

The World That Missed The Messiah

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[0 : 00] Good morning again. We're going to have an interesting time over the next few weeks.! We're going to be delving into the world of John the Baptist.

! There's not much there, but today we're just going to be covering three verses. Luke chapter 3 verses 1 through 3.

And if you were to look at those three verses right now, most of it is a list of names. And you would say, well, what are we doing talking about John the Baptist in that way?

What are these names about? And actually, I want to start with a different fellow, a different name altogether, to kind of set this up.

And who I want to tell you about is an Italian reformer by the name of Jerome Savonarola.

[1 : 01] I'm sure my pronunciation in Italian is not very good. But this Italian reformer, Savonarola, was someone who grew up in Florence, Italy, and was influenced by, in particular, Dante's Inferno.

I don't know if any of you are familiar with Dante's Inferno, but the images of hell that he had in that piece of literature haunted him. And so he very much so pursued the Lord and eventually went into training to become a monk.

And this is in, by the way, the late 1400s. So this is in Florence, Italy, in the centerpiece, the centerpiece of the Renaissance, before Martin Luther's Reformation, which began in 1517.

So he was, before Martin Luther, trying to reform the Catholic Church, which was corrupt and filled with all kinds of wickedness and terrible things that they were guilty of.

And once he finished his training, he was sent back to Florence, where he began to preach. And this is Florence, Italy, here.

[2 : 25] He studied a lot of St. Augustine, who was an early Christian preacher in Alexandria in Africa.

And he realized in studying, in his studies, that the church had fallen away from its apostolic calling. And so he began to preach against the corruption and against the moral decay of his day and the lifestyles, the superstition that had crept into the church, the unbiblical practices that were not just in the community there in Florence, but also was in the clergy and, in particular, among the bishops and in the papacy itself.

And so he began to preach and he began to beget very strong in his presentation and his condemnation of what was going on in the church.

He preached repentance from sin. He had people who were coming to faith, hardened sinners, who were repenting and coming to faith in Christ.

And things were happening. Dens of iniquity were being closed down. Gambling was outlawed in the city of Florence. Books and pictures were destroyed in an event that you know the name, but you probably don't know where it came from.

[3 : 56] Have you ever heard of the Bonfire of the Vanities? Anybody heard of that before? This was Savonarola in Florence, right there in the main square in Florence.

They had this huge bonfire where people brought all of their superstitious icons and pictures and immoral things and books and paintings, and they burned them there in Florence.

Now, the pope was not a big fan. This is Pope Alexander VI, who was not a big fan of Savonarola because he was living an immoral lifestyle, and Savonarola was preaching against him.

He had open affairs and mistresses that people in the world around the pope knew about. Multiple children from multiple women, and in their world it was not unusual for popes to buy their position, bribe their way out of problems.

They would leave bishops and so forth. Their sons would become bishops and be appointed, not because they earned it, not because they were somehow more religious than any others.

[5 : 11] They weren't. They used it as a way to gain money and power and to satisfy their lusts and all of these different things, and the church was not happy with what was happening with Savonarola and his preaching.

And so he began to, the first thing he wanted to do was to try to bribe Savonarola and to give him a position and to give him money so that he would cool off and not continue his preaching, and of course he rejected that.

And so then he flipped and began to say slanderous things about him. Eventually they put him in jail and began to torture him because of what he was preaching and what he was saying.

Eventually it came to the point where the church said to the leadership in Florence, he said, put Savonarola to death even if he is another John the Baptist.

That's an amazing thing to say about a man. But put him to death. And so on May 23rd in 1498, less than 20 years before Martin Luther would nail his 99 theses against the door of the Wittenberg Church, they put him to death by hanging.

[6 : 44] And then while he and two of his apprentices were hanging there, they burned them, and then they took their ashes and threw them into the river. This is what happened with Savonarola.

It's a fate that's something that John the Baptist could relate to because he himself was put to death because of his preaching, because of his emphasis on repentance and doing away with sin.

