

(Early Anabaptism) the Approaching Wave of Persecution

by Denny Kenaston

The approaching wave of persecution is coming to America soon, and God is sending witnesses from other lands to warn us and prepare us for the challenges ahead.

Duration: 1:28:15

Scripture: Mark 10:23

Topics: "Anabaptism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preparing for hard times and the return of the Lord. He urges listeners to teach their children the Bible and equip them for the challenges they will face. The speaker also highlights the presence of persecution and fire in America and encourages believers to be aware of it and seek wisdom to navigate through it. The sermon concludes with a call to be prepared and alert, comparing it to being aware of an approaching wave and taking necessary precautions.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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I want us to stand for a word of prayer before we go any further. Can we do that? One more time, on your feet, let's pray together. Father, our hearts unite with that prayer.

And the other prayers that we've sang already here today, they express our hearts. Yes, Lord, we love you today. We're excited about being here.

Yes, Father, it's Sunday and we get to be here. Thank you, Lord. We acknowledge you.

We acknowledge your presence. We thank you, Lord, that where your presence is, there is the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Thank you for that, God.

Father, we also do acknowledge this morning that we have an enemy. And that enemy would seek to destroy and hinder everything that you want to do in this place today. So, God, we ask you a special prayer this morning that you would rebuke the enemy away from us, dear God.

And, oh, that you'd give your spirit, that comforting, that enlivening spirit, free course in this meeting, God. Thank you for Jesus Christ. Thank you for his blood, dear God.

We rest under his name and we rest underneath that precious blood this morning, God. Have thy will and way in all we say and do, God. We trust you.

We thank you for hearing us all in Jesus' name. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

You may be seated. Well, I'm very grateful to be here this morning. Excited about the things that God is doing in our midst.

I must admit, traveling is difficult when God is busy doing beautiful things at home. It's difficult to go away. Come home on Monday and the family's just chattering about the beautiful things that God did on the Lord's day.

And I missed it. But, that's just part of traveling. I'm very grateful to be here today and to be singing the songs of Zion with the people of Zion.

So, I greet you in Jesus' name. And, I have a little bit of a different kind of a message this morning. I appreciated Brother Jeff's opening.

It's actually one of the points in my sermon, Brother Jeff. So, we'll get it twice. But, that's alright.

It's probably one of the most important points in my sermon. But, I would like to speak a bit this morning on the subject of persecution. And, it can be a very morbid subject.

But, it doesn't have to be. Warnings can be some of the most loving words that we can hear. Warnings can be some of the most loving words that we can hear.

And, it may be a bit difficult to put your mind on persecution as we live here in America. I mean, everything around us says opposite of that. Life's pretty nice.

We came to church this morning in freedom. We carried Bibles with us. We sang as loud as we wanted to.

Everything was beautiful today. We went freely to this place and that place through the week. What do you mean, persecution? Well, I would like us to put our mind a bit on persecution this morning.

The title of my message is, The Approaching Wave of Persecution. The Approaching Wave of Persecution. Because I travel, I have the opportunity to take surveys wherever I go.

And, I appreciate taking those surveys. I get to ask questions to large groups of people and see where God's people are at by the raise of their hands. One of the questions that I ask everywhere I go, even outside of our own circle of fellowship, is this.

Is persecution coming to America soon? You know what I get when I ask that question? Most of the time, I get about 75% of the people raising their hands. Is persecution coming to America soon? And 75% of God's people in our circles and outside of our circles raise their hands and say yes. And they do it without hesitation.

It's not like they stop for a moment and think about it and one puts their hand and the next one. It's just like you give the question and the hands go up. It's like, yes, we know that.

Yes, it's in our hearts. Yes, our minds bear witness to that fact. 75% of them raise their hands.

It is shocking to me that all these Christians believe it is coming, but it doesn't seem to affect their lives very much. That's shocking to me. I wonder this morning, how many of you believe that persecution is coming soon? Let me see your hands.

Okay, I think probably 75%. Maybe more, since I primed your pump a little. Maybe a little more.

But the point is that we are very consciously aware that our days of peace and prosperity are numbered. Amen? We are aware of that. It's very clear to me that this is a message that the Spirit of God is speaking to the American church.

Just like it says in Revelation, If any man have ears, let him hear what the Spirit is saying unto the churches. And so even this morning we would say, and I think we would all agree, that this is a message that the Spirit of God is saying to the churches in America. Or they wouldn't be able to quickly answer that question.

God is bearing witness in the hearts of God's people in this land that persecution is coming soon. It's not happenstance that God sends witnesses from other lands. These witnesses bear testimony of persecution.

Maybe you even get some periodicals in the mail. And I'm grateful for the ones that we get. And frankly, I'm grateful for the pictures that they put in there.

Because it brings a sober reality upon us that this is how other people, God's people, are living in other lands other than where we are. We get the little Voice of the Martyrs magazine in our home. And whenever it comes, we all pick it up and we go through it and we look at some of the articles.

But if we don't read all the articles, I guarantee you we look at every picture. And they put pictures in there. And that is a witness from the Spirit of God.

It is a loving warning from God sending persecuted Christians over here to tell us what it is like. God is doing that. Do you believe that? God is not just sending them here so that we can feel compassion for them and pray for them and give to help minister to them.

Although I do believe that God is sending them here so that we can do that. And I believe it's part of our responsibility to do that. But God is also sending them here to get us awake and alert to the fact that our own days are numbered.

They're numbered. Our minds are being placed continually upon persecution through those witnesses. God is trying to prepare us, I believe.

Now, in the title of my sermon I said, The Approaching Wave of Persecution. That little phrase, the approaching wave, means it is on its way. Amen? When you look at that illustration of a wave that is approaching, that means it's on its way.

