



**Christian Love-Part 7**  
**Loving God's Coming Kingdom**  
**Pastor Mike Fabarez**

Well, they say there is no place like home. And I certainly would agree with that. But I realize it's really not about the house itself. It has a lot to do with who's there. You know my home is really not my home when Carlyn is not there. She's kind of gotten increasingly known, I guess, for some of her teaching so she's doing more of these trips out of town to go speaking, sometimes in different states, different places and she's gone and that's good for those women's ministries that have her come in to preach but it's certainly bad for me and my family. We don't like that. Things can easily deteriorate and get chaotic and crazy and frankly frustrating when my wife is not around. Now, she knows that's going to happen so she is in the pattern of making all these lists. That's one of things I love about her, she's so organize and so she makes all these lists and she lays them out there on the island in the kitchen and so I know what day it is, I look at what time it is and I know what I'm supposed to do and where things go and our kids all have their lists and we know what's going on. We do our best but it's really not quite the same. We just can't wait for her to drive in the driveway and be back and then our home is our home again.

You know Jesus really taught us that the Christian life is going to feel like that experience times a thousand. That is really a bit of what we should naturally feel when Jesus says, you know when it comes to who I am, your king, I'm going to leave, I'm going to go receive this kingdom and then I'm going to come back and set it up. That's what we've been studying here in Luke Chapter 17. We get a sense of that feeling of incompleteness with his departure. He even calls himself the bridegroom and he speaks in terms of him being the bridegroom and really our connection with him in his first coming and even now in the interim being one of being betrothed, or engaged. Now I think about that. And to sense the fact that your life, in terms of one that has been relationally connected with Christ, is really not even completed yet until the bridegroom comes back and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place and we have the consummation of the kingdom. And all of those aspects of what he illustrates for us should naturally make us think, wow, this is a Christian life that should feel, in many ways, incomplete. They once came Jesus and said, what's wrong with your disciples? They're not fasting. They're not fasting like all these other religious and serious, devout people. And he said, well, you know, when the bridegroom is with them they're not going to fast because fasting is often the impetus is pain and need and it comes out of sorrowful situations. So I'm going to be taken away and then they're going to fast. And this is the norm for Christianity and yet so often we're peddled and pushed and propagating, you know, falsely this sense that if you become a Christian then everything's going to be great. No, I understand we have his instructions and we have the Bible, we have even a sense of his comfort. We've been given his spirit and we have the great privilege to call out to him. We have the access to God through prayer but it's not the same and our lives will really not be at home until the bridegroom returns. When that happens we're going to see Christianity the way it was designed to be and as the Apostle Paul said, if we've hoped in Christ in this life ONLY then you ought to pity us and that's one of the key ingredients in understanding the Christian life that so many people miss. If your focus isn't on the fact that this thing that we call Christianity isn't even really going to kick into gear until Christ returns then we've completely misunderstood this. If we don't set our hope and our anticipation on that so then we're really just spinning our wheels and playing around with a philosophy and we really haven't engaged in theology.

As a matter of fact there are a hundred lesser evils in our lives that will break out. There's a lot that gets out of whack real quickly when we don't have our hopes set on the blessed hope, the Bible calls



it, the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because it didn't happen last week and it didn't happen last month and it hadn't happened to me any other times we thought about it, it's easy for this to slip to the background and instead try and occupy ourselves with things that are happening on our schedules and our programming and in our church.

But, Christianity is really all about the appearing of Christ because with Christ will come his kingdom. Let's pick it up where we left off last week in Luke Chapter 17 and remember how important this is in our messed up, confusing, chaotic world that we call home, which is really no home at all until Christ arrives.

We'll look at four verses tonight, verses 22 through 25, but remember where we've been. We've been confused, at least at the initial reading of it in verses 20 and 21, when the Pharisees asked, "When's the kingdom of God going to come?" And his answer was, "Well, the kingdom of God is coming in ways you can't observe," and that was the most unsatisfying answer you could expect. Not only that it seems very unbiblical because everything about the Old Testament said you're going to observe the kingdom, it's going to change everything.

But he said, no, there's something going on. It's coming on in ways that you can't see.

People aren't going to say, "Look, here it is," verse 21 says, or "there," no. "Behold," look, that's what behold means, that's old fashioned Bible talk for look, look "the kingdom of God," it's right here, "it's in the midst of you."

As we try to understand last week and if you weren't here last week you certainly need to stream that sermon to get what we're dealing with there, which is this invisible phase of the kingdom that doesn't come with observable signs, at least not the way that they will immediately in these four verses that follow, verses 22 through 25.

Clearly there are visible signs. But it's a kind of phase where it really relates to the person. I need to get connected to a person. When's the kingdom going to come? Well, it's going to come and you're going to, look at verse 22, you're going to long for it, you're going to desire it, you're going to ache for it. You're going to feel so homesick that the king is not here, that the kingdom hasn't arrived. You're going to desire it and there are going to be those days, as a matter of fact, there will be many of them.

And for those people that he was talking to initially here, these disciples, it says in verse 22, he's focused now not on the Pharisees but on his own team, the home team. He says, yeah, you're not going to see it.

