

2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

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[0 : 00] Bring you greetings on behalf of Pastor Dave Helm, who's flying back from North Carolina after celebrating the wedding of his nephew, Micah.

So, it's sad he can't be here, but he's rejoicing with his nephew. Let's pray, Lord. Thank you so much. Thank you so much for your word.

Thank you that you will establish your work, you have established your work, and we get the opportunity to be benefactors of what you are doing. Incline our hearts to your understanding this day, in Christ's name. Amen.

What you just heard read in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 is Paul's attempt, in my opinion, to set the record straight for his listeners.

Particularly as it relates to the coming, or eschatology, the coming of the end times, which has sparked numerous questions over decades for many preachers and theologians alike.

[1 : 08] Even to this day. In chapter 1, we see Paul trying to reassure his readers that they are in good shape when it comes to Christ's return.

But then in chapter 2, the topic jumps out right at us in verse 1. Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, an hour being gathered together with him.

We ask you, brothers and sisters, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed. Jumps right out.

Paul now has to address the issue of the coming of the Lord pastorally for his listeners.

From a pastoral standpoint, since it seems that there might be an error in their understanding or a deception in their doctrine or a threat to the stability of their spirituality.

He's addressing and setting the record straight concerning the coming of the Lord and our being gathered to him.

[2 : 26] Last year around this time, I believe it was a Sunday. I got an email from the wife of one of our former pastors that used to serve here, Pastor Arthur Jackson.

His wife, Shirley Jackson, sent an email saying, and the title read, Shirley Jackson, awful experience. So you're like, uh-oh, what's going on?

And then I open the email. I'm in route home. And I open it. And it says, we took a trip to the Philippines. My stuff was stolen.

We have no identification. We have no money. We need you. We're asking. We're begging that you can help us get out of the country and get another flight and get our stuff back.

The hotel refuses to give us our documents and let us leave until our bills are paid. Can you please help now? I didn't really. I mean, I'm driving, as you're not supposed to be.

[3 : 32] And I'm getting home. And as soon as I walk in the door, my wife goes, did you get Shirley's email? How much do you want to send her? I'm like, you know, I did like every good husband would do in those predicaments.

I trust you to make the best decision for that, babe, you know? She's like, all right, well, whatever.

We'll figure it out. And then I had to go to prayer gathering that evening.

And I remember a few hours later, we get an email from Shirley saying, that's not my email address.

Don't send anything to that person.

It was a scam. And I'm at prayer gathering. My wife has got my child. And I'm trying to, oh, snap.

And apparently, everyone else thoroughly read the email and realized it was wrong, except me, because I was in transit home.

Blessed to have a wife who also is wise enough to not just skim through an email like that. And I get home. I'm like, babe, did you send anything or anything like that? She was like, no, it was a scam.

[4 : 35] It was like, oh, OK, cool. Yeah, that's what I was going to tell you. Yeah. The people of Thessalonica have received an email with the headliner, Christ has already come.

But now Paul in chapter two is writing from his real account. Don't believe them. That's not what happened. You're being deceived.

Don't be easily shaken and alarmed. That's not my words. In fact, when I was with you, we talked about this. You should know that's not what I would say.

The people of Thessalonica are being shaken to the core. He says, do not be deceived. Verse three. A. Whatever was sent to you was forgery.

Whoever is speaking on behalf of us is a liar. The church around this time has experienced a lot of persecution from outside.

[5 : 42] But here we get a glimpse of persecution, turmoil from within. Attacks from within by persons making false claims about what will take place in the end, disrupting the faith.

The crisis within the church as seen in verse one through three. A. Brings us to Paul urging the brothers and the sisters not to be shaken or alarmed to keep their composure and reason.

Do not be unsettled by any spirit or spokesman or letter that comes their way claiming that the day of the Lord has come. Writing false truths about those that would be gathered to Christ.

False truths. Paul's words here do not be easily shaken or alarmed. Set up his argument for the following words as to why the letter or the words that they're hearing have misrepresented the doctrine they have received.

And that has been laid out by the apostles and prophets even provides for the people a reason to check the source of the message.

[6 : 58] That they've received and believed even. Paul deems it necessary to provide an argument for the assurance of their faith and establish a genuineness of whose signature is on the information they've received.

Whose signature it is. In verse one through three. If verse one through three. A is concerned with the crisis of the church. Then three B all the way down through 12 as we read is concerned with convincing the church of the truth.

Convincing the church of the truth. Do not be deceived. Do not be unsettled or alarmed. He lays out the argument in two ways.

