

Day of the Lord

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[0 : 0 0] All right. We're a small crowd today. By the way, I want you to remember that Matt, the reason I'm preaching, Matt's supposed to preach today, got a hold of me Friday evening, I guess, late afternoon, early evening.

His father is really, really close to death, and they called the family to gather to be there. So he and Becky went up to Virginia on Friday evening, and we haven't heard anything.

So he said, Matt's got a very clear idea of what's going on. He said, of course, my dad, Hostess has been saying he's dying ever since Easter, and he's still here, so he may hang on for weeks. We don't know.

So just be praying for them and for grace. And then we have a whole bunch of people that this is their vacation weekend. So here we are. I told Teresa, yep. Just remember, we're the faithful. We're the faithful. That's right. And we're going to be talking about it. That's what we were talking about in Sunday school, too.

And it's quality. Quality. That's correct. You've got the quality. We've got the qualities right here. Well, anyway, so I had to come up with a sermon, and he said, I'm sure you can come up with it. You've probably got one half written. I go, no.

[1 : 1 9] And I usually write them on Friday mornings. Well, of course, Friday had come and gone, so I can review them on a Saturday or Sunday. And so yesterday morning I got up, and I told the cat as we're sitting in the office, I'm looking at the computer.

I've got Word here, and I've got my Bible software here, and I'm going, Lord, we need a sermon. Rosie, you've got a sermon in here. I don't know what we're going to do.

But anyway, it finally came. I've been reading a book on, it's a really intense study of Revelation. And something came out of that. I mean, I had a sermon idea a couple weeks ago that I really bad wanted to preach, but I didn't have an opportunity.

It didn't fit anywhere, but I couldn't remember it. So here you go. This is what you got. Take it for what it is. And that last song, part of it fits really well into this. Do you know the day of the Lord? You know, what is the day of the Lord?

His return. His return is the day of judgment, right? The day of the Lord. The day of the Lord is coming. Do you understand that? The day of the Lord is coming. I'm excited. Some people aren't excited.

[2 : 3 1] But I'm excited because we know it's coming. And when it does, we can be assured that it's going to bring justice to this world.

God's justice to all the nations and the peoples of the earth. You know, that's the whole, you hear that in the news a lot. It's justice, justice, justice. Well, the world's got their idea of justice. God has the ultimate idea of justice.

And his justice is different than ours. But he's going to bring justice to all the people of the earth, past and present. And now it's not based on some rule of law.

We're not going to be judged by the Torah. We're not going to be judged by some hammer, rabbi, code, or the American legal system or whatever. We're going to be judged by God's character.

And we know that God is holy. And he demands that all of his human creatures be holy.

[3 : 3 5] That's the standard that we're going to be judged by. How do we match up to his holiness? He said, be holy as I am holy. That's the standard. We've been set apart to reflect his image.

And called to be holy. You know that we are all his image bearers? Did you know that? You are an image bearer. God's image bearer. Every human being is God's image bearer.

Why? Because he made us all. Every human being has been made in the image of God. Do you understand that? So when you get mad at that clerk at the store because they did something dumb,

you just got mad at God's image bearer.

When you cut that guy off on the highway because he's driving erratically, you just cut off God's image bearer. And what did you do to yourself as God's image bearer but tarnish that image?

He made us in his image to reflect his glory and to have dominion over creation.

[4 : 47] When Adam and Eve were created, they were told to bring order to the earth. They lived in the garden. You know what? The garden wasn't the whole earth.

Most of the earth was just wild. They were to extend that garden as they grew in population. They were to bring the whole of the earth under dominion of human lordship, working as God's agents, to bring his authority over all of creation by the work of their hands.

And that's what we're called to. But we haven't done very well caring for creation. We have extended our work over all of creation.

All the earth is filled with human activity. Not all human activity, though, is beneficial to the earth. But the day is coming when we will answer for that.

The day is coming when we will have to answer for the grace that we've experienced and for the rebellion we have committed against our God and our Creator, whose image we bear and whose purpose was given to us to complete.

[6 : 04] You see, we all have rebelled. And what's another word for rebelled? Sinned. We all have sinned. You know what the fundamental rebellion is?

