

The Birth Pains of 2020

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[0:00] Good morning, Shoreline. I hope that you are well this day. I'm glad to be with you as we gather again apart.

! You might have recognized that passage that was just read as we saw Matthew 24 just a few months ago.

When we got to Matthew chapter 24, I told you that I had been dreading that day for months. I even joked that I stretched out the section on hypocrisy in chapter 24, hypocrisy, right, so that I could kick the can down the road because chapter 24 is a really difficult passage.

So why are we back here today? Well, I think it was a wonderful mercy as Jesus taught us about what he calls the birth pains of this present age, the disasters, the persecutions, the tumults that disrupt and destroy life in a fallen and broken world.

And he taught us how to react. And, you know, that that seems most appropriate to this moment in our the life of this world and the life of our church.

[1:24] And I just like to point out, you know, that by committing to consecutive expository preaching walking straight through books of the Bible, rather than picking whatever suits my own fancy that allows God to set the agenda for his church.

For his church, not not me. And he is much wiser than I am. I never would have picked Matthew chapter 24. Ask the elders. I was terrified of that passage. But I think that it's so well set us up for this present moment that I really want to go back and find fresh application for this moment in that passage.

Because today, in a way that we didn't just a few months ago when the Lord first prepared us in this text, we stand in the midst of some particularly painful and invisible birth pains, as Jesus put it.

And so today, as we return to Matthew 24 and apply what we saw there in a fresh way to our present circumstance, let's let's go to the Lord in prayer and ask that he would bless this time together.

Lord, as we approach this challenging text in the midst of this challenging time. I pray, Lord, that we would find comfort in you.

[2:38] And Lord, that we would also find challenge from you for this moment, this present moment in this world that Lord, you would help us to serve and love and proclaim.

We pray all these things in Christ's name. Now, like I said, you know, this is no surprise to you. We stand in the midst of of significant birth pains, as Jesus puts it in this passage, the biggest of which must be COVID-19.

Right. It is global. It is disruptive in this frightening. Right. For some, it has been a colossal disruption for others. It's been more of an inconvenience. But for all it threatens our lives and the lives of our loved ones.

And it has caused a quarantine separation, which means loneliness for some lost for support for others, missing the fellowship of the saints. For others, it has produced cabin fever, a little bit of that in my house. Right.

It has changed our relationship with time. Some have far too much time on their hands right now and would love something to do. Right. And and that breeds opportunities for temptation.

[3:56] And paradoxically, having so much time often is the death of productivity and, you know, faithfulness in our time. But then others have so little time feel that they can't cope.

And so there are all of these effects. But then there are also spillover effects beyond the threat of the illness and the immediate quarantine. Right. There is the the looming threat of long term financial disruptions layoffs and unemployment are threatening families for some among the elderly. There are savings have been massively financially vulnerable people are going to be most affected by economic collapse. And so coven might cause incredible suffering far beyond the medical effects, especially among the disadvantaged.

The shutdown is also causing other health crises just as non essential businesses have been heavily curtailed during this time. So too is non emergency medicine and the impact of deferring or canceling so much preventative care might be enormous.

I know someone right now who needs major dental work but cannot get it. And that is a multiplying and compounding. And so many people are facing similar issues.

[5:16] And another spillover threat from COVID is the increased pressure on social isolation that places on mental health, on addiction, on the victims of domestic violence.

And friends, if you need help in any of those areas, if mental health or addiction or domestic violence is increasing in your life right now. That you're feeling additional pressure there. Please, please reach out for help.

Reach out to me to Shoreline to the elders. Reach out to a friend, reach out to a community group leader in our church, reach out to sources in the community. Please get the help that you need because we the Lord cares for you.

He cares very much in this passage. We're going to see that he cares for you and he doesn't want tragedy to befall you. So please, please get the help that you need. And so we are venturing through one of the great birth pains of our generation.

But COVID isn't the only game in town. But we also stand in the midst of another particularly painful birth pain. And that's the birth pain of racial injustice.

[6:28] In our society, a large proportion of the population has renewed fears right now of racial violence. In the past weeks, we have seen reports of black men being killed in ways and for reasons it seems very unlikely white men would experience.

And that the fact that this seems largely unchanged in our society since the last time this issue bubbled to the surface has led to protests and unfortunately to rioting.

So to be sure these demonstrations aren't solely about the events of this week, right? They're an expression of the frustration that nothing has changed. And this is the focal point, right? I've heard them called the fed up riots.

