

Part 1 - Hope

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 December 2018

Preacher: Jesse Kincer

[0 : 0 0] Hey, Wynne Harbor, how are you? Good, good, good to see you. Thanks for being here. Any of you, those who are with us that are new today, so glad that you're here. And we really look forward to getting to know you as well. Those of you who might be listening to this podcast later on, totally miss you. And yeah, but glad that you can tune in and stay in touch that way.

If you're here, you have a Bible with you, you can go ahead and turn to 2 Peter chapter 3. That's we're going to be working out of today. And I'm really excited. I love this season. I love the Christmas season. We are kicking off Advent. And those of you who are like gurus of the Advent season, you would have noticed that we are two weeks late in starting. But hey, I say better late than never, right? And so while we're looking at 2 Peter verse 3, you may be scanning it already and thinking like, wow, this isn't your typical kind of like fun Advent passage, right? But by the end, I think you're going to agree that it fits with the tone of the season that we're in. And so before we dive into it, and we're having a whole series on Advent, let's first like get a grip on what Advent is, right? So Advent is just a Latin word. It comes from a Latin root word that means coming or arrival.

And so the Advent season refers to this time of year that we celebrate right now, where for several weeks leading up to Christmas, we remember the arrival of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, right? Which, truth be told, isn't December 25th. That's not when Jesus was born. Sorry to burst your bubble.

We don't really know the day. Yeah. So you're like, well, why the heck did they choose that day then, right? That's the natural thing. Well, this is what happened. So what happened December 25th is kind of around the time where back in the day, way, way, way a long time ago, that there was this pagan ritual selling winter solstice, and it was a rager, right? I mean, they partied hard. They made it look like spring break had too many rules applied to it. These guys were going crazy during this time.

And so the church fathers and leaders of this day said, man, you know what? We need to counteract this somehow in some way. And so what they did is, is they turned it into a day or co-opted the day and say, hey, they're doing that. We're going to have our own celebration, and we're going to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. And it kind of makes sense. And it was an easy correlation because winter solstice, it's the longest, it's the shortest day of the year, but it turns into them looking forward to these pagans that they were celebrating is that no longer is the darkness going to win anymore.

[2 : 29] Now the light is going to be growing day by day by day as we move into more daylight and more warmth as the sun hangs around longer and life begins to bud and we're moving into spring and all these things. And so it was a looking forward into an anticipation of what was to come. And so it really makes a lot of sense. It's like, okay, cool. That makes a lot of sense. We think of Jesus coming to this earth, December 5th, light piercing the darkness, him coming in that profound way, the son of God born into this world. And he came in and he pierced the darkness, the darkness of our souls and the darkness of the sin that this world lay in. And so this is how Christmas came about and it turned into a mass or a church service where they celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ, hence Christ mass Christmas. And leading up to Christmas and what kind of surrounded it then, what was adopted across church history was this Advent season, this anticipation. And so during this season, what we're doing is we're remembering that at one time the world lay hopelessly in sin, eagerly awaiting the appearance of the promised

Savior. And Advent is a season where we not only remember and celebrate Jesus's first coming, but also that he's coming again one day. Our life is lived in between Jesus's first and second coming.

Now, if you are a Sunday school pro, you've grown up in church, you're no doubt thinking at this time thinking, thank you, Captain Obvious. I already know that we are living in between Jesus's first and second coming. And those of you who are new to Christianity, hey, guess what? That is a huge, big tip and it's really helpful. But here's the thing. There is a difference to us knowing about this in our heads and really living in light of this, having this like seeped in and embedded into our hearts. Because it's easy to forget, man. You think about going about life and the demands of life and the things we do. It's so easy to let that go. Let that not be in front of us all the time.

