

The Coming of the Lord

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Date: 14 January 2024

[0 : 00] We're going to begin our worship this morning by singing to God's praise. We're singing in Psalm 33 in the Scottish Psalter, page 245 of the psalm book.

Psalm 33, we're going to sing from verse 8 down to verse 14. Here in this psalm, verse 8, Let earth and all that live therein with reverence fear the Lord.

Let all the world's inhabitants thread him with one accord. For he did speak the word and done, it was without delay. Established it firmly stood whatever he did say.

We're reminded in this psalm of how this is the Lord who has created and made the heavens and the earth by his word and established it all. And as we're going to look at this morning in this service, a day will come when the Lord will come back to earth, back to reclaim and remake all that is his.

So we're going to sing from verse 8 to 14 to God's praise. Let earth and all that live therein with reverence fear the Lord.

[1 : 22] Let all the world's inhabitants thread him with one accord.

For he did speak the word and done, it was without delay.

He established it firmly stood whatever he did say.

God doth the council bring to naught, which he then folk do take.

And what the people do devise, of none effect doth make.

[2 : 44] O but the council of the Lord doth stand forever sure.

God of his heart the purposes from age to age endure.

That nation blessed is whose God Jehovah is.

God of His standard is not able to tell. God of his own faith inening the world has been resurrected.

For God's idolize now, He ■ Kyle. God of His Son. God of His Son is contrary to his life. Lord midw ■■ to kneel, too.

Father King of angels host Israel is with one accord. That nation with ■■■■ and against Him. Sh rivals or drum a man Heamethrouff on faith in every step. God of heaven's doubt the radiation of God.

[3 : 55] Christ in whether he consequently. and behold all sons of men full well.

He views all from his dwelling place that in the earth do dwell.

Well, we've come to God in prayer. Now let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Our Father in heaven, as we gather this day, we thank you for it.

We thank you that this Lord's Day, your Sunday, is a day of coming for this purpose of worship, of gathering together and of spending time around your word and refreshing ourselves in it, not just a rest for our bodies, but a rest for ourselves from the busyness of the week and especially to be reminded of the rest that we have in Jesus Christ.

And we pray today, Lord, that if we come feeling tired and weary, if we come maybe anxious about the week ahead, worried about what maybe lies ahead in a busy week, especially when we think of young ones just now who have preliminaries in these coming weeks and children may be busy in school in different ways, we thank you, Lord, that you hear our prayers and that you are there for us.

[5 : 29] We thank you that you remind us that we have a great gift in prayer, that all the things that worry us we can bring to you. For you care for us, you love us, as your people, as your children.

And we pray, Lord, that you will hear all our prayers today, from the youngest to the oldest, that as we look to you, we seek your blessing on your word to us and upon all that we do.

May we continue to learn from you, to learn about your goodness and your love towards us, and also about the many warnings that your word gives to us as well, even as we consider them today, Lord, that we would hear your voice and listen to you.

So, Lord, bless us all, bless us as families and our homes and our communities and our schools, Sunday school and creche and twinnies today as well, Lord, we ask that you will bless each and every one who attends here today.

Watch over us and take care of us today and in all the days ahead. So we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, who here enjoys watching the weather forecast Does anybody like watching the weather forecast?

[6 : 43] You make a point every day of sitting down and seeing what the forecast is for the next few days. Every evening, now you've got apps on your phones or on your iPad or these kinds of things and people are always looking at them.

There's apps and you're maybe looking two weeks ahead and you're saying, look, it's going to be a severe gale in two weeks, there's going to be a hundred mile an hour winds. But by the time the two weeks passes, it's a clear sunny day, they got the forecast wrong.

Because so often when they're trying to do a forecast way in advance and along a week or two weeks ahead, they don't always know exactly what's going to happen. But yesterday we were told that we were going to be under a weather warning from midnight last night until midnight tomorrow night.

A warning about snow and ice. And if you'd been checking the forecast, you were maybe thinking this morning, you would get up and you'd look out the window or open the door and you'd see the place would be white with snow.

And was it? No. Does that mean the forecast was wrong? Well, maybe not. Not yet because we're still under the warning, aren't we?

