



The Next World Order Looking Forward without Giving Up Pastor Mike Fabarez

It is good to see you. As I know on Sunday, you, you know, you get ready for church. You got that nice shirt on, combed your hair. You're looking good. As my first grade teacher used to say, you're all in your places with bright, shining faces. Remember that? But behind all that nice, shiny, Orange County Christian exterior, I'll bet there's a fair share of frustration in your life.

I would think, I'm just guessing now, that your life, if it's like mine, has plenty of pain mixed into the whole thing. Just plenty of injustice, a lot of inequity, a lot of just plain old wrong. Even though we're reading the right book, you know, we're worshipping the right God, we're following the right Lord, we're maintaining the right message, I mean, there's just a lot of pain. And you know, sometimes we're tempted, when we're honest, we're tempted to look at God and say, God, what's the deal? You know? And we are doing what we're supposed to do on this end. At least we're trying. I mean, we're clear about the God that we serve, and we're focused on your Son, and we're trusting you, and things aren't going perfectly down here.

I think we as Christians, we have a little problem in how we present all that God is doing, and there is a reason for it. I mean, clearly, if you open your New Testament, you look through the Bible, you find out that the reason things are still a little messed up down here—on some days really messed up down here—is because God is not done yet. Have you gathered that from the pages of Scripture? There's more to come. And sometimes we like to think that everything that God is going to do, he's done now. And that's just not the case.

As a matter of fact, we're living in a place where God hasn't completed. He may have initiated his work, but he hasn't fully inaugurated his work. And that's an important distinction to make, especially because sometimes we think, you know, we as Christians, we toss around that God has done the work. As a matter of fact, Christmas is a good example, the first coming of Christ. We pass around our Christmas cards, and we quote passages, and we listen to Handel's *Messiah* being sung in Isaiah 40, where it says all the mountains are, you know, they're made low, and all the valleys are raised up, and the crooked is made straight, and all the rough places are made plain or smooth. And we, you know, say, yay, it's great, Christ has done the work. And then we look at the reality of things, and we think, well, that's not how it's working out. I mean, frankly, you're tempted to say, if Christ came to fix everything, he didn't do a very good job, because it's not fixed in my world. How about yours?

Yeah, Christ has done a lot. As a matter of fact, he's done what's most important. But what's with all of this that we have to deal with on a day-to-day basis? And some of it is shocking. Some of it is so painful, we think, what in the world? How can you let that happen?

In chapter 1 of Hebrews, we've been studying at length here now for several weeks, the lordship of Christ, clearly presented as the King of kings, the one in charge, the sovereign one. Christ has earned the right to reign and to rule, and he has all the credentials that are needed. Christ is in charge. Then we hit chapter 2, and we saw for four verses that we'd better listen then to what he says. I mean, he's far more authoritative than any angel. He's far more powerful. He's far more knowledgeable. He's got all the credentials. And if he is powerful, you'd better not disregard his word. And so we paid attention to that in our series the last three weeks.

Then he gets back to the theme, verse number 5. And basically what he does here is remind us for a few verses, verses 5 through 9, that he hasn't fully inaugurated his plan yet. We're still in the middle of it. And that's why things on this earth are going to be a little messed up. And if it hurts in your marriage, if it hurts in your life, if it hurts at the office, there's good reason for that, but just hang tough because God is going to work all this out.

Take a look at verse number 5 as he gets back to the comparison of Christ and angels. And he says, "It's not to angels that he has subjected"—now here's a key indicator—"the world to come." But, you know, he has the power. I mean, that's what we've been studying for the whole first chapter. This world to come, by the way, is about what we've been speaking, he says. I mean, that's the whole point of the first chapter. "But there is a place where someone has testified," which, by the way, is not because the writer of Hebrews forgot where this passage came from. Interesting study through the book of Hebrews, you'll find he never quotes the sources of the text, and it's not because he doesn't know where they come from. He's really wanting to make it clear this isn't Isaiah, this isn't David, this isn't whatever. This is God's word. And he says, you know, "There is a place where it has been said, and someone has testified," and he quotes now Psalm 8. He quotes verses 4, 5, and 6, and he says, "What is man that you're mindful of him? And the son of man that you care for him? You've made him a little lower than the angels, and you've crowned him with glory and honor, and you've put everything under his feet."

In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Now, what's important is defining these pronouns. Because if you know anything about Psalm 8, it's about the fact that David is standing back, looking up at the stars and all the planets, saying it's an amazing thing that God would take interest in man. It's an amazing thing that he's stooped to really crown us with glory and honor and put us in charge of things like Genesis 1 says, that we're ruling over the planet in a certain sense. And it's just amazing that God would do that.

But here all of a sudden the writer of Hebrews applies this to Christ. And he says, "In putting everything under him"—now that's not us, that's Christ, because I know it in the next phrase—"God has left nothing that is not subject to him." Now he's left a lot of things that aren't subject to me and you. Am I right about that? But nothing that's not subject to him. "Yet at present"—there's another indicator, there's something better yet to come—"we do not see everything subject to him." Just watch the news tonight, and you'll get a sense of that. "But we do see Jesus," verse number 9, "who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor." He is now crowned with glory and honor. Why? "Because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone."

Now, what's interesting about a passage like this is that there's a lot that tells us about the hope that we have in the future. But before we get to really sensing what that is, I wouldn't be a good expositor if I didn't try to at least untangle a bit of this quotation, why he quoted it, and how this all fits.

