The Forever War

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Preacher: The Rt. Revd Mike Hill

[0:00] As I said, we've come to the last of our readings, of our sessions, and in a voy in. It is language which is foreign to us, but I think in the end we have to grapple with, and I think we're feeling this very much at the moment, that we're having to grapple with the ongoing issues of the fallenness of our humanity. And it's a very critical kind of existential question which occurs to me in the 21st century, and that is a question that I think

Christians have asked throughout the whole of Christian history. Why is the world the way that it is? What is the world the way that it is? Politicians since the Enlightenment have talked about what they call continuous progress.
And at a lot of levels, we can tick that box. Why is it the world is the way that it is? I want to read to you some words. I mean, I always think, you know, I do it, we all do it a little bit, you know, we complain about the world as it is, and that's fully intelligible to me. But it shouldn't surprise us in a way if we know our scriptures. Let me just give you one passage of scripture, one of many I could have read. And this is from 2 Timothy chapter 3. And Paul writes these words, mark this, there will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying its power, have nothing to do with such people. I mean, you read that stuff and you think, and Paul never actually had read a word of social media. And yet he's talking about what I think is the natural outflow of our fallenness as human beings. And I made this point on Sunday in church,
I'm going to use slightly different words today, but I think what's great about Ephesians chapter 6 is it reinforces this idea, not just a philosophical concept, but also a theological concept, that when we think correctly, when we believe correctly, the likelihood is that our actions will be more appropriate. Wrong thinking, and in the early church, this is a massive issue, you know, the early patristic fathers of the church, spent their time trying to weed out orthodox faith from heresy.
And you can imagine, they had to do that without a copy of the New Testament. The canon of the New Testament probably wasn't formed until the end of the fourth century.
[4:11] And so for the first years of the church, they're trying to sort out these issues. And the only text they had in front of them was the Old Testament.

And as Paul points out in Ephesians 6, the devil is in the detail. It refers here to the various forms of spiritual oppression that might, well, not might, but will befall Christians in all ages.
And Paul says here, you know, our response to this is to put on the full armour of God. In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 13 and 14, we read this.
It talks about men being false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. Basically, what he's saying here is that Satan himself, this is verse 14, masquerades as an angel of light.
That is, that Satan, I never saw the movie The Exorcist, and I hope you didn't either, because I gather it's awful. But the big deal with it is that at one point, apparently, this young teenage girl who

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is possessed of the devil, she's kind of, her head is spinning through 360 degrees, whilst at the same time she's vomiting green bile.
[5:56] And you kind of think to yourself, well, if that's the work of the devil, frankly, I'm quite keen to avoid it. But the devil masquerades as an angel of light.

And that means the devil is in the detail of Christian living today. What can appear to be good can, in fact, be the devil masquerading himself.
So what's going on here? The first word of this reading is, finally, in the version, the NIV, the English version, it says, to end.
Actually, that doesn't really carry what Paul was intending to communicate here, I don't believe. Finally, Paul was saying, in the light of everything I've written to you, here's something you really need to take note of.
You need to take note of the fact that life is not going to be uncomplicated. Even if you believe the right things and you adhere to the teaching I've given you in Ephesians 4 and 5, in the first bit of Ephesians chapter 6, you need to be aware of this.
[7:19] And Paul's reading of the problem is very clear. Our fight is not against people on earth. See, I think that one of the big confusions is that in the church today, we kind of have this dichotomy.

And the dichotomy is this, that some people don't even think about this fight that's taking place in the heavenly places.
And some people, thankfully I believe a minority in the church, are obsessed by it. And every stone they turn over in church life, the devil they see at work.
I mean, I think you have to be very, very careful with that kind of approach to faith. So the finally is connecting this important section of Paul's teaching here with what's gone before.
And his reading of the problem is, this is not the fight that many of you imagine that you will be in. And Paul's solution is in chapter 13.
[8:34] This is why you need to get God's full armour. I'm going to talk about that in a bit more length. But his reading of the problem is challenging to us.

