

Jude 20-23 "Biblical Mercy and Canadian Mercy"

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0 : 0 0] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's just bow our heads in prayer. Father, over these last few weeks, we've looked at some very difficult words from you. And now, Father, we're looking at words that, well, that we resonate with when we read them. But Father, we know that your Word contains mysteries, and we want to know all there is to know of your Word. So we ask, Father, that we give you, Father, an unqualified invitation, unconditional invitation, for you to speak into our hearts and rule our hearts by your Word. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Saviour. Amen. Please be seated.

Yesterday, I did a very bonehead thing, and not yesterday, on Friday, I did a very bonehead thing and left my phone on the roof of my car while I was changing my shoes, because I went to a funeral.

And it was only when I got to the funeral that I realized I'd never taken my phone off the top of my car. And of course, the phone's no longer on the top of my car. Anyway, I don't have a timer. I will try not to speak for 90 minutes. And anyway, turn in your Bibles to Jude chapter, Jude, not chapter, just Jude. And we're going to be looking at verses 20 to 23. And here's the issue. And Jude, by the way, is a tiny little book just before the book of Revelation, which is the last book in the Bible. Some of you might have had questions over the last few weeks when we've been looking at the book of Jude. And especially if you heard what Owen read just a few moments ago, which is what I'm going to look at, what we're all going to look at today as we study the Bible together. Owen read part of it that we are to build ourselves up into the most holy faith, and that we're to keep ourselves in the love of God, and that we're to wait for mercy.

[3 : 1 1] And some of you might have had a question over these last couple of weeks that the Bible seems awfully harsh. The Bible text that we've been reading seems awfully harsh. And we've been wondering if it's a little bit inconsistent, and not even a little bit, but if it's very inconsistent.

And some might have even wondered, why would you want to build yourself up on something which seems to be so harsh? Like, George, you don't normally seem like a harsh person. Maybe you are. But even last week, George, I mean, some of you might have seen some of the short clips and stuff, and you might think, I said harsh things. You know, and if I was to say, well, what do you think of it? Well, you say, George, don't you, you know, don't you talk about, you know, these people that you're saying are godly influencers, that they're going to be like the people that rebelled against God and died in the desert. You sort of compare them to angels that fell, and you're now, they're now demons. You compare them to Sodom and Gomorrah, and its destruction. You talk about how they blaspheme, and they defile the flesh, and you talk about them as if God is going to pronounce this eternal woe on them, woe to them, for they walked in the way of Cain. And like, that just all sounds very, very harsh, George. And so, like, I just really don't understand, like, why would we want to build ourselves up in something which seems to be so harsh? And if you've been wondering that, that's the type of question that our culture would, it's a very good question to ask, actually, right? We're not, we should never be afraid of asking good questions. And why is it that we want to build ourselves up in a faith that seems to talk in such harsh terms about some people? So let's look at it.

Let's look at these four verses. We're only looking at four short verses today. They're very packed. And what I'm going to do is, you're going to see that there's sort of in three, there's three parts this week, and then our final bit of Jude, which we won't look at until the Sunday after Easter.

In some ways, the first little bit, which is the first two verses, is sort of all about growing. The second, it's all part of now that we've, he's described the problem, and which now people are wondering, maybe for two weeks, it's been very harsh. And we're going to now look at how you actually contend for the faith. And the first part is, like, about how you, in a sense, you know, you contend by building yourself up. Then the next bit is about the posture, or the heart, that you should have in terms of contending. And then after we get back from Easter, we'll look at the last bit, which is hope, primarily. What is our great hope in contending? And so let's look at it. And I think that when we look at it a bit more closely, it's going to, we're going to see maybe why it is that we want to build the faith, and even why it is that these harsh words aren't really harsh. There's another way to understand them. So let's read verse 22 and 20, verse 20 and 21. But you, and by the way, in the original language, the but you is emphatic. And I actually really wish, no Bible publisher would ever take my advice on this, but I wish they followed the modern convention. And when there's something emphatic in the text, if they would bold it, because if they bolded it, then we'd get, oh, this is emphatic. Like, it's not just, you know, ta-da, ta-da, ta-da, ta-da. It's like, ta-da, ta-da, ta-da, ta-da. Like there's something there trying to catch your attention. So the but you should be bold in verse 20. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord

Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. Those are four key things about building ourselves up. And you'll notice there, right, it's, there's all these been 14 verses, 15 verses of very hard language comparing these people who are causing problem in the church to be like, like Cain, and like Balaam, and, and all these, and Korah, and, and demons. Like very, very, very apparently harsh language. But now Jude wants us to build ourselves up in the faith. Well, why would we do that? Well, let's listen to this next bit, which is the, the heart behind contending. And it goes like this, verses 22 and 23.

[7:36] And have mercy on those who doubt. Save others by snatching them out of the fire. To others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh, which sounds a bit harsh as well. So let's look at it. Really, in fact, if you wanted to, to try to just get a very simple view of what he's saying here, is there's this fundamental command of, of be merciful.

Like, be a person of mercy. And when you're being a person of mercy, there's three types of people that I'm specifically talking to you about that you have to show mercy towards. First of all, those who have doubts. They've been listening to ungodly influencers. They doubt now a whole pile of key doctrines in the Bible. To doubt means to be in two minds. And now they partly think like the, these people who are rejecting the Christian faith, but appear to be Christians.

And they've, so they hear Christianity, they hear these, you know, this other way of understanding things. And now they're in doubt. They have two minds. And then the second group is actually those who now, they've gone a little bit farther than just doubting. They actually really push back.

They dispute with you. They really are starting to think that maybe this group here, that they're right. And so they push back at those trying to represent what the biblical Christianity is. And then the third group are those, and that's about, they're playing with fire now.

They've gone farther down the path, so to speak. And they're actually trying to put into practice these things, which the Bible says are immoral, that are wrong. And what should our policy be when we're trying to address them? The word snatch is trying to capture this idea of you move towards them forcefully. So you don't, you know, sit here with your hands in your pockets. You don't just sort of shrug your shoulders. You walk towards them. And you deal with them, in a sense, with all that you have to try to deal with them, to deal with their questions, and to deal with what they're saying, to talk to them, and pray for them, and do all of these other things. But you do it with a posture of mercy. Well, this all sounds sort of good, but here's, here's, here's a, mercy's more complicated than we think. And many, many of us are probably thinking of mercy the way Canadian culture thinks of mercy. And Canadian culture does not think of mercy the way the Bible thinks of mercy. So we can hear this, but actually, and we could actually be paying very close attention, but actually we're not hearing what the Bible says. So let me illustrate what I mean by that. So first of all, I think the average Canadian and, and us would agree that showing mercy in general is good. That, you know, if I was to say in a Tim Hortons or some boutique expensive coffee place, you know, in general, showing mercy is a good thing. Well, everybody would just think I've seen a platitude. It would be boring, like, not boring, but they'd all say, yeah, yeah, yeah, that, that's, that's, that's, that's a good thing. But for Canadians, there's a, a bit of a problem, and, and we're very Canadian. And here's the first thing, like, you see, what we think of as mercy is we think that mercy should be shown to those suffering, those who are suffering undeservedly. That's what we think of as mercy.

[10:54] Some of you are way too young to remember the, the, the, the, the shock of the United States and, and many people in the world with the 9-11 attacks on September 1st, um, September 11th, uh, 2001.

And afterwards, George Bush took lots of applause, said, well, God may have mercy on them, but we're sure not going to show them any mercy. We're sure not going to show them any mercy. Why?

Did that get such common applause? Well, because we understand that mercy is what you show to those who are suffering undeservedly. Those who deserve, have done something wrong, they deserve judgment.