And so it goes beyond just the events of this week, right? The where the African-American community watched a police officer in Minneapolis slowly squeeze the life out of a black man. A human being made in God's image who was unable to defend himself. And it happened in broad daylight in public view with cameras rolling in his face as people begged him to show mercy.

[7:50] And what's crazy is that he felt he was able to do it even then, even there. And what's even worse is that he could. The tragedy and the fear is even further heightened because in a wicked irony, the violence came from someone commissioned to protect life.

And now Shoreline is a majority Anglo congregation. So most of us likely don't feel as threatened by this as do our brothers and sisters of different races.

But if that video showed someone who looked like me face down on the asphalt, what would that do to my concerns, to my trust? And what's really interesting is that I think there's a lot of overlap in the effects of these two, you know, crisis point birth pains.

Both of them bring uncertainty, right? Will I get COVID? Do I even have it right now without yet showing the symptoms? You know, that's the COVID uncertainty. Will I be unjustly treated by those sworn to protect me?

That's the racial tensions, birth pain, right? How might it be? How bad might this be? How bad might the sickness be? How bad might the injustice be? Will someone I love get sick?

[9:10] Will someone I love be harmed? And not only is there uncertainty, but both feel like they won't end, right? There's no certain timeline, no clear answer to COVID on the horizon.

And many would say that there seems to be little progress in abuse of authority towards minorities in the US. So what hope is there for the future? There's no clear endpoint for either of them. And, you know, as we all sit hunkered down at home, watching what's going on, these birth pains can feel all encompassing, right?

COVID has seemingly shut down the world. And racial injustice leaves a whole segment of our society wondering if just quietly living their lives will result in violence.

The birth pains seem pervasive, overarching. They seem to be the narrative of the whole world.

And that's what the disciples in Matthew 24 are feeling like, oh, my goodness, it's all going to come to an end.

[10:11] If the temple falls, that means that the whole people of God, Jerusalem, will have fallen. Everything will be lost. And it feels like a totality narrative that overcomes all other things.

And so we are now working, walking through a period of what Christ would call birth pains in a new and heightened way compared to what we saw just a few months ago when we first looked at Matthew 24.

And so I want to think today about what did Jesus teach us? And what he taught us is that even though these seem to be completely totalizing narratives.

That there is another narrative, one that subsumes even the fiercest pains. And we can apply its lessons to these birth pains just as well as the disciples could in their lives.

And so in verse four, Jesus answered them that he told them in verses one through three that the temple would fall, meaning that the whole Jerusalem would likely fall. And they asked, well, when? And he said in verse four.

[11:18] He answered them, see that no one leads you astray where many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed for this must take place.

But the end is not yet for nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. Jesus has warned the disciples of the greatest birth pain of their generation, the fall of Jerusalem, capped by the destruction of the temple.

And they wanted to know when, when will that happen? So they're asking for a date. And Jesus doesn't give them one. What does he give them? What is his concern here?

He says, see that no one leads you astray. He says, see that you are not alarmed. What kind of language is that? Don't be alarmed.

Well, surprisingly, in a passage about the future, this isn't the language of a prophet. This isn't the language of a lawgiver. It's not the language of a priest or a judge or a king.

[12:30] It's the language of a pastor. And so Jesus is saying little flock, do not be alarmed. Do not be dismayed. Do not be led astray. That's interesting. Don't be led astray. Let's try by what?

Well, by the birth pains themselves, the wars, persecutions, the natural disasters and the false prophets. And how would that all lead us astray? And how might it lead us astray today?

When things seem out of control. Does it feel like God is in control? When war and when conflict rage, do you sense a peace that surpasses understanding?

When the world goes wrong, where is stability? Where will you seek it? When our world is unstable, so too can be our faith.

And we might look for other bedrock that's going astray. Looking for other foundations. We might lose hope, right? Saying if this is the way the world is, how could God really permit that?

[13:36] And so this is Jesus, the pastor, the good shepherd. And he is preparing and comforting his flock for the difficult journey ahead, just like we are presently journeying through difficult things.

And so as we walk through this passage, we need to feel our Lord's warm regard towards us. His pastoral concern for us. His loving care for us.

This is our good shepherd caring for his flock in advance and reminding them what is most important. And so he tells us, verse 8, all these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

War and natural disaster and false prophets, they ebb and they flow. Just like birth pains, right? And right now, pandemic and quarantine and race riots.

It feels like the tide is at flood stage. But Jesus is telling us that the flood will not overtake us in this age. And again, when I say this age, I mean that we're living in what the scriptures call the last days.

