

Judgement and Salvation

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.
- Special welcome if you're new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here, and we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community.
- And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced there's no one so good. They don't need God's grace, and no one so bad they can't have it, which is why we come back again and again to God's word, because we believe he has something to say to everyone.
- We're continuing our study in the book of 2 Peter, and you'll remember that the book of 2 Peter is a letter. It's a letter written by a man named Peter, and he writes it to a church somewhere in the Roman Empire in the 60s AD, and he writes it with one hope, one goal, that they would grow.
- In fact, that's how he ends the book. In the very last verse, he commands them to grow in the grace and knowledge of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Remember, I'm telling you those are the two ways he wants them to grow.
- [1 : 0 6] He wants them to grow in both grace and knowledge. Now, we talked a lot about grace in chapter 1. We are now in chapter 2, starting at verse 4, and we're talking about knowledge. Last week, we looked at the false teachers and the threat that these teachers make to knowledge.
- They were teaching things that were wrong, especially things that were wrong about the second coming, about Jesus' return. They are telling people Jesus is not actually going to come back to judge the world.
- We're going to continue that theme this morning as we turn to 2 Peter, and so I invite you to turn there with me now. Remember, we're in chapter 2, starting in verse 4. You can turn in your worship guide or in your Bible or in your phone, and you will remember that I told you last week our application was to be the opposite of the false teachers.
- So the false teachers teach things that are not correct about Jesus' second coming. We want to teach what's correct. We want to make sure we're clear about the fact that Jesus is coming again to bring both judgment and salvation.
- So, of course, this is going to be something that touches on that very same doctrine. Now, I'll mention something as we're coming up. So I was looking at this passage, verses 4 through 10.
- [2 : 2 0] I realized that I was trying to preach two sermons. I realized that's in time. You're welcome. And so I'm not going to touch on everything that's in verses 4 through 10.
- There are some things, especially in verses 7 through 10, that I'm going to save and come back to this passage a second time. We're going to have to wait until 2021, though, because Advent starts next week. So I'm going to leave you in great suspense.

We're going to look at verses 4 through 10 this morning, and then we're going to look at it again in January. And so if there's things that I don't touch on this morning, you'll know why, especially, I think one of them's in verse 5, but there's a lot of things going on in verse 7 through 10.

This morning, we're just going to focus on two things, God's judgment and God's salvation. We're going to focus on God's judgment and God's salvation. And this is a follow-up to what happened last week, because as we talked about the false teachers, we were told at the very end, in verse 3, their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

In other words, Peter is reminding these people that while they're not seeing and experiencing judgment right now, it will still happen one day. And he needs to tell them this because this doctrine of Jesus coming back is under attack.

[3 : 35] And so there's two places these people might find themselves. They might be like the false teachers. They don't believe that the second coming is real. They don't believe that God's judgment is real.

And so they think the Christian message is a joke. They're telling people it's a joke. They're teaching people not to pay attention to what Jesus has to say or what Peter has to say, because they won't have to worry about God coming back again to the earth.

So that's one category of people. They don't believe that Jesus is coming again. The other category, and this is probably more likely the people receiving this letter, they're tempted to doubt that Jesus is coming again.

These false teachers are telling us this is all a joke. Should we really believe what Jesus and Peter said? Is it really worth staking our lives on?

Are we throwing something away? By obeying what Jesus taught us, are we going to end up being fools? Because he's not coming back. And so it's in light of that that Peter is here to assure these people that Jesus is coming again.

[4 : 44] And it's with that that we read now. I invite you to read with me, starting at verse 4. And remember as we come to this that this is God's word. And God tells us that while the grass withers and the flowers fade, his word will stand forever.

And so that's why we read it together now. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment, if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly, if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly, and if he rescued Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked, for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard.

Verse 9, Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.

I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word. Our Father in heaven, we thank you again for your word, and we thank you especially this morning that it is clear.

That you haven't left us to wonder about what the future holds, but that you have outlined it for us, that we would know how to live and walk in this world. We ask that you would use this passage this morning to increase our confidence in both your judgment and your salvation, and that you would use that to increase our hope and our trust in you.

