

Series: Clarity in Chaos; First Peter

The End of All Things is at Hand

Sermon by Lead Pastor Larry Renoe

First Peter 4:1-11

Waterstone Community Church, Littleton, Colorado

Sunday morning, November 3, 2024

Hi, my name is Kimmy Deeble, and I am the director of fifth and sixth grade in our kids' ministry. Thank you. We are going to do a reading today from First Peter chapter 4, verses 1-11: "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans used to do, living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry. They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you, but they will have to give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body but live according to God in regard to the spirit. The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and have a sober mind, so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever, amen," the word of the Lord.

Larry: Waterstone, the end is near, and of course, I am talking about the 2024 election cycle, so we are going to do what the apostle Paul has encouraged the church to do for the last two millennia as we submit to our governmental authorities, and that is pray. We are going to pray. What I have done is I have about three paragraphs, and we will cover the bases. In between the paragraphs, I am just going to leave some silence, and as the Spirit brings images or faces or your own struggles, pray those in the quiet, and let's lift our hearts to the Lord and pray for our nation.

We pray, Lord Jesus Christ, in this election season, we ask that you bring peace and unity to the American nation. We pray specifically against violence at political rallies, polling places, and post-election gatherings. By the favor of your providence and the power of your Spirit, we ask for safety and order to prevail.

We pray for our government and its leaders. We pray your kingdom come, your will be done. We pray that through this election, the American government will be strengthened, so that their authority, supervised from above, will continue providing conditions that enable the gospel of Jesus Christ to flourish and allow all people, especially the most vulnerable among us, those to whom Jesus is demonstrably drawn, to live in peace, liberty, and justice. Give governmental leaders wisdom and courage, unity and protection as they carry out their call to serve our country by creating solutions from Micah 6:8, to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

Lord of Heaven and Earth, you who reign over all things on November fifth and November sixth, we submit to you our thoughts, feelings, and frustrations about the candidates for whom we did not vote. May we look at them not with contempt, but as people made in your image. We pray for protection over all the candidates and their families. Give us the humility needed to pray for all people, not just those who look like us, live like us, or vote like us, and we remember before you now in prayer that the candidates we vote for are not our savior, but our hope rests in you, and we commit our nation to your care and your sovereignty. We commit ourselves, our anxieties and enmities, to your care and correction. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we say together, amen. Amen.

When I retire in February, I am going to miss Mondays more than Tuesdays, Mondays more than Tuesdays. Mondays is when I go to the Denver Seminary library and hide among the stacks of books, and I open the next text that I'm going to preach, and I say, "Come, Holy Spirit," and I saturate in that text, and I read all the commentaries, and then again, I say, "Come, Holy Spirit What does this text mean to the original readers?" and then, "Holy Spirit, how do we build a bridge from our early brothers and sisters to the brothers and sisters here at Waterstone?" It is an amazing experience and a partnership. I am going to miss that, not Tuesdays. Tuesdays are when you have to turn in your sermon title. The art of sermon titling is a misery for pastors. It can't be too boring, or no one is going to want to look at it or listen to it, but you can't oversell. I read of a church in Knoxville, Tennessee, for some strange reason the pastor decided, well, I know why he did it. He wanted people to show up in church. He entitled the sermon, "What's under the bed sheet?" and of course, more people than normal showed up on that Sunday. When the pastor took the platform, here come two ushers rolling a big white board out onto the platform under a bed sheet, and he lifted the bed sheet, and there was his sermon outline. How would you feel about that? Punked?

What would you entitle this sermon? The main theme is in First Peter 4, verse 7a: "The end of all things is near." What would your title be? I thought of a couple. I am a big Johnny Cash fan, the man in black. My favorite Johnny Cash song is, "God's going to cut you down." How is that? Maybe a little too intense. I thought of a title that I used when I was in, believe it or not, Waterstone youth ministry. I used to be a youth pastor back when I had hair and was skinny, and I entitled a sermon once on the second coming of Jesus, "Get right, or get left." Yeah, it sank quickly. How about this one? "End run." Are there any better ideas out there? "Walk the line." How about this? How about we stick to the text? How about "The end is near"? That is the title this morning. Do you believe in the end? Do you believe that Jesus is coming back again? I mean, what is all this business, like to make not only a personal appearance that we will each see Him with our own eyes when He breaks into our reality again, but even more, history as we know it will come to a close, the whole universe will be called into judgment, and the kingdom eternal and all made new will finally come when Jesus returns. The end is near.

