

Endure To The End

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[0 : 00] Two things we're going to look at today, if you like to keep track of the outlines. We're going to look at Jesus' prophetic disclosure, and then we're going to look at his pastoral directives.

Let's first look at this prophetic disclosure. Now, much of the narrative describing the week of Jesus' crucifixion, as you will remember, is set in and around the temple in Jerusalem.

And one of the more important interpretive keys to this passage is noting exactly where Mark placed it in his narrative.

If you'll remember all the way back to chapter 11, you remember Jesus and his disciples make this final trek to Jerusalem. Jesus rides to Jerusalem on the donkey.

There is tremendous praise that comes along with that. And do you remember he goes into the temple? He looks around. He observes. And then he goes back to Bethany for the night, and he thinks about what he's observed.

[1 : 03] And do you remember what he did the next morning? He goes back. He's headed back to the temple, except he stops at a fig tree that was in bloom but had no fruit.

And he curses the fig tree as an illustration of the end of Israel's temple and Israel's worship.

A dramatic change is about to happen, and Jesus is illustrating that in the parable of the fig tree in the enacted parable there. And you'll remember through his teaching there.

All of this is leading up to this moment when there is a literal fulfillment of that. And it's going to happen in the time of the apostles.

Rome will eventually come in. In the years leading up to AD 70, Titus will come in, and he will promise to raise to the ground, R-A-Z-E, raise to the ground everything that is there in Jerusalem in response to a rebellion.

[2 : 05] And that's exactly what happened. And so Jesus is describing that. He is forewarning his disciples about this occurrence. Let's look at it there in verse 1.

And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, Look, teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings. And Jesus said to him, Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down. Now, talk about a particular killjoy of a moment, right?

Because this was an amazing moment for the disciples. They're from the backwaters of Galilee.

They don't make this trip to Jerusalem very often. Maybe annually they would come and they would get to witness exactly the extravagance and the grandeur of the temple complex.

And that's what they're doing. And they've come in and they're walking out, maybe perhaps for the last time before Jesus' death, they're walking out of the temple. And an unnamed disciple with amazement remarks to the Lord, Look, look at what wonderful stones.

[3 : 26] Look at the glory of this temple. And indeed, it was a glorious sight to behold. The complex itself had been in the process of renovation for 46 years by King Herod at this point, and it was nearing completion.

It spanned 36 acres. Now, that's not the temple building in this spot that is on a 35-acre plot of land. No, the temple complex itself was 36 acres.

It was huge. The stones that made up this great complex. Josephus, a Jewish historian, wrote that some of the largest ones were some 40 or 50 feet long, some 11 feet tall and 8 feet wide, weighing hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Massive stones have been brought in to construct this amazing temple. But it's not only that. There was a particular ornamentation to this temple that Herod had brought in.

The outside of the walls were plated in various places by pure gold. The gates were made of gold and brass and precious metals.

[4 : 49] And the parts of the stone that wasn't covered in precious metal were a purest white. So that Josephus said, From a distance, when you're approaching Jerusalem, the temple itself looks like a snow-clad mountain in the midst of Palestine, in the midst of the desert mountains of Judea.

It really would have been an amazing thing to see. And the disciples have spent their time there. And they're walking out of the temple here in this moment. And one of them looks up and says, Lord, look how amazing this is.

Look how awesome this is. And this is what sparks Jesus' lesson. It's this particular comment. This particular prophetic disclosure that everything that they saw will be destroyed.

And this surely must have come as a shock to the men. The temple then, as it is today for Jews, was the very focus of Jewish life and worship.

For them, it was literally the house of God where he had promised to dwell among his people. And of course, we can read the Old Testament.

[6 : 03] We can go to Ezekiel's book and we can see that the vision Ezekiel had where the glory of the Lord was removed from the temple some hundreds of years before this event actually took place.

But in the minds of the Jews, as they journeyed to Jerusalem, as they saw the temple, it stirred all kinds of spiritual emotions in them.

And just like they had no theological capacity for a Messiah who would suffer, neither did they have any kind of capacity in their minds for a fruitful spiritual life that was absent of the temple and the forms of worship that the temple represented and stood for.

So when they're coming out of the temple and the disciple says, look at how wonderful this is, and Jesus says, yeah, it's all gonna be destroyed, this is not a small passing statement from the Lord. This is hugely impactful. Remember the first time that the temple was destroyed in the Old Testament with Babylon coming in and taking captive the people of God. Remember when the remnant returns and under the leadership of Ezra and Zerubbabel, they begin to reconstruct the temple.