[6 : 44] We thank you that that hope and trust don't rely on us, but they rely on Jesus, and so we ask these things in his name. Amen. As I have told you guys many times in many sermons, one of the saddest things, most frustrating things for me about moving to Colorado in midst of all the joys that we have here, the wonderful sunshine, great outdoor opportunities, amazing traffic compared to the East Coast, my great frustration here could be summed up in one word, hail.

I've told you stories about my experiences with the hail in 2018. Of course, I got another fun experience with the hail this past August, on August 5th. Don't ask me why I remember that date.

We got hit again here in 80906. And so one of the things I've been working on the last few weeks is getting a roofer, working insurance claims, working towards getting a new roof and new gutters and all the things that come along with that destruction.

We're also working on that same thing with our church. Now, our church is different than my house in one very important way. It's a lot bigger. Which means our choice of a roofer matters a lot more.

So our deacons, and especially Tom Gearing, have put a ton of work into making sure we pick the right roofer. The reason we want to pick the right roofer is, of course, there's big consequences, right? A lot's at stake.

[8 : 16] If we choose the wrong person, we could regret it for years. We could be caught up in all sorts of hassle, right? And so we have one roofer that we've been working with, and we haven't committed to this company yet.

But we are optimistic about them. And one of our questions, though, is, can you handle this kind of job? It's okay to trust you with my house. Are we going to trust you with the church?

How do we figure that out? Well, we want to know what their track record is. One of the things we demanded from this company was a list of references. We want numbers and names of people we can call.

We want to know what sort of large buildings have you worked with in the past. How can we have confidence that you're going to deliver what you say you're going to deliver? Because a lot is at stake.

And so what we're going to do is check the references. A lot is at stake for the people in this passage as well. Do they believe what Peter is telling them about Jesus' second coming?

[9 : 17] Do they believe that the judgment that is going to come upon the world is real? Peter here gives them one answer. Check the references.

Can God do this type of job? Is he going to judge in the way he's promised? Look at what he's done in the past. Go back and review the data.

Here are the names and the numbers of the judgment jobs that God has done in history. This is why you should have confidence for what is coming.

And so this is, of course, a follow-up to verse 3. And that's exactly what Peter gives them here. He says, God has done similar work in the past. You can have confidence for him in the future.

And so we're just going to go through this morning the list of references, the names and the numbers that Peter provides us so that we know that judgment and salvation is real. And so remember, I told you we're going to look at the reality of God's judgment and the reality of God's salvation.

[10 : 19] First, the reality of God's judgment. Before we get into that, I want to give you a definition of judgment. I've been throwing that word around a lot. It appears in this passage multiple times.

In fact, we see it twice. I want you to look with me. For verse 4, we're told that these angels are to be kept until the what? The judgment.

Verse 9, same passage. We find out the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.

Now, this isn't the only time we've heard about the day. We also saw it in chapter 1, verse 19, where we were told that there is a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns.

And I told you that this day was the day when God was going to come and make the world right. So, first of all, we're talking about the judgment. We are talking about a day. And this day is going to be the day when Jesus comes back to this world in person as he promised, and every single person in this world answers for what they have done in their lives.

[11 : 28] And so, first of all, the judgment is a day. It's an event. It is a historical event that's going to come in the future. The Bible teaches this clearly in passages like John chapter 5, verses 22 through 29, where we're told exactly what's going to happen.

Not only is this judgment, however, a day, a time where God holds everyone accountable, but there's going to be two different outcomes. So, at the end of that passage in John chapter 5, we're told there's going to be a resurrection of life and a resurrection of judgment.

There are going to be those who have faith in Christ who are raised from the dead, and they go on to eternal life. There's going to be those who do not have faith in Christ, and they're raised to judgment. That's the day component.

There's also an ongoing component. That judgment has a picture to it that the Bible gives us. It's often spoken of as fire. We're told in Matthew chapter 5, verses 41, or 25, excuse me, Matthew 25, I believe it's 41, that there's an eternal fire.