[14:43] Not necessarily in the sense that Jesus is coming right now, this week, though that would be a great mercy. But this age that we live in after the earthly ministry of Christ, marked by these birth pains of conflict and falsehood and disasters, is the last age of this present world.

Just weeks after this conversation in Acts chapter 2 in Peter's great sermon at Pentecost, he said that that day marked the last days pointed to by the prophet Joel.

In the book of Hebrews, it begins saying long ago and at many times in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son in the book of first John.

When we were there, the apostle John told us, children, it is the last hour. Right. So we live in the final age of this world and he is marked by birth pains.

And we know that Christ is coming to consummate his kingdom, to renew heaven and earth, to bring justice and complete healing. But in the meantime, in this present pregnant, so to speak, age, we are expecting that kingdom.

[16:03] Well, it's coming with birth pains. And he continues telling us that difficulty is what we ought to expect in the midst of them.

Right. Verse nine. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, put you to death, and you'll be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another.

And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

And so in this section, Jesus narrows his view. He focuses less on the war and the national disasters out there, the natural disasters out there, and looks to the experience of his disciples.

And so he is answering in advance that question that we have. Right. If Christ is risen, why doesn't it feel like we're victorious today? And so he prepares us and says, little flock, persecution and trouble will be the norm.

[17:10] And, you know, largely in the West persecution has not been the norm for us. And so let us be thankful for that, that we are blessed with the peace of religious freedom.

That is not the experience of every time period. It's not normal. It's not the experience of all Christians today in the world. But even if he's saying, even if we are persecuted, even if we lose everything, even if we're martyred, even if we're martyred, it is all fantastically overwhelmingly worth it.

Because better is one day in his courts than a lifetime of all this world could offer. And so let us press on to the finish line. And so as we look at this passage, let us see here Jesus, our pastor saying, do not be led astray.

Do not be alarmed. Do not let your love grow cold. He's such a pastor here. And when you see throughout these last days conflict of every sort and natural disasters and pandemic and false prophets, even the sharpest birth pains, the one they asked about the fall of the temple and the ones that we are currently living through.

Jesus is the true pastor. Jesus is the true pastor. Jesus is the true pastor. These are exactly the kinds of things that alarm us and cause us to be unsettled. The kinds of things that would cause us to look for answers and in our desperation be led astray to other teachers.

[18:37] When nations go to war, when the earthquake, when famine strikes, we fear for our very lives and are tempted to doubt God's goodness.

Right? How, how can God be good?

How can he be in charge when the nations are going to war? How can God be in control when COVID has killed a hundred thousand in our country so far?

How can God be in charge with when false teachers have enormous platforms? How can I remain strong in my faith when the culture is embracing every form of debauchery and calling Christians hateful for denying it?

How can God be in charge if George Floyd's tragedy in Minneapolis would be unknown and unmourned, except that a bystander happened to catch it on camera?

How can God be in charge of the world? If Christ is risen, if he rules and reigns, how could the world be like this? Jesus, the good pastor, is preparing his church ahead of time.

[19:39] Sin is wickedly evil. Don't let that surprise you. Don't be alarmed. And so even when there is cataclysm, the fall of Jerusalem in the temple, a world shut down by a pandemic, a whole segment of the population fearing the authorities sworn to protect them, God still reigns.

So do not lose heart. Do not be alarmed. Do not be led astray. And so in this, Jesus does not only prepare us to sort of weather the hardship.

In the face of the birth pains, what does he do? Verse 14. In the face of pandemic, in the face of racial injustice and riots, he prepares us for mission.

Look at that. Verse 14. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations.

And then the end will come. And so Jesus is saying on the one hand, don't be alarmed. Don't be led astray. Instead, proclaim the gospel to the whole world.

[20:51] The church exists to make disciples of all nations. And Jesus says here that his kingdom will advance. The gospel will go out. His mission will be a success.

But what does that have to do with pandemic? And what does that have to do when injustice moves from out of the shadows into the clear? And our cities are burning because of it.

Is preaching the gospel enough? We have done a lot lately to apply the gospel to the pandemic. And in fact, the reason I chose Matthew to return to Matthew 24 was to apply these lessons to this moment of coronavirus. But we've spent a lot of time thinking about that, you know, applying the gospel in our own hearts.

The gospel gives us a hope that transcends the security of this life that coronavirus threatens and for our mission. Right. An empty tomb is a powerful testimony to those who fear for their lives.