I don't know where it is. I don't know where it is. I can look out into the ocean and I say, Well, I don't see it out there, but there's a wave that is approaching.

And it takes a long time for those waves to make their way into the shore. But, they're coming. I thought about the tsunami and the people that were on the shorelines of Indonesia on the day that that wave came.

That was an approaching wave. I don't remember how long it took from the moment of that severing of the earth underneath the ocean until that 100 foot wave hit the shores of Indonesia. But it was a space of time.

And it didn't matter whether that thing was out there and it was approaching the shoreline of Indonesia. The people on the shoreline, they didn't know. They looked out into the ocean.

It just looked like a normal day. The blue sky was there. The sun was shining.

They were playing out on the beach. The people were sitting out on their verandas in the beautiful resort hotels around that area. And all of a sudden, 100 foot wave hits the shore there in Indonesia.

Just another peaceful day. And then all of a sudden, destruction came. That's a picture of what we're talking about.

And my desire here this morning is to not make everyone afraid, you know. We don't want to live in fear. But rather my burden is that we would be awake, that we would be alert and that we would prepare.

I mean, if you know there's a wave coming, you're gonna prepare. Right? I mean, if you believe that a wave is coming, you're gonna prepare. But we're not like those people on the shorefront in Indonesia.

We know it is going to come. We know that. But somehow, God needs to help us to be alert enough that we begin acting on the basis of what we believe.

Reading in Habakkuk chapter 2, I found these words in Habakkuk chapter 2 verse 1 through 3 and then also verse 4. I found them very much fitting the burden of this message. The context here in Habakkuk chapter 2 is the approaching armies of Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem. The approaching armies of Babylon and the destruction that they will bring to Jerusalem.

That is the context of these verses. Habakkuk says, I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what He, the Lord, will say unto me and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me and said, Habakkuk, write the vision and make it plain upon tables that He may run that readeth it.

Now, again, look at the context here. The context is the approaching armies of Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem. And at this point, they haven't left Babylon yet.

But God says the armies are approaching. God, who sees all things, the beginning and the end, all at the same time, He can look at it all and say, The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

But, in the meantime, behold, His soul which is lifted up is not upright in Him, but the just shall live by His faith. Interesting that that verse is in there in the flow of that context, isn't it? But the just shall live by His faith. God, through the prophet Habakkuk, is pleading with His people, pleading with them to prepare.

But they would not. Pleading with them to believe that, in fact, the words of the prophet are going to come to pass. But they wouldn't believe.

And because they didn't believe, they didn't act. And because they didn't act, the day came when the armies of Babylon were surrounding the city of Jerusalem and they were all stuck and they couldn't get away. God is calling us to unstop our ears and hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the churches.

And sometimes it's difficult for us to hear, isn't it? Because if you go by what you see and what you sense in the natural, oh, everything seems very nice. I mean, it's peaceful, it's peace and safety and life is just moving right along. And, you know, if you go by what you see, you wouldn't be alerted at all.

But God is calling us to unstop our ears and hear. Recently I've been strongly challenged on this subject. What am I doing to warn Christians of the inevitable purge that is coming upon American Christianity? And I've answered them back.

I do warn. I do say that. I constantly put a little spot in here and there when I'm preaching about the subject of persecution.

I do warn. It is coming. But it seems to me that people are waiting for more facts.

See, we in the natural, we need to see it. You know, we need to see the submarines out there, you know, just out there in the ocean, you know, parked on American waters. We need to see the submarines out there with the missiles pointing out.

Then, oh, oh, okay, yeah, that's right, wake up, let's go. That's just kind of how we are in the natural. But God is calling us to be spiritual and to be awake and to be alert to what is going to happen in this land where we live.

We want to wait until we see the tsunami wave way out there in the ocean, way bigger than the rest. Then, oh, then, yes, then we'll move. But God wants us to wake up before that.

Next, consider these verses this morning. Over in the book of Daniel, if you'll just turn there. Daniel chapter 7. Now, we're not going to get into a detailed discussion of prophecy here this morning.

But I want to read these verses and I want us just to draw from the general revelation of what they give to us. Without getting into all the details of horns and weeks and all of those things, I want us just to draw from the spirit of this general revelation of these verses. In Daniel chapter 7 and verse 21, Daniel says, I beheld, and the same horn or power made war with the saints, made war with the saints and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was given, and the judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Now, that's a beautiful little portion of Scripture. But I want us to notice that there's a war coming before that. And He prevailed against the saints.

Let me ask you this morning, is that talking about the saints in China and the saints in Vietnam, but not the saints in America? How many of you think it's just over there in China? Not one taker. He will make war

with the saints and prevail. Those are sobering words.

Reading further, Thus He said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, or all the kingdoms before, and shall devour the whole earth. There is a fourth kingdom which will devour the whole earth. In those days, it will not be a problem dividing between the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God.

This fourth kingdom will devour the whole earth. That's what He says. And shall tread it down and break it in pieces.

And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise, and another shall arise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings, and he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints. Circle that. He shall wear out the saints.

That's us, brothers and sisters. The saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into His hand until the time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away His dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. Far enough to read there in that portion of Scripture. Now we see there some very sobering words, but there's also some pretty encouraging words in there.

I mean, yeah, there's a battle coming, and it's going to be a raging battle, and it's not going to be an easy battle, but bless God, when it's all done, we're going to be on the winning side if we're faithful. And that's nice to know, isn't it? I mean, it's pretty easy to go into battle when you know you're on the winning side. Chapter 8 and verse 23 through 27.