[7 : 57] So maybe tonight or maybe tomorrow morning when you get up, the place might be white with snow. We wait and see, don't we? And sometimes when we hear these kind of weather warnings, we maybe start thinking, great, there might not be any school tomorrow.

If there's loads of snow, we can't get out, we'll get a day at home. But for other people, they might be scared. They think, oh no, what if I can't get out of the house? Well, I've got to go somewhere. I've got to travel somewhere. I might not be able to go. Some people get excited about the warning. Some people are worried about the warning. Well, today in our service, we're going to be thinking about a warning that the Lord gives in his word.

And a warning that we're all under today and every day. And it's a warning that the Lord is going to come. He's going to come. Again, Jesus came into the world.

That's what we read in the Bible. We see that Jesus came into the world. He came into this world and lived in this world among the people. He gave his life in this world. We look at the cross so often and we see there Jesus giving his life.

[9 : 05] And then he rose from the grave. But what did he say before he left this world? He said, I am going to come again. And that's the warning that he's given us.

I'm going to come again. We don't know when, but the Bible tells us it's going to happen. But like the weather forecast, when we're looking, maybe we're thinking far in advance, we're just not sure what's going to happen.

Maybe the Bible got it wrong. Maybe Jesus isn't coming after all. It's been so long. Surely he was going to come. He'd have come by now. But the warning is still there for us.

He's telling us he's going to come. That's his promise. For some people, we'll be excited about that. We look forward to the day of his coming. For other people, you may be worried about that day.

You may be afraid of that day. But what the Bible is telling us is to be ready for that day. If we know a weather warning's in place for snow or gales, we maybe make preparations by getting extra food in or these kinds of things.

[10 : 09] Well, the Bible warns us to be ready for his coming again. And the way to be ready is to hear what he's saying, that we are to trust in Jesus. To take refuge in him.

And that way, we'll be safe and secure on the day when he comes. We'll be looking forward to that day. We'll be excited for that day. Because then we will see Jesus if we're believing in him.

And we'll be with him forever. So we're under a weather warning just now. But we're under a greater warning too. A warning from the Bible that Jesus is coming.

So let us be ready for when he comes. We're going to say the Lord's Prayer together now. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

[11:08] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. We're going to sing again to God's praise this time in Psalm 18.

In the Sing Psalms version. Psalm 18 on page 19 of the psalm books. We're going to sing from verse 1 down to verse 10.

Psalm 18, verse 1. I love you, Lord. You are my strength. A fortress is the Lord to me. My rock and my deliverer. For refuge to my God I flee.

Words remind us that we can find refuge in God. Not just for the day of his return, but for every day that we can take refuge in him. Psalm 18, verse 1 to 10.

I love you, Lord. You are my strength. A fortress is the Lord to me.

[12:23] My rock and my deliverer. For refuge to my God I flee.

He is my stronghold and my shield. The Lord who saves me by his might.

I'll call on him and give him praise. I'm safe.

He puts my foes to flight. The cords of death entangled me.

Destruction hit me like a wave. Encircled by the snares of death.

[13:42] I face the terrors of the grave. In my distress I called on God.

I cried out to the Lord for aid. He from his temple heard my voice.

He listened to the prayer I made. The earth before God's anger quaked.

The mountains deep foundations shook. Consuming fire blazed from his mouth.

And from his nostrils came forth smoke. The heavens parted, he came down.

[15:09] Beneath his feet the dark clouds lay. Upon the cherubim he flew.

On wings of wind he made his way. God's water flames.

We can turn to read God's word together. Now we're going to read two passages. First of all in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 24.

We'll read from the beginning down to verse 14. And then we'll turn to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 1 to 5. So first reading in Matthew chapter 24.

reading from the beginning of that chapter. Jesus left the temple and was going away when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, you see all these, do you not? Truly I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.

[16:27] As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately saying, tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age? And Jesus answered them, see that no one leads you astray. For 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 war.

