

Is This the End of the Church

by Anton Bosch

This sermon emphasizes the need for believers to stay faithful and vigilant in the midst of challenging times, focusing on the importance of discernment, holiness, and looking to Jesus as the ultimate source of hope and redemption. It addresses the current state of the church, highlighting the dangers of false prophets, lack of repentance, and the rise of nationalism within Christian circles. The speaker urges listeners to engage in meaningful conversations, remain active in kingdom work, and trust in God's faithfulness despite the surrounding chaos and moral decline.

Scripture: Revelation 22:7, Malachi 3:16, Luke 19:13, Revelation 22:11, Luke 21:28, 1 Samuel 7:12

Topics: "Faithfulness in Trials", "Discernment in Deception"

Description

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Transcript

So please turn with me to the book of Revelation, the last chapter, chapter 22. Revelation chapter 22. And I'm going to read seven through the end of the chapter.

So the last verses in the book of Revelation, last verses in the Bible, Revelation 7, 22, sorry, Revelation 22, 7 through the end. Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

Now I, John, saw and heard these things, and when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, See that you do not do that, for I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren, the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.

And he said to me, Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still. He who is filthy, let him be filthy still.

He who is righteous, let him be righteous still. He who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to everyone according to his work.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are those who do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.

And let him who hears say, Come. And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely.

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life, from the holy city and from the things which are written in the book.

And he who testifies to these things says, I am coming quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. So as we are coming to the end of 2020 and we're coming into a new year, as is my custom, I believe it's important for us individually and corporately to take stock of where we're at, where we've been, where we've been during this last year, what has happened during this last year, and what is its relevance? And where are we going in the new year? And it's an exercise that I urge everyone to go through.

And I spent several days in the desert this last week doing exactly that, trying to understand where we've come from and trying to understand where we're going. The problem is that we don't know where we're going. And I'll address that in a few moments.

But I would again urge you to personally take time off during this week, now that we're over Christmas and all of the festivities, and we have a little bit of time hopefully before we get into the rest of the year, to take time and say, well, where have I personally come this last year? What has God said to me? What has God done in my life? And where is it that He is taking me? And as I went through this exercise, I wanted to bring a message of encouragement. And you can gather by just that statement that I'm not bringing a message of encouragement this morning. I'm going to end with encouragement.

But as we look over this last year, there is not much to be encouraged about. And so I want to look at those things. One of the things I was reminded of as I waited on the Lord is that it was 18 months ago that I preached a message here called, Has the Great Falling Away Has Begun.

The Great Falling Away Has Begun. That was 18 months ago. I do not claim to be a prophet.

And one of the things I was hoping to do this morning was to be able to bring good news and say, well, you know, we're going through the winter, not just physically, but spiritually and as a country in terms of the virus and all of these things. But the summer is coming. And once we get through the winter, the new growth comes and there's new life and there's new growth and there's new development.

But I can't even say that this morning because I don't know that I can make that promise. I think that as we sat here in this chapel this time last year, we all looked forward to the year with great hope and great anticipation, not having a clue as to what would hit us. And yet it was six months before the beginning of this year that I warned that we have begun with a great falling away.

Eighteen months later, I have to revisit that message. And I would encourage you to do that. It's available on the Facebook, on YouTube.

And in fact, what has happened is the great falling away has continued and it has intensified. And we find ourselves in even a greater falling away than we were a year ago or 18 months ago. And I think it's important for us to understand that because it is important for us to understand what is going on around us and to be able to respond in an appropriate way and to be able to secure our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because here's the problem. And here's just the reality. And I'm going to speak with you from my heart this morning.

I haven't prepared a fancy message. I've got a whole lot of points that I want to speak on this morning. But I really want to expose my heart to you.

And as we stand at the beginning of this year, I have no guarantee that I will not be one of those who has fallen away by the end of this year. That is just the reality. Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

I am secure in my salvation. I'm secure in God's goodness and God's grace and God's keeping power. But I am incredibly fearful of my own flesh and of my human mind that is so easily led astray by the things around us.

And one of the lessons of this last year is that there is no one who is above falling away. And I know right now there are those who are watching on the internet and those who believe that once you're saved you're always saved. Well, I don't know how you explain what's happened in these last few years.

