

Since the End Draws Near

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Preacher: Marty Krause

[0 : 00] A dear friend and brother, Marty Krause, he's come to us from Regina. And he was actually my young adult pastor when I was just a youngling at Hillsdale Baptist Church in Regina.

And Marty and his wife Ruth, they ran the young adult ministry. And I got to just enjoy the benefit of having fellowship with other Christians through that and growing in my faith.

And the Lord really did use their ministry in a big way to bless me. And so it's my honor to welcome Marty to come and share the word with us this morning.

I was away at the BGC School of Orientation this week meeting with other pastors and just getting oriented to the Baptist General Conference, which we've now joined. And so Marty was gracious to come and be willing to share the word with us this morning.

So come on up, Marty. Am I on? Good morning. Yeah.

[1 : 08] Really good to be here with you folks. I have been reminiscing about Josh the last couple of days. But we've known each other for a long time, at least as long since the days when I could comb my hair.

Yeah, those days are kind of gone. But I consider this a real privilege to be here this morning. I was visiting with Josh's parents last Sunday evening.

And they are thrilled with their son, as they should be. But they're also thrilled with what's happening here at the church here in Davidson. So they passed their hellos along.

And, yeah, so this is good to be here. I've recently retired from formal pastoral ministry. I was on our staff at Hillsdale for 25 years and just retired as of September 30th.

So we're kind of starting a new adventure here. My role was kind of a visitation slash mentoring kind of a pastor. I had a number of guys that I would meet.

[2 : 10] I could still do that. But I don't have kind of like, as our pastor would say, the caller of ministry has been kind of removed from me. But it's always fun to get out and to do some preaching.

Bill, we were on holidays and Bill texted me and asked if I wanted to come up here. It was a quick yes. But glad to be here. My spot at Hillsdale was always the, you know, that Sunday between Christmas and New Year's?

You know, the one where nobody comes? That was my spot for 25 years. And I guess it still is. But interesting, I kind of joke about that.

I told people that on the 25th time. I said, Pastor Bill's given me one more chance to get this right. So hopefully with the number 25 I can do it. But I also hold the record.

I also hold the record for the lowest giving on a Sunday morning on one of those. I told them, I said, listen, take the offering before I preach. Okay. That's the way it should go. But anyways, it's a real honor and a privilege to be here this morning.

[3 : 13] And I really enjoyed listening to your worship and your testimony this morning. And the praying, because that's part of what I want to share about this morning. But all the requests and the heart behind them is so good and so critical as Christians to how we live and to what we do.

As a new believer way back in 1978, at the age of 22, I can still remember hearing a conversation between two Christian gentlemen. I remember those days because anything that had to do with the Lord was so new to me.

And I was just eating everything up. And the one thing that one gentleman said to the other was that preaching has to be the overflow of your life. And I remember that.

And I can tell you quite honestly this morning that the message I have is that. And we're going to be looking later at 1 Peter 4, 7 to 11.

1 Peter 4, 7 to 11. But for months now, 1 Peter 4, 7 to 11 has been the overflow of my life. I've pondered over it.

[4 : 25] I've prayed over it. I think of its contents often throughout my days. And I'm really coming to you this morning to share what the Lord's been speaking to me about.

And my prayer this morning is that it might be helpful to you as well. I have to tell you this, that I'm not a theologian. I would probably describe myself as a hillbilly who reads his Bible.

What I would share from God's Word this morning comes directly from my devotional reading. And it's simple, biblical, and hopefully practical enough that we can apply it to our lives and to your lives and anywhere else that the Lord may send us.

Just join me in a word of opening prayer here, okay? Father in heaven, thank you so much for this privilege and opportunity to be here in Davidson today, this morning. We thank you for this church. We thank you that we're connected now with the BGC.

We're so thrilled in Regina about that. We're so glad that Josh is here. And we hear so many good things about the church here. Father, the message this morning from 1 Peter 4, 7 to 11 is really about the church.

[5 : 37] It's about us. It's about this church and this community. How it operates, what we pray it would look like, and the privileges that they have to do what they do.

Also the challenges. There's many challenges to be the outpost of hope and faith in any community. Peter, or Paul called the church the pillar and support of the truth.

The church of Jesus Christ is the only, is the only place anywhere that can stand for truth. And so they're important. This is an important place in Davidson.

So I pray your blessing on it. Protect it and guide it. And I pray that the words that we share together this morning might be helpful in their endeavor. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. All right.

Why don't we just take a second. We'll read through 1 Peter 4, 7 to 11. The end of all things is at hand.

