

Strive for the Faith

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Date: 14 September 2025

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[0 : 00] And I guess we're ready for our first slide there if we can go ahead and get that up. Yes brother. Thank you. Courtney is speaking first. Courtney who, right? Let me go ahead then and we'll include her in our recording today so folks will hear a nice mission report. Thank you for mentioning that. I just got carried away. I'm eager to preach this morning.

So today we're really blessed. We have a missionary among us who's come to give us a report on her mission work in Bolivia, South America. And she doesn't need much of an introduction to those who have been in the church a long time because she grew up in our church.

She was a child here, part of the Mathis family and went on mission trips with us and was in Sunday school with us and vacation Bible school and got baptized here in our church.

We've known her forever and the Lord sent her out from among us to go and serve him. So let's welcome Courtney Mathis. Come and share with us this. She says, first, first the video.

Thank you. Thank you.

[1 : 40] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. And you're happy. And you're happy. And you're happy. And you're happy. And you're happy. And you're happy. And you're happy. serving in the women's ministry. We hosted several women's conferences and retreats, held monthly ladies' meetings, and organized a Christmas tea each year. I also had the joy of discipling several young women in the church. Serving in a new church plant also meant many opportunities for community outreach, inviting people to church, and sharing the gospel in creative ways. One example was our Good Friday movie night. We used a local community center, passed out invitations, served snacks, shared a Christian film, and closed with a clear gospel message. Through these ministries, along with many other events and visitations, we've seen people trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, follow Him in baptism, and become active members of the church. Lives have been changed as God has worked through His people. Thank you for your faithful prayers and financial support for these past three years. Without you holding the rope, none of these things could have been possible. Please continue to pray for Bolivia. There are so many who are still lost and have never heard the true gospel, heard that God would bring revival to this country, and prayed for more laborers, that others would answer His call, and go. The harvest is ready, but the workers are few. Together, we can continue to bring the light of Christ to Bolivia.

I'm gonna grab you my crown. We're gonna finally get this thing untangled up here. There you go.

[4 : 50] Sorry. It was so good to be here with you all tonight. As Mr. Matt mentioned, I grew up here in church, and it has grown since I have last been here, which is amazing.

But I am just so glad to be here with my family and my church family that I grew up in. It was here that I went on my first mission trip to Colombia with the church, where I first felt the Lord place a call on my heart to serve Him with my life.

And back when I was 18, I had no idea that that would lead me to Bolivia, South America. So it has just been an amazing three years in Bolivia. As you saw in the video, there has been many events, many things. The first thing I did when I reached Bolivia, when I got there three years ago, was start language school.

I did not speak much Spanish when I went there, so I spent a year in language school, 20 hours a week, one-on-one with a teacher. And we went through our book of grammatical things in Spanish, and that was very boring.

I went home many days with a headache and just tired of Spanish, and I said, my brain just cannot do anything else today. I'm exhausted. But it was through her, more than just the books, but just

talking one-on-one with her, forming a relationship with her and a friendship, that I really learned Spanish, talking about everything under the sun on our breaks.

[6 : 14] And then I read out loud to her books in Spanish. I think through the year, I read five books out loud, with her falling asleep as I'm reading to her.

I can only imagine how boring that was for her. But it was what really helped me be able to serve in the ministry in Bolivia. I started out in the children's ministry, teaching on Wednesday nights in our kids' club, and I've been able to see that ministry grow.

When I got to Bolivia three years ago, that church plant was brand new. They had just started their first Sunday, and so being able to see the church grow from nothing up until what it is now, after these three years, I have really seen how the Lord has worked and blessed.

This past month, I think in June, we got word after we left, which I was kind of like, really, Lord? But it was just him reminding me that it's not us, but it's him that gives the increase in everything.

There's a little boy, Daniel, who has been coming to the church since the doors opened three years ago. He has come to the children's club on Wednesdays, and he has come to church, to the kids' church on Sundays for three years.

[7 : 21] And after we left, a few weeks after we left, he finally gave his heart to Christ and got saved. And so praise the Lord for that, to see the Lord continuing to work even while we're not there in the church.

But the Lord really used that to humble me and said, it's not you, but it's me that continues the work. So through that, I was able to start teaching on Sunday mornings as well, starting with all the kids. And then once the class grew, we were able to split the class up into the older kids and the younger kids. And this past year, I took over being the director of the children's ministry, planning the events, leading the people.