And I'm not, I'm going to try and limit the number of names this morning because it's not about names. And I can give you the names if you want. But I made reference a couple of months ago about one of the the greatest Christian apologists that we've had in the last 30 or 40 years.

This week the report from his ministry has come out. He has since died. But the report from his ministry has died confirming that he was a sexual predator.

And yet he stood as the beacon of apologetics, standing against evolutionism, standing for the inerrancy of the Word of God, standing for the inspiration of Scripture, standing for all the things that we believe on. And yet secretly he was far from God. And there are many, many other examples.

And so because greater men than I are not with us today, not necessarily because they've died, but because they are far from God. And many have turned their back on the faith. Many have denied the faith.

And the question I have to ask myself and we have to ask ourselves is, Lord, will we be here again this time next year? I thank God. And I'm going to come back to this. And I'm sorry if my thoughts are jumbled.

But there is so much in my heart and my mind this morning. And I have limited time. I thank God for his faithfulness.

I thank God for each one who is here this morning and has made it through this year. And I thank God that by and large the majority of those who are part of this group, a part of this assembly, have made it through this year and are still standing by his grace. Not by anything we have done, but by his grace.

Yes, we have lost some, but those were those who were on the fringes, who were never really part of us. But I thank God that those who are part of the core of this church have made it through the year. And the reality is that there are not many churches who are in the same position as we are this morning.

Every church has lost people. Even pastors have got used to staying at home. And when the opportunity comes in their countries to restart the services, they decide, no, we're just going to stay at home.

Not because of the virus or because of concern of safety, but simply because they've gotten lazy. Converting the church into a house church model, simply because it's more convenient. Not because that's what God wants.

And I don't have a problem with house churches, and if that's what God wants, then let's do that. But if it's just because we're too lazy to come out, and because the pastor is too lazy to prepare messages every week and to preach the Word of God every week, then how far have we gone? So here are some of the things that... And I know that nothing I'm saying this morning is new. We're really rehashing much of what we've said over this last year.

Many Christians are following prophetic voices, prophets, so-called prophets, people who call themselves prophets. And again, I'm not going to give you the names. But you can just go online, you can go to YouTube, and you can watch dozens and dozens of prophetic messages.

Every single one of those prophets has prophesied the election, the outcome of the election. And every one of them has been wrong. Not one of them... And they still continue with their prophecies.

But here's the other thing, that not one of those prophets, not one of those who claim to be speaking from God, predicted the pandemic. Now if you just think about this, this is the biggest thing that has happened in our lifetime. This is the biggest thing that has happened since the second world war in this world.

Do you think that if these men and women are prophets, that God would not have revealed to them the need for the church to get ready? And yet not one of them, even one month before the time, predicted what was going to happen. So what does that make them? Every single one is a false prophet. Every one is a false prophet.

Folks, this is just the simplicity of it. And I'm going to... I am in the process of writing an article which I'll release after the 20th of January. I'm going to hold my powder dry on that one.

But the scripture is clear, that if a prophet says something is going to come to pass, and it doesn't come to pass, he is a false prophet, and he must be stoned. It's as simple as that. And the second thing that is attached to that, is that even if he says it's going to come to pass, and it comes to pass, but he says let's follow other gods, he is a false prophet.

And one of the points I'm going to come to in a few moments, is that all of these prophets, every single one of them, have said let's go after other gods. And I'll explain that in a few moments. Not only are those who claim to be prophets wrong, but there are those who don't claim to be prophets, but who claim to be students of prophecy.

And who run websites and blogs and YouTubes, some of them on a weekly basis, of what they call prophecy updates. And these YouTubes and these blogs gather thousands and thousands and thousands of views. They are the most popular Christian websites and blogs and YouTubes on the internet.

As I said to you before, all you need to do is put something about the second coming in your title on YouTube, and it will triple or quadruple or multiply your views by ten times. Literally just like that. Same preacher, it happens to me.

And these people have built entire ministries on analyzing prophecy and the second coming. And saying well this has happened here, and this has happened over there, and this has happened in Jerusalem, and it's all proof of this is happening, and this is coming, and this ties up with Daniel, and this ties up with Revelation, and so on and so forth. But not one of them was able to predict the pandemic.

And all of them, without exception, I have not found I've not found one who is an exception, who has correctly predicted the pandemic or the outcome of the election. Folks, again, they are false prophets. And yet Christians flock to these men and these women and follow them by the thousands, if not by the millions.