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, sound like now, when the transgressors are come to the full, in the midst of all that wickedness, which is rampant throughout the whole earth, a king of fierce countenance and understanding, dark senses shall stand up, and his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power, and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. There again, looks like loss, not victory. But remember how Christians win.

Looks like loss, but it's victory. He shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand.

It will be prosperity. And he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many. He shall destroy many by peace.

Interesting way to destroy, by peace. He shall also stand up against the prince of princes, but he shall be broken without hand. And the vision of the evening and the morning, which was told, is true.

Wherefore, shut thou up the vision, for it shall be for many days. And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick certain days. Afterward, I rose up and did the king's business, and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

Revelation also. Again, let's just pick up the spirit of this general revelation. Revelation chapter 12 and verse 17.

Basically, the same word that we read in Daniel. Verse 17. And the dragon was wrath, angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Here now, in Daniel, we saw a king. Here we are seeing the king who is in charge of the other king. Here we pull back the veil and see the spiritual side of all this and recognize that it's not just men in high places.

It's not just this king and that king. It's not just this king and his armies and his missiles. But you pull back the veil, you see another king in charge of all those kings, and here he is called the dragon.

And he made war with the remnant of her seed. Chapter 13 and verse 7-9. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints.

It was allowed that he could make war with the saints. Question. Who allows him to make war with the saints? Hmm? God does.

God, all-wise, all-loving, all-powerful God, allows him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations. That's a worldwide influence.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.

He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. Be a lamb and allow yourself to be destroyed.

This is the patience of the saints. As we draw from the general sense of these words, it is sobering to us. And without us going into all the details of it, we need not go into the details to be able to look at it and recognize that's speaking about the time of the end.

And that's not speaking about persecution in China. That's speaking about persecution in the whole world. And whether you realize it, brothers and sisters, we are a very big part of that whole world.

And the most influential part of that whole world. Financially and in many other ways. What an utter foolish thing for us to think that the persecution is breaking out over there.

But it's not going to come and break out here. What a foolish thing to think. When I was young, a young Christian, I used to say when I read verses like these, these verses are not for me.

I believed, I was taught in my Baptist setting that the rapture will come and snatch us out of here before all these things come to pass. I don't believe that anymore. But in those days, that's what I thought when I read those verses.

I thought, no problem, the rapture will take care of that. I've even heard ministers say at times of difficulty, when there was unrest in the congregation, I've heard ministers say, don't worry about a thing. The rapture will come before life gets hard.

I don't believe that, brothers and sisters. The rapture is not going to come before life gets hard. Christians in other lands have drawn strength and stability and courage by reading these verses that we've read.

And realized, hey, this is supposed to be happening. This is part. It must be near the end.

Maybe Jesus will come soon. That's how they've drawn strength and comfort from them. Oh, but they say, and oh, many say, multitudes say today, relax, don't worry about a thing.

The rapture will be our escape. I don't believe that, brothers and sisters. The rapture will not be our escape.

Yes, it may be our final escape, but it will not be our escape from this war that we're talking about here, that we read about. It will not be our escape. In fact, it's allowed by God to be a proving ground to see who loves Him.

I mean, why would God let us escape the war since we're soldiers? Oh, relax, don't worry. The rapture will be our escape. Yeah, tell that to the Russian Christians, and the Christians in Uganda, and the Christians in Rwanda, and the Christians that are in China.

Tell that to the Christians who live in Muslim lands today. Don't worry about a thing. The rapture is going to come and snatch us all out of here.

Oh, brothers and sisters, we need to recognize that that is not the truth. Trouble is coming. I remember the sad story that was given to me.

I read it somewhere in a book of the fruit, the results of wrong teaching that the missionaries gave to the Chinese Christians. This kind of teaching that I just talked to you about. And the Chinese Christians, they thought, hey, before things get tough, the rapture will come.

And all of a sudden, the Boxer Rebellion broke out. And after the Boxer Rebellion, more trouble. And after that trouble, more trouble.

And finally, the Cultural Revolution. And literally thousands and ten thousands of Christians have been martyred in China. And many of the Christians who believed that this is just going to all be swept away for us through the rapture, many of them gave up the faith.

Because they were disillusioned. All of a sudden, trouble was everywhere. And they thought, we're going to be snatched out of the way.

As I see it, at the time of the end, God's people will be persecuted in all parts of the world. That's what I see in the Scriptures. And I don't think you have to be a great student in order to see that and discern it.

God's people will be persecuted in all the world. Our day is coming. This wave of persecution is coming.

And we need to be awake. And we need to be alert to the fact that it's going to come. Some have said to me, Brother Denny, there is a conspiracy here in the United States to bring the people of America into bondage.

Maybe you've heard those things too. There's a conspiracy going on. There are men working behind the scenes and their whole goal is to bring all of America into bondage.

What are we going to do about it? Nothing. Nothing. What is a conspiracy? A conspiracy, here's the definition out of the dictionary, is people working together secretly to do something that is wrong.

That's what a conspiracy is. They say that the Rockefellers and the Rothschilds and many other of the world's wealthy elite are the ones that are behind this conspiracy and they're working in a certain direction to bring about a one world government that they will rule with a one world monetary system which they'll be in charge of. And it's a conspiracy and we need to stop it.

You know, when I start thinking that through a little bit, I think, now wait a minute, what do you want to stop? Do you want to stop the very thing that God is going to bring at the time of the end which will bring the final battle and bring the Lord Jesus Christ back to this earth and all of those things? Do you want to stop that? I don't want to stop that. I don't know about Rockefeller and Rothschild and all of those wealthy elite, but this I do know. Let's just look one step further behind the scenes.