And not something that we long for is remembering back to Jesus is coming, but also that he's coming again. And so Peter writes this letter to believers in verse one of chapter three. He says this, this is now my second letter that I'm writing to you, beloved. What a nice guy, huh? I wish people would call me beloved. In both of them, I am stirring your sincere, I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, right? So Peter's wanting to remind these readers something and he's willing to repeat himself. Not because he's some old senile guy. He's not that crazy old uncle that we see at every Christmas gathering or Thanksgiving gathering where it's like, oh, we're going to hear the same old stories over again. He's repeating himself. No, no. He's really doing this on purpose. He's reminding us on purpose. He's repeating himself on purpose. And the point is to stir up our minds. So stir up our minds to what? Well, he continues on in verse two. So that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets, right? You remember and you look back as you look into the Bible, the prophets of old, what they had predicted, and also the commandment of the Lord and Savior, he's talking about Jesus, through his apostles, your apostles. And the prediction here that they're talking about and the command of the Lord that

Jesus was talking about was his second coming, Jesus' second coming. And not only did the prophets predict this before Jesus came the first time that he was going to come again, but Jesus himself told his apostles this, right? I'm going away. I'm going to be coming back. So Peter, one of Jesus's first disciples, is really making a big deal about Jesus's imminent return. And it's interesting how much of the apostles' and early church's writings majored on this, right? Focused on this. So much of how they disciplined people was in preparation for their meeting Jesus one day through death or through his coming again. Now, here's the thing. When you think about our life in church and kind of our rhythms as a church and what we look and what we teach about, we really don't do that. We really don't think and consider Jesus's second coming that much, right? You know, these seasons, we have like the big Easter season where we focus on Jesus rising from the dead. That's awesome. He conquered death. And then we think about Christmas, him coming to earth that first time. And it's so cool to remember those things. Little little baby Jesus, how humbly he came. And even during this Christmas season and Advent season, so much is just focused on his first arrival than rather thinking about and remembering that he's coming again, his second arrival. And yet this passage is telling us that this is just as important.

[7 : 10] It's just as important to remember that he's coming again. After all, if Christ's first coming was meant to resolve and eradicate all the problems of sin, well, then we would have to conclude by looking around us today that mission not quite accomplished, right? Things aren't as they should be still. There's still sin in the world. There's still sin in my heart. There's still sin in your hearts. And what I'm not saying is that Jesus's first mission failed and he left with his tail tucked between his legs. No, he came 2,000 years ago according to God's plan, right? He came humbly. He came quietly, not in the way that anybody would have expected a conquering Messiah, a conquering king that was promised. He came as a suffering servant, not as a mighty king. He was born in a barn. He wasn't born in a palace.

He walked among us as a poor peasant. He didn't come as a privileged prince. And this was to fulfill the predictions of the prophets about his first coming. The great prophecy of Isaiah chapter 53, talking about who this Jesus, who this messianic king was going to be, it says this about him.

Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of a dry ground. Now check this out. He had no form or majesty that we should look at him. Basically, Jesus was like a really ho-hum looking guy, right? He wasn't this like, he wasn't John Cena in the flesh. Like it was like, ooh, that guy, he's going to do some damage. He's going to win the battle here. I'm going to follow that dude. That was not Jesus. That was not what he looked like. He had no beauty that we should desire him. He wasn't going to end up on the front of a GQ magazine ever. He was despised and rejected by men.

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hid their faces. He was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his wounds, we are healed. And so why am I reading this passage or reminding us that Jesus came just as it was predicted that he would come? His first coming, Jesus came like this. That's what he was like. He came and he broke sin's power. He was pierced for our transgressions, our iniquities. He was crushed for them. And by his wounds were healed. And so he broke sin's power. And yet we still realize today that sin's presence still remains. Now, it's good to remember backwards to Jesus's first coming.

[9 : 52] It reminds us that God fulfills his promises. He already did it before. He's done it before. Surely he will do it again, right? See, we live with this unwavering hope that God will fulfill his promises by remembering that he has fulfilled his promises. See, when we stop remembering God's past faithfulness, we stop looking for his future faithfulness. We stop looking for his future faithfulness as best. And at worst, we just stop believing in it. 2 Peter 3 picks up on this idea in verse 3. It says, knowing this, first of all, scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing or ridicule or with derision, following their own sinful desires. And they're going to say, where is this promise of his coming? Where is it? Promises of God, Jesus coming again, these predictions? Yeah, whatever.

Forever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning. Why should I believe that Jesus is coming again? Nothing's changed. I can look back on history.