We need to learn. And if you watch any of these prophecy updates, or listen to any of these so-called prophets, I urge you today to stop watching them and listening to them, and certainly stop supporting them financially, because they are false prophets. They are lying.

They are not speaking the truth of God. And you say, well what's the big deal? They preach Jesus. No, they're not preaching Jesus.

They're preaching the second coming. But that's not preaching Jesus. And all of them are preaching nationalism, the next problem.

Nationalism. Folks, it's fine to have nationalism out in the world. You can sing, I'm proud to be an American, if you're out in the world.

But we are Christians, and that is what identifies us. But the church has become nationalistic, and the church no longer preaches the very message that we preached in the song this morning. I'm marching to Zion.

I'm not looking for a better America, or a better South Africa, or a better England. I'm looking for Zion, the city of God. I'm looking for the new Jerusalem.

In fact, all of these things are a distraction. And yet this has become popular, and again, it's based on money. You see, why do people run these prophecy updates? Because thousands of people will watch, and they'll send money.

Why do people preach American nationalism, or Zimbabwe nationalism, or South African nationalism, or British nationalism? Simply because it gets them followers, and followers means money. Just this week,

someone sent me a note and said, you need to watch this prophet in Zimbabwe. He is the only man.

He claims for himself, and this is what his followers claimed and sent me. He is the only man who speaks for God in Zimbabwe. And because I'm very closely connected to Zimbabwe in many ways, I know the situation well.

I'd not heard of him before, so I decided to look at him. He is not a preacher. He is not a prophet.

He is a politician. Every single one of his messages, he is preaching politics. I resent that I've had to speak about politics more than I've ever in my life in this last year.

But I'm not preaching politics. I'm preaching against politics. I'm preaching the politics of heaven.

I'm preaching the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm preaching the cross. I'm preaching the New Jerusalem.

But these people are preaching Zimbabwe or England or whatever it is. The rise of nationalism has drawn away thousands and thousands and thousands of Christians. Literally thousands of pulpits today have been converted from pulpits of preaching the cross and the gospel to preaching American nationalism.

So just show me where Jesus preached Israel nationalism or Roman nationalism or Paul or any of the apostles. No, they preached Christ and Him crucified. We have one message and it's Jesus Christ.

We don't have a message of America. We don't have a message of Sun Valley Community Church. We don't have any other message.

We have one message and that is that Jesus died for our sins upon the cross of Calvary, that He was buried, that He rose again, that He is coming again. That is our message. And the moment we deviate from that to preach republicanism or democratism or whatever you want to call that, then we have forsaken the wells of true water for wells that have no water.

Every few days I'm losing people. I'm losing friends because they follow these things, getting bound up in conspiracy theories. There are Christian pastors and missionaries that I've had to block on the internet or on Facebook because all I get from them is conspiracy theories.

And you say, well, what's the problem with conspiracy theories? It's simply something that's mind-tickling. It's something that's interesting. No, here's the problem with them.

If you cannot discern the difference between a stupid hoax and a stupid conspiracy, whether it be about the elections or whether it be about the virus or whether it be about the dark web or the deep state or whatever, if you can't discern the difference between truth and error, how can you discern the difference between truth and error when it comes to the Word of God? If you're so easily fooled by a Russian website into believing what they're trying to propagate, how will you stand when the false prophets come and preach another Jesus? And that's exactly why the church has not stood. That's exactly why evangelicalism is in a total shambles today. And I'm ashamed to call myself an evangelical because it's got another meaning today.

It used to mean those who preach the gospel. Today it means those who support a particular political party. I'm no longer an evangelical.

I'm a follower of Jesus Christ. That's the beginning and the end. I can no longer identify with that.

And yes, I have to speak about Trumpism. And I know that there are many that are going to be very angry with me on these statements. Now, folks, please understand me before I make the statements that I don't care who you vote for or did vote for.

If you believe that Trump was the right man for the White House, then that is your prerogative to vote that way. And if you decided that you did not want to vote at all, then that's your prerogative. And if you decided to vote for Biden, then that is your prerogative.

It is your conscience. You make those decisions. I am not telling you who to vote for.

And I'm not telling you that it's wrong to vote for Trump. But what I'm telling you is that it is wrong to elevate him as God's man for this hour. He has done no favors to the body of Christ.