Savonarola taught that we must regenerate the church. None are saved by their own works. No man can boast of himself.

He gave emphasis to the scriptures and promoted the idea of sola scriptura, the idea of the scriptures alone. That's where we get our teaching.

That's where we get our doctrine. And Martin Luther himself used quotes and promoted the work of Savonarola.

[7 : 47] But we don't know about him. John the Baptist himself is someone that we have precious little information about.

He preached for a while, for a short period of time before he was put into prison. And then after he was in prison for almost two years, he was put to death because of his emphasis on repentance and his message to Herod Antipas, who was immoral and abused his position.

So I don't think Savonarola would have minded being compared to John the Baptist. The sin and corruption that Savonarola confronted, that John the Baptist confronted, I think is something that we would be familiar with also in our day today, the world around us.

The political and religious setting that Savonarola faced, that John the Baptist faced, Martin Luther faced, that we face today is similar in that sense.

So Luke, in these first two verses, sets the stage and names five political names and two religious names to help us to understand the world in which John the Baptist began his ministry and then eventually Jesus would also come and begin his ministry.

[9 : 27] So Luke chapter 3, verse 1, reads like this. In the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee and his brother Philip, tetrarch of the region of Ileria and Trachonitis and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John and the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

And he went into all the region around the Jordan proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And that's all we're going to cover today.

And I want to start with going over these names so that we can understand the setting in which John the Baptist began his ministry. And I want to kind of start at the bottom of the food chain, if you will, and work our way up to the top.

So the first name that we see there is Lysanias and there's not much written about him. He was tetrarch of Abilene. Now, when I think of Abilene, I think of what state?

Texas. I have a niece who lives there. And we don't have much that we know about Lysanias. Abilene was just north of the region of Galilee in the Middle East there.

[11 : 03] And Lysanias is so unremarkable that we know his name. We know that he was the tetrarch. Tetrarch meaning the under-governor.

Like Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea. That was a major area, an area of great concern to Rome. But tetrarchs were given smaller territories.

So he was governor, tetrarch, over this small area north of Galilee. And that's about all we know about him. Now, the next two names are Herod and Philip.

These guys are actually brothers. This is Herod Antipas and Herod Philip. These are the two sons of Herod the Great.

Herod the Great was the king over that area when Jesus was born. He was the guy that wanted to kill or set the order to kill all the young boys that were two and under after Jesus was born because he had feared for his kingdom.

[12:11] And he wanted to remain king. And he didn't live much longer after that. And he had three sons. And one became a tetrarch but didn't do so well.

So Caesar Augustus basically took away his territory and sent him into exile.

And we don't hear anything about him. But we do know Herod Philip, who loved his power, loved his entertaining, loved building cities.

So Caesarea Philippi, which we hear about in the book of Acts, was a city that he basically built. And he named it after himself, Caesarea Philippi.

And Herod Antipas was also, he's the tetrarch of Galilee, and was also wicked in his ways. Because what we don't know is that, what we do know is that he visited his brother Philip one time.

[13:16] And while he was married, he had an affair with Philip's wife, who he then actually married. And John the Baptist was preaching against Herod Antipas.

And that's why he was put in jail, because he preached against his adultery and his other forms of wickedness. And so he was put in jail, and eventually his new wife was the one who was responsible for John the Baptist's death.

A name that you would be more familiar with, Pontius Pilate, who was the governor of Judea. He came into that position probably when Jesus was in his early 20s.

And famously, when Jesus was about to be crucified, he was the one who was in charge of his trial. And he famously brought Jesus out, not finding anything that Jesus was guilty of.

He brought a basin out in front of the crowd and washed his hands and said, Listen, I'm not responsible for putting Jesus to death. And so I washed my hands of it.

[14:32] But it didn't work. And so eventually, we find that Pontius Pilate failed and was deposed. The Caesar, Tiberius Caesar, took him out of that position and sent him into exile as well.