[21:56] I feel like we have been doing quite a bit of applying the gospel to the pandemic and the quarantine. And so I'd like today to spend more of our time.

And this became more and more apparent to me as this week progressed that really this was going to be become a sermon that needs to apply these lessons, these very lessons to the moment of racial tension in our in our country right now.

But that question comes up again is verse 14 applicable here. Is it really relevant? Right. Does preaching the gospel mean anything in the face of systemic racism?

I heard some people say, you know, the gospel is the answer to everything. And I've heard here other people say, oh, my goodness, you know, stop preaching the gospel right now and take care of this business here.

There's this great injustice. I think if you. If you remember when we talked about leadership in the kingdom in Matthew's gospel.

[23:05] And we ended up talking about male headship. I said, you know, if you're very excited about male headship or if you're very not. Nobody's going to be happy today. I feel like there's that kind of that little space again here where the people who would say the gospel is the only answer are only partially correct.

And Jesus is going to drive us in that middle road. And because there are a multitude of ways that the Christian faith speaks to this particular challenge today.

I just want to consider two of them. This is certainly not the final word or anything like that. But he says here in the face of like the whole point of this passage is twofold.

First, don't be alarmed. Don't lose hope when you see great calamity in this world. And secondly, be on mission in the midst of that. What we do in the face of great calamity, great trial and great tribulation.

Is to do the mission of the church and that means that, you know, that there's going to be a multitude of ways that the gospel applies to this and actually changes the circumstance.

[24:20] Today's just an entry point. I'm going to talk about two of them. The first thing I want to talk about is more a proclamation, a message to the world. And the second is more a transformation of the people of God spurring us on to action.

The gospel does that. And so the people who would say, oh, the gospel is the answer. They're typically all they're talking about is pointing a ticket to heaven that that's not very transformed. And those who would say, oh, we need to stop talking about the gospel right now and just focus on the injustice.

Well, they don't have the power of God at work in their lives to actually address injustice. And I think so we need both. We must have the power of the gospel, the full or gospel, the transformation of the gospel at work in the people of God, if they're going to be affected as peacemakers in this time of need.

And so the first has to do with the relationship. This is the proclamation part that I'd like to start with. That first part has to do with the relationship of human rights and injustice.

Christians should not be surprised when we see abuses of power. Right. Christians who believe in original sin and the depravity of man ought to expect that ought to be on the lookout for.

[25:41] Well, sinful people sinning in their positions of authority and that just makes complete sense along the lines of the scriptures. And we see it over and over in scripture as leaders are evil and use their power for their own selfish gain.

Right. And so like John the Baptist to Herod, like the prophet Nathan to the king to King David, we ought to call sin sin in our leaders.

And we should recognize that sin committed by a person in authority is more serious and impactful a transit transgression than that same act committed by a person under authority.

And I think that most people probably expect that we have a saying, you know, power corrupts. And that's not. But Christians can grieve over it and lament over it and call people to repentance in a unique way that our culture truly can't.

And that's because in a purely naturalistic worldview that secular worldview that our culture holds as Tim Keller pointed out, I can't remember where I heard him say this, but he said in that secular naturalistic world.

[26:51] Yeah. It's perfectly natural for the strong to eat the weak. In a purely naturalistic worldview, black lives don't matter because human lives don't matter.

All life is just a cosmic accident with no intrinsic value whatsoever. Injustice should really be the norm. It is only within the framework of human beings have an innate value.

You're not an accident of a cold, dark universe. That human rights have any meaning or sensibility. And so the fact that our society is rightly outrightly outraged shows that deep down we know human beings have intrinsic value.

And what's more, that thing that our society knows that people have inherent dignity. We can say that only in Christianity do we have a God and a savior who has made us in his own image and actually grounding our inherent knowledge of human rights.

And so that's what we're seeing as Romans chapter two says, when Gentiles who do not have the law that is God's testimony by nature do what the law requires.

[28:12] And that's what we're seeing as people are demanding justice. They are a law unto themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts while their conscience also bears witness.

And that's what we're seeing as people are saying. What Paul is saying there is that because God made us, we know deep down that human life has an incredible value.

And Christianity is the place you can go to actually ground that. Injustice is meaningless without human beings having intrinsic value.

And not only that, not only does Christianity give a true footing for human rights, rather than seeing us as mere chemical accidents floating in the ether in a meaningless universe. Christianity also points to a God who genuinely cares about injustice, who, as we mentioned Thursday, when talking about National Foster Care Month, cares how we treat the orphan, the widow, the downtrodden.

