

Revelation 1:9-20

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[0 : 0 0] All right, so we are looking at the book of Revelation tonight. We are in Revelation chapter 1. We're studying the book of Revelation this summer, and our particular focus this summer is going to be on the letters to the seven churches that are found in chapters 2 and 3.

But kind of as an introduction to that, we've been spending these first two weeks on chapter 1. Last week, if you were here, Pastor Greg walked us through verses 1 through 8 of Revelation chapter 1, and there we saw the answers to three kind of basic but important questions about the book.

We saw who Revelation is for, who it's from, and what it's mainly about. And real quickly, just to review, we saw there that Revelation is for, as it says in the first opening and opening verses, it's for the servants of God.

This book is for all the followers of Jesus. And we saw that the book was from, in verses 4 and 5, that it's from the triune God Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the one Creator and Redeemer.

And then we lastly considered that the book is ultimately about Jesus Christ and His kingdom, about the kingdom of God. In other words, the book of Revelation, at the biggest picture, is about what God is doing and is going to do to bring to completion His kingdom work in the world.

[1 : 2 6] It's about what He's doing between Jesus' first and second coming, and of course, what He will do at Jesus' second coming. So, with that in mind, let's pick up where we left off with verse 9.

Let me read this for us. It says, I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos, on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning, I saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the lampstands, one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

The hairs of his head were white like wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze refined in a furnace. And his voice was like the roar of many waters.

[2 : 4 3] In his right hand he held seven stars. From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword. And his face was like the sun, shining in full strength.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet, though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, Fear not. I am the first and the last and the living one.

I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and Hades. Write, therefore, the things that you have seen, those that are, and those that are going to take place after this.

As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. And the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Let's pray as we consider God's word together tonight. Lord Jesus, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the book of Revelation. Lord, we pray that by your spirit you'd help us to understand this mighty book. And God, that our hearts would be strengthened and encouraged to follow you in the life that you've given us here for your glory.

[3 : 53] Pray this in your name, Jesus. Amen. Amen. So, when you're facing a problem or a trial or even some kind of suffering, what's the one thing that you need?

Well, perhaps you'd say, the one thing I really want, actually, is for the problem to go away. I would prefer for the suffering just to stop. Thank you very much.

But if that doesn't happen in the midst of pain and suffering and trial, what's the most important thing you can have? That's really what our text is pointing us toward tonight.

But before we look there, what are some of the things you might say that you need? Perhaps you'd say you need the presence of caring and supportive friends, people to kind of walk with you through those times.

Or maybe you'd say that you really need a strategy for overcoming the trial, a plan to eliminate the source of pain. If you're jobless, what you really need is a good resume and a few practice interviews.

[4 : 57] Or if your marriage is in trouble, maybe you need a good marriage counselor and some communication exercises to work on. Some sort of strategy. Friends, strategy, maybe the one thing you think you need are some answers.

Maybe some sort of reason why you're going through what you're going through. Or at least some potential reasons why to help you understand what's really going on. Maybe you think that's the one thing you need to really help you.

Well, of course, all these things are good things, right? They're not necessarily sort of bad in and of themselves, but our text tonight is pointing us to something even greater.

To what is perhaps the most important thing for us to have when we're in the midst of trial or when we're about to undergo some sort of trial. And if I were to put it as straightforward as I can, I think we see this in Revelation 1, 9 through 20.

I think this is kind of the main thought. Now let's unpack that.

[6 : 20] So verses 9 through 11, we see pretty clearly the fact that Christians suffer, that they face trials and problems and persecutions, that they experience distress and loss.

Look again at verse 9. I, John, that is the Apostle John, your brother and partner, that is someone who shares deeply in something together with you. Your partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus.

Look at those last three concepts. Tribulation, kingdom, endurance. This is actually how John is sort of summarizing the Christian life.

First, tribulation. The word simply means suffering, distress, intense hardship. As a follower of Jesus, there will be trial and hardship.

And often on account of being a follower of Jesus. Look at the rest of verse 9. I was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Because John had been faithfully following Christ, bearing witness to God's word and to all that was true about Jesus, crucified, risen, reigning, coming again.