Now, I don't know about you, but that is hard to believe. There are some plausibility issues, let's say, with it, not only because there are some embarrassing things in the ways that the church has handled this idea over the last two millennia. There are those who really think that the way to read Revelation, the book of Revelation, the last book in the New Testament, is that you start in the twenty-first century and force everything that scares you in the twenty-first century back into the book of Revelation in the first century and say, "That is what is happening." That is nothing more than just bad hermeneutics. That is a

bad way to interpret scripture, even though it sells millions and billions of books. It is a Christian version of pornography, and it should not be.

So, there are some embarrassing things about the way we have handled prophecy, but even more, I will confess it. It is just hard to believe that that is how it is going to end, that Jesus will just break into the skies on a cloud, and every human being will be raised up and brought to judgment. It does not much bend my behavior. I do not think about it all that much. How about you? Yet Jesus talked about his second coming a lot. He talked most about the kingdom of God, and He said, the first words out of his mouth in the gospel of Mark, “Repent and believe, for the kingdom of God is at hand,” like since Jesus now has come, that everything now has changed. “It is a devastating new reality now that I am here on Earth with you,” and then He went on to live the life we should have lived die the death we should have died and was raised again, so that now, where we left off last week in First Peter chapter 3, the very end, so now this is true because of his resurrection: “It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand, with angels, authorities and powers in submission to Him.” Catch this, all these last few weeks we have been talking about submitting to government authorities, submitting to each other in our marriages, submitting to our bosses. It is this life of submission that Jesus calls us to, but look where it lands with Jesus, “All power submitted to Him.” In his weakness and sacrifice, He conquered the world, and so what is true is that that lifestyle has now infected billions of people on the earth, and known as the church, this Christian movement, but there is still so much more to come, and when Jesus comes again, all things will be made new, and every person judged. Wow. Do we believe that?

I just want to experience for a minute or two what it would have been like to sit in a first century audience when Jesus was teaching and teaching specifically about how He is going to come again. I have chosen this text from the gospel of Mark, because Mark, who wrote the book, was a disciple of Peter, so you are getting Peter’s perspective a lot in the gospel of Mark, and obviously it affected Peter then, and then thirty years later, when he writes First and Second Peter, it is still on his mind. Let’s listen in to Jesus as He talks about his coming again: “and at that time, people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory, and He will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens, but about that day or hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard. Be alert. You do not know when that time will come. It is like a man going away. He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If He comes suddenly, do not let Him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone, watch.”

Are we watching? Do you believe the end is near? Waterstone, you’ve got mail. It is called First Peter. We have been working our way through it these past few weeks. The theme is First Peter 2 verse 12. Let’s read this together out loud. Would you join me? “Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us. That is the theme of First Peter, and the last couple of weeks we have been asking, “What are these good deeds? What does this good life look like?” and it is all about submission, as we have talked about, to our governmental authorities, submission to one another in marriage, and submission to our

authority structures at work and living that life of submission as a reflection of the Jesus lifestyle, and the Jesus lifestyle is the one that through sacrifice and the cross has now saved and will take over the world, and as we live that life, here is the hard part. If you look at verses three and four in the text that Kimmy read earlier, First Peter 4, three and four, it says that that lifestyle will not be all that well received. They will think that you and I are strange, and they will heap abuse on us. I like the old King James version there. He says, “There will be on you a flood of dissipation.” It will not be understood, the way we live, and it will not be well received. There will be mockery and scorn. Therefore, Peter says, what do we do? How do we have endurance and keep going when people think we are weird, and they do not understand us and maybe shun us on the easy side or persecute us on the hard side? What do we do?

