

Nearer Than When You Believed

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[0:00] Please, to Revelation, no, Romans chapter 13, they both start with an R, right? Romans chapter 13, so the first time I'm preaching, first time I've ever preached before, no.

Been a little bit, I'm glad for the opportunity once again to be here and to have an opportunity to be in this pulpit. Glad to see, as mentioned, that the pulpit's back in its place, as far as that goes, too. Had a grand day yesterday with the wedding, and that was a blessing. And I'm sure there are many, at least several in this auditorium this morning, that are glad they're on the other side of yesterday. So that part is over, all the, you know, everything that goes into it. So they're glad to be on this side of things. Thanks, as far as, as well as the couple in speaking of as well.

Listening this morning for Sunday School, if you're here for Sunday School, you found out that this world is not getting any better, is it?

[1:12] It's not getting, it's not good and getting gooder. It's evil and getting eviler. And I misspoke on purpose. That's just to see whether you're going to be listening to me or not. I don't mean to offend your ears if you are an English major or anything like that whatsoever.

This place is, we're living in crazy times. Crazy times. Who would have thought that you'd have borders, but you wouldn't have borders?

You'd have borders, but you'd just open and wide up a sieve and whatever else. That you could, you could have people come into the border and you could, you could have a government officials that would take more care of them or give them more benefits than you do those that are hardworking individuals that are citizens of the country.

It's a crazy place. Who would have thought you couldn't add up one and one and get two as far as genders go? Who would have thought that you'd have this? Well, how many are there?

Well, who knows? It keeps, it's fluid. It keeps changing. I don't know about that. That's a crazy, and who would have thought you'd have people in the, supposedly that, you know, sign them, you know, name to a Hippocratical oath and that are there for the help and well-being of people and yet would mutilate little bodies?

[2:32] Who would have thought? Who would have thought? Who would have thought we'd be in a time with, you know, whether you want to call it global warming or climate change or whatever else, who would have thought that you'd be in a, and sorry about this again, I know you're Californians, but I live in Idaho.

It's a free state. And, sorry, sorry about that. But I'm on the outside. I'm on the outside looking in. And, but who would have thought you'd have a governor that would say things like, you know, you'd want to push electric cars, but then you want to say, well, hold back on your electricity because, you know, you know, maybe put your temperature of your house up a little higher in the summertime so you don't use so much of it.

But yet you push electric cars. Who would have thought that with all this global warming, you get sucked into that, that where did the global warming come from, you know, centuries ago in the Middle Ages or before that when there was a period of global warming?

I just wonder how many internal combustion vehicles there were around there polluting and who was leaving their carbon footprint back then. I don't know.

Anyway, it's just a crazy place. And I know in the past, a couple of times when I've been here and preached, I preached a couple of different messages. I thought back on it. I preached the message on hope is perished.

[3:52] I preached another message on joy is withered. And they weren't my words. They were from the Word of God. And, you know, if you get your eyes on the wrong place, such as mentioning news and everything else and emphasizing the things I already spoke about, and if you keep yourself from the right things, then your hope will perish and your joy will wither.

But, you know, that's not what I want to talk about today whatsoever. I want to flip the script. Do you mind if I do that? I want to flip the script. In fact, I loved the couple of all the songs that we sang this morning, but I loved a couple of them that we sang in particular because it has to do with what I want to talk about today.

You know, something's coming in the future for every born-again child of God. I don't know the group that's here. I mean, I've met many of you through the last couple of years that we've been coming and going.

Obviously, since the last time we were here a little over a year ago, there are new people, new folk that are here that have never seen me before or heard me preach or whatever. So I don't know you, but I don't know if everybody here is born again.

I don't know if everybody here is saved. I don't know if everybody here knows Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. I hope that's the case, but I don't know that to be the case myself.

[5:13] I didn't talk to my son beforehand and say, now, Pastor, are there any lost people here today? I didn't ask him that. I didn't ask him about your spiritual condition either whatsoever.

I haven't talked to him at all about you as a congregation or individuals. But if you're saved, then I trust and hope that you'll be able to appreciate what we're going to talk about today. If you are not saved and you don't know Jesus Christ as your Savior, you don't know that your sins are forgiven and you're not washed in the blood of Christ, then I do hope and pray that you think about what we're going to be talking about this morning.

Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer. Our Father and our God, we want to thank you for your mercy to us. We want to thank you for your kindness to us. Lord, I want to thank you for your grace in saving our souls.

And Lord, if there be somebody here this morning that is not saved, not sure that their sins have been washed away, that they have forgiveness, not sure that if they were to die, they would go to heaven and meet you for all eternity, then Lord, I do ask and pray that something would be said today to sort of jog their mind and thoughts to cause them to flee to Jesus Christ, to get in under the shadow of the cross of Christ.