And what it means is that all of Christian history will be messy. And some of you will be, I apologise for a little bit of repetition for what I said in here on Sunday morning.
But Paul's, it's messy. Because the general teaching of scripture is that on the cross of Calvary and the resurrection of Jesus, the devil has been defeated once and for all.
And you say, well, if he's been defeated once and for all. Paul wrote this kind of stuff, you know, talks about being more than conquerors in the Corinthian literature. If the devil's already defeated, well, how come the way the world is the way the world is?
And I used an analogy from the world of farming. And I said that what I think is happening here.
[9:46] Is, you know, I'm told this. I mean, I don't know. I've never seen it. And really, I never want to. But I'm told if you chop the head off a chicken in the farmyard, the chicken will race around the farmyard three or four times before it collapses dead.

And I think that that's what's happening in the era in which we live. Satan has been defeated forever, but with his head chopped, metaphorically, he's still able to race around creating carnage.
And we see some of that carnage every day in our newspapers. And Paul's great solution is you need to put on the full armor of God.
And anybody who thinks that becoming a Christian and being in a church is like a free pass into la-la land is amazingly mistaken.
I mean, you should know this because you know that in churches we have some of the same problems that people out there have. So Paul's diagnosis is that we need to put on the full armor of God.
[11:13] Wear God's armor, says Paul, so that you can fight against the devil's clever tricks. This is subtle. As I say, if the devil's subtle tricks were people with their heads revolving 360 degrees whilst vomiting bile, we'd have no problem avoiding that.

We wouldn't want that, it's clear. But the devil's clever tricks, his wily tricks, it says in some of the older translations, our fight is not against people on earth.
Well, I think that's kind of complicated. Paul goes on to say here that we're fighting against rulers and authorities. And I think what Paul would say to us would square with a Chinese military general is a person who's name is Sanju.

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And Sanju wrote this. He said, Know your enemy and know yourself and you will not be in danger in a hundred battles. See, I think what this general understood was that understanding your enemy is critical in any engagement of that enemy.
But at the same time, understanding yourself is important. If you think that because you're a Christian, you are totally immune to being influenced by these malign powers that Paul understands lie behind a lot of difficult issues in our world today, I think you might be deluded.
[12:58] And Paul here says that the bottom line is that he describes four kinds of enemy. the first one is the rulers and the authorities.

And normally in Scripture, when rulers and authorities are referred to, Paul's talking to earthly government, talking about earthly government. And I think what Paul would tell us about this is that the problem with the subtle work of the devil is that he very often employs human agency.
and again, forgive a little repetition from Sunday, but you know, what do we live through in the 20th century?
We live through Nazism. This is, you know, not just a kind of bit of a grouse that Adolf Hitler had with Jewish people and Roman Catholics and gay people.
this was systemic brutality on a horrendous scale. And we tell ourselves, you know, as we did after the Second World War, there was this literature that came into play which is called utopian literature.
[14:20] And it was basically based on the premise the world must never allow this kind of thing, i.e. world war to occur again. I don't know, you know, I think it probably would be exaggeration at this point in time to say that we stand on the edge of nuclear war at the moment.

I don't honestly believe that myself. But there are several commentators who think that the only way this kind of standing up against Vladimir Putin and the Chinese government.
The only way that that can get resolved is through nuclear war. And I think, you know, we all know enough about nuclear war to know there are no winners in that kind of scenario.
So one of the tricky things is, I mean, governments have always been vaguely incompetent, haven't they? And I wouldn't basically, you know, that's not, that's an apolitical statement.
I mean, it's just that actually government's a really difficult thing. And authorities are going to make kind of natural mistakes because sometimes their policies have unintended consequences.
[15:40] That's not what Paul's talking about here. He's talking about when the devil influences through his wily tricks, rulers and authorities who dream up awful things, genocide, Nazism, you know, Stalin in Soviet Russia, you know, starved up to six million Ukrainians during his attempts to implement communism across the, across what became the Soviet Union.