They deserve the full weight of the law, so to speak. So that's how the average Canadian thinks, but there's, and, and, and, and here to, to give a, give another example, maybe a non-political example, um, you know, if we found out that there's some faceless bureaucracy, uh, some faceless bureaucracy, and it's, uh, maybe because they've applied the rules incorrectly, or they've been really nitpicky in applying the rules, and as a result of that, you know, some poor, you know, single mom, uh, with, you know, three kids just struggling to get by, they're caught up in the, uh, in that whole mesh, and, and the gears of the bureaucracy, and it's just crushing her, and it gets reported in the media, and all of us would say, listen, she didn't do anything to deserve this. Like, you know, what, whatever the, the nitpicky rules are, surely the minister, or the deputy minister, or the assistant deputy minister can step in, and some mercy should be shown to this person. Like, you know, there, there, there were some honest mistakes being made, uh, they, they don't really deserve such, uh, such, uh, such overbearing treatment. They don't deserve it, so mercy should be shown.

But on the other side, on the other hand, if you read a, an article in a paper about, uh, a very, you know, smart, in quotation marks, businessman, who's been manipulating the rules, and paying, playing fast and loose, and filing false claims for, for the last 10 years, and finally, CRA's caught catching up to, uh, to this guy, and, uh, the, the, the newspapers and the media report on it, and you're saying, no, no, this guy doesn't deserve any mercy, like, bring the hammer down on this guy. Like, he's been cheating on his taxes, he's been lying about his income. Uh, you know, like, a, a good example, a variety of this is, I, I've talked to, to some women over the years, who's, uh, they, uh, they have a divorce, and their husband is very wealthy, but has done remarkable things to try to hide his wealth, his wealth from his wife, so he doesn't have to pay any money. And, you know, we think, if that guy gets caught, like, bring the hammer down on that guy. Like, don't show him mercy. But you see, if you think about it now for, there's still some problems with this. Like, we're all sort of agreeing on this as Canadians, but, but here's, there's some more problems, because I think most people would say that if you show mercy, it shouldn't be, it should be, um, freely given. Uh, it shouldn't be a right. Like, it, you know, mercy, showing mercy is a little bit like being generous. Uh, if the state takes 50% of your income, they can't say thank you for your generosity. Because you want to say, well, to be honest, if I wanted to be generous, give me back the 50% of my income, and then we'll see how generous I want to be to you. It's not, it's not generous if they require it of you, right? And, and so, you know, it's almost, so somehow, on one hand, we think of mercy, it should involve freedom and something like generosity. But on the other hand, when we think of it as something you should show to somebody who's suffering undeservedly, then it becomes a right. So it's not really mercy at all, if you, if you think about it.

[14 : 53] So another example would be, um, if you call up 9-11 because, you know, uh, the person you're with looks as if they've gone into cardiac arrest, you don't thank the ambulance driver, the paramedics, for being merciful. No, they're supposed to come. Like, if they don't come, you're going to complain, right? That's not mercy. That's just dealing with it. There's, right? So, but here's the other, here's the other thing. It's also not mercy if, you know, I use some of those examples, if, you know, maybe the husband who's hiding his income so he doesn't have to pay his, his, uh, his, uh, ex-wife, the child support, which he should, he can pay and he should pay.

Um, but if he claims that he needs some mercy and he wants to be treated differently, once again, remember I've said we, we wouldn't think that that's mercy. Um, we won't go through a list, but when President Trump, just before he lost the election and had to hand over power to Biden, he pardoned a whole pile of people. And if you were a Trump supporter, you'd say, yes. If you're a Biden part, uh, supporter, you'd go that dirty rat, despicable guy. Those cronies of his don't reserve mercy. They're guilty. That's just injustice. Now the shoe will be on the other foot.

I have, I'm not making any predictions, but if Biden loses this election and Trump comes in, nobody's going to take a bet of me of a hundred dollars that Biden's not going to pardon a whole pile of his cronies, probably his son, not getting political. I should, I apologize for having said that. But, um, uh, and you know, once again, people who are Biden supporters, they'll say, yeah, that's good that he should show mercy to those people. But Trump supporters, you know, no, no, that's, that's just complete and utter injustice. Those guys are guilty. They don't deserve mercy.

