

The Church Prophetic

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[0:00] Well, if you'd open up your Bibles to Revelation chapter 10, as you're turning there, I just want to let you know we've got a special guest with us this morning. Isaiah the prophet has come and joined us from heaven for a little bit.

So Isaiah, welcome, welcome. Thank you, Mike. Isaiah, I've got two questions for you. The first one is this.

If you could sum up your prophetic ministry in one word, what would it be? Well, Mike, I don't need to think about it that much. It's the word bittersweet. And here's why. The sweetness of being a prophet is being given God's word, hope-giving word.

You know it's true. You know it's God speaking. It is so sweet. And there is sweetness when you proclaim God's saving message to people under his judgment and you see people respond and get saved.

That is sweet. But here's the bitterness. It's when you proclaim this message of salvation to people who don't have ears to hear.

[1:10] And they reject the message. It's heartbreaking. It's so bitter. But that's only half of it. Because when you proclaim God's saving message to people under his judgment and they reject it, they're going to reject you.

And sometimes they will hurt you. This prophetic ministry is bittersweet, Mike.

Did you have another question? Oh, in fact, I do. Isaiah. Isaiah, if you could say one thing to Christ the King Church, what would you say? Christ the King Church.

For you to be a faithful church, you must be a prophetic church. Take the scroll. Eat the scroll. Preach the scroll. Thank you, Isaiah. Here we are in Revelation chapter 10. Let me try to orient you as to where we as a church in 2019 are on Revelation's time frame.

[2:24] Okay? Here we are. Here we are. We are somewhere in between the hoof beats of seal six. And we are the seal judgments.

And we are between the seal judgments and the final trumpet of the trumpet judgments. Of Revelation 11, 15. We're somewhere in there. God's turning up the heat.

We're somewhere before the coming of Jesus. And when Jesus comes, the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

So here's the question that I want to ask and answer this morning. What are we to be doing as a church in between? What are we to be doing?

And what we're going to see this morning, the answer from God in his word is, Christ the King Church, you must be prophetic. You must be prophetically present in the city of Kenosha.

[3:34] As God turns up the heat of judgment. Just like the prophets of old. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

These men who were given God's very words to proclaim to people under his judgment so that they would be saved. Christ the King Church.

You must be prophetic. I want to be up front with you this morning. To be prophetic is to experience bittersweet.

We'll see that in a little bit. Let me give you your bearings again on terms of Revelation 10.

Revelation 10 and the first half of Revelation 11, it's kind of a break in the action in the trumpet cycles of judgment.

So there's seven trumpets. And in between the sixth trumpet and the seventh trumpet, we have this, what scholars call an interlude. It's chapter 10 and the first half of chapter 11.

[4:42] And this isn't the first time we've experienced this. Because back in the seal judgments, between the sixth seal and the seventh seal, there was another interlude in which God addresses the church.

And so both these interludes between the sixth and seventh judgments, seals and trumpets, God is addressing the church.

What are we supposed to be doing in the midst of God turning up the heat of judgment? Well, what's interesting about chapter 10 in the first half of 11 in chapter Revelation is that we're given these very interesting pictures of John being recommissioned as a prophet.

And then in chapter 11, 1 through 13, we're going to see a story of two witnesses that get thumped. So here's what these messages are to us as God turns up the heat of judgment.

The first one, chapter 10, which we're going to look at today is, the faithful church is a prophetic church. And then the second, which we'll see next week, is that the faithful church is a suffering church.

[5:58] And here's why. Prophetic ministry and suffering, more often than not, goes hand in hand. Maybe we'll bring in Jeremiah next week to ask him about it.

Chapter 10 answers the question of what the church must be doing while God is turning up the heat of the judgments. And what we're going to see in chapter 10 is this picture, vision unfolding with the initial focus on an angel with a scroll, and he is called a mighty angel for a reason.

And then the vision unfolds from this mighty angel with a scroll to John, the writer of Revelation, being given that scroll to eat.