Human rebellion? The basic human sin is all based in one thing. It's one thing. You know what it is? We were so impressed with God as human beings that we wanted to be like Him.

What we didn't understand is that was God's intent. He wanted to make us like Him. To build, change us. That's what Christ is. Paul says we're being made into the image of Christ.

We'll be like Him. But we decided we could do it on our own. We could do it on our own. That's what Satan promised. You'll be like God.

I mean, well, that's a good thing. It's a good thing, and it's part of God's plan, but it was done the wrong way. What separates the ones that are gathered here from some of those that are out there is that even though we have rebelled, we've sinned, what have we done?

[7 : 19] Well, we've turned and put our faith in the grace of God. That was extended to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our songs talked about that today.

It's here that our hope lies. In Him who knew no sin, who is both declared Lord and Savior, who Himself is God in the flesh.

If you read Revelation, you'll find out that the Lamb, which is Jesus Christ, gets the same praise and adulation and worship as the God the Father. They both are on the throne.

And literally, there's Revelation. John is saying in the visions he saw that Jesus is God. God. If you ever question that, all you have to do is look.

But the problem is the way Revelation is written, we see part here and a part there and a part here and a part... We never put them all together. That's what I like about this book I'm reading.

[8 : 16] He's analyzing it topically. And there's a place in Revelation. Turn to it. It's Revelation 6, verse 12.

That's what we're going to be reading. And there's a question where on that day, the day of the Lord, everyone's going to ask a question. Anyone who's alive at that point is going to be asking this question.

Who can stand before Him? So let's look at Revelation 6, verses 12-17. And don't close the book when you get through, because we're going to be looking at several passages.

And it says, When He opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake. And the sun became black as sackcloth, and the full moon became like blood. And the stars of the sky fell to the earth as fig trees sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.

The sky vanished like a scroll that was being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth, and the great ones, and the generals, and the rich, and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling up to the mountains.

[9 : 39] And rocks fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath has come. And who can stand?

Who can stand indeed before the Lord? That's the question the world is going to be asking. Every human being alive at that time is going to be asking, that are left on the earth, Who can stand?

Well, it's an interesting question because if you go back to Revelation chapter 5, let's go back there, chapter 5, verse 6 through 10, it says this, Then I saw standing in the middle of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the middle of the elders, a lamb that appeared to have been killed. And he had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out to all the earth. Then he came and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who is seated on the throne, and when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders threw themselves on the ground before the lamb.

Each of them had a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints, and they were singing a new song. You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because you were killed, and at the cost of your blood, you have purchased for God persons from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

[11:07] And you have appointed them as king and priest to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth. So who indeed can stand before the Lord?

Well, one can. And who is that? Christ. He stands there and receives from the Father the scroll. He's the one that's going to bring the judgment on the last day.

He stands not only in front of the throne, he stands, this is in the middle of the throne. Now, I don't know what that picture is. I'm sort of thinking maybe the throne idea is more than just a seat.

We think of the throne as just a seat, but it could be elsewhere, John, we're going to read it, he's going to describe it as having a glassy seat in the throne, and all that, and he's standing in the middle of this. In another place, he said that he's on the throne with the Father, with God.

He's the only one who's worthy. He receives the same praise as the Father from the elders and the creatures that are around the throne. Who can stand Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior?

[12:20] He is worthy and able because, why? He purchased a people from every tribe, language, people, and nations to be the people of God. You think about that.

Who is that? Who's included in every people, language, tribe, and nation? Oh, they're right here. Us. And he did that.

That was God's purpose. Remember back when he came to Abraham, and he called Abraham out, and he said, go to the land, I'll show you. And when he got there, what did he tell him? He says, look at the sky and see the stars.

Your descendants are going to be like the stars if you can number them. He told, I think it was Jacob, see the sand? Your descendants will be like the sand, beyond count.

Too numerous, a multitude beyond numbering. And they're all, according to Revelation, purchased by the shed blood of Christ. Turn over to chapter 7 in Revelation, verse 9.

[13:29] John goes on to report what he saw. I think that's important too, is when you read Revelation, remember that it is John's recording what he saw and heard. He's not telling us a story.

Verse 9, chapter 7 says, After these things I looked, and here was an enormous crowd that no one could count, made of persons of every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the land, dressed in long white robes and with palm branches in their hand.