So, there's something about judgment that continues forever. It's not that those who are judged cease to exist, but they experience separation and alienation from God forever.

[12 : 43] And so, I mention all this to clarify what it is when we talk about God's judgment. We are saying there are two destinations for people after this life, eternal punishment or eternal life.

The Bible cannot be clear about this. This is the way our confession of faith puts it. It says, The souls of the wicked are cast into hell where they remain in torments and utter darkness reserved to the judgment of the great day.

In summary, judgment will occur on a day when Jesus returns. There will be two outcomes. Life, you expect me to say death, not life and death, but life, or eternal punishment.

It's that reality that Peter is giving us the references here now. So, let's jump right into the list. First of all, reference number one we find in verse four. These are the first people we need to call, and they are the angels.

We're told that these angels are being kept until the judgment. Now, I'm not going to go into great detail about the angels, not because I don't want to talk about it, but because these are the exact same angels we saw in 1 Peter.

[13 : 58] Remember in 1 Peter chapter three, we talked about the angels that were kept under punishment that Jesus came and proclaimed his victory over. We assume these are fallen angels from Genesis chapter six, and we talked about the fact that God was restraining them, holding them back from working evil in the world.

Now, if you recall, I gave you the illustration about how I used to play capture the flag at summer camp, and I told you these angels were in jail during capture the flag. Okay, so the game was still going on.

The angels were restrained. They weren't able to act. They weren't able to tag people and put more people in jail. They weren't able to keep anyone from capturing the flag. So I'm not going to rehash all of that.

If you want to know all about the angels, I encourage you to go back and listen to the recording of our sermon from 1 Peter chapter three that touches on verse 19. The important part here in chapter three of 1 Peter, remember the point was that God is in control.

He's in control restraining these wicked angels from Genesis chapter six, and he proclaims his victory over them. Here, the point is slightly different. Yes, God is in control.

[15 : 06] He's restraining evil, not in preparation for Jesus to proclaim his victory, although that's true, here in preparation for judgment. Now, this may seem like a strange reference, but to the people reading 1 Peter and the people reading 2 Peter, this would have been something common that they would have discussed all the time.

Everyone would have known about Noah. They would have known about the angels. It was talked about in the Bible, talked about even more outside of the Bible. So reference number one, God restrains the angels, the wicked angels from Genesis chapter six.

He keeps them for judgment. If you want to hear more about that, we've talked about it in length, 1 Peter chapter three. Happy to talk about it more afterwards, but I'm not going to dwell on the angels.

We're going to move on to Noah. So judgment job number one, God restrained the angels. Okay, reference number two that we're going to call. We're going to call Noah, verse five.

Now, if you're familiar with the Bible, you know the story of Noah. He's someone who lived in the early part of the world, the history of the world, and he lived in an extremely wicked time.

[16 : 11] The earth was so wicked that God decided he needed to destroy the entire world with a flood, except he saved Noah and his family. And of course, that's what we see here in verse five.

If he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others. So in other words, there's only eight people that survived this judgment. God destroyed the entire world with a flood.

He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. And so reference number two, look to the flood. Look to Noah.

Remember, God judged the world then. He has proven that he has the ability to then judge in the future. We'll talk about this more in chapter three of second Peter, but the first judgment of the flood was by water.

The Bible frequently speaks of the second judgment being by fire. There's a reason Matthew chapter 25 talks about an eternal fire. And so this reference is self-explanatory, essentially.

[17 : 13] God judged the world then. He demonstrated his ability and willingness to do it. He'll do it in the future. Now, reference number three, verse six. By the way, when we got references from the builder, there's a long resume, all the skills, multiple names, multiple jobs, multiple numbers.

Right? We want more than one reference. We want to know for sure there are multiple people who have worked with this roofer who can attest that he's able to get the job done. The same thing with God.

We now have a third reference, verse six, Sodom and Gomorrah. By the way, all of these are stories from the book of Genesis. And you'll remember that Sodom and Gomorrah was a city encountered by Abraham.