Nothing's changed. And it's so easy to disassociate ourselves from these guys to say, you know, those are the scoffers. I'm definitely not like that. Man, but I would argue, let's be honest with ourselves, we're not too much different. See, the longer we wait for something, the more we tend to want to give up on it altogether, right? Hope deferred makes the heart sick. And our impatience and that sickness in our souls, when we don't get what we're wanting and we're waiting and we're waiting, we have these unfulfilled desires. The way we cope with it, we do it in two ways. We either despise what we're waiting for. We begin to despise it like these scoffers did. We just despise what we were once waiting for. That's no big deal. Who cares? Or we just give up on it altogether. We just say, you know what? It just wasn't true. It just must not be true. Either way, we let go of these promises.

promises. We forget about them. Or we deride them. The scoffers here are those who knew about the promises. They knew about these things that were predicted. But the years since had piled up.

They piled up into centuries and into millenniums and still the prophecy went unfulfilled. And so now they've just concluded, you know what? This is just silly superstition. These are old wives' tales, just a bunch of hocus pocus. We're not going to believe. I'm not going to get shammed into believing this. See, when we believe the lie that God has forgotten us, we tend to overlook what he's done.

[12 : 25] Verse 5, Peter's saying they deliberately overlooked this fact. These scoffers, they deliberately overlooked this fact that the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, right? So he's picking up on like God's action and how he created, but he's saying in a very specific way the word of God. And this is important. And that by means of these, again, the word of God, by the same means, God's spoken word, the world that then existed was deluged with water and perish. He's referring to the flood that happened in the days of Noah.

And it was something just as the earth came into existence because God spoke it and decreed it and commanded it to be. So the flood happened because God spoke it and determined and commanded that it would be.

And by the same word, the heavens that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. What was happening? These scoffers mocked God's future promises because they overlooked all that God has done, had done. They overlooked his work in the past. See, it's easy to take for granted that it was God's word, his decree, his command that formed everything.

And then when man rebelled and sinned and then sinned, spent rapidly over the earth. So he looked down and he grieved because the hearts of men were so evil. And then he judged the earth with a flood. That was God's word and decree and command that brought that. Now we can take those truths, we could take them as information or just as trivial knowledge, or we can hold onto those truths as assurance that God is faithful to fulfill his word, right? Because it says so in verse seven, it is by the same word, the same word spoken by the same God that there will be another day of judgment. How do you know? Well, look, he spoke his word into, uh, through his word, the earth and everything that was in it was spoken to existence. Through his word, the earth was judged, um, through a flood.

And so we can trust that God's word will be fulfilled. When God sends out his word, when he speaks what is yet to come, it doesn't come back to him unfulfilled, right? There's a verse in the Bible says, my word does not come back to be null and void. When God has sends out his word, when he says, this is what I'm going to do, his purpose and his plan, it doesn't come back to him unfulfilled, right? Our God is not an impotent God. He's all powerful. He's all sovereign. When he's going to want something to happen, it's going to happen. And that doesn't mean it's going to happen right away, right? And that's kind of hard for us. And we think about that. We think about the timing of God.

[15 : 05] We think we want to, we think we know what's best, right? We think we know, okay, God, this is what you're going to do. Well, you know what? Can you just get it done ASAP? Can you get it done as soon as possible? Or at least can you get it done in like a halfway decent timeframe that fits me, that suits me? But what helps us wait with faith-filled patience for the promises of God is knowing that God's timing is the best timing. See, we live with a patient hope that God knows the best time to fulfill his promises. In verse eight, it says, do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promises. Some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with the roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

See, when we take the time to think about what God is like, when we think about, man, God, okay, what are your attributes? What are your characteristics, right? This actually, this verse makes a whole lot of sense. See, God is eternal, right? He's eternal. He's uncreated, and if he is eternal, then we realize that, you know what, time and all that, man, that's a creature reality. That is a created creature reality that's unique to us, but it's not a God reality, right?