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. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death. And you will 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 this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come. We'll turn to our second reading in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. We're going to read just verse 1 to verse 5 of chapter 2. But you notice in chapter 1, there it speaks about the judgment at Christ's coming. That section of the end of chapter 1 from verse 5 to the end speaks about the day of the Lord's judgment. Some will be the promise of heaven fulfilled to others. Their destiny is eternal destruction and flaming fire, as it calls it there in verse 8, what we call hell. We see the picture of heaven and hell presented to us there. Our focus this morning is particularly on verse 1 to 3 of the second chapter. So we'll read verse 1 to 5. Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed either by a spirit or a spoken word or a letter seeming to be from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way, for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who

opposes and exalts himself against every so-called God or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? And so it goes on.

Amen. And may God bless these readings from his word to us. We're going to join again together in a word of prayer. Let us pray. O Lord, our God, as we approach your word, there are many subjects that we feel that we are out of our depth with, many things that we maybe do not understand fully, and yet we still thank you that your word contains every matter that we need pertaining to life and death and eternity. And we know that apart from your spirit, Lord, we do not understand any of it, for it is your spirit that enlightens our minds and our hearts to hear and to understand what you are saying to us. And so we pray, Lord, for your help today as we think upon a subject that maybe we have maybe not every answer to, but help us to see every promise that is in your word that reminds us of the truth of it. We pray, Lord, that you will help us in the reminder that we have that the day is coming, that when you will come again, a day that we do not know.

It could be any time, Lord, but we know, Lord, that our greatest need in it is to be ready for it. And we thank you that that is what your gospel gives answer to, that you have made it clear to all people, low and high, as the psalmist calls it, we can all find refuge with you. And we thank you that your gospel speaks and ministers to us in that way. We thank you that in all the answers we do not have, we have your grace that is sufficient. We have your strength that is made perfect in our weakness.

[21 : 35] And so we pray, Lord, that you will give us what we need to understand, the revealed things that we have in your word, for we know that there are hidden things that belong to the Lord. And so help us to just humble ourselves before you under the mighty hand of God. And we pray, Lord, that you will help us to hear you today, help us to know you, help us to be built up in our faith or to be brought to faith in you. Whatever we need, Lord, you know it already, and you are able to provide. And so we pray, Lord, that you will bless your word and all that we do in your name today, throughout this day, from the morning to the evening that as we look to you, as we call upon your name in our own private devotions, in our prayers, in our public worship, in resting in you, Lord, we pray that it will be a day of blessing and refreshment for us. For we are many so busy during the week and all the rest of the week,

Lord, and even our Lord's day can be busy in so many ways with family and so many things to do. And Lord, we live in a world that is going so quickly, where everything seems to be 100 miles an hour. We thank you that your word reminds us that there is time to be still and to know that you are God. And we pray, Lord, that we will have these times. We'll have them not just in moments of the day, but every day, that we would have that time, precious time, just to be still before you and to know that you are God, to spend that time in peace with you, praying, hearing your word, and receiving it, being built up by it, not just rushing into the day, but spending that time with you, that that would build us up in our faith, that would help us as we go on in the week, in all the days of the week, in the busyness of work or home or school or whatever we are doing, that we would feel, Lord, encouraged and emboldened by you. For when we hear subjects such as the return of the Lord, we recognize then the importance of proclaiming your name to a world that is perishing, to a people that are perishing, to a people who are not ready for that day.

And so we pray, Lord, that you will encourage us as a people here, always to have that in mind, to have that need in mind, that people need to hear the glorious gospel of Christ Jesus, who is able to save. We pray that in all that we would do, we would be blessed by you, whatever it is, whether it's collectively as a congregation or individually as a people, that we would know your spirit with us, helping us, giving us words to speak, bringing people into our paths on a daily basis that we can minister to, whether it's people we've known for a long time or people we just meet for the first time. We pray, Lord, for boldness and courage to speak of the gospel, that glorious gospel. We thank you, Lord, for your goodness to us in that way. And we pray, Lord, that throughout the world today, as your word is preached and proclaimed to all ends of the earth, that you will be building up your church, that your kingdom will come in power. And the more we see in our world, Lord, the more we see that great need of you when there are so many tensions around our world and from north, east, west, south, Lord, from every direction we see troubles and wars and famines and earthquakes, even as your word speaks of and as we have read. And yet you tell us not to be afraid, for these things must happen.