And they spent their whole lives not seeing it. Verse 22. "And he said to the disciples, 'The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days,'" now here he uses this phrase again that we've talked about so many times, "'the Son of Man,'" right out of Daniel Chapter 7. The one who would be the king of the kingdom. "And you won't see it." Oh, you're going to want it and you're not going to have it.

Verse 23, then people will try to proffer some kind of cheap imitation. They're going to say to you look, "There it is!" or "Look here!" No, "Don't follow them." Don't follow. Why? Because it comes with unobservable signs? No, verse 24, because it comes with visible signs. We're not talking about the invisible kingdom. Now we're talking about the literal, material kingdom. Just like "lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so the Son of Man will be," future tense, "in



his day." There's a day coming when the kingdom will arrive and it's nothing like the phase we talked about last week that is the invisible phase of the kingdom. There's a day coming and everyone's going to see it.

"But first he must suffer many things," verse 25, "and be rejected by this generation." Let's take this one verse at a time, starting in verse number 22, and just spend a little time seeing the normal mode for Christianity and that is this: number one, that you ought to expect to be homesick. That's just how the Christian life is going to be lived.

And if you've tried to somehow play with your theology or your definitions of Christianity where you're supposed to be happy and joyful and fulfilled and there's never this ache for home then you've got the wrong Christianity because real Christianity will get you to the place of saying, really, this world's not my home. This kingdom is not the kingdom that Christ promised, as a matter of fact, this kingdom, as he says in Second Corinthians Chapter 4 verse 4, is the kingdom of the enemy of God. He is the god of this world and I can't wait for him to be cast out. You're going to be homesick. And home, you may be home here on Earth, and one day the kingdom will be on this earth and he will call it home but the difference is the person and the person is coming back. You start looking for that in the New Testament and you start reading the New Testament with those glasses on, just looking for the theme of the return of Christ, you will see it everywhere and you'll see Christ and all the apostles saying, this is what it's all about, this is what it's all about. And in this world, all kinds of trouble, but take heart, the world is overcome, the enemy is going to be cast out, the kingdom is going to come.

So right now get used to feeling homesick. Let me just give you three quick reasons why you're going to feel homesick. Here's the first one. Turn in your Bibles, if you would, to Second Timothy Chapter 3. Second Timothy Chapter 3. And once you get there, jot this down, if you would, letter "A" if you want to put it that way, you're going to feel homesick in the Christian life and it will be an increasing homesickness, here's why, because, here comes, the world will get increasingly worse.

Anybody seeing that trend? Yeah. There are some, I would say, ridiculous eschatological views, that look at the future and try to read it as though things are going to get better before Christ returns. Now, I don't know how in the world they cook the books to make that add up but that's not working out very well. As a matter of fact, let me prove to you that that's not the forecast for this world, Second Timothy Chapter 3 verse 1, "But understand this, that in the last days," OK, that means we're nearing the time of the kingdom, the kingdom is going to arrive, Christ is going to come back, things are going to be a whole lot better than they are now. No. It says, "there will come times of difficulty."

Now here comes a list of 18 things. I don't even have the stomach to go through them all but let's start with the list.

"People will be lovers of self." Are you seeing any of that ramping up these days? "Nah, I don't see that." You know they said the average conversation, just 40 years ago, when a person would go and sit there and talk to someone else, that, and this should be sad, 60% of the time they would be speaking of themselves. Since the birth of social media, that's gone from 60%, the sociologist tells us, to 80%. All I want to do is talk about myself. The Bible says in the last times this is going to ramp up. People are going to "love themselves."

Or they're going to "love money." Has that gotten any worse? You know in 1969 they took college



freshman, they said, what are you doing here? What's the point of your education here in college? 42% said in 1969, "I want to be rich. I want to be financially well-off." You know what that stat is today? It's not, "I want to be a help to society. I want to have an honest job. I want to do something good for humanity." No. Now it's gone to 79%. Almost 80% of people now say that, "Why am I here? I'm here to work hard so I can be rich, make a lot of money."

"Proud." "Lovers of self," "lovers of money," "proud." Here's a stat, ladies don't laugh too loud. 50% of men on online dating profiles... You're ready to laugh now aren't you? 50% of them rank themselves in the top 1% of intelligence. Now, I'm not great at math but that doesn't work out to be a very accurate assessment of people. 50% of men think they are in the genius category, which is simply 1% of the population. Which means that 49% of them are wrong and I think probably 50% because the real geniuses probably are too humble to say anything about it. I don't know if they're smart enough to know they shouldn't say that.

"Arrogant and abusive." Do you think that's ramping up at all? "I don't know." Do you read any blogs or how about blog comments? Or how about just go to YouTube and read the comments. Just go to YouTube. Go to Twitter. Look at the trolls on Twitter. Just page down through that stuff. Or watch the news. Watch the news panels talk about what's going on in our world. Do you think we've gotten to the place of being arrogant and abusive? It is now on display as a virtue.

"Disobedient to parents." Do I need any stats on that one for you? Go volunteer at the local junior high school. Just spend some time getting to know today's youth.