That's injustice. So here we see that we're a little bit, we're, we're a bit caught that we sort of, on one hand, we think, okay, yeah, we should be showing mercy. But on, on one hand, we think we should be showing mercy, but we only show mercy to people who, who don't deserve the suffering. Uh, but on the other hand, if people start to demand us to show mercy to them as a right, then it's not really mercy, is it? Because mercy should be something which we, we offer freely, like, like, um, like, uh, like being generous. And on the other hand, as well, you should never show mercy to somebody who, who actually deserves the punishment that they're getting. That's not mercy, that's injustice. And, and, and, and if it's, you can't have mercy and, and justice fighting with each other. Yeah, you, you, you, you need to, they, they have to, they have to be at peace with each other. And so there can't be any type of injustice at all with mercy. And all of a sudden, this simple text, if you press into it, it realizes that there's some problems with it. We all begin as Canadians as saying that mercy should be something that we should do. But there's lots of problems with it because most of the time, well, here's where it gets even more problematic. I think as you get older, when you're, when I was young, I thought that most of the time what I needed was justice. If, if people would just understand what went on and I got justice, that would be good. But as I get older, I think most of the time what I need is mercy, not justice. And sometimes I think I need justice. A lot of times what I realize is I need some mercy. I need people to show me some mercy.

But now we're sort of, we're, we're, we're stuck because you see really half the time, no, that's not true. 80% of the time, no, actually that's not true. Probably 99% of the time when I'm hoping I get mercy, really what I am is somebody who's been a supporter of Biden, who wants Biden to give me mercy just before he leaves office. So I evade justice.

[18 : 57] In other words, what I'm really looking for is God to treat me different. I'm, I'm hoping that God will in a sense forget about justice when he looks at me and give me mercy.

mercy. And if I'm at all self-aware and I, I, I'd say to another person, God, don't show that person mercy because of, they, they really deserve this. But in my heart, I'm asking for the exact, I'm asking for that, for God to, to be set justice aside. And then we realize we're, see, the fact of the matter is, is if God was to treat us with perfect justice, we would be screwed.

We might think to ourselves that we're pretty good people. And we probably are. And we might forget all of those things that we've done that deserve some type of justice that have not, then that justice has not fallen on them. But you can be absolutely guaranteed that if God was to do a little, a survey about the people that we've hurt, uh, they would paint a very different picture of us than we try to portray for ourselves.

And if, if God was to now reveal our inner life, the motivations as to why we do things and how we think about other people, and that was to be revealed to other people, and they could then comment on it.

They'd say, no, no, don't count George as a good person, God. Did you, you hear, did you see what he was thinking? Did you, did you see why he did that? Like, did, God, did you see? Like, George, George, God, if you were to show George mercy, you're being unjust.

[20 : 44] There are many in our culture who feel trapped. They feel locked in. They know, they long for mercy, but they also know that they've done wrong. A couple of weeks ago, I, I was getting a coffee at a, at one of my favorite coffee places, and the person dealing with the coffee at first, it looked like they'd made a mistake on the cash.

And they said, I think I might have made a mistake, and I, I'm sure you didn't, you don't make mistakes. And they, they, they looked at me, and they paused. They said, you don't know me. If you knew me, you would never say I don't make mistakes. She didn't say it with a smile. She said it with a type of sadness.

She said it with a type of sadness. And somebody that is locked in, they long for mercy, but they've done wrong. The biblical gospel proclaims that God's mercy triumphs over justice, so that his mercy is extended to the undeserving. That's what we don't understand about this text. When this text is telling us to show mercy, it's not saying just to show mercy to people who deserve, who don't deserve their punishment. Biblical mercy, the whole message of the gospel is that God shows mercy to the undeserving. And he does it in a way that is not unjust.

