

# “How Long, O Lord?” | Revelation 6:9–17 (ESV)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, good morning, everyone. How are we doing this morning? We all awake? Oh, that's good. Today, we are continuing our sermon series through the book of Revelation.

And I got to tell you, this has been by far the most challenging, but the most rewarding sermon series that I've ever done. I've read Revelation many times, and I got to tell you, it is a lot, right? How many of you have read Revelation, and you're like, I don't know what in the world's going on. And then there's different sides and different opinions arguing to and fro about this book. And what's really unfortunate is that how Revelation is viewed upon as such a scary book. But in reality, Revelation is a book about hope. It is a book about God making all things new. Yes, there's the final judgment. There are so many apocalyptic language that's being used in this text. But through the end comes the beginning. Through death and destruction and judgment comes new life.

[ 1 : 1 1 ] And it's so interesting how when we talk about things such as heaven, in Revelation, we have the new heaven and the new earth. We have this kind of language that is so connected within the Old Testament.

And it's really remarkable the more that we begin to read and study together this fascinating book. It can be confusing, and it certainly can be heavy.

But Lord willing, we're going to open the text together, and we're just going to go through it. This last week, we began in Revelation chapter 6. If you guys want to get ahead and go ahead and turn there, that's fine.

And Revelation chapter 6 has been a very heavy and very difficult passage where we have this judgment kind of language. The seven seals, right? And the seals are being opened.

But as we're turning there, I want us to keep in mind something. As we've been going through Revelation, there are certain key points for us to remember. The first is that God is in control. Amen?

[ 2 : 1 5 ] That is the most important thing. We don't need to fear the four horsemen. We need to be in relationship with the Lamb.

Just like when we sing the song, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. Very powerful lyric, right? We sing that in many worship songs, many songs that's out there.

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, that is worthy to open the scroll, right? The scroll that is found through Daniel. The scroll that is prophesied about. And now we have this scene where it is the opening of the scroll, the breaking of the seven seals.

When we think about it, this last week it was the four horsemen. And that very metal kind of imagery, right?

How many of you have gone on Google or you've seen an image of the four horsemen and it's the most, let's be honest, kind of dark and scary kind of image, right? And it's a very powerful image at that.

[ 3 : 2 0 ] Don't get me wrong. But for some people, they're like, I don't know about that. At the other, got the other side of the coin where it's like, yeah, that's awesome, man. There's got some judgment going on here. With all of that, it's important for us to recognize we need to know the Lord.

And we don't need to fear the final judgment. You have to know Jesus Christ being the way, the truth, and the life. You know, life is beautiful.

From the time that we are born into this earth, holding a newborn baby is something that is remarkable. Some of you parents, you remember when you held a newborn child.

And some of you grandparents, you may remember your son or your daughter or your grandchildren, right? And how precious that life is. And it's so incredible when Scripture talks about

how God knew us before we were born.

How God knit us together. And how, well, essentially, when we are born into this earth, we have a certain number of days. Our entire life, Scripture talks about that we are amidst.

[ 4 : 35 ] Amist. And yet, in all of that, every day, every breath is a gift from God. Not only this, our gifts and our abilities, our potential, all comes from the Lord.

And we have to think of how God gives each and every one of us, every single day, an opportunity for us to know Jesus Christ. An opportunity for us to go from darkness into light.

I love how throughout Scripture, how many of you guys have been boating, whether it's on the ocean or on the lake, right? And we know how windy and how stormy waters can be, right?

When you're getting tossed to and fro in the boat. Do you realize that the sea is a representation throughout Scripture as chaos and sin and disorder and dysfunctionality?

Just like how Christ, when He goes out into the boat and He says, Peace, be still. Showing not only that Christ controls the water, but He will bring calm to the chaos.

[ 5 : 42 ] It's such a powerful kind of imagery that we think about. And so, in all of this, for many of us, we come from this chaotic world. Where we are in the sea, as it were, right?