And then Paul talks about the powers of this world's darkness against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenly places.
I find it difficult to describe this to you because Paul doesn't go into a great description. And I wouldn't blame you if you were sitting there saying, well, come on, Mike, you know, this is just a kind of ancient cosmology that we don't have to take seriously today.
Well, let me tell you, Jesus took it seriously. The early church took it seriously. The Roman church today takes it seriously.
The Orthodox church today takes it seriously. So just be a little careful if you want to dispose of this in the trash can of history. history. These powers are at work in the world.
[17:18] The powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. I suppose, you know, the nearest way we can get to describing it is the concept of fallen angels, people who, beings that have fallen below what God expected of them.

know your enemy. Our enemy is not human agency first rate, but it is. Evil can permeate human agencies.
His tactics, very subtle. 2 Corinthians 11, 14, he masquerades as an angel of light. And in 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 8, this is why church history is constantly messy.
Because those malign forces at work in our world are not going to give up easily. 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 8, Peter says to the Christians that, be self-controlled and alert.
your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Now I want to say to you something that I hope will be liberating for most of you.
[18:47] If you are, as Paul would put it, in Christ, if you are a believing Christians, if you accept what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary for you in grace, that your sins are forgiven and that God

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has gifted you the promise of eternity, I want to say to you that you can never be possessed by the devil.

I have in my pastoral ministry come across Christians who think they might be possessed of the devil. And it's interesting, isn't there two bits of advice here for Christians that Peter is writing to. He doesn't just say be alert, he says be self controlled and alert. Sometimes some of the Christians I've met who think they might be possessed by the devil have lost all sense of self control. They're doing stuff they really know they shouldn't be doing and they continue to do it. I don't believe even their salvation is up for grabs.
So these malign forces are constantly on the prowl. like a roaring lion. Some years ago now Anthony and I were on a game hunt in Uganda and we came across these lions and they seemed so playful.
[20:17] You know they were just a few yards away from the Land Rover where we were hiding and they were just plain naturally rolling over he almost wanted to get out to the Land Rover and tickle their tummies like you might with your domestic cat.

The guy that took us said that wouldn't be advisable. Then suddenly one of them let out this most blood curdling roar. I'm a bit into tell you I'm very sensitive to noise and it was so loud and so scary I almost wanted to tell the guy right start the engine let's go.
So this is reality reality you know the devil prowls around seeking whom he may divide if you are in Christ you don't have to worry about the devil possessing you but I do believe that these malign forces and the captain of their team the devil can't possess you but they can influence you and we see Christians all the time I mean I you know I want to go on about this but we have seen in the last 12 months some amazing church leaders dragged into terrible sexual scandals goodness knows what people who seem rock solid to us you know suddenly undermined by their shocking behaviour I suppose the one that you know really kind of sticks in mind is the
Ewan minister camp and this man John Smythe who apparently evangelical Bible believing Christian taught the Bible took pleasure in beating boys with a cane don't tell me that we Christians can't be influenced by it so what 1 Peter 5 8 tells us is that this malign influence is persistent that's why Paul says you know we need to be strong in the Lord and in his great power leave it to my great power we're all in trouble leave it to his great power and there is hope for us and Paul's advice is very simple in a way it is put on the full armour of God obviously it's an analogy in
Paul's mind and one of the things about the well three things about the full armour of God is one it prepares us for this battle two it protects us from attack and thirdly the main outcome of this putting on this armour is that it helps us stand our ground and so just to run through what the armour is constituted of the belt of truth the breastplate of righteousness in place says Paul the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace the shield of faith the helmet of salvation the sword of the spirit and consistent prayer in the spirit the belt of truth has truth been relativized in modern culture that is a question that is constantly in front of us these days in the media usually forms around people who are woke with what they call woke mentality and between people who think that woke mentality is a load of bunkum that needs to be avoided and oddly enough the idea of truth being relative has been around since the 5th century
[24:31] BC a Greek philosopher by the name of Protagoras who had a big influence on Plato Protagoras' idea is probably one of the most successful though ultimately wrong political theories of all time the kind of driving thought behind relativism is that different opinions can be equally true relative to different standards think about that for a moment that really means there is no such thing as statements of truth that can be removed from their context so I mean first up I mean you can't rip the Ten Commandments up because they arrived in stone but actually if you start to take the Ten Commandments and you say thou shalt not kill and you say yes but in certain circumstances you really need to kill the problem with relativism is that there is an element of truth about it but once it undermines the idea that there is anything that might be called absolute truth you end up

I think with a house built on sand so what does it mean to put on the belt of truth I love these speakers who come up with clever ways of structuring their sermons this has nothing to do with what we're talking about tonight but I once heard Sal when you speak and he was talking about Samson and his three points were prayerless careless and hairless and I heard another preacher say trouble is if you've not got the belt of truth on you're going to end up with your trousers around your ankles I didn't like to think about that for too long but he did say that truth is really important I mean!