Here is Peter’s counsel. Are you ready? Here is what you do. Remember this? “The end of all things is near.” The end of all things is near, so today we are going to unpack that sentence. What does it mean that the end of all things is near? Then we are going to ask, “How should we then live in light of the end?” That is our structure, so what is this idea of the end? Well, in the English language, the word, “end,” has two meanings. The one meaning is a chronology, like November fifth, the election will be finally done. It is the passing of time. It is a marker that you just wait for, wait for, wait for, and finally it comes. It is termination. It is a finish. That is one meaning. There is a second meaning of the word, “end,” in English, and it means not termination, but culmination, like a goal completed, like a time fulfilled. The end comes when everything is in play, and the goal is finished. So, it is this idea of purpose, that the purpose has been achieved.

Now in the time that Peter wrote and using the Greek language, the word “end” in our text in First Peter 4:7 means that second meaning more than the first. Of course they are related, many times usually involved, but Peter is talking about the end as in God’s mission will be complete. The mission will be reached, and all of God’s goals will happen, and when that occurs, Jesus comes. It is purposeful. The idea of it being near, again is not just Jesus is up there waiting till whatever day. He does not even know. He is waiting for the Father to say, “Okay, here is the day.” No, don’t. We can’t think of it that way, and here is where I am going to be like an ant trying to describe how the watermelon got to the picnic, I mean, a creature in time trying to talk about the infinite and how he relates to time. Remember that time itself is a creation, but Jesus, who is not in time because He is God, is not just sitting around waiting. Theologically, God has never waited for anything. He is outside of time, so it is not like Jesus is just standing there waiting to get the cue from the Father. No, what it means is that the end, Jesus, the approach is that this end should be moving into time, so that it is already influencing us. So, Revelation 1, verse 7. Here’s the end. The end is not a time. It is a person. Here is what’s going to happen when it happens: “Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all peoples on Earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be, amen.” Wow.

What shall we call that? It is a moment. Wow. “Every eye,” that means that there will be many who have been waiting for this for all their existence since they have come to know Jesus, and for everyone else, it will mean the last thing they ever wanted will happen, and they will see Jesus and be separated from Him and get what they want for the rest of their eternal existence. That is the end, and the end is approaching means it should be influencing us now. Again, it is not that Jesus is waiting for the time. He is with the promise of coming at the end, influencing time now by letting this moment impact us deeply.

We get a sense that there was some confusion the first time around, when Peter was talking about the end, because he wrote a second letter called Second Peter in which he addresses this even further, and he wants to clear up again this idea of the end, that it is not about time, but it is about God's mission being fulfilled while Jesus is getting ready to come back, so look at this in Second Peter chapter 3: "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends, with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." Again, it is not about time. God is not just waiting. "The Lord is not slow keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, He is patient with you." Here is the mission, "Not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance, but the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, and the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare, refined and made new."

So, what is this? Let's wrap this package up. What is the end? The end is this idea that Jesus is coming back again to judge the living and the dead and to bring a new heaven and the new Earth and all things made new. He is coming. He has come, and He is coming again. He is coming, but what is the wait? Well, the wait is not for God. It is this idea that even now, knowing that He is coming should influence the way we live now, towards what? Well towards seeing people come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. If there is a wait for us on our side, it is this, that Jesus wants more people to come to know Him. That is the mission right now.

A few years ago, I read about a theatrical production in Chicago of Shakespeare's Hamlet, and the play was progressing along, and they reached that climactic sword fight scene at the end of Hamlet, and everyone was doing their part. It was an amazing moment, when all of a sudden, Hamlet steps out of character towards the front of the stage and says, "Stop, stop," and all the actors stopped, freeze, a puzzled look on their face, and Hamlet says, "Someone has been hurt. Is there a doctor in the house?" And sure enough, what had happened was Hamlet's own dagger had flown from his hand and hit a lady down in one of the front rows right above the eye, and she was bleeding profusely. So, they stopped the play, they tended to her, and then when everything was cared for, when the woman was cared for, Hamlet's character, Hamlet called out again, "Places," and everyone got back into their where they left off, and then he said, "action," and the play went on to its dramatic conclusion. That is the idea of now. Right now, Jesus is at work to tend to troubled souls, and welcoming more and more into his kingdom through our efforts of sharing his word and being witness to who He is, but more and more are coming, but when that is full, as Jesus Himself said, when the elect from the four corners of the earth are all gathered, He will say, "Places, action," and the earth's dramatic conclusion will come.