A God who has promised to hold the guilty accountable and to one day bring justice to every inch of the globe. And chiefly, a God who is not removed from injustice.

[29:32] He who reigns in the ultimate seat of authority did not abuse, did not use it for selfish gain. The God of the Bible chose to take on a human nature so that he might experience the ultimate injustice in our place.

The true innocent sufferer volunteer to bear the weight and penalty of our guilt so that unjust men and women might find grace and forgiveness and life that we do not deserve.

And so when someone is incensed rightfully about injustice. We Christians can say, I agree with you.

That George Floyd's life matters. That the rights of those who weren't videotaped, whose names we don't know, but were also given severe injustice.

Their lives matter. May I share with you why I believe that his life is even more valuable than you know.

[30:42] The Christian worldview completes the story of human rights. It writes the setup. It gives the foundation for it. Human rights don't hang nebulously in the air.

They are grounded in the fact that we have intrinsic value because we are made in God's image. And it writes its conclusion. The Christian worldview is a hero who dies for the villain to make enemies family and who will one day blanket the earth in a perfect justice.

So the Christian message can speak powerfully into this moment. The gospel also changes the people of God to a better approach in this moment.

And this is that second part that I'd like to apply this to. Right. Christ says in the face of these birth pains be on mission.

And that means preaching the gospel like I just said to the world. But also align the gospel to transform us so that we might be peacemakers in this world. And that begins with and I'm going to focus here on humility.

[32:00] There is a lot of humility that goes with the gospel. I must confess that I'm a sinner. That's a low bar because as our culture is fond of saying, you know, nobody's perfect, but I have in humility to confess.

I am a sinner and it's not OK that I'm a sinner. I stand justly under wrath. And what's more, I must confess that God's word is true.

I am so sinful and so unable to save myself that I need a rescue. That's a humble place to say, come save me. Not I'm in a hole. I can dig my I'm going to have to work hard to dig myself out.

Right. There is nothing I can contribute to that rescue. That's why Jesus had to die on a cross in my place. Right. And so the rescuer that I get didn't do it in strength.

He did it in weakness. The only way to salvation is through a humiliated savior, not a proud one. And the new work, the new life that he works in me by his Holy Spirit.

[33:06] One of the chief attributes he aims to kill in me is pride. And one of the chief virtues he aims to grow in me is humility. And so there is a profound amount of humility integrated, baked in, inseparable from the gospel.

And if the gospel produces humility, that is going to change how I act in this world. Right. And so it begins with humility to recognize that I'm not God.

So I don't see all. Example. In the first day or two after George Floyd's death, I saw some people on social media saying, I can't believe people are defending what happened there.

And I go like this because like, it seems so crazy to me. I'm like, what are you talking about? I've seen nothing but grief and anger in the news and in my timeline, you know, on social media.

What are you talking about people defending this? And then slowly I began to see some of what those people were talking about as comments began to appear in fair timelines.

[34:20] And so the first thing that has taught me is that I do a much better job curating my friends than most of you. But the second thing it taught me was that this is a confirmation of what I had to embrace when I came to faith in Christ.

And so I'm not God. So I know that my sight and my judgments are limited. They're not, you know, my my sight is not infallible. So there are things hidden from my view because my eyes don't see as far as the Lord's because I'm not as wise as the Lord.

And because my remaining sins still clouds my sight. Which means the gospel births in me a humility to listen to others whose real experiences can teach me.

I did not know that there were people in the early days who were defending what happened there until someone showed it to me. Humility changes the way I view the world, knowing that I have only a partial image of what's going on.

It also changes the way I represent my own position, because then I know that the conclusions I'm drawing are based only on partial information. The gospel humbles me and humility is necessary to be able to be corrected.

[35:40] Right. Proud people can't grow. Won't grow. Pride is a lid. Right. It is an interesting irony that self exaltation. Pride diminishes me, caps me, limits me.

And so humility. Does all those things. It also gains a hearing for the gospel. Right. Proud words don't adorn my Christian witness, as we talked about.

Pastor Mike talked about in Titus chapter two. Proud words don't soften hearts. When an attitude of gospel grown humility can be a bomb to weary, frightened souls.

And so from that attitude and that posture of humility birthed out of the gospel. Right. What does that humility prompt us towards?

Well, it's important that when Jesus says don't be alarmed, he doesn't say be passive. I feel like we could easily make that mistake and say, oh, don't be alarmed. Just chill.