"Ungrateful." They took the executives in our country in a survey, the top net-worth executives, I forget what the benchmark was, it worth over a million dollars in cash or whatever, and they asked them to figure out why they got to where they were. Now you think that would be the time to say I want to thank all these people, starting with my parents. 99% credited their hard work, 97% credited their brains. They went through the list. Do you know it didn't even make the list? Thanking anybody else. Ungrateful.

What's the next one here? "Unholy." Here's a stat that blew my mind. One out of 90 references to sex on TV, that aging medium of entertainment, in primetime, one out of 90, only one out of 90, depicted or referred to sex within marriage. Well think about that. The only context God says sex is appropriate in is marriage, the covenant commitment of marriage. One out of 90 is depicted that way in primetime television. And of that 1 out of 90, add up all of those in this particular research, less than 10% were presented as a positive. I mean, if you want to think about the unholiness of our generation, I could go on all night with stats that would do nothing but depress you. Then I'm afraid it will be archived, this sermon online, and every stat that I give you tonight will be completely ridiculous in about a year because it's only going to get worse. We're the most unholy generation.

"Heartless, unappeasable, slanderous." I did that much research and I said, I'm done, I'm not going to do anymore. The list goes on "without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." All these things in between here about all the problems and all the false religion, all the false teachers, now drop down to verse 13. Do you still have this passage open? "While evil men," which we've all described there with 18 characteristics from verse 2 to verse 4, "and impostures will go from bad..." But then they'll be all those social programs and reform programs, education, we'll put more money into it, that will all get better. No, they'll go from "bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

One of the reasons you're going to be increasingly homesick for the kingdom of God, the reason



you're going to long for just seeing one of the days of the Son of Man when he sets up his kingdom and he rules and the crooked ways are made straight and the rough places plain, is because this world is getting worse. And if we all live another 25 or 30 years, just go ahead in your brain and think about that, if Christ does not come back and set up his kingdom 30 years from now, let's just think through that list. "Lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous."

So where do you think we'll be? It's going from bad to worse.

You're going to crave the coming of the Son of Man because the world's getting worse. Number two, you're going to crave the coming of the Son of Man, this is letter "B" because the kingdom of God is going to be so good. It's going to be so good and we don't spend enough time talking about this. It will be SO good.

As a matter of fact, as though I had time, let's go to Daniel Chapter 2 real quick.

Daniel. You know the story, I hope. Let me put it into my words, paraphrase and summarize this story. The king of Babylon, think this through now, in the sixth century before Christ, has a dream, he has a vision of an idol, a giant idol. Idols are things people bow down and worship. It was made of all these materials. This giant idol had at the top of the head, a head of gold, had a torso of silver, had some hips of bronze, had legs of iron that went on and on and on, and then down at the bottom it had this composite of iron and clay. And he's like, "What does this mean?" He got this torturous dream, this bizarre dream, and Daniel, who's now a prisoner, conscripted into the leadership, the young kind of junior leadership of Babylon, these trainees. He is a budding prophet that God is speaking through and he is called in and he interprets this dream. And he says, that head of gold, that's the Babylonian kingdom that's now, running full speed, dominating the world. But you're going to go away, there's going to be another kingdom that comes after you.

And that Medo-Persian kingdom is going to be that torso of silver and then another kingdom is going to come in, the kingdom of Greece. It's going to be those hips and thighs, that section there, that's going to come and dominate the world. And then there's this thing, unlike any other. The iron and long legs. And that iron is going to be this Roman Empire as we look back on it now and see it. And it's going to be strong.

It's going to, now, move all the attention from the east to the west and it will be the basis for what we still study today as western civilization that dominates everything with the gadgets and computers and Levis and rock and roll. This western civilization, that was birthed out of Rome, continues on and it says, it's going to be so diversified, it'll be like toes down there, all kinds of different expressions of that and some will be strong and some will be weak and that's why it's iron and clay and all those things.

I forgot, there's one more. There's a big rock. A rock that is not cut out, it's not polished, it's not manufactured, it's not chiseled by the hands, it's not touched by humans. Here comes this rock, thrown out of heaven at the idol. And it crushes it. And that idol that's being crushed is crushed from the feet because in time that revived, Roman, western civilization that has grown out of this Roman empire that was in vogue when Christ came, well, this rock's going to come and smash everything.

Do you have Daniel 2 open? Look at how this is described in verse 42. "And the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and brittle." We still got that





going on now. Drop down to verse 44, "And the days of those kings," that run all these different expressions of this revived Roman western civilization, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed," unlike all the changing of the guard through time, without all this idolatry, this anti-God sentiment, "never going to be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all the kingdoms and bring an end to them," Daniel says in this interpretation, "and it shall stand forever."

"Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain with no human hands," this is something beyond humanity, "and it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold. A great God has made this known to the king," of Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar, "of what shall be after this. This dream is," here's what the Bible has been saying from the beginning, it is "certain, and its interpretation sure."

There is an impenetrable, powerful, authoritative kingdom that's described in this dream as a rock, as a boulder that's going to replace every kingdom.