Satan and all of his demons are in a conspiracy to do just these things that we see here in the Scriptures. And they're working behind the scenes. Remember, these things are determined.

They are determined. Just like the crucifixion of Christ was determined, every step that the devils take closer to their goal, every step that the wealthy elite take closer to their goal is just like the crucifixion. It will actually be their final doom.

Do we want to stop all of that? Do we want to get on some political bandwagon and try to stop all these things? Well, it just depends on which kingdom you're in. You know, which kingdom are you in? But do we want to stop all those things? In my own heart, I think, no, I don't want to stop them. I want to get ready for them.

Because they are coming. Yeah, there are men working behind the scenes. But remember, there's a devil behind those men and the devil's working behind the scenes to bring about all the things which will be the final end.

And the devil usually uses men to get his work done. So, it doesn't matter to me if it's Rockefeller or Rothschild or some other men. You know, it really doesn't matter.

Let's pull back far enough that we can see this thing from God's perspective. The devil is conspiring for a one world order, for a one world religion, for a one world monetary system and for a one world ruler. And it's going to happen.

Amen? He can't stop it. It's going to happen. God's letting it happen.

God wants it to happen. The wave is coming, brothers and sisters. This is not for us to worry about.

It is for us to prepare. Look up. Your redemption is drawing nigh.

But, there's going to be a war before that redemption. We need to get ready for the war. Because it's coming here.

And it's coming sooner than you think. We have read in the Bible. We know that trouble is coming.

We also know who will win. Hallelujah! And we also know how to win. We win by dying.

We win by dying. My plea is that we will believe it. That the wave is coming.

That we will believe it and prepare. And I don't know when the wave is coming. Maybe it's four years away.

My personal opinion, I don't think it's twenty years away. I think we're going to be shocked. Most of God's people are going to be shocked.

All of a sudden, everything is going to change in this land. And we're going to be shocked. But God wants us to be prepared.

And that's the burden of the message this morning. Maybe it's only four years away. Let's just, for the sake of illustration, let's just put it in that slot.

Four years and the wave is going to hit this side of the United States. Let's just say it's four years away. How should that affect my life? Number one, how can I prepare? I need to learn my Bible.

I need to learn my Bible. They're going to take my Bible away from me. Is that right? They're going to take it away from me.

But they cannot take it away from me if it is in my heart. Amen? We need to learn our Bible. History is clear.

One of the first things that they will take away is our Bible. Oh Lord, wake us up! They're going to take our Bibles away. The evil authorities know that if they cut off the source of our strength, the Bible, then they can pretty well keep us in the place that they want us to be in.

But oh, brothers and sisters, let us get ready now. Let us learn our Bibles. Let us read it.

Let us study it. Let us memorize it. Let us treasure it.

The day will come. The day will come when a Bible like this will be more valuable than pure solid gold. And if we get a hold of one again, we'll hold it in our hands and we'll weep tears of gratitude that we have one.

Because that day is coming! And we have them all over our house. And we read the Lancaster Farming, you know, and we get on the internet, and we zoom here and get at this information and that information, and the devil's just laughing while we're wasting hours that we could be putting in this book, hiding it in our heart. They're going to take our Bible away.

Agreed? Huh? They'll take it away. They're going to take it away. They can't take it out of here.

Hallelujah. They can't take it out of here. No way.

In fact, testimonies would read that if it's in here, and they take this one away from you, it just starts bubbling out. He, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, shall bring to you, bring to remembrance all the things you need to know. How? Through His Word, which we've hidden in our hearts.

The early Anabaptists spent much time in the Bible and hiding the Word in their hearts. It's very evident when you read the Martyr's Mirror, they knew their Bibles inside and out. And remember, that was back when you didn't have Bibles like this that you could carry around.

They had to go out of their way to learn the Bible. But they learned the Bible. When they were at work, they had portions of the Scripture up there.

While they were doing whatever their work was, working with their hands, they kept their minds free so that they could learn the Bible. And it became their strength and their shield when the heat was on. Brothers and sisters, there are a lot of things in this land that we live in that are a waste of time.

Though they're not wicked, but they're just a waste of time. Number two, in preparation, let us study persecution. Let us become students of persecution.

Now, you may think this is a very morbid point. But stay with me. Let's go deeper.

Let's look beyond the natural response and see the spiritual realities of what takes place if we become a student of persecution. This will cause you to meditate upon persecution. And God wants us to meditate upon persecution.

The purpose of meditation is mental practice. The purpose of meditation is preparation for reality. That's one of the purposes of meditation.

Let's read this verse in Hebrews. Can we turn over there? Very interesting verse. A command, by the way, that God gives to us people of God.

Hebrews 13.3 says these words. Hebrews 13.3 Remember them that are in bonds, those that are persecuted and thrown in prison, in chains and all other things. Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them.

And them which suffer adversity as being yourself also in the body. Now, God is asking us to put our mind upon those who are suffering persecution. So again, when witnesses come from other lands and share with us, and people give us periodicals and we read about it, it gives us the opportunity to put ourselves in their shoes.

That's what this verse is saying. Put yourself in the shoes of those that are suffering because you are also in the same body. Because the body of Christ is one.

And remember those that are in bonds as if you were also bound with them. In other words, God is saying, I want you to get very close in your identification with those who suffer. Put yourself there in jail next to them.

That will do a lot of things. Yes. You'll pray for them more if you do that.

Number two, it will begin to prepare your own heart. My day is also coming. You see, God needs to get us over the hump.

Right now we go, Oh, my day is coming. Am I going to be able to handle it? Oh, Lord. God needs to get us over that hump to where we say, Yes, my day is also coming.