You see, if you think about people being trapped, and there's this combination of they really long, that somebody would show them mercy, but they also understand that they've done these, these really bad things, and they feel trapped. And in a sense, that trap or that lock, there's a, there is in fact a lock hole, a keyhole there. And only the person of Jesus fits that lock and can unlock you that you will be free.

It is not found in any other religion, any other spirituality, any other philosophy. Only the gospel, only Jesus is that very unique lock, a key that goes into the lock and can turn it and can free you.

[23 : 05] God's mercy triumphs over justice. His mercy is extended to the undeserving. I mean, when Jesus is first introduced in his public ministry, he's described as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The whole, our whole understanding of Jesus in this is that Jesus is the one who never sinned. He, he lived the perfect life, the life that we should live that we were not able to live. The whole point of his virgin birth is that he, in a sense, becomes the second Adam. Our first Adam and Eve sinned and rebelled God, and we are all in, in a sense, that lineage of that Adam and Eve, and that we have now that propensity to sin, and we also sin, and we do things which deserve some type of punishment and some type of justice. The justice of the universe cries out against us, and we hold our ears to stop hearing it, but the cry for justice against us is very, very loud, and God, the Son of God, takes on flesh. He lives that sinless life. He lives that sinless life. He is the one who can represent us, and he walked amongst us, so he can, he can, not only is he one who can represent us, he identified with us, he experienced the temptations that we suffer only without sin, and he offers his life upon the cross as a substitute. He says, George, I can represent you,

I understand you, I see right into the depths of who you are, and I am willing to die in the cross instead of you, and I am willing to offer my life as a substitute and exchange my life for yours, and I do it willingly. That's the whole point of the miracles, the miracles of how can one who walks on the water, how could he die upon a cross? How can one who can multiply bread die upon a cross? How can one who raises the dead die upon the cross? How can one who stills the waves die upon a cross?

How can he do that unless he allows himself to die out of love for you? Because those nails could not hold him.

And if on the last day, and there is a great plain, and God says, consider this person, George, has George ever wronged you? And God plays all of my thoughts, all of the things I've done, all of my desires, all of my reasons, and he plays it before the whole room, the whole great plain, and the cry would be, he deserves judgment, George deserves judgment, George deserves judgment. And then there would be a second thing played, and Jesus seen every single one of those things that I have done in my life, all of my thoughts, all of my desires. And Jesus then says to the assembly, I saw all of those things, and I knew George when I offered to die on the cross for him.

And he accepted my offer. And so God himself can say to the gathered crowds, the universe demanding justice, that Jesus' death upon the cross, God's justice has been maintained.

[26 : 33] Because Jesus died as my representative, as my substitute. And Jesus does that in mercy.

I did not deserve God's mercy, but God's mercy is extended to me. There's a beautiful hymn. Deborah and I were just talking. She's going to try to teach it to the congregation. It's one of those hymns that, it's called My Song is Love Unknown.

And I was telling her for back in the day, those old ancient days when people sang hymns, congregations had a love-hate relationship with the hymn, My Song is Love Unknown.

Google it. Because it's sort of complicated to sing, My song is love unknown. My Savior is love. Like it goes slow, it goes fast, it goes up and it goes down.

It's a bit complicated. But once you master, it's a beautiful hymn. And it has one of this beautiful, beautiful line in it. Love for the loveless shown, that you might lovely be. That's the gospel.

[27 : 35] Love for the loveless shown, that you might lovely be. And that's to be our posture and our heart as we're dealing with those who doubt as we deal.

Because of ungodly influencers taking them away from this truth. You see, this. See, now go back. Who wouldn't want to build their life on that truth? The truth of the gospel.

Who wouldn't want to build their life on that? Who wouldn't want to grow into that? Who wouldn't want to learn to enjoy and celebrate that and praise God for that?

And if you have people in the church taking you away from that and say, No, no, no, that's not how it works. No, no, no, that's how it works. Well, then you see, here's the thing. True love says strong words to protect people from ruinous danger.

That's what Jude did. He, because of his mercy, because of God's mercy, he says strong words to wake us up because of true ruin, true danger.