[36:46] No, no, he's just be on mission. Right. So what does it look like from that place of humility to prompt us towards gospel mission? Here are some things that from that position of humility, we can be a God.

We begin with prayer. Right. That prayer is the ultimate position of humility on your knees figuratively or literally going to the one who can do because I can't.

And so when we go to God in prayer for this, we may lament over this injustice and the ongoing racial sins in our culture. We can pray for those who are afraid. We can pray for the law enforcement officers, that those who would use their their position for unjust gain or to harm others, that they would be removed or remove themselves.

And for those who serve faithfully, that they would not lose heart in the midst of all this as they are under intense scrutiny. We can pray for those who are rioting, that they would repent and find constructive ways to seek change.

We can pray for the legislatures. We can pray for the upcoming elections. We can pray for the church, that the church would be a united witness of love.

[38:02] We can pray for local congregations in particularly challenged communities like in Minneapolis, that they would sow peace.

And as we continue to allow the gospel to transform us and foster a heart of humility within ourselves, we can allow that humility to lead us into hearing more than our own experience.

That was my experience. That was my experience this week. As I, my sight was broadened by other people. And just as we advocate for the unborn, we can also advocate for those who face injustice.

We pray, you know, for the end of abortion. We can pray for the end of injustice. We make some of you have signed petitions and attended demonstrations with regard to pro-life causes.

We can do the same with regards to racial injustice. Some of you have contacted your representatives in government. Excellent. You can do the same. Some support ministries and organizations that work in that area. Do the same.

[39:16] The Lord has ordained also that we live in a representative democracy. So we may vote also with this in mind. So, too, just as the prophet Nathan confronted King David and John the Baptist confronted Herod, we adorn the gospel by calling for the godliness that accords with the knowledge of the truth in our leaders.

And it was interesting to see, but, you know, Nathan is calling out a king among a leader among God's people and John the Baptist was calling calling out sin in Herod, who is not a member of

God's people.

And so we can call it out in the gospel. And so we can call it out in the gospel. And from this attitude of humility, we need to look at ourselves and say, are we doing it right?

Humility says I'm not perfect and I need to self-examination. Humility says I'm not perfect. Just as the apostles dealt with racial injustice within the church in Acts chapter six.

And I would encourage you to go there and see the dispute there. Right. There was racial injustice within the church. we must humbly identify anywhere that there are people and systems in place that are contributing to that within the church, the body of Christ, and then set people and systems in place to fix it, just like they did in Acts chapter 6. These are some of the things that humble Christian witness prompt us towards. I saw another list of that a pastor put together this week and he kind of put it together with some scripture verses. I'd like to read it to you now and we'll link it in the description of this video if you'd like to see the list and the associated scripture passages so that you can see it yourself. So I'm going to read it to you kind of as our conclusion.

[41:19] What is a Christian response to injustice? We groan with grief, Romans 8. We lament over it before God, Psalm 13. We pray desperately, 2 Chronicles 20. We are angry without sinning, Ephesians 4. We weep with the hurting, Romans 12. We rescue the oppressed, Proverbs 31. We pray for the oppressors, Matthew 5. We rebuke those oppressors, Isaiah chapter 1. We speak against injustice, Ephesians 5. We repent of our own injustices, Romans chapter 2. We entrust vengeance to the Lord, Romans chapter 12. And we hope in Jesus return and the day when evil and tears shall be no more. Revelation chapter 21. Friends, let's pray.

Lord, as we walk through this moment where two of the great birth pains in this world are at a crescendo, that fever patch. Lord, will you please help us to not lose hope, don't be dismayed, not be alarmed, to trust in you and to double down on your promises because only there is there strength and power for the mission and comfort and even a grounding for the sentiment that it must not be this way, that things are wrong. And so, Lord, we ask for justice for those who've been murdered, for comfort for grieving families, for those communities that are ravaged by destruction, Lord, that you would bring peace.

Lord, we ask that you would do the work of gospel ministry among us, your church, and grow in us hearts of humility so that all the things that we have fought through today can be true of us and we will have the strength and power to do it humbly. I thank you that just as you conquered sin and death through humility, that that was the actual power that broke the chains of death for us.

Lord, I pray that you would foster in our own hearts humility and that, Lord, we would find so counterintuitively that humility is strength and power in the economy of the kingdom to serve this world and be on mission and call them to the only hope this world has. We pray this all in the name of Jesus Christ, our King, who in humility rescued us. Amen.