So it's a chart night. You like chart nights, don't you? Did you get your worksheet out yet? I hope you did. At the bottom, not only do we have the text there just listed the way it is in your Bibles, but at the bottom we have a little chart. If this feels a little bit too much like a Thursday night, then whatever. But you'll see something that looks kind of like that. And I know in the back, you might not be able to read that. But you got it there on your sheet. So take a look at that on your sheet, and you say, I can't read that either. Okay. Well, just listen then.

Three columns. And what you need to know is our text starts down here, right? Verse number 5. I put these out of order, and I'll show you why. Here is the quotation of Psalm 8. But the reason he chooses to quote Psalm 8, if you'll follow me here, is because he starts to talk about the fact that if Jesus is Lord—this first chapter we've learned about, minus the four-verse warning in chapter 2—he's saying, you know what? Christ is in charge, but you know what? It's not quite here yet. The world to come is the thing we're speaking about. And when he hits that theme, it reminds him here, by God's Spirit's inspiration, you know what? There is a passage that speaks about everything being put under his feet.

Now again, the concern is that this is a passage about people. There's no getting around that. Go home tonight, take a look at Psalm 8 eighteen different ways, and it's about people. That's the initial application of the text. But he says, you know, Psalm 8, that whole discussion about putting everything under his feet—mankind, that is—really applies in the perfect sense as we think about Christ. Because in Christ, nothing is left outside of his purview of leadership. Everything is put under him, and God left nothing that is not subject to him. So this is the theme that draws the whole quotation of Psalm 8 into the text. And he then begins to apply this to Christ, okay?

Now the focus—oh, by the way, why does he say this in Psalm 8? I quoted it just briefly a second ago. Genesis chapter 1:28, God says he makes men and women in his own image, male and female, he made them in his own image, it says in verse 28, and then he commissioned them to lead, to rule, to subdue the earth and to be in charge of it. So that's the sense here, and David is saying as he looks up at the stars, it's amazing that we've been given such authority. Now, it doesn't even come close to the authority of angels, and it has no comparison to the authority of Christ, but that's the original context of this phrase, okay?

Now, in this context, what we have here is a clear focus on him, on Christ. Now, what I want you to do is to fill in the aspects of Christ's ministry. Here is the focus of the passage: the future reigning Christ. Christ will one day—look at these words again—“in the world to come,” about which he's really concerned about in our passage, and the world that's not yet present. I mean, we don't see it now, but we will one day. It's future, the future reigning of Christ.

Which, if you look across the page at Hebrews chapter 1, I mean, he said some pretty grandiose things about the leadership of Christ, which we have to say, well, it's not yet present. Take a look at that, Hebrews chapter 1, across the page. Hebrews chapter 1, verse number 8. He says, “But about the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God’”—remember that when we studied that a few weeks back? It's been a couple months now, I guess—“‘Your throne, O God,’ it's amazing that here the Father testifies about the Son and calls him Elohim, God, ‘will last forever and ever. And righteousness will be the scepter’”—that little gold thing he holds—“‘will be the scepter of your kingdom. You do everything right. You're going to make sure that right is done. You've loved righteousness. You've hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God’”—interesting, he's speaking about God, but “God, your God’”—“has set you above your companions by anointing you.” This is all about placing him as the great Messiah, the King Christ, “with the oil of joy.”

Now that picture is a picture that speaks of a future time, obviously, where Christ will rule and reign. He brings that theme back up, and he says, I know in your lives now, guys, everything isn't that way. I know in the 11 o'clock news, it's not the way things look. I know in your interpersonal relationships, that's not the way it is. But one day it will be that way.

As a matter of fact, when we studied this passage, I turned you to Revelation chapter 11. And since you brought your Bibles, why don't we look at it again? Revelation chapter 11. This is a Bible study, right? Let's take a look at this text. Hebrews chapter—I'm sorry—Revelation chapter 11. It's right before your concordance. It's easy to find. Come on, that was kind of funny, I thought.

Revelation chapter 11. Remember, there's all these sets of sevens in the book of Revelation. Remember that, right? You've got seven trumpets, seven seals, seven bowls. When you get to the seventh, they often go back and go to the beginning and kind of unfold this crescendo into the seventh again. And so whenever we hit the seventh, we should have some statement of finality. And sure enough, in the seventh trumpet, that's what we have. I know this is a cryptic book, but I mean, here is the seventh trumpet, verse 15. "The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said, 'The kingdom of the world'"—which was started there in Genesis chapter 1—"has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. And he will reign forever and ever."

And when they heard that, the twenty-four elders who were seated on their thrones before God, they fell on their faces and they worshiped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the one who is and who was, because you've taken your great power"—now notice this, a time element here—"and you've begun to reign." You've done it now. "And the nations were angry" and blah, blah, blah, blah. But the bottom line is, you're starting to reign now. You've taken your power and you're putting it to work. And you're actually doing it. "And the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." That's future, see? That's when things all get straightened out.

Okay, now, this is where we start at verse number 5. He then quotes Psalm 8, which is all listed for us here. He then adds this commentary in verse 8: "In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him." And then he moves up to the top of the passage. That's why we needed a chart, right? I'm a bit of a visual learner, but you're tracking with me, right? No? Okay. Two of you are. Three. Three, four. All right. So let's move up to the top, okay?

