

Don't Miss Out On The Rest

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- [0 : 0 0] So, admittedly, I had a hard time this week prepping for today. I thought with all the time on an airplane, I'd have plenty of time to prepare and get things together.
- Josh is laughing. Yes, it's true. And I was laughing at myself after the fact. Despite all the time of traveling and the downtime and such, it just wasn't conducive for good study and time in the word as I would have liked.
- And those of you who are on social media saw my plea for prayer last night as I was fighting fatigue and dealing with what I called a sloppy Joe recipe of a sermon rather than a gourmet meal.
- And somebody had the audacity to say, well, just go with memes. Well, but I don't have that type of creativity like you do, but I appreciate that.
- So, but God, I feel he's redeemed this this time. So I'd like to jump in on this. Ironically, this topic, don't miss out on the rest in Hebrews 4.
- [1 : 1 1] And so as I was struggling to stay awake and thinking about this idea of God's rest last night, I was like, oh, man, this is this is tough. So a few weeks back, we concluded our look at Hebrews 3.
- And here's a reminder of what we studied in verses 7 through 19 of Hebrews 3. First, I brought about the reminder from the Apostle Paul, who informed the church in Rome concerning the things that were written in the Hebrew scriptures.
- Namely, that whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures, we may might have hope.
- So even though the Old Testament may be hard to follow and understand at times, it may even seem like, how is this possibly relevant for us?
- Or how is it relevant for me to read through Levitical law, for instance, and their sacrificial system?
- [2 : 1 4] And there are some folks who would say, well, you just you read through it or you listen through it so you could fall asleep at night and wake up in numbers. Sorry, I was thinking Josh had that experience on the trip, listening to Leviticus twice, listening to Leviticus and woke up in numbers.
- So anyway, but the fact is this, that like, it's easy to look at the Old Testament as being old and irrelevant and not important anymore. But as we're going through the book of Hebrews, you see oftentimes that the Old Testament is alluded to and it's used directly to teach Christians.
- And so we need to realize that it is important and it's there for us to learn from, to take instruction from. And there's one very important lesson that's repeated over and over again throughout the Bible.
- And that's God's warning toward mankind of the dangers and penalty of sin. And really, you see it over and over again in the history of Israel, where God warns them, don't go down that path.

Don't make that decision. Don't do that. It's not going to end well for you. And just like any other man or woman that we know, they do exactly what they were told not to do.

[3 : 32] And it doesn't end well for them. So in that regard, it is very beneficial in reading through the Old Testament. You see God's interaction with his people and how he's dealt with his people over the years and his expectations for his people.

And ultimately what happens when they fail, when they're not obedient. And so it serves as a reminder for them themselves in the real time.

And it serves as instruction for us today. In Hebrews 3, the writer points to the failure of the Israelites to enter the promised land because of their unbelief.

Instead of entering, they spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness and dying. They did not get to enter the land. They did not get to enter into the rest of their God.

That's what Hebrews 3 is talking about. But it's not just talking about a history lesson about Israel. It's a very real application for the church today.

[4 : 35] We learn that to not trust in him, to not trust in God is fatal. And contrary to popular belief, God does not send people to hell. That's something that is a, in conversations I've had with people, whether it's friends, coworkers, family, you know, they'll say, well, why would a loving God send so-and-so or send somebody to hell?

Well, the reality is God doesn't send people to hell. It is our unbelief that prevents us from entering his rest, entering heaven.

And he's given his, he's given this warning time and again, over and over, you know, that if you do not believe and you do not trust in, you know, Jesus, our Savior, then yes, you will spend eternity in the lake of fire.

So there's a warning about the penalty to come. God is a loving God and that he has warned you what will happen if you do not believe. And it is our unbelief ultimately that prevents us from entering his rest.

So now as we get into the text of Hebrews 4, it expands on this a little bit. And I think we can take a few things from this. So looking at Hebrews 4 and in verse 1, I think the thing we can take away first is that the opportunity to enter the rest is still present, but not for long.