[6 : 36] Therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God.

Whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies. In order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. Amen. Just a couple of introductory comments before we look at the passage. Among other realities of living in 2024, I've noticed in particular two things which I keep hearing from many people.

First is this, and it's about COVID. That the COVID experience changed the world. One change seems to be that people don't seem to be getting out together as much as they did before this event.

[7 : 44] I'm not sure what happened, but I do see that as well. Secondly, I hear many people seem to be certain that we're really living in the last days before the Lord's return.

Even many sound, credible, biblically solid and balanced Bible teachers seem to be indicating that to us. I'm aware that end time scenarios have been around forever.

But many signs seem to indicate this is truly where we seem to be in history. I still remember as a new believer in 1978 hearing things I had never heard before.

People were talking about the return of Christ and the rapture. And I had never, ever heard growing up, I'd never heard anything about any of that at all. And I found it thrilling and unbelievable, but very real.

And the anticipation of that has had an impact on how I live. So we've come through the COVID era and are still anticipating the Lord's return.

[8 : 48] With a changed and somewhat damaged world from COVID, and with an anticipation of the return of Christ at any moment, how are we to live? As I mused over those thoughts a few days ago, I was reminded of Hebrews 10.

I'll just read it here, Hebrews 10, 24 and 25, which is a very familiar passage, probably to most of us, and it reads like this. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more

as you see the day drawing near.

The question is this. If the day of the Lord's return is near, what do we do? The commands in Hebrews 10, 24 and 25 are echoed, actually, in 1 Peter 4, 7 to 11.

So let's examine the passage, and we'll go verse by verse. In the first part of verse 7, Peter states this. He says, The end of all things is at hand.

And we must understand that Christ's second coming has been anticipated in every generation for 2,000 years, and was anticipated by the church in Peter's day.

[10:03] God's design has been for it to be an incentive for holy living, not a signal to sell your home and go to the mountain and sit and wait for Jesus to come back. Peter's message, in anticipation of Christ's return, is not for the church to run and hide and to wait secretly for this.

There were many difficult days for the church to endure that Peter was writing to, and hiding might have made sense to them. If we look at the surrounding chapters where 1 Peter 4, 7, 11 is found, we can see that the church was enduring persecution and difficult times.

In 1 Peter 3, 14, just before the passage, it states, Even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake. And it goes on to that. So they were suffering for that. 1 Peter 5, 9 and 10 states, Knowing that the same kind of suffering, and then it says, And after you have suffered a little while.

So the church, where it was placed, the church Peter was referring to, had gone through difficult times. So he's talking to them in the midst of that. An initial human response to spiritual pressure, producing suffering, coming from an unbelieving world that surrounded them, would have been to hide away and to protect themselves.

But this is not the message God has for them. What does the Lord command them to do? In the second part of verse 7, Peter states this, Therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

[11:34] Firstly, Peter is emphasizing the importance of prayer in the church. That blessed me to hear you folks pray this morning. I love hearing that, you know, where you go around and you get a bit of a feel where everybody's at, and you can pray for everyone the way it is.

That is so important. So that's so good to hear that. Jesus said in Matthew 21, 13, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer.

If there was ever a time for followers of Jesus Christ to be growing and consistent in their prayer life, it's now. Too often we think of prayer as an option, but it's not.

Too often, in the New Testament letters, we see Paul requesting prayer for open doors. We see Epaphroditus wrestling in prayer for the church. We see Jesus spending nights in prayer and rising early to pray.

Can we do any less? We must learn to be consistent in our prayers and believe that our prayers are important and make a difference because they do.

[12:42] I read about one pastor who was a man of prayer and was asked by an unbeliever, Don't you just think that answered prayers are just a coincidence? His response was, I don't know.

All I know is this, when I stop praying, the coincidences stop happening. We are commanded to be self-controlled and sober-minded in our praying.

This would suggest that our lives are purposeful and not impulsive about matters in life. We don't, quote, jump to the next trendy thing, but have a consistent walk with God.

Be careful that we don't jump on bandwagons, especially in things such as the end time events. Balance in your prayer life is the key. In the book of Daniel, Daniel was aware of a conspiracy to have him thrown to the lions if he prayed to anyone but the king.

He was not threatened by this, but prayed to God, quote as it says, as was his practice. In other words, he was not thrown off by threats or intimidating edicts, but maintained his prayerful walk with God as he had always done.

[13:50] He maintained a sober consistency. We must learn to be sensitive to the needs and situations of those around us. We must stay sharp and alert and pray accordingly.