Lord, for those of us that are saved, ask, Father, that we think about the things we're going to talk about this morning and realize that this is what your plan is for us.

[6:42] This is what is on the menu, so to speak. This is a planned event that we're looking forward to, anticipating, and hopefully just longing to be there.

And I pray you'll bless. Now help us to get excited. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. All right. So I'm in the book of... By the way, what I want to talk about this morning has to do with an event that's going to take place one day.

For every born-again child of God, no matter how young you are in the Lord, how old you are in the Lord, whatever the case is, if you're saved, this is what's going to happen.

One day you're going to see Christ. One day you're going to be like Christ. And one day you're going to be forever with Christ. To me, those are three parts of what the Bible calls the blessed hope.

Now I dissect that. I know one day I'm going to meet Jesus Christ. Now it could be by death or it could be by the rapture. One day we're going to see Christ.

[7:48] Eyeball to eyeball. Face to face. One day we're going to become like Christ. And we're going to be with Him forever and ever and ever.

That's what's on our calendar. And look at what Paul says here. We're going to start in verse 11. I'll read to the end. Well, no, we'll just read verse 11 to start out. And Paul says this, You get a little groggy in the world, a little lethargic in the world.

It's, you know, shake those cobwebs off, so to speaking. For look what he says at the end of verse 11. For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Now, you know, when Paul says that, he's not saying something like we're growing into salvation. You know, our salvation is nearer as if we're not saved.

Paul had a know-so salvation, not a hope-so salvation. Okay? Paul knew he was saved. He wasn't saying, he wasn't like somebody in the world saying, I'm working my way to heaven, and I won't know until I die that I'm going to be there or not be there, etc.

[9:07] That's not what Paul's talking about here whatsoever. In fact, I won't have you turn, but let me give you a verse reference. You can jot down if you choose. There's a great place.

You know, a lot of people say this. You can't know you're going to heaven. You can't know. Well, of course you can. I agree with you completely. But I came out of Roman Catholicism.

And when we were in Poland for almost 20 years as missionaries, that we were surrounded by, you know, 98, 99% Roman Catholic. And I know just across the border, as your pastor referenced, you know, Mexico immersed in Roman Catholicism.

I understand all that. But when I was dealing with whether it be family members in the past or whether it be a polls or whoever the case is, and they would say things, well, that's what they, Catholicism calls the sin of presumption, to presume that you are worthy of going to heaven and that you could know it now.

My wife's parents, my in-laws, they spoke in those types of terms. You can't know that. That's, you're presuming something. No, I'm not. I'm simply taking God at his word.

[10:22] And, you know, here's something that Paul said. I mean, if I'm presuming it, then I guess Paul presumed it also. Because he said this in 2 Timothy 1, verse 9, speaking about God in the context, and he said, Who hath saved us?

Wait a minute, Paul. Do you mean to tell me you're a saved man? That's what he said. Who hath saved us? Past tense. Saved us.

There was a wedding here yesterday. Past tense. Not Friday, there will be a wedding here. Saturday. But no, now it's Sunday.

So there was. That's past tense. What does that mean? It means it already happened, right? So if Paul says he hath saved us, guess what already happened? He was already saved.

He called upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he got saved. So when Paul says here, Now is our salvation, he's not talking about the fact of getting his sins forgiven, is getting closer, being redeemed is closer, or reconciled is closer.

[11:35] No. What he's saying is, The completion of my salvation is nearer than when I first believed. The fulfillment of my salvation is nearer than when I believed.

The realization of my salvation is nearer now, Paul said, than when I first believed. You know, it matters not how long you've been saved.

You could say to me, Well, hey, brother, I got saved a month ago. Bless God, you're one month closer to the realization and the completion, the fulfillment of your salvation.

One month closer. You say, Well, I got saved, I got saved six months ago. Well, bless God, you're six months closer. I got saved a year ago. You're a year closer.

Five years ago. You're five years closer. Ten years. You're ten years closer. I got saved, hold on your hats, 52 years ago.

[12:37] Last month. Yeah, I know. I don't even look that old, do I? In my dreams. 52 years ago, in January, I got saved.

And you say, Well, what about it? Well, I'm 52 years closer. Hey, the Lord hasn't come yet. I'm still alive. So what does that mean? It means I'm 52 years closer to the realization of my salvation, the completion and fulfillment of my salvation.

For now, is my salvation 52 years closer to me than when I first believed? That's what that verse is saying. And you can put your time frame in there, however it is, however long ago you got saved. It's the event on our calendar. And again, as I said, whether it's by death, we go one by one, or it's by rapture, and all of us that are saved get to go together.