[7 : 22] And the ones who were old enough to have seen the former temple, Solomon's temple, remember what they did when they saw the new one? They wept. But their weeping wasn't rejoicing.

Their weeping was the fact that this is such, just a shadow of what it once was. This meant so much to them. This was everything to them. Today, you can go to Jerusalem, you will see it is just as important to the Jews today, even though it's not underneath their control.

They are awaiting the moment when they can reclaim the temple mount and they can reestablish the temple and their temple worship there in Israel. It means everything to them.

So when Jesus tells these men, it's going to be destroyed, that means something to them. It's impactful for them. And so Jesus was essentially saying, don't get too attached, fellas.

This is all going to go away. The truth is, if they were going to understand the gospel, if they were going to faithfully follow Jesus, their affections couldn't be attached to the temple and the old covenant system that it represented.

[8 : 42] Do you understand why Jesus is saying this to them? So long as these men, so long as their affections were attached to the things of this earth, to the old forms of worship, to the old covenant, so long as they were attached first to those things, they would never fully understand the gospel.

They would never really be faithful followers of Jesus because remember what Jesus had come to do. He had come to do away with the old in order to establish the new covenant in his blood.

He talked about it as new wine at one point that cannot be poured into old wineskins, else it would burst and be destroyed. Do you remember when Jesus said that in Mark's gospel?

This is what he's referring to. You can't take the new covenant of Jesus Christ and try to fit it into the old systems of the old covenant and the law.

It just doesn't work. And Jesus is saying, as long as your affection is set on this, as long as your affection is set on this temporary thing, you'll never really be able to faithfully follow me.

[9 : 52] And in the same way, we must not get so attached to this world and the things that we love so much here because eventually it's all going to be destroyed.

This earth will dissolve. It will be shaken. It's going to go away. Don't waste your time setting your affections on the things of this world.

Paul says, set your mind, set your affections on heavenly things. Set your affections on the things of Christ. Christians belong to another kingdom.

And we're awaiting the day that this earth will finally be dissolved and the new heavens and the new earth will be ours in eternity. And just as Jesus is describing to these disciples, don't get attached to the temple, it's going away.

Just focus on me. Trust me. So he says to us through this passage, don't let your affections get set on the things of this earth. Follow me. Trust me.

[11:02] The end is coming. Look at verse three. And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, tell us, when will these things be?

And what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished? And so the disciples just chew on the Lord's statement for a little bit, don't they? Sometime later, they're on the Mount of Olives.

I should have brought the picture for you today. I showed it several weeks ago, a picture of when my dad and my brother were there. You can be on the Mount of Olives and it's directly adjacent to the temple compound, the temple complex and mount in Jerusalem.

That's where Jesus and the disciples move to. They transfer over to the Mount of Olives. They're sitting there adjacent from the temple and they're just looking at it. They're gazing on it.

Four of them pull Jesus to the side or perhaps the others have gone to another place. Maybe they've gone on to Bethany for the night and these four disciples, while they have Jesus to themselves, ask him, when are these things gonna happen and how will we know when they are about to happen?

[12:15] And I think there's three questions here for us to deal with just briefly before we move on. One question that isn't asked, one question that isn't answered, and then one question that serves as the basis for Jesus' teaching.

The first question that isn't actually asked is why? Why? The disciples are so focused on when, they're so focused on the signs, that they don't stop for a moment, at least in the text, they don't stop for a moment and ask the Lord, you've said this is gonna be destroyed.

Why? Why must it be destroyed? Isn't that a good question to ask though, right? Well, why is it gonna be destroyed? Well, like I said, if you look over the course of Jesus' teaching in the Gospels, you'll find this theme, this motif woven through of something new replacing the old.

Jesus himself is the fulfillment of everything typified by and promised in the Old Testament. He was the perfect sacrifice that rendered obsolete the sacrificial system that was instructed through Moses.

He was the final fulfillment of that. Through him, we experience the eternal spiritual rest that is typified by the law's approach to the Sabbath day.

[13:47] Jesus fulfills that. Because of his death on the cross, we now have access to God through Jesus and Jesus alone, not a priest or a temple system.

Because of the Lord, the temple has no other reason to exist. He himself in that day was the presence of God among his people.