- [7 : 31] Because of all that, John was exiled and imprisoned on the island of Patmos. Now, Patmos is this tiny little island off the western coast of modern-day Turkey. And at the time, the Roman Empire used Patmos basically as a penal colony.
- That anybody that they thought was sort of a, you know, dangerous to the good order of the empire, they pretty much just shipped off there and forgot about. An easy way to solve your problems when you're an empire.
- Let's find a little island where there's nothing there. And let's put all the people we don't like on it and forget about them. Now, of course, today, I don't think any of us are worried about getting shipped off to one of the Thimble Islands and sort of left there on account of our testimony for Jesus, right?
- Maybe the Thimble Islands would be nice. There's some pretty sweet houses out there. But no, right? We don't think in those categories, at least not in the west. But notice that John says, I'm your brother and partner in this tribulation.
- He writes to these churches saying, this trial, this hardship, this is expected. This is something we all share in together.
- [8 : 41] After all, Jesus himself said, in the world, you will have tribulation. It's the same word that John uses here. In fact, that saying of Jesus actually is recorded in John's gospel, chapter 16, verse 33.
- But notice, secondly, John doesn't describe and summarize the Christian life as only suffering or only tribulation. He says in Jesus that we also share in the kingdom.
- That is, right now, we are fellow partakers in the reign of God, in that inbreaking, liberating rule of the triune creator and redeemer.
- Now, do you see the balance here? That Christianity is not just tribulation. It's not just a sort of defeatist, pessimistic, despairing thing.
- And on the other hand, Christianity isn't just the kingdom or sort of shallow understandings of it. It's not just a triumphalistic, everything's fine and rosy, there are no problems in life sort of thing.
- [9 : 54] No, John's saying it's both. Christianity is about God's kingdom that progresses even through tribulation.
- Christianity is about tribulation that one day will be swallowed up and healed by God's kingdom. It's both. So one thing we see in this first paragraph of our text, verses 9 through 11, is that all Christians will experience some sort of trial or suffering at some point in their walk with Christ.
- And that doesn't overthrow all the joys and blessings of knowing God in Christ, but we can expect hardship. Now, some of us don't need to be reminded of that fact, right?
- Maybe you've experienced all sorts of hardships in this life, physical, emotional, relational. Maybe you've been ridiculed for your faith in Christ. Some Christians in the world today, as we know, are being physically harmed and killed for their testimony to Jesus, as John puts it here.
- But I do think that many of us, at least in the West, aren't we kind of surprised when hardships come? We think for one reason or another that we're entitled deep down to a pain-free life.
- [11 : 17] Or we think that being a follower of Jesus should somehow get us out of it. Now, don't get me wrong. Following Jesus actually will save you a whole load of heartache in the long run.
- To listen to Him, to know Him, to follow Him, that sort of life is full of joy. It is full of the kingdom.

But following Jesus will also mean suffering at times. One of the other pillars of the early church, the Apostle Peter wrote in his first letter, Beloved, don't be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you.

Friend, are you experiencing a fiery trial tonight? And if so, are you uncertain how you are going to stand in the face of it?

Jesus told John to send this book of Revelation off to the seven churches in Asia Minor. That's western Turkey.

[12 : 33] And those churches are listed there in verse 11. In fact, these cities are listed in the order that the main road would sort of take you if you were the one delivering the letter. You'd sort of first visit Ephesus on the coast, and then you would go up to Smyrna, and then you would sort of circle around the rest.

And these churches were about to undergo a season of persecution and suffering unlike any they had known before. It seems that the Roman Empire was going to become more aggressive in the years to come, and following Jesus was going to be more costly than ever.

And as you read through the seven letters in chapters 2 and 3 and sort of look at them as a whole, you see what they're up against. Not just physical harm from unjust rulers, but also internal theological confusion and moral breakdown and even spiritual complacency.

All things that threaten the church even still today. And John wants to call them and us to patient endurance.

That's the third thing John mentions in verse 9. And notice how all three of these words are strung together. The way that it's constructed in the Greek is actually very tight.