And I, for one, if you don't mind, like the latter. I like the latter, not the former. I've seen many people go one by one. People that I know, friends, people in the ministry, et cetera.

[13:54] But I'd like to go together, collectively together. I'd like my whole family that's saved, because I have family members that aren't, but my whole family that's saved, I'd like us to go back together, go all, go up together.

I'd like us to be able to look across the thousands of miles that may distance us. We've got kids, missionaries over in Nepal. We've got family up in northern Idaho, and of course, Toby and his family down here, and wherever the case is, and I'd like us, hear that shout, hear that trump, and the call, come up hither, and look through, and see, hey, look, they're going up too.

Hey, look, they're going up too. Hey, they're going up too. Hey, glory to God. Woo! I got saved reading a book on Bible prophecy.

January 1972. Glacery Planet Earth, Hal Lindsey, was popular at the time. I read that. I got convicted.

I found out that there were things in the Bible that I had no clue of because, of course, it sat on a shelf. There was a Bible in our house, but that's, it was just on a shelf. God saved my soul.

[15:21] From the very beginning, I believed in the rapture. I believed the great tribulations coming, the Antichrist, everything else. Listen, let me talk to you about, I'm going to do something this morning that I don't do when I preach.

I don't give you the outline when I preach. I don't give it to you ahead of time because then you might scribble it down and say, okay, I can leave. I already know what he's talking about. I'm going to leave.

I said, but I'm going to do that today. I'm going to take a chance that you'll stick around. So I want to talk about three things in regards to this because I think, you know, when we deal with major events in our life, I think we can divide it into three areas.

Whatever the case is, we'll talk about a couple of those in a moment. I think there's a preparation for the event that's coming, a preparation. You get ready for it. There's the anticipation of the event and then there's the realization of the event.

For instance, yesterday there was a wedding. There was preparation for that wedding for months, weeks, days, leading up to it, right?

[16:31] Preparation. The food that was eaten yesterday here just didn't all of a sudden come out of nowhere. You know, just getting things, putting things up and getting tables set up and all that and just the whole idea, the process.

I mean, Ashley didn't just all of a sudden look in her wardrobe and say, what dress am I going to wear today and pull out this white one? And Samuel didn't all of a sudden just say, well, what suit am I going to wear today?

I mean, there was preparation and, you know, there's a ring and everything else and plans and they didn't just decide to go down to San Diego without making preparations. Every aspect of it had preparation but also, at the same time, there's anticipation.

Mom and dad are saying, yeah, I want that day after. That anticipation. But there's that, there's that lead up. There's, for a couple as far as a wedding goes and you can look back, those of you that are married, those of us that are married here, there's that anticipation.

Hey, I'm going to spend my life with that girl. She's going to spend her life with this boy. And, in, next month, we'll celebrate our 50th anniversary.

[17:47] There's that anticipation of that event that we're going to get there and we're going to say, I do, et cetera. And then, of course, you get to the day. There's a realization of it. That all the planning is coming to fruition.

All the anticipation, anticipation, it's the day. Today, I don't go home and sleep in my bed with mom and dad at mom and dad's house.

Tonight, I take my wife on our life's journey. There's that, there's that realization of saying the vows that were stated right here.

I do, I do, et cetera. All of that. And then, every event in life is that way. I mean, when you think about a schooling, you think about whether it's high school or a trade school or whether it's college or whether it's a Bible school, whatever the case is, you have all those three involved. You have the preparation, right? Going to classes, studying, taking tests. You have all that preparation. You have that anticipation.

[18:56] Oh, I want to get over this. Oh, I want to get to that place. I want to finish. I want to get to the end of the four years of high school or the four years of college or however many years in a trade or Bible school or whatever the case is.

And then there's that, you know, just that anticipation and then there's a realization. And you get there and one day, all of a sudden, you leave with a diploma and you say, it's over. But then life starts if it's high school or college or whatever.

How about holidays? Holidays the same way. Christmas, for instance, let's just pick one. I'm not going to pick Hallmark, Holiday, you know, Valentine's or whatever.

I'm not going to pick Halloween. That's getting bigger and bigger all the time. But let's go to Christmas. How many of you have Christmas? There's always preparation, right? All right, get out. All the ornaments and different things that are going on and different things all over the house and the tree and everything else and the presents and whatnot.

There's this preparation and then there's the anticipation, especially if you're on the younger side. But hey, let me ask, who doesn't mind getting a present? Who doesn't mind opening up a present?

[20:09] You're never too old for that. So, but there's that anticipation, especially when they're kids and then there's a realization. Okay, hey, it's Christmas, et cetera. You know, all those things fill, they fall in line the same way.