And as I was getting ready to come home on furlough, training up the Bolivian ladies to take over that ministry from me, which I think was the hardest part of all, is having a ministry and then handing it over to someone else who has a different way of doing things.

But the Lord really has continued to bless in that ministry as well. And through that, I was also able to start teaching in with the women as well as I learned Spanish.

[8 : 21] I think teaching women is harder because they have a deeper understanding of things and you can't just use a basic vocabulary. Children are harder because they're blunt and they will tell you when you mess up to your face.

The women will not. So that's great. But we have every year we have a ladies, an older ladies retreat in February. And so the ladies will come.

One year we did it out on a camp property and they were able to be there all day. Sometimes we do it at the church property and all the churches come together with the women's ministry. And we just have a great time fellowshiping with the Lord.

We've done different themes this year. The theme was, oh, I can't even remember what the theme was. For the young ladies, it's our identity in Christ. So every year we do one for the older ladies. And then every year we also do one in July during their winter break.

We do one for the younger ladies, a retreat Friday night and Saturday. And they love that time together. We usually watch a movie on Friday night after a lesson. And then all day Saturday we're in classes and we have breakout sessions.

[9 : 23] And so this year their theme was our identity in Christ. Who we are in Christ and using that to lead us out into the world. I've just enjoyed seeing how these people have grown.

How the Bolivians have grown in their faith. Over the last year I was able to do discipleship with a young lady. Her name is Annalise. When she first came to the church, she was very shy. And she would not talk to anybody.

And when she spoke, she spoke like this very quietly. And you couldn't hear anything she said. And so she thought I didn't speak Spanish because I couldn't hear her. But it's not that I didn't understand her.

It's that I couldn't hear anything she said to me. And so I was reading her lips trying to figure out what she was saying. But as we started to do discipleship lessons, she really started opening up to me. I got to know more about her past, more about her life.

And she grew up in church. But through some things that had happened in high school, she ran away from the Lord. And she even told the Lord, I hate you. And I do not want to be your daughter

anymore.

[10:21] And so she, when we started going through the Bible lessons, she was like, I don't think I'm saved. This is what has happened in my life. And so I was able to reassure her of her security of salvation.

That once she has accepted Christ as her Savior, she could never lose that. And so I taught her about who God is, who Jesus is, who the Holy Spirit is in our lives. And through that, I've seen how God has changed her.

She went from doubting her salvation and just struggling in everything. To now, she is serving in the children's ministry, teaching the little kids each week, and looking to marry one of our pastors.

So she will hopefully in the future be a pastor's wife. And I think that relationship, that friendship with her has just been a huge blessing on me. She would come home with me on Sunday afternoons.

She would teach me how to cook a Bolivian dish.

Or we would go out to eat if I didn't feel like cooking. And then we would do our discipleship lesson.

And she would just hang out with me all day and then go back to church with me that evening. It made for a long day, but it was just so wonderful having that friendship with her, getting to know her life, and seeing how God really is still working in Bolivia in people's lives.

[11:27] Not just in the church as a whole, but in the individual people's lives. So I, again, want to thank you all for your faithful support over these past three years. Not just financially, but in your prayers.

Without all of your prayers, none of this would have been possible. I don't think I would have ever learned Spanish. It was very hard. Yeah, exactly. It's not easy learning another language.

I still make mistakes. There's some things people say, and I'm like, I don't even know what you're saying to me right now. But I just, all of this is not possible without each of you here holding the rope while we are there in Bolivia.

And this ministry, like I said in the video, is your ministry as well. Each of you have a part in this, and I want to thank you so much. This church has been such a blessing to me since I grew up in it. And been faithfully helping me throughout these years as well.

So thank you all so much. If anyone has questions, I'll be here. I love talking about Bolivia. It's my favorite topic in the world. So if anyone has any questions, you can ask me after the service.

[12:26] Thank you, Courtney. That was wonderful. Well, aren't we proud of how that girl has grown up?

The confidence you now stand and speak with, it's astonishing. Wow. And Mark and Tammy, would you all just stand up just a moment?

Look, there's the parents of this young lady, and you did a good job, and we appreciate you. God raised her right there. Okay. Amen. And if you couldn't hear Mark, he did the right thing.

He gave the credit to the Almighty. But nobody's been more faithful in this church for over 20 years than the whole Mathis family. And so we just appreciate you all so much.