So there are two scenes of this vision, and they're designed to help us as a church to be faithful to Jesus today. A faithful church is a prophetic church.

So let's walk through these scenes, and I'm going to bring these things to bear as we go through.

So scene one, this angel with the scroll. And there's several things I want you to notice about this angel.

[7:20] Then all of a sudden there's this twist, and then we have this angelic announcement that we see at the end of this section. So first, some descriptions of this mighty angel.

Well, take a look at this, because this mighty angel coming down from heaven, he's wrapped in a cloud. He's got a rainbow over his head. And he's got a rainbow over his head. His face is like the sun.

And his legs are like pillars of fire. And when you look at your Bibles, you realize those are all descriptions of God at some point. This is a God-like angel.

So much so, some scholars think that this is actually Jesus. But I find myself not persuaded because John is very clear that this is another angel.

This mighty angel does have kind of God-like aura about him. But it's because he's coming from the very presence of God.

[8:28] He's radiating God's glory from being in the presence of God's glory. This is an impressive angel. The second thing I want you to notice is the movement.

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He's coming from heaven. From the very throne room of God. From God's very presence.

Now this is in stark contrast to last week about all those demonic locust plague coming from the hell hole. This angel, mighty angel, is coming down from heaven.

And implied in that is that he's been sent. He's coming down to earth with a purpose.

From God. The third thing I want you to notice is his stance. Now I spent a lot of time as a former athlete being trained by coaches that when I am out in the field I need to have an athletic stance.

[9:37] Feet shoulder width apart. Slight bend in my legs. Do I have an amen from any further athletes? Amen. Head on a swivel. You got it. This angel does not have an athletic stance.

He's got an authoritative stance. Did you notice that? He's got one foot on the sea. End of verse 2. And his other foot is on the land.

This angel is straddling sea and land. He's got all authority over sea and land. And not to mention, he's bigger than any Paul Bunyan statue you've ever seen.

He's massive. Colossal. This angel has come down on a mission and he is massive and brilliant. The scene is meant to impress you. The fourth thing I want you to notice is back in verse 1. It's this is another mighty angel. And whenever you read something like that, you're like, wait, wait.

[10:49] There was one before? And the answer to that is yes. If you flip back to chapter 5, verse 1. We're back in the throne room. Then I saw on the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written and on the back, within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

You remember that scroll? Verse 2. And I saw a mighty angel. That's the reference. And what was he doing? He said, you know, proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?

Remember what John did? John freaked out. He started crying after that. Good things happened. Here we have a reference to another angel. Another mighty angel.

The angel that we see in Revelation 5, 2 is a mighty angel that is in the very throne room of God. He's very in the presence of God. And he is talking about a scroll.

A closed, sealed scroll. Here in chapter 10, verses 1 and 2, we have this other mighty angel coming from heaven.

[11:59] Reflecting the glory of God's presence. And in his hand, he is carrying a scroll. Opened.

Which brings me to the fifth thing I want you to notice. This scroll in his hand. What scroll is this? Well, first, let me just remind you where he's coming from. He's coming from heaven. This is a scroll from heaven. And did you notice?

It's a little scroll. Now, I'm going to save you a lot right now. There is so much out there on the little scroll. What is this little scroll?

So, what I'm about to tell you is my best shot at it. It's my opinion on it. You may disagree. That's okay. Why is this a little scroll?

[12:59] Well, I think the simplest and best explanation to the little scroll is it's because of the size of the angel. The angel's huge.

He's straddling sea and land. Of course, it's going to look little. But what's more important to its apparent size is that it's opened.

It's an opened scroll. It means it has been opened in heaven, brought to earth. It's because it's been unsealed by the lamb.

I believe this little scroll is the same scroll that began in the right hand of the one seated on the throne, Revelation 5.1. To be taken by the lamb and unsealed.