[13 : 51] These three concepts are all sort of woven together. As if John is saying, if we participate in the kingdom by virtue of our union with Christ, and if we undergo tribulation by virtue of our union with Christ, then the patient endurance to remain faithful comes also by virtue of our union with Him.

That is in Jesus. And you see, the rest of the chapter starts to give us that endurance. Where do we get it in the midst of trial?

From a vision of the glory of Christ. And in verses 12 through 16, we see the glory of the person of Christ. And in verses 17 through 20, we see the glory of the work of Christ.

Now, if the word glory is kind of a confusing one or not sort of very clear in your mind, look at the description of Jesus in verses 12 through 16, and maybe that will help to sort of give you a shape for it.

I admit this description of Jesus is a little strange at first. It's kind of bizarre. Sort of see the white hair waving in the wind, and you think, this is strange. What's going on? But you have to see that John's trying to use finite human language to capture something that actually exceeds the bounds of our language.

[15 : 09] And what are some of the themes that we catch here? First, you have to admit that John is presenting Jesus here as completely radiant. His face is shining like the sun.

His feet are like burnished bronze refined in a furnace. His hair is gleaming white. His eyes are on fire. Even his clothes are resplendent. He's got this golden sash strung around his chest. From head to toe, Jesus is blazing and bright.

Do you remember how Jesus once described himself in his earthly ministry? He said, I am the light of the world. And the people listening must have thought, this guy, who does he think he is?

And yet now John gets a vision of the risen and ascended and ruling Jesus, and it all makes sense. So first, the glory of Jesus here is his brilliance.

It's his beauty. But second, John is sort of capturing some of his glory by describing Jesus' power. His voice is like the roar of many waters.

[16 : 16] His right hand is holding seven stars, and we'll get to what that means in a minute, but at least you can see it's a picture of strength. Out of his mouth comes a sharp two-edged sword.

That's a pretty striking image, isn't it? A sword coming out of his mouth. As if to say, John is saying, it's as if to say, here is one so powerful, so authoritative, that his mere word is penetrating and effectual.

What he says goes. What Christ says happens. The judgments that he declares are true.

And in fact, this Lord doesn't just declare mere verdicts, but his word creates and it recreates this voice that roars like waters and pierces the air like a trumpet.

So the vision of Jesus here, this vision of his glory, of his person, is one of intense beauty and one of perfect power.

[17 : 25] Have you ever thought about that? When do we ever see, when do we ever catch a glimpse of beauty and power in the same thing? So often it's only one or the other.

Beautiful things are often very fragile, aren't they? Flowers wither. Last Sunday in the morning service, I used the flowers in our front yard as a sermon illustration. Now they're all dying. They're all withering away quickly.

Flowers wither. Sunsets quickly disappear. In the old apartment that my wife and I used to live in, we lived on the fifth floor overlooking the city, and every night we would get the sunset. And every night, Beth would say, Nick, come, quick, look at the sunset.

It's beautiful. It's great. And often I would catch it, but sometimes I would miss it because it would be gone. Beautiful things are often fragile. And powerful things are often, well, not very beautiful, are they?

I remember in college, we used to like watching this thing called the World's Strongest Man. Does anyone ever remember seeing those? They were like these contests, probably on some weird off-channel like TNT or TNN or whatever.

[18 : 33] Anyway, so the idea with these World's Strongest Man contests were that these huge dudes with names like Lars and Dietrich would basically pull cars up hills, and they would throw logs over walls, and they would do all these sort of crazy feats of brute strength, and then they would get scored and awarded prizes or something.

I don't know. And for as awesome as those shows were, and as cool as I thought those guys were for like, you know, throwing things and smashing things, I wouldn't necessarily say that any of those guys was particularly beautiful.

And yet here in Jesus Christ, we've got both. Ravishing beauty and unparalleled strength. And as John reaches for metaphors to try to capture what Jesus is like, it's maybe no surprise that he goes to nature.

Hair like wool, like snow. John pointing us there to a blizzard covering the layers of earth in white, in power and in beauty. Or like a voice that roars with the sound of many waters, the ocean vast and limitless, the waves pounding, the shore crushing, powerful and yet beautiful at the same time.