And then finally, you have Tiberius Caesar. He is the Caesar, the king, if you will, in Rome at this time. And he is an interesting, he was a general.

He was an adopted son of Caesar Augustus and was successful in his campaigns. And at 56 years old, became the Caesar in Rome.

He struggled with jealousy. He struggled with suspicion. He suspected everyone around him. There was no safety.

There were informants. People who were accused of treason against him basically killed themselves because if you were put to trial, you were going to be put to death in a horrible way, so better to kill yourself.

[15:45] This is the setting that John the Baptist came in politically. This is the political atmosphere. And it's one thing to face this kind of political atmosphere if you have the backing of the religious establishment.

But that wasn't the case for John either because of these two fellows, Annas and Caiaphas, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, which, if you know anything about Jewish history, you know that this stinks.

This smells like a dead fish. This setup. They didn't have two high priests at any time. And so what had happened was when a man was appointed high priest, he served that for the rest of his lifetime. But that was of concern to Rome. And because Rome was in charge, they set about to be the ones who would appoint the high priest to make sure that they would keep the high priest under their thumb.

And so Annas was appointed by Rome to be the high priest, and he remained the high priest for seven years. And that was it. And so eventually, through bribes and paying off people and so forth, these high priests got to stay in office or got to appoint whoever they wanted to be in office.

[17:07] And he had four sons, and so his four sons served in succession for one-year terms as high priest. And then finally, his son-in-law, Caiaphas, was the one who was the high priest at the time when John the Baptist began his ministry.

He was also the high priest when Jesus was tried and then crucified. But Annas was the one who was really in charge.

And these guys ran Jerusalem and ran their religious system and the temple like a mafia. And Annas would have been like a godfather, and Caiaphas would have been his enforcer.

And they ran that temple ministry like a money-making machine. That's what they wanted.

They wanted the power. They wanted the influence. And they wanted the money. And so they used the way that God had set up the temple ministry as a way to make money for themselves.

[18 : 24] And so all men were required to come to Jerusalem several times per year to worship at the temple, to offer sacrifices.

And whenever they would come to Jerusalem to come to the temple, one of the things that was set up in the Old Testament law was to pay a temple tax.

And that temple tax was basically, if you convert it to modern terms and modern economy, it was like \$15, \$15. That you would pay when you would go to the temple.

You would have to pay this \$15 tax or fee to be able to enter the temple to pray, to offer sacrifice, to whatever it was.

And so what they did with this temple tax is they said, well, it has to be paid in our currency. And they had these shekels, these Galilean shekels that they used as currency.

[19 : 28] And people wouldn't use this currency in their normal practice. And so they had Egyptian coins and they would have had Roman coins and Greek coins and different.

Every little nation state had their own form of currency. And people used that. And when they brought that currency to the temple, they couldn't use that to pay their temple tax.

And so they had something in the temple set up called money changers. And they were hired and ran by and supervised by the system that Annas and Caiaphas ran.

And so these money changers would take the money that they brought, if it was Egyptian coins, if it was Roman coins, whatever kind of coins they had, and turn their currency then into these shekels, these Galilean shekels that were used for temple currency.

But they had to pay a fee to change their money. And then not only that, because their currency was considered unclean, religiously, ceremoniously unclean was their money, they also had to pay another fee to get clean money, these Galilean shekels.

[20 : 56] And so what would have cost normally \$15 to get into the temple would cost them much more than that just because of these exchange rates that had to be paid in order to exchange their money to get money that was acceptable just to get into the temple.

And then once they got into the temple, these travelers would come and they would bring, if they had the means and ability to do that, they would bring their animals to be sacrificed.

I've raised a lamb and I'm bringing that lamb to the temple for sacrifice. But famously, their lambs would be rejected and they would say to them, this lamb doesn't qualify, you must buy one of our lambs in order to sacrifice.

And they would charge four times the amount of what the lambs would normally be sold at. And so they had this money-making racket that brought in millions of dollars in our currency to the temple, actually to these guys.