And after, as we talked about last week, after he ascended to heaven, he sent his spirit to indwell his people personally. There's no reason for the temple to continue.

The old forms of the old covenant have been perfectly fulfilled and replaced by Jesus. And if you desire forgiveness of sin, if you desire eternal life, peace with God, you will not find that in the temple.

You will not find that in a church building. You will not find that in religious formalism. You will find it through faith in Christ and Christ alone. That's the why.

[14:53] Why is this going to happen? Because I am the fulfillment of all these things, would have been Jesus' answer. But then that brings us to the second question, a question that they actually do ask, which is when?

When will these things happen, the disciples say. And what's interesting about this question is that Jesus doesn't answer it. You read all the way through the Olivet Discourse in this chapter plus Matthew 24 plus Luke 21, and you will never find where Jesus says, let me tell you when it's going to happen.

In fact, the closest that he comes to it, and Mark 13 is in verse 32, and he essentially says, you'll never know when it's going to happen until it happens. And so it's a question that goes unanswered. And my point in bringing that up is that since the Bible doesn't tell us when the end will come, we have to stop wasting our time trying to determine it ourselves.

Right? There was the one guy through the 70s and 80s and 90s that would write these books that 99 reasons the Lord will return in 1999.

[16:03] And then when the Lord doesn't return in 1999, he writes the next one. Well, you know, 21 reasons why the Lord will return in 2021. You know what I mean? The people trying to predict things that the Lord never gave us an answer for.

In fact, he said, you won't have an answer for it. We have to stop trying to do that. We need to beware of the people that are so obsessed with the things that are happening around the world that all they can think about is trying to pinpoint a time frame for the Lord's return.

We can be satisfied with the fact that the Lord is returning and then come to his own teaching and see he didn't give us an answer on that. So we'll leave it there. Then there's a third question.

What? What will be the sign of these things? The disciples say. And this is the question that serves as the foundation for the whole chapter. They wanted to know how they could know when everything Jesus said was about to happen.

Now Matthew's account adds a third element to this question. Matthew says that they ask also what will be the sign of the Lord's coming at the end of the age?

[17:11] Mark doesn't include that part of the question. And I think the reason he doesn't include it is because it's the same question that they ask when they're asking for the signs of the temple's destruction. Here's why I think that.

Because to the disciples and to the Jews in general, the destruction of the temple could only mean one thing. That the end of the age has come. Remember, theologically, in their capacity, that they had no theological understanding of a spiritual life without the temple.

The only thing that the destruction of the temple could mean is that the eternal state has come. The eternal kingdom has come. And so I really think when the disciples say, what will be the sign of all of these things?

It's the same as if they're also asking what will be the sign at the end of the age. So Jesus' answer corrects their thinking that says that these two things are going to happen simultaneously.

And then he speaks of two separate events here. One being a sign for the other. I mention these three questions because they serve as the context to which we have to return time and again as we study this chapter.

[18:23] The answers Jesus gave to the disciples are the same that he gives to us as we await his return. The gospel answers the why question.

We will not have an answer for the when question. And the signs and exhortations of the what question are the same for us as they were for the disciples. For the disciples, it had the temple particularly in focus.

For us, it has the foreshadowing of the end times. Well, that's the prophetic disclosure. Look with me now at the pastoral directives.

Pastoral directives. As the time of the temple's destruction drew near, there are three things that Jesus insinuates that the disciples are going to have to encounter.

They're going to encounter deception. They're going to encounter persecution. And as a result of both of those things, they're going to encounter personal spiritual doubt.

[19:32] And so what Jesus does as he begins to unfold what will happen moving forward, he uses it in the framework of three exhortations, three directives.

Here's what you must do to be faithful disciples. The first thing he says, don't be led astray. Don't be led astray.

Look at verse five. And Jesus began to say to them, see that no one leads you astray. Now, his first warning was that his followers were going to face wave after wave of false teaching that if they weren't careful would lead them away from following Christ instead of encouraging them to faithfully follow Christ.

Consider the cultural and religious climate of their day. Remember, the Jews believed that the Messiah was going to be primarily a political Messiah.

They thought he's going to deliver the nation from the oppression of Rome. So you can imagine, just as it happened historically, as things got worse and worse leading up to the destruction of the temple, there were many false messiahs claiming that they would be the one to save the nation. [20 : 57] The disciples were going to have to be mindful of these things. Jesus mentions two types of people that Christians must be aware of lest they're led away. The first one is what I just mentioned, fake messiahs.