Getting tossed to and fro in the boat. Wondering what in the world. When is this storm going to be over? And it's a call for all of us to know Jesus Christ who can bring peace to our life.

Give us calm. Give us clarity. Give us consistency. Give us truth. Especially in the world that we live in. Don't we live in the kind of world where people say there is no such thing as truth?

Don't we live in a world where people say darkness is light? What are you talking about? We know, we should know, Jesus Christ being the way, the truth, and the life.

The light for all of us to come to. It's important for us to recognize that from the time that we are born, God calls all of us into relationship by extending grace before us.

[ 6 : 40 ] It is this invitation for us to respond. And we are given time, but not forever. How many of you have been invited to a birthday party or a wedding invitation, right?

We all know that you got to RSVP within 30 days. You got to RSVP within two weeks. I mean, depending upon the organization of the person putting together the party, you've got to respond. You've got to RSVP. And in the same way, that's how it works with God inviting you into salvation. Will you respond with a resounding yes or no? We are given time, but not forever.

That's like how it is in any birthday party, right? My birthday is in 10 days. Are you going to come to the party or not, right? Not on the 12th day. My birthday has already passed, right? You think of these kind of things and how God gives us this invitation.

And to know God is to respond to him. It is to say yes to Jesus Christ. And it is also recognizing that God is going to transform your life. He is going to change the very fabric of who you are, being born again, becoming a new creation.

[ 7 : 45 ] And as we're going to go over in the text, being given these white robes. I'm not saying my jacket is white robes in any sense here. But to be given new clothing, right?

Not only are we a new creation when we are saved by grace through faith, but in this revelation kind of language, we'll see this type of new clothing and how God cares for those that love him.

When we think of us coming to know Jesus Christ, how wonderful is it that we can come together, that we can worship Jesus Christ, that we can sing these songs.

And I love how the scripture says, make a joyful noise. It doesn't say make a joyful production.

Thank God, right? We sing songs. We praise the living God. And look, you can be out of tune.

That's all right. You don't have to sing. But as long as you're worshiping God, that is what matters, right? And the fact that we can come together, we can open the word of God when there are other places in the world that do not have access to scripture.

[ 8 : 50 ] There are other places in the world that cannot sing songs to worship the Lord. Some of us may know about the persecuted church, the global church, and how Christianity is outlawed, how it is difficult.

Now, granted, we may say it's difficult to be a Christian in America. I understand that. But it's very different when you look around the world. And so important for us that throughout scripture, throughout the history of Christianity, we have found that there have been people that have been persecuted for their faith.

There have been people that have been martyred for their faith. And I got to tell you, as we're going into the text today, this is going to speak to those who have died.

Those who have been martyred. It's some easy reading, isn't it? It's going to be some very more heavy language in here. And so to know God is to respond to him.

To know him is to be held and care for and provided for and given everlasting life. And it's important for us to know that as we live here on the earth, when we are saved by grace through faith, we are in preparation for the new heaven and the new earth.

[10:00] For us to dwell in the presence of the Lord. What happens, unfortunately, is many times there are Christians who are persecuted for their faith. There are those that die for the word, those that die for the cause of Christ.

And these people are remembered. Let's turn there. I want us to go into the text here.

My slides are out of order, and that's okay. It is... It's going to be on page 1,222 in your ESVP Bibles.

It's Revelation 6, verses 9 through 17. And let's read it together, church.

Are we all there? Feel free to read along out loud or listen, or even in your own Bible of choice. We do use the ESVP Bible.

[11:05] It's those blue Bibles in here. So it says in verse 9, When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the what?

The souls of those who had been what? Slain for the word of God. And for the witness they bore. They cried out with the loud voice. Let's say it together. O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

What a question, right? Verse 11, Then they were each given what? A white robe, and told to rest how long? A little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

That is not an easy thing to read, right? Let's be honest here. Verse 12, When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was what?

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 the, this is interesting, as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.

[12:24] Verse 14, The sky vanished like a scroll that is 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.