I say it all the time from the platform, do I not? Revelation Chapter 11, "The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." Well, that just says the kingdom... Great, I'm glad you said that, turn to Daniel Chapter 7. Let's get this very phrase that we are now seeing throughout Luke 17, let's get it from Daniel 7. I quote it a million times just off the cuff. But let's look at it in context. Daniel Chapter 7, you're close to it. Look at verse 11. As we get into more detail from Chapter 2 to Chapter 7 about all these kings and about how they vie at the end of time for prominence and there's one that's super prominent and they're now described as horns and they're speaking with all this authority and their speaking against God.

Daniel 7:11. "I looked and then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking." So some leader here in this revived western civilization, it's boasting, it's taking control of the others. "And I looked also and the beast was killed, and its body was destroyed and given over to be burned." All these leaders are described as beasts or horns. "As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time." We see all that playing out in the book of Revelation. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man." There's the phrase Jesus keeps employing to describe himself.

He comes from heaven, he's not born in the natural way, he's born of a virgin, he's coming into the world but it's really not a worldly thing, this is a supernatural presentation. And he comes here, in this heavenly scene and he presents himself before the Ancient of Days. The Father is depicted here. And he was presented before him, so you have one that now is depicting these human leaders, he's now a human being in a human body, at least that's the vision here. And he comes before the invisible God enthroned in unapproachable light and to this one who stands here with the title of the Son of Man, verse 14, "there was to him given dominion and glory and a kingdom." There's our word.

What kind of kingdom? "That all peoples," How many? "all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; and his dominion is an everlasting dominion." OK. So the rock is the kingdom and here is the Son of Man, he's the king and every single authority in the world, every kingdom now, is destroyed and scattered.

And here comes something and it's from heaven, it's a heavenly kingdom, that comes and takes and supplants all earthly kingdoms and it resides here on Earth and it's not going to pass away and his



kingdom is one "that shall not be destroyed." This is a permanent, complete, forever kingdom.

Drop down to verse 19. Daniel is just reeling for that. "Then I desire to know the truth about the fourth beast which was different from all the rest." One of those beasts with all those horns and all that stuff, I had one different and is "exceedingly terrifying." This one person, it was bizarre, its teeth were like iron and claws like bronze and it devoured and broke into pieces and stamped what was left with its feet and, about verse 20, "ten horns that were on its head. And the other horn that came up and before which three fell, and the horn had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, that seemed greater than its companions" and that's all consistent throughout the Bible. There's one coming who will come out of this revived western civilization who will be the ultimate leader, he'll speak against God and he'll prevail. "As I looked, this horn made war with the saints" everything that was good was being attacked by this leadership structure and ultimately by this ultimate leader, he's against all that's good. The New Testament gives him another name. He's the anti-christ, made war.

And as John said, we've got many anti-Christ already out even though the ultimate one is isn't here. Fighting against the saints and have prevailed over them. That is until, that's a big word, verse 22, "Until the Ancient of Days came."

The Ancient of Days is going to come, yeah, he's going to come in the person of the Son of Man, "and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and that time came when the saints possessed the kingdom." Here it is, that eternal kingdom, that rock.

"Thus he said: As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth." That's that period that's described throughout the book of Revelation, "and trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the tin horns out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, then he shall put down the three kings." we've already had that briefly in this cryptic description of the horns up earlier. Verse 25, "He shall speak words against the Most High," that's what he does, "and he shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law." I guess we're going to see that clearly in the rearview mirror when it takes place. "And they shall be given into his hands for a time, times, and half a time," a key phrase in the book of Revelation. But, like that word "until" in verse 22, and I sure like this conjunction in verse 26, "the court," this heavenly court, "shall sit in judgment and his dominion," his authority, "it shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end," verse 27, "and the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." And guess who's at the front of that parade? The Son of Man.

"And his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom and all dominion shall serve and obey him." Now, I know that's a lot of stuff we just looked at but all of that to say, everything that's wrong with the world, everything that's anti-God in the world, everything that's against what's good in the world, everything that's against who's good in the world, is going to be replaced by the best one. And he's going to come with a kingdom and establish that kingdom and all that's wrong is going to be expelled and all that's right is going to be established and everything in that kingdom will be unthreatened by any kind of revolt or hostility. And he'll reign forever and ever, an everlasting kingdom and dominion shall serve him. If you grow up on that talk in the Old Testament you get to the place where you realize, "When is that going to happen?"

I know the Pharisees are the bad guys, we said that last week but they asked a good question,



"When's the kingdom going to be here?" And he says, you know, the kingdom, look, it's already started in a way you can't see. It's a person, it's the king, it's the Son of Man. And then he says, but, you know what, there's going to be a time when the Son of Man isn't here and you're going to long to see his days.

He says that to the disciples not the Pharisees because he knows the Pharisees are the ones who are going to reject him and make him suffer. But those disciples who put their trust in him and said I want a relationship with you, they're going to mourn that the kingdom hasn't arrived. They're going to crave one of the days of the Son of Man. I just wish he were here and I wish he'd make all things right. And you know if you're really a Christian here and not just a church goer, the third reason, letter "C" that you're going to crave just one of the days of the Son of Man. That's because God's kingdom is, and I got to say this in a supernatural way, it is in an ontological way, it is your real home and you know it and you feel it.