Do you believe in the end? What is your eschatology, your study of last things? How do you think it is all going to go down? It is always a war of plausibility, right? The outside world looks at this idea of Jesus and coming back again as, "I could never believe that idea," but they have their own plausibility issues as well. How is their world going to end? I mean, do they die? Is that it? Do you die? You are done? At the end of time, some random force turns the sun off, and it is darkness, and you will never ever again be remembered, everything you have done forgotten? There is nothing after this life? That is hard to believe too, and it is certainly not how our soul is wired in terms of love and beauty. What rings true to your soul? Where is your evidence? Those are always the questions when it comes to plausibility contests. What rings true in your soul?

For a believer, it is not necessarily progress. It is not the idea that this election we are going to get every right person in office down to the dog catcher, and the new kingdom will come. It is not about the market. It is not about medical technology. It is not about a bustling economy. If we get all those things, do you really think that society, through human effort and progress, would one day become perfect, smarter and more loving? Is progress your savior? Is it some secular evolution, where you throw off any sense of God? Is that ultimately going to save you? Or could it be that there is evidence of two-thousand years of a man, Jesus, who taught that if you trust me, I will get you through the worst human problem you face, your impending death? You have to choose. What is your eschatology? Do you believe the end is near?

All right, that is the end. I mean, not of the message. Hold on, and by the way, we have communion after. The best part is always coming, right? If you believe in the end and that that end for you is Jesus, it is not a time, but it is a person, then how do you live? Two ways. Two things; you think better or differently, and you love deeper. You think differently, and you love deeper. So, let's look at chapter 4, verses one and two. We read, "Therefore, arm yourselves," remember the end of chapter 3, Christ's resurrection, of all things in submission to Him. "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves." The word, "arm," there, that is a Greek word that comes from the word, "tool," and it is often used in a context of thinking or mental activity. In other words, you are strategizing. You are thinking things through. It is a mental activity, "with the same attitude that Jesus had. Whoever suffers in the body is done with sin."

Now let me just say a word about that. It is confusing in English. What he is saying there is that if you decide to follow Jesus, and people think you are strange, and all that abuse is heaped on you, you are going to suffer. You are going to suffer in your body, but the point of that sentence there is, if you make that choice, it tells the world you are done with sin. You have made up your mind you are going to follow Jesus, even when it is hard. That is what it means there to be done with sin, and as a result they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God, and then it goes on to the next verses 3 and 4, it talks about the heaping of abuse, and then we go to verses 5 and 6 of First Peter 4, where we read this, "but they will have," those who are heaping abuse on believers, "they will have to give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead, for this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead." In other words, preached all the time, everywhere, "so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body." What that means is everyone dies. Every single human person is judged in the sense that they die, but live after death, according to God, in regard to the spirit.

What is the point here? The point is this, when a person decides that the end is near, and their end is Jesus, they give their life to Him, and they live in a certain way, the way He lived. They think differently. Okay, how so? Two ways. One, they realize that the people who are heaping abuse on them and making their lives difficult, whether through shunning or persecution, they are going to face judgment. They will be held accountable for the ways they are treating you, and you see that again and again in the book of Revelation. When we preached through Revelation a couple of years ago, it was stunning to me how often the martyrs are mentioned in the book of Revelation. God is fully aware of what you are suffering at the hands of people who despise you because you are a Christian, and that is true here in this room, but it is true globally for every believer who has lived. Justice, God will hold them accountable.

Then the second way that we think differently, so we give our vengeance to God, because they will face judgment, but the implication is that for us, we will not face judgment, and instead, we look forward to heaven. So that is the first way. We think differently. We understand that nothing that happens here is the last word. God gets the last word on every soul, those who are mistreating Christians, and Christians who look forward to the promise of heaven. We think differently. God wins.

