

God's Amazing Gospel Story

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 July 2024

Preacher: Chris Mitchell

[0:00] All right, am I on, Shane? All right. There's a lot to these things. My first sermon, I ended up putting these on upside down. I think Dave referred to a learning curve, and I am on it.

And I think the beauty about a learning curve is that those on the learning curve get extra grace for whatever they're doing, and I'm hoping that's the case. It is maybe not a real miracle, but it is, I could probably say it's an act of God that this got completed.

I was sitting at Cultus Lake with our youth group the other day watching Caleb Duncan put scorpion hot sauce on Oreo cookies, and I turned to Lisa, and I was like, this is never going to get done. So the fact that it's done, I think I can say, thus saith the Lord, because it's nothing short of a miracle. The beautiful thing about doing this, though, is it is an act of worship, and it will not be perfect, that is for sure.

But it's an act of worship. And I think sometimes when we get into a church and we start going, you know, I prefer this style of music, or I prefer this length of sermon, or I prefer this type of animation, I think we're heading down the wrong track almost immediately.

[1:16] Everything that's done here is an act of worship to our God, and so please join me in praying that he will help me do this. Lord, thank you for today and for this opportunity to serve you in your church.

Thank you that you've provided us with your word and all the clarity that goes with it. Thank you that we have a roof over our head and we know brothers and sisters around the world don't. And thank you that we have brothers and sisters in Christ to help us in our sanctification, God.

I ask for your help today as I perform this act of worship, Lord. Thank you for the opportunity to speak truth from your word, and I pray that I would not misrepresent anything.

In your name, amen. All right. In today's sermon, the gospel message, and I'm going to seek to captivate you with clarity and some amount of passion.

You won't get as much passion from me as you would from my wife, so you have to dial down your expectations somewhat there, but I am going to try to bring clarity to this gospel message that we try to diligently teach to our youth regularly.

[2:30] And it's amazing. Each one of us plays a role in this gospel message. Everybody here, and you'll hear me say this later if I don't miss the note, each one here is exceedingly valuable.

Every person here, exceedingly valuable. You are created by God himself for a specific purpose. Even if you're not a believer, you're exceedingly valuable, and you serve a purpose that's been ordained by God.

That's amazing. And as a result, you are part of God's amazing gospel story. The word gospel means good news, and Steve Lawson says, if there's good news, then there's bad news.

And so I'll start with the bad news, and then we'll spend the rest of the sermon occupied with the good news. So the bad news is captured in Romans 1.18, which says, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Romans 6.23 says, For the wages of sin is death. And that's complemented by Ezekiel 18.20, which says, The soul who sins shall die. Bad news.

[3:45] As a sinner, I'm under divine judgment, and there's nothing I can do myself to change that. That's the bad news. Ligonier Ministries, founded by R.C. Sproul, concisely describes the good news, which we'll now shift to quite quickly, or the gospel in the following way.

Concisely, the gospel is that Christ died for our sins, according to the scripture, that he was buried, and that he was raised from the dead. The heart of the gospel is Jesus Christ himself, the person and work of Christ, the sin-bearing work of Christ, as well as the perfection of his life that is imputed

or attributed to those who believe.

Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. And I think many of us realize that every other single religion on this face of the earth all have one thing in common, and that is that they believe that works can get them into heaven, that they can somehow be good enough.

And that differentiates us as true Christians from every other religion on earth. Salvation is not a reward for the righteous, but a gift to the guilty.

Any addition of human works, merit, goodness, or religiosity is a false gospel. For those of you who think you aren't good enough to merit Christ's salvation, you're not, but you need to get past that.

[5 : 07] His blood is red and rich enough to save whoever he chooses, and that's the gospel truth. The entire Bible is oriented around God's gospel, his message of our need, and his provision.

I want to speak about God's word for a moment, because that is what we have to describe this gospel to us. Sometimes we tend to develop personalized views on what the Bible represents, what its priorities are, what it should be, or even worse, rely on it to provide a customized emotional experience.

This latter one is a predominant tactic of false teachers. If they can appeal to the emotions using the Bible to do so, they can access the purse strings of their listeners. Sometimes we view the Bible as a set of stories containing good moral lessons and from which to access wisdom.

And that's true enough on the wisdom side. The Bible is rich in wisdom. Any person on earth, believer or unbeliever, their lives would be radically transformed by drawing upon the wisdom of the Bible.