Okay, so it's listing those that were in power, and then everybody, slave and free. What did they do? They hid themselves in the caves, and among the rocks of the mountains. Calling to the mountains and rocks, what did they say?

Fall on us. 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, who can stand?

Whoa. What is going on here, right? So the main thing that we have to take away from here is that the martyrs are crying, and God answers.

That is very important for us. Throughout Scripture, there's a question that gets asked all the time, and people in the everyday world ask this question.

[13:37] Why does it seem like evil people do well? Right? It's a fundamental question that gets asked all the time. I see those rich and these wicked people.

They seem to have everything together. Right? It's a question that's asked in Psalms. It's a question that's asked throughout so much of Scripture. In other words, you may be familiar with the saying, why do the wicked prosper?

Right? As some mentions in Psalms here. And in that, we find those that are following the Lord, those that are following God and His path and His ways, and they may find, you may even find, that there's struggles that happen within life.

And you turn and you think, these bad people appear to be doing good, but yet I'm following the Lord, and there's these struggles. And it's important for us, and this is not just in Revelation, but throughout all of Scripture, that wicked evildoers, it appears that they're doing well.

But on the inside, they're not. On the inside, they may have this sense of emptiness, a hole or a void that they cannot fill.

[14:56] I mentioned it before, and I'll mention it again. And when you search the things of this world, there's many things that the world has to offer. Fame, notoriety, right? There's casinos everywhere.

There's all kinds of things that the world has to offer. And when you pursue those things, do you find a life of fulfillment and happiness? A life where you can say, you know, I've gambled all my life, and I have everything I could have ever wanted.

I don't think that's a statement that's, I don't know anyone that has gambled and has said that, right? In fact, my father would tell me a story about someone that he knew very dearly who was an alcoholic and would tell me that the very look, the very taste on his tongue, every time he smelt alcohol, it would give him this high, so to speak.

And how sad that happens, that there comes a point when you think of addiction and whatnot, it's not the person drinking the bottle, it's the bottle drinking the person, getting used and consumed. And it's very unfortunate when these things kind of happen. And so in this, we have to realize and to recognize here, there are struggles that happen in the earth. The people that are wicked and evildoers, it looks like they're doing well, but yet there's a sense of emptiness, a hole and a void they cannot fill on their own.

[16:22] And then you have the good that are struggling. Those that know the Lord, right? I'm following the ways in the Lord, and yet I'm struggling. I don't understand why. And then to top it off, you have people that are killed, those that are martyred.

You have people that are crying out, why, God? Why are you letting this injustice happen? And it's important for us to recognize that God works in his own timing. When we think of God and his mind, his ways being higher than our own, we have our own human understanding, right?

And I gotta tell you, I'm glad I am not a judge. I'm glad I'm not a lawyer. Because I am a human being, and I am imperfect when it comes to these kind of things. I have my own human tendencies and my own human biases.

But when it comes to God, whose ways that are higher than ours, his justice, his timing, is certainly beyond our understanding. And that's very difficult. That is not an easy thing to talk about.

That is not an easy thing to preach on. That is why it's so important for us to wait upon the Lord for his divine timing and understand that he will have the final say.

[17:35] And so in this, right, the martyrs are crying. God answers by providing them a white robe. What beautiful language. That even when wicked people think they have the final say, they certainly do not.

It is God who has the final say. It is God who makes all things new. It is God who restores the broken. It is God who does the healing and transformation. That is very comforting.

Now, sometimes it's hard for us to see it like that because we see only a portion, a piece of what is happening here on the earth. But let us recognize, when we talk about this judgment kind of language, a day that no one can stand, it's showing the power and the glory of God being so powerful that no one can stand it, right?

It's being in the sense of an awe and of wonder in this. And it's interesting that it is connected here and this is some harder language.

In Psalm 79, verses 10 through 13, let the avenging of the outpoured blood of your servants be known among the nations. There have been people that have died for the cause of Christ and God recognizes that, right?

[18:58] The cries of the saints has been across the centuries and it's the same cry that we see beneath the altar. If you notice, when it says in the text, in verse 9, opening the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God.