Now to be given to his angel. We'll come back to that, Revelation 1.1. Who then is now bringing it to earth to give to John and commission him as a prophet.

[14:03] Who then, John, is giving to us through the book of Revelation. This is God's plan for the fullness of time realized in Jesus.

You can shorthand it by saying it's the revelation of Jesus Christ. Revelation 1.1. It's about what God is doing to save sinners in the person of Jesus.

This mighty angel is coming down from God's presence. With God's opened plan for the fullness of time. It's revealed, made known, and to be made known.

And this angel is coming down to earth to give it to John to proclaim. And to pass on. And now you guys ready for the twist?

Verses 3 and 4. This angel calls out with a loud voice like a roaring lion. It would have reverberated in John. And when he called out, the seven thunders sounded.

[15:10] Whoa, that's really interesting. Verse 4. And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write. But I heard a voice from heaven saying, seal up what the seven thunders have said.

And do not write it down. This is really interesting. What is this? What is this all about? This mighty angel straddling sea and land. Holding the open scroll.

He's calling out in a loud voice. John's ready to write it down. John, Revelation 1.19, because he was to write down everything he saw for us.

John's about to write it down. And then there's this voice from heaven that says, no, we're not going to do that. We're not doing the seven thunders.

Seal it. Close it. Don't write it.

[16:10] This is not to be passed on. Pretty interesting, isn't it? What's this all about? Well, here's how we're going to figure it out.

Has anything like this happened before? Has there been an angel that has pronounced something and then something big happens? Well, we've seen it. So in Revelation 6.1, 6.3, 6.5, 6.7, these living creatures, these angelic beings around the throne, they call out, come, and one of the horsemen comes.

Judgment. Judgment. And then when we go to the seven trumpets, do you remember what happens? An angel raises a trumpet, blows his trumpet, judgment comes.

So what we see here is angels. What I'm trying to make a case is angels calling forth judgment. It's interesting that these are seven thunders.

Because there's been seven letters to the churches. Seven seals of judgment. Seven trumpets of judgment. And what we're going to see in a little while, weeks out, seven bowls of God's judgment.

[17:28] This angel appears to be calling for seven thunder judgments. Another cycle of judgments. That's to take place. That's to take place after the trumpets and before the bowls.

And this voice is saying, no. Seal it. Don't write it down. That's a twist.

That should catch your attention. What is going on here? This voice is saying that these seven judgments of thunder aren't going to happen.

And what these judgments would consist of, we don't know. But what we do know is that they would have extended the time before God's full and final judgment would fall.

And so what these seven thunders must represent are another cycle of wrath that would have been partially poured out on all creation.

[18:41] So why is this voice, who has authority to execute God's plan for the fullness of time from heaven, nixing the thunder, seven thunder judgments?

You know this voice. Flip back to Matthew 24. Matthew 24 is a section in the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus himself is teaching about the end times.

So I'm going to help you see what's going on here through Jesus' own words. Chapter 24, verses 21 and 22.

For then there will be great tribulation, such, this is Jesus speaking, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now. No, it never will be.

And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short.

[19:47] What's going on here? The cutting short of those days. This mighty angel was about to call down another cycle of judgments, but the lamb cuts it short for the sake of his blood-bought own.

This, my friends, is mercy. He limits, he knows the suffering of his people, and he's limiting the suffering of his people.

He sees the hard-heartedness of those who don't repent of the fifth and sixth trumpet, and he also hears his saints, How long, O Lord?

He cuts it short out of mercy for his blood-bought. And then what we see in verses 5 through 7 is this kind of adjustment.

The mighty angel is about to call down the seven thunder judgments. He raises his right hand. It was a way to indicate you're going to take an oath.

[21:00] And he swears by the one who lives forever and ever, the creator of all, of heaven and everything in it, of earth and everything in it, and of the sea and everything in it. And remind you, he's standing over the sea and the land.