Still, that's not its primary purpose. The primary purpose of God's supernatural word is to be glorified through his gospel message that he brings light to from the beginning to the end.

[6 : 22] Daryl Dash from the Gospel Coalition Canada says, I used to think that we needed more creativity, better strategies, and fresh insights. I now believe that we need greater focus on what matters most, a recovery of our belief in the power of the gospel, the preaching of God's word, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our job is to stay close to the means that God gave us. Let's worry less about innovating. Let's be people who trust God to work the way he always has through the proclamation of his word and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jonathan Lehman, who's the author of Nine Marks of a Healthy Church, says, God's word, working through God's spirit, is God's primary instrument for growing God's church.

In the world today, we see such distortions of truth. And now we've even entered into an anti-truth age. And we spend a lot of time teaching our youth about this, this anti-truth age, how to think through it, how to get past it, how to get beyond it.

Silly sayings like your truth is your own or be your best self are indications of that. Many churches dilute the understanding of who Christians actually are. They're being swept up in that age, as we all know, what they represent and the significance of God's redemption.

[7 : 36] So I'll get started. As I seek to illuminate God's gospel for us today, I'm going to approach it from seven main vantage points, which sounds like a lot, and it is.

The first one is God's glory. The second one is God's sovereignty. The third one is the beginning. The fourth one is the fall.

The fifth one is prophecy and symbolism. The sixth one is salvation. And the final one is the end to come. I'll read them quickly through again, because some of you take notes.

God's glory. Second, God's sovereignty. Third, the beginning. Fourth, the fall. Fifth, prophecy and symbolism. Sixth, salvation.

And seventh is the end. Before we get started on his glory, I just want to do a heart check on myself and for everyone else here. I want to ask you for the sermon to try to put yourself into a place of humility.

[8 : 39] And that's a very tough one for me to do. The first one is remind yourself that you are a creation made in God's image. Try to balance the fact that you are special, but only because God created you to resemble him and to serve his specific purpose.

The focus is not on the talents you have, the influence you have, the career or financial achievements you have secured, and certainly not because of self-credited intellect or wisdom. Any giftedness you have is because he has graciously given it to you. And focus on the fact that you are special because you resemble him, that you will ultimately exist for his purposes and glory.

That's number one, heart check.

Number two, you are a creation with limitations. Even before the fall in Eden, Adam and Eve had limitations, much less since the fall that we have all been born into.

Our limitations are often showcased in how we address the tensions through God's gospel. There are some things we can understand clearly, some with limited clarity, some that require a real stretch through continued study in order to understand, and some we will never understand the side of eternity.

[9 : 48] They're just mysteries that God has chosen to keep to himself. Consider that you are someone who is growing in understanding, and that any obstacle to understanding is born out of you as a creation, not God or any inadequacy of his word.

Second heart check. And the final one is, try to be a creation that is utterly amazed by God's plan that you're part of, how he has orchestrated all things from the beginning to flow in exactly the way he wants them to, and that you play a small role in his overall plan.

The exactness of your role in his plan has been determined entirely by him. All right. So we'll get started again. Number one, God's glory. There are different angles from which to start explaining or telling God's story.

For example, we could start by assessing the validity of God's word. Where did it come from, and how can we know it is accurate? If we can't trust God's word, confidence in his gospel immediately falls apart.

What about building out God's attributes? There's such rampant misunderstanding about God's love and how that shows up. It's very often used to dilute some others of God's attributes, like perfect justice.

[10 : 59] In any case, where I'm going to start in illuminating God's gospels with his glory. I remember when I was a kid, I would think about God's glory and would wonder how that was different from my own sinful pride.

How is it okay for God to seek out glory for himself, and yet that be sinful for me here on earth? Isn't that hypocrisy? For any of you who have asked something similar, know that this is not an abnormal or uncommon question.

It drives right to the root of who God is, why we have been created, and our place in his overall plan. The simple answer to this question is no. God glorifying himself is not wrong or hypocritical. Instead, consider how all that has been created by our perfect God, who has no beginning and no end, belongs to him, and he rightfully created it for the purpose of bringing glory to himself.

How that glory manifests takes us deeper into understanding the Trinity, which I'm not going to get into specifically today. Jesus himself created all things to glorify the Father, a gift, if you will, who Jesus is in perfect communion with.