So it's saying here in this kind of language that the souls are under the altar, right? Now, when we're looking at this apocalyptic type of language, it's very similar to what you find in the old Jewish temples, right?

The old sacrificial system. There's a lot of connections within there. We had talked about previously in Revelation, the golden bowls, our prayers being offered as incense.

And here we're seeing this scene where the souls under the altar is a representation of the protection and the provision of God. that not only are you protected and provided for, but God is going to restore you and make all things new.

That language of receiving a white robe then is knowing it's a place of reward and it's a place of honor. You think about that. Well, to know that I'm going to be protected by the Lord is a remarkable thing.

[20:13] And for those that have perished, those that have passed away, that know the Lord and have been martyred, it's very, very beautiful language. And it is hard for us to understand.

I can understand that. And so I mentioned about the prayers of the saints rising as incense from the golden bowls, the souls of the martyrs resting beneath the altars.

And it's interesting, in Leviticus 7, the priest would place in the sacrificial system the blood, right? The blood of the horns of the incense altar, it was poured at the base of the altar as part of a sacrifice.

And so in the same way, it's kind of difficult for us because we're not partaking in the sacrificial system. But it's blood that is spilt out.

It's not being, you're not bleeding in vain, so to speak. It's you're being regarded. Even though evil has happened, you are being taken care of. You're being revered by the Lord.

[ 21 : 20 ] And so in this, what can we observe in here, right? The souls under the altar. The second thing is that creation shakes here.

Oh, one second. The souls under the altar, another thing that's very interesting, is the martyrs. Martyrs, the language in that, talks about those that witnessed.

Witnesses, or those that gave testimony. That's actually, it comes from martyrria, if I pronounce that correctly. That's where we get the word martyr from.

It is those who testified with their words, the testimony, with their blood. So that's kind of interesting. That's where we get the word martyr from.

And so, them crying out, how long? It's connected with, and I've mentioned this parable quite a few times, is the parable of the persistent widow. I've told you about the judge, the wicked judge who didn't fear God, nor respected man.

[ 22 : 23 ] I don't want to know a judge like that, right? And this widow is crying out for justice. And eventually the judge gives justice. And the whole point of that parable is when Jesus says, how much more will God give justice to the ones that he love, as opposed to a human who doesn't revere God and doesn't respect man.

It's going to show that God's justice is far greater than humans in that. And so, the cry of, how long, O Lord? It's something that has been throughout Scripture, Psalm 13, Psalm 79, Habakkuk 1. If you've ever read Habakkuk, that's a pretty good book in the Bible I should read. The saints have always cried that question, but it's waiting upon the Lord for his divine timing. And so, creation shakes.

There's a great earthquake that happens, right? The shaking up that happens. The sun becoming black as sathcloth, and the full moon becoming like blood. I don't want to see that.

Right? What kind of scary imagery we can think of when we think about that and the stars falling to earth. every mountain and island being removed in here.

[ 23 : 32 ] It's actually connected with the prophet Joel, where it says, the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

It's talking about what will happen before the final judgment. So, that kind of language has been shown in Scripture before. We also know that in Exodus, when God moved against Pharaoh, the sun was darkened, right?

That's another very similar language about judgment. And so, there's, and even the fig tree. When Jesus said, fun fact, in Luke 21, when Jesus says, when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near.

That's very important, is that despite all of this apocalyptic and scary kind of language, we don't need to be afraid of that. it's going to show how powerful God is in His divine works that, let's be honest, we don't fully understand.

And that's okay. It's just like how we hear that God works in mysterious ways. We don't understand all of the complexities of God. God works in such incredible ways that's like, whoa, okay, the sky turning black and the great earthquakes and people running and hiding in caves is very difficult for us to comprehend.

[ 24 : 54 ] And again, that is okay though. It's going to show that God is powerful and no one can stand the awe, the power, and the glory of God.

And so in that, the imagery that we have here is of God's judgment showing the power of God. It's important for us to recognize. When you hear and read this kind of language, who's really in control?