And we pray, Lord, that in our fears that you will be near, in our anxieties that you will give us your peace, that you will remind us, Lord, that you have all things in your hands. And so help us to calm ourselves before you and to know you as our Lord and as our God. We pray that for many people all over the world today, your people who live in these situations on a daily basis just now, we pray, Lord, your blessing, your help towards each one. We pray for our own congregation and community here, Lord. We pray your blessing on us for those who are unwell from young to old, Lord. We pray your help, your strength, your blessing over us, those who are in hospital or in their own homes, Lord. We pray that you will be near to them, that you will bless them and keep them. Those who are mourning, Lord, we pray your comfort towards them. And as we had funerals in this last week, Lord, we pray for comfort and blessing towards all the families, the families of Bell Mackenzie and Ann Stevenson. We pray, Lord, that you'll be near to each one. Uphold them and be their refuge, be their strength. We thank you that even in the midst of sorrow, there was joy in the Lord and strength in the Lord for the assurance of hope for your people. And we pray, Lord, that you will continue to bless us and watch over us, be with us together as a people. Pardon all our sins as we come before you, confessing anew.

Thankful, though, that you hear our prayers, that you are able to answer. And we pray, Lord, that you will continue with us now as we turn to praise your name and to hear your word. Guide us in our thoughts and in our words and in all that we do. Protect us, Lord, we pray. We ask it all in Jesus' precious name and for his glory. Amen. Before we turn back to our passage, we're going to sing in Psalm 27. And we'll sing in Psalm's version, page 31. Psalm 27. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 4. [27 : 41] Page 31. The Lord's my Savior and my light, who will make me dismayed. The Lord's the stronghold of my life. Why should I be afraid? We'll sing from verse 1 to the end of double verse 4 to God's praise.

Amen. Amen. Amen. The Lord's my Savior and my light, who will make me dismayed. The Lord's the stronghold of my life. Why should I be afraid? When evildoers threaten me to take my life away? My adversaries and my foes will stumble in the day. Although an army hems me in, my heart will feel no dread. Though war against me should arise, I will lift up my head. One thing I'll plead before the Lord, and this I'll seek always.

that I may come. that I may come with this. that I may come with this. God's willing cause hvad that I may come with this. Maybe that I may come with this. But now again. tehdas and it■?

holy And I may happy god and this Vil i and dwell there all my days, that on the beauty of the Lord I constantly rejoice, and in his earth may seek to know direction in his ways.

We turn back to our reading in 2 Thessalonians. We're looking at chapter 2, verse 1 to verse 3. You can read these words.

[30 : 59] Now concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed either by a spirit or a spoken word or a letter seeming to be from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

Let no one deceive you in any way. And so on. These words that we sang in Psalm 27, verse 4, they speak of the desire of the psalmist.

One thing I'll plead before the Lord, and this I'll seek always. It's a desire that the psalmist has for what?

To gaze upon the beauty of the Lord. And as we turn to God's words today, and as we think of this subject of the coming of the Lord, is that your desire?

Do you have that desire of the psalmist? To gaze upon the beauty of the Lord. The day of the Lord's return is a day where everyone will appear before God.

[32 : 12] Everyone will appear before the Lord to give answer according to the deeds of this world. But will we as a people be a people who have that great desire, that longing to gaze on the beauty of the Lord?

So we're going to look at this subject of the coming of the Lord this morning. And it's a subject that perhaps we have more questions than answers for.

We don't have all the answers, but we often have questions about it. I'm sure we've often wondered, many of us, what will that day be like? What will it look like, the day of the coming of the Lord?

But the sad fact is that there's so many people who give no thought to that day, or very little thought to that day and just push it away as something for another time and another place or just something that's not even worth considering.

But what does the Scripture say to us about this day? Well, the first thing and the key thing is this, He is coming. That is a key truth that the Scripture gives to us.

[33 : 26] That's a key warning that the Scripture gives to us. That the day is coming when He will come again. And if we believe that, we often ask, what will it be like?