Or two ways that I pulled out. Convincing the people. Argument number one. Everybody say number one. Three B through verse five.

And you see it there. First of all he starts off. What no one deceive you in this way. For the day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed.

[8 : 10] The son of destruction or perdition. The day of the Lord will not take place until the day of rebellion. First and foremost. Which leads to this man of lawlessness.

In other words a time of iniquity. This full assault on godliness has to take place first. Which is the reason why you shouldn't believe that Christ has already come.

That the day of the Lord is at hand. Because you haven't seen the full assault as Paul says. Yet this as other terms the great apostasy hasn't taken place.

Again Paul is referring to the time when even amongst the most devout of us. The most religious will turn and oppose God and be like that don't matter.

Maybe they won't say it like that. You know. It's not that way. While Jewish people might be thinking of certain instances in their past as Paul's writing.

[9 : 16] They might be thinking well the day of the Lord could be on us because. I mean think about it. Like we have a ton of instances as Jews that we can look to and say yes.

This is probably what it is. As in the case of Isaiah even. When Manasseh is empowered and he turns the people away from God's law and apostasy.

They could be thinking of that rebellion. The emphasis on the day of rebellion is referring not to merely Jewish people though. Turning away from Yahweh.

But as the apostle commends their faithfulness in chapter 1. He's also referring to those who turn away. As those who have been faithful. Or showed that they were faithful.

Or proved amongst us that they were faithful. In other words. You wouldn't just be able to spot him out and be like yeah. I knew he was going to turn. No these are folks interwoven into the society of religiosity.

[10 : 22] Those who had once been steadfast. And now are revolting against the faith. They once held to the ideas. And even struggled in certain areas with individuals in the congregation.

Or the body. This great rebellion hasn't come yet. According to Paul in 3b. Even Christ demonstrated that the. An idea that there's a certain time when those who are seemingly faithful to the gospel.

Will then turn. Matthew 24. Even in Paul's time. There has become many amongst them that have been apostate. Which.

Is a way. Of this rebellion that he's mentioning. Paul is using these words to help them see the history as just a paradigm of what's to come.

The day of rebellion would give way to the man of rebellion. A man of lawlessness. A man of sin. The opposition to the law of God would give way to the lawless one who's opposed to God.

[11:30] The. This is. A scene in verse 4 describes that there will be one who opposes God. Exalts himself against the throne.

Of God. I had a friend. Who one time told me. I don't believe God. Should have done this in this way.

And. My other friend said. I'm just not brave enough to say that to God. Yet. Yet. Paul is saying that there will come a time when there will be a man. A person who will say.

Enough with him. He'll do away with any sort of barrier between. Respect for the cloth or anything like that.

He will take a seat in the temple according to Paul in verse 4. To the object. To be the object of worship. By the people of God.

[12:32] Look at that. Not only does he claim to be God. But then his next task is to allure. Individuals. Who will worship him. This man of lawlessness is anti-Christ.

Paul. Purposely uses his words here to describe what. What Jews might remember from the book of Daniel chapter 11. As Daniel's prophesying about.

Well he makes a few prophecies. But one particular one about a man from Persia. And so they might be thinking. Alexander the Great. Is it. Was it that.

So it makes sense that they. Would have believed the forged letter. Having. Considered Alexander the Great. Or maybe. Even more closer. To their heart and history.

A man named. A name of Teacus the fourth epiphanies. Who. Comes in and. Claims to be God. Sets up. Zeus in the temple.

[13:34] By military action. Decides to. Make the people worship. Zeus. Or any other object that he puts up. So Daniel.

Prophecies about these. Individuals. So I can understand. Just being me. Putting the dots together. Daniel prophesied 300 years before. And these things happen.

It must have already happened. So yeah. But again. You remember. Paul is setting the record straight. After the prophecy. After all that Daniel foretells.

After all that happens. After all they consider. Paul is just using this image. To describe to the people. That while Daniel's prophecies. Might be spot on. About someone.

That they've seen. In their own history. It's still not the fulfillment. Of the person. He's speaking of. Alternatively. Paul. Might even be. Alluding to what their current.

[14:30] Circumstances. Might be. Under the guard. Of Rome. You got to remember. They would come in. And tell the people. To take the incense. Throw it in the fire. And say. Caesar is Lord.

And the moment. You would say. Jesus is Lord. You're dead. Paul might be referring to. Their current. State of affairs.