He then starts to comment, verse number 9. Notice verse 8 follows verse 9—verse 9, rather, follows verse 8. And he begins to comment on this first part here. He says, "But we see Jesus." And the reason this is a good choice, another good choice to apply to Christ, is because of the use of this phrase "son of man." And I jotted down this reference for you, put it up on the screen. You might want to jot it down: Daniel 7:13 and 14.

Now the phrase "son of man" in the Old Testament is used quite a bit, and it's usually used to describe someone like Ezekiel, the prophet, who is called by God the son of man. And to be the son of man is like saying the puppy of the dog or the kitten of the cat. The son of man just means you're a person, and it really puts you in your place. When God says, hey, son of man, right, that you're just an offspring of men, you're nothing more than that.

But then there's this interesting passage in Daniel chapter 7. Why don't we turn to that one? Turn to Psalms, the Psalter, and turn right, which to you is this way. Turn right. Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Ezekiel, Daniel. I'm sorry, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel. There we go. Daniel chapter 7. Is that what I said? Okay. I'm catching up to you. I'm finding it. Got one of those Bibles that left Daniel out. No, here it is. All right. Daniel chapter 7.

Another reason, I think, he quoted the whole text. Why? Because he wanted this phrase in there. “Son of man,” by the way, in the New Testament, you know, Jesus loved it all the time and he loved to apply it to himself. And it referred to the fact that he was incarnate. Where did that connection come from? Take a look at this, Daniel chapter 7. Look at verse number, what, 13? “In my vision,” this is Daniel speaking now, “I looked, and there before me was one like a”—here it comes—“son of man.” Okay? In other words, we’re seeing all these big, majestic, angelic, supernatural things, and then it looks like somebody who’s a human being. And he’s “coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days,” this appellation, this title for God, eternal God, God the Father, “and he was led into his presence.” So now we have someone that looks like a human being led into this entity in this unapproachable light.

Now look what happens, verse 14. “And he was given”—son of man, that is—“authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language”—now notice this—“worshiped him.” Now that isn’t a good thing if we’re not talking about God here. You notice in the Bible you’re supposed to worship God? Worship anybody else, you get in trouble for it in the Bible. Here, the Son of Man is being directed by the Ancient of Days to receive worship. And look at the last phrase. “His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

Who does that sound like? Jesus. If you’re ever confused, Sunday school answer is generally right. Eighty percent of the time, just say Jesus, okay? Who does that sound like? Jesus. That sounds like Jesus to me. And you know why you think it sounds like Jesus? Because that’s exactly the phraseology that is used from the first announcement of Gabriel telling Mary that this baby’s going to be born all the way through the end of the book of Revelation. And that is, Jesus is going to reign and rule over a kingdom. And we just read in the book of Revelation, it hadn’t quite started yet. It’s been initiated. It hasn’t been fully inaugurated. And that’s an important distinction to make. But his title is in this passage, and he takes it on in the Gospels, the Son of Man.

So we have a good correlation here, and he makes the connection. What do we call this? Before Christ comes, this, what I like to call the pre-incarnate Christ. As a matter of fact, if you’ve been around for a while with my teaching, you understand the best way to describe this is with Mexican food analogies. Pre-incarnate. You won’t find that in your spell check, but that’s it. Pre-incarnate. Carn-e. Right? What does it mean, guys? Jesus is not the right answer at this point. It means meat. Oh. Carn-e. Carne asada. There’s just so many places we can go with that, but don’t get me started. Just makes me salivate.

Pre-incarnate Christ. This is before he put on meat, flesh. Pre-incarnate. We see him here approaching the Ancient of Days in the book of Daniel. This is Jesus, the Hellenized word for Joshua. That’s his name. Jesus, the son of the carpenter from Nazareth. You know who we’re talking about here. And look across the page again in Hebrews chapter 1. If you go back to Hebrews 2, you look across the page and you see these statements like in verse number 3 that talks about him being “the radiance of God’s glory, the exact representation of his nature.” Remember those verses? I mean, this is a majestic person who, as he said in his earthly ministry, “I existed in all my glory with the Father before I ever came down to this place to walk your dusty streets. I had all the glory of heaven and all the angels worshiped me.”

Clearly, the Son of Man, the Daniel 7, the Jesus, the pre-incarnate Christ, okay? Then he says this. He quotes Psalm 8, and the next phrase in Psalm 8, which is verse number 5, I believe, “You made

him a little lower than angels,” which in our text is verse number 7. And he says in verse number 9, this Jesus, “who was made a little lower than angels.”

Now again, if I’m in Psalm 8, that’s a promotion for me, because I’m sitting there going, man, I’m just a dust clod here. I’m just a little tiny speck on the planet. I’m looking up at the stars and the planets going, wow, is it amazing that the eternal, transcendent God would take interest in me? Wow, that’s amazing. That’s an amazing thing. As a matter of fact, it’s amazing that I am made a little lower than those angelic beings. It’s an amazing thing. But in the case of Christ, that is not a promotion, is it? No, that’s not a promotion. This is the transcendent one who has free access to the Ancient of Days, who all men are supposed to worship from every tribe, language, and nation. Now, this is not a promotion for him. As a matter of fact, this is the most humiliating thing for deity to do. We call it the incarnation, which means he put on flesh. He put on meat. He walked among us, which is exactly, by the way, what Hebrews 1:6 speaks of.