You're going to crave the coming of the Son of Man because God has done something in your life, it's called the miracle of regeneration, that rewires your internal passions and desires to where what you're really going to want is something you can't find in this world. It's not going to be drugs, it's not going to be sex, it's not going to be money, it's not going to be vacations. It's going to be something this world cannot provide. And you're going to start talking like they did in the Bible, Hebrews Chapter 11. You're going to say that you are a stranger and an exile on this earth. You're going to seek a homeland that's not here, to use the words of verse 15. You want to return? You could go. You could live in this world, you could make your home here but you don't want to. You are driven because you're a new man in Christ, to say, "I don't want this world to be my home."

And you're going to desire, I love this verse, one of my favorites in Hebrews, you're going to "desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one." Not that it's see through and not that it's going to be in heaven, it's going to come from heaven to earth like a big rock that's going to smash the kingdoms of this world.

And if you think that way, it says God is not ashamed to be called your God, for he has prepared a city for you.

Now if you don't think about that and bask in that and long for that regularly as Jesus taught you to, every day, praying "your kingdom come." It's the first thing on the request list of the Lord's Prayer. If you don't pray that, you need to get your brain in that more often.

And if you get there and then you say it makes me feel bad, then now you're on track. That's it! Is the Christian life supposed to feel bad? That part of it is. You're supposed to feel homesick.

In that same passage it said, Moses, speaking about Hebrews 11, "when he had grown up," he had every access to everything in Egypt, but "he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the fleeting or passing pleasures of sin."

"He considered the reproach of Christ," that's an anachronism I know, Christ hadn't come yet, but in his mind, I'll align myself with the king of the kingdom rather, "than all the wealth and treasure of Egypt, for he was looking forward to his reward. By faith he left Egypt." He wasn't afraid of the anger of the kings of the world, the Pharaoh, because "he endured seeing him, the king, who is invisible," at least right now for us.





If you don't long to see the banners with Christ's name on it, if you don't long to turn on your TV and instead of seeing all the junk in this geopolitical mess we live in, but seeing the face of Christ giving a news conference, who does everything right, has all power and no one in his kingdom rebels, then you don't have your heart in the right place. You should groan and moan.

The Old Testament, it said, they went through the cities and the towns of Israel and they looked for people who groaned.

And they said those are the godly ones. Some of you think godliness is never groaning. You should expect to be homesick.

Jesus said to the disciples, the days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man but you will not see it. Verse 23 Luke 17, it's printed on your worksheet, they will say to you, "Look there" or "Look here." Jesus said don't go out and follow them. There are a lot of cheap substitutes out there. But you need to remain biblically undistracted, number two on your outline. You've got to stay biblically undistracted. Undistracted.

Our military friends have two phrases, antithetical phrases, for when they find themselves in battle. One is a pejorative term for the distracted, for the deserters and the other one is for the faithful, undistracted, resolved. The one phrase is, there are those out there who are weak, they're not the people we want to be. They, here's the phrase, "they cut and run." But there are others who are faithful to the cause and they, here's the phrase going back a couple hundred year, "they stay the course." They know what they're there for. And they're going to see this to the end if it cost them everything. You've got a choice as a Christian, you can cut and run, or you can be like Moses, who said, I'm going to stay the course. I know I could have the passing pleasures of sin this week.

Tonight you can go out and experience all the junk that Jesus hates and died to redeem you from. You could do that. If you want to go back, you can go back to the world. Go! You're like a dog returning to its vomit. You could live that way.

Or you could say, no, I'd rather stand and take the reproach of Christ. You got a decision to make, cut and run or stay the course. If you're going to stay the course then I guess you need to know what the course is. The course is that you listen to what Christ says. Here's one of the things he says in this passage, don't go out and follow them. Anything less than what he said, don't do it. That means, let me put it this way, you need to be discerningly biblical. You stick to the script. What does the Bible say? What did Jesus say we should be living for? It's all about the scripture. You know that passage I read for you in Second Timothy Chapter 3, we looked at it. Understand this, last days, terrible times, people are going to be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, all that. Do you know what the next thing is?

There are going to be people in this world, they're going to have a form of godliness but they're going to deny its power. In other words, they're going to offer you something that looks religious like, "here's the kingdom, take this. You want to be godly? Here's a religion that fits in this world."

Like Jannes and Jambres. He names those two magicians in Egypt who said, "You got some, you know, relationship to some god of this world. We got that too. We got our version of that." And then he starts talking about false teachers. There will be teachers everywhere, false teachers, deceiving other people.

But here's what he says, in the middle of that passage, he says, "You, however, you followed my



teaching. You've followed my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love," hey Timothy, "my steadfastness." You've even been willing to follow in my "persecutions and my sufferings and everything that happened to me when I traveled to Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra — which persecutions I endured there." You follow that example.

"Yet the Lord rescued me from those."

"Indeed, all those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, they will be persecuted, while evil people and impostures go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you've learned." Stay the course. "And what you firmly believe, knowing from whom you've learned it." And it's not for me, this is God's agenda. He's left you a note.