In fact, he has brought about the destruction of the church like never ever before. I'm going to speak about immorality in the church. A lot of that immorality comes from the highest sources.

And Christians are saying it's fine to have multiple wives. It's fine to live a life of immorality. It's fine to lie and to cheat and to deceive because he's not a pastor.

He's a politician. No, it is not fine for anyone. It is not right in any.

And the moment you condone that in Donald Trump, then you have brought it into your own life and you've brought it into the church. But please understand me, you can vote for who you like, but when you begin to worship a man, and that is what the church has done. It has worshipped a man.

It has changed its doctrine. And many of the problems we have in theology today is because the church has changed its doctrine to suit its theology, its politics. We cannot adapt our theology to suit our politics.

Folk, I'm not a Democrat nor a Republican. But I'm going to give you just one example, and I don't want to get too involved in this because it can take us off the track. But I think most of us, of the, certainly the middle generation, will remember when Bill Clinton got involved with Monica Lewinsky.

We all remember that. And we remember how the church condemned it. How Republicans and Democrats alike condemned it as immoral.

And yet now we have a man who does exactly that and 10 times worse. And we're saying it's okay. Why was it not okay for Clinton and it's okay for Trump? And worse.

And I'll tell you why it is. Because the church has lost its moral compass. It has engaged in pragmatism.

What we mean by pragmatism is because it works for us, because he helps the church, because he helps Jerusalem, because he's against abortion. We will support. It doesn't matter what he does.

It doesn't matter what tools he uses. It doesn't matter what methods he uses. It's fine.

Folk, it's time that we separate our politics from our theology and that our theology informs our politics and not the other way around. But we have seen a change in these last four years in the church where politics has defined the church, where many will not listen to the gospel anymore because it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ, but it is the gospel of the right wing. And so there is a blindness.

And folk, this is something I don't have answers for. But there is a blindness come upon Christians. That even if you show them this piece of paper, it's white.

But somebody told them, no, it's black. They believe it's black. They will swear it's black and they will kill to support the idea that this is black.

When it's clear, it's white. And that's not just as far as politics is concerned and conspiracies, but as far as the word of God is concerned. And folk, we've come to a place where I no longer want to correct people, and I don't correct people anymore because nobody seems to want to know the truth.

And even if you prove to them that the truth is not what they believed, they will reject it. And I say, where does this come from? And my conclusion is that it is not an intellectual thing. It's not a thing of them looking and saying, no, this is not white, this is black.

I'm convinced this is black. No, there is a spiritual principle at work. And that spiritual principle is blinded the hearts and the minds of people to everyday truths, that they cannot even see that this piece of paper is white and it is not black.

One of the other things that we have, that has happened in these last few years, particularly in this last year, is the message of repentance. Not only are preachers not preaching repentance, and there are some who preach repentance, but they don't live repentance. But a whole theology has been developed in these last couple of years against the idea of repentance, that we don't need to repent.

We're saved by faith, and faith and repentance are mutually exclusive. And yet repentance is at the very heart of the gospel. But why don't we want to believe that message? Because we don't want to do the repentance thing.

And so we'll change again our theology to suit our practice. And so there's no need for anyone to repent. There's no need for anyone to change.

We can just continue in our wicked and sinful lifestyle. One of the other things that deeply disturbs me of this last years, but particularly this last year, is that there's no voice. And by the way, you may want to watch Pastor Gary Osborne.

He's developing these thoughts in much more detail in a current series on the Berean Assembly in Florida's website. You can watch his messages on Facebook and also on YouTube. But we're agreed on the principle.

For the last 2,000 years, there has always been a voice. Men of God who have spoken the truth, who've had a national and international voices. And the list is long.

Andrew Murray, Watchman Nee in China, D.L. Moody, R.A. Torrey. The list goes on and on and on. But the list has stopped.

Folk, I have searched and I have spent a long time in these last couple of years looking at Australia, looking at the United Kingdom, looking at Europe, looking at Africa, looking at America, and there is not a single prophetic voice who is speaking the Word of God. Not one. There were some that I thought maybe had an element of truth or even had truth.

And time has exposed them as not being men of God. And folk, this is the first time in my life, and I'm not a kid anymore, I'm not old as Henry, but I'm not a kid anymore. But this is the first time in my life that there is no one out there in the world that is preaching the gospel.