Okay. Well, today we are turning back again to the book of Jude. It's a very short book in the scripture. And in fact, I'm kind of amazed that the commentary that we used squeezed three sermons out of this.

[13:31] I'm not sure there's three sermons in there. But anyway, it's a great book. And the main theme of it really is that we must contend for our faith.

We must hang on to our faith. And we talked last week in the introduction how Jude, the author of this book, was actually another son of Mary.

So Jesus Christ was his half-brother. Jesus, of course, having a different father. God was his father. And Jude, Joseph, would have been his father, as far as we know.

So anyway, the book of Jude written by somebody who grew up with Jesus. And anyway, last week, Steve Tversky filled us all in on all of that quite well.

Now, today, the part that I was assigned goes into great detail about avoiding false teachers and false prophets. Well, the last time I preached, about a month ago, we were in the book of 2 Peter.

[14:36] And the section that I was assigned was all about avoiding false prophets and false teachers. And I'm not going to preach the same sermon again twice that close together.

So I'm going to go in a different direction. But I'm still coming out of the scripture assigned to me. But this week, I've been, like all of us probably, I've been stunned by things in the news.

And some of you that don't try to keep up with the news, you're probably smart for doing that. There's just a lot there that can be very troubling. And I guess all of us this week, if you watch the news at all, next slide, please.

You were very aware of the assassination of Charlie Kirk. He was an outspoken Christian political leader.

A young man, only 31 years old, huge following, follower of Christ, preached as much as he gave political speeches, did both.

[15 : 38] And it was just a terrible assassination and shocking. And then just a week or two before that, in Charlotte, the violence of this young woman that was on this train, and some maniac, at least demon-motivated, if not demon-possessed, who'd never met her, never seen her, knew nothing about her, stabbed her to death for no reason whatsoever.

And then back in June, this one didn't maybe get as much attention, but it kind of did in June. Up in Minnesota, a couple of Democrat lawmakers who tend to be more of the liberals, somebody showed up on their doorstep pretending to be a policeman, shot them.

The lady died, was assassinated, really, for her political beliefs. The man who was also a representative there in Minnesota lived through it. So it's kind of not just from one side of the political spectrum or the other side of the political spectrum, but it is the violence and craziness that's growing in our society.

And we're all probably wondering. Steve, last week you said right here in the middle it gets real echoey, doesn't it? I don't know if y'all can hear it, but I do. I'm going to stand to the side a little more.

So anyway, these are difficult times that we're living in. And I was just praying about these things this week and saying, Lord, what should we do?

[17 : 15] How shall we react? What as Christians in a society where people are just crazy, how should we be living? And I think that in the book of Jude today, we see hope.

We see hope. So let's stop and ask the Lord to guide us. Lord, we need a word from you today. We don't need a word from any other source.

Government has failed us in many ways. Medicines fail us. Psychiatry fails us. Self-help books let us down.

We need a touch from the living God. Through Jesus Christ, our Savior, we need the Holy Spirit to come and inform us and teach us.

So, Lord, we now give you this time. We open our hearts to you. Come speak to us, O Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen. Before I go into Jude, I first want to back up and read something that the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy.

[18 : 29] So, the next slide, please. 2 Timothy, chapter 3, 1 through 5. Paul says, But mark this. In other words, this is important.

Pay attention to this. There will be terrible times in the last days. We're going through some terrible times. We're in the last days.

We've been in the last days for a long time. Ever since Christ left, it's been the last days. But we are very much in the last days. And then Paul says, here's what it's going to be like as these terrible times come.

People will be lovers of themselves. Do you know anybody or do you know of anybody that probably posts a selfie five or six times a day?

Talk about a lover of self. Who wants to look at you that much other than yourself? Well, we could all be accused of guilty on that one.

[19 : 34] Do you ever walk past a mirror without glancing in it and kind of trying to shape up something? Do you look in the mirror and say, you good looking thing, don't you ever die?

You know, well, we're all guilty of lovers themselves. But more and more in our society, you see an increase in only caring about self.

Lovers of money. Does that sound like modern America? Does that sound like the world? Seems like we love money and we think constantly of how to get more of it and how to keep building up more and more of it.

We are very carried away with greed. Boastful and proud. This is part of why I don't follow celebrities. All kinds of celebrities.

You think about the athletes. I hate to hear them speak. It's so boastful. It's so proud. Politicians. They sometimes just grate on me the way they want to take credit for everything and talk about their God's gift to the planet.