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Christians not so much these days may be but traditionally I don't think this is a bad thing as a matter of fact I mean in lots of churches these days the last thing you'll ever hear is a creed I think to myself actually it's good for us to recite together the things we think are non negotiable I mean I think there are other non negotiables that are not mentioned in the creed the it that's just a ranting of an old buffer but look truth is important and I was telling somebody this morning I had this I was for a while I mean don't laugh I was for a while a hospice chaplain.
And one day, the people who ran this hospice said to me, would I go and visit this family? And the man had very bad stage four brain cancer.
And I said, so, you know, what's the issue with him? So they said, well, the family keep pretending he's going to get better. And they've made us, the medical profession, caring for him, swear that we won't tell him the truth, that actually his days on planet Earth are numbered.
[28:13] So I went and I met with the family and they said, don't judge us harshly for this. You know, we know old Harry. It wasn't his name, but I'll call him Harry.

We know old Harry. If he told, he'd just be fall apart in pieces. So I said, well, your moral basis for telling him a lie is what?
They said, well, it's a white lie. I don't think there is such a thing as a white lie. I think there are a few grey lies, but maybe not so many white lies.
So I said to them, look, if he talks to me about it, I'm a minister. I'm not going to tell him a lie. So we're talking together and he said, when I get out of here, I said, you think you're going to get out of here?
He said, don't you? I said, I'm not so sure about that, Harry. You know, you've got stage four and they've stopped treating you. His family phoned me up a week later and they said to me, Harry seems a lot better in himself.
[29:33] I said, what did you say to him? I said, it's very simple. What was it? They almost thought somebody changed his drug regime.

What did you do? I said, I told him the truth. And the truth set him free from anxiety. And I remember praying a prayer of commitment with him at his bedside.
And all it left me with in all of that was just this thinking that do we persuade ourselves that white lies are acceptable? You know, I mean, we, you know, we didn't do anything about this.
But for instance, I kind of felt a bit nervous about promoting the white lie of Father Christmas. You know, I was engaged with one of my grandchildren who, they said, in this place we've just been staying with them for the week, there was a wood burner and it's a very thin chimney goes up and the first question what my grandson said is, how did Father Christmas get down there?
And, you know, I didn't say to him, you idiot, there is no such thing, you know, grow up. And he said, oh, I think he probably parks up outside or something, you know, obviously he can't get down there.
[30:57] And, he seemed satisfied with that explanation and so, you know, we left it there. But, you know, I have an uneasiness about that. And the problem is, if the message of Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ, and that is true, and the message of Father Christmas isn't true, how are kids going to work out the difference between what I can know is truth and what is just, you know, I mean, don't get me wrong, you know, I'm not, you know, I'm not Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans are, you know, dressed up in modern clothes, well, not that modern clothes, but, you know, I kind of get it in one way, but I do feel uncomfortable with it in another way.

I hope that's not too weird. But the belt of truth is, it's not just about the issue of truth, though it is about the issue of truth, but it's about living the truth.
speaking the truth, avoiding falsehood, gossip, and slander. I think some of the worst gossipy stuff I hear is in churches.
Living in integrity, aligning our actions with words, that's Paul's consistent message. If you believe this, this is the ramifications for the way you should behave.
Pursuing righteousness, seeking justice, honesty, and fairness. It seems reasonable to me to be expected of a Christian.
[32:33] And, discerning deception. That is, recognizing and rejecting false teaching and temptations. Friends, you need to buckle up with the belt of truth in this fight against these malign influences.

on the second, the breastplate of righteousness. What's a breastplate designed for? Well, as it tells you in all the books about breastplates, it says it's designed to protect your vital organs.