When you look at the last words of the Bible in the book of Revelation, chapter 22, the second last verse in the Bible says this, the words of the Lord, Surely I am coming soon.

Surely I am coming soon. There's a warning there for us. Surely I am coming soon. The Lord Jesus, as He was taken up into heaven, as He ascended into heaven, you read it in the book of Acts, chapter 1, and it speaks there about His coming again.

So there are plenty reminders to us that the Lord is going to come. And what's it going to be like? Well, again, the Bible describes it in different ways.

As you read in Matthew, chapter 24, we read part of that chapter, but if you read the whole of the chapter, it gives a lot more information as well. And it reminds us that it is going to be something that the whole world is going to see.

[34 : 48] Everyone is going to be aware of it. Now, we read in Psalm 19, for example, where it says, the heavens declare the glory of God.

So we think of what we see in the heavens, the skies around us, and how often we look up to the skies, and what do we see? We see the wonders of God in so many ways.

The heavens declaring the glory of God. We've seen it, or we've seen it even in these last week, when we think of the cold, frosty mornings, or evenings, when you see the sunrise or the sunset, when you see the clear sky on a frosty night, and you see the stars and the moon, all of these things standing out.

You marvel at it. The heavens declare the glory of God. Sometimes you see a shooting star. Sometimes you see a meteor or a comet.

Sometimes you see an eclipse. You see all these marvels in the sky, but you think, well, not everybody has seen it. Maybe only a few have noticed it.

[35 : 54] A sunrise, maybe many people see, but not all at the same time. A shooting star, maybe only a few will see. And all of these things, but you wonder at the coming of the Lord and the way it speaks about it, everyone is going to see it.

The whole world is going to see it. And you wonder, how is that possible? Well, the Lord is coming, is what the Bible tells us.

And as Paul is writing this second letter to the Thessalonians, he's writing to them about this subject, and he's writing to them in light of what has come previously here as well.

In chapter 1, as I mentioned, in verse 5, to the end of the chapter, you see the reality of heaven and hell. There, if you read verse 7 and 8, it says in verse 7, to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

It says, again, the revelation of Jesus from heaven with his mighty angels, how he's going to descend to his people. It's a wonder.

[37 : 19] It's going to be something spectacular, and spectacular as a sunrise or a sunset or a comet or a shooting star. All of these things, they're spectacular in their own right, but the coming of the Lord is going to be something far more spectacular, something we won't be able to avoid, and something that we need to be ready for.

What do we believe of what the Bible tells us of his coming? Do we believe the very fact that he is coming? Are you resting in his word?

Do you see it as truth, and do you have faith in the Lord? Are you looking forward to that day of the Lord's return? That day when we will gaze in the beauty of the Lord?

The book of Revelation again says, surely I am coming soon. The writer of Revelation says, Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. There's a sense of excitement.

There's a sense of anticipation. Come, Lord Jesus. Are you ready for that yourself? Well, that's what Paul is addressing here as he writes to the Thessalonians, and we're going to consider it under three headings this morning.

[38 : 45] Three things I want us to see as Paul writes these words, in particular in verse 1 to 3 of chapter 2. First of all, do not doubt his coming. Secondly, do not be anxious about his coming.

And then thirdly, do be ready for his coming. Do not doubt his coming. Do not be anxious about his coming. But do be ready for his coming.

The first thing is, do not doubt his coming. As you read chapter 2 of 2 Thessalonians, you can read through it, we come to some of Paul's deepest teachings here in terms of trying to find a way of understanding just what he's speaking about.

And when he's speaking here about the coming of the Lord and what that entails, there's many things here that you maybe immediately focus in on. And you ask questions about.

It's only natural for us. For example, at the end of chapter 3, there's this subject, this issue of the man of lawlessness being revealed. And the question is, well, who is this?

[39 : 58] Well, that's for another day. But we can often focus in on a chapter or a verse in Scripture and we can get sidetracked from the main issue. We can get distracted from the main issue.

And the subject that he's speaking about here, the coming of the Lord, it's one of these subjects that is easy to get sidetracked in and just to debate about and things that we're not really understanding.