As a matter of fact, let’s take a peek at that. Hebrews chapter 1. And again, “when God”—this is Hebrews 1:6—“brings his firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all the angels worship him.’” I mean, he is bringing his one and only—firstborn, that’s what it means—into the world. And this is the one who has all the future leadership of the universe that is going to be laid before him. The government will rest on his shoulders, and he brings him into the world. It is a good cross-reference, by the way, that whole passage in Philippians 2. He humiliates himself. He puts on humanity. He takes the form of a bondservant, and he’s found in appearance as a man. Remember that text? I mean, that’s Christmas. And for the Son of God, that’s a—the Son of Man, the Son of God—that’s a humiliating thing. It’s a step down. Now, again, in the original context, boy, that’s a step up for us. For him, that’s the incarnation.

Okay, then the text says, as David muses on the universe, he says, wow, we’ve been crowned with glory and honor. You’ve crowned him, man, mankind, with glory and honor. It’s amazing that we stand upright, we think straight, we reason, we make decisions, we have leadership, we rule over things on this earth. It’s an amazing thing, the blessing and grace of God that’s been bestowed on mankind.

Well, he defines the phrase in the bottom of verse 9 by saying now Christ Jesus was crowned with glory and honor not because he was created as a human being—that was a step down. The reason he is crowned with glory and honor is because “he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” The amazing thing about Christ was that he humbled himself, again to quote Philippians 2, even to the point of death, even death on the cross, and because of that, God highly exalted him and bestowed on him a name which is above every name. Remember the text? The name of Jesus, at which every knee is going to bow and every tongue is going to confess. We like to call that the exalted Christ. He is exalted because of his work of redemption, which is exactly what the second half of Hebrews 1:3 says, that after he made purifications for sin, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Remember that text we studied carefully at the beginning of our study of Hebrews? He is exalted.

Now, he’s so exalted, he is there at the right hand of this unapproachable called God, this person that has intellect, emotion, and will that rules all things, and now he is at the right hand, at the place of honor and majesty, okay? And the reason, from the redemptive calendar of God, that that happened was because he was willing to go to death, even death on the cross, to redeem mankind so that he would taste death for everybody, okay?

Now, here's the thing. That's not all there is to it. The focus is on the future reigning of Christ. That's the real concern. See, we live here, but the focus in the text is, remember this, in the world to come. It's not here yet. Well, "yet at present we don't see it, but we will." And one day he'll rule, and one day he'll reign, but right now we live here. In the Old Testament, they lived here. If you were Peter, James, and John, you lived here. If you live in the church age, you live here. One day the kingdom will come, and we'll live here. See the chronological progression here? The ministry of Christ?

Here's the problem. We live here, not here. And because we live here, we have this strange conundrum of having a Christ who is in charge of the universe, but not in charge of Orange County, or so it seems. Are you tracking with me? We have a God who says, I am the righteous God, who will rule with a righteous scepter in my hand, but here it is, your family's messed up. Why is that? Because we live in this period where Christ has earned every right and established his right to lead, but he has not yet taken his power and begun to reign in every detail, okay?

Is that chart helpful for you? Hope so. It took me a while to put that together. I need a carne asada burrito right now.

1. Understand the Problem with the Now

Let's take this apart. We've got the text. We understand what it means. We see how it unfolds. Let's learn from it. Let's understand the problem with the now. Let's understand the problem with the now. Why is it that in my life I see heap loads of pain and injustice and inequity, and the good guys don't always win, and the bad guys are sometimes winning? What's with all that, God? I'm doing the stuff you told me to do. I'm trusting in the things you told me to trust in. I'm reading the book you told me to read. You are my God. You are my Lord. What's the deal? What's the deal?

Here's the problem with the now. Take your Bibles, if you would, and turn with me. Where should we go? Let's go, first of all, to 2 Corinthians 4. And as you're going there—we can't do that. You might be able to if you're ambidextrous. But when you get to 2 Corinthians 4, jot these two words down: delegated authority. Delegated authority.

And even before we look at 2 Corinthians 4, I'll prove this to you. We just read Psalm 8. It was quoted almost verbatim in Hebrews 2. And Psalm 8 says, which applied to man, that God has made us a little lower than the angels. We don't have all the power and authority that they do, but we have a lot. Crowned us with glory and honor and put us in charge of everything here on earth. Well, not everything the way that Christ has everything subjected to him, but he put things in subjection under our feet. And that was a quotation, by the way, in reference to Genesis 1:28, which says, here, you rule the place. The birds of the air, the fish of the sea, the land—take it, subdue it, rule over it. Just the very reality of that proves to you that God has delegated authority. He has delegated authority in one way to man, has he not? Right?

As a matter of fact, look on your worksheets at that first phrase in verse number 5. "It's not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we're speaking," which, again, is a contrast to the reality of what we learn in chapter 1. Angels have a ton of authority now. Daniel chapter 10, remember that? They have all kinds of authority. They're ruling over Persia. They're ruling over Israel. Now, what's the deal? The kingdom to come, they're not going to do that? No, they're not. Not in the same way. As a matter of fact, delegated authority is really going to change.

But now God has delegated authority. And here's the kick: not everybody who's had some delegated authority from the throne of God is doing all that great of a job, right? Because you've been delegated a little authority, haven't you? How about you parents? Anybody trying to raise some kids here? Already done it? You ever pray and go, oh God, I really screwed these kids up, right? I wish I would have been a better dad. I wish I would have been a better mom. We recognize—and your kids could pray the prayer, right? God, how do you expect me to be a good kid? Look at the parents you gave me, right? And they're down in the youth rooms right now, lamenting to the youth pastors that they don't have perfect parents. And if you're honest, you look in the mirror and go, yeah, you know what? They're right. They don't have perfect parents.