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I mean, I can think of one, I don't think it does protect too well, but anyway, you won't go there. But what is a breastplate? It's designed to protect your vital organs. And the breastplate of righteousness is the way that you live your lives because righteous lives turn back the enemy. Nothing the devil hates more than people who claim the righteousness of Jesus in their lives. righteousness. And we have to remember that wearing this breastplate reminds us, I mean, I think Paul in other parts of the scripture talks about what he calls sanctification.
That is being transformed in holiness. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 1, just let me give you a flavour of this, just so you know this isn't my idea, it's Paul's writing.
[34:08] And in chapter 4 verses 3 through 8 he says this Sorry, I'm just about to read 1 Timothy to you.

Hang on, give me a minute. Okay, here we go. Anybody else have this problem?
The older I get, the harder I find it to split pages. Is that just me? Come on, own up. So, Paul says this, it's God's will that you should be holy, that you should avoid sexual immorality, that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lusts like the heathen who do not know God.
In verse 8 he says, therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God who gives you his Holy Spirit.
You sit there and you think, oh my goodness, sanctification, you know, how am I doing with that? What's my progress on that? And the answer is, thank God you're not left alone to battle with this because God has given you the Holy Spirit who will convict you of sin and show you what is right from wrong and give you the strength to withhold temptation.
[35:43] So, we go on to the, sorry, I can't split my notes up here. Okay.

Put this down. Talk amongst yourselves. Paul talks about wearing, somebody put it like this, choose sensible shoes.
And, one of the things about shoes is, you know, to say, we wear different kinds of shoes for different jobs, don't we?
So, you know, you don't go, I imagine you don't go running in six-inch high heels. You don't go and work in a factory where there are heavy weights being shifted around in open-toed sandals.
No, we choose the right shoes for the right job. And Paul says in Ephesians chapter 6 that the shoes that we should be wearing in the light of the spiritual warfare are the shoes that are fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.
[37:07] And Paul tells us what the gospel of peace is in Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 14. It means primarily peace with God.

God and the gospel is a way that rebellious sinners can find peace with God. And again, I would say the proclamation of the gospel is what the devil hates.
One of the not so wily tricks of the evil one is that if you read through scripture you will see that so often God sorts out key people in God's purposes for special treatment.
You see that in the life of Elisha in the Old Testament, Elijah, all these people. And you can see it in the New Testament. When Paul is talking about his qualifications for his role in churches which doubt his apostleship, he doesn't say, I went to the University of Antioch and took a double first in theology.
No, he goes on about I've been beaten with rods, I've been shipwrecked, I've been just this whole kind of chapter of the sufferings that he's gone through.
[38:24] And so in relation to that, the gospel I think being preached turns back the malign influences of these forces of evil that Paul writes about.

I love the idea of that, but then I suppose I would, but I do love the idea of that. And that's why preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is so critical.
You know, if you go to a church and the gospel is purely to do with social action or purely to do with the fight for justice, these are good things, these are concomitants of the gospel, but they're not the gospel.
The gospel is about Jesus' death on the cross of Calvary, what we're going to talk about remember on Good Friday. Paul then says you've got to take up the shield of faith.
And so the Roman army had a shield which is called a scutum. And a scutum was as large as a door. You've probably seen pictures of riot police today.

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[39:40] And you know they have those big shields. And those shields have two primary functions. One is they protect the body, the whole body.

And secondly they can be used offensively to push back the enemy. That's the way riot police primarily use them. And again one of the things the devil hates is people who are faithful.
You know if you think about that of course he would hate that. He would hate people who recklessly trust God even when the circumstances might dictate that that would be the last thing you would think of doing.
The devil hates that. And he'll do what he can to undermine him. we go on to the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit.
And the helmet of salvation is the closest bit of protection that's near your head, the seat of your learning. And we need to be clear in our minds that we are in Christ, that we are saved by grace, not by our effort.
[41:00] Save for good works, not by good works. A big message in Ephesians. And we need to be clear as well, and this is so important in our society today, dominated by mass marketing and dominated by social media.