We're putting forward our own maybe theories, we're speculating as to things, what might be. And ultimately, we lose sight of the importance of the matter. You think about the day of the coming of the Lord and how it's been spoken about down through the years.

In almost every generation, it's been speculated about that someone has this vision or this revelation that the day of the Lord's return is going to be such and such a date.

It's gone on for years and generations. You even see it in the Scripture itself. Here, they're speculating that it's already been. And it's something that goes on all the time.

[41 : 04] You know, convinced they know whether this is bound to be now when the Lord returns. And as you read Matthew chapter 24, you maybe read things there and you're drawn into this idea, well, surely this now is when the Lord will return.

It speaks about times of war and rumors of war and all of these things that are going to take place, earthquakes, famines, and we see it all the time when we start to speculate, well, surely now the Lord is going to return and we can start speculating about these things.

But is that the most important thing to talk about in the midst of it? To start speculating about, well, will he come just now? Will it be imminent? Is it maybe something that's just way off in the future? When the reality is we don't know. We don't know. But what it's all doing is reminding us that we should be drawing near to God.

We should be coming to God in a closer way. We should be seeing the challenges and difficulties all around us which are many and escalating as it seems all the time just now.

[42 : 20] When you think of the Middle East and the Ukraine and the Far East and our own nation, the West as we call it, there's chaos of all different kinds. All the rumors and things that the Bible is speaking about in Matthew 24, we're almost seeing them just now on a daily basis.

Are we just pushing that away or is it bringing us closer to the Lord? As Paul is writing to the Thessalonians, they themselves were living in difficult days.

They were afflicted. They were persecuted. From outside, there was all these people who were persecuting them and having a go at them and bringing false truths to them.

And within themselves there were all these doubts and anxieties that they naturally had. And yet, when Paul writes to them, he says in verse 3 of chapter 1, we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

This is what he was seeing. Even in the midst of all these uncertainties about the coming of the Lord, their faith was growing abundantly and the love of every one of them for one another was increasing.

[43 : 40] Is that what the Lord sees with us today? A faith growing abundantly and a love for one another increasing.

The day of the Lord's coming is without doubt, but how are we approaching it? How are we living in a day when we don't have the answers, but we know it is true that he is coming?

What are we focusing on? Well, things in this world will shake us and things in the church will shake us, but when Christ is our rock, then we have a security, a certainty.

The Thessalonians were being told that the day of the Lord had already come, but Paul is assuring them that it hasn't, but he is also assuring them that it will.

You know, today the problem of the coming of the Lord is almost the opposite to what they had in the day of the Thessalonians when they were being taught that he had already come. The problem today is that he has not come and that people think, well, he probably isn't.

[44 : 59] One was bringing doubt into their minds that he had already come. Today, the doubt is in our mind that he's not going to come because surely after 2,000 years or more, he would have come, he would have brought peace to this world, but it hasn't happened, so we can push it away.

But what's the answer in both? Well, it is faith. Faith is the key here. Faith is what we need.

And that's what Paul is thanking God that the Thessalonians had. Your faith is growing abundantly. It is ours. It is yours growing abundantly in confidence in God's Word.

One commentator puts it very helpfully. He says, rather than having an understanding of everything that every verse says, it is to have anchor points.

Anchor points. Things that we can focus in on and hold firmly to that. Keep us secure. Yes, there's things we don't have answers for, but there's things that we can have certainty in, and one is the day of the Lord's coming.

[46 : 11] He will come. In Matthew 24, Jesus says later on in that chapter in verse 43, 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 when you do not expect. Again, it's so clear there.

Jesus himself, the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect. That is our anchor point. The Lord is coming, and that we should not doubt.

So we see Paul's pastoral heart here. His concern for the people is that they hold firm to this fact that he is coming.

The second thing we see here is that they are not to be anxious about his coming. Now, concerning the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed.

[47 : 26] Don't be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed. Do not be anxious about his coming. We live in days when we can be anxious about so many different things and afraid about so many different things.

None of us here today will be without our anxieties, without our fears, but how do we deal with them? And especially we think of this idea of the coming of the Lord.

How do we deal with anxieties and fears over that? Well, again, it's to anchor ourselves in God's word, to anchor ourselves in the promises of God's word.