Later on in history. Men like Josephus. And others. Will depict. How the Caesars. All come into the temple. Or just. Destroy the temple. Men like Nero.

Men like. Titus. And his father even. They all come in. And you can see. How. Paul might be.

Even thinking of. These characters. These men. As even Jesus. Prophesied. About this. Temple. Whatever way. It's taken. It's clear. That Paul is not.

[15:29] Set on naming. Who this. Man of lawlessness. Is. He says. If you're. Question is. Who is. The man. Of lawlessness. You are asking.

The wrong. Question. Particularly. Since he states. In verse 5. That he has already. Spoken to them. In the past. He feels. No need. To go into detail.

More about this. Because we've already. Talked in person. About. Most of this. Stuff. Instead. He's interested. In what. The man. Represents. As the author.

Says. The antichrist. Will represent. The sin. As an author. Says. The antichrist. Represents. The fruition. Of the sin. Of Adam. I forgot.

The author. That's why. The revealing. Of this man. Of lawlessness. Will come. By way. Of the members. Of the body. Who prove themselves. To be otherwise.

[16:24] Members. Who fall away. That's. That's actually. What the Greek. Term here. Is the great. Falling away. The man. Of lawlessness.

Is the fruition. Of. And the figurehead. Of evil. It's also clear. That the day. Of the Lord. Will take place.

Won't take place. Until. This apostasy. Happens. This great rebellion. Which leads. To this man. Of lawlessness. Paul sets. The record straight. But. To accept.

Any other view. Apart from this. Is. Is to denounce. The scriptures. Entirely. At this point. But. The second argument. That Paul makes.

Kind of. Takes. Us. On a little journey. But. But he. But he does the same thing. And says. Now. If that man. Doesn't come.

[17:20] Then you can't expect. Christ. To have. Come. He also says. That the day of the Lord. Has not taken place. Because. Verse 6. Through 12. Because. Of the present.

Power. Of lawlessness. That is still. At work. You see. The man. Hasn't come. The day of rebellion. Hasn't happened. But you also know. That Christ.

Hasn't come. You also know. That the day of the Lord. Is not at hand. Because. There's still. A present. Power. Of lawlessness. In the world. That hasn't been. Dealt with. Paul.

Then turns. From what will happen. To presently. What is happening. Whoever this man. Of lawlessness. Is. Whenever he arrives. According to verse 6. This antichrist.

Is being. Restrained. He's being. Restrained. That the full weight. Of the power. Of sin. By the. Sheer. Common grace.

[18:14] Of God. Is being. Restrained. That's. That's what's happening. Right now. There. That. You haven't seen. The full weight. Of sin.

You. You haven't seen. What it could. Ultimately. Lead to. In this. World. That's. That's just. Common.

Grace. You read. About these things. In. In Romans. And. And yet. You. As. Christians. As those. Who. Are looking. To. Hope. In Christ. You know. That God. Doesn't even. Have to do that. We don't. Even deserve.

That. Let alone. Grace. That leads. To salvation. The question. Again. Isn't. When will. The restraint.

[19:08] Be lifted. Or. When will. The lawless man. Come into the world. But. The point. That Paul. Wants. The readers. To arrive. In. At. In these verses. Is. Who.

Is. The one. Restraining. God. Is. The one. Holding. Down. The evil. The revealing. Of the evil. One. Indeed. It. It. Has. A lot. To do. With.

The amount. Of. Evil. That. Will. Will. Be. On. Display. In. That time. But. Even. More. To do. With. The Christ. That. Will. Have. An answer. For. That evil. Let me.

Say. That again. That. While. There. Is. A lot. To say. About. This. God. Removing. His. Hand. And. Allowing. Evil. To. Run. Its. Full. Course. It. Actually. Points.

Us. To. A. Greater. Vision. And. Hope. That. Man. You're. Going. To. Handle. Everything. And. Christ. Is. Like. Yeah. I.

[20:02] Got. You. I. Got. It. First. John. Chapter 2. 18. Children. And. It. Is. The. Last. Hour. And. As.

You. Have. Heard. The. Antichrist. Is. Coming. So. Now. Many. Antichrists. Have. Come. Therefore. We. Know. That. It. Is. The. Last. Hour. They. Went. Out. From. From. Us. But. They. Were. Not. Of.

Us. For. If. They. Had. Been. Of. Us. They. Would. And.

Our. Text. This. Morning. Is. Already. At. Work. This. This. Lawless. Mystery. This. Thing. That. Is. Happening. It. It. It. It. It. Already. Happening. Around. Us. That. While. It.