[6 : 02] Let's read Hebrews 4.1. Therefore, since their unbelief prevented them from entering the land and the rest of God, therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear, lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

Now we're going to take this kind of verse by verse rather than reading the entirety of the section of Hebrews 4 verses 1 to 10. So I just wanted to stop here. Now it's interesting that the author of Hebrews tells their readers to fear.

So notice it says, therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, the opportunity is still there. If you're reading these words or you can hear these words, the opportunity is still there for you.

And how do we know that? Because you're not dead. And you're comprehending and understanding these things and it's being said to you. But he says that, now while this still stands, let us fear, lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

He tells his readers to fear in case they fail to reach his rest. It's a genuine concern that some of their readers are still steeping in unbelief.

[7 : 16] Similar to a pastor who would be concerned about people in their own congregation who do not know Jesus as Savior. It's a genuine concern that you come to Christ.

It's a genuine concern that you come to Christ. And that's a genuine concern by this writer here in Hebrews that they come in belief of God to enter his rest.

And as long as the promise of entering his rest still stands, there's an opportunity to be saved. As long as you are still living and breathing and you can comprehend and you can hear, there's still an opportunity for salvation.

In 2 Corinthians 6 verses 1 and 2, Paul says, Working together with him, then we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

For he says, in a favorable time I listen to you and in a day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the favorable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.

[8 : 18] See, Paul recognized the need for people to make a decision about Jesus because they are not promised another moment to reckon with it. When you are approached and you encounter the gospel of Jesus Christ, that is your time and moment to reckon with a decision there.

Because you are not promised another moment. And whether you realize it or not, you are making a decision each and every time you are encountering the gospel.

Each and every time you are encountering the opportunity to make a decision. What are your choices? Yes and no.

That's it. And you're either choosing yes or no each time you come face to face with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The brevity of life is very real.

Right? We understand that we're not guaranteed a moment beyond the one we just had. We're not guaranteed another breath beyond the one you just took. D.L. Moody shared a lesson he learned from the great Chicago fire.

[9 : 35] He says, I want to tell you of one lesson that I learned that night, which I have never forgotten. And that is when I preach to press Christ upon the people then and there and to try to bring them to a decision on the spot.

I would rather have that right hand cut off than to give an audience a week now to decide what to do with Jesus. And the greater context of that was he had been preaching in Chicago and he'd given a sermon, great gospel presentation, and was like at that point of like, okay, what do you do with this?

And he said, we'll come back next week and you can decide then what you're going to do with Jesus. And that night the Chicago fire started and he'd never seen those people again. And that weighed heavy on him.

And he said, as I have opportunity to preach, I'm going to press people to make a decision. He's not pressing them to make the decision, yes, follow and trust Jesus, like to coerce them to do it.

He's basically recognizing that all events in life are out of his control. But he can encourage and tell people, hey, you need to make a decision about Jesus.

[10 : 53] You need to come to a conclusion as to what you believe and where you stand about Jesus. And I contemplated this last sentence that he said, I would rather have that right hand cut off than to give an audience a week now to decide what to do with Jesus.

I think the idea there is that, no, he's not so much concerned about the relationship and ongoing relationship with an individual. He's more concerned about their eternal state.

Until the end of life, a person is never too far gone for God to deal with them. As long as his heart is sensitive to what the Spirit is saying and he can hear God's call. Until you've breathed your last breath, you still can be led by God and called by God for salvation.

And it's amazing. Ultimately, I mean, it's a work of God. You know, it's amazing the people that God will save. I mean, people you think are, well, they're completely gone.

They're too far gone. There's no hope for them. God can call them and they can be saved. They can be broken and saved through the Word of God.

[12 : 09] And then there's people that you think, oh, you know, maybe they'll be a good Christian. Or, you know, you think, oh, they're close, they're close. And you feel like they're really close and you keep going and keep going with them, keep going with them. And then they never get saved.

So ultimately, when it comes to salvation, we are the worst judges of who's going to be saved and who's not. We may think we know and may think heaven. No, we don't.

Only God does. And so as long as a person has breath in their lungs and the ability to hear and be sensitive to the calling of God, he can save them. But opportunity is still open.