So, first of all, let's talk about the preparation for this day. Every event that we talk about, whether it's a wedding, whether it's a graduation, whether it's a holiday, it all has, there's a time frame.

It fits on a calendar sometime. There's a time frame, there's a date that you can anticipate.

December 25th, okay, or yesterday happened to be February 17th for a wedding.

Graduation could be whenever, you know, the end of May or into June or whatever the case is. But for the coming of the Lord, for seeing Him, does death have a, do you have a spot on your calendar where the Lord said, okay, you're going to die this day?

We don't have that. Do you have a date on the calendar that can say, okay, the rapture's going to take place here? We can't do that either. We don't know when it's going to happen. We have no clue.

[21:19] There's no dating for the rapture. People have tried to date the rapture, but they've been wrong. 88 reasons why the Lord will come back in 1988. Guess what?

You had to come out with 89 for 1999 because He didn't come in 88, et cetera. I mean, that was way back in the years, you know, when I was saved, growing up, and whatever else in the Lord, and you come up with us dating the rapture.

There's no telling. When's the Lord coming back? I don't know. When are we going to pass away? I don't know. And I tell you what, you know what? If we knew when the Lord would come back, would that benefit you?

If you knew when the Lord was coming back, would that benefit you? If you knew when you were going to die, would that scare you? I don't know. Where's the benefit with knowing those dates? You know, what it does, because of our nature, probably we get very complacent and procrastinate. If you knew the Lord was coming back in five years, I hope it's before that, but if you knew the Lord was coming back in five years, what would your tendency be to do?

[22:27] You know what our nature is? We have like, oh, I can do what I want to do for the next one, two, whatever years. And then, as we get closer, I'll switch things around and I'll get, isn't that what kids do when they're young?

Well, I've got my whole life to serve the Lord. I'll just go ahead and do what I want to do now and then later on, I'll get right and serve the Lord. Well, that's our nature. That's human nature.

We get complacent or procrastinate. So, having a date isn't really going to help us one way or the other. How are you going to prepare to meet God? For a wedding, okay, you know what has to be done to make preparation.

For a graduation, you understand what's required. For a holiday, we can understand, but preparing to meet God? How do you prepare to meet God?

I want to take your, if you take your Bible and go to Titus. We're in Romans. Go to Titus, please. And actually, I'd like you to go to Titus chapter 2 and if you will, also go to 1 John.

[23:30] Titus chapter 2 and then also 1 John. We're going to look at Titus chapter 2 first and then we're going to look at 1 John.

But I want to say this, our very simple thing, one word actually, I'm going to answer that question. How are you going to prepare to meet God? Sanctification. Sanctification.

In other words, your daily walk with the Lord. That's how we prepare to meet God. Our daily walk with the Lord. What, if you will do today what God wants you to do today, guess what?

Tomorrow will take care of itself. If you'll do this week what God wants you to do this week, next week will take care of itself. If you'll do this month or this year what God would have you to do this month or this year, your future takes care of itself.

It falls in place. Our problem is we don't do what we need to do today and then we worry about tomorrow. We fret about tomorrow. Just do what you're supposed to do.

[24:42] Do what God would have you to do today. Listen, whatever walk you find yourself in today, just keep fulfilling it. Whatever vocation you have or whatever calling you have in life that where you see yourself today, just fulfill it to the best of your ability.

For instance, if you're a student, be the best student you can be. If you have a vocation and you're out in the work of day world, then do the best job that you can do.

If you find yourself to be a husband or a wife, be the best husband or wife. If you find yourself to be a mom or a dad, be the best mom or dad. If you find yourself that you're younger and you're a child in a family, a son or daughter, then be the best son or daughter you can be.

That's how you prepare to meet God. Make that preparation. Look what we have here in Titus chapter 2. Titus chapter 2, we'll start verse 11 and 12.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us. So if you're saved, this is what the grace of God does that brings salvation to you.

[25:57] It teaches you this. Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. That's what God would have us do.

Our daily sanctification. What God would have us do today. In other words, Galatians chapter 5, 16 says this. It said, walk in the spirit, you'll not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

So what does God, how can I prepare to meet God? Walk in the spirit. Walk in the spirit. Because if you do that, you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh.

In other words, as your pastor read in Ephesians chapter 4, put on the new man. Put off the old man. I likened it, when I was over in Poland, and teaching about the old and new man, et cetera, I'd have two sport coats.

I'd have one, an older sport coat, and I'd say, what you have to do is take off the old man, and I'd take my sport coat off, just throw it off to the side. And then I'd reach over, and I'd reach over and pick out a different one, a newer sport coat, and then I'd take that, and I'd put that on and put on the new man.