[12 : 04] Paul says, speaking of Jesus Christ, in Colossians 1, 15 to 19, he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authority.

All things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Preeminence can be defined as he is first in everything, importance, honor, and exaltation. So on the subject of glory, where sin comes into play is when we try to replace God's glory with our own. When we as creation seek glory for ourselves, this in fact represents the first recorded sin which fueled Satan's rebellion and subsequent ejection from heaven by God himself with a promise of eternal damnation to him.

In speaking of the results of Satan seeking his own glory when in heaven, Ezekiel 28, 17 says, Your heart was proud because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.

[13 : 12] I cast you to the ground. I exposed you before kings to feast their eyes on you. Providing context to God's attribute of perfect justice, which I'm not addressing with any kind of depth today, this should provide clarity as to how God feels about creations taking glory for themselves.

All glory belongs to God, and this represents the primary reason for why Jesus created anything and why we even exist. I'm hoping this clarifies how God's glory is righteously his and represents the core purpose for his gospel.

Only by elevating ourselves does glory seem wrong or hypocritical for God to possess. He was there from the beginning, and this is his story. Two, God's sovereignty.

God's sovereignty is well understood by the following, and I'm hoping the youth could quote this back to me. We've said it to them so many times. God either decrees something into place or he allows something into place.

In either case, he's perfectly under control. Decrees or allows. That's God's sovereignty. For example, the Bible clearly explains it, explains that it is the work of God who transforms the heart to be saved.

[14:25] Ezekiel 36, 26 says, and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. That is his sovereignty.

He decrees that into place. A ruler like Trudeau may be an example of God has allowed someone to be in charge of a given country for a time. If he hasn't decreed him into place, God's allowed him, and there's many examples of that.

But then on the other hand, in the Old Testament, there's many examples of how God decrees a certain ruler into place. But in any case, it's he that either decrees something to be the case as in the case with changing our hearts.

We belong to him or we don't, or he allows it to happen. R.C. Sproul says, if there's one molecule, I love this saying, I'm going to say it twice, if there's one molecule in the universe running loose, outside of the control of God's sovereignty, what I like to call one maverick molecule, then the practical implication for us as Christians is that we have no guarantee whatsoever that any future promise God has made to his people will come to pass.

If there's one molecule in the universe running loose, outside of the control of God's sovereignty, what I like to call one maverick molecule, then the practical implication for us as Christians is that we have no guarantee whatsoever that any future promise God has made to his people will come to pass.

[15:44] God has planned for a story that would bring him glory from the beginning. He has orchestrated all that would happen to ensure his glory is secured. The beginning, and this is amazing. It contains some facts that either we don't know or we don't regularly perhaps go over or remember.

It's fascinating. With God's glory being entirely righteous and deserving, the purpose for which all creation becomes clear. So this is the beginning. God's heaven. Jesus, who is fully God and fully man, created heaven.

God's glory on eternal display. Heaven was created to exist eternally. Heavenly beings, including saved humans, are presently and will be worshiping him there for eternity.

So this is before the earth, of course. God created heaven. John 1 verses 1 to 3 says, In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. Remember the word in this passage is referring to Jesus himself, who of course is one person of the Godhead or trinity. The passage goes on. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. Taking you back to Colossians 1 15 to 19 reference, remember that Jesus is credited with all creation.

[16:58] Heaven, earth, visible, invisible. Amazing passage speaking to the breadth of creation and even to the church itself. God's angel who became the enemy. Jesus created Lucifer.

God's glory was served in creating this magnificent, this magnificent heavenly being. Ezekiel 28, 14 to 15 says of Lucifer, You were an anointed guardian cherub.

I placed you. You were on the holy mountain of God. In the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till unrighteousness was found in you.

God's rule. God threw Lucifer out of heaven. God's glory was served in casting out one of heaven's most powerful angels. Revelation 12, 7 and 9 says, Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon.

And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who was called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world.

[17:58] He was thrown down to earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. We're not even to earth yet. God's justice. God created hell. Some of us forget that. God created hell.

It's a great way of remembering just how just God is and how he views sin. God's glory was served in creating a way for his perfect justice to be displayed and satisfied. God's perfection on display and what he declares to be just punishment for sin.