It's important, as Paul says here in 2 Corinthians 6, do not receive the grace of God in vain. Now is the day of salvation. Now is your opportunity.

2 Corinthians 13.5 is a challenge for believers or a challenge for people in the church. My challenge for you is what Paul challenged the Corinthians with.

[13 : 10] 2 Corinthians 13.5, Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you unless indeed you fail to meet the test.

What's the only way that Jesus Christ is not in you is if you have not put your faith and trust in him. And we're told in other passages of Scripture that once we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we have the indwelling Holy Spirit comes and lives within us.

The only way that he's not there is if you're not in Christ. So examine yourselves. Where are you in the faith? Going back to Hebrews 4, verses 2 and 3.

A missed opportunity has grave consequences as it relates to this. Hebrews 4, verse 2. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them because they were not united by faith with those who listened.

For we who have believed enter that rest. As he has said, as I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest. Although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.

[14 : 36] The writer here has drawn this comparison between the Israelites of the Old Testament and the people in their own day of the New Testament times. Now there's even people in our time today. Both groups of people received the good news.

But the Old Testament Israelites failed to obey and were thus punished for their disobedience. For 40 years they suffered in their wanderings and an entire generation lost their lives before they were permitted to enter the promised land.

Matthew 10, verse 28 says, Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. In the Old Testament, those who did not believe did not enter the land.

Today a person's unbelief can only have one result. It's eternity in hell. It's not a typical response for an unbeliever to have a genuine fear of going to hell.

You know that? If there are people who don't believe the gospel, maybe there are people who hate the Bible, they hate God, they hate Christianity, they hate the church, and they hate you because you're associated with all of it.

[15 : 51] They're not really concerned about going to hell, are they? Who are the ones who are concerned? We are, right? Because we know the truth.

We know the reality if they don't believe in Jesus. And unfortunately, for many people, and our media has a lot to do with this, hell's going to be one giant kegger with all your buddies.

And it's going to be a great party. Oh man, I can't wait to get there, I've heard. It's going to be great and awesome. Really. I was just thinking like 20 years ago, Adam Sandler movie, Little Nicky.

The whole premise of the movie is that this guy is basically the seed of Satan and that hell is a party. It's amazing.

But people want to take the truth and reality, they want to twist it and distort it to make it something that is more palatable or definitely not true, right? But I want to talk to you about the truth about hell.

[16 : 58] In the time it takes for me to say this sentence, 18 human beings awoke in eternity because they died on earth. About 10 seconds of time.

Every hour, 6,464 people die. That's 155,131 per day and about 56 million a year.

The sad reality is that a majority of these folks are stepping out of this life and into eternity of hell. What do we know about hell? I'm not going to go into an exhaustive study from Scripture.

There's a lot you can get into, but I'm going to give you three main points. First, it's the place of eternal, unending pain, misery, and torture. A darkness so impenetrable that in the countless ages of eternity, none of the lost will ever see light or relief.

Darkness. I don't know how much of an experience you've had with darkness, but when it's dark and there's no light and there's no light even just a little bit away.

[18 : 12] It's dark. It can be scary. It can be overwhelming, especially if your eyes can't adjust to it where you can kind of make out a little bit. That's the kind of darkness we're talking about.

This deep, impenetrable darkness where people will never see light or relief. It's no wonder they're wailing, howling, and gnashing teeth.

In fact, Jesus says in Matthew 13, 41 and 42, the Son of Man will send His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers and throw them into the fiery furnace.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Weeping and gnashing of teeth. What a party. Man, you can skip my invitation.

Matthew 25, verse 30 says, Cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[19 : 17] Revelation 14, 11, And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. And they have no rest, day or night. These worshipers of the beast and its image and whoever receives the mark of its name.

Wow. Torment forever and ever. No rest, day or night. There they are in the outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth. Number two, it's the place where body and soul are tormented.

Everybody will be raised, both saved and lost. But those who are saved will be raised to eternal blessing. Those who are lost will be raised to an eternal horror.