They had this racket that just, and that's why later on when Jesus goes into the temple and overturns the tables and throws them out of the temple courts, that's why that was such a nuclear bomb to that setup, to that system.

[22 : 31] Even the people observing would have been terrified. But certainly the religious priests and high priests would have been furious over what Jesus did because it was upsetting their whole operation.

And so you can see how corrupt and how evil this religious system was that John the Baptist and that Jesus came into when they began their ministries.

And so all of this is what was going on when John the Baptist began their ministries. And so when you see what Luke is doing, what his purpose is in even telling us these names, why is he saying these names?

Well, first of all, Luke's purpose here is to verify the historical record. We saw that back in chapter 1, verses 1 through 4.

He's writing to a man named Theophilus, and we don't know who Theophilus was, but he is wanting to say to Theophilus and ultimately to you and I that this record of the ministry of Christ and

eventually his crucifixion and resurrection is all historical.

[24 : 02] This is not a fairy tale. This is not fiction. This is real. It is history. And so these are the people who were in charge at the time.

Remember what this was like. Now, by the time that Luke is writing, all of these men, these seven men, five political leaders, two religious leaders, by the time Luke writes, they're all dead.

And they all missed it. They all, they had Jesus in their midst, and they missed it. They all died without knowing, without trusting Christ as Savior.

But Luke is reminding Theophilus and reminding us of this climate. Also, not just to verify, but to remind his readers what the political and the religious climate was like when John began his ministry.

So when John is preaching and calling out their sin, and specifically saying of Herod in his presence in public, how could you do these things?

[25 : 14] And then Luke also wanted us to know what the world was like and who the players were at the time that seemed to be in charge in this world.

Remember when Jesus was being questioned by Pontius Pilate. Pontius Pilate was like, I have charge over you.

I can put you to death or I can set you free. I've got that ability. I've got that power. And that didn't register with Jesus. It didn't mean anything to Jesus, because ultimately Jesus knew who was really in charge, who was really sovereign.

Now the political scene, as we've talked about, was full of immorality. It was full of paranoia. It was full of treachery.

Spiritual apathy. Whatever their religion was, some of their religions promoted immorality. The ones that didn't, certainly the Hebrew faith, did not promote these things, but it existed nonetheless.

[26 : 32] All of these things happening. And we see all of this today. This is no different today.

The religious scene was full of pride. It was full of greed. It was full of extortion, of malice, spiritual decay. And remember now, God had been silent for 400 years.

Seemingly allowing this evil to go unanswered. Why would God do that?

Why would God remain silent in the face of all of this evil? And you can almost hear the reader ask, will God remain silent still?

As people today would ask, where is your God?

[27 : 47] Is he real? Of course not, they would say. And so it's into this world, during this time, that the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness.

And he was a different kind of a guy. He did not try to fit in. He didn't fit in. He didn't go to the main cities and so forth.

He basically spent most of his time in the area of the Jordan River, in the wilderness. And he was preaching. In Mark chapter 1, we learn a little bit about him.

John was clothed with camel's hair. So basically, he had a tunic. A tunic was like just a shirt. A long shirt that would go down basically to their knees.

And he apparently skinned a camel and used that to make his tunic. I imagine he skinned it himself.

[28 : 58] And I don't know if he put the camel down or if there was a dead one there that was handy. But he skinned it and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey.

I imagine that wasn't the only thing he ate but that's what he was famous for. So if John the Baptist had a logo or a brand, it would be like a locust.

Maybe dripping in honey. I mean, I imagine that's what you know, would a chocolate-covered locust be any good?

But he would take a locust. Locusts, you guys have heard of the cicadas that come around every so often.

It's similar to a locust. It's not a locust. But when we were living in West Virginia, they had these cicadas that came out like once every 13 years or 17 years or whatever it was and one of the years when we were in West Virginia, they came out that summer and they were everywhere.

[30 : 13] I mean, they were everywhere. And you couldn't drive down the road without your car being pelted by these cicadas and they were full of cream.