And then, finally, the earth. R.C. Sproul says, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. This is the most fundamental assertion of historic Christianity, and it is the single most bombarded target by secular philosophy and by neo-paganism in our day, because every pagan knows that if you can get rid of creation, you're rid of God, and if you're rid of God, you can live however you want.

And so everything that divides the Christian from the pagan is at stake in that opening assertion of the Old Testament. Sometimes when we're teaching Sunday school or we're teaching within our families, it's easy to depict Genesis as, isn't it amazing?

Limit Genesis to, isn't it amazing creation? And my goodness, it sure is an amazing creation. But this is where it all started. This is the beginning of this gospel story. Genesis 1 to 2, God created earth and all that is in it, including people in his own image.

[19 : 19] He blessed them with more than what they needed. Part of that blessing was a direct and personal relationship with him. Another part of that blessing was purposeful work. This is sort of a fun fact that sometimes we forget about.

Work was not part of the curse. Work was part of the blessing. We're going to have work in eternity. It's working to live that was part of the curse. So as we talk with our children, perhaps that's something that's worth remembering, is not talking about work as though it's a negative thing. It never was, it isn't, and it never will be. Working to live while here on earth was part of the curse. The fall. Number four is the fall. Genesis 3, 1 to 19.

Adam and Eve sinned out of their own hearts via temptation from Satan. God judged them and alienated them from direct contact with him. We all know this to be a pivotal moment in God's gospel.

Suddenly we are all going to God's hell to satisfy his perfect justice unless there is another way. To clarify, following Adam and Eve's sin, we are all born into sin.

[20 : 20] There's no way to mitigate this on our own. We are entirely helpless on our own.

Remember that Satan did not cause them to sin. He tempted them. Thus, in our lives, we are responsible for the sin that flows from our hearts.

Satan tempts us, but we are responsible for our own sin. Sometimes it's easy to quickly go, oh, well, the devil made me do it. That's just, he didn't. Our own hearts made us do it.

And there's two forces to be aware of in our lives. Our own hearts is the primary one, and the enemy, which causes us to stumble. But the credit for our sin belongs with ourselves, not with the enemy.

We are responsible. Prophecy and symbolism is number five, and this is just fascinating, and I'll try to keep it brief, because my goodness, you could spend a lifetime here.

It's absolutely amazing. The Bible's riddled with prophecy of the Messiah. So we fell, and all of a sudden, prophecy starts coming forward about a way to come.

[21 : 21] And it starts right back in Genesis, and I'll show you that. We fell, and God himself started prophesying about a new way to mitigate against our fall. That's just amazing.

Almost right away. So the Bible's riddled with prophecy of the Messiah to come in the Old Testament, and a second coming yet to occur. Over 27% of the Bible contains prophecy.

So of course, easy math is that's easily over one in four verses contains prophecy. And there's two primary areas of prophecy, of course. One is the coming Messiah, which happened, and we can look back to with thankfulness.

And the second is his second coming, which hasn't happened. And the majority of the prophecy that's occurred revolved around his first coming, which is, as I say, which has already happened.

To give some perspective on the depth and accuracy of biblical prophecy. So I'm going to read you a bunch of it, and it's just an example around the prophecy of the first coming. And all of these are prophecies in their exact nature that came out of the Old Testament.

[22 : 23] As it related to his first coming. So what I'm about to read you, as I say, sort of, I want to say word for word, but apply that to your reading in the Bible.

And all of this was prophesied specifically about his first coming. Jesus would be born of the seed of Abraham, Jesse and David, specifically named prophecy, hundreds of years before it ever

happened.

He would be born of a virgin called Emmanuel, born in Bethlehem, hundreds of years before it happened. Great persons would come to adore him. There would be the killing of children in Bethlehem. He would be called out of Egypt.

He would be preceded by a forerunner, which we know to be John the Baptist. He would be anointed with the Holy Spirit. He'd be a prophet like Moses, a priest after the order of Melchizedek. He'd be entering into his public ministry in Galilee, hundreds of years before Jesus appeared on earth. He would be entering publicly into Jerusalem and come into the temple. He would live in poverty and meekness.

[23 : 25] We knew hundreds of years before he came that he was going to be a poor man by the prophecy. And yet somehow we expected him to come as a mighty warrior. It was prophesied that he was going to be in poverty and meek tenderness and compassion.