Bring it on, Lord. Bring it on. God needs to get us over that hump.

See, we're talking about a war. Amen? No soldiers go out to war going, Oh, I hope I can make it. No! That's not how a soldier is.

Remember them that are in bonds as if you were bound with them. And those that suffer as if you are also in their body. Because you are.

And what does this do? It causes us to think upon them. It causes us to put ourselves in their place. And it begins to prepare our own hearts.

And I believe we need to do that. He wants us to become students. This can be difficult in a prosperous land.

We are so easily lulled to sleep. Remember, the Anabaptists, they have their martyr's mirror. And there's one in almost every house.

I'm not sure how many of them are reading it these days, but it's on the shelf there. Maybe you have one on your shelf. My personal opinion is it doesn't hurt to let your children read the martyr's mirror.

And it's good for us to read it also. Or Fox's Book of Martyrs. These are good.

Number three. Live for the Lord now. Learn to walk in the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Ghost now.

Nothing will prepare us more than that. Some are fearful. How will I ever make it? Live for the Lord now, brothers and sisters.

Do it with all your heart. Some have said, how can I know that I will endure when those difficult days come? I want to tell you how. God's grace is manifold, many-folded.

If we walk in His grace today, God will give us the grace to suffer persecution tomorrow. It works that way. God will give us what we need.

Think about it. There is dying grace. You don't need dying grace until you're laying on your deathbed.

But how many of God's people, God's faithful people, lay on their deathbed and say, oh, the grace that God has given to me while I'm dying. That's the way it works. There is sickness and suffering grace.

And some of us in this room know what that's all about. How the grace of God comes when you're really going through a sick time or a painful time or a time of much suffering in your body. It's like the grace of God comes upon you.

When you lose a loved one, there's grace to lose a loved one. And how many times we've been to a funeral and talked to those that are still alive and heard them say, I can't believe the grace that God is pouring on me! But my friends, that grace God is pouring upon the faithful. So all you need to do is learn to walk in the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Spirit day by day.

And when that wave comes, we'll be ready! We will have that strength. God will shower us with the strength that we need. He will! Just like He does in all those other difficult things that we have faced.

He will be. But here's the challenge. If you can't live for Him now, you surely won't be able to die for Him or suffer for Him, which, by the way, is more difficult than dying for Him.

It would be real easy to just shoot me in the head and be done. But they may stick you in a prison for three months and torture you before they kill you. But if you cannot live for Him now, you will not be able to die

for Him.

I guarantee it. God said these words to Jeremiah. I think it's in chapter 12.

Jeremiah was complaining a bit to God about how tough things were and how the people aren't listening to him and all of that. And God said these words to Jeremiah. If the footmen tire you, what will you do when the horses come? Good word.

My frank opinion is we don't even have any footmen. There ain't even any footmen around yet. We need to get ready.

Number four. Moving along here. Arm yourselves with a mind to suffer and deny yourself.

Arm yourself with this mind. Like it says in 1 Peter 4, verses 1 and 2. Arm yourselves with the same mind in the way that Christ suffered. Arm yourselves with the same mind.

God says, we Americans tend to take the easy way. We do it without even thinking. That's not going to work.

We should be rather thinking, I think I'll take the harder way. But we tend to take the easy way. Don't we? I do.

Anybody else like that? We just tend to take the easy, you know. Here's a couple of options. Oh, I'll take this.

Here's a nice car. Not so nice car. Well, I'll take this one.

We Americans tend to take the easy way. We do it without even thinking. But we must go a different way if we're going to prepare for this wave that's coming.

Because it's coming. Choose the hard way. Do it on purpose.

Suffering is good. Learn to bear it patiently. Learn to endure hardness now as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

In prison, the testimonies are like this. Christians last longer than others in prison. Why? They have a mind to suffer.

They're not afraid to die. Fasting is not a problem to them. Fellowship with God is a reality to them.

And Christians always last longer than other people who are thrown in prison and put under difficult circumstances. Let us prepare our minds. These things are going to come upon us.

Number five. We need to change our mind about material things. We need to change our mind about material things.

Mark this down. Persecution and poverty are always sisters. Is persecution coming to our land, brothers and sisters? Poverty will come right along with it.

Do we know how to live in poverty? Are we prepared at all to live in poverty? Persecution and poverty are twin sisters. It is the first thing that the authorities do every time, is they take away your money, they take

away your land, they take away your house. It's the first thing that goes.

Take away all their money and they can't do anything. Are we ready to live in poverty? We must lower our standard of living and learn to be content with it. Did you hear me? We need to lower our standard of living.

The persecuting government always chases you from your home, fines you large sums of money for whatever you did, refuses you the best jobs, seizes your property and pushes you into a little apartment somewhere and that's where you live with your five children. That's what they do. Are we ready for that? And ultimately, and we all know this, the mark of the beast will come and you will not be able to buy or sell without it, which means we're going to be in poverty, if not starvation.

Amen? We need to change our mind about materialism as we prepare for what is coming. We should read in Mark chapter 10. If you can turn over there with me and your Bibles.

Important Scripture in light of this subject and I'd like us to read it. It speaks about persecution down toward the end of this portion of Scripture, but I'd like us just to hold persecution over these verses while we read it in Mark chapter 10 verse 23 and following. And Jesus looked around about and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at His words.

But Jesus answereth again and saith unto them, Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! He's speaking a little deeper there. He made this statement, now He's giving some of the principles behind this statement. If you have lots of money, you tend to trust in that money and if you're trusting in the money, you cannot enter into the kingdom.

He goes further. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but with God, but not with God, for with God all things are possible.