And he says, as an oath, there will be no more delay. No more delay. No more partial judgments. We're going to go straight from the seventh trumpet to the seven bowls. God's full and final outpouring of his wrath on all creation.

And in so doing, God's plan is fulfilled.

If you flip in your Bibles to Revelation chapter 15, 1, what you see happening is this.

[22:01] Then I saw another sign in the heaven, great and amazing seven angels with seven plagues. If you look quickly over to 15, 7, those seven

plagues then take the form of bowls, bowls of God's wrath.

And these, back to 15, 1, these seven plagues, which are the last. For with them the wrath of God is finished, fulfilled, finalized.

Turn to 16, 7. The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne saying, It is done.

Fulfilled. Finished. Finished. So when this angel swears that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call, that seventh trumpet to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled.

He's talking about the fulfillment of God's just wrath on earth, poured out by the seven bowl judgments, just as he announced to his servants, the prophets of the great and final day of the Lord.

[23:13] Shocking. So what happens here in verses 1 through 7 is that there's this angel who brings an open scroll, and he's a brilliant angel, and he's announcing another cycle judgment, but he's interrupted by this heavenly voice in order to cut short the days of suffering for God's elect, and therefore the seventh trumpet is going to usher into God's full and final wrath.

But this nixing of the thunder judgments doesn't change what this angel had come down to give John, because in this angel's hand remains an open scroll in which we all will be called to prophesy. A faithful church is a prophetic church. So would you turn with me now to verses 8 through 11, the second scene where John is recommissioned as a prophet, and we are commissioned as prophets. John's faithfulness, for John to be faithful, he must be prophetic. And for us to be faithful, we must be prophetic.

And so there are three words I want to help you see. We're just going to get us through this last section. I want you to see the word take, I want you to see the word eat, and I want you to see the word prophesy.

[24:52] Let's look at that word take in verse 9. This voice that I heard from heaven, excuse me, verse 8, this voice that I heard from heaven spoke to me again.

The same voice that has just nixed the thunder judgments. That voice says to John, go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who's standing on the sea and on the land.

Go. Here's the significance of what's going on here. This is a chain link of transmission of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Here's what's going on. This scroll started in the hand of the one seated on the throne. And then it goes from his hand into the hands of the lamb who breaks open its seal.

And then the scroll opened is given to this angel who then brings it down to earth and now is going to give it to John who's going to take it, eat it, and prophesy it and write it down to give to us to take and to eat and to prophesy.

[26:27] If you flip back to Revelation chapter 1, 1, I'm not making this stuff up. The revelation of Jesus Christ, shorthand for the contents of the scroll.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, Jesus Christ, to show his servants, us, the things that must soon take place.

But you're saying there's only three links in that chain, Salvati. Well, look next. He made it known, Jesus made it known by sending his angel, mighty angel, just come down, straddling sea and land. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who then gives it to us. Five links. God, Jesus, angel, John, us.

And John's got to take it. John's got to take it. Go and take it.

[27:34] Go take the scroll, John. This has so many similarities to the callings of the prophets in the Old Testament, Ezekiel in particular.

A scroll, God's saving message for those under judgment to save them, given to a prophet for him to proclaim so that God's people would be rescued back to him.

And what John is being told here is, John, you've got to take the scroll. You've got to lay your hand on it. But the scroll was for him to take.

He's addressing John. And here's how I want to apply this for us. John's prophetic commissioning is like our prophetic commissioning.

We are to grab hold of this revelation of Jesus Christ. That's where it starts. We got to realize this is being given to us.

[28:43] We take the revelation to ourselves. This scroll, this making known of God's plan for the fullness of time in the person of Jesus.

This is calling. This is entrustment. This is being given God's message for us to do something with. And we have got to take it. Another way to think about it is, brother, sister in Christ, God intends for you to grab hold of this revelation.

And for us to do it as a church, we move from taking this to eating it.

We read, I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll and he said to me, take and eat it. Eat it, the scroll, will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.