We do need to exercise some caution around the idea that what we input into our minds will affect the outcomes in our behaviour. I don't know how to advise you on this other than limit your exposure.
Some of you know I like sport a lot, I listen to talk sport, but one of the things that horrifies me, and I've phoned in about it and I've written a letter about it, is every advertisement on talk sport, is for online gambling.
Big, big issue. I was talking to a lady in one of the shops today just down there and I was saying to her, I thought it's a big problem, she's like, you're telling me. I said, why, do you gamble?
She said, no, no, no, but I know someone who does. Take a wild guess as to who that might be.
And so what we put into our minds will affect the outcomes in our behaviour.
[42:26] We'd all like to think that we are, you know, can be, you know, you're not, we all think we're not influenced by mass marketing, but we are.

Why would commercial enterprises spend millions of pounds on mass marketing if it didn't have any impact? I guarantee that, you don't have to shout this out, but there'll be people here who've watched this stuff, and you can't avoid it, to be honest, who've watched this stuff and moderated their behaviour in a certain area by what you've heard.
I mean, you, you know, you'd think we're all mad not to go on cruises. You know, they're so wonderful and so inclusive and all that stuff. Somebody I know went on their first cruise last week and said never again.
It's just one long drunken, you know, festival on board this ship that was cruising around the Canary Islands. And the best offensive weapon in the light of all this is the Word of God.
Do you remember Jesus in the temptation narratives in the three synoptic gospels? every temptation that the devil put before Jesus, Jesus turned back with scripture.
[43:54] And finally, Paul says, pray at all times in the spirit. Why? Because the devil hates faithful and authoritative prayer.

Any kind of prayer, intercessions, which incidentally, not just praying for what I want in every situation. I think when you grow up in Christ, you learn that interceding means you want to pray for what God wants in any and every situation.
Praising God, really important and good thing, it can lift your spirits when you're feeling low. Confession and repentance. And Paul says, do this at all times.
And you think to yourself, I can't do that. you know, I've got stuff to do, I can't, well, I think it's a kind of, it's a way of life that you can foster.
And I still get caught out by it, I still get caught out by, sometimes, you know, I face a situation and because, you know, I've always been a leader, I guess, I'm trying to fix it in my own strength.
[45:05] Trying to come up with a strategy they'll get around it. And the last thing, somebody will say to me, well, don't you want to pray about this, Mike? I'm like, oh, yeah. Good thought. Why don't we?

So, friends, there we are, and I love the end of it, where Paul humbly asks for prayers for himself, that he might preach the gospel, and he uses a kind of personal imperative there and says, which I should.

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And if there's a should that a applies to the church in the western world in the 20th century, it should be preaching the gospel. Not shouting it, preaching it, arguing for, giving a reason for the hope that's within us.
So, friends, that's it, six weeks together, and it's been great to be with you, and I've loved it, and I just want to say a few closing comments before we pray.
last year, when we talked about the seven churches in the book of Revelation, I said that I was wondering whether there would be any of you who might like to go in a pilgrimage and go to those seven churches.
[46:30] And I didn't do anything about it, partly because I forgot to ask you to leave your email addresses, so I had no way of getting hold of you. But I did think about that pilgrimage, and I thought about you, and I've done it, and I thought to myself, there's quite a lot of, you know, days when you're just on a coach for hours.

And I remember, I think it was the church in Smyrna, and we just coached for five hours. And when we got there, it turns out that the only thing that's left of the church in Smyrna is a copper plate on the side of a multi-story car park.
And we're like, you know, that's a bit disappointing. But there are some fun things that we could do by way of a pilgrimage.
And I would love to take a group of Christians from across the churches together. I mean, that's where you really get to know one another. You have a lot of fun, some learning, some worship, some time together in that way.
And so if I come up with a plan, and I, if I've got your email addresses, all I will do is send you the plan. It's up to you then. I've said if you want the Bible school to continue, just put a tick next to your email address.
[47:52] I hope you found it to be of some benefit. I hope it's stimulated to think. But I hope, too, there's been a bit of food for your soul. And in these days when some of us are thinking the future looks a little uncertain, understatement of the year, I hope that in these sessions you might find some hope.

Not in me, but in the Lord Jesus Christ. And as Paul said, you know, he wrote to the saints in Ephesus, and his final words was grace and peace.
Sorry, his opening words were grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Well, friends, grace and peace to you.

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