Again, I would refer back to your prayer time this morning. You guys are staying sharp and alert with your prayer requests. That's so amazing. So keep that up. And it takes work and practice and commitment, but it makes a world of difference in our praying.

So we need to be praying. Let's look at verse 8. It states, Above all, keep loving one another earnestly since love covers a multitude of sins.

The picture of loving earnestly is a picture of an athlete. Paul's giving us a picture of an athlete, or Peter's giving us a picture of an athlete who is training, training hard to perfect his sport. To love others this way takes work. Have you ever been disappointed in a gift someone gave you? A gift that was nice, but missed the mark?

[14:58] A gift that indicated that the person that gave the gift really didn't know you very well? I spoke to one gentleman who told me that when he was 12, he had asked his parents for a guitar.

Now, here's a question for you. What kind of a guitar does a 12-year-old want? We kind of know what he wants. He wants something that's going to rock, that's cool. So what happened? His family gave him a huge, plain, classical guitar. He was somewhat grateful, but deeply disappointed. But he was deeply disappointed in the fact that the people that should have known him best and taken time to figure out what it was that he really wanted didn't seem to know that. So it takes work. It takes work to love. Love means earnestly taking work. It means we observe them and meet the deep needs because we know by observation and prayer what those deep needs are.

We were away about a year ago and came back and had our kids over for Thanksgiving supper. And my birthday's in September.

[16:10] So we were gone during that time and one set of our kids had a gift for us or a gift for me. He said, Dad, here's something for you. We saw this and thought you'd like it.

And you know that Christmas time, you know that the red truck with the green Christmas tree and all that and all the lights. I love that picture. There's just something that just touches me. So they said, here's a little something for you, Dad.

They gave me a bag and opened it up and it was three little Christmas tree ornaments but they were the truck, the red truck with the green. I just went ballistic. I was so thrilled.

And they were watching me. They were going, ooh, what's wrong with this guy? But I was so excited about the fact that somebody knew exactly what I wanted. And that's the picture here of loving, of loving people, of knowing, you know, what can I do, you know, to help somebody out? But it takes work. Like an athlete works at his craft, his sports craft. We need to work at knowing how to love people, observing, making sure that we pick up on little things that could make a difference.

[17:16] True love also covers a multitude of sins. You know, we live in a culture that unfortunately loves to expose the sins and weaknesses of those around us.

I'm a baseball fan and I always remember the stories of some of the old Babe Ruths and things like that. And it seems like the fans from that era always loved their heroes.

And we're aware of the fact that their lives weren't perfect, but they protected them. And it's just, it's sad to say that we seem to live in a world that's opposite and that we love to expose people.

And it's sad. Imagine if God displayed our sins and weaknesses on a billboard for all other people to see. He has the power to do that, but he chooses not to in his love for us.

So let's be a people that accept one another in spite of our imperfections and protect and guard one another. I understand that there's times when disclosure of sin is appropriate. It is the right thing to do at times.

[18:20] But let's not be too quick to do that and let's protect, let's protect one another. Let's look at verse 9. It says, show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Whether it be a COVID hangover or just something we haven't done or maybe it's something we don't like to do, we must grow out, we must grow in our living together outside of the walls of our church.

Some of the deepest and most meaningful conversations with people have come at a dinner table or over a cup of coffee. Billy Graham used to talk about his crusades and there was always invitations given to come forward.

But he said most of those, most of the responses to his crusades came with people going out for coffee afterwards. They didn't actually come at the event. They came later on in a kind of a more quiet, warmer environment.

so important. Our homes are given to us as gifts from the Lord. We need our homes to be places of refuge but also to be places to refresh other people.

[19:29] How many have made decisions to follow Jesus Christ in someone's front room? Let's pray and ask the Lord to make our homes places for God to use for others. We will receive the

blessing from God in our own lives if we do.

So you're kind of getting the picture of Peter challenging the church and saying don't turtle because of what's going on. In other words expand the church.

The church needs to take charge and be the church and with one another but also let the world see what they're doing. We come to verse 10 and 11.

They read as each has received a gift use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's very grace. Whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God.

Whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.

[20 : 27] Amen. Now rather than dissect these verses and their contents I wanted us to rather focus on what I see as one kind of overriding theme in these two verses.

The theme is simply that our lives need to be all about Jesus Christ and him living his life in us.

John 1.17 states this that the law was given through Moses grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

We need to experience the grace and the reality and the presence of Jesus Christ among us and within our own hearts. God gives us abilities to do acts which we cannot do on our own.