And God delegated leadership in your life over children, and you didn't do a perfect job. And God delegated—maybe you're a manager or a boss in some organization—and God delegated authority to you. Now, all authority one day will be taken back to Christ, but right now, he's delegated authority to you, and you may not have done all that great of a job. He also delegated authority in this world to the angelic beings. And did the angelic beings all do a good job? No. There's one that did a really lousy job, and Jesus is not the answer here. Who is that? Yeah. He did a really cruddy job.

As a matter of fact, in 2 Corinthians 4, he not only did such a bad job, he has so much present authority you're going to be shocked at the word that's used here. Take a look at it. First of all, it's a defense of Paul's ministry. 2 Corinthians 4. And he's saying, you know, we're out there doing the right thing. Don't lose heart. We don't lose heart. We've renounced secret and shameful things. We don't use deception. We don't distort God's word, verse 2. "On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing."

Now, why is that? Why is that? When we try to lead, Paul says, and we do it right, why is it that not everybody gets it? Okay? And there have been times you've thought that, right? Why don't they get it? Okay? Here's a very insightful phrase. Put it in quotations: "the god of this age." Big G, small g. But in my life, sometimes it feels like a big G, right? Because he seems to be fully in charge. And you look at people and you say, why don't you get it? What is wrong with you? And the Bible says, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

As a matter of fact, a good cross-reference to put in the margin, if your study Bible doesn't already have it, is Ephesians chapter 6, verses 10 through 12. And that is that our fight really, ultimately, our big battle, it's not with human beings. Our big battle is with these spiritual forces. It's with these powers and principalities. Remember that text? What are we talking about here? We're talking about bad spiritual delegated authority. There's human authority that just goes totally south, and there's spiritual authority that goes totally south.

And what is God doing? He's letting it run its course. Is he out of control? Not out of control in the slightest of ways. He is sovereign and in charge, but he has delegated authority. And when your kids complain they don't have perfect parents, they're right, see? And when we complain that there are spiritual forces that don't allow people to see what is right, just, and equitable, you're right. Because there are spiritual forces and authorities who have delegated authority from God. Human authority from the smallest of persons who just have control over their life and their garage, right, and Saddam Husseins who run whole countries, who do it poorly and unjustly. God delegates authority.

That is the problem with now, is that there's lots of angels and lots of people doing all kinds of jobs, from pretty good job to not very good job at all. And there is one that is running, in a big way, the system of the world. He's called the god of this age. And sometimes when we try to do what's right, equitable, and truthful, he puts his little, you know, pointy bony fingers over people's eyes so that they can't see. And you've been there, haven't you? What is wrong? Well, what's wrong is delegated authority. God did it for a reason. He's going to glorify himself when it's all done. But that's the crux of the problem.

You and I need to fight it. As a matter of fact, that's a good cross-reference I gave you, Ephesians chapter 6, verses 10 through 12, because it says I'm supposed to resist him. I'm supposed to stand firm against him. And when I see injustice, I want to make it right, I want to do right, I want to stand firm against it. Because even the best of human authority, I'm asking you to pray for and support, but do it with a great deal of forbearance and patience. Because even the best human authority is going to be flawed. Have you noticed that? It's going to be. Even the good ones.

Think about it in the Bible. One of the best leaders God had, that he would say would be a prototype of the Messiah, and he would call him a man after his own heart, and he would have Christ come from his lineage and have him be called the son of David—even that guy, though he was the best leader God had as a prototype, he's human and he's frail. And I read a few things in his story in the book of 2 Samuel that isn't all that good. Have you read some of that stuff? So he's not all that perfect either.

God has delegated authority. Be patient with that authority. Pray for that authority. Your kids are concerned about your authority. Your employees are concerned about it. We're all struggling to do this as best we can. And we see bad. We see medium. We see kind of good. We see fairly good. We see some that's really good. But it's not perfect. Delegated authority is the problem. Understand the problem with now. Boy, this is so important for us to get. And we need to recognize what it's all about and why we live in a place and in a time when we have these kinds of struggles.

2. Anticipate the Perfection of Then

Okay, but the whole focus of the passage isn't that. The focus of the passage is then. And I want to say, as Christians, we don't do this enough, but we need to start doing it. Anticipate the perfection of then. It will be perfect. Why? Because there won't be delegated authority the way we know it now. God is going to now take back the leadership. And he's going to say, I'm going to be in charge now. And we're all going to applaud and fall down on our face and say, we are so grateful.

As a matter of fact, Jesus taught us to pray that way. "Your kingdom come." You know what that means? Can you get in charge of this whole thing and sit at the front of the desk and lead it, please? That's what it's all about. And right now, there's somebody else leading the thing at the front of the desk. And because of that, we have problems. But the good news is CEOs are going to be replaced with one CEO. Leaders are going to be replaced with one leader. Presidents are going to be replaced with one president. Dictators will be replaced by one perfect dictator. And he is going to replace and be the immediate leader of the universe. That's what we're looking forward to, and that's our hope. And we ought to be saying we can't wait for that.