Fake messiahs. Look at verse six. Many will come in my name saying, I am he. And they will lead many people astray.

Now, the claim here is not that they are Jesus. That's not the claim. It's not that many were going to come after Jesus' ascension and say, I'm Jesus that has come back. That's not what they're saying. What they're claiming is to be the savior for the nation, the messiah for the nation. Again, as Rome would come in and as the tensions politically would begin to boil over, we would find historically that there were many who claimed to be the champion that God had sent.

And Jesus indicated that what would increase the pressure on his disciples as these false messiahs came on the scene is the amount of followers that would follow these men.

[22 : 11] I think it was a man named Judas Maccabeus who would be responsible for the rebellion around the AD 65, AD 66, responsible for the rebellion.

He would be the one claiming, I will be the one to deliver the nation. God has sent me. And there were masses of people following this man, following this man to their destruction.

Jesus says, don't be led astray by the fake messiahs, that the one saying, I am he that will deliver the nation. These messiahs, these false saviors would have the skills that align with the Jewish misunderstanding of the Messiah.

And the disciples are going to face enormous pressure, enormous cultural pressure as the people around them begin to believe these claims and begin to abandon the truth of Jesus in the process. And Jesus warned, this is going to happen. Men, don't be led astray, Jesus says. Don't be led astray. And we have to heed this directive of the Lord.

[23 : 24] Because many false saviors arise in each generation from religious and secular realms. Their claims and skills are deceptive.

And the cultural numbers of people are often on their side. Masses of people following these false doctrines, following these false saviors to their certain doom and destruction.

Don't be led astray by the false savior of expressive individualism. Don't be led astray by the false savior of moral relativism.

Don't be led astray by the false saviors of Roman Catholicism or Mormonism or Zen Buddhism or other false religions. There will be many of them.

They will have many more followers than Christ will have. Don't be led astray. It's only going to get worse and worse and worse.

[24 : 26] Beware of the false messiahs, Jesus says. But there's a second group here that he warns about. They're really connected to the first. I term them as foolish experts.

There's false messiahs, fake messiahs, then there's foolish experts. Look at verse seven. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed.

This must take place. But the end is not yet. Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places.

There will be famines. And notice Jesus is saying this under the same paragraph, same context, as do not be led astray. Don't be led astray by the false saviors.

Don't be led astray by the foolish experts. Because there's going to be plenty of people that come claiming to know the things that God hasn't revealed about the end.

[25 : 30] In the years between Jesus' ascension and resurrection unto the destruction of the temple, all of these things came to fruition in and around Palestine.

There's a massive earthquake and Laodicea, massive destruction. It wasn't too far removed from this time that Vesuvius erupted and buried Pompeii.

It was certainly during this time that there's constant wars and rumors of wars just like there always has been. And anytime those things take place, it's necessary, Jesus says, but they're not the exclusive signs of the end.

Political and natural catastrophes will continue until Jesus returns, but we must not be led astray by the doomsday experts that strike fear in our hearts.

You don't have to build a bomb shelter under your house in fear from reading the newspaper. You don't have to be led astray by these that claim to know when these things are going to happen and point to every little thing that the end is actually here.

[26 : 43] Perhaps we can see the warnings here in application to the fear-mongering media age in which we live. Whether it's a newspaper or a news program or social media, all we get fed over and over and over is things that are designed to make us panic and fear.

Is there a warning in this from Jesus? What does he say? You're going to hear of wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, kingdoms against kingdoms.

And what does he say? Don't be alarmed. Don't be alarmed. Don't be led astray. We've seen so much of this the last two years, haven't we? Christians are being led astray by notions that the COVID vaccination is the mark of the beast.

Or that Bitcoin and Dogecoin are the universal currencies that mark the rule of the Antichrist at the end of the age. Listen, church.

Don't be led astray by those who are obsessed with every little thing that happens in Israel. Beware of those who interpret the Bible through the lens of American politics.

[28 : 03] Beware of those that interpret their Bible by laying the grid of their newspapers across it in order to determine what it is that God has said for us here. Beware of those people.

Don't be led astray. And notice what Jesus says in verse 8. These are but the beginning of the birth pains, he says. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

This is such a helpful analogy, isn't it? I say it's helpful because I wasn't the one that actually had to go through the birth pains in the process of our two children being born. It brings back to mind some of those days, though.