We are born. That's the timeframe we start. We're going to die. That's the timeframe we end. Those are the boundaries of time. We live within time boundaries. Yet, here's the thing. God always was. God was never born. He's uncreated. He always was and always will be. He alone is eternal. Now, we are going to live on forever, right, into eternity, but God is the only one who could say he's uncreated. All of us started at some point, and at some point, we never were. So, we could say God doesn't have time boundaries. So, one day could be like a thousand years to him, and a thousand years is like one day, and you're thinking, Jesse, this is making my head explode.

I don't know what you're talking about. Guess what? Welcome to the club. Here's maybe something a little more helpful, all right? I turned 40 this year. My beard got grayer. My hair got thinner.

[17 : 24] I got more hair on the back than I had before. Sorry for that visual. And here's what's funny. As you get older, time seems to slip faster along, right? Now, at 40, time does seem to go by a lot quicker than I was eight years old staring at the clock in school, waiting, waiting. Why are the minutes taking so long until I can get to recess or until the bell rings and I can get out of here and go home? It's almost like the older we get, the more we move closer to that everlasting, at that everlastingness, that eternity, the more a thousand years starts to feel like a day, right? I mean, think about it. The years just go by. Every time a year goes by or a kid has a birthday, I'm just like, oh my gosh, where did the time go? When I was eight years old, I never said that. I was never, where did the time go? I was like, why is the time not moving fast enough?

And this is helpful for our patients in waiting for God's promises. He's eternal. We're not. He's calling the shots, not us. He knew exactly when to send his son. And as the Bible records it in Galatians, when did that happen? Well, it happened in the fullness of time. A really good phrase to think about and go on. When the fullness of time had come, then he sent his son, born of a virgin.

So what is God saying in that passage? There was no other point in history that I was going to do that than when I did it. It was going to be when I had to predetermine it and the fullness of that time had come, that's when I was going to make it happen. That's when Jesus was going to be born.

It was going to be born thousands of years later after Adam had sinned. It wasn't going to be born a few generations afterwards. He came right when he was supposed to come according to God's plan. And just like that, God has the day of Jesus's second coming plan. When the fullness of time has come for that as well. Amen? And it won't be until he has fulfilled all that he has planned, right? And it's hard for us to figure this out. Well, where is it? And guys really like to try to figure that out, right? And don't listen to them because Jesus said, nobody knows that day when it's coming. So don't listen when guys are predicting the day and the hour that Jesus is coming. Nobody knows except the Father. That's it. So God has this hidden will, this hidden plan, but he's also revealed a lot in his plan as well to us. We see it in the Bible. And think of it this way. We get both of that, a hidden and revealed will. Revelation 13, 8 and 17, 8 talk about the same thing. It's talking about this book, right? This book called the Book of Life. And it says in both places that this book of life was written before the foundation of the world, right? Before everything was formed. Well, what was written in that book of life? Names. Names of you. Well, names of those that were saved and appointed to each real life. Wow, that's a hard name to grasp. And yet it's in the Bible.

And so this is what we do know. Jesus is not going to return until those names, every single one of them that are written in the book of life have been saved. He's not going to come a day sooner.

[20 : 31] And that's just one of the things that need to be fulfilled before the fullness of time is reached and has come again. There's others as well, but that was a low, you know, low-hanging fruit that we could look at. God will fulfill all that he has decreed. Therefore, we don't get to determine what is slow and fast. We trust in God and we trust in his timing and we trust that he knows best and we don't. And when he comes in the fullness of a time, it's going to be the right time. It's going to be perfect. You might think, gosh, man, you know, a little warning might be nice, right? A little warning might be nice so I can just make sure that I'm ready, right? Really make sure I'm ready.

But man, let's be honest with ourselves. We wouldn't do that. You know, if we knew the exact day and time of Jesus is coming, you know, if I knew the exact time of Jesus is coming, I would be like, sweet, I'm going to plan this out. I'm going to party like a rock star until like one minute before he comes and then I'm going to repent and get right and just do, you know, that's going to be the temptation. That would be the temptation. When I was in school, you know, when I wrote my exams four hours before they were due. And in the meantime, I was doing everything I wanted to do, right? I was like having fun. I was playing video games. I was playing sports. I was hanging out with friends. I was doing everything except preparing for my exams. And then it was like cram session, get it done at the last minute. Knowing the exact time Jesus is coming isn't going to be good for us.