Do you remember do you remember what is it?

The little lion Lion King. The movie The Lion King, right? When the young lion what was the young lion's name? What was it? Simba. When Simba was hanging out with Timon and Pumbaa.

Am I getting their names right? Right? And they were teaching him not to eat regular animals but to instead eat insects. And one of them was like, ooh, this one's cream filled.

And that's what I think of when I think of these cicadas. And I remember one Sunday after the service was over and I was greeting people and it was a beautiful day and I was outside and the cicadas were out there.

[31 : 23] If you've ever, we've never, I've lived here for 25 years never seen anything like this here. I don't know if we ever get cicadas here but there's so, there's so many of them that if you have trees in your yard or anywhere if you have a bank of trees anywhere near where you live it's like a roaring sound.

They get so loud. There's so many of them. And if you walk out, they're just everywhere. And so, they were all over the sidewalk when I was after the service and the kids would come out of the service and I'd step on one, oh, cream filling.

And they were like, ew. Oh no, they're good, try one. The newspaper would have recipes for these things. So, they were making pies out of them, they were making ice cream out of them, they were, true story.

So, I can imagine John the Baptist, you know, he's got his own line of locusts and wild honey, there you go. But, John wasn't interested in any of that, obviously.

But, so he didn't fit in. he wasn't normal. He wasn't a normal guy. But yet, his preaching was, was right in your face and basically there were three components of that preaching.

[33 : 04] Verse 3, he went into all the region around the Jordan River proclaiming three things here, baptism, of repentance, and for the forgiveness of sin.

So, those three things. This is what he was preaching, the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And so, I want to go through those three things, and you have these on your notes as well.

So, baptism, and basically the word here is immersion. That's what the Greek word baptizo is translated as, is as immersion.

And this is important as we make our way through the text. In a couple of weeks, we're going to talk about this again when he's talking about the one who's coming after him who will baptize us in the Holy Spirit and with fire.

And so, it's important to understand that baptism is something that involves complete submersion. Josephus, the historian, the Jewish historian who writes about Jewish history, uses this word to describe someone drowning.

[34 : 25] And so, you're not just getting sprinkled with a little bit of water and drowning. You're being submerged in a body of water. And so, that's what the word means.

Now, this baptism that John is practicing, that John is proclaiming, that John is performing, is not the baptism that you and I experience.

We receive a New Testament baptism. And sometimes we forget that the majority of the Gospels, up until when Jesus is crucified and resurrected from the dead, the Gospels are set in an Old Testament setting.

They're still sacrificing animals at the temple. It's still an Old Testament system that they're working under until Jesus rises from the dead.

And then, our baptism is a picture of that, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. That's not what John is performing. What John is doing is different.

[35 : 41] It's more similar to an Old Testament baptism. An Old Testament baptism is one that the Jewish people didn't have to be a part of.

They didn't experience that. They didn't know or participate in baptism because they were already Jewish, because they were already a part of Abraham.

And so, baptism was something that Gentiles would do. And this is a part of why John's message was offensive, because he's preaching to Jewish people, and he's telling them that they needed to be baptized, that they needed to repent of their sins and be baptized, which is something that Gentiles would have to do if they wanted to be included in the Jewish faith.

And that's offensive. You're telling me that I have to do what a Gentile would do to be considered a part of the family? No. So that would have been offensive to them, but that's a part of the steps.

There were multiple steps that a Gentile would have to take, including circumcision, including a special meal, including baptism, that they would perform on themselves.

[37 : 01] It wasn't someone else who was baptizing them. They would baptize themselves in front of witnesses. But this is something that was just offensive in everything.

Repent. You need to repent. And don't think that because you can say that your father is Abraham that God accepts you just because of that, which would have been the message of the rabbis and the teachers of the law.

Hey, you're already in. You're already good with God because you're a part of Abraham, because Abraham is your father, because you're Jewish. You're all set.

And so what John was doing was offensive and abrasive. And you would think if John the Baptist had counsel from some other preachers or prophets at the time, they might have told him, hey, slow down, John.