Remember, those of you ladies who have gone through this, you understand what it's like when you first begin to experience the early contractions that signal that birth is imminent. Even maybe the fake ones, whatever those are called, that happen maybe the week or so before and you start to panic and you find out, you go to the doctor and you think you're about to have a baby and the doctor says, well, those aren't even real contractions.

Well, what are they for? We begin to panic. We see the early birth pains, right? Well, how is it that this works? You know. You've been there. You've witnessed it. You start to feel the pain. You begin to panic a little bit.

[29 : 20] This baby might come any minute now because I had a little pain and you start to get urgent in the things that you do and you rush yourself to the hospital only to find that maybe it's going to be many, many hours, maybe days before the baby actually arrives.

Well, it's the purpose of the early birth pains. Well, they're a sign that the baby is coming, but they're not the sign that the baby is here. This is a helpful analogy, isn't it? Because it applies the same way to us.

Think about those moments, that final extreme pain and effort that a mother goes through in giving birth and then joy suddenly comes in the experience of new life and knowing that the pains of birth are now a thing of the past.

So it is with the end of the age, Jesus says. The disciples assume that the destruction of the temple meant the end of the age. Jesus said it was not the end of the age, it was actually the beginning of a new era, a new era in redemptive history.

It's just the beginning and the events foreshadowed in the temple's destruction are going to continue to increase as the day of the Lord draws near. Just like those early contractions are somewhat small and infrequent, but they grow stronger and they grow more frequent all the way up until the moment that new life is realized.

[30 : 41] So it will be with the end of the age. The temple was just the beginning. It's going to get worse. It's going to get more frequent and suddenly will come the end. And so as we read our Bibles, we quickly find that this analogy is so fitting.

Things are going to worsen in this world. And at the end of the tribulation, the worst of the birth pains, the worst of the efforts, believers will rejoice in the experience of eternal life in the new heavens and the new earth.

Just like a mother who is exhausted from hours of labor, so will weary Christians stand before their Lord and Savior. And the Bible says at that moment, He will look at those of us who are weary, who have come through great trial and hardship and persecution and tribulation, and He will wipe every

tear from our eyes and death will be no more and sin will be no more and disease will be no more. No more martyrs, no more problems, no more war. It all will pass away in that moment. And what we will have is to enjoy in eternity the new heavens and the new earth.

Jesus says this is just the beginning, but the beginning always has an end and in the end comes the new age and the new heavens. What a day that will be. What a day that will be when my Jesus I shall see and I look upon His face the one who saved me by His grace and He takes me by the hand and leads me through the promised land.

[32 : 23] What a day, glorious day that will be. Do you see what Jesus is doing for His disciples here? Things are going to get bad.

It's going to be really hard. Endure men, He says. Don't be led astray. It's just the beginning and the end will come and the end will come with great victory and life.

Don't be led astray. And then He says don't drop your guard. Don't drop your guard. Look at verse 9. He very plainly says it. I know this is just such an amazing sign of my ability as a wordsmith to come up with just tremendous ways to describe what this passage is saying.

What is it that Jesus says? Be on your guard. Don't drop your guard. Be on your guard. The directive here, it carries the idea of standing firm in the truth.

being prepared for what will come as a result. And in this section, Jesus is reminding the disciples of the reality of persecution for believers in this life.

[33 : 43] Persecution for the gospel will continue. It will increase as the day of the Lord approaches. and the Lord's directive was that we stand firm and be faithful to the glory of God.

Isn't this what Paul was instructing the Philippian church with? In reference to his own suffering and their suffering in that day, he writes, only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. So whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, not frightened in anything by your opponents, he says.

This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

What is it that Paul's saying? He's saying what Jesus said. You're going to deal with persecution.

And it will be great when I hear that you are standing firm together as the church, that you are standing firm in one spirit, that you are standing firm on the truth, not frightened by your opponents because you recognize that to suffer for Christ in this life is an honor.

[35 : 22] It's a grace of the Lord that he would count us worthy to suffer for his sake because we know at the end of this suffering is life eternal with him.

And so Jesus takes this reality of persecution as these men continued on in their walk with Christ and I think he says three things about it here. First, he gives us the purpose of persecution in verse 9.

The purpose, look at it. For they will deliver you over to councils and you will be beaten in synagogues. You will stand before governors and kings for my sake.