[27:10] You've got to throw off the, you can't put the old man, or the new man, on top of the old man. I mean, I'd look a little foolish here if I put on a sport coat over this one, wouldn't I? Look a little silly.

Take that old man off, and then put that new man on. Don't fulfill the lust of the flesh, walk in the spirit. That's what God will have us to do.

It's the same thing that, you know, when Jesus talked about being his disciple, that we're to deny ourself, and take up his cross, and follow him. That's what we're to do.

Go over to 1 John, please. I asked you to turn to 1 John, if you have already, chapter 3. And look at verse 3. Every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.

So that daily purification. So what hope is he talking about? Well, look back at verse 2. 1 John 3, 2.

[28:09] Beloved, now are we the sons of God. And it doesn't, can you imagine that? If you're saved, you're a son of God. If you're saved, you're a son of God.

Well, you can see I'm a woman. But if you're saved, you're a son of God. You're a son of God. Think of that.

Just let that seep in for a little bit. I'm a child of God. Hallelujah. Don't be conformed to the world. Be transformed. We heard about that this morning as well. By the renewing of your mind. I'm a child of God. Hallelujah. It does not yet appear what we shall be.

But we know. Wait a minute, John. You just said it doesn't appear what we shall be. But now you're saying, but we know when he shall appear, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.

[29:15] Well, what does he mean? It kind of sounds like a contradiction. It doesn't appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears, we'll be like him. Well, listen, you got up this morning.

How many of you, I don't like to do this all the time, but just for a show of hands, how many of you looked in a mirror this morning? All right. Sure. We all did.

When you looked in that mirror, does that appear to you looking in the mirror, seeing the reflection, did it appear to you what you're going to be in the future when you get to heaven? It doesn't mean I can look at pictures of what I used to look like.

My wife can look at pictures of the guy she married and look at me today and said, does that, do I appear what I'm going to, do I appear now looking in the mirror what I'm going to be like in heaven? No. So I think that's what he's talking about. It doesn't appear. When we look at ourselves, when we see ourselves, when we see ourselves in the mirror, we can't see what we're going to be. But we know, based upon the word of God, we're going to be like him.

[30:30] This doesn't look like him. This guy's getting older by the minute. But the new man inside is going to be just like him one day.

That's the hope that we have in us. And because we have that hope in us, not, you know, Las Vegas hope. It's not, you know, throw the dice and hoping, wishing.

No. It's a concrete, solid, certain expectation. That's what Bible hope is. Bible words sometimes don't have the same meaning that used in the world.

The same word in the world doesn't mean the same thing sometimes as the word of God uses it. I have a hope. It's a sure thing. And because I have that hope in me, I want to purify myself even as he is pure.

So what do I need to do? And we're talking about our daily walk. My daily walk with God should be my priority. Daily, I need to put off the old man.

[31:40] Daily, I need to renew my mind. I need to put on the new man. Daily, I need to be reading this book. Daily, I need to be praying to God.

Daily, I need to maintain a witness and a testimony in this lost world. Daily, I want to try to conform to the image of his son. Daily, I need to resist the temptation and the devil and sin in my life.

As often as the church doors are open, I need to be there. As often as the church has ministry opportunities like the door hanging or ladies meeting or special services, I need to be there.

That's how I prepare myself. Another verse we need to see, look back at chapter 2 of this same location. We're in 1 John chapter 2, look at verse 28. And now little children abide in him, that when he shall appear, that's what we're talking about in chapter 3 verse 2, when he appears, we're going to be like him, but look at this.

When he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. Oh man, we don't want to be ashamed when we see the Lord.

[32:52] We need to have preparation. I mean, if you get to the place where it's at the end of your course of studies and you found out that you didn't prepare to take the finals and you fail, guess what?

You're going to be, you're just going to be ashamed that you spent all this time and then you failed and you're not going to get the diploma. You get to a wedding service and then they fumble along and say, well, we didn't buy any rings.

How can we exchange rings? Or whatever the case is. You get to a Christmas day and you find out, oh, I forgot to buy their presents. Well, that'd be pretty sad and sorry.

How much, how sad and sorry would it be we get to be and meet the Lord and we say, have I done my best for Jesus? And we sit there and say, no, not really.

That'd be a sad day, wouldn't it? That'd be a sorry day. Are you making preparations to meet the Lord? Are you consciously preparing for that day?

[33:59] It's coming. Is it tomorrow? Unfortunately, just a little over a month ago, my wife and I were in Arizona for just a little bit at a break from the Bible Institute that I teach in up in Idaho and I got a phone call from my sister and my brother, my older brother passed away.

Suddenly, he and his wife were in a supermarket and he was by himself in an aisle and he keeled over and had a heart attack right there. Unexpected.