Take it easy. Don't go right to the repentance part. You've got to take it easy on him. Just kind of come in slow and don't be so abrasive.

[38 : 15] As a matter of fact, you want to be more inclusive. John's like, no, that's not going to help anybody. They need to hear that they are not right with God and they need to repent of their sin.

And they need to humble themselves and submit to this baptism, this baptism of repentance to say, Lord, I'm broken and I'm caught up in my sin and I need you.

So, this is what this baptism represented. it's a baptism of repentance, repentance being an about-face, a turning the other way, a going the other way, a 180, I'm headed in this direction and God says, no, you need to head in the other direction.

And it's complete, it is a complete repentance. leaving your life of secret sin and public sin.

Let it all, all in, I surrender. Which then led to forgiveness, forgiveness, which is made possible through faith in the full, final payment of Christ on the cross.

[40 : 09] Which John would mention, would say, would declare of Jesus, this is from John 1 29, when he saw Jesus coming toward him, John said, behold, the Lamb of God.

And they would have known what that meant. it didn't mean just some cute little lamb sitting in the field and, oh, let's bring him in, let's adopt him, let's pet him, he's so cute.

They knew what that meant, that a lamb was meant for slaughter, was meant for sacrifice, was meant for atonement, meant for sin, that they would take that lamb, that they would slit his throat, that they would spill its blood, that they would burn it and sacrifice for the payment of sin.

And Jesus, he declares of Jesus, there's your lamb. There's the one who will pay the penalty for your sin, takes away the sin of the world.

John understood that. John declared that. Now, these next couple of weeks, next week we're going to look at John's message, his sermon, if you will.

[41 : 30] Then the following week we're going to look at this discussion of, John, are you the one? Are you the Messiah? And he's going to say, no, there's someone coming after me who will have this unique thing that he will do, again, with baptism.

We'll talk about that in a couple of weeks. But before we're done today, there's three brief statements, three reminders, if you will, that we get from this text and this setting.

The first is this. The advancement of the gospel does not rely on the favor of any earthly government.

if you look at world history, the church flourishes not when the government favors Christianity or faith.

The church flourishes in the midst of persecution. when the government stands against the faith.

[42 : 45] I flew down to Virginia this week to see my new grandbaby. And I flew down there with my other daughter, Sarah.

She's also expecting in April and we flew together. My wife, Sherry, was already there for the birth of the baby. we were there for the aftermath, the fun part.

And on the way down on the plane in Grand Rapids, as we're in the airport getting ready to board the plane, we're standing in this long line and we met a missionary who is a missionary to Cuba.

But you don't meet those. You don't see those. people and he's not able to go there in the typical fashion when we think of a missionary who goes to a place and lives there.

He's not allowed to live there because he's American. But he's allowed to visit. And the whole work of the ministry that he's involved in is training up Cuban men to become pastors.

[43 : 59] pastors. And it blew me away his description of what's happening in Cuba. In Cuba. The church is exploding in Cuba.

He said five years ago we had I had 200 and I forget 230 or something like that. Churches. Churches.

In Cuba. It's over 400 now. The work that he's involved in and training pastors there is like immense.

the number of men of young men who are coming to faith in Christ and then surrendering their life to ministry in the midst of this communist not a friend to the church nation.

It just blew me away. We're praising the Lord and talking to him about his ministry and what he does there. And it's happening in other places like in China and Iran.

[45 : 19] You don't hear about any of these things in the news do you? But it's happening in places where the church is persecuted.

Where the church receives no favor from their government. and what happens to the church in nations where their government does favor them and there is prosperity.

Look around you and you'll see it. Apathy. people walking away from the faith.

People just not caring. Not believing. The churches and the pastors themselves giving up on the basics of the faith and conforming to the ways of the world and what the world says is right and wrong.

and what the world says about faith and belief or any of that. Oh you know Jesus is okay but he's not the only way.