[28 : 53] Understanding mercy. And it's a very, very hard. In a sense, this mercy that is offered to you in the person of Jesus, that's what the Bible teaches.

And it's when you understand the person of Jesus that you really understand the Bible. And now go back, just in closing, go back and look at these commands in verses 20 to 21 and say to yourself, Why wouldn't I want to build my life into this?

Like, what's more beautiful? What's more hopeful? Like, there's nothing. There's nothing.

Listen to verse 20 and 21 again. If you could put it up on the screen, that would be great. Just very briefly. But you, beloved, building yourself up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourself in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

Remember, he spent verses 5 to 19 talking about the character and the shape of these people who are causing problems in the church. And Nietzsche has a very true thing to say.

[30 : 07] It's actually a very biblical thing, even though he was an atheist and hated Christianity. He said a very Christian thing when he said those. I think it's something to the effect of, beware of looking into the abyss, because the abyss looks back at you.

And there can be a great problem if you spend all of your time thinking about evil, because evil can start to form you. And so what we see here, right, he's given the problem, and he's now giving these three things, these areas that we have to go in to contend for the faith.

And so what he's beginning, it's just like in the airplane. In the airplane, at the beginning of the time, just before you take off, or just after you take off, the stewardess or the steward gets up and, you know, describes how in the event of some accident or some problem, the oxygen masks will have dropped down.

And every time they say that, I inwardly say, and you should start to pray to your God because you're about to meet your maker. That's what I actually think they should say. I think they should actually have a little card that says the Lord's Prayer.

They should say, yeah, get the oxygen things, but read the Lord's Prayer because you're about to die. But obviously that wouldn't be a good thing to say on an airplane just as you're taken off. But the principle, I always say you put the oxygen mask on yourself first and then you can help others.

[31 : 19] And that's what he's doing here. He's saying, listen, you can get into trouble if you spend all your time thinking about error. You need to fill yourself up on the truth. You need to feed on the truth. You need to build yourself up on the truth.

You do this first. Do this first. And then you see error more clearly. And you have these four commands. And the first one is, and it's hard to translate into English, but the word build yourself, it actually has this double meaning.

You build yourself on the faith and into the faith. That's the first thing it's telling you. Build yourself on the faith, and the faith is this message of mercy which unlocks the Bible.

And you read the Bible, and you start to see how it's, and the Bible and the whole counsel of God, and it's not just, you know, truth about God and truth about yourself, but it's truth about right and wrong.

And it will influence how your imagination works, and how your desires work, and how your longings work, and your affection. And it touches how you live your life in terms of your sexuality, and how you live in relationship with money, and how you live in relationship with power, and how you live in terms of your relationship with the state, and all of these types of things.

[32 : 32] And you want to build yourself up on this profound bedrock of mercy. That's what you build yourself on, and you build into it at the same time. And that's the first command.

And all of these commands, they're both personal and communal. It's saying both, George, this is what you should do. And it's saying, Church of the Messiah, this is what you should do. It's both personal, and it's communal.

Verse 20, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. It's holy because it comes from God. And the second thing is, pray in the Holy Spirit. Be people of prayer.

Pray into this situation. And the Holy Spirit's not saying about speaking in tongues. If you have the gift of speaking in tongues, well, praise God. Go ahead and speak in tongues. But it's not just that you have to speak in tongues. It's saying that you have to understand that the Holy Spirit desires to have you pray.

The Holy Spirit will empower you to pray, and that you should ask God for the Holy Spirit's help in praying, that He might give you energy, to pray. He might guide and direct your prayers, and that you want to pray to God, and about other people, and about yourself, and you want to be understood as a person of prayer, and praying in the Holy Spirit.

[33 : 41] You know, there's that wonderful thing. I can't remember the name of the hymn. It says, Tune my heart to sing your praise. That's capturing this idea about the Holy Spirit. Tune my heart so I can pray.