He woke up that morning not knowing he would be in eternity that night. Just got a talk, just this morning, I was texting with a fellow in my Sunday school class that is having an operation this Friday and he thanked me for the idea of praying for him and then he just mentioned something else came up and he said a younger sister of his in Canada just died suddenly last night.

I mean, we have no guarantee tomorrow will be there for us. What do we? We don't know. We don't know that the rapture couldn't take place right now. Are you making conscious preparation to meet him?

Another thing, go to 2 Timothy, please, 2 Timothy chapter 4. A second thing is our anticipation of that day. Are you anticipating it? Are you looking forward to it? Jesus is coming again.

[35:33] Are you excited about it? Look what it says here in chapter 4, what Paul said in verse 8. 2 Timothy 4, 8 says this, Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Jesus is going to appear one day, come for us and take us home to be with him in glory. One day you might see him before that again as I mentioned by death. But whatever the case is, whatever it is that happens, one day you're going to see him.

Do you love his appearing? Are you longing for, thinking about, looking forward to, you know the Bible is filled with these terminology. In Titus 2, 13, right where we were before, it says, talking about, you know, the idea that we're, you know, we're to turn away from this world and live righteously, soberly, etc.

in this life. Then it says, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Looking for that blessed hope. Paul says this, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in 1 Corinthians 1.

1 Thessalonians 1, he says, how you turn to God from idols, to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven. Philippians 3 says, for our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[37:02] Paul says, we should be looking for him, we should be waiting for him, we should love his appearing. I have a granddaughter that I'm eyeballing right now and she has an affection for a particular holiday and she could listen to the music of that particular holiday all year long.

Christmas. Talking about Sarah and she knows and her whole family knows it. she could listen to Christmas music any day, every day, 24-7, 365 a year.

She likes Christmas. I joked with her yesterday that if the Lord tarries and if she should be so fortunate and desires and ends up walking down an aisle like Ashley did yesterday, that she's not going to have somebody play Here Comes the Bride or anything else.

She's going to have somebody play Hark the Herald Angels Sing. She loves Christmas music.

There's nothing wrong with that. I mean, I think it's a little strange, a little odd, but that's okay.

That's okay. Everybody can have their little niche in life. But you know, here's the thing. Do you love the Lord's appearing like she loves Christmas music? Are you waiting for His coming?

[38:32] Are you looking and longing for His coming? Listen, if kids think about Christmas time, little kids, it gets closer and closer and closer. It's on their mind all the time.

They go to bed thinking about Christmas. They get up thinking about Christmas. They look, especially if you have the tree and presents under the tree and if they were like ours, especially our youngest who's not here but was here about a month ago.

Go look at the presents and see where their name is and then take them and jiggle them and I'm sure our son probably did the same thing. Go around the backside see if there's any over there where their name is.

Why? Because you get, you know, kids get obsessed with things about Christmas. Can I ask you this? Are you obsessed with the Lord's coming? It's happening.

It's on our calendar. You can't hold back, you know, Father time. It's coming. Death or the rapture. We're going to meet the Lord.

[39:35] We're going to be like the Lord and we're going to be with the Lord forever and ever and ever. Does that excite you? Are you preparing for it?

Are you excited about the thought of it? Is it constantly on your mind? A third thing and this will be the last and that is simply this, the realization of that day.

Realization in this context can mean the fulfillment or achievement of something desired or anticipated. So whether by rapture or death, the realization of this day will be the culmination of all of our preparation.

It'll be the realization of everything that we've desired or anticipated. One day we will experience the completion of our salvation. We've read about it.

We've thought about it. We've preached about it. But one day it's going to happen. We will see the Lord, etc. You know, we read verses like in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 6 talks about being seated in heavenly places.

[40:43] But here we are seated or we sit around here or whatever else and it's like, well, it's, yeah, it's a doctrine. But guess what? It will be a reality one day.

We will be seated in heavenly places and we'll look at each other in heaven, seated around and seeing our Savior off to our side.

And we'll remember back to when we heard a message or thought about being seated in heavenly places and it will be a reality. We talk about and we read about the fact that we have the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Doctrinal truth. We've been justified, right? But one day it will no longer simply be a theological doctrine or fact. It'll be fact. It'll be experience.

We will have the righteousness of Christ. being like him and seeing him as he is won't just be a wonderful blessed hope.

[41:48] It'll again become, I would call it from my past drug days a mind-blowing transformation. It'll blow our mind. Whether it's by death for me to live is Christ, to die is gain.

Or whether it be by rapture, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

One day it's going to be a reality. And guess what? You're not going to be disappointed. You're not going to be disappointed. You know, sometimes we can set our minds on things and they disappoint us.