I mean, think about that. You know, it's where body and soul are tormented. What is that like? I mean, we can probably grasp a little bit of what it's like for your body to be tormented over and over and over again forever.

We can feel pain, we understand that sensation, but I think it even still falls short of what the capability is and what it's going to be like. But to have your soul tormented, I mean, what is, honestly, I'll be honest with you, I don't even know if I can even begin to explain what that is.

[20 : 40] You know, at what point, you know, do we experience, you know, our souls being tormented? I mean, we can, we understand what it's like to be in distress, distress and anxious and depressed and whatever.

Like, we understand these, you know, states of mind or whatever, but is that really soul tormented? There's only one person who can do that or only one being that can allow that to happen, God. He knows how to torment the soul and body because he set this up.

And this is what hell's about. Daniel 12, 2 says, Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Luke 16, verses 19 through 26. I've got the verses up here if you can see them. If not, you can turn there. There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen who feasted sumptuously every day.

And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus covered with sores who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

[21 : 47] He's a pathetic creature. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

And in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am in anguish in this flame.

But Abraham said, Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things and Lazarus in like manner bad things. But now he is comforted here and you are in anguish.

And besides all this, between us and you, a great chasm has been fixed in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able and none may cross from there to us.

Thinking about, you know, sort of eternal darkness, torment, torture. Here, the rich man can see hope.

[22 : 57] He can see deliverance, but he can't ever reach it. What's interesting about this is that many scholars believe this is not a parable, but this is an actual account of an event that took place.

Because if it's a parable, it's the only parable that ever names an individual in it. A lot of reason to believe that this is an actual account that Jesus is giving his people.

Third and finally, hell is the place where there are levels or degrees of torment. everyone who's in there face intense, non-ending pain, but some will face far greater.

No, why is that? If you're in there forever anyway, suffering, why would there be degrees of punishment? Well, it seems to be consistent with what we already experience in the Word of God and in the law.

For example, in the Old Testament law, it prescribes a more severe punishment for premeditated murder than for accidental homicide. Think about reading through that.

[24 : 14] You know, people were still punished, but it was a greater punishment if it was a premeditated murder versus an accident. And we can understand that to some degree in the justice system.

you know, not everybody is killed for their crime because you stole a Kit Kat from Walmart or something. Like, it's not, you know, there's degrees of punishment, right?

And there's indication in Scripture that there's degrees of torment and torture and punishment in hell. Romans 2.6 says that he will render to each one according to his works.

At the judgment, the record books will be opened. We're told in Revelation 20, verse 12, and I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne and books were opened.

Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done. If it only came down to the book of life, whether your name was written or not, then why mention the other book?

[25 : 20] Why would someone be judged based on those things as well? Unless there is a degree of torment, there's a degree of punishment based on what is done.

There seems to be no point to having it there unless there's a measurement going on. And honestly, I mean, I can't even tell you what that is. I can't, with assurance, this just seems to be my speculation as to what's going on there.

Only God really knows. But one thing I can definitely tell you for sure is that hell is a very real, unpleasant place that our society as a whole has twisted and distorted as being the preeminent spot to spend eternity.

Because really, who could throw a better party than Satan himself? This reality has been twisted into a joke, a laughing point.

And it's something we need to be broken for our society about. We'll be praying for them, that God would open their hearts and minds. Finally, verses 4-10 of Hebrews 4 tells us what the rest is all about.

[26 : 34] Not like the rest of the Bible and all that, but what God's rest is all about. Let's go ahead and read. Hebrews 4, starting verse 4. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way, and God rested on the seventh day from all his works.

And again, in this passage, he said, they shall not enter my rest. Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again, he appoints a certain day.

Today, saying through David so long afterward in the words already quoted, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

for if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

So a fatigued mind, as he reads through these verses, has a hard time connecting the dots.

[27 : 46] It was taught. What in the world is being talked about? Well, the rest that's been alluded to by the writer of Hebrews is similar to the rest that God took on the seventh day of creation.

Think about this. In six days, God created all things that mankind needed. He created a righteous man and woman to take care of and live peaceably with a perfect creation.