[20 : 40] They're not. They're just humans. And we have selected them to be our leaders. And they need to keep some humility. And it just goes on and on and on. Just this whole attitude of I am the greatest.

Nobody's as good as me. I'm wonderful. I can do everything. It's the kind of spirit that has come upon our land. Being abusive. So many people are abusive to others in their family, in their friendships, at work, to their spouse.

They're very abusive in their words. It's a very hateful time in the world. Disobedient to parents. And you think, wow, why is that up there?

The rest sounds pretty bad. But, you know, I guess we all know that most every kid has some time. Not most every. Except for Jesus. Every kid has disobeyed their parents.

I think what we're seeing in this kind of disobedience is the kind that is so extreme that we're seeing today. Psychology has even given it a name that didn't used to exist.

[21 : 48] When I was in graduate school studying psychology, this wasn't even in the books. It's called oppositional defiant disorder. It means this is a kid who will not obey anybody.

This is a kid who says, nobody tells me what to do. I'll make up my own mind. I'll do homework if I feel like it. I'll watch TV or social media or whatever whenever I feel like it.

I'll go to bed or I won't when I feel like it. And if you try to in any way correct me or discipline me, I will throw a screaming meme that drives you crazy.

And you won't keep doing it. That's the kind of attitude that is spreading in these last days. Being ungrateful. We're so guilty of that.

I'll give you a simple example because I know you're as guilty as me. You go out to eat at a nice restaurant. And they bring you, you know, whatever. The waitress is nice.

[22 : 49] And they bring you your appetizer or a salad or whatever. And it's just perfect.

Everything's good. And you're eating it. And then they bring you the main course. And they're so nice. And they lay it out. And the music is nice.

And everything's wonderful. And then maybe one thing. It'll be something like, you know what? This meat here, it's a little too salty. And so what do we do?

Instead of focusing on and being grateful for this whole wonderful experience, we say, I don't know. I went to eat over there and the meat was too salty. We just tend to be ungrateful.

Nothing's ever good enough. It's partly because we got so much stuff. We're so blessed more than any generation ever, ever was. I had a conversation this morning with Kenny in Sunday school.

And Kenny said that he had just learned this week, it had some kind of reading assignment, that peanut butter and jelly sandwiches were originally only for kings.

[23 : 51] Nobody else could afford peanut butter or jelly. And now we have it so much. Do we have any gratitude for peanut butter and jelly?

We have everything so that we lose all sense of being grateful. There you go. People today are unholy. To be holy means to be set apart for God.

To be unholy is to be totally opposed to following God. People today fail to show love. We tend to not forgive. That's a big one.

Somebody's wronged us. And maybe they come to us and they say, I'm sorry. And we say, well, I'll try to forgive you, but I'm never going to forget it. That's not forgiveness.

People are slanderous. Oh my goodness. It's the worst part of our political climate, I think, is how terribly each political party talks about the other group.

[24 : 56] They make the other group into demons who should be killed. And then they're surprised when some of their ridiculous, stupid, deranged followers take them at their word and go and kill one of them.

But they just last week talked about them like they deserve to die. That they shouldn't be breathing air on this planet because their ideas are so terrible. And then it's like, I can't believe somebody shot them.

We slander each other terribly without self-control, brutal, like a guy on a train in Charlotte who murders somebody he's never even seen before for no reason whatsoever.

We don't love what's good. Our society is filled with treacherous, rash, conceited lovers of pleasure when we should be lovers of God.

We are living in days like this. It seems to me that it is increasing. Just this morning, Becky and I talked about something.

[26 : 02] I thought, there's an example. When she was, how old were you on that ship coming back from Italy with your parents when you were little? Just under four. Just under four years old.

She's on a, like a cruise ship. And, you know, hundreds of people coming back. Her family were in the military. They were stationed in Italy. And they're on a cruise ship coming back home for ten days.

And she was discussing this with her sisters and her brother and so forth. And it came out that they said, we never could find you. You were only like four years old and we never knew where you were.

You were running all over the ship, talking to everybody, making friends everywhere. And mama was constantly saying, has anybody seen Becky? So go look for Becky. And I thought, who today would have a little blonde haired four year old girl and go on a cruise ship and just let her go run and play anywhere among hundreds of strangers?