Secondly, we love deeply. If you look at verse seven again, it says, “The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.” We pray together. Those two words are almost synonyms, “alert,” and “sober of mind.” It is the idea that prayer is a mental activity. It takes mental discipline. Let me say something really important. I know we all desire to have a better prayer life, all of us. It is that ongoing thing we want most, but sometimes it is so hard to figure out how to do it. Let me just say a statement. I think I heard D.A. Carson, a New Testament scholar in Chicago, say this once. He said, “We do not naturally drift to better habits of prayer.” It is true. I found that in my own life. You will not just sit around and say, “Okay, I am going to just, I am going to start praying better.” We like to think it were that way. No, if we want more prayer, which if you think about it, is the experience of eternity. It takes mental discipline. It takes work. Prayer is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it. It is work. It is as much work, communicating with God, as it is communicating in a marriage. I am not going to touch that anymore, but it always takes work to improve communication, and the same is true with God. Why would we think differently?

So let me just say this briefly. Praying together is one aspect of a loving church, praying for one another. I encourage you, I’ve reached the point where I think I have four sermons left here at Waterstone, and so I am going to say things now that are probably the last time I am going to have the opportunity to say it to you. Here is a big one. I hope and pray that Waterstone continues to be a church that prays the Psalms. Prayer, one Psalm a day. Read it out loud. Go through the Psalms. The Psalms are Jesus’ book given to us to teach us to pray, and the beauty of the Psalms and the way they work is half the Psalms are thanksgiving and praise psalms, and so they teach you how to express your heart to God when things are good in your life, and half the Psalms are lament and confession, and they teach you how to pray to God on the worst day of your life and your most shameful moment. The beauty of that is that sometimes there will be in your life as you pray one a day, where you are in the best spot you where could ever be in life, and it is a lament song. What is that about? That is teaching you to lament while things are good, because there is bound to come from trouble in your life, where you need to learn about lament before you actually need to lament. The same is true on the other side. There will be the worst days of your life you are in. You cannot even form a prayer, and one of those happy thanksgiving psalms commends to you, but what is that? That is a hope that this time, this day, the hardest day of your life, will not last forever. Waterstone, we need to pray the Psalms.

There is a great app out there that Jan and I use. It has been one of the great things. I know many of you use it. I want to say it one last time. It is called Lectio 365. Pull your phone out even now. It is an app. Go to your app place. Lectio 365, and you will spend ten minutes every day praying a Psalm. It is an amazing tool, and it teaches us to pray.

Really quickly, the other way we love deeply is not only to pray for each other, but then it says, “Love deeply,” and above all, love deeply. That word “deeply,” is the word “stretch.” It was used in ancient

Greece of stretching before your Olympic event. In other words, when the church is the church, they are always preparing to love, and Peter gives three specific stretches to do. The first one he says in verse 8, “Love covers a multitude of sins.” That is the idea of forgiveness. One of the things that the church has to become good at, it is our instinct, actually, if we have been forgiven by Jesus, is we to forgive one another. We do not let sins and broken relationships in this room pile up and pile up. You can be sure going through life that Christians will hurt you and disappoint you, and so one of the things we practice is forgiveness. What is forgiveness? Forgiveness is pulling a disagreement or a sin out of the middle of two people. One hurt the other, but you pull it out, and you both agree, “We will not have this in between us.” You understand that what that means is one of you, the one who has been hurt, is going to have to absorb the cost to do that, but that is what Christians do. Why? Because that is what Christ has done for us. Whatever was in the middle between us and God, Christ removed. He removed all sins at once. We are asked to do it one at a time with believers, and so we practice forgiveness. We own our piece of the pie, what we need to do in that relationship that’s been hurt, and we come together. Now do not misunderstand it. Usually, it does not mean that the friendship is restored automatically. It doesn’t mean there is immediate trust. Forgiveness and trust are different things. Nor does it mean that that relationship could be what it once was, but you take that sin out of the middle, and whatever the new relationship is to look like, there has to be a sense of peace, so what believers do is practice forgiveness. We do not let sins build up. I have said to people about Waterstone, I want it to be a church, not where we just keep the peace. Anyone can keep the peace, ignore sins. We want to be a place that makes peace, keeps short accounts, and practices forgiveness.