As a matter of fact, we're praying for that daily, "Your kingdom come." It was the cry of the early church. They said it in Aramaic, Maranatha. You know what that means? Come, Lord, now. We'd

sure like it now. And if you've got a bad boss, a bad parent, or a bad leader, or whatever it is, we pray it with a little more urgency, don't we? Man, I'm so ready. Come now.

Anticipate the perfection of then. And if you don't read it regularly, you should. If you haven't read Revelation 21, or parts of it, in the last month, I want you to turn to the last book of the Bible. We need to get really familiar with this, and it needs to be where we pin our heart. Listen to what Jesus said. He said, man, where your heart is, your treasure is going to be. And it isn't here. And it's not with this political system. It's not with that financial system. It's not with that leadership system. It's with a whole different leader in a whole different place.

Anticipate the perfection of then. How about this one? Revelation chapter 21. You ought to read the last two chapters of the book regularly because this is where we're headed, when he sets aside poor delegated leadership and he leads directly. "Then I saw," verse 1, "a new heaven and a new earth." That sounds good. "For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem"—this is where we're going to live—"coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband."

And again, I've got to bring you back to that analogy of the wedding. You've seen them. You've been to them. And there it goes. The door opens and there she is. And here it comes, down the aisle. As good as it can possibly be, here it is. He brings down this new world order to us.

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men.'" That's so key. I'm thinking, doesn't God dwell among us? Isn't he omnipresent? Yes, but not like this. "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." He's with us now, but not like he's going to be with us then. We are his people now, but not like we're his people then. See, he is our God now, but not in the same direct and immediate way he will be there. There will be no distance, no mediatorial anything except for Christ ruling in the new Jerusalem.

"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." And we're all going to cheer as he dumps it into the cosmic trash compactor. It's going to go passing away. See ya. And Isaiah says it's going to be so good there, you're not even going to hardly remember this place. All the pains and aches and the injustice and the inequity and the garbage of this life, you're going to go, what? It used to be like that? I guess it did. It'll be like some dream you had last Thursday night. You're going to go, I kind of have a weird memory of it, but I don't remember.

And right now we're lamenting the delegated authority of this world. Don't just hang on. He's going to take that, toss it into the trash compactor, verse 4. Verse 5: "He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!'" Write this down, "for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said, "It is done." Now, remember, on the cross, we get that word where Christ says, *Tetelestai*, "It is finished." And we think, wow, wasn't it done then? No, it was paid for then, see? But it's not fully inaugurated until here when he says, "It is done."

"I am the Alpha"—that's the first letter in the Greek language—"and the Omega," the last letter of the Greek language. "The beginning and the end." The beginning when there was no delegated authority, and then in the end when there's no delegated authority, not the way there is here with imperfection and people making decisions and influencing people. He's going to do all of that. I love this. "To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of

life. He who overcomes will inherit all of this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice the magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

Everything that does not align itself with the perfect king—into the trash compactor. And God will say, enough of that. In this place, it’s different. And I will be running the place personally, and I’m in charge.

As a matter of fact, they get down to the place and what it looks like and how big it is and what accoutrements do we have there. And when it comes to the temple, which was the central focal point for the Jewish people, look what it says in verse number 22. He says, “I did not see a temple in the city.” There was no place to go and say, okay, I’m going to now put up my God antenna and try and make contact with God today. None of that. Because “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”

You want to worship? Okay, he’s just down the street here. Go down the street two blocks, turn right or left. You’ll see a big palace there, and Christ is right in there. If you want to talk to the CEO of the universe, he’s right there. You’ve got a problem? Talk to him. There’s no reaching out in prayer and wondering where God is. None of that. “The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”

“The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.” The nations will walk by its light, and the so-called kings of the earth—who may have that on their business cards—but trust me, there isn’t a lot of delegated authority in this place. They’re going to bring their splendor into it because God is going to make sure everything is done just the way he wants it. And they can flip on their little camera watches or whatever they’ve got going on and check in with the King because the King is going to direct everything. All the rest are just associate workers in his administration.

“On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.” Verse 26: “The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.” “Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” And there’s that great phrase of grace. It’s a good thing. And if your name is there, you’re in this place.

And it’s people that are going to bow the knee to Christ and do exactly what he says. Anticipate the perfection of then. Christ earned the right to do it. Right now, he’s just wrapping it up. Nothing will escape his perfect leadership in that day. And you and I are going to look back on this time and the pain will be just a distant, foggy memory.

All right, in the meantime, in the meantime, now what? Let’s buy a compound in Texas and sell your colorful clothes and let’s get up on a hill and wait for him to come back. No, let’s not do that. What do we do?

Letter A. Next to letter A—did I not put verses 5 through 9, the whole text? Because here’s the point. We’ve got a progression of Christ’s ministry: pre-incarnation, right? Made lower than angels. We’ve got the exalted Christ, been crowned with glory and honor because he defeated death. And then the future. That progression is as sure as anything—you can bank on it. And because of that,

we're moving in the direction of the leadership and reigning of Christ in the New Jerusalem, where everything will be under the purview and authority of Christ.

So we have this sense that it's going to be perfect. We're moving in the right direction. You don't have to bite your nails. You don't have to be afraid. It's all going to be right. And in the end, we know what's going to go there. So what we need to do is govern our emotions at this point. As a matter of fact, let me turn you to a great passage, Psalm 37, and we'll fill in letter A here in just a second. Psalm 37—a great text because it says it over and over and over again, do not worry.