And Jesus taught us in a parable, in many parables actually, that we need to live ready for him to come precisely because we don't know when he is coming again. Our life is lived in readiness and in preparation for his return. And see, when we live in the hope of Jesus's second coming, it changes how we live today. Verse 11, since all things are thus to be dissolved, since the heavens and the earth are going to melt away, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness?

Waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolve, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn. But according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation. So during this Advent season, let's take time to reflect on what we're living for. Take time to reflect on what you're living for. Are you longing for Jesus's return?

When you think about that, what stirs up in your heart? Would it be an inconvenient interruptions to your plans, to your life goals?

[23 : 21] I remember, this is like, this is how immature I was, okay. When the first Lord of the Rings movie was announced that it was coming out, I literally thought this, Lord, please don't come before I can watch that thing. Right? Yeah. Thanks, bro. I'm like, I'm thinking back, I was like, well, you know, I was in my early 20s. But that's, that's what I was living for, man. The thought, I mean, we could have all sorts of things, right? I used a really silly example. It was real for me. And we have all sorts of things that we would say, Lord, don't come because I want to experience this. Don't come because I want to fulfill this. Don't come. There's a, there's a ton of it. Are we living for what we can obtain in this life?

Because this says it's all going to burn. Everything we amass in this life, as my friend Tom says, it's all going to burn.

But this doesn't mean we despise this life, right? It doesn't, we don't look at this and say like, oh, well, then forget this. Who cares? I'm going to just go live as a monk somewhere all by myself and just take a vow of poverty and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It doesn't mean we despise this life. This life is a gift to us. The things God gives us are gifts to us. Those things are meant to be enjoyed. But realizing that he's going to come again one day, realizing that all these things that we could have, these gifts from God, we hold open-handed because in the end, they're not going with us into eternity.

It's all going to burn. And that means we should, it should have a profound effect on the way we live our life, a profound effect. See, the thing we set our future hope on is what we live for today.

So let me take Tiger Woods. He's a great example of this. His dad's future hope for him was to be a professional golfer, a really good golfer. It affected how they lived every single day. This is what his dad's heart treasured. This is what he wanted for his son. This is what Tiger wanted for himself. This is what Tiger treasured in his heart. They were both all in for this future hope. And if you read about and learn about what Tiger did, I mean, he, they sacrificed time and money and relationships to be the best golfer that he can be. And you know what? It worked.

[25 : 43] He accomplished everything that he set out to accomplish. He became one of the most, if not the most successful golfers of all time. And his effect on the sport is still felt today, right? Now, golf isn't just for old white guys. That's awesome. But like many of our realized dreams, those things just don't last. We can't hold on to them forever. This life doesn't afford us that. Man, Tiger's rise was epic, right? But so is his tragic fall. And I actually say that with great sorrow.

The point is, limiting our vision of hope to this life is not going to bring lasting satisfaction, hope, or joy.

It just won't. I'm going to read something from the memoirs of John Stuart Mill. He was a 19th century thinker, one of the leading thinkers of his day, and one of the most celebrated thinkers even today, and one of the architects of modern liberal ideology. He says this, I had what might truly be called an object in life, right? He had a goal. He had a meaning that he was going for. To be a reformer of the world, this did very well for several years, during which the general improvement going on in the world and the idea of myself as engaged with others and struggling to remote it, seemed enough to fill up an interesting and animated existence. He was experiencing, he was stepping further into his goals for his life. He was finding meaning in this thing, right?

But the time came when I awakened from this as from a dream. In this frame of mind, it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself. Suppose that all your objects in life were realized. Everything you wanted, every goal you set for yourself, all the meaning that you're living for, what if they were realized? That all the changes and institutions and opinions that you are looking forward to could be completely affected at this very instant. Would this be a great joy and happiness to you, and an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered no?

All the things that he was struggling for, all the things that he was looking for, his vision and hope for the future of what could be, if he was to realize it, he realized, if I was to attain those things, would it bring me satisfaction and joy? No. No, it wouldn't. That question that he wrestled with, probably one of the most honest and meaningful reflections we can make as human beings.