I did. It says something about what's happened in our society. Our society has gone downhill as we have been drifting away from God, the God of the Bible, from the influence of the Christian faith in our society.

[27 : 27] What should we do then? Well, today, I think what we should do is that we have to keep our eyes on the Lord and on his promises to us.

And in Jude 14 and 15, here's God's promise. Listen. Listen. The Lord is coming with countless thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment on the people of the world.

He will convict every person of all the ungodly things they have done. And for all the insults, the ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Jesus is coming back. There is the great hope and the great promise and the great solution to the problems that we're having and our world is having.

Jesus is coming back. These are the last days. These are, we're going to sing in a minute. These are the days of Elijah and the days of Ezekiel and the days of David. These are the times.

[28 : 35] Behold, he's coming. He's coming soon. Now, I want to agree with something that Phil, our brother, preached two or three weeks ago out of 2 Peter.

Phil, you said something like, and I agree, that too many people, the only part of the Bible they ever study is the end times. The second coming of Christ. And we need to really study the parts of the Bible that tell you how to live a Christian life and how to be ministering and serving and helping and obeying God and being ready for that second coming.

But there's some people that all they ever want to study is just the book of Revelation, the book of Daniel. How do these tie together? And they just focus on the wrong things. They spend all their time on stuff like, do you think that the ten horns in the book of Revelation are the ten main countries of the European Union?

Do you suppose the Pope is the Antichrist? Do you think that the rapture will happen because Elon Musk is putting chips in people's brains?

They just want to focus on things that are rather irrelevant. And that kind of study of Scripture is not going to do you much good because the most controversial book in the whole Bible is probably Revelation.

[29 : 59] It's a very hard book to understand. But the second coming of Christ is a very important doctrine.

Very important. And you should believe it and know it and look forward to it. And not fight over exactly what day he's going to come or whether or not somebody is Bill Gates the Antichrist or whatever.

You know, you can find all kinds of foolishness out there. And what difference does it make? Let's keep our eyes on Jesus Christ. He's coming back soon. I'll tell you how important it is.

According to Mr. Google, I mean, I didn't have time to go through, look all this up. I just said, how many times in the New Testament does it refer to the second coming of Jesus Christ?

And Google said it's in the New Testament 316 times. Now, if God decided to put in your New Testament 316 times Jesus Christ is coming back, you need to know that that's important.

[31 : 07] And you need to be looking forward to it, happy about it, expecting it, if you know Jesus as your Savior. In fact, there's 27 books in the New Testament. 23 of them speak about Jesus Christ coming back.

He's coming again. The time is closer than ever. Now I'm going to back up and repeat Phil's sermon again. Phil, you don't even know anybody listens to your sermon. Who did it, right?

But I was listening. In the book of 2 Peter, 2 Peter said, or as Peter's writing his second letter, he said, Now some of you say, well, if Christ is coming, what's taking him so long?

We don't think he's coming back. And Peter says in there, with God, a thousand years is like a day. So it's been 2,000 years since Christ left.

That means to God, it's the same as two days passing. God is not wasting his time. He's told us 300 and how many? 316 times Jesus is coming back.

[32 : 15] And if he's waited for two days, it's only because he's patient. And he doesn't want to condemn people to hell. As Scripture says, he doesn't want anybody to perish. He wants all of them to turn to Jesus Christ.

Be saved forever. Enter the kingdom of God. And so if Christ hasn't come back for 2,000 years, it's because he loves God loves you. And he knows when the author of the play, the curtains close, the author of the play steps on the stage.

The play is over. It's too late. When Christ comes back on the scene, it's too late to decide to follow him. You have made your decision before that.

And he's being patient to give everyone a chance to hear this message and respond. But he's coming. And that Scripture says he's coming with countless thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment.

This is scary stuff now. Who will he be judging? He will judge those who have always rejected Christ Jesus.

[33 : 26] He will not be coming in judgment against the sinners like you and me that have received Christ and put our faith in him. Which camp are you in?

The Bible has so many characters in there that are examples of both. You've got people like Cain, Adam and Eve's son, commits the first murder.

Yeah, think about it. The first children ever born. And one brother kills his brother. That far back. And so, here's Cain. As we read the Bible, he never turns back to God.

He never repents. He just runs off and starts chaos. And all of his children are so hateful that God sends Noah's flood to start all over again.