Is. Being. Restrained. It. Is. Also. Dangerously. Active. Do. Not. Be. Confused. With. The. Fact. That. God. Has. His. Hand. On. The. Head. Of. Evil.

[21:01] So. That. It's. Not. Running. Its. Full. Course. To. Think. That. You. Can. Play. Around. With. Evil. It's. Just. As. Dangerous. Which. Is. Why. We.

Need. Christ. In. All. Circumstances. Yet. Paul. States. That. This. Mystery. Lawlessness. Is. At. Work. It's. Dangerously. Active. That. That. That. We. Would. Be. Deceived. To. Think. That. The. Power. Of. Sin. Is. A. Light. Matter. This. Present. Lawlessness. Is. Being. Restrained. By. God. But. Once. The. Restraint. Is. Taken. Away. Paul's. Meaning. Here. Is. That. The. Influence. Of. The. Man. Of. Lawlessness. Will. Be. Revealed. That. You. Will. See. Who. Will. Follow. This. Restraint. In. This. Present. Age. As. Well. As. In. As. The. Working.

[21 : 55] Of. Sin. Currently. Are. All. Meant. To. Point. To. The. Fact. That. It. Is. God. Who. Is. In. Full. Control. At. Every. Point. And. Is. Working. Out. Plans. And.

Events. For. His. Glory. That. Is. That. As. Evil. Seemingly. Prevails. Seemingly. Prevails. Giving. Way. To. The. Man. Of. Lawlessness.

The. Church. Can. Hold. Fast. I. Said. The. Church. Can. Hold. Fast. To. The. Assurance. That. Christ. Will. Destroy. The. Works. Of. Sin. And. Lawlessness. Where I come from.

They would say. Won't he do it. That means. Indeed. Agreed. The. Church. Does. Not. Need. To. Fear. Because. God.

Has. Provided. The. Perfect. Picture. Of. The. Purpose. Of. God. Which. Is. On. Display. That. While. The. Lawless. One. Is. Revealed. This. Is. Proceeded.

[22 : 52] It. Destruction. Will. Follow. Even. Though. Verse. Eight. As. Even. Though. Lawlessness. Is.

Revealed. Verse. Eight. Has. To. Come. About. Check. It. Out. And. Then. The. Lawless. One. Will. Be. Revealed. Whom. The. Lord. Jesus. Will.

Kill. With. The. Breath. Of. His. Mouth. And. Bring. To. Nothing. By. The. Appearance. Of. His. Coming. I. Like. That. That. Word. Appearance.

Means. Shining. By. The. Brightness. Of. His. Coming. I. Don't. Know. Anybody. Else. I. Can. Do. That. I. Mean. My. Wife. When. She. Come. In. The. Room. But. That's. About. It. Christ.

Comes. Just. By. His. Appearance. And. Then. He. Speaks. And. He. Handles. Everything. You. Thought. You. Were. Holding. On. To. Uh. This. Past. Thursday. At. Youth. Group. We. Were. Just. Talking.

[23 : 47] About. The. Corners. Of. Our. Heart. Like. Are. You. Willing. To. Give. Them. Everything. Nothing. Will. Be. Hidden. All.

Will. Be. Exposed. What's. In. Darkness. Will. Be. Brought. To. The. Light. Verse 9. Through 12. Gives us this description of lawlessness as we.

Finish off what the presence of lawlessness looks like. In Paul's argument. He. He. He based the power that is at work that will be at work.

There's. One result. There's. There's one. Being behind it and he says it's Satan. It's a satanic work. That's. That's the reason why you shouldn't allow sin to linger in our.

In your life. That's. The reason why we don't just sit idly by while. While evil happens. That's. The reason why you have to pray. It's a satanic work.

[24 : 46] It's. It's the. Ephesians 6 effect. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. Know your enemy. Right. Likewise. The. It is the power.

Of God. That responds to the power. Of sin. It's why people are deceived. Power of sin. It's.

It's why. False signs are accepted in the text. That's. That's. The lawless one takes orders from Satan coming. With all kinds of counterfeit. Counterfeit. Miracles.

Signs and wonders. In other words. The lawless deeds are done to misrepresent Christ. You feel me. To lead people astray. To pervert the way of truth.

While the man of lawlessness is yet to be revealed. Paul makes it clear that we do not. Have to look far to find men and women living lives. A deception. That as Paul says in verse 10 even.