Jesus' face shining like the sun in full strength. There it is again, the sun shining in full strength and beauty and in power. But you know, in describing the risen and ascended Jesus here, John isn't just sort of finding helpful pictures from nature.

[20 : 12] He's also, and perhaps more importantly, pulling from the Old Testament. You see, these various images come from places like Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 7 and Daniel 10 and Isaiah 60.

Some places where it's describing God himself. One of these allusions is right there in the beginning of John's description.

Jesus appearing like a son of man. Which is a direct allusion, almost a quote of Daniel 7. Let me read that part of Daniel 7 for you.

Daniel 7 verses 13 and 14 say this, And behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man. And he came to the ancient of days and was presented before him.

And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom. That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away.

[21 : 19] And his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. John is saying here in Revelation that Jesus Christ is that son of man.

He is the one who has ascended to the Father to the ancient of days. And the Father has given him an everlasting kingdom that will never pass away. And it will be a kingdom of all peoples, nations, and languages.

And it will never and can never be destroyed. Friends, how does a vision of the glory of Christ's person help us endure in trials? Because this Jesus, this one who is the sum and source of all beauty and all strength.

This one who fulfills all the Old Testament longing for God himself to come as king. This one, his kingdom is never going to end. And it will never be destroyed.

And that means that no matter what is shaking you right now, it will not and it cannot take your best thing away from you.

[22 : 29] If you belong to Christ, then you belong to one whose beauty and power cannot fade. What you have in him, no amount of suffering can steal.

What you have in him, no hardship can really truly diminish. Friends, no one is talking about the present reality of the Roman Empire.

Are they? It is gone. And yet the kingdom of Jesus Christ remains and is larger than ever. You see, friends, this vision of Jesus here, this is Jesus right now.

At the Father's right hand, living, ruling, reigning, and one day coming again. This is the one through faith that you are united to.

So even if your health fails and even if your dreams are shattered, you have him. Imagine a house that is just full of artwork.

[23 : 44] A picture on every wall. But every single piece in that house is a print. It's a reproduction. Except one.

Upstairs in the spare bedroom hangs a genuine Monet. Worth millions. Beautiful to behold. And imagine that that same house one night while the owner is away is utterly robbed.

Broken into. And every single piece ripped from the walls while the owner is away. And you can imagine the owner coming home and maybe seeing his front door sort of swinging open.

And he goes in and he starts to see that all the pictures are gone. And his heart starts to beat. And he starts to hurry through the rooms. And he makes his way to the stairs. And he goes up. And he goes into the bedroom.

And there on the wall, in its place, hangs the Monet. They had taken everything else.

[24 : 47] But they didn't take the one of real worth. They had overlooked the one that had real, lasting value. That's the one that he still had.

Friends, it's the same with Christ. Even if every picture you own is stripped away, you still have the one of limitless, eternal value.

Who will give you your heart's desire in fullest satisfaction for eternity. You see, every pleasure, every good, every joy we experience in this life is somewhat like a print.

Somewhat like a reproduction. Pointing us toward him as the source of all good. Whose face shines like the sun without ceasing. And if we have him, then we can really lose nothing.

It's not to downplay or to diminish our hardships or pain or suffering. But to say that in him we have everything.

[26 : 01] But you know, John doesn't just show us Christ's person. He also shows us the glory of Christ's work. In verse 17, John falls to the ground like a dead man.

Jesus here is not simply sort of Jesus meek and mild, but one who makes us fall down to the ground. And seeing John on the ground, Jesus reaches out his right hand, puts it on John, and says, Fear not.

I am the first and the last and the living one. I died and behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and Hades.

You see, when Jesus, the ever living one, died and rose again, he conquers sin and death for all who believe. And now he holds the keys. He has the authority over death and hell.

And that means, you see, friends, because Jesus died and rose again, there's no suffering or no death that we might undergo in this life that Jesus himself cannot turn over and will turn over for our ultimate eternal good.

[27 : 12] Whether that good comes in this life or in the age to come. Because Jesus died on the cross taking our worst, our sin, our punishment, our hell.

And because he gave us in his resurrection his righteousness and his life and his reward. Friend, whatever trial we face here, it cannot possibly be some mistake in God's plan.