Get to the island in the kitchen, read the note and whatever it says, you do it.

"You know how from childhood you've been acquainted with the sacred writings. They're able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ because all scripture is breathed out by God and it is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training and righteousness." Why? "That the man of God may be complete, equipped and ready for every good work."

You've got to be biblically literate to start with and then you have to be diligent, you have to be consistent, you have to be discerning. Just because they wear a Jesus T-shirt does not mean they're faithful to God's Word. That whole passage is about a world that's in moral decline and then it says, be careful, there is a religious component just like there was in Egypt. Don't follow it. And there are a lot of people that will say to you, "oh, you want to be a Christian? I got a version of Christianity that's going to fit much better here in this world."

I need to reject it. As Jesus says, don't go out, don't follow them, be discerningly biblical. That's at the heart of what it means to stay the course, to remain biblically undistracted. And then we've learned so much in Luke already. You can just jot it down, we don't need to turn to turn anywhere for this, but Luke 12, he told that parable, one of many we've studied so far, where he says, listen I'm going to go away, you stay here, you though "stay dressed and ready for action and you keep your lamps burning. Be like the men who were waiting for their master to come home from a wedding feast, so that you may open the door at once when he comes and knocks." Be ready. Lamps burning, what's that? Now, I don't want to stretch this too far but clearly Jesus had a lot to say about our lives being a lamp. I can tell you this, if you're going to stay the biblical course, not only do you need to be discerningly biblical, you need to be diligently righteous, you need to let your light shine before men, you need to be a godly person. "Well... I'm saved by grace." I understand that. We're not talking about earning your salvation, we're talking about you being faithful to what's on the note on the island in the kitchen while Christ is in heaven receiving a kingdom before he comes back to give it to us.

You need to be diligent, circumspect. I need to be righteously pursuing Christ. Why? Because this world is not our home, it's passing away. Second Peter Chapter 3 verse 10 says, the earth and all of its stuff is going to be burned up. "Since these things are so thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in the lives of," do you know the passage, "holiness and godliness." How's that going this week? Maybe one of the reasons is you don't have your eye on the prize. You don't know where we're going.

You're trying to fit into the world without a lot of hassle. You don't want to be a problem here, so you just kind of go with the flow. Or you can say, no, I'm not going to be conformed to this world.



When it comes to what I'm here for, it is to live for Christ and my hope is fixed on the grace that's going to be brought to me when Christ comes back. If I have that desire, as First John Chapter 3 says, then I'm going to purify myself as he is pure.

Who are you waiting for? The king of righteousness? Then you're going to start to be righteous, that's going to be part of your agenda.

You want to stay the course. Well you don't follow all this stuff that's less than. You don't take some cheap imitation of religion or the kingdom but when it comes to your life, certainly, you need to be finding out what's pleasing to the Lord. I love that passage in Ephesians 5 where it says "Walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true, and try to discern what's pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness." You want to be ready for Christ's return. He's coming back. You need to live a righteous life, diligently righteous. And then, of course, and we dealt with this last week but just for completeness jot it down, we need to be daringly evangelistic, you need to be boldly evangelistic. When he said, "I'm going." And they said, "Is the kingdom now?" He said, "Not for you to know the times or the season but you got a job to do. Be my witnesses," Acts Chapter 1, "in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth." You've got a job to do. As it says in the passage I just read in Second Peter Chapter 3, I'm going away, I'm not coming back right away. I'm not slow on my promises, I'm patient because I want more people to come to repentance.

That's my desire. We've got a job to do.

When Jesus said that in Acts Chapter 1 verses 6 through 8, I'm going, it's not for you to know when the kingdom is coming, you just do the work of being an evangelist. Three chapters later you've got Peter preaching. Look at the motivation when he's calling people to repent. Just listen to this passage. Acts Chapter 3 verses 18 through 21.

"But what God foretold," he told the people, "by the mouth of all the prophets, that Christ would suffer it's been fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn back, so that your sins can be blotted out." Why? We don't preach this way very often but we should. "So that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that he may send the Christ that's appointed for us. Whom heaven must receive until the time for the restoring of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets long ago." Now that's something that would kind of freak out your next evangelistic prospect that you have.

"Hey, you need to get saved today." Why? "Because I can't wait for the kingdom. And if you just get saved, maybe you are the last person to get saved and then the times of refreshing can come. I can't wait. I'm homesick." Got to be biblically discerning.

You need to be thoughtful in your righteousness, diligent and circumspect about that and you have to be bold about your evangelism.

Because as it says in verse 24, the coming of the second phase of the kingdom, the visible form of the kingdom, is going to come like lightning.

Luke 17:24 says it is going to flash and light up the whole sky. No one is going to be saying, "It's invisible, I don't see it." Everyone's going to see it. As I read last week, Isaiah 40, the Lord is going to be revealed, "the glory of God is going to be shown and all flesh will see it together."



Christ is coming back. So will the Son of Man be in his day. That day, by the way, is a series of events as is constantly the case. We even have in the plural and singular here.