To see a newly converted former thief do acts of service and giving creates wonder and brings glory to God. This is how it should be. Now I realize that the topic of gifting brings up other questions such as what are my gifts and how do I find out?

Those are valid questions and time does not permit us this morning to venture into those. However, I would say that if our heart is to live and to serve others as we are commanded and according to his word that the Lord will help us discover those gifts as we go.

[22 : 05] We're also commanded to speak the oracles of God. Our communication with one another is enriching and encouraging when God's word becomes part of our communicating.

I have an example in my own life that I remember. I had a friend from our church in Regina that he just for years had stopped coming to church. He just felt uncomfortable and I met with him week after week after week and we'd talk about it and talk about it and he always resisted.

He just, something had happened to him which is a very typical story sometimes where something had happened and he didn't want to come. And I just said, you know, you've got to consider coming back.

And he wanted to but he just couldn't seem to do that. So one time I was meeting with him and I had my Bible with me and in the course of the conversation I just, I was reading a particular passage and it had nothing to do with his absenteeism.

It was just a passage that I'd been reading in my own devotions and I read it to him and I'm looking down and looking and then I looked up and I looked at him and he was a bucket of tears. He was crying and crying and crying and he said, you know, I've wanted to come back to church so badly but I couldn't.

[23 : 18] My point is this, it was the word of God that touched him. My fine advice and counsel did nothing for years. It was good that I was connected with him but I read one passage in the word of God and he's crying his eyes out and very soon after that came back to church and I would tell you this, that he still comes and he's a healthy member of our church and is doing amazing but it was the word of God that brought him back.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. To bring balance to this point I realize that we don't invite people to come over to our homes and just read and chat about scripture to the exclusion of everything else.

If you have a Super Bowl party and all you do is read scripture it might not be the best thing to do. Not to say you can't use the scriptures but there is balance that's needed as well.

However, having said that I do think we could move to some degree towards incorporating God's word into our times together be it sharing verses or meaningful experiences as we grow in this area we will bring more glory to God.

I heard that this morning with the testimony. It's that sort of thing where you just bring those and to make those a common part of what we do. Excuse me. We need to experience God's mighty hand at work among us and it'll come through his word and it will thrill us when it does.

[24 : 49] Just a few thoughts to conclude our time this morning. I'm always amazed that the word of God is always current and it's always relevant.

The needs in the church in Peter's day are the same as they are in our day 2,000 years later. Pressures from the world has always had the potential to make the church stronger. As well, anticipating the Lord any moment in return has had the same potential to sharpen our focus and to make us operate as the Lord has designed the church to do with laser-focused prayer, sacrificial love, hospitality, serving one another, all centered around the word of God. One final challenge for us to consider this morning. We sadly remember the tragic events of 9-11. I had heard the testimony of a preacher who lived in New York City at the time of the event. He said this. He said, for a year, he said, you couldn't find a Bible in New York City. He said, churches were full. Obviously, people were responding and were looking for some answers. [26 : 03] A year later, he said, things went back to normal. His sad comment on this was that people were looking for answers in reaction to this tragedy. Sadly, they never found it in the local church, so drifted away.

The church had an opportunity and just didn't do with it what they could have. If the Church of Jesus Christ in 2024 can come to grips with the directives outlined in 1 Peter 4, 7-11, what a testimony this would be to the outside unbelieving world, among whom are many who are looking for answers. I pray that we are up for the challenge and for the opportunity. Amen. Let me just close this in a word of prayer with you, okay?

Father, the church today is such an important part of any community. And Father, in Peter's day it was the same.

it was under pressure. And Peter's counsel to them was don't give in to the pressure. Become the church more and more.

[27 : 16] Be stronger in your fellowship, in your praying. Do everything more than you used to do. And Father God, I pray that the church here in Davidson, I'm so thankful that this church exists here, Father God.

Use it for your glory. And I pray that all of the items, the list that is suggested in 1 Peter 4, 7 to 11, be sober-minded for our prayers, be praying, be having fellowship, having people into our homes, loving, learning to love in new ways that's deeper.

Everything, Father God. and using the word of God more and more and more and using our gifts to encourage one another and to build the church up. I pray that Davidson Church would be a church that grows in this area.

And I pray that it would not only strengthen the church on the inside, but that the outside world looking would wonder about this place and would want to come in and find out what's going on and find out that the Lord is here.

That's our prayer. That's our prayer this morning. And Father God, what an amazing thing to be part of the body of Christ, especially in the days we live in. Use us and guide us for your purposes and your glory. In Jesus' name.

[28 : 33] Amen.