Then Peter began to say unto Him, Lo, we have left all and have followed Thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house or brethren or sister or father or mother or wife or children or lands for My sake and the Gospels. Note that.

For My sake and the Gospels. But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions. And in the world to come, ah, eternal life is there.

It is a good exercise of the heart and mind to just walk away from your little place where you live. It's a good exercise in your heart and your mind to just pack up a few little things that you have, put them in one vehicle, put all of your children in there, put your dear wife next to you. Look at it all.

Look at your house. Look at that shed. Look at your tractor.

Look at all the other vehicles and that nice truck and all those things. Pile everybody up in one little car and drive away from it all, leaving it behind never to see it again. The day will come when many of us will do that.

It's good to be practicing that one ahead of time because it's coming. It's going to come. I remember the testimony of Boris, that Russian man, as he gave testimony of the Russian Christians, and many of these Christians were warned, the communist purge is coming and it's going to be against the Christians.

They were warned. If you're going to flee, now's the time to flee. But only a few fled.

All the rest didn't believe it and stayed behind. But do you know why they stayed behind? Their houses, their land, their businesses, the money they had in the bank and all these things is the reason why it was hard for them to believe the simple message that the wave of persecution is approaching. And they stayed behind and suffered much because of it.

The Bible is clear. The day is coming when we will not be able to buy or sell. I think we need to change our mind about material things.

Number six. Learn to stand for the truth now. Because that's the issue.

When persecution comes, the issue is going to be the truth. Let's learn to stand for the truth now. As I study church history, persecution always comes because of truth.

Persecutors are always pressing the persecuted to compromise with the truth. They don't care if you are a Christian. Just be one to yourself at home.

But don't stand for the truth openly. Don't preach to others. And don't allow the government to guide your children.

Can you do those three? Compromise the truth. Stop preaching to others. And allow the government to guide your children.

Are you ready for that? That is exactly what they will ask us all to do. And they will tell you. Sitting in an interrogation room, they will tell you, look, I don't care if you are a Christian.

You can go home and be a Christian. I don't care. But these three things you must do.

You need to compromise the truth. Go to the registered church. Number two, you need to stop preaching the gospel.

Number three, you let your children come to our schools. If you do that, we will let you out of jail. Are you ready for that? In other words, be a Christian in name only is the bottom line.

The one world religion of the last days will have many right things in it. It will have right ethics in it. But it will be false to the core.

Just to give an example of compromising truth or not. The Bible says that Jesus is the only way that you can come to God. By His blood and His sacrifice is the only way to come to God.

Now, where we live, that's a simple one. We all believe that. That's not a problem.

We would all raise our hand and say, Amen. That's right theology. I believe that.

But what you may not realize is the climate, even in this land where we live, is very slowly changing. And more and more people are considering you to be a fanatical bigot if you only believe that Jesus is the only

way to Heaven. And the day will come when you will be tempted to not profess that only way to Heaven because of the pressure that is on you.

I've felt that pressure. Maybe you have too. I've felt it at times when I've been out witnessing.

When I'm sitting in a group of five or six people in Washington Square Park and all of a sudden they say, You mean to tell me that only Jesus? You mean to tell me that the Jews are going to Hell? You mean to tell me that Muslims are going to Hell? And only you Christians are going to go to Heaven? And all of a sudden you've got six of them scowling at you after they ask you that question. Well, now what are you going to do? See? Learn to stand for the truth now. It's not going to get easier.

I guarantee it. It's not going to get easier. The divorce issue is real to most of us in this room.

Let us learn to stand for truth now. Distinctive Christianity in the midst of a fashion crazy world is issues. Learn to stand now.

Family reunions can be a real challenge at times. Learn to say no. I'll never forget the family reunion that we were at years ago and my aunt and uncle had a big swimming pool in their backyard and they said, Can the children go swimming? And I said, Yeah, sure.

If everybody will swim in their clothes. End of subject. No, we don't put on a swimming suit and go jumping around in the water with a bunch of other people that don't have any clothes on.

Amen? And the last illustration. The boldness to witness for Christ. The fear of man is what stops us from witnessing now.

Think how difficult it will be when your neck is on the line. Learn to stand for the truth now. Number seven, and this is the last point.

Prepare your children. Prepare your children. This goes back to Brother Jeff's closing comments.

If we know that hard times are coming upon our children, what a shame to not prepare those children ahead of time. Back over the points that we gave. I've been giving them to us because we need to apply them to us.

But think about it. Think about a generation of children who grew up in soft America. Who are growing up not learning the Bible.

When they're going to take their Bible away from them too. Our children need to learn their Bibles. They've got sharp minds.

It's just a matter of putting it in the schedule. They can memorize two or three verses in the Bible every day. They've got sharp minds.

We have these cassettes. You can play the Bible on cassette. The children can go to sleep listening to the Bible.

It's real difficult. You just walk into the room and go... and walk back out. But the fact of the matter is if the children grow up listening to the Bible like that, they'll be filled with the Word of God.

This last trip that we made to Africa, we were discussing this subject with my son Daniel. And he brought it up. I didn't.

He said, Papa, thank you for making us listen to the Bible every time we went to bed for a nap and every time we went to sleep at night. I'm full of the Bible. My mind is filled with theology.

And I never took a theology course. Well, thank you, Lord. Amen.

We can do that. It's real difficult. Just walk out of the room.

Day after day after day. They can study persecution. We can lead them to a clear, continual dedication to God.

Some of our young people are not in that place. We can lead them to a clear, consistent dedication to God. They're going to need it.

I guarantee you they're going to need it. We can guide their lives in such a way that they learn what self-denial and suffering is. You say, well, that's not right.