It's like saying the day we go to Disney World in Florida. I can tell my kids that, we don't snap our fingers and get there, we have a series of events to get there and when it comes to the series of events, if you want to know more about them, you can go on the back of the worksheet, you can get a book, you can listen to some of my teaching on that. You can see what we see in scripture regarding what's next on God's timetable. But for you and I, it's the appearing of Christ to meet the Lord in the air and that could happen like lightning at any time. What's the only thing that has got to happen? Verse 25. "But first he must suffer many things and to be rejected by this generation." Has that happened yet?

Check. Great. So what's left? Nothing. So what does that mean? That means any time. The imminent return of Christ. Number three, this is what that means, you ought to assume Christ returns today. That should be your assumption. Coming back today.

Why? Because the only thing that has to happen before he comes to catch his church up in the air is the suffering many things and being rejected by that generation and that's already happened. Check that box. Now what's left? The lightning strike.

I remember in Clanton, Alabama, my mom took me to Maple Springs Baptist church cemetery. What a fun outing that was. "Let me show you all your relatives out here son, buried in the church cemetery."

Well I kind of got into it, I got to say.

I was just a kid but I thought, oh, wow, that's the same last name, I saw all my mom's relatives, all my relatives, the headstones, they head markers. And as I'm watching all this I knew it was overcast but I really didn't pay attention to the huge storm clouds that were coming in over there. It's one of these country churches where the big tall trees of Alabama were all around and just cut out was this big square where all the headstones were. Now I may have heard, I don't remember, some distant rumbling of thunder on the horizon. But my parents started to feel the drizzle of the rain come and they said, "Come on. Let's go. We're getting in the car."

They were old and smart enough to not want to get wet in the rain. I was in the middle of just getting into this. "This is cool. Here's another one. Back to 1854. This is me. I'll be there in a minute." I've never had a lightning strike so close. I don't think anybody has and survived. This lightning strike came out of nowhere. I've never heard a lightning strike like this. The trees that surround it, I was like in this pit of trees, it got hit right where I was standing. I mean I was just feet from where this lightning hit. I ran to the car really, really fast because, you know, that stuff comes with no warning. It strikes out of nowhere. And it lit up that gray afternoon, the drizzly afternoon. That lit that whole thing up. I thought I'd gone blind.

The Bible says one day, as you go about your business, obeying or disobeying your parents, he's going to come out of nowhere. And the only thing that was on his calendar was for him to come and suffer and be rejected. And then he gave us an assignment and apparently that assignment going to be done at some point, when we finally have some urgent and earnest evangelists say, "Would you hurry up and repent of your sins so we can get out of here?"

So that the times of refreshing can come and Christ can come back. And that last person is going to



bow his head and say, "God, I'm a sinner, I repent." And then it's going to be like lightning. Maybe it's a convert in China, maybe a convert in Jordan, maybe some convert in Brazil, maybe they'll be in Aliso Viejo. And someone's going to repent and, like a strike of lightning, we're going to see Christ.

And it's going to be over. You ought to assume that's going to happen today.

You know, when my wife says, "I'm coming back" and I love that, we're pretty good about telling each other when we're going to come home.

I know I need the warning. And she comes back from one of these trips and she's got those lists out there. When I get the text that she's almost home I RUN to the kitchen.

Because I start going, did I do that, did I do that, is this done, as it were? It's amazing if you lived like Christ was coming back today, I bet you'd be discerningly biblical in your life. You'd run to the word and say am I doing this right?

Diligently righteous.

Remember when the junior high teacher said, "I've got to go down to the office. You kids, now, just read from page 25." Chaos! At least in the school I went to. Chaos. Like, what are you thinking? Right? You leave and it's the jungle of junior highers. Airplanes, spit wads, rubber bands, people get up and start playing catch, literally, in the room with baseballs and gloves. It was chaos.

But if I knew that teacher was about to walk through that door... And I had a bit of a conscience as a seventh grader and I remember sometimes thinking I can mess around with everyone else or I'd looked at that door jam and I think one day that door is just going to swing open.

I bet you'd be diligently righteous if you thought he's coming back today.

As a matter of fact, that's the way James puts it, he says even down to the words you say about each other, he says the judge is standing at the door. He could throw that door open. As it says elsewhere, do you want to be ashamed and shrink back when he appears? Or do you want to be ready as Jesus says in multiple parables, be ready. May you be found busy about the right things when he comes. See, if you have an imminent expectation of the return of Christ you're going to be discerningly biblical, you're going to be diligently righteous.

And I'll bet, you'd be daringly evangelistic if you knew Christ is coming back. We're going to get into Noah next time we're together but you can imagine Noah. He was certainly an accurate weather forecaster. He just didn't have the timing. He knew nothing of the timing, apparently. He had work to do. He didn't know when the last animal was going to go up that ramp. Imagine if you knew the severity of the storm, we just didn't know when it was coming. Or let's just say, perhaps you did know. I'll bet your passion and your daring would ramp up if you knew it's Tuesday. And now it's Sunday. It's Tuesday when the flood is going to break out, but now it's Monday. It's Tuesday when the flood is going to break out, but now it's Tuesday morning. How's your passion and your boldness going to be in evangelism?