Paul's really echoing what Jesus taught in chapter 24 of Matthew here. He's almost using the same words. Do not be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed.

It's just the way Jesus spoke in that chapter as well. So it's really, don't be anxious because you remember who you are trusting in.

[48 : 33] When you look at the situation in Thessalonica here, those who are growing in faith, your faith that is growing abundantly, how was it growing abundantly?

How was their love for one another growing abundantly? Well, it's because they were resting in the truth of God to them.

And there must be practical, simple, practical lessons for ourselves here today as well. The role of the anchor is to keep us safe and secure, to stop us drifting and being shipwrecked.

That's the role of the anchor. So what is the anchor of Scripture? It's to anchor ourselves in the foundation of truth that we have in God's Word. All the promises that are given to us.

And by holding on to them, by seeing them, we end up being secure in Christ and not drifting away and being tempted away by false teachings or the kind of things that he's speaking of there in verse 2 by a spirit or spoken word or a letter to the effect that the day of the Lord has come when we're being led as straight to say, no, that is not what the Word of God says.

[49 : 51] And to hold fast to the Word of God. And that's what Paul was doing for the Thessalonians, holding them fast in the Word of God.

When you think of the book of Acts, chapter 22, after the Lord's ascension, how were the people found in chapter 2? It says in verse 42, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

That was their focus. That was how they grew. That's how the church at Thessalonica was growing. All of these things were present and that's what we are to be secure in as well.

Being under the Word, being in fellowship with one another, taking the sacrament, prayer. When our relationship with the Lord is right, our faith and assurance grows.

So we are to anchor ourselves in the Word of God. Do not be anxious or afraid for this day. How? By being close to God, by trusting in Him, by knowing who you are believing in.

[51 : 06] One commentator speaks of the importance of both faith and perseverance. Two things that we need as Christians.

Faith and perseverance. And he speaks about it in this way. The illustration of getting into a sporting event. And he said, a person who wants to attend a game in a stadium, for example, a big football match or Six Nations rugby or something like that, if you want to get into the stadium to watch, you've got to pay your money and when you pay your money, you receive a ticket. But he asked a question, but what gets you into the stadium? Is it the money or the ticket? And he said, it's both.

Ultimately, the money paid is what really gets you in, but you must have the ticket as evidence that you have paid the price. And for ourselves as Christians, the greatest confidence we can have is that the price has been paid for us.

The Lord Jesus has paid the price for our entry into heaven. And our ticket is faith. Faith is a ticket.

[52 : 33] So that by faith in the Lord's, the day of the Lord's return, we can come and say, I have believed in you. I have believed that you paid the price.

That in giving your life on the cross, you paid the price for me. The faith and the perseverance. The price paid and the ticket shone. They both go hand in hand. And when you look at the wonderful words of the Lord Jesus to his disciples, in John 14, there you see that Jesus was telling them do not be anxious.

What he says in verse 1, let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. And he says, I go to prepare a place for you.

And then what does he say? That I may come again and take you to be with me. What wonderful words, what confidence they bring to God's people.

[53 : 48] Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. I go to prepare a place. That preparation involved his going to the cross, his rising from the grave on the third day, his ascending into heaven, and that promise that he will come again.

Is that what you're leaning on? Is that the promises that you're holding on to? That he will come again. Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

The word of God is so wonderful in the confidence and the hope that it gives. The third and final thing we want to see here is we need to be ready for his coming.

We need to be ready for his coming. What is Paul's greatest concern to the people of Thessalonica here in both chapter 1 and chapter 2 as he's speaking of the judgment at Christ's coming, where this picture is put before them of the different destinations of heaven and hell.

What's his concern? As he comes into chapter 2 concerning the coming of the Lord, it's that they be ready. That they be ready for it.

[55 : 20] When you see what he is teaching them, you see the purpose behind it is that they might believe and be ready to have assurance in the truth of God's word.

As we see, the Thessalonians will be, these doubts will be put into their mind that this day had already happened. And for ourselves today, it's almost like the opposite is true.

It's almost that this day is not going to happen. That this day surely would have happened by now.

