah. The last two chapters, what does it speak of?

That the day of the Lord will come, and this earth will be consumed with fire, and a new heavens and a new earth will be created where the lion and lamb will lay down together. So the last two chapters of the book of Isaiah speak of that day.

[31 : 55] Jesus, right before he left, said there will be a day, and the believers started accepting reality. There's coming a day. Here is the reality that we need to not be convinced of, but to be carrying a conviction of that there will be a sudden fulfillment of every promise of God.

And it could be at any moment because it is sudden. Do not be one of those who buys into this reality that, well, when I see things happening, I'll get my life straightened out.

He says it'll come like a thief in the night. Now, I have the benefit. Currently, we live 1,600 feet off the road. Just some of you have been to my house. I have no blinds. I have nothing in my house. Well, because we're 1,600 feet off the road, nobody can see in my house. If you come at night, I see your headlights. I see you long before you see me. Don't try to sneak into my house at night. Just don't. Okay? I know I'm a pastor, but don't. At that moment when I'm asleep, I'm a homeowner. Don't do it. The day of the Lord is not like that.

[33 : 05] It comes suddenly. In the flash of an eye. In a moment. Live with the conviction and it steadies your mind apart from the uncertainties.

It could be today. For I do not know. There is a sudden fulfillment of his promise.

So the question begs to be asked. What impact does this have on our daily living? If that is a truth, a conviction, a conviction that never moves you to action is just a collection of useless information. I've said that before. If you say, oh, pastor, I have this conviction. I have people that have come to me time and time again and say, pastor, I think we should do this. I say, that's great. Let's do it then.

Oh, pastor, I think we should do it. There's a lot of people that think we should do things. There's a lot of people that think these things sound good. But when somebody comes to me and says, pastor, I have to do this. Okay, then great. The other way is the latter that actually does them, not the former. Some people think things are a good idea.

[34:04] Other people have a conviction that they have to be the one who does it. When you're convinced of something, that's great. But when you have a conviction, when it has you to the core of your being, then you can't escape it because it's something you know you're supposed to do.

And a conviction that does not bring application really is nothing other than a collection of useless information because if you're not moving upon the convictions you have, you're not really convicted. I've never found anyone in scripture that had godly conviction and didn't do anything.

There was always a response. You either turn your back and walk away because you don't like the conviction and it makes you uncomfortable or you'll fall on your face and you'll cry out, woe is me because the conviction has reminded you of who you are.

But there's always a response. And so what does the word of God tell us? Sense. Sense. All these things.

You say, what things? All these things. Everything. Sense. All these things are to be destroyed with fire.

[35:15] I told you my favorite verse a few weeks back. I've written it down. There's a bulletin in the hallway if you go through the glass doors. The second one is actually between the Sunday school classroom and my office. There's a bulletin board there.

Write your favorite verse down. Write it on one of those things. Tack it to it. Mine's up there.

Deuteronomy 4.24 For the Lord our God is a consuming fire. He is a jealous God. And there will be a day when the consuming fire of God consumes all these things.

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, that is, burned up, consumed, consumed, what sort of people ought you to be?

ought you to be? ought you to be? So here's the application. Peter says, if this is true, and it is, then what impact does that have on your life?

What sort of people ought you to be? Since all these things are to be destroyed, that doesn't, you say, well, pastor, I guess that means I've got to throw everything in a barrel and just bury it or give it all away and not have anything and wander around in rags.

[36:31] No, maybe it means that we live with open hands and God, whatever you put there, I want to use for your glory, not only for my comfort. If I get comfort from it, great, that's awesome, that's magnificent, we appreciate that.

If I can appreciate it and enjoy it, thank you, Father, for allowing me to. But if not, and you want to move it, okay, then you can take it. What sort of people ought you to be? It doesn't tell us to get rid of everything, but look at what it says, in holy conduct and godliness.

So if there's anything of these things that are keeping you from holy conduct and godliness, if it is a hindrance to holy conduct and godliness, you can go ahead and set that on fire and burn it.

But if you can possess what you have and still live in holy conduct and godliness, then enjoy it as long as he allows you to. But if he ever puts his finger on it and says, I want you to get rid of that, then do not hesitate, get rid of it.

And I speak as one who had to get rid of things, a lot of things over the years and things that make people scratch their heads and say, why are you doing that? It's because I felt like he put his finger on it and since he put his finger on it, he wanted me to get rid of it, so I did.

[37:41] And what I have found is anything he puts his finger on for me to get rid of, he's got something better to replace it. Every time. But the moment I cling on to it, I say, no, I want that, I like that, I really enjoy that and I want to hold on to that and I try to hide it from him, that thing becomes miserable.

It's like in the book of Job where it says that they take their delicacies and they eat them and they chew them because it tastes so good but then it turns to the brood of vipers in their gut and they end up spewing it out and it makes them sick because they loved it and they wouldn't get rid of it and the more they held on to it, the more they chewed it, the more they enjoyed it, then all of a sudden it made them sick.

Why? Because what sort of people ought we to be in holy conduct and godliness? This is the impact it has on our daily lives. The conviction we have that his promise will come about should

impact our daily lives in every aspect, in every way that we think.

Lord, is this for your glory and holy conduct? Is this for my edification and godliness? Is this going to sanctify me and set me apart? What sort of people ought we to be?

But just so we understand, it's not all doom and gloom. We see the last thing and that is the anticipation of hope that is before us because we set our minds, we fix our minds to remain steadfast, not on the destruction.

[39:00] The destruction is not what keeps us steadfast because then we lean over to a nihilism where we say, well, all this is going to be burned up and let's just do whatever we want to do.

No, he's going to burn it up to bring about the new. Right? And it is the hope. It's the anticipation of the hope we have. So all these things, but according to his promise, what it says in verse 13, just as he has promised that the day of the Lord will come and in that promise there is a destruction of all these things, according to his promise, when they are destroyed, we, those who have been washed by the blood of the Lamb, we are looking for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

See that? That's the hope that when he burns this up, we get something better. When this is consumed, what we are giving far outweighs it.

And we would cry out like Paul, this momentary light affliction fails in comparison to the weight of glory and eternity. And we live where righteousness dwells.

What a hope. It is setting our mind and fixating our mind upon that anticipation, that promise that there will be a day where I will no longer be dispersed, but rather I will be called back home.

[40:36] There will no longer be a day where I will be a diaspora living among a people who are rebellious and living among a people who are rejecting, willingly rejecting the truth, but rather that I will be living in the land of glory in which righteousness will reign.

And all things are as they should be. It is the hope that is set before us. And it is that that steadies our mind.

It is that which keeps us living consistently in this life. For I do not expect righteousness to dwell eternally in this life, but rather there will be a day where righteousness dwells.

And what sort of person ought I to be in light of this reality? And it helps to fix my mind to be steadfast. What fix is yours?

What confidence do you have in the middle of the dispersion in this world? Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day.

[41:45] We're thankful that we can gather together with you. We're thankful for your word. And now we pray as we have heard a word from you that it would not be the word of man that would resonate within our hearts and minds, but it would be the very word of God that my opinions may be cast aside by your truth.

And Lord, that your truth would captivate us, that it would change us according to your purposes, and that you would get the greatest glory from the work that only you can do.

And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.