Don't give Johnny a hard thing to do. No. Give him something hard to do.

Let him work until he gets blisters on his hands. Can I say that? Give him something to do so he cuts his finger every now and then. Give him some work to do.

He smacks his finger with a hammer every now and then. Let him work out in the garden where he sweats. Teach them self-denial.

By the way, every general who has a son, who wants to see that son on a battlefield someday, I guarantee you he doesn't let him grow up in a bed of ease. I guarantee it. Because that general knows what he's going to face out there on the battlefield.

Every general who has a son, he says, I want my son to be on the battlefield someday. He doesn't let him grow up on beds of ease. That doesn't make soldiers, amen? It doesn't.

What about the material issues? You know, it's so good for our children to hear us say, you know, we don't need that brand new truck. Let's just get a little older one. Or it's good for them to hear us say, no, we can't afford that right now.

No, we can't afford that right now. That's good to hear, amen girls? You're blessed. You're blessed if you can't afford it right now.

That's not a shame. That's not a problem. That's a blessing.

If you can't afford it right now. And lastly, teach them also to stand for the truth. Teach them.

They can. They'll have opportunities. Even in our own church, they'll have opportunities at times.

Hey, let's go outside. No, my father wants me to stay in here. Let's go down into that room in the basement.

No, my father said we're not supposed to do that. Teach them to stand for the truth. We believe that that day of persecution is coming.

Amen? We believe the day is coming when the children will not have a Bible. We believe that. Daniel chapter 12 in closing.

The approaching wave of persecution is not all bad. There's many beautiful things that will happen in this land of ours when those things come upon us. We will become the church beautiful like we've never ever known.

There are many beautiful things that will come with that wave of persecution. If we understand its effect upon the church. If we understand how it produces the life of Christ in the believers.

Since we know that the final victory is ours. It will be a time of great opportunity. The time of the end.

Like it says in Daniel chapter 11. And they that do know their God shall do exploits. I don't believe we're just going to be running around hiding in the last days.

I believe we're going to be winning souls. You say, I don't know. You win a soul, you get your head cut off.

That's right. That's what the early Anabaptists did. They got their head cut off because they won a soul.

But guess what? Two souls in heaven, not one. They just got their head cut off. They were fearless.

They were not afraid to get their head cut off and go to glory and get a martyr's crown. So it's a time of opportunity. Not just a fearful time.

What are we going to do? No, it's going to be a beautiful time of opportunity. We need to get ready. The early Anabaptists had great troubles and great anguish of heart.

But souls were saved everywhere they went. And Brother Jeff, just to say it again. Chapter 9 verse 31 follows all the persecutions from chapter 8 through chapter 9. Chapter 9 verse 31, the one you read to us.

That concluded the persecutions in Acts. All the persecutions. Now the persecutor Paul is converted and all the persecutions stopped.

And then they continued in the fear of God and the grace of God. And brothers and sisters, persecution brings the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Ghost down upon His people. Chapter 12 verse 1 in closing.

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people. And there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time. And at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.

And they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased.

These are mysterious words, but I believe they're speaking about the day that we're living in. We live in the day when many are running to and fro and knowledge is multiplying in such a fast pace that it boggles the mind. And I believe God is opening these things up in the last of the last days to prepare His people so that we can stand in the midst of the troubles that are really going to come and stand in such a way that we're not afraid to die, that we're not afraid to lose our head and we can reap a mighty harvest in the midst of it all.

I believe that's God's will. May God add His witness to the word this morning. Thank you.

Thank you, Brother Danny, for a sobering message this morning. It's good for us to hear that. When we feed our children, we don't just give them the things that they like because a steady diet of that isn't healthy.

This message might be a little harder in some ways than others, but it's good for our health, our spiritual health. I've heard people say, I remember as a new Christian I heard a brother say that he was willing to die for Jesus. I think we saw some kind of movie where they chop people's heads off, you know, and he just shared that with me.

I love Jesus. I'm willing to die for him. But there were some areas of his life that he wasn't willing to die.

You know, it's easy to put it way far away. Yes, if I go to the chopping block, I would give my life for the Lord. But what about today? Are we, are you and I willing to die today? That hits home pretty close.

In fact, that even gives a little bit more glory to those deaths that we're called to. Are we willing to die when somebody's unjustly treating us? Are we willing to just take it and just lay down, not defend ourselves? Are we willing to die when there's a situation with my husband or my wife? There's a misunderstanding. Am I willing to be the one who dies? Or do I have to have my way? Do you have to defend your rights? Or have you lost all your rights? Death is the way to victory in the Christian life.

Peter, 1 Peter 4, For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind. For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. The whole mystery of Romans chapter 6. For you have died with Christ.

If we're walking in that, then as Brother Denny said, it won't be hard to take that last step when our head is on the line. So let's see the glory in those daily deaths. I'm just getting ready, Lord.

I'm just getting ready. I'm going to die. I'm going to lay down my life.

Maybe somebody has a testimony this morning. How God spoke to you. There's one up here.

If the Lord has put something in your heart to share, to build up the body, please do. Maybe you have a confession. Well, I know I've already shared this morning, but I just want to give a little background.

Sometimes when I see a man share the word, I want to know what motivated him, what the Lord spoke to him during the week that led him to that message. I've always wondered that at times when messages really speak to me. This morning I have to share.

Brother Aaron asked me to share the opening. Shortly after, I asked him, well, who's doing the main message? So I can be praying for my brother. Pray that somehow our messages would go together.

And I heard that Brother Denny was teaching and I began praying for him. I went to my study and I wrote out my lesson in probably five minutes. It just came to me.