God's ultimately going to use them for our good. And he's going to make us more like Jesus through them. Fear not, Jesus says.

I'm the one who holds the keys to death and hell. I died and behold, I'm alive forevermore. What do you have to fear? If I could take a Roman cross and make it the gateway to eternal life, how could I not take the suffering and trial that you face and make it a pathway for renewal life for you?

The very thing that you fear, the boot of the Roman Empire coming down on your necks is the very thing that I've turned into the means of your and the salvation of the world.

[28 : 25] What have you to fear? And notice here that Jesus is standing among the lampstands and holding the stars in his hands.

The lampstands, Jesus tells John in verse 20, are the churches. And the stars are the angels of the churches. Now, perhaps the angels there are just that.

Angelic beings. A representative part of the heavenly host with a special ministry to the churches. Or maybe what angels refers to there are actually human messengers.

The word angel just simply means messenger. So maybe this is just sort of messengers from the churches that John's going to send a message back to. But, you know, either way, the big picture is the same, isn't it?

That here is Jesus dwelling in the midst of the churches. Present among them. Active among them. Friends, Jesus Christ is here even if we don't see him with our physical eyes.

[29 : 28] The living one dwells among his people. Dwells among the ones he purchased with his own death. Dwells among us to lead and to guide and to teach and to warn and protect and to say, fear not.

Friends, this is what we need in times of suffering and trial. We need a fresh vision of the glory of Christ. And when we see his person, when we see his beauty and his strength, friends, we realize that he is our greatest good.

And nothing can take him or his kingdom away from us. And when we see his work, when we see his death, his resurrection, his reign, we realize that nothing bad cannot be turned for our good.

And that he's here present with us. And we need not fear. Now let me conclude with two applications then. One for those who aren't Christians and one for those who are.

First, we've been saying tonight that those who believe in Jesus can face trial and suffering with the utmost endurance because of who Jesus is and because of what he's done. But friend, don't you see, if you're here tonight and you've not placed your trust in Christ, then these things are not true of you.

[30 : 54] Without a saving relationship with Christ, the living one, suffering actually will steal your best. Your friends, your possession, your worldly status, your health, even your legacy, none of those things are immune.

And the bad things that happen to you, friend, ultimately they will never turn for your good. Apart from Christ, your best days will forever be behind you, slipping further and further away.

And as you head forward, you are destined to face more loss and more fear. But tonight, the same risen Lord Jesus that John saw on the beaches of Patmos is saying to each one of us, come to me.

A little later in the church to lay out at sea, Jesus is going to say, I'm standing at the door and I'm knocking. Friend, open to him.

And he will come in and he will sit down and he will dine with you as a friend, the king of the universe. And he'll make you his own and then you'll hear him say to you, perhaps for the first time in your life, the words fear not.

[32 : 37] Turn and trust in Jesus Christ. And if you have done that, if you are a Christian, then I want to encourage you and me by way of application to seek the means that God's given us of renewing our vision of Jesus's glory.

Of course, you probably won't actually have a vision like John had here and that's okay. But what are the means that God has given us to make the truth about Jesus more and more real to our hearts? Well, first, quickly, we'll just kind of tick through a couple of them.

First, notice that John, even in exile, is worshiping on the Lord's Day. Now, when John says the Lord's Day, he's obviously referring to Sunday there. By the way, this is one of the earliest references to Sunday as a special day for Christians in the historical preserved works that we have.

The Lord's Day, Sunday, this is when Jesus rose from the dead. This is the new day of Christian worship. No longer the seventh day as it was under the old covenant, but now the first day, the day of new creation, the day when the God of Israel inaugurated his worldwide reign in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And here is John, worshiping in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. You see, friends, what we do on Sundays isn't some rote ritual.

[34 : 00] It's not checking off a list of spiritual to-dos. It's gathering in the Spirit of God to set our minds and set our hearts upon the one who died and rose again to bring us to God, to get a renewed vision of the glory of Christ.

These regular rhythms of gathered worship are essential to keeping and renewing that vision. And isn't it so easy to drop off when things get hard?