Take a look at how it puts it. A bit of an archaic word. Psalm 37. Plenty of injustice. Yeah, but it's really bad right now, Mike. I realize that. It's bad in this world. I realize that. Sometimes it's bad in the church. I realize that. But make sure the first thing you do is govern your emotions. Here's the first three words—just jot them down right there in your worksheet: **Do not fret.** That's the main thing. Don't fret. Don't worry. Don't freak out. Settle down, okay? When you're tempted to go, "Ooh!"—don't. Don't fret.

"Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong." Because the only way we would ever be tempted to do that, as the psalmists often say, is because they seem to be advancing down the path of success a whole lot faster than we are. And in this world, the god of this world seems to reward people who do things his way. People who lie, people who deceive, people who cut corners, people who compromise. They seem to have the better hand in this world. Doesn't matter. Don't be envious of them. Don't fret because of evil men. "For like the grass they will soon wither; like green plants they will soon die away."

Instead, do this. Govern your heart by trusting in Yahweh and doing good. As a matter of fact, that line is long enough there on letter A. Not only "do not fret," but put next to it **do good.** I mean, you want to turn your attention and energy to something? Don't fret. Don't worry. Instead, just keep trusting God and doing what's right. That's all you've got to do. Even if you're losing in the column of advantage, it doesn't matter. Just keep doing good and keep trusting God.

"Dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in Yahweh and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord. Trust in him and he will do this: he will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun." And it's all future. I realize that. It ain't happening now. That's okay.

Verse 7: "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him." I know it's going to be a wait, but wait patiently. Here it is again. Underline it. "Do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes." "Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it only leads to evil." Quit biting your nails. Quit being concerned. Just keep moving forward. Trust God and do what's right. "For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land."

Look at the time indicators here. Verse 10: "In a little while the wicked will be no more." Though you look for them, they will not be found. "But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace." "The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them, but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming." He's not worried. God's not worried. Don't you worry. Don't fret. Do good.

That's so important because a lot of people get really frustrated with the inequities of this life, and because of that inequity they get angry, they get frustrated, and they lash out. And you know what? They cause a whole lot more damage than God ever intended. For people that sit quietly, wait patiently for the Lord, and just keep on doing good—that's all you've got to do. Don't fret the injustice and inequities of the world. Just hang in there. Don't fret. Do good.

Look at verse 9 back in Hebrews chapter 2. That's a great passage, isn't it? Psalm 37. We should memorize that text. That is so good. So many of the Psalms, by the way, reflect that. Verse 9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor." Now that's the conundrum. That's the paradox. Christ is not ruling, Christ is not reigning in the way that we would like him to, so that he changes the course of everything on the news tonight, so that he changes the course of the board at your office who runs your company or whatever, or your boss or your manager. I understand the inequity and the injustice.

But look at this text. Right now Christ is already crowned with glory and honor. Why? Because on the cross he purchased and established his leadership and said *Tetelestai*, which was the initiation of his leadership but not the full inauguration of his leadership. So what that means is I know that it's going to be okay, for one. But secondly, I need to make sure that I'm ready to know it's already taken care of. I don't have to say one day God's going to do something about this. God has already done something about this. He just hasn't cashed in on it yet.

Now I've told you my boys—my seven and eight-year-olds—are just fanatical crazy baseball fans. They're watching it all the time. I can't stand it. Watching it all the time. It's always on—whatever it is—baseball, baseball, baseball. Well I'm sitting there. I was doing something at the kitchen table, working on something or whatever. They had the ballgame on. And I heard out of the corner of my ear here, I heard them say, you know, the bases are loaded. And sure enough—crack of the bat. Everybody got excited on the television. All the volume went up. And he knocked one out of the park. It was a grand slam home run.

So I turned to look because I had a little theological question. I thought to myself—I just had a question I wanted to figure out. I said, are they going to post the runs on the scoreboard before he goes and touches all the bases? I just wondered. And sure enough I glanced over there and click, click, click—four runs went up on the scoreboard on the little screen there, you know. And I'm thinking to myself, wait a minute. That ain't right. All those well-groomed, studly baseball players—they have not touched all the bases yet. I'm thinking that's not right.

As a matter of fact, I'm thinking if you want to be correct and accurate about this, you should put those runs on the scoreboard when they touch their little cleats down on the white plate after touching all three bags. That's what I'm expecting. But that's not what happened. The guy was quick on the trigger up in the booth or whatever. Click, click, click, click—four runs. And I'm thinking, what's the deal with that? And everybody in the stadium was totally stoked. Totally cheering. And I'm thinking he hasn't gotten all the way around yet. Isn't this a little premature?

Now I know he knocked the ball over the fence and I realize that he's done the work. But you don't get the score until you come around and touch all the bases. But that isn't how it works in a ball game, right? What do people do? They go nuts. The guy in the booth gives him points or whatever—runs. Why? Because as far as they're concerned, all the work has been done. But in reality—I'm sure it's in a rule book somewhere—it doesn't count unless you touch the bases. But that part's not the hard part. So everybody cheers as though it's already done.

Letter B: You and I need to learn to celebrate Christ's victory. And I know it hasn't been fully applied yet. I know that our redemption is not fully accomplished. Oh, it's been paid for, but we're waiting for him to set up the kingdom.