And I put it away. And I thought, well, thank you, Lord. It's nice when that happens.

But then it's as though God spent the rest of the week saying, okay, you understand what you're going to teach intellectually, but you're not experiencing this. You're really not walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Spirit. You can get up there with some of your theological training and you can give verses on this, Jeff.

But I'm going to take you through the school of ministry this week. And it lasted right until last night's watching. Got a couple hours sleep.

But there was such a burden on me today for what was going to happen. And I realized in America, it's so easy to look at China or look at the Middle East and say, God bless those Christians for their persecution, but that's not going to affect me. And I've been praying, Lord, how can I get that refining fire that they have? And that's a dangerous prayer to pray.

It was just simple things this week. And I'll just briefly share in one minute. I got a tax return.

And for three years I've been using this computer I bought for \$75. I ran a writing business with this computer. And when I finally had a little money, I knew that we as a family, if we're ever going to go to the Middle East where we're called to serve as missionaries, we've got to get this language down.

So I bought a refurbished computer and a used computer that could run this program the right way. But the time I spent looking into the prices and then programming the computer and then shipping the clunker back that didn't work, little by little I was being dragged away from the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Spirit. I didn't even know.

I had my lesson down. I'm not going to stand up there on Sunday unprepared. I've already written that thing.

But God was telling me all week long, you're just drifting. You're getting bogged down by the things of this world, Jeff. And I was so dry last night.

As a young man, I had an opportunity to take Bibles into Russia and into China. I was caught taking them into China, and I thought my life was over. They lined us all up, the guards were there with guns, and I thought, well, this is it.

But you know, I had another opportunity, witnessing to a man in Reno who took hold of me and walked me down an alley with a gun and was going to kill me once we got to the end of the alley. In both situations, a peace came over me as a young Christian. I'm ready to be with you, Jesus.

It really didn't terrify me. You know what terrifies me is what happened last night. If Jesus would have come last night, I wouldn't have been ready.

I would have been caught. I was so tangled in the things of this world, computers and all that. That's just a testimony I want to share.

What motivated me, what drove me to get ready for this week is I needed to hear that message to me. Brother Denny's and my own message. And I have to confess, I fought Brother Denny for the first... It was 1115.

I kept saying, well, I believe in the pre-tribulation rapture. I need to bring some balance to this message. Let me say this.

I completely agree with my brother. I may have pre-tribulation theology, but I'm going to live like an Anabaptist, a mid-tribulation guy. Because I don't want to escape.

I want to be counted worthy. And in America, I do believe there's plenty of persecution to get us ready. It's in our own homes.

It takes time to discipline children. It takes emotional energy to stay up late. It takes time, like Brother Denny said.

I could just go point by point in his concluding remarks about take advantage of the things that are there. Family reunions, speaking out against divorce and remarriage are things that break us and humble us and make us cry out for the Comforter if we'll open our eyes. They're there.

There is plenty of persecution and fire in America. It's all around us. We need to ask for wisdom to have eyes to see it and move toward it.

So God bless you, Brother Denny, for a balanced message on the Lord's return. Amen. Any other hands? Get them up.

I'd like to thank you, Denny, for bringing that message. God has been speaking some of that to my own heart about persecution and about being prepared. And I appreciate the way you dealt with conspiracy because there's many people who have fear in their hearts because of conspiracy and what you would do about it.

And I can say, you know, in my own mind, I've went down that road of fear already. Just, you know, what about this? What about that? But God doesn't call us to a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. And that word I'd like to focus on there is love.

I have been praying that God would give me a spirit of love, compassion. As Jesus had compassion on other people, that I would have compassion on other people. And I can say that my level of compassion has been rising.

You know, there was a time when I didn't really care about other people. But I do care. I do want other people to get saved.

I was just talking to a neighbor's son yesterday. He's only eight years old. And he's driving his four-wheeler around, and his daddy's not home.

His daddy's off to the club. And he says, I just don't understand why he's going off to do his own thing. And my heart just went out to him.

And God has touched me to, you know, I should be speaking to that man. Jesus Christ wants to transform that man's life. So praise God for the message.

You know, one other thing that I've thought about is the preparation even. Is that as we, I appreciate how you brought out about preparation, the things that we do. Don't worry about the externals, but prepare our hearts.

Jesus also mentioned one other preparation that we can do is use this money that we have now. The mammon of unrighteousness. So much to use that wisely, so that when these things come upon you.

I don't remember the verse, I'm sorry. But in my mind, it means that we can use this money that we have now. Give to others, do good deeds, do good things.

And at least hopefully our neighbors will have pity on us. And it's not just for our own survival. Because we need to prepare our hearts for the worst.

But praise God, he will give us grace for whatever comes. And we don't have to worry or fear. We can stand strong and say God will take care of us in everything, in every situation.

Praise God. Amen. And God still has ravens too.

Praise the Lord. Well, it's getting late here. Let's take this home and chew on it.

Dads, let's talk it over with our families. Even this coming week. And prepare our children.

Walk them through. That they're not afraid. I just thought of the testimony that was one of the instruments converting John Wesley.

He was on a ship that was going down in the storm. He wasn't saved. And there was these people called the Moravians that were on the ship with him.

Mothers and fathers and children. And he was scared to death. He was terrified.

But they were sweetly singing over in the corner. All of them. Children.

And after they got safely to shore, guess who John Wesley looked up to see who could help him with his soul. He found those Moravians. Praise God.

So let's walk our children through that. That they don't need to be afraid. Let's ask them those questions.

Let's be the dads and guide our families. And as we fellowship this afternoon, let's not just let this message just dissipate away into the thin air. We need to think on it.

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