You can think about Christmas time. Did you ever get disappointed at the present? You open it up like, oh yeah, we all do that. I think we bought something for our son.

And he opened it up and thought, and he traded. I heard he traded with his son. A bearish shirt, Chicago bearish shirt, nothing quite colored scheme that he thought.

[42:58] But hey, that happens. Things happen. Like we get disappointed. You go on vacation and you know what? You come back and they say, hey, how was your vacation? Well, you know, didn't live up to your expectation.

Do you think this day is going to meet your expectations? Do you think you're going to get up there and go, eh, it's not quite what I thought it would be. Come on.

You're in heaven. You're surrounded. You're surrounded in the throne of God. You're in a place where it's unbelievably holy and righteous and pure.

And no man, no evil, as we learned about in Sunday school, no evil, no wickedness, no iniquity is going to dwell there whatsoever. Amen. Amen. If you'll allow me, I know where I'm at.

I know this is not Chicago Bear country. It's okay. I don't blame you for that. No. They've been on the losing end for a long time.

[44:07] But I go back. I go back. I go back to the 85 Bears. The last time they won the Super Bowl. And Toby was a young guy, probably around second grade, somewhere in there at that time.

We had a deal. Staying up late to watch a game beyond Monday Night Football, Bears beyond, we had a deal. When you get home from school, do your homework, take a nap, and then I'll get you up at something time and then you can stay up with Dad and watch the game.

Because being on the East Coast, they'd be going until 11, 30, 12, whatever else. Anyway, so the 85 Bears win it all. They were like 15 and 1 at the time. And then they go to the Super Bowl and two teams to shut out.

And at that point when they beat the New England Patriots, I think, I don't remember exactly, 46 to 10. But at that point, it was the largest discrepancy as far as, you know, the losing and winning team for score.

But they had a great running back, Walter Payton. You might have heard of his name. A great Hall of Fame running back. Carried the team for many years.

[45:18] Anyway, they win the game and at the end of the game, and I remember seeing this picture as they panned the locker room and all, here's Walter Payton sitting off to the side by himself.

Sulking. I mean, all he ever wanted to do is be on a winning team, win the Super Bowl. He's on a winning team, they win the Super Bowl, and he's sulking.

How come? Well, he didn't get to score a touchdown. Well, they had other guys, if you remember the name Refrigerator Perry, score a touchdown, and he didn't.

He got to the pinnacle of his career and he was disappointed. What is that? But that happens all around. You have a town filled with Hollywoodites that are disappointed with life.

They've reached a pinnacle in their life, money, fame, all that kind of stuff, and it's like, this is all there is? Is that all there is? Boy, I tell you what, when you get the glory there, all your expectations will be met and they will be exceeded.

[46:30] If I can, let me try to paint you a little picture. Now, remember now, you're going to be up in glory. Now, I'm not going to be doctrinal about this, whether it's at the rapture or if it's a little bit later time, but you're going to be changed somewhere, sometime.

You may be there in glory and not realize the change that has come over you, that you possess immortality, that you are sinlessly perfect.

You may not be aware of that. It may not dawn on you that you have not had any sinful thoughts go through your mind. It may not dawn on you that no matter how old you are in this life, when the rapture takes place, that you have some type of a mature but a youthful energy that you did not possess when you last walked this earth.

You have immortality. You're up there in glory and of course around the throne as you read Revelation chapter 4 and you realize there's the 4 and 20 elders, there's the 4 beasts and it's all there.

And because of these things that are happening to you, you realize that all of your senses, your perception, your awareness are all heightened. Unfortunately, make a carried over like being on some type of a drug that everything is every second you're aware of, everything you're aware of.

[48:07] What you see and hear exceeds any earthly sights and sounds. Everything is new. Everything's unique.

Everything's extraordinary. But guess what? Nothing seems strange to you. Everything's different. Everything's unusual and inexplicably you feel comfortable.

Everything's unfamiliar. Everything's beyond comparison. And yet you feel like you're at home. Four things.

I believe you become overwhelmed at some point about the presence of a pure absolute holiness. holiness. And you fall down on your knees in adoration and worship and praise.

Just like the Bible says about in Isaiah 6, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. A third, second thing I believe is you're on your knees and sensing that unbelievable pure holiness, tears of utter joy will just flow down your cheeks.

[49:29] Joy. Bible says that in thy presence is fullness of joy. And be like 1 Peter says, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

A third thing, I believe also some wave of love will just flood over you. Overwhelm you and feel your soul immersed in an ocean of love for God is love.

Unconditional love. I am accepted completely. I belong completely. I am loved completely.

And a fourth thing, at some point you get up the courage to look up and you see before yourself a pure white radiating light.