Then he rested from the work he had done. Okay? God rested from his work. Similarly, Jesus came to this earth, lived among imperfect, sinful men, and perfectly showed the love of God and lived the life in perfect obedience to the Father.

Then he rested from the work he had done. He sat down. It was complete. And it is promised to those who live in faith and obedience to God that they will enter his rest.

That is why if you hear his voice today, do not harden your hearts. Be sensitive to his leading and come to Christ. Seek to live in obedience to our Creator and Savior, lest the day comes when he says to you, you shall not enter my rest.

[29 : 02] So the idea here of entering the Father's rest is that you have lived a life that is seeking to be obedient, though imperfectly because we are imperfect people.

We are seeking Christ, seeking to live like Christ and to show Christ to the world. And so at the end of our life when we breathe our last, we have been in faith in Christ and we've been faithfully following Christ, we then have a time to rest from the work that we had done through him.

So what does it mean to have God's rest? Well, this is another one that could be like a two or three part sermon. So I've got like three of them all in here thrown together. It means this.

First, it means to be at peace with God. To be at peace with God. That's to have forgiveness of sin. It's to be forever established in Christ and it means to depend on God for everything.

To depend on God for everything. That's, no, that's to be at peace with God is that you're depending on God for everything, right? And to have the peace of God, that's to be free from worry about sin because it's been forgiven.

[30 : 12] It's to free from the feelings of guilt because of our sin and our shortcomings and our imperfection even as we are in Christ. it's free from every doctrinal wind that blows our way.

Man, you want to talk about issues. Elder Joy brought it up last week with the, you know, who's the enemy, right? Well, the issue you have going in churches and among the Christian circles is that you have many doctrinal winds blowing.

Which way are you going to follow? Well, having the peace of God is that you're free from that because you're following His word and faithfully serving Him. And then to have peace of God is depending on God and everything.

So to have the peace with God is that you can depend on Him for everything and to have the peace of God is that you are depending on Him for everything. Because it's easy for me to say, well, depend on God, He'll provide.

And it's another thing altogether for you to actually depend on God because you know He'll provide. We don't do it perfectly. We get anxious, we get worried, we get concerned, we get to wonder, oh, maybe God overlooked me this time.

[31 : 24] Maybe He was too concerned about Eric or Bill and He forgot about me and my needs too and so I need to worry about that. No, no, no, no. God's going to provide everything you need.

He promises it. And to have the peace of God is when you get to that point and you're thinking and you can say, all right, this is a very difficult task or trial that I'm going through, but I trust God.

And isn't that tough? And the trial is different for everybody. There are some things that people will go through that I may not struggle with. And there are some things I go through that people probably look at me like, why are you worried about this?

You know, I mean, a small matter, right? Okay. Very, I think I'm getting there kind of with this example, but if not, it'll be kind of a funny anecdote anyway. So on our way home from Kenya, I believe it was from Nairobi to Paris, we were flying along and we hit some turbulence.

Okay. I don't know those of you who've flown before understand what turbulence is. I've never been a fan of it. There's something about the vehicle I am in shaking and nothing to catch us for 40,000 feet.

[32 : 45] So anyway, so we hit some turbulence and I get worked up and I get a little worried. Josh is sleeping. Through it all. I'm not going to go with that example.

I don't want to give too much. Anyway, so we hit this turbulence. I'm just, I'm getting worked like, okay. I'm looking out and I'm seeing, like we're right there behind the wing, right? And so I'm seeing the wing like, this is it, this is it.

My heart's beating fast. I'm like freaking out. Then we finally get through it and like, I was like, Josh, I don't know if you saw, I was worried or just was saying hello, I'm awake or whatever.

And I was just like, you know, like, like I'm, I'm like the turbulence, like, oh man, my heart's beating so fast. He's like, Ken, you realize like that road that we took by the Great Rift Valley was way worse than the turbulence you just experienced.

And that's, that was a whole nother experience too, going on that road. Oh, thank you. Thank you. Somebody who understands. But there was, it was, but that was the perspective, right?