He never repented. He is the sort that when Christ comes again, there will be a judgment. As we come on through the scripture, people like King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, who actively searched for God's prophets and had them killed, actively ruined anyone following Jehovah God, and instead built idols and commanded and demanded the people to worship idols.

[34 : 48] They never repented. People like Doeg, the Edomite, you say, who in the world is that? That's the guy that killed one of the high priests and thought nothing of it.

These are unrepentant sinners, hardened sinners. God will deal with them. Judas. I'm talking Judas that betrayed Jesus Christ.

So often, our Hollywood movies about the last days of Jesus kind of take a very sympathetic approach toward Judas. And we don't know what all that was.

But the Bible says he was a thief. And the Bible doesn't actually show him a lot of kindness. And his problem is that he never, after listening to Jesus teach for three solid years and seeing all of these miracles, he still didn't believe.

He never turned to Christ. He never gave his heart to him. He never committed to him. And I don't care how Hollywood might portray him. That's the biblical story.

[35 : 56] And because he's unrepentant, when Christ returns, he will be judged. On the other hand, there's these folks in the Bible, all down through the Bible, who are more like Christians today.

They have made sinful decisions. Let's start with Adam. He was a sinner. But he went back to God. He was remorseful and sorry.

And so, he accepted from God that God killed an animal of sacrifice and gave him skins to cover his nakedness. It speaks of God willing to cover your sins.

We have come to a guy like Samson, ridiculously sinful. But we read his whole story. And in spite of all of his sin, at the end of his life, he says, Oh God, I'm so sorry if you'll just forgive me and use me

one more time.

He had turned to God. Look at David, King David, an adulterer, a murderer. But he turns back to God and he says, I was wrong.

[37 : 10] I was a sinner. Forgive me. I love you, Lord. I want to follow you. I want to worship you. Forgive me. Christ will not be coming to judge such as them. And then I'll just stop with the Apostle Peter.

Peter was not that much different from Judas in what he did. Judas betrayed the Lord. Peter denied, betrayed him three times.

The difference is that Peter came back to Christ and said, yes, Lord, I do love you. I love you.

Forgive me. And so he became one of the leaders in the whole establishment of the church.

What you've done is not so terribly important, except whether or not you have turned to Jesus Christ for forgiveness. Whether or not you have received that forgiveness by faith that he can cover your sins.

Christ is coming again. Let me just read a few excerpts from scripture to build your faith that Christ is coming again. In the book of Matthew, then will appear in the heaven the sign of the Son of Man.

[38 : 21] And all the tribes of the earth will mourn. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. In the book of John, Jesus says, I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go prepare a place, I will come again. In the book of Acts. And while they were gazing into heaven, as Jesus ascended, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said to them, Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the heavens?

This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way as you have seen him go. In the book of 1 Thessalonians, the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout and the voice of the archangel and the sound of the trumpet of God.

And the dead in Christ will rise first. In the book of Hebrews. So Christ will appear a second time to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

I'm looking forward to being finally and completely saved. In the book of 1 John, little children abide in Jesus so that when he comes, you will have confidence and you will not run in shame.

[39 : 53] And then, of course, in the great book of Revelation, very mysterious, but the clear parts of it are very clear. Revelation chapter 1, behold, he is coming on the clouds and every eye will see him.

There's no symbolism there. There's no question about what the bowls were and the seals were and the horsemen were. And it simply says he's coming on the clouds and every eye will see him. I believe that you can take it to the bank. Revelation chapter 3, verse 11. Next slide. Now, back up a slide.

Okay, I'm getting ahead of myself. Jesus says here in Revelation 3, verse 11, I am coming soon. Hold fast to what you have.

He's coming soon. You say, well, what is soon? I don't know. He's closer to coming than he was when I started preaching 20 minutes ago.

[40 : 59] Some of you are saying, good lamb wasn't an hour ago. Amen. He's closer to coming than ever.

He says, behold, I'm coming soon. Hold fast to what you have. Hold on to your faith. Don't let anybody on social media, don't let any smart talker convince you that the Bible's not true.

That you can't believe this book that has guided humanity now for all these years, centuries and centuries. Don't hold fast to what you've got.

Be pressing in. Continue to study the Bible. Continue to pray. Continue to serve others. Continue to do good works. Continue to witness. Continue to want to be more like Jesus.

Keep seeking. Keep pressing in. Don't get lazy in your faith. Watch yourself. If the Lord convicted you and said, now that was gossip. Say, Lord, forgive me.