The one sitting on the throne. Bible says, His countenance was as a sun shineth in his strength, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto whom no man hath seen nor can see.

[50:43] You're in heaven. You're before the throne of God. And you're experiencing your first moments in heaven, your first moments in God's presence.

You're finally home and it's only the beginning of an eternal permanent dwelling with God in glory.

Think there would be any disappointments? I think the only possible regret you could have is this.

I didn't do as much as I could have. I didn't do everything I could have for the Lord. For now, is your salvation nearer than when we believed?

Each day, one step closer. Each day, getting one step closer to the fulfillment and the completion of our salvation.

heaven. This is a self-perpetuating prophecy. It's getting nearer. Hey, we're one day closer to heaven than we were yesterday. I remember years ago, before I went to Bible school, I was working construction in Chicago and we, of course, lived in a suburb, Chicago, northwest suburb.

[51:56] I was working downtown Chicago. It was a remodel project. I was putting up metal studs in this building that we were remodeling and all. And I got to talking with another worker that was on the job site with me about the Lord, about salvation.

He claimed that his dad was a preacher. Got talking, of course, at some point about the Lord coming back and he said, yeah, I've heard that all my life. He's maybe a little bit older than me. I was, you know, early 20s at the time, but he was maybe 25 to 30. Yeah, I've heard that all my life. But it hadn't happened yet. And he, nah, I dropped off from that.

I don't believe that. I was told it was going to happen. It never happened, so I'll let it go. And he wasn't living for the Lord, wasn't going to the church, or whatever. I guess, you know, if his dad was still preaching, I don't know.

That was over 50 years ago. That was just a little bit after I was first saved. It was probably, you know, 51, 52 years ago. You know the difference between us? There's a similarity.

[53:00] Well, when he got, if he ever got saved, I can't guarantee that at all. But at that point in time when our lives intersected, you know what? It's been 50 some years ago, and the Lord hasn't come back.

In his life, nor in my life, hasn't come back unless he's dead. But you know the difference between us? I still believe he is coming back. He dropped off years ago.

Unless he repented, he got right with him, I still believe he is coming back. And the wonderful thing about this verse, like I said before, is when you read it, it becomes self-fulfilling. Every time you read it.

However many times you read through your Bible, if you minimum read through your Bible every year, then every year you come to that verse and you go, hey, it is nearer. It's nearer than the last time I read it.

If you read it through three, four, five, or whatever times a year, your Bible, then every time you get through there, it's like, hey, it's getting closer. It's closer than the last time I read it. You can read that verse every day of your Christian life.

[54:03] You can just focus on it. And you know what? Every day, as long as you're still alive here and he hasn't come for us, it's getting one day closer. Do you believe he's coming?

What are you doing to get ready? Are you excited about it? Do you love his appearing? Are you looking for that blessed hope? One day it's going to be a reality. Coming again, coming again. Maybe morning, maybe noon, maybe evening, and maybe soon. Coming again, coming again. Oh, what a wonderful day it will be. Jesus is coming again.

You know, some people listen to this type of thing and they think, sounds like science fiction to me, brother. You know, beam me up, Scotty. Sounds like science fiction. Well, you know, that's not, that's reality.

This is truth. Science fiction is when you get out of this building, you look around. That's science fiction. This gender stuff is all science fiction. This climate change is all science fiction.

[55:05] The political stuff going around, that's all, you know, the, what's it called, the Green New Deal, that's all science fiction. This is reality.

Don't lose sight of that. One day, you're going to be with Jesus and the completion is getting closer and closer. answer. My question is this, simply, what are you doing about it?

Let's pray. Our Father, Lord, we love you. We count it such a privilege and a joy to live for you, to love you, to try to serve you. Our Father and our God, I ask for this congregation here this morning that they would and all of us need to do on a daily basis, assess our lives.

Look at our lives in light of eternity. What are we doing to prepare to meet you? It's going to happen. How excited are we to meet you?

It's going to happen. One day. Any parent that's raised children knows how quickly life goes. The babies were born and the babies are married and they're producing grandbabies.

[56:15] Life moves on. And the older we get, we see how short and how quick life is. Lord, before we know it, we're going to be standing before you.

This message will be way back in the background someplace. But we'll be standing before you. What are we doing to get ready for that day?

If you're not saved here this morning, you don't know Jesus Christ, what are you doing? Will you trust him? Will you realize that it is a reality?

There is a heaven. There is a hell. Jesus is the difference. He loved you. He died for you. Trust him. Believe on him. Turn to him. Please look to somebody this morning, the pastor, somebody else, to ask them, how can I know heaven is my home? Father, I pray and ask that you bless now in Jesus' name.

[57:16] Amen. Amen.