And they were shouting out in a loud voice, Salvation belongs to our God, to the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb. So not only is our Christ, our Savior, standing there before the throne, who's standing there before the throne now?

A multitude of people from every language group of people. And they're saying, Salvation belongs to our God. Purchased by the blood.

They are the martyrs who conquered the beast and the dragon. Those who have not bowed down to the beast, who did not worship or do not worship the adversary, which is the devil, whose allegiance was and is to the Son of the living God.

[14:50] And to them, he gave white robes that were washed in the blood of Christ, and palm branches which symbolized victory. Now think of the picture.

Here are all these people, and they're there with a palm branch waving. When was the first time you heard about palm branches being waved? The Christ came to Jerusalem. When Christ made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

And they were hailing him as King. Messiah. Messiah. Which is Christ. That's what the word Christ means. And what happens at the end?

That multitude had palm branches in there saying, Christ has come and rescued us, redeemed us, bought us, given us victory and salvation.

It's a picture of the completion of a new exodus. Just as the Israelites left Egypt, which is a picture of the world, to go to the new land, the promised land, we too, as God's people, are going to leave this corrupted, degraded earth, and we're going to go where?

[16:03] Where? First to the heaven and then to the new earth. It's an exodus. We're leaving here. We're sojourners. We're on our way. We're not there.

That's the problem. Many Christians think, well, we're already here. And the answer is no. You're on your way. You're fellow travelers in a multitude.

And one day, we're going to celebrate in His triumphal entry. Going to chapter 15 of Revelation, John records another scene there where the victors who conquered the beast are seen.

Verse 2. Then I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire. And those who had conquered the beast in His image and the number of His name, they were standing by the sea of glass holding harps given to them by God.

And they sang the song of Moses, the sermon of God, and the song of the Lamb. Great and astounding are your deeds, Lord God, all-powerful. Just and true are your ways, King over the nations.

[17:18] Who will not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name because you alone are holy. All the nations will come and worship before you for your righteous acts have been revealed.

Now it's interesting, it says that they sang the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. One was the song of Moses first sang after they crossed the Red Sea during the Exodus when they were rescued from the Egyptians.

We're going to sing that song of God's victory over the world and we're going to sing the song of the Lamb, His victory over sin. How is it that all the nations will come and worship God?

They've been destroyed. How is it that it's possible that that can be fulfilled? It's because every nation is going to have someone there. That's why the Great Commission says we've got to get to the ends of the earth.

Why? Every people group, every language must hear the gospel and someone, someone will be saved out of that people. Why? Because they're going to represent that nation.

[18:29] God values our differences, by the way. I don't think when we get to the new earth we're going to give up our language and our culture in a lot of ways. We're going to keep the good parts of that. He's going to celebrate the fact that He has a people who live together in peace and harmony and glorifying Him, speaking different languages with different backgrounds and different culture.

and there will be people from every nation, every people group on the new earth. They're going to sing the song of God's victory, praising Him for conquering His enemies and saving His people in the new exodus by the blood of the Lamb.

While those who remain in their rebellion cry out, who can stand those who are Christ are going to cry out, salvation belongs to our God, the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb while standing there before Him.

Now sometimes I think about that day and I mean, I'm getting to be, I'm 74, I'll be 75 in December. So you know, every day.

One way or the other. You know, if the motorcycle doesn't get me, old age will, something's going to get me and it won't be long. That terrible day of the Lord.

[19:59] And the question in my mind is this, will I cry out for the mountains to fall on me or will I be found crying out, salvation belongs to our God?

I know I am not worthy of God's salvation and grace. there's no way I deserve it. I know with certainty that I'm not righteous by my deeds.

Like Paul, I can say I'm among the chief of sinners. There's no question about that. My zeal sometimes flags.

My heart sometimes strays from the Lord. I am in need of constant repentance. Yet, deep in my heart there is a desire to be there on that day before Him, standing with the multitude, before the throne of God, praising Him, extolling His great deeds and declaring Him to be the King of the nations.

What my mind questions, my heart must trust. what my reason tells me is unlikely, my faith assures me, is true.

[21:16] And above all, I know God's justice is found not in law, we are all guilty. Rather, it's found in grace to all those who cry out to Him for salvation and life.