You know, when we encounter conflict or trial or suffering, one of the first things to go is we stop gathering with other Christians because we're busy or because we're hurt or because we have questions or doubts.

And yet, this is precisely the time when we need it more than ever. Even John, in exile, by himself, is taking advantage of the Lord's Day.

But in addition to that, in addition to gathering on the Lord's Day, friends, do we take the time in our times of private prayer, not just to pray our needs to God, as important as that is, but do we take the time in our times of private prayer to actually think about God and to enjoy Him?

[35 : 14] You know, this is another means of keeping our vision of Jesus' glory real, to find a truth about God or Christ in our regular reading and to pause and to think over it deeply and then worship God for it and enjoy God for who He is.

Just this morning, I read Psalm 21 as my morning devotional. And verse 1 reads, Oh, Lord, in your strength the king rejoices. And then I read the rest of the psalm in about 30 seconds.

And then I realized I got nothing out of reading this psalm this morning. This was a waste of time. And then I went back and read the first verse. Oh, Lord, in your strength the king rejoices. Friends, encountering a line like that, pause and rejoice in God's strength.

Think and reflect on the way in which God parted the Red Sea or the way in which Christ stilled the storm of Galilee, the way in which He's worked with strength in your own life. This is what it means to meditate on God's Word, and that's a means that the Holy Spirit's going to use to renew your vision of the glory of Christ.

Your hair's not going to get blown back every single quiet time, but you're going to be growing in your intimacy and your vision of who Jesus is. Because I have no hair, it doesn't mean my hair has constantly been blown back in my quiet times.

[36 : 31] That has not happened. Lastly, one more means of keeping our vision of Jesus fresh, and that means is the Lord's Supper. You see, Jesus gave us this somewhat simple practice in order to keep our minds and our hearts renewed in the glory of what He's done for us.

He's given us these very, very simple and basic things that are found in nearly every culture, bread and wine. He's given us these simple things to take us into the infinite depths of what He's done for us.

So friends, what we're about to do in a moment, this is the time to pause and to pray and to confess sins and to worship and enjoy Christ through these tangible means that He's given us.

Our passage ends with Jesus telling John and telling us, I'm here dwelling in the midst of the lampstands. I'm present in the churches.

In a moment, a couple of us are going to hand out the bread and the cup. But you see, friends, really, it's Jesus Himself who offers these things to us, saying to us, remember me and eat with me and take what I've done down into the depths of you and let me, through it, comfort you and strengthen you and change you.

[38 : 15] So let's take a moment right now to pause and to prepare our hearts for communion. Lord Jesus, we ask that as we gather now around your table, Lord, that as we take the bread and as we take the cup, Lord, actions that we've done so many times, Lord, that you would make it fresh and real to us, that in and through these humble means, we would see the magnificence of what you've done, taking on flesh and having it broken, having blood course through your veins and then allowing it to be spilled for us, for us sinners and for our sin to reconcile us to God, to give us peace with God.

Lord, come by your Holy Spirit and renew us, we pray. Amen. Well, Greg, I wonder if you'd help me to serve communion tonight. And Mary, would you help as well tonight to serve?

Thanks. Well, friends, as we gather to the table, let me make just a few comments about how we typically do things here at Trinity. First, we're going to hand out the bread and we're going to sort of hold it and pray together and then we're going to eat it together as a sign of our unity and we're going to do the same thing with the cup after that.

We're going to take the cup and distribute it to one another and then we're going to partake of the cup together. And if you're here tonight and if you're a Christian, if you've turned from sin and placed your trust in Jesus and in His righteousness as your hope and your standing before God, then, friend, take the bread and take the cup in repentance and in faith and be renewed in your relationship with Jesus.

You're welcome to take these things with us if you've placed your trust in Jesus. If you're here tonight and you haven't done that, if you're still sort of spiritually figuring things out, if you're not sure where you stand with Christ, then instead of taking the bread and taking the cup, you can just pass them by or just sort of make a gesture and we'll pass them along, friend.

[40 : 28] But I'd encourage you to use this time to come to terms with who Jesus Christ is and what it would mean for you to step over the line and to start a relationship with Him.

We don't get many times in our busy world to just stop.