And it's easy to waste time speculating about the coming of the Lord.

Will it, won't it, or when? But instead, we are to heed the warnings of his word. Like I was saying to the children earlier on, we're under a weather warning just now.

And we look out and we're wondering what's going to come. What's it going to be like? It's the same every time, whether it's a gale or snow and ice, we're wondering how bad's it going to be?

[56 : 29] What damage will it cause? But what about the warning of the Lord's return? Are you heeding that warning today?

He's going to come. That he has told us. He's going to come like a thief in the night. You don't know the moment, but are you ready? To know he is coming should motivate us, should drive us to himself, and should drive us in everything that we do as a people.

The urgency of this, the very fact that he is coming and we don't know when, what are we doing to tell others? What are we doing to warn others?

There's a story told of an American colonel, his name was Colonel Davenport, and he was one of the speakers to the House of Representatives in America and Connecticut.

And on this day in May, May the 19th, 1780, there was this meeting taking place of the House of Representatives in Hartford, America.

[57 : 39] It's like our Parliament meeting. And as this meeting was going on, it was June the day, and yet the sky just suddenly started to get darker and darker, to such an extent that some of those in the meeting started looking outside and just amazed by the darkness that had come so quickly.

And the fear that came upon them was this, that the day of the Lord was coming, that this was it. And they started calling for the meeting to be adjourned, the meeting to end, because this was so serious.

But Colonel Davenport, it said, he calmed the meeting. And he said this, the day of judgment is either approaching or it is not.

If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. Therefore, I wish that candles be brought.

The darkness was ominous. But he said, well, if this is the Lord's return, I want to be found doing my duty.

[59 : 01] Rather than fearing what is to come, you are to be faithful till Christ's return. And instead of fearing the dark, we are to remember the light that we have in Christ and his gospel.

And we are to watch and wait for his return. The reality of heaven and hell is clear before us in the scriptures.

And the reality of the day of judgment is clear before us in scripture. The reality of the coming of the Lord is clear before us in scripture.

The question is, are you ready? Are you ready? The day is coming when the sky will light with flaming fire for all people to see and the Lord will come.

Some will cry on that day to the mountains, fall on top of them because they will be so afraid. They will not be ready for the day to appear before the Lord.

[60 : 12] But for us may it be a day when we delight, a delight that we will see the beauty of the Lord and gaze on him, for we are ready for it.

But while we have time and opportunity, as we think of the coming of the Lord and the day is going to come, and as we think that there are people out there who know nothing of it or who are not interested in it, the reality of heaven and hell and the judgment and the coming of the Lord should drive us in telling others that he is coming and to be ready.

May the coming of the Lord not be something. We just speculate about the things that we do not understand, but may it instead be a day that we see is true and is the great hope of the Christian, but is our great motivation in reaching out with the gospel.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for your word that is truth, and even though the world will cast so many doubts over it, and tell us that it is not true.

Tell us that if the Lord was going to come, we would have done so by now. Help us to realize that that was true in the days of our Lord, in the days of the apostles, and down through all the generations, but it doesn't mean that it's not something to be believed in.

[61 : 49] For your word tells us that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, and help us to be ready, and help us to be urgent in our work for the gospel, to tell others to be ready for it too.

But Lord, we thank you that it's a day that your people can look forward to, a day of joy, a day of delight, when we will gaze on the beauty of the Lord.

And so we pray, Lord, that you will bless your word to us, and go before us in the rest of this day, pardoning our sins, in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 33 again, page 246 of the psalm book, Psalm 33, page 246.

We'll sing from verse 18 down to verse 22. These three stanzas, Behold, on those that do in fear, the Lord has said as I, even those who on his mercy do with confidence rely.

We'll sing these verses to God's praise. Amen. Behold, on those that do him fear, the Lord has said his eyes, he those who on his mercy do with confidence rely.

[63 : 37] From death to free their soul in death, life unto them to yield, her soul doth wait upon the Lord, he is our help and shield, our heart our heart shall joyful be.

Lord, let thy mercy be on us as we do hope in thee.

After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my right. We'll close with the benediction. Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore.

Amen. to amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.