Is it the wicked or is it God? So it's here, it's God showing you wicked evildoers do not have the final say.

It is God that does. Because the ability to shake up all of creation and everyone being afraid of the presence of the Lord in that respect is, well, I don't have the final say.

It is God that has the final say. It's going to show his power and his authority. And then finally, the third thing is that all flesh hides, right? And so in this, it's interesting.

[ 26 : 01 ] It talks about the kings of the earth, the great ones, the generals, the rich and powerful. You kind of wish you would just stop there, right? No, it extends to everyone, right? Everyone in this place, slave and free, they hide themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains.

And you have to think how powerful a presence it must be, especially if you're wicked, to call upon the mountains and the rocks to fall on them.

When is the last time you've ever called for a mountain to fall down on you? I mean, I hope that's none of us here in this room, right? But to think for a moment that the face of God, right?

And we'll go into what that means. It's kind of an interesting one. The presence of God being so powerful that it's so convicting to you that you cannot stand being in the presence of the Lord.

Isn't that interesting? That these people would rather flee away in darkness and rather have mountains fall on them than to deal with the Lord.

[ 27 : 08 ] That's powerful. I mean, that is something that's remarkable. And it's also a fulfillment of the prophet Isaiah when he says, men shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground from before the terror of the Lord.

Talking about God's judgment, His presence, and His wrath. We have to think when we read these kind of things that you know, you have God's love and His mercy, but you also have God's truth and God's wrath.

Now, a lot of us love God on this side, right? We love the love of God and the mercy that He has for us, but there's also this sense of truth, justice, the wrath of God.

We have to think that when God offers all of us a choice, we have to essentially decide, are we going to receive the love and salvation or are we not?

It's so simple, but yet, there's so much consequence that comes to that. And so, in this, it's the wrath of the Lamb, and it's the same Lamb who opens the scroll.

[ 28 : 24 ] It's the one the wicked cannot bear. Now, if you think about it, this shows the power of God, the fulfillment of prophecy, and it's when, and I want to make this very clear, this is when evil is held accountable by God.

Okay? I want to make that extremely clear to you. That this sense of, I want mountains to fall on me, it is this sense of the wrath of God and that they are being held accountable.

How many of you have ever felt convicted before? Yeah? I know I have. There have been times where this stirring in my heart, and I've got, I've got to do something now.

I've got to make a phone call, and that kind of, it's this, like, stirring, as it were, to act, and it bothers you. For some people, you may lose sleep over such a conviction, right?

I've got to call and make amends with so-and-so, or I've got to, I've got to do this, I've got to talk to so-and-so, this just didn't sit right. And God works in that kind of, really remarkable kind of way, stirring in your heart.

[ 29 : 39 ] Well, imagine the kind of conviction for an unrepentant soul. Or imagine the kind of conviction of all evil, all evil people, in that sense.

Very harsh language, indeed, but, it goes to show that God cannot stand for evil. And when the wicked do evil things to God's people, that's not a good thing.

How many of you are protective of your own children? You wouldn't want anything to happen to them, correct? I hope everyone says yes in that, right? Protective of your children, protective of your spouse, right?

Protected of family members and even your friends at times. So, if we're so quick to want to protect those that are our own, why is it such a big deal for us to understand that God wants to protect his own?

We have to, and I know it's, obviously it's different human relations compared to the Lord and us, but it's a similar concept here when we think about this.

[ 30 : 47 ] And so, in our interpretation, what does all of this mean? The first one is that God is not late, he works in his own timing.

Right? Now, for some of us, this is very hard to read. Even for a person like me, it can be hard to read because I want God to intervene now, right? How many of us, we wanted God to respond

immediately?

And we're like, God, come on. Now, maybe a few minutes ago, right? We have those kind of moments that happen, but it's important for us to know God works in his own timing. He's not a genie in the bottle, right? Although some of us may view God as that. It's inaccurate. But God is completing something. If you notice in the text when it says until the number of their fellow servants should be complete, God is not behind schedule.