Why? To bear witness before them. To bear witness before them. And you only have to get a couple of chapters into the book of Acts. Just days after Jesus tells them this that these men are indeed delivered before the councils of the Sanhedrin.

They're persecuted in the synagogues and cast out of the synagogues not allowed to even return. They stood before governors and kings as Paul stood before Agrippa and they testified gave witness to the resurrected Christ all for the glory of God.

[36 : 37] So in case we're tempted to think that the hardship we face is a result of God being out of control or perhaps unconcerned Jesus proclaims there's actually a divine purpose to this.

They would indeed stand before all of these people and the purpose was to bear witness of the truth which had two possible results. It has one result the conversion of the lost.

as people looked on to their persecution and listened to the message of the gospel people were converted to Christ and they became Christians in that moment. It also served the purpose of judgment a warning to the unbelievers of their damnation and these results were to the glory of God for he is the God of perfect mercy and of perfect justice.

So what does Jesus say the purpose of this is? You're going to glorify God in your persecution.

You're going to glorify the Lord in your hardship.

People will be saved and others will be warned and in either case the Lord will be glorified. The purpose of persecution. Then we see the product of persecution for them.

[37 : 58] Verse 10 and the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. It will be proclaimed to all nations. All people groups will hear the truth so that when we endure the persecution for the gospel's sake it results in the evangelization of the world.

The statement pointed to a dramatic shift in God's plan to show his glory to the world. Do you remember how God's plan to reveal his glory to the world was structured in the Old Testament? Was structured through his people in Israel? Through their worship? Through the temple? People would have to travel to Israel to learn of this God.

They would have to travel to Jerusalem to the temple to learn of his glory to witness of his glory as they gazed upon his people and the way that they behaved and the things that they did. Not so in the New Testament.

Temple's destroyed now. Right? That's what Jesus is saying. And with that comes a shift in the way that God reveals his glory to the world. Instead of bringing people to a single place to reveal his glory he takes his people he indwells them and then he scatters them around the world and they take the demonstration of God's glory with them wherever they go.

[39 : 19] And what is often the agent of this scattering? Hardship. Persecution. The war in AD 70 itself would see many Christians spread throughout the Roman Empire and as they're spread in the diaspora throughout the Roman Empire what do they take with them?

The words of the Lord are on their lips and they preach the gospel and we see even in the book of Acts we see a foreshadowing of the gospel going to all nations around the world and Jesus says this will also be a sign of the end that as the end of the age approaches the gospel will prevail and the gospel will flourish around the world once again.

We see the product of it. Then we see the promise in it the promise in persecution. Verse 11 and when they bring you to trial and deliver you over do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say but say whatever is given you in that hour for it is not you who speak but the Holy Spirit.

Now what peace this provides to us. What peace. We don't have to attempt to predict the future so that we might prepare ourselves for its realities.

We don't have to do that. We only need to faithfully follow Christ and trust his promise that he will send his spirit to sustain us in those moments.

[40 : 54] Wasn't that the point of that whole section between John 14 and 16? Jesus is telling his disciples we read some of it last week I'm going away but when I go away I'm going to send my spirit.

Now I want you to think about that for just a moment. I prayed this this morning here in this room before people began to show up for worship today. I pray that we would experience the reality of that promise that as we gather for worship we have the promise of Christ's spirit to help us understand his truth.

To help us respond to his truth in the way that we need to respond. To enlighten us to his glory. To inform and help us and encourage us in our worship.

We have the seal of the spirit within us as a seal of our salvation. There is wonderful promise that comes from Christ about the spirit and here in this passage it is echoed once again that as you face certain persecution and hardship in this life whether it be through natural catastrophe or political upheaval or persecution for the gospel sake he has promised us his spirit and his spirit will inform us in those moments.

You don't have to try to figure it all out and prepare. You just have to trust the Lord. trust his promise he will give you through great peace the things that we need as we face these things.

[42 : 22] And there's echoes of the promise in the great commission here in Matthew 28 Jesus says all authority is given to me go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the father and the son of the holy spirit teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you.