The second is hospitality. Peter says in verse 9, I love this, “Offer hospitality without grumbling.” In the ancient world, the way hospitality usually happened is that overnight, Christian guests would show up on your door and say, “Can we stay here tonight?” In the ancient world, you never wanted to stay in a hotel or a hostel, because they were known for two things, assault and theft, and so it was common in the ancient world, the lifeblood of the ancient church was hospitality, where believers would just show up on your doorstep, and you were expected to hold them overnight and to take care of them. That does not happen so much in our world, but do you know how it happens and how we practice hospitality without grumbling? Let me give you a scenario. You have an appointment with your hairdresser. You show up at the salon. You know because you have been with her a while that she is a believer, but today she begins to tell about something really hard that has happened in her life, and it is one of those afternoons where you have ten errands to do with six stops, and you notice that the more she starts talking and sharing what is happened in her life, the less her hands are on your hair and more in the air asking for help. Then you realize, show hospitality without grumbling, that what it means is you give the two greatest gifts you can give to another person, listening, unhurried listening, and prayer, and so you slow your heart down about those ten errands and six stops, and you practice hospitality, and you listen, and you pray. May we be a church of hospitality, because that says we believe the end is near.

Lastly, we believe the end is near because we serve one another, and verses 10 and 11, and we will be brief on this, but it is about spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts, as God has gifted every believer to have a part in the church and to serve in the church through words and through deeds. If you are wondering what place you can serve in a church, here is the way you should approach it. Go to Billy, Paul, Brooke Schmidt, Emily Clauss, any of our staff leaders, you should go to them and say, “Hey, where is the greatest need in

the church right now? Where can I go?” People often want to know what their spiritual gifts are. You know the best way to find it? Plug in anywhere and start serving, and you will gravitate to your gifts. The church will just move you along to where you should be serving.

So let me give you the place to start. It is called children’s ministry. Just a brief word, since the pandemic, that is the ministry that has been hurt the most. Our kids’ staff has such a difficult time finding volunteers to work in our kids’ world. That should not be. Do you know why? Because when Jesus was here with us, there were a number of different times that He stunned his disciples, but what He did is He is teaching away, all this adult world stuff going on, and all of a sudden a kid comes up to Jesus, and Jesus stops, and He puts the kid on his knee, and He says, “Do you want to know what the kingdom of God is like? Do you know that if you want to be part of the kingdom of God, you have to become like, can’t stand on one foot today, it is kids. Everything in the kingdom of God begins with kids. Jesus would be absolutely frustrated that, Waterstone is not alone, that churches can’t find people to work in kids’ world. It is a lack of vision. Most people come to Jesus between the ages of 0 and 12, and we stand around and say, “Oh I am not good with kids.” You can stand in a room and help kids get from one place to the other. We are not asking a lot, and Jesus would be especially unhappy about, “Oh well, I am done in five.” I am going to say it. “I am done in five weeks.” He would be so stunned if your answer to Him were, “Well, I did my time.” What? The main strategy of the church is to get the end nearer by winning more and more people to Christ, and the main strategy to do it is to work with kids, and you are saying you have done your time? Come on. No. Some of you need to sign up for kids’ world. All of you need to consider it. At least pray, “Lord, where do you want me?”

So, the end is near, of this sermon. The end is Jesus. Jesus has done everything so that we can approach Him. He has forgiven us. He has promised us hospitality in heaven. He has served us, so that we can now participate in his kingdom. He has given us prayer and communication. He has promised us heaven, and He has promised us justice on our enemies. He has given us everything, which is why, week after week, month after month, we come to his table, and we remember. Here is what is amazing about the fact that the end is near, Judgment Day. We are not afraid of it. We are not afraid of Judgment Day. Why? Because Jesus has taken our judgment. Do you know what a Christian is afraid of with regard to Judgment Day? We’re afraid that we will stand before Him and realize to what degree we have lived an unloving and ungrateful life, and so we come to his table today, confessing again our lack of love, our lack of gratitude, but even more, resting, resting that Jesus, through his sacrifice, has brought us home.

43:45 minutes

Edited by Tom Kenaston

Message #803