It is waiting for the proper time for all of his own to be gathered together. Okay? And I want you to consider the persecuted church, those that have gone before you.

[ 32 : 00 ] Those lives that have been persecuted, they're not forgotten. They are remembered. They are held. You even think of even in the early days of Christianity spreading.

The wars that happened. Ever heard of Emperor Nero? Right? That's a good example, right? In that kind of apocalyptic language. Persecution of the Christians.

And in that, to face that kind of fear and trembling, it's relying on God knowing that look, God has the power over death itself.

So these wicked people that think they're going to take your life, they're not going to have the final say. It is God who controls life itself. So although people may do wicked things, and they may do evil things, God gives them the choice to make on what they're going to do.

It's the same kind of choices we have to make. Are we going to come to know the Lord? Are we going to let God transform us and do good in his name? Or are we going to be like the wicked?

[ 33 : 17 ] It's unfortunate when in my own personal life there have been people I've met who blatantly not just reject God but go against God in the process.

If you want to talk about a tragedy, it's the hardened hearts of people. And it's very interesting to talk about how God renews our spirit, how God transforms our mind, changes the very fabric of who we are.

It's very unfortunate if you ever know somebody that has departed, as it were. And so the persecuted church today, it stands at the same altar as Stephen, Polycarp, and those that have been martyred.

I mean, who can count the amount of lives that have been lost? It's a really, it's a very heavy thing for us to think about, right?

It's very difficult to talk about the persecuted church, but at the same time, knowing that they will be remembered, to be given that new robe, and they'll dwell in the presence of the Lord forever, that's a remarkable thing.

[ 34 : 32 ] And so in that, there's a question that's asked in Luke 18, will not God give justice to his own, who cry to him day and night?

I tell you, he will give justice to them. That's right after the, that's in that connection with the parable of the persistent widow, showing the same kind of connection.

And this is part of the remarkability, the significance of scripture, is how connected it is with the Old Testament and with the parables of Christ, these kind of things.

And this is connected, right, with the second one, the martyrs are not forgotten. They wear white in anticipation. What beautiful language in that. The white robe is God making everything new.

Everyone will be restored unto him. It's as though you received a royal garment given by God himself, or like the guests at the great banquet who wait in anticipation for better days to come.

[ 35 : 40 ] It's kind of, you think about it, we can think about this in common terms. You're waiting for the wedding feast, a great banquet as it were, and you're waiting for everyone to arrive in their proper attire.

That's such simple language, but that's very similar to what the Lord is doing. And so God honors those who gave their lives for the cause of Christ, for the witness of Christ.

They're not forgotten, and their lives are not wasted. They are counted. It's just like how the Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians, for to me to live, for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

It's such a, almost confusing when you read it at first, right? But it's connected in here, that death is not the end. And for the saint, death is the moment where the white robe is going to be placed, given to you.

Because God makes everything new. So we don't need to fear the apocalyptic language of revelation. We don't need to fear evildoers.

[ 36 : 56 ] We trust in the living God who will sustain us and hold us. And so, finally, you have the two kinds of hiding, the two kinds of face I put on here.

You can hide in the protection of the Lord, right? to be hidden away. There's language talking about the shadow of the wings, right?

To be protected as a bird protects its own, right? You think of that kind of beautiful language, how God protects his own.

So you can hide in the Lord, as it were, and the protection in the cover, to be hidden in the lamb. Or you can hide away from the face of God.

Just as it mentions that the king's hide from the face of God and begging the mountains to cover them. It's going to show that in that sense of power of God, what are you going to hide in?

[ 38 : 00 ] Are you going to flee to the mountains or are you going to flee to God and be hidden in him as it were? And it's interesting that to flee to the mountains would be against the very notion of what, when we go over our benediction here at church.

The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. You think for a moment, well, if you're fleeing away from the Lord, it's the opposite of that.

Really think about that. And so, let us, as we read that, as we think of this, may you hide in the protection of the Lord.