He would be without deceit. He'd be full of zeal, preaching with parables, working miracles, bearing reproach. He would be rejected by his own Jewish brethren. The Jews and Gentiles would combine together against him.

He would be betrayed by a friend. Isn't that amazing? He would be betrayed by a friend. And yet they were all absolutely confused and without any clarity whatsoever when Judas Iscariot got up to betray him after Jesus said, go do what you must do.

This was in prophecy before that ever happened. He'd be betrayed by a friend. You'd think they'd all be looking around going, which one of us? His disciples would forsake him. He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver, which would be given for a potter's field.

He would die with intense suffering, yet be silent under that suffering. He would be struck on the cheek. His visage would be marred. He would be spat upon and scarred. His hands and his feet would be nailed to the cross.

[24 : 36] He would be forsaken by God. He would cry out specifically, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He would be mocked. Gall and vinegar would be offered to him. His garments would be parted.

Lots would be cast for his clothing. He would be numbered among the transgressors. He would intercede for his murderers. He would die, but not a bone of his body would be broken. He would be buried with the rich.

His flesh would not see corruption. He would be raised from the dead. He would ascend back to the right hand of the Father. And we could go on and on and on. And all of this is very specific, hundreds of years before the first one happened.

The first coming. So we're waiting for the second coming. And that's the next bulk of prophecy that we can rely upon. The amount of prophecy in the Bible is one of the things that makes it unique among religious books.

There's no emphasis on predictive prophecy in the Koran or Hindu Vedas. Whereas the Bible repeatedly refers to its fulfilled prophecy as proof that it is God who speaks through his word.

Genesis 3, 14 to 15 is known as the first gospel.

[25 : 42] That's where prophecy started. God announces his plan of salvation to history. Again, reflecting on Genesis, amazing creation story. And then so much more than that.

Genesis 3, we're already into prophecy of God providing a way to salvation after the fall. His plan unfolds through the rest of scripture. Anyone on the Lord's side will suffer, is what he says.

He will be bruised. But the snake's, Satan's, head will be crushed, dealt a death blow in the future through the work of Jesus on the cross. Genesis 3, 21, sacrifice of love becomes the God-appointed remedy for the separation between mankind and himself.

He kills an animal to clothe Adam and Eve. And then that leads into Old Testament sacrifice, which I think a number of us understand. And the Old Testament sacrifice was all oriented around casting their eyes on the Messiah to come.

Their own need, God's way is coming. And it's going to involve death of an innocent. And that is the entire Old Testament. How people were saved in the Old Testament, of course, was looking forward to that.

[26 : 53] How we are saved now is looking back to that. But in any case, the way to salvation is knowing our own sin, the need for a savior, God and God alone provided that one savior, and putting your faith and trust in him.

And, of course, his subsequent resurrection, Jesus is up there alive and well today, interceding for us. Exodus is one of my favorites.

I'll just mention it because it's one of my favorites. It's that Passover lamb. I didn't understand this for a long time, but the whole idea of the Passover was prophecy, of course, killing that lamb. You're going to be okay. You're not going to lose your firstborn if that lamb is killed and the blood is put on the post. That's all foreshadowing to the Messiah coming, of course, the innocent lamb to be shed his blood.

I know you ladies in BSF have beat that one to death, but it is fascinating. Ligonier. The subsequent Old Testament system foreshadowed Christ's saving work by showing vivid detail the need sinners have for a substitutionary sacrifice.

[28 : 03] Even the Old Testament feasts were symbolic of the Messiah. I'll leave it there. Everything about his saving work must be understood in light of our need for redemption. And that was the whole purpose of all of that prophecy and the Old Testament sacrifice.

So as a quick review, God created, some amount of time passed, we fell, which was the responsibility of us, not Satan, and prophecy started.

I'm going to provide a way for you. And then that way happened, and now we're waiting for that second coming. But the way to salvation back then was exactly the same as the way it is now, except that they were looking forward and now we look back.

Our sin, one way to salvation, and Jesus is it. Salvation. I just want to break salvation into two pieces perhaps.

And it all revolves around Jesus, of course. One is his humiliation, and the other is his exaltation. So his humiliation is represented by him coming, of course, and being a meek and humble God on earth, obeying perfectly.

[29 : 16] So even his obedience, his obedience is probably the greatest testament to his humiliation. God himself, Jesus, fully man, fully God, is obeying perfectly all of the laws that were set in place by God.