[41 : 58] Help me to keep this mouth closed and not be gossiping. When you're aware that you've committed any kind of sin, get serious about it. Say, Lord, I don't want that sin in my life anymore.

Jesus, I want more of you. My last prayer of each day is usually, most of the time, as my head is on my pillow and my eyes are closed, one of my last thoughts is, Lord Jesus, I want to be your friend.

I want more of you. Work in my life. And usually I fall asleep somewhere in that prayer. Let's press in. Hold fast to what you've got.

He's coming back soon. And when he comes, there you go. The apostle John had a vision of what that last day would be like.

And that's this next scripture, Mark. And I'm going to be coming to an end with this. John says, he's in the future. He's at the last day. I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.

[43 : 06] And from his presence, the earth and the sky fled away. And no place was found for them. Some scriptures say for them to hide. Think about who was standing there.

The great. Napoleon. The pharaohs. Alexander the great. The great. Michelangelo. Leonardo da Vinci. The great singers.

Bill Gates. Donald Trump. The chairman Mao. I mean, the greats are standing there. He says, I also saw the small.

That he sees the little children born somewhere in Asia that live in a trash pile and eat garbage to survive. They all come. And you and I, somewhere in between those extremes, we stand before him.

And the books were opened. The books contain the record of all that you've done in your life. Praise God.

[44 : 14] Another book was opened. The book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in those books according to what they had done.

And then death and Hades. The end of death. All of the grave of all of that. It's all thrown into the lake of fire forever.

That's the second death. We will all die once. But after that, when we face the judgment, we will face the second death. And that second death, if you have not received Christ, is the lake of fire.

But now here's the hallelujah part. Verse 15. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown in the lake of fire. That means if your name was in the lake, in the book of life, you aren't going to be thrown in the lake of fire.

And that's something to get happy about. Is your name in the book of life. I mean, when I come and stand before the Lord on that day, and they open that pile of books, and it's going to say, liar.

[45 : 24] Liar, liar, pants on fire. I'll be, I'm guilty. Yes, Lord, I'm lying. Greedy. Yes, Lord, I was greedy. Thief.

Yes, Lord, I stole that that time. Lustful. Sick sexual immorality. Yes, Lord, you saw it all. Disobedient appearance.

Yes, Lord. Went after other idols. Didn't always put me first. Guilty. And he looks through the books. It's going to be terrible. And then it'll be, check the book of life.

Jesus will step forward and be able to say, Father, here's his name. Father, he's one of mine. And how did I get my name in that book of life?

Because I believe Jesus came and took my place on the cross. He died for my sins. He died for my sins. And when he took my place on the cross and I believed it, then all the other things I've done, they don't matter anymore.

[46 : 36] They're canceled out by faith in Christ alone. And so I can look forward to and be happy about the coming of the Lord. My name is in the book of life. Is your name in the book of life?

Last slide, Mark. Time to wrap it up. Jesus says, it's next to the last verse in the whole Bible. Jesus says, surely I am coming soon. Oh, are you going to be ready?

Are you going to be ready? There's only one great question. And that, what choice have you made? Are you going to pay for your own sins?

Or have you come to Jesus and said, Jesus, I believe you paid for my sins. Forgive me. Be my savior. I will follow you.

That's your choice. The choice of heaven or hell. The lake of fire. Eternal life. Christ is coming back. And he will correct all that's wrong in this world.

[47 : 36] We're going to sing a song. And it's a really joyful song. Behold, he comes riding on the clouds.

Shining like the sun. Hallelujah. It's a song about the second coming of Jesus. It's a happy song for the church. It's a rejoicing song. But while we're singing, I'm going to stand down here.

And if there's anybody here today and you've never made that decision to go ahead and accept Christ's death in your place, then come today and make that decision.

You can be saved today. Forgiven today. Today, God will write your name in the Lamb's book of life. There's still room in there for however many more God has planned.

And today could be your day of salvation. Brother Phil, Brenda, as you come, I'm going to lead in prayer. Lord, the scripture has been laid out plainly before us that we have a choice.

[48 : 38] For those of us that have chosen you, hallelujah, we thank you. Help us to hold on to what we have. And for those who have not yet made the decision, Lord, I pray now that you speak through their hearts and that today, now, they would receive Christ as Savior.

In Jesus' name, amen. And for those of you who have not yet alguém alguém alguém alguém
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