I thank God for faithful pastors. But they are small time. And I'm not decrying small time, because I'm small time.

And the reason they're small time is because nobody wants to listen to the truth. You can preach whatever nonsense you like, and thousands will watch your videos. But the good faithful pastors are small assemblies.

Nobody wants to hear what they have to say, because they're preaching the truth. And so one of the conclusions I've come to is that it's not that God is no longer speaking. He is still speaking, but nobody's listening.

Nobody's listening. Nobody wants to hear. And so for the first time in the church age that I know of, we're back into 400 years.

Remember the 400 silent years between the Old Testament and the New Testament when God didn't speak and there were no prophets. There was no prophetic voice. And we're back in that place again.

There is no prophetic voice. And I challenge you to come to me afterwards and give me a name of one man who speaks and has a voice, a national voice in America, never mind the world, who is a voice for God, a voice for righteousness, a voice for justice, a voice for integrity, and above all, a voice for the crucified life. It doesn't exist.

And not only do we not have a voice, but we have no succession. My generation is getting old and tired, and we can't continue. And there is no new generation.

When I grew up in an assembly this size, there was a dozen young men who felt the call of God on their lives and who entered the ministry. Today I can visit assembly and church after church after church, and there is not a single one who is willing to dedicate themselves to the work of God. Everybody talks about it, but they're more involved with their jobs and their careers and their families and their children and all sorts of other things.

Folks, the church is in a desperate state. You say, brother, you're too negative. No, I don't think I'm negative enough.

There is no ethics and there's no integrity in churches. This is not a new thing. Those who walked with us when we sold the old building and bought this building know some of the stories of churches that we tried to negotiate with in order to buy a building and the downright cheating that was going on with churches trying to cheat us out of our money one after the other.

And yet today it's even worse. I watched this week when a pastor or a so-called pastor who preaches a false message, he doesn't believe in the inspiration of scripture, he only believes that Paul's letters are relevant. The rest of it is worthless, basically.

Bomb a pastor friend of mine's website and somehow grab hold of the review section and be able to reduce his positive reviews from five down to zero. And then use the opportunity to preach his damnable

heresy. No integrity.

No respect. And if that's what it is in the pulpit, then how is it in the pew? There is no fear of God. Pastors steal other pastors' churches, literally, physically, I've seen it.

And they continue like there's no problem. If that's what the pastors are like, what are the people like? The two biggest influences in Christianity today is Bethel and Hillsong. Their songs are sung in just about every evangelical and charismatic church in the world today.

Both of them are hotbeds of immorality. One of their pastors has finally been fired this last couple of weeks after a lifetime of immorality and drunkenness, public drunkenness, which we've all seen as he partied with his disciple Justin Bieber. But the church lets it be.

And that same church becomes one of the biggest influences on modern Christianity and theology that you've seen. I can go on and on and speak about Bethel. Unfortunately, Bethel has affected many churches around us, churches that we, at one time, were associated with.

And I can't even share with you some of the stuff that they say and do. But I challenge you to go on to YouTube and do a search for what the angels do around the throne of God according to a Bethel pastor. And I cannot tell you because it is too vile.

And yet they preach that from their pulpit. No fear of God, no respect for God's holiness. The Bible tells me what the angels do in the presence of God.

It says, with two they cover their faces, with two they cover their feet, and with two they fly and they cry, holy, holy, holy. And yet it's become popular in the church today to speak about them doing the most unseemly things in the presence of a righteous and a holy and an awesome God. And folk, it seems that every week there's a new level of low that has come into the churches.

I'm almost through, and I know we're very late this morning, but there is no discernment. There are dozens of websites and ministries that claim to be discernment ministries, that claim to discern the difference between truth and error. And yet not one of them are speaking against the very things that I mentioned here this morning.

And I have no desire to enter back into discernment-type ministries. As you know, I used to be involved in that, and I've seen the futility of it. But here are people who claim to be the defenders of the faith, who claim to be apologists for truth, and not one of them will speak about any of the things that I've spoken about this morning.

And yet these are the real threats of the church. They'll still speak about prosperity preaching. Yeah, prosperity preaching is a problem, but that train has left the station.

The problems we're facing are the problems I mentioned this morning, and not one of them will speak of it. Very few Christians understand even the beginning of what I said this morning. There is no discernment.