[25 : 41] Because they do not love the truth. Because they. They. They. They. Aren't bent towards. Righteousness. Because they love unrighteousness. They refuse to be saved.

Paul is speaking of those who do not welcome saving truth. Who have no time. For God's understanding. Nah. Well. Come on man. We just.

We just want to eat. Come on bro. Here he comes. Here she comes. Here. Yet again.

Even with. Followers of sin. God's act of hand is prevalent. God brings about. A delusion to unbelievers. Who reject the truth. God.

Acts. God. Acts. By bringing. A delusion. As a result. Of the ultimate choice. That men and women have.

[26 : 39] In rejecting the truth. You want to go that way. Go ahead. You want to do that. You want to reject the one that loves you the most.

Cares for you the best. Has a better plan for your life. But it's true. Go ahead. It's an act of judgment.

He allows them. He brings about a delusion. On them. In other words. We see God.

Yet again. Rendering a proper payment of sin. And what Paul's listeners. Take from this. That while the world goes on. Being deceived. They can rest assured. That's the salvation. That they have.

Is in Christ Jesus. Outside of themselves. It's not based on. Them. That. That know that God. Know the God of truth. And they can be set free.

[27 : 34] From the bonds of sin. And while the world is condemned. The body will reign with Christ. And while the truth is abandoned. On all accounts. And godliness is shunned.

The people of God. Take pleasure. And righteousness. That's what. That's what verse 12. Is alluding to. In order that all may be condemned. Who do not believe. That the truth.

But have pleasures. And unrighteousness. Consider the opposite. That's what Paul's saying. The church needs to understand. That the day of the Lord. Won't come until the rebellion. Leading to a revealing.

Of this lawless man. And they can rest assured. That when the day of the Lord. Comes the current circumstance. Of sin will not remain. As it is. Praise God. As the culture of truth.

Is currently. Being affected. By lawlessness. Christ. Invites. Us. To share. In truth. For the sake of his glory. For the church.

[28 : 32] Of Thessalonica. To believe. That the day of the Lord. Has already come. Would be to say. That God. Has not dealt properly. With sin. You understand. What I'm saying. Like. To believe.

That God. Has already come. Yet the circumstances. It's to say. That. Well. God doesn't really care. It's to say. That God is unjust. It's to say. That God is not.

God. That's what Paul's argument is. Come on guys. Let's think about this. Look around. Look ahead. Look back. Consider.

It would mean that. It would mean that he has not gathered together a people for his own glory. It would mean that God did not keep a promise to his own son.

What's the outcome? 13 through 17. What's the outcome? Well, Paul aims to instill confidence. For 13. Verse 13 through 15.

[29 : 33] Paul aims to instill confidence. But we ought to always give thanks to God for you, brothers. Beloved by the Lord. Because God chose you as the first fruits.

To be saved. Through sanctification by the spirit. And belief in the truth. Verse 13 through 15. It's this instilling of confidence as the outcome. Why should we always give thanks?

Why? Because believers are not deceived. Thank God. We stumble, but we're not deceived. They are not destined for destruction.

They do not have to fear death. You haven't missed out is what Paul is saying. If the first email made you shudder because you thought, oh, man, I missed out.

Paul is saying, now you got the first fruits, bro. Look at that. Ephesians 1.4. Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love.

[30 : 40] You will obtain the glory. You haven't missed it. The work of God sparks adoration and praise to God. Confidence that you can move in this life and not fear that you missed something in God.

Verse 15, as Paul returns to what is true concerning the traditions, the spoken word and the letter, as he's using that to tell in his, his, this piece of the letter is in spite of false truth mentioned earlier or the forged letters.

The exhortation is for believers to stand firm against deception, expect evil and know that God is at work. Don't be surprised. Don't be alarmed.

Don't be unsettled. God is at work. So you can go to work. Verse 16 through 17, though, Paul aims to bestow reassuring comfort.

We all can use comfort. That by the power of God, we are comforted eternally in hope. We are comforted toward obedience in Christ.

[31 : 57] And if the church were to have a mission given the day and age, it would be within these two main verbs of the text to be encouraged and to be established.

Be encouraged. Be established. Go. Go. This could be the same for us that even though the church of Thessalonica's questions were concerning whether Christ has already come today, we might not have the same questions.

We might not be questioning whether Christ has come. I've never questioned that in my life, except when I read about Jehovah's Witnesses. But I've never actually questioned that as a heart thing for myself.

But our questions might be different. Same outcome, but different. You might have a question like. Will Christ come?