This leads us then to how should we live? The first one I put is to cry out to the Lord. Pray to the Lord. Be in connection with him. That's something that's very important.

The persistent widow did not stop asking for justice, and the souls beneath the altar did not stop crying. It's a call for us to pray without ceasing.

[ 39 : 11 ] for us to continue to remain in the Lord. It's okay to cry out to the Lord for justice, for healing, for the prodigal, for the persecuted church.

God hears our prayers. God will answer in his time. And let's not forget when we think of praying to the Lord, be specific in your prayers.

Pray for your city. Pray for your leaders. Pray for your family. Pray for that prodigal family member. Think of people, and maybe take some time this week to think of who specifically you can pray for.

The second thing then is to endure, that God restores his own. So much in Scripture when it says to hold fast until the end and to remain in him until the end is recognizing this is the other side, that God will restore you.

No matter what the world does to you, how the world may attack or even persecute you, God will protect you. God will be there with you, and he will restore you.

[ 40 : 24 ] That should give us comfort. That should give us a really good understanding. For many of us, we may be worn down in doing good.

For many of us, we may even be suffering in some capacity. Just know, let this be a call for you to remain in the Lord and to know that you'll be restored in him and to be that God will make all things new.

The family is almost complete. In other words, it's like the family reunion coming together despite this incredible kind of language. God honors his own.

The grave does not have the last word. It is the Lamb of God who does. Let us remember that. And finally, the third thing is to proclaim, to share the gospel whatever the cost.

It is recognizing that, look, the martyrs were slain for the word of God and the witness that they bore. Their testimony is why they rest beneath the altar.

[ 41 : 29 ] And so, let this be a call for you to share in your faith, in the words that you speak, in how you conduct your life. Plant seeds and recognize some people will choose Christ, some will not.

Some will respond to that invitation, some will not. Our job is to continue in the Great Commission, to tell the world about Jesus Christ. Our job is to witness.

And it's important for us to recognize there are churches in the world today where their Bibles are hidden, where pastors are imprisoned, and where believers are martyred for the name of Christ.

We remember those lives. The Lord remembers them. And we pray for those that are persecuted. We proclaim and we thank God for the blessings that he has given us.

And so, in conclusion, the Lamb who was slain, he holds the scroll. The blood of the martyrs is at the base of the altar, representing that they are not forgotten, that they are held, that they are

remembered.

[ 42 : 41 ] And the prayers of the saints, they rise as incense, that beautiful language, to know that God does have the final say. No one can stand against the power of God.

And remember that in your life, you all have a decision to make. Whether to receive salvation through faith or to not.

And in receiving salvation, know that there is a call for you to be transformed, for you to grow in the Lord, and to proclaim the good news of the gospel to others. And how wonderful is it to know that in knowing the Lord, no matter what evil does, it cannot stand against the power of God.

God, no matter what evil thinks that they have the final say, they certainly don't. It is God who has the final say. And so, in all of this, let us cry out to the Lord, let us remain in him, and proclaim the name of Jesus.

Let's pray together. And Father God, we thank you for this passage. We know this is a very difficult passage. A lot of language of the sky vanishing like a scroll, the stars falling to earth, showing the power of who you are.

[ 44 : 06 ] And we just pray that may we all come to know who you are. You call each and every one of us, may we respond accordingly. May we not be afraid of judgment.

May we not be afraid of you. Rather, may we come to you and respond to you. May we be in that sense of, just as scripture talks about, the fear of the Lord, being in the sense of awe and wonder of who you are.

May we boldly come before you and respond to you. May we be transformed in our understanding and may we recognize that there are some things that we are just not going to understand and that's okay.

What matters is that we believe in you and that we grow and we continue in the mission. Father, we're grateful for the grace that you've set before us and how when we receive this salvation, we certainly are a work in progress.

May we be molded. May we be confident in you. May we live in love like your son, Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. May we wait upon you and trust in your divine timing.

[ 45 : 21 ] It is in the name of Jesus that we pray and we all say together, Amen, church. Amen.