[30:01] And I took the little scroll, verse 10, from the hand of the angel and I ate it. And it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

Eat it. He took it, now he's got to eat it. Again, the calling of Ezekiel in Ezekiel chapter 3, God gives him a scroll, his message for the people of that time who were under judgment, for him to eat it and to call them to rescue, call them out of judgment.

Eating it, this is a really interesting way to talk about it. It's a picture of internalizing God's revelation. of internalizing God's message. Have you ever been to, you know, you're talking to somebody and you're like talking really fast to them and you're giving them a lot of information and they say, whoa, whoa, you know what, give me a second, I just need a minute to digest what you're saying.

To take it to heart. To fully grasp it. To take it personally. John is not just simply to take this.

[31:27] We're simply not to take it. We're to eat it. Internalize it. Claim it as our own.

This angel says, hey, when you eat it, it's going to make your stomach bitter and your mouth it's going to be sweet. Internalizing this revelation of Jesus Christ will have a bittersweet effect.

The sweetness is recognizing the truth of what we are ingesting. The truth of how things really are. The truth of who God is. Of who we are. Of what he's done in Jesus and our need to respond. And the sweetness is knowing that having responded to this message ourselves in repentance and faith. We have peace with God. Healing. But the bitterness what we will see is that the heartache of this of this scroll and its contents the revelation of Jesus Christ it's when we when we take it in and then when we proclaim it when this message falls on deaf ears because those deaf ears belong to a dead heart and when those this message falls on deaf ears you realize that this good news is now a warning message of judgment.

[33:14] It's hard. It's a heartache especially when the people that you want most to tell this to are the people you love the most. And then the bitterness is of course the hurt that can come when we proclaim this message of God in Christ for those under his judgment and they're like nope don't buy it and by the way how dare you suggest that my lifestyle is offensive to your God.

I won't forget that and you'll suffer for it. What can happen is the bitterness of this message is not only seeing the heartache of people who don't take it in themselves but it's the the reaction towards us the messengers for faithfully proclaiming the message to them.

in verse 10 John eats the scroll and he experiences both the sweetness and the bitterness and so will we but brothers and sisters you must eat the scroll you've got to internalize it yourself you've got to internalize the revelation of Jesus Christ God's plan for the fullness of time realized in Jesus you've got to own it not because your parents own it not because your spouse owns it not because your church owns it you need to own it yourself because you become personally convinced of its truthfulness and its necessity it's personal when I was a college student I spent a couple summers out in New Jersey on the shore and I would watch construction workers build boardwalks and these huge pile driving machines there would be this pile unloaded and it was like this big telephone pole and this pile driver would use steam and just hammer this pile on down through layers and layers of sand until it hit bedrock wasn't moving now you can build your board walk internalizing the gospel of Jesus

Christ is very similar it's a process of God driving the truth of who Jesus is all the way down into the bedrock of your heart where it will find uncompromising conviction you build on it how do you

become convinced of this how do you how does this process of conviction happen well you prayerfully study your Bible you get into a life group among other people who are saying I want to be convinced of this too I know it's true Jenny and I have the privilege of leaving a life group ourselves and we're going through the gospel of Mark and the gospel of Mark is this gospel pile driver that is driving Jesus down onto the bedrock of our hearts uncompromising conviction internalized and when you've internalized the message now you're ready to preach it now you're ready to speak it now you're ready to prophesy in verse 11 we read this and I was told you must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings after John takes the scroll after John eats the scroll John is now to prophesy the scroll do you see the word must you must again prophesy it's the nature of calling it's burden it's I've got to I've internalized this I know it's true I know it's necessary I've got to speak this it's not an optional calling but a mandatory calling you must again prophesy it's not enough for John to take it's not enough for John to eat John must prophesy he must speak God's message his revelation of [38:35] Jesus Christ to the peoples and nations and languages and kings from whom God will draw out a company a multitude who will worship him you must again prophesy remember John was exiled to that rock pile called Patmos for the testimony of Jesus and so here he's being told John your prophetic days aren't over buddy you got to get back out in it and preach again this revelation of Jesus Christ on this scroll given to you and hey if you're kind of wondering whoa what is this revelation of Jesus Christ business what is this prophesying business it's making me a little uncomfortable turn back to Revelation 19 verse 10 it's not complicated we're told what is at the heart of this prophesying in 19 10 second last sentence of the verse for the testimony of