[46 : 43] Don't offend anybody by saying that. We can we're all going to go to heaven because it's just a matter of whether you have sincerity in what you believe.

it's not about what you believe it's whether or not you're sincere. And so a Buddhist or even someone who doesn't have faith at all as long as they live a life that is upright and they're not like blatant criminals and we'll all be in heaven.

Don't be so offensive. But John would make it clear pastors today I hope would make it clear that there's only the one way.

Jesus would make it very clear himself that there's only the one way. I am the way the truth and the life Jesus said.

No one can come to the father except through me. So whatever our current circumstances we need to be a people, a church who will be faithful to preach this gospel message, to proclaim it, to stand up firmly against whatever the world may throw at us and in our world we're not getting persecuted here in our country.

[48 : 33] No, not like what's happening in other places. Let us be found faithful.

The darkness and the depravity that we see in our culture can be the perfect setting for another reformation. Seven arolas preaching Martin Luther's preaching the whole reformation the revivals that our own nation experienced early on.

we need that again. Our churches need to be reformed.

Us believers need revival. We need revival of heart heart and will to say I will serve the Lord no matter what.

We will not bow to what this world offers. And the greatest tragedy that we see in our world today and in our world's history is not that believers suffer temporarily and there are many in our world today who are suffering for their faith in Christ.

[50 : 24] That is not a tragedy. What we experience in this life is so small compared to eternity.

what is a tragedy? That unbelievers will suffer eternally.

Because without faith in Christ they will suffer eternally. Separated from Christ and what we will see in a couple of weeks and what we know in our hearts but we somehow try to lessen the message but what they will suffer is an eternity apart from him in the flames and the fires of hell the lake of fire for eternity forever and that will be their choice.

we need to be faithful in sharing this message this good news as John was faithful in sharing this good news 1st Timothy Paul writes about this mindset that we should have first of all then I urge this 1st Timothy chapter 2 I urge then that supplication praying for other people praying for ourselves intercessions thanksgivings that as we pray in this way that that would be made for all people that we would pray for everyone in our orbit and the people around us people that we know that we hear about around the world for kings people that are in charge people who are in authority over us we would pray for them all who are in high positions that we would pray for them that we so that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life part of why we pray for part of the result of our prayers for other

people is that we would be able to lead a peaceful and quiet life that we would be godly and dignified in every way and then he ties all of that together with this this is good he says that we would be able to live this way in the world that he has placed us in and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth why do we pray why do we lift up leaders in prayer the people around us in prayer our families why do we do that because God desires all people to be saved to come to the knowledge of the truth and so we pray and so we live godly peaceable quiet dignified lives and we share the message of the gospel with those who need to hear it this brothers and sisters is how we ought to live let us pray to that end let us live in this way lord we thank you we thank you that this ministry of john would be carried out in such a world that was filled with such evil such corruption and such greed and such treachery it's a world that's not different from our own world we have political leaders that are caught up in sin and evil and treachery we have religious leaders that are caught up in greed and pride and taking advantage of people for their own selfish gain even those who would compromise the message of the gospel the clear truth of the gospel willing to water it down willing to want to fit in to say that certain types of sin are no longer evil they're acceptable that we can work with that that we can compromise

[56 : 37] Lord forgive us may we too be willing to repent help us to see that it starts with us recognizing our own sin our own apathy our own willingness to compromise our own willingness to overlook evil Lord may we be a church may we be a people who represent you well who speak for you through the word of God the word that is our final standard it is the truth may we cling to it and Lord may we cling to you may we freely admit and say

I need you we need you we can do nothing without you and may we be faithful in the world in the communities that you have placed us in the homes workplaces all of it may we be faithful in the secret place may we repent Lord I pray that when people look at our lives that they see Jesus and may we be willing to speak to speak of you to declare you and your message your gospel the good news of Jesus

Christ to the people who need him to those who have never heard to those who have never responded to the message of the gospel may we be faithful in declaring it and living it we ask it in the name of our savior Jesus Christ amen voy