[33 : 51] For me, the turbulence was an issue. For him, it wasn't. And for him comparatively, the road was an issue. For me, it wasn't. Even though the drop was quite significant on that road.

But there was solid underneath. And that's what I'm talking about as far as what you're going through, your trials and hardships in life. Now, one may be, you know, it may be turbulence for one person.

It may be, you know, the crazy driving on a, on a road by a cliff for another person. But either way, we need to be depending on God to deliver through those times and experiences.

And finally, the last two points of what it means to have God's rest. Well, it means to experience the kingdom rest of the millennial kingdom. You know, praise God, Revelation 19 and following, we've got the return of Jesus, the establishment of his kingdom on earth, the thousand year reign, the millennial kingdom.

It's a real thing. There's nothing metaphoric about it. 100% really going to happen event. And that's one experience of rest. And then finally to experience the eternal heavenly rest when it's all said and done.

[34 : 59] And we can rest forever with our Savior, our God and Savior. Ladies and gentlemen, admittedly, the book of Hebrews can seem dry at times.

There are a lot of Old Testament references and allusions, but as we've already been reminded by the Apostle Paul in Romans, these things are written for our instruction. The fact is that God has a promised rest for those who have faith in Christ and live in obedience to him.

The opportunity is still present, but not for long. You have the opportunity now to commit to Christ for salvation, but you are not guaranteed another moment in your life.

It doesn't matter how young or old you may be, your time will be up one day. And I'm just thinking even the last couple weeks. Barbara Guerin passed away, 102 years old.

I always forget if it's 102 or 103. I just remember it's always a lot. But no, 102 years old. Her opportunities were immense in her life.

[36 : 09] But then, even while we were in Kenya, there was a young man down in Sekinani who died. The circumstances we don't even, we're not sure of exactly what it was, but they died.

It was a friend or somebody on the mission knew the individual. They're 21 years old. And I'm just thinking like, that was 14 years ago for me, and then that was many years ago for some of you, and that's yet to come for some of you as well.

21 is not long, not old. They're gone. Their opportunities are gone. So you're not guaranteed another moment beyond this one. So don't let it linger.

Because a missed opportunity has grave consequences. Maybe you're one of those people who says, I'm just not ready to make this decision. That's you. I plead with you not to put it off for long.

Remember, you're not promised another moment beyond this one in life. And to miss out means eternity in hell. And I think we've established what that's going to be like.

[37 : 15] It's not what the world tells you it's going to be like. Because they don't know. They don't want to know. And what the rest is all about, peace with God and the peace of God.

The day will come when our striving in this world will be rewarded with eternal rest in the presence of our Creator and Savior. We can praise God for that. We look forward to it. But my encouragement to you, whether it's you personally or somebody you know that you need to talk to and share Christ with, their opportunity is still present, but it's not for long.

Make a decision. Because a missed opportunity is not going to be good. Let's pray. Father, I thank you for your word. Lord, I thank you the way you work through us, the way you cause us to not just dig into it, really sift through it and understand it.

Lord, we thank you for your spirit that gives us understanding. Lord, you grant us many opportunities in this life, many opportunities as we're confronted with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Christ. Lord, I pray that anyone here who has been putting off that decision, who've been saying, no, I'm not ready to make a decision about Jesus.

[38 : 32] Lord, in effect, that's a no answer. Because if that's their last opportunity, Lord, we understand what happens. Lord, we have many people in this church who have many people on their hearts and minds right now, knowing that if they were to die today, they would spend eternity in hell, separated from you, eternal torment of body and soul.

And our hearts break for them, Lord. We desire, we want so desperately for your spirit to draw them through your word to yourself. Break down those strongholds, Lord.

Allow these folks to be sensitive and led by you. Help them, Lord, to commit to you. Make the decisions to say yes to following Jesus, to trusting in him fully for salvation.

Lord, I pray that you would take these words, you would take your word ultimately, Lord, shape us more into the image of your son, and help us, Lord, as we go from here to live each and every day pleasing to you, because we're going to have to give an account someday.

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.