[28 : 37] And this reflection, it resulted in a major crisis in Mill's life. He fell into depression. He had to seek out new meaning and what it meant to exist. And unfortunately, he never turned to God. He was an atheist, and so he didn't find it in him. But let's think about this for ourselves. Think about this for yourself, honestly. What if you were to sit down? What if you were to consider what would truly make you happy in life and have meaning? Now imagine that you achieved all those things. Then what?

Then what? See, the naive part of us wants to think, oh, if I got those things, I would be happy. It would make me happy forever. But it wouldn't. You would have to find something new to live for. There is a whole book in the Bible about this called Ecclesiastes, how Solomon, one of the richest men, one of the wisest men, he amassed everything. Everything that was his desire, every pleasure that he had, he fulfilled it.

Every success that he wanted, he attained it. And at the end of his life, he looks back and he says, it's all vanity. It's all meaningless. It's a chasing after the wind. See, this life always demands more of us. We meet our goal, and then we find out, actually, you know, it's not enough. And after chasing after that, it's chasing after all that is its own kind of madness. It's like chasing after a mirage. Your soul only grows more thirsty the more you chase after it. And what we find in this passage, though, is the antidote for this. We have to change where our hope lies. We have to change what we live for. We must set our hope upon eternity with Jesus. We have to stand in this in-between. Jesus has come, and he is coming, and we're living for that day. And if we're going to be with him one day in a kingdom marked by holiness and righteousness, let us pursue those things today. Let us pursue those things tomorrow and until the day he comes. Why? Because Jesus is holy and righteous, and we love him, and we get to be with him. If I could have the band come up, we're going to wrap up this way. Jesus taught this. Matthew 6, 19 to 21, don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, nor where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be. What are we living for? What are you living for? What am I living for? Where is our hope?

And I pray in this Advent season as we turn and think about the coming day of the Lord, I pray our hearts begin to cry out more and more, come Lord. I pray this would be the season not of thinking only about how many gifts can we put on the tree, but the greatest gift that has come and the greatest gift that will come, and we cry out with our hearts, come Lord, come Lord. I pray our lives, because of this, would come into alignment with living more and more toward Jesus's return, to want to see his return, and like it said in that passage, hastening it.

And I pray we hold the good gifts of this life with open hands, right? Being generous to God, and being generous toward his kingdom and his kingdom advancing, his kingdom that is going to live on forever.

[32 : 09] I pray that we would use our time and our talents and our treasures for the sake of his kingdom, because when they're sown into those things, man, when they've sown into his kingdom, which is eternal, they bring about everlasting peace, everlasting joy, and everlasting satisfaction. And we're going to turn, and we're going to come, and we're going to respond by taking communion. I want us to think about this.

We respond with our hearts saying, come Lord, and then Jesus in this moment invites us to come to him at his table, to his table. We're coming to partake of some symbols that represent his body that was broken and his blood that was shed for our sake. He's saying, I have come for you and come to me. He sings a reminder that we get to live with an eternal hope because of what he's done.

When we come to the Lord's table today, let's remember that in this act and what we're doing, we are proclaiming that Jesus has come, and we believe in that, but we're also proclaiming, proclaiming that he is coming again. Today, let's take communion with thankfulness. Let's take communion with celebration and this confidence of our future hope we have in Jesus Christ. Pray with me.

Lord, we thank you. We thank you for your word. We thank you for your truth. We thank you for your promises that have been fulfilled. We look back upon them. We thank you for the promises that we stand in and hold on to, and that are ours today, and those that we cling on to in faith and bright hope for tomorrow. We think of the promise we have in you, Jesus Christ, that you are going to come again, that you are gonna return, and that when you come, there is gonna be a new heaven and a new earth. And not only will the power of sin be broken, but the very presence of sin will be no more.

Death will fully be defeated and give way to victory in you, Jesus Christ. And we will step into and be brought into by your grace into a kingdom of holiness and righteousness. Lord, we thank you for that. I pray our hearts would long for this. Every day that marches on in history hastens the day of the Lord coming. And I pray our hearts would be crying out, come Lord. Come Lord. Amen.