That's absolutely amazing. Paul in Philippians 2.8 says, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Galatians 4.4-5 says, but when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.

And we know we don't have any hope today, and they didn't have any hope back then of being good enough on their own to be saved. It was entirely the redeeming work of Christ through his death on the cross.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism says, Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God and the cursed death of the cross in being buried and continuing under the power of death for a time. As we know, on the cross, the sinless son of God took the sin of his people on himself so that he could impute or attribute to them his righteous status before God.

[30 : 40] So when God sees us, we who are saved now, he sees us as perfect, not because we are perfect, but because of the work of Christ. His perfect law keeping is counted to believers as their perfect law keeping.

So in the eyes of God the Father, I am a perfect law keeper. Why? Not because I am, but because of the work of Christ and the blood that he shed for me. Exaltation.

And we know he's exalted. He raised from the dead. Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day and ascending up into heaven. And right now, he's at the right hand of God the Father.

And he's coming back to judge the world. And he won't be meek like he was when that happens. Three main components to his exaltation. Rising again, ascension, and sitting at the right hand of God as he is right now.

That's salvation. The end to come. I want to remind you that this is a story we are all part of today.

[31 : 44] There's no one who is not playing a role in God's gospel story to some degree. The fact that you were created means that you are part of God's gospel story.

It also makes you exceedingly valuable at an individual level. You can just imagine that youth group when you have a kid in front of you who has never been in a church before and you tell him in today's world after he's just gotten done a week of school, you tell him he's exceedingly valuable

and that he has a purpose.

Like, you can just see it on their faces. They're like, what? The businessmen in town, same thing. They're dying for purpose. They've realized money is not doing it.

They're dying for purpose. They can't understand why they feel so empty. You tell somebody like that that they're exceedingly valuable and that they were created for a purpose and you just see it on their face.

They still have to unravel the idea that they didn't come from monkeys and all of this sort of stuff, but at a personal level, they can't believe that. That is shocking to them. For those who are saved, to say that we have much to be thankful for is one of the greatest understatements that could be made.

[32 : 58] We have everything to be thankful for and everything to look forward to. Good old R.C. Sproul says, when he comes again, Jesus will bring about the consummation of all things, the regeneration of the cosmos.

In the new heavens and the new earth, he will reign as the glorified and exalted head of the new humanity. Jesus did the creating for the Father and Jesus did the sacrificing for the Father and Jesus will return for the Father.

All that has occurred is just as the prophecy said it would happen. All that is yet to come will happen just as the remaining prophecies say it will. So in closing, I'm going to read out some scripture about what's to come.

But as a reminder, there's no one here who is not exceedingly valuable. There is no one here who can do good enough to get to heaven on their own.

It is only through the blood of Jesus and that is amazing. I mean, when you take yourself out of your natural inclination of I'm going for a walk with my wife today which is a wonderful thing but that's what my whole day is oriented around and you put yourself in the eternal perspective and you kind of go, I was created for a purpose.

[34 : 12] I am in eternity now. I'm going to one place or another. Like it's mind-blowing. So in terms of the end and what's to come, Luke 21, 25 to 28 says, and there will be signs in sun and moon and stars and on the earth distress of nations and perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear, with foreboding about what is coming on the world.

For the powers of the heavens will be shaken and they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near.

Matthew 24, 30 to 31 says, then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man and then 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 and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other.

And finally, Matthew 24, verses 36 to 37 says, But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the Son, but the Father only.

For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark.

[35 : 39] And they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away. So will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field, one will be taken and one will be left.

Two women will be grinding at the mill, one will be taken and one will be left. Therefore stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.

Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. We all exist within God's gospel story and the question is are we ready for what's coming next because it is coming.

Let me pray. Lord, thank you for this opportunity to speak from your word. God, thank you for helping me.

I know I do not do a perfect job but you help me and I thank you for that. I pray, Lord, that all of our hearts would be soft and that we would be seeking after you, Lord God.

[36 : 48] We know that you are the only way and we thank you for providing a way right back at the beginning, Lord. There's always been a way right from the time of first sin and you set that in place,

God.

Help us to remember to orient our lives around you, Lord. not periodic things, not things that are turning to dust or going away, Lord. Help us to remember what is true value.

Help us to remember what is coming, God, just as you came the first time. In your name, amen.