I mean, I've heard a sermon for a couple weeks ago. I mean, that man spoke with some passion. I thought we had gone next door.

He mentioned Romans 8, 1-4, so turn there now. I'll give you a minute to find it. Romans 8. Romans 8. Romans 8.

1-4 says, Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And if I don't hear a whoopee, for the law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

For God achieved what the law could not do because it was weakened through the flesh. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, He condemns sin in the flesh, so that the righteous requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

[22 : 54] What Christ accomplished on the cross through the shedding of His blood brings me and you into a new relationship with God, it brings righteousness, which is just simply right standing before God to us.

It allows us on that day to stand before the throne of God and praise Him, rather than cry for the mountains to fall on us. He did what we and I cannot do.

He condemned sin and fulfilled the law that we might be set free and be made into new creations or creatures in Him. You see, that's good news because it does not depend on my sinlessness, but on faith in Christ and acceptance of Him as Lord.

When God looks at me, He sees Christ, which is good news. He's better looking, I'm sure, than I am. and He's more faithful, He's righteous, He's holy than I'm not.

When I approach God, I do so through Christ. Hebrew says that we go boldly into the presence of God, to the very throne of God, to the veil of Jesus' flesh.

[24 : 16] Ephesians says that we're seated in the heavenlies with Him, in Christ with Him, on the right-hand side of the throne of God. We're part of the body of Christ.

He's our head. We're under His authority, His lordship. We don't live for ourselves, but for Him. We should not pursue the things of this world, for it is directed by the evil one. Do you know that the New Testament declares that the world is ruled by the devil?

You know why everything's going to pot? It's because the devil is directing the direction, and guess what? He has. He's not a creator, he is a destroyer. He can never bring life, he can only bring death, and he's good at it.

But we should pursue the things of Christ. obedience to our Lord, our head, is what will bring us to stand before Him at the throne.

We are not gods, although that's what people who rebel against God are seeking to become. They want to make themselves godlike. They think they're in control of their own destiny and their own lives.

[25 : 32] They're not. God. In fact, in Romans it says, you're either a slave to sin or you're a slave to righteousness.

Christ sets you free to make that choice. We are servants, even slaves of our God, the people of His kingdom.

Our allegiance should be set on Him alone. In Philippians 3, Paul wrote, not that I have attained this, that is, I have not already been perfected, but I strive to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to attain this. Instead, I am single minded, and this is what you and I all need to be, forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out to the things that are ahead.

And with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. I pray that we'll have this same mind daily that Paul had.

[26 : 42] Now, there's no way I can do that on my own. That's another thing most Christians don't understand. We are not able to be Christian on our own. It's virtually impossible.

You will not stand by yourself. Think of that. A soldier surrounded by an enemy army, by himself, will not last long. He will be struck down.

But God in His mercy has given me two things to help me, and to help you too. First, it's His Spirit living in us, who's there to guide us into all truth, to transform us bit by bit into the image of Christ.

He works hard in us that we might grow in Christ. Christ. The second thing He gives us is the church.

And the church is not an institution or a building, an organization, or a society. It is the people, the saints, the people of God gathered in a place.

[27 : 57] Those called out and made new creatures in Christ. And we are called to love, encourage, admonish, and walk with each other until we all attain to the fullness of Christ.

And as we work and pray and serve and support one another, by the way, there are over 60 of those one another's in the Bible, then on that day we will be found with the multitude from the nation standing before the throne, praising our God and our Christ.

So let us be found faithful. Let's pray. Lord, I just thank you that no matter what my mind says, your truth says that I'm yours.

You said no one can pluck me out of your hand, that we are your people, the sheep of your pasture, yours for eternity, to populate the new earth, to serve you and to worship you forever, together.

Help us, Lord, to maintain that, understand that it is only through your grace that we have a means of standing, permission to even be in your presence, and to face the obstacles of this life and in this world with confidence in you and not ourselves, knowing that you have all things in your hand, you guide and direct all things to your purpose.

[29 : 39] And when the mountains shake and the islands are displaced and people are crying out, death might come and hide them from you, that we would stand up and rejoice knowing that you have the victory and have claimed us to be a part of that victory forever.

thank you Lord, in Jesus' name, Amen.