There's no understanding of right and wrong. There's no understanding of truth and error. And so the question then is, what must we do? How do we go into this new year? And, folk, while I'm hopeful that there will be, that the virus will be dealt with and that we'll get back to some semblance of normality sometime in this new year, and every time I look at it, it seems to be a little later and a little later.

But there is hope as far as that is concerned. But there is no hope as far as the church is concerned. And that's our problem.

Our problem is not the virus. Yeah, the virus is huge. It's massive.

But the problem, the spiritual problem is far bigger. So what do we do? Well, all of these things we've spoken about in these last, in this last year or so. I'm going to take you to four or five scriptures quickly.

Malachi 3, verse 16. Remember that Malachi is preaching in a similar time to where we are at today. Israel is far from God.

The priests had corrupted the truth. The priests were using their office for financial gain. The sacrifices were perverted.

And God says through Malachi, is there no one who will shut the temple? Because I'm tired of your profanity. And in the middle of this situation, Malachi says, then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another. They spoke to one another.

Folk, we need to speak to one another. I'm grateful for the Zoom meetings on Thursdays. We need to speak to one another.

We need to encourage one another. Because there is no truth outside there anymore. And those who are true believers, and there are some true believers all over.

I'm not saying that there's no true believers outside of this church. Of course there are. We need to speak to them.

We need to hear from them. We need to encourage one another. So those who feared the Lord spoke to one another and the Lord listened and heard them.

You see, when we speak words of encouragement, when we speak words of exhortation, even when we speak words of rebuke, God is listening. And God honors us if we're speaking truth. The Lord listened and heard them and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name.

I believe that book of remembrance is being written even this morning. And it's being written of those. And I pray that each one of us will be those who are fearing Him and that are speaking to one another.

Verse 17, they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts. On that day that I make up my jewels and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him. You see, He's coming and He's coming in judgment.

But those who fear Him, their names are written and He will own them as His own. Verse 18, then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. Isn't this what we've been speaking about this morning? Let me rush on to Luke chapter 19 and verse 13.

And He called His 10 servants and delivered them 10 pounds and said to them, occupy till I come. I've not spoken about the Lord, the second coming this morning, but I believe that everything that we've spoken about are signs of His second coming. And I don't want to fall into the same trap that I preached against this morning.

But at the same time, there's need for us to discern the times. There's need for us to look at the weather. Jesus says, you look at the weather and you say, well, it's going to be a good day or the wind's going to blow.

Can't you discern the times where as far as the second coming is concerned? In fact, I believe that we are very, very close to the end. Here's one of the things. The picture I drew this morning is dark.

And if this continues, if what has happened in this last few years continues, there will be no true church left in 10 years time. That's just the reality. And there are statistics to prove that.

Where is the next generation of leaders? I thank God for our assembly as we look over it and we find a good balance between younger people and older people. But most of the good churches are just old people. Will the church come to nothing? No.

Jesus said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. So the church will never fail. But it is failing.

So what will stop it? It's not going to be a revival as everybody's preaching. The only thing that's going to stop the decline is Jesus coming. And I believe he will come before the church is totally destroyed by the stuff that we've spoken about this morning.

And so Jesus says, Occupy. I've given you talents. I've given you gifts.

God has given us certain things. He's given us individually and corporately talents and gifts. He's given us this body.

He's given us these buildings. We need to use these things. The more modern translations say, do business until I come.

And this has got nothing to do with making money. It has to do with working for the kingdom of God. And so it's no good sitting down and having our little holy huddle and saying, well, there's no one who's believing the truth anymore.

Everyone is going. And so let's just sit in and just talk to one another as we saw in Malachi. No, we need to keep busy.

And we need to keep busy with the work of the kingdom of preaching the gospel, of saving those that can still be saved. And we need to stay busy until Jesus comes. That when he comes, he finds us busy about the work.

Revelation chapter 22 and verse 11. This really is my text and I've not dealt with it in a textual way this morning. But folk, I want you to go home and meditate on this verse.

It's easy to remember. Chapter 22, verse 11. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still.

This is in the context of the second coming. Those who are unjust, they will be more unjust and let them go. Let them do.

He was filthy, let him be filthy still. The word filthy still meaning more. He who is righteous, let him be righteous still.

He who is holy, let him be holy still. You see, what we're seeing, and we've spoken about this, is we're seeing a shaking going on. A separation of the chaff and the wheat.