If you assume Christ is going to return today you'll be discerningly biblical, diligently righteous and daringly evangelistic. You'll be telling your friends, as the writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 4, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. There remains a rest to enter into. Enter it!





People who hear the good news and disobey, they don't enter it, but enter it if you hear his voice. Don't harden your heart.

I said it last week but Christianity is a forward looking religion and you need to be looking forward to the return of Christ. You'll be homesick between now and then but you've got to stick to what God told us to. Stay the course.

I'm going to ask the ushers to come down. It would be a good thing for us to celebrate the Lord's Supper as we wrap this sermon up. In part because Jesus was very forward looking when he passed out those elements and he said, "Eat this bread, drink this cup." When he said those things, much like a lot of his teaching, he came back to that hopeful expectation of the return Christ. As the ushers come down and pass these, if you're a Christian I want you to take those elements and just hang on to that little piece of bread and that little cup. We'll take them together in a minute. If you're not a Christian, just chill out for a little bit. We'll be done in a minute. But when he took that cup and he took that bread, he said something very interesting that many of us just skim right over.

He says in Matthew 26:29, he says it in the parallel passage in Luke as well, he says, "I tell you I will not drink this fruit of the vine again until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

I don't know when it's going to be and I got no insight other than what the Bible says, beyond the fact that I know one of the first things we're going to be doing is celebrating the Lord's Supper when the kingdom gets inaugurated.

And Jesus says, he hasn't done it since the night before he was rejected, betrayed and crucified. There should be in your mind, not only as Paul said to the Corinthians, a proclamation of the Lord's death and we think about the blood and the body of Christ, that's what saves us. God's transaction on that cross saves me. But Jesus, when he did it, he said, I'm not going to do this until I do it when the kingdom rolls in.

Certainly that's a motivation for us to be thinking about the kingdom when you take this.

Christ is coming back. One of the first things we're going to do with Christ is we're going to bow our head, we're going to take that cup, we're going to take that bread and we're going to take that together. And everyone that's there in the kingdom will know exactly what that's about. The body and blood of Christ. And Christ will in great joy welcome us into the kingdom by celebrating the Lord's Supper. You know what this is about. Spend some time if you would. If there's anything to stand between you and God. Maybe it's some of the things we talked about, you haven't been very discerningly biblical, maybe you haven't been righteous in this area or that because you think it's all about Grace and so it doesn't really matter. Or maybe you haven't shared your faith in years, I don't know, but it's time for you to get right with God by telling him you're sorry about all those things. "If you confess your sins he is faithful and righteous to forgive your sins, to cleanse you from all unrighteousness." You have that transaction with God. I'll come back out in just about two or three minutes and we'll take these elements together. But right now, you silently, between you and God, just spend some time talking about where you stand with him.

PAUSE.

Well, it's very clear that God loves us so much that he would take this messed up world and take all the human sin, replace it with a perfect kingdom. He said he went away to prepare a place, he's



going to come again and that place that he's going to bring, that kingdom that he's received, he's going to come back and establish it here.

But that wouldn't be something you would ever qualify for were it not for the fact that Christ loved you so much.

He was willing to be treated before his Father like he was the sinner that you and I are. Every sin, every failure, every transgression, every rebellious thing we've done, every cross word we've said, every lustful thought we've had, everything we've done that has been an offense to a holy God, Christ said I love you so much I'm willing to lay down my life for you and that means I'll be treated on that cross as though I were you. And we'll let God punish me so that you can be qualified for the kingdom.

That's something that should grip us every time we think about the Lord's Supper because it cost him his life. "The wages of sin is death." He suffered death so that we wouldn't have to suffer the second death, which he suffered in his first death, the combo of the biological death and the spiritual death of having his Father pour out his anger on him. So if you know what it is to put your trust in Christ and you have the hope of forgiveness that comes not by you doing penance or anything good for God, but by you trusting completely in his finished work, then I hope you would engage in this activity now with a hopeful anticipation of the coming kingdom.

And I hope, as I tried to teach last week, that you would say, the king is coming and today that you would say and it could be today. As a matter of fact, I'm going to live as though it were today. It doesn't mean we are going to be irresponsible, it doesn't mean we're going to sell our stuff and put a bed sheet on and go up to the highest mountain. It means we're going to be, as Jesus said, busy about the work God's called us to do. So I hope that we can go about our work tonight the way God would have us do it and tomorrow and Monday and the entire week, but every day anticipating his return because we might not make it to next week.

Our hope is that we're going to meet the Lord in the air one day. That's his promise.

And with that great expectation and with the gratification of being forgiven because of the body and blood of Christ, let us together eat this bread and drink this cup.

Stand with me as I pray for us and then we'll sing a quick chorus, but let me pray. God, please, recalibrate our thinking about your return. Give us the hope of your return. A hope that's not a cross-your-fingers hope because that's certainly not Biblical hope but the hope that says you promised.

And even as Daniel put it to King Nebuchadnezzar, the interpretation is sure. This is what you will do. The kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his king, of his Christ, the one who will be king for us, the Son of Man and he will reign forever and ever. Let that grip our thinking, let it fuel our imagination, let it focus our attention this week as we go about our work for you.

In Jesus name. Amen.