And what's the promise that that goes along with it at the very end and behold I am with you always to the end of the age Jesus says and what does he tell his disciples here guys you're probably going to die you're going to face a lot of hardship don't be alarmed I'll be with you I will be with you what peace that brings to our hearts what wonderful promise there is in persecution we got to hurry to the end here we're thinking pastoral directives Jesus says as the end of the age draws near don't be led astray don't drop your guard be prepared for what's ahead and then he says don't lose the

faith don't lose the faith because if they're led astray and they drop their guard that will be the result they will abandon the faith verse 12 brother will deliver brother over to death and the father his child and children children will rise against parents and have them put to death and you will be hated by all for my name's sake but the one who endures to the end will be saved this final directive I think brings us to the main point of this first section down through verse 13 faith in the gospel can indeed result in loss of family we don't always have first hand experience with this in our context like many Christians do around the world but there are many people who upon converting to Christ perhaps even through their baptism are totally abandoned by their families as a result they're abandoned by their friends they lose their jobs they lose life as they know it and they lose it willingly for the sake of the gospel that's a reality for many people around the world faith in the gospel can result in loss of family it can result in loss of friends it can result in loss of life itself the end is coming and with it will be an incredible amount of hardship and persecution and in the midst of that we will be tempted to follow false teachers and we will be tempted to abandon Jesus in order to preserve a comfortable life in this world that's the temptation that's why Jesus said whoever will lose his life for my sake will gain it and whoever will save his life will lose it but in the end all those who endure and persevere in faith will be saved that's the promise now Jesus didn't mean that endurance earns our salvation that's not what he means by that our salvation is a present possession that comes to us at the moment of regeneration and conversion we can trust that our eternity is secure at the moment that we're saved but there is a dynamic to our future salvation there's echoes of Jesus' parable of the soils do you remember Jesus said that the gospel would be cast the seed would be cast on various types of soil and there were two types of soil that for a time appear to be fruitful they appear to be believers but either through sin or persecution they fall away but the promise from Jesus in that is that those who have truly trusted Christ alone for salvation will prove to be fruitful even in the end and how do we apply the end here look again at the verse 13 the one who endures to the end will be saved well these disciples didn't live all the way to the end at least the end of the age but they did come to an end didn't they all of us will face the waves of death as we'll sing about in just a moment Christ the sure and steady anchor as we face the waves of death if you remember back to pilgrim's progress do you remember us as pilgrim and hopeful they make it finally to the sea that they have to cross in order to get to the celestial city and it represents death doesn't it and in that moment pilgrim wavers for just a minute afraid of the death that awaits them and we can expect that at the moment that our death approaches we will be tempted to abandon the faith will you trust [48 : 03] Christ even in those moments and Jesus says the one who endures to the end will be saved for you the end may be natural death for you the end may be disease for you it may be some type of devastating consequence for you it may be persecution hardship the sun beating down on us like it did the seed that Jesus talked about in that parable but the one who endures will prove to be fruitful it's a promise of the Lord so endure Jesus says it's a pastoral warning endure don't lose the faith don't throw in the towel stay faithful trust me continue the Olivet Discourse is so very helpful but we have to approach it with the right purpose as I said in the beginning we can learn lots of things about the end of the age and we need to learn those things but the purpose of this section is in order to exhort us to faithfully follow Jesus do you see it just as the temple came to an end in AD 70 the end of this world is going to come the end is coming are you ready for that are you ready for the end have you trusted

Christ alone to forgive your sins will you endure the deception will you endure the destruction will you prove to be a faithful disciple we prayed about our discipling initiatives earlier in the service do you know why those things matter they matter because we need one another to spur us along in this don't we sometimes we come to church Sunday by Sunday and we do the best we can we only have limited time together on Sunday mornings don't we we do the best we can to encourage people the truth is we really have no idea what's under the surface of most of our hearts as we come in Sunday by Sunday and we may think you know nobody is nobody's having to go home every Sunday and deal with the threat of their life because they went to church that day at least I don't think that's the case for anyone here but we don't know what kind of hardships and persecutions each other are facing you know why it's helpful when we come to a lakeside connect group we have a moment to encourage people along to say just keep going trust the promise isn't that what we want to do with our children on Thursdays because things might be harder for them than what it actually is for us in either case they're going to face great difficulty as believers don't we

want to start teaching them now hey trust the promise

Jesus said this would happen just stay faithful just trust him isn't that what we do is we pray for one another in the prayer breakfast and in our personal time that's what we're doing when we're meeting together for coffee and when we're investing we're saying keep going God is good the Lord is faithful he will help you keep moving endure to the end and in the end every one of us who know Christ will celebrate just like a new mother new life and joyNING Thank you.