Jesus is the spirit of prophecy do you know what the heart of prophecy is do you want to know what the essence of prophecy is do you want to know what the breath of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus it's all about Jesus this open scroll is God's plan for the fullness of time in Christ by Christ for Christ and John must proclaim it and we must proclaim it too you may be thinking wait wait wait I thought this sounds like more of a calling of

John the prophet but hey I thought you said this was about the church just let me remind you of the five link chain of transmission starts with God on the throne goes to the lamb angel comes down gives it to John and John is writing it for us to take eat and for us to proclaim we must speak of the of Jesus and of all that he is into the lives of others around us we do that prayerfully and we do that boldly spirit empowered courageous if you're afraid to speak of Jesus if you're too busy to speak of Jesus you need to eat the message more it's got to be driven down more and then you'll be able to preach it to you might be wondering what do I say to someone who I love and I know the wrath of God is coming I'm afraid for them I want good for them I want to tell them about Jesus what do I tell them so that they can be saved I'm going to refer you to a book it's called what is the gospel by Greg Gilbert he points to four words that you need to say that they represent you need to tell them about God that God is the creator he's holy and just he's got a plan for the fullness of time and every person on the planet has a place in his plan and this

God is warning us which brings us to the second point man God man God created men and women in his image to be in relationship with him but we rebelled against our creator in the worst way possible we swapped him out for far lesser things to worship the things he made it's called idolatry and it's a capital offense it provokes God's wrath that is what got us to this problem to begin with God man Jesus God sent Jesus to bring us back to God by addressing God's wrath for our sin Jesus hung on the cross bearing God's wrath for our rebellious idolatry and this

[43:56] Jesus didn't stay dead he was raised from the dead he's reigning right now and he's going to return and when he returns he's going to vindicate his saints and he's going to pour out the wrath of the lamb God man Jesus and the last word is respond you've got to respond to this and you either respond by rejecting it or respond by repentance and faith and saying oh man I did not know that so thankful for telling me I'm turning from my idolatry and trusting myself and my unbelief in God and I'm turning to Jesus trusting in him trusting in this revelation you're telling me about that's from God to save me and by the way no response is

a response it's called waffling and it's a rejection of Christ you know who are we to tell this to anybody who listen can I give you another resource it's called the art of neighboring you can look it up online

Jenny and I have extremely helped by it I think we are put on by it by Rick and Jasmine Aldrich who are like PhDs in the art of neighboring but I would commend it to you life groups I would commend the material to you to position your life groups to think about the summer of 2019 in a different way of taking eating and prophesying you've got to take the revelation the scroll you've got to take it yourself lay your hand on it and then you've got to take it down deep internalize it eat it and then when it hits bedrock you proclaim it you speak it and just a word of reality when we become prophetic in our city for Christ it's going to be bittersweet there's going to be blessing sweet blessing of people coming to faith in

Jesus it's happening but then there's going to be heartache this message of God falling on deaf ears people reject it and then rejecting it they want to hurt us they want to go after the messenger of the message that's part of the bitterness to be a faithful church is to be a prophetic church is there really any other worthy option worthy is the lamb let's pray God would you by your spirit make us a prophetic church not obnoxious not stupid wise brave compelling empowered and God we would ask that through us your message coming from our lips that you would you would save many rescue many that we would be worshipping around the throne with many who in 2019 repent and believe in Jesus we ask this in your name amen or to