Our prayer has a tension of unfinished business: "Your kingdom come." We're still praying it. But you know what's going to make the wait a whole lot better? Not only are you getting control of your emotions and saying, I'm not going to fret when evil men do their thing—you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to spend my time celebrating Christ's victory. Because you know what? Back there in about 28 A.D., he knocked the ball over the fence. And it was all paid for. All done. It's just taken an awful long time for him to get around the bases.

And you know what 2 Peter says? Don't worry about the time. It's a done deal. And if it takes two thousand more years for him to come in and touch that base and we start the celebration after all of that's been done, don't worry about it. Because to the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day.

Nobody's forgetting he hit it out of the park. God has accepted the sacrifice of Christ. So we celebrate it now. You want to deal with the injustice and inequity of life? Spend more time in worship. Turn off your crazy little talk show on the way to work and put in something that's going to bring your mind with some melody and some verse that's going to raise your heart to say Christ has won. He is in charge. He purchased the administration of leadership and the righteous scepter is in his hand. He's seated at the right hand of the Father. The work has been done. And one day he's going to stand up and assume the throne in the middle of the New Jerusalem. Don't you worry about it. It's coming.

Why don't you celebrate the fact that he's won that right to do it? Why don't you and I get in the pattern of saying our life's going to be about worship? Not about sitting around going, "Oh, isn't it terrible?" Yeah, it is terrible. I realize that. You and I ought to lament poor delegated leadership. I'm all about shedding a tear about that. But you know what? I'm done now saying—listen—I am not going to have my heart stay there. Time for me to worship and recognize that every crooked way will be made straight and every rough place will be made plain and every mountain will be made low and every valley will be lifted up. And everything's going to be exactly the way it's supposed to be. And the payment for it has already been paid. So it's done.

Okay? Good news. "Crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death," bottom of verse 9, "so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." You know, you can't really celebrate these truths without the word **grace**. Because the bottom line is you read the description of New Jerusalem and you know what I'm seeing there? Righteous people who do everything right all the time. And I'm thinking to myself—I don't qualify. Right? Your kids are saying, my parents don't qualify. Your wife is saying, my husband doesn't qualify. And a few husbands are gutsy enough to say my wife doesn't qualify.

So what we need to do is focus on what makes all of this possible. And that is that my name will be written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Which means that I am clinging to the death of Christ, who tasted that punishment for me, who incurred that penalty for me.

I like to put it this way: **I cling to the cross.**

You want to know what you should be doing for the next forty years you have on this planet, or twenty years, or ten, or two, or whatever you've got left? You ought to be saying: I celebrate the grace that Christ has paid it all for me. And because of that, I know it's done. I don't have any doubts about my participation in the kingdom because I know what it is to respond to the message that we looked at last week in Hebrews chapter 2.

If I'm supposed to listen to the message of salvation of the Lord, what is it? We summed it up in that nice phrase there from Mark 1:15: **repent of my sins and put my trust in the good news.** And to do that and understand the mechanism is Christ's death. It's a kind of belief and trust and confidence that I have in what Christ did for me. He tastes death for me. I can't bring anything to this deal. That's why it's grace. He's accomplished it all. He has put me on his back, hit it out of the park, he's running around the bases, and the win is for me because I'm clinging to Christ.

And because of that I need to occupy my focus there. Not with lamenting the terrible injustices of our world. Oh yeah, fix what you can, stand up for what's right, lament poor leadership. But then get off your face, celebrate Christ's victory, and make sure that you're a participant in the kingdom because you're clinging to the cross. You've repented of your sins, you put your trust in Christ, and you're not thinking it's something you do plus what God does. You know it's what Christ did. And that's all there is. It's grace alone. That's what it's all about. In the meantime, cling to the cross.

That was a stern warning in the first four verses of Hebrews 2. I mean if the message spoken by angels proved unalterable and every violation received a just punishment, **how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?** We have no hope. Make sure you're in. And if you are in, cling to that. It's a message of grace, and how good it is to know he paid it all for us. The death theme and why Christ had to put on human flesh is what the next few verses are about.

We're going to deal with that next week. This Sunday afternoon we're going to wrap up that time with celebrating communion. This symbol, this tangible expression and symbol of what Christ's death was all about. And unless Christ touches home plate before next Sunday, our goal is to get back together again and to study that. That's going to be wonderful. Don't miss it next week. Bring somebody with you. That might be a good idea, huh? It's better than watching whatever's on TV on Sunday afternoon, I'm guessing.

Let's pray.

God, what a great thing it is that we've been given the opportunity, because of the call of Christ, to turn from our sin and to place our full confidence in what Jesus has done for us. And because of that, our name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

And we know we will be participants in the kingdom of the Messiah. And that the kingdom of the world will one day become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. And he will reign forever and ever. And every valley is going to be raised up, every mountain made low, every crooked way made straight, and all the rough places plain.

Now at Christmas, God, I know that you sent your Son to pay the price to make it a reality. But God, like you taught us, we want to pray what Jesus told us to pray. And that is, **your kingdom come.** We can't wait for the full inauguration of the kingdom. And God, we want to pray for it. We want to reflect the essence of that Aramaic word, **Maranatha.** We want you to come. Come now, Lord, please. And we look for your coming kingdom, God.



But in the meantime, we're not going to fret. We'll spend our time worshiping. And we'll make sure that our heart is firmly clinging to the cross and what you've accomplished for us. And God, that'll be a good place to be for the next five, ten, fifteen years—or five days—whatever we've got left. God, help us to live there fully focused on what you've done for us.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.