And then verse 21, John, keep yourself in the love of God. Keep yourself in the love of God. We've just heard about the love of God, and it is profound mercy. And John, if you go back and you read, I don't have time to do this right now.

If you go back and you read John chapter 14, verses 15 to 24. John chapter 14, verses 15 to 24. Jesus says, The way you love God is by keeping his commands.

Obedience is key to knowing God and knowing his love. And then finally, it says, this fourth command is wait.

Learn to wait. And look what you're waiting for. Waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. Now, George, didn't you just say that you receive that mercy when you give your life to Christ?

[34 : 53] You see, you have to understand all three tenses of this. This is what's so beautiful, folks. It's so beautiful. I have received mercy. I am receiving mercy.

I will receive mercy. It isn't as if I have some mercy to become a Christian, and then after that, it just, you're all up on your own. No. It begins with mercy.

You breathe mercy. It continues with mercy. And the end is mercy. It's mercy all the way down and all the way up and all the breadth and breadth. It's all mercy.

And waiting is about hope. You know, it can be really hard if you get concerned about ungodly influences. That's a very important message for the church. Many of us know institutions are crumbling around us.

If Jesus doesn't come back in the next 20 years, the denominational framework of Canada and the institutional Christian framework of Canada will be quite different.

[35 : 58] Many parachurch organizations will no longer exist. Many denominations will no longer exist. There'll be merges and there'll be new organizations. And sometimes it can get you really down when you see how ungodly influencers are persuading whole churches and groups of people to leave the Christian faith and embrace something that is not going to unlock your soul, that's not going to lead you to Jesus.

And we can get down. That's why it's really important to practice hope, to learn to wait. They might win the battle over this denomination.

They might get to keep a property and others might have to walk away. But I don't say this with any type of boasting whatsoever.

I am one who received, I am one who does not deserve mercy who received mercy in the person of Jesus. And the final word about me that God will say is when I enter death and I see God face to face and he will smile at me and he will say welcome.

Not because of my deserving, but because of Christ. And that joy, that joy, that joy, that joy, that joy, that joy, that joy.

[37 : 30] That joy, that joy, that joy, and that joy, that joy is when I enter death well, that joy. That joy, that joy, that joy, that joy, that joy, that joy, that joy, that joy. for the faith. And it's worth remembering the final word about you. So you might have strength for this day and strength for tomorrow.

And all the more while you want to walk towards those leading people astray and pray for them and share the Bible with them and share arguments with them and urge them to turn.

Urge them to turn. I want to just close by this idea of the waiting. I want to read in closing. In fact, why don't you stand while I read it? It's 2 Corinthians 4, verses 16 to 18.

It's a verse that many of you know and have memorized. 2 Corinthians 4, 16 to 18. So we do not lose heart. We do not lose heart.

Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. God's grace is working. For this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.

[38 : 54] For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. I'm going to continue reading. For we know that if the tent, that is our body, that is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

For in this tent, we may groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling. just skipping down. But we know that mortal will be swallowed up by life.

And he who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given his Holy Spirit as a guarantee. That is our blessed hope. I invite you just to bow your heads in prayer.

Okay. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you extended mercy to the undeserving in the person of your Son, in his life and death and resurrection.

Father, we ask that you would help us to remember what he has done for us on the cross, that you would have the truth of what he did and what he accomplished.

[40 : 10] We give you thanks and praise that he is present with us, that the Holy Spirit indwells us. And we ask, Father, that you help us to build ourselves up in this faith, that you help us to pray in the Holy Spirit, that you help us to be kept in your love, and that you help us to wait in hope for the new heavens and the new earth, for our new resurrection bodies.

And having a posture of mercy, Father, help us to deal with all with a posture of mercy, with merciful prayer and merciful words, knowing, Father, that sometimes those words will have to be very strong and bold and clear.

But, Father, may you purge our hearts from any vain glory or anger, and may it be mercy, mercy that we stand on, mercy that propels us, mercy that draws us, mercy that shapes us.

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