But there also needs to be a shaking within ourselves. And there needs to be an increase in holiness as we see an increase in unholiness going on all around us. There needs to be an increase in holiness in every one of our lives.

There needs to be an increase in righteousness. Not just righteousness in our theology, not just righteousness in the church, but in righteousness in all of our dealings as we deal with the things, as we deal with the world and the things in the world. And then my second to last verse is Luke chapter 21, verse 28.

And again, in the context of the second coming, when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near. When these things begin to happen, and folk, here's the problem. This is not the end yet.

We're going to see much worse than we have seen. And that's the problem with bringing a message of hope for next year and saying, well, it's going to be great. We're going to have a great revival next year.

No, every sign is that it's going to get worse this next year, because this is the beginning of sorrows. This is the beginning of the end. When these things begin to happen, when the great falling away begins to happen, lift up your heads.

And folk, it's easy to go away discouraged and despondent after a message like this this morning. But I want us to lift up our heads and fix our eyes on Jesus. Isn't this part of the theme, as it were? And it wasn't a conscious theme.

But how many times has it not come out in the ministry over this last year, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despised the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. How many times have I reminded you of Peter, whose eyes were on Jesus. He was able to walk on the water.

He was able to overcome the trials and the tribulation and the problems. The moment he took his eyes off Jesus, he began to sink. And Jesus himself said these words, when these things begin to happen, look up.

Let's get our eyes off the world. I'm trying to get my eyes off the church, and yet it's in my face all the time. Let's look up.

Let's lift up our heads, because our redemption draws nigh. Jesus is coming, and he's coming very, very soon. First Samuel chapter 7 verse 12.

This was in Henry's devotional a couple of days ago. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Misbah and Shem, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, Thus far has the Lord helped us. Thus far has the Lord helped us.

God has seen us through these years. He has seen us through this last year, and he will see us through the coming years. And we need to raise up those Ebenezers and remind ourselves of his faithfulness, that when man is unfaithful, he remains faithful, because he cannot deny himself.

His very essence is faithfulness. His very essence is graciousness towards those who fear him. So let me close with that hymn.

Unfortunately, we can't sing it, but we have it in our hymn book, and I'm just going to read it, because it really expresses much of my heart at this point. Come thou fount of every blessing. Tune my heart to sing thy grace.

Streams of mercy never ceasing. Call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnets sung by flaming tongues above.

Raise the mount I'm fixed upon it. Mount of God's unchanging love. Here I raise my Ebenezer.

Hither by thy help I've come, and I hope by thy good pleasure safely to arrive at home. Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God. He to rescue me from danger interposed his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be. Let thy grace, Lord, like a fetter bind my healed heart to thee. Let me know thee in thy fullness.

Guide me by thy mighty hand. Till transformed in thine own image, in thy presence I shall stand. Father, I pray that this may be our prayer, Lord, that we're grateful that you've brought us through.

And Lord, that even though the fire and the flood has come, you have been faithful and you've brought us thus far. And because you've brought us thus far, Lord, we are confident that you will take us through to the end. We're confident that you'll take us through to the end of this year and up to the point when Jesus comes.

Lord, I pray that you would help us to not be so confident in ourselves that we are easily led astray. And Lord, that we walk in humility and brokenness before you. Absolutely dependent on your grace to keep us and to hold us.

Absolutely dependent on you to reveal truth and error to us. Lord, I pray for this church. I pray, Lord, that you would keep us.

I pray, Lord, that you would protect us from error. I pray, Lord, that you would protect me from error. Lord, that you'd protect us from sin and evil and from immorality.

And Lord, those who are amongst us who may still be dabbling with sin, I pray that they may become holy and righteous still. And Lord, that as we come to the end of this year of Jesus' tarrys, we may come to a point of saying, yes, the Lord has brought us even further. And yes, we see that there has been great growth in our lives personally.

There has been a deepening of our faith. There's been an increase in our righteousness and in our holiness. There's been a purifying of our integrity.

And we've become a little bit more like the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, we've said many things this morning that are hard. But I pray that by your grace, we may hear what it is that you're saying.

And Lord, I do believe that this is a relevant message for our time. So Lord, I pray that you'd go with us now and that you'd keep us and protect us. Not just in this week, but until Jesus comes.

I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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