To that Paul's words point us back back to Christ himself will comfort us in the eternal in love. Will he come?

[33 : 02] Yes. He will come. And you can be comforted by that. The fact that he's coming for you because he loves you. Or your question might be.

When will Christ come? Well, our comfort. Will be based in the hope of the grace that has been given us in Christ.

It's not a matter of when it's a matter of. Of posture. Are you living in the grace of God?

So whether he comes today or later. We live under grace. Or you might have a question of why should I care if Christ.

That Christ comes. Because without the coming of the Lord, we have no incentive to do good work. If Christ isn't coming back.

[34 : 07] You have nothing. To base what you're doing. On you have no hope. Of wrapping your arms around the one that has carried you through.

It's like when I leave out the house. And. You know, my daughter. Where you going, dada? And I'm like, you're not going to understand where I'm going.

I'm not trying to be like Jesus. I'm just saying you don't understand where I'm going. Because you don't know the words. And then she throws a fit. But the best part is when I come back in the house. And it's like. Pastor Bing told me. Record it. When you come in. You'll cherish those memories. Of your child running.

And wrapping their arms around you. You've seen it when soldiers come home from. Military. Deployment. And. The kids run up.

[35 : 08] And it's like. Or when the dad's standing behind the child. And doesn't know that they're there. And then they turn around and loses it. If you don't have that hope. And that's pales in comparison to what Christ has done.

What are we doing? Paul is saying. No. He will. You got a hope. Without the appearance of Christ. We cannot experience. And take part in the grace. That is bestowed upon us.

We cannot. Work according to God's. Word. As children of God. With confidence. Unless you have embraced. This gospel. That places you. Within that hope.

Or maybe. Lastly. Your question. Who cares. Whether or not. Christ comes. It's not really for me. I don't really care to know. It's not that serious.

It's not that serious. It's not that serious. It's not that serious. Whether he comes or not. I don't know. We'll figure it out when it happens. If that's your stance. You can try to take an antinomian stance.

[36 : 08] Where it throws off all parties. In favor of just living. But the text lays out a revealing. And a coming. As two events that will take place. No matter where you stand.

All throughout our chapter. We see. That this coming. This parousia. This coming. Thus. In verse 1. In verse 8. You're seeing Christ coming. But in verse. In other verses. You see that. There's a coming. Of this lawless one. It's in juxtaposition.

With each other. It's as if. Every time you see something glorious. With God. There's a perverted. Counterfeit. Like this letter. That Paul is mentioning. Every time you see something good.

You see something. That's not that good. Pergrades itself to be good. But it's not. Or you see the Lord revealed.

[37 : 01] From heaven. Three times. Verse 3. Verse 6. And verse 8. And then. You see the revealing. Of the lawless one. Or you see Christ coming. In power and glory. In verse 7. In 8. But then you see.

A lawless man. Coming. And having power. In verse 9. Coming with a counterfeit. replicas, but nothing is real. Nothing is true. And it's not even lasting for that matter.

And as Stott would say, both the coming of Christ and the coming of the Antichrist will both be personal, visible, and powerful. Where do you stand? That's the question. Where do you stand? You can't not serve God and say you don't serve his enemy. It's going to be personal. It's going to be visible. And ladies and gentlemen, it is powerful.

The point to why you should care is because you're already involved whether you know it or not. You will either be on the Lord's side or a member of those who are deceived.

[38 : 12] There's no mushy middle as Keller would say. Paul states it simple in this paragraph that now is a time of restraint that then will come a rebellion and later a retribution.

Restraint, rebellion, retribution. To take the stance, ah, why should this matter? Or this isn't for me, is to take a stance with the Antichrist.

But oh, that you would believe. Oh, that you would believe in the voice of the Lord. The coming of the Lord. And the church will be found pressing into faith.

Pressing into God in faith. Not sitting in idleness and iniquity. That because the slippery path to destruction begins with a love of things that God hates.

A love for evil. Then a rejection of the truth. Then to a deception by the devil leading to a hardening by God. And then condemnation.

[39 : 20] Or better Paul. Or better James puts it. Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires. And desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin.

And sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. But to love God. As the gospel calls us to hate sin and recognize that we are loved by God. Which the outcome is a love for God.

Hence, for if there is laid, as 2 Timothy says, up for me a crown of righteousness. Which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day. And not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

For the church. For the church in crisis. I pray that we are convinced of the truth of God. And the outcome would be that no matter your questions.

You would not be shaken. You would not be alarmed. You will hold fast. To what he's revealing.