And this city had two major sins. One of their sins was a lack of hospitality. Bible speaks clearly about that. Their other sin was sexual immorality and perversion.

Both of these sins were rampant in Sodom and Gomorrah. God finally brings his judgment on the city and destroys it. And we're told that this is meant to be a lesson for us in verse six.

[18 : 25] So this wasn't mentioned in verse five about Noah, but there's something special about this reference. It tells us in verse six, at near the end, God was making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.

In other words, Sodom and Gomorrah, God's destruction of this city in the ancient world was meant to serve as a small picture of what would one day be true.

And so I want you to think about this as a larger concept in the Bible. There are places in the Bible where we see the future brought into the present. There's places in the Bible where we see the future brought into the present.

So think with me for a minute. Jesus performs miracles during his earthly ministry. He's not just doing it to show his power, although he is.

When Jesus performs miracles during his earthly ministry, he is giving a small picture of what the future will look like. One day there will no longer be sickness.

[19 : 27] Guess what? In this specific instance, I'm going to heal this sickness. So we have places, especially in Jesus' ministry, where future salvation and redemption is brought into our present reality.

The same is true of judgment. There are places in the Bible where the future is brought into the present. Sodom and Gomorrah is example number one, exhibit A in the Bible of future judgment being brought into the present.

Here's a small picture of what's to come. This is the same thing that happens when you're at a restaurant, right? You might look at a menu and it might say something like, small bites.

Maybe it's appetizers. You're getting a small taste of something before the main meal, before the entree. Same thing is true of God's judgment and his salvation.

There are small bites that we get. Small bites of the goodness and the salvation and the restoration that's to come and small bites of God's judgment and his justice that's to come.

[20 : 34] Sodom and Gomorrah here makes that specific point. And so we have our three judgment references. Now this is meant, of course, for people who do believe the Bible.

This is meant for Christians. And so these people, I haven't given you any defense at this point of the historicity of the flood, the historicity of Sodom and Gomorrah. If you're not a Christian, you might be thinking, man, that's great.

I don't believe any of those stories anyway. So why should I care about these references? I can't call Sodom and Gomorrah. That was years ago. I can't call Noah and the flood.

Noah's not alive anymore. What am I supposed to do with this picture of judgment? And I'll tell you, I'll give you two things. First of all, this passage is meant primarily for Christians. Peter's writing it to those who believe the Bible and believe it's true.

If you don't believe the Bible, you don't believe it's true. We don't have time this morning to go into a defense of all these events. I'm going to give you another reference. As we look around the world today, as we live in this world, judgment is what makes most sense of it.

[21 : 45] When we look at the destruction that happens in the world and we look at nature around us, there is nothing in nature that would cause us to believe that we can avoid the judgment. And I'm going to read you a few passages.

One is from a book by a man named Tim Keller who wrote The Reason for God and he writes an entire chapter about God sending people to hell. He ends with this paragraph. The belief in a God of pure love who accepts everyone and judges no one is a powerful act of faith.

Not only is there no evidence for it in the natural order, but there is almost no historical, religious, textual support for it outside of Christianity.

The more one looks at it, the less justified it appears. And I want to hone in on that one phrase. There is no evidence for it in the natural order.

In other words, as we look around at the world, we see judgment everywhere. We see people die. We see bodies decaying.

[22 : 50] We see natural disasters. We see the coronavirus. One of the things that I love about Christianity is summed up by a man named Francis Schaeffer who said that the hand, that the Bible fits the hand of reality like a glove.

The Bible fits the hand of reality like a glove. In other words, the Bible makes sense of the world. Why is it that things are so broken? Why is it that we experience disease and illness and sickness and death?

Why is it that people do atrocious things to one another? Well, of course, there's this thing called sin in the world at work. Of course, the world is broken. It doesn't work the way it's supposed to be.

There's a reason we want things to be different. It's because our hearts know that the world was not created to be sick and dying. Whether we're Christians or not, we long for Eden.

We long for everything to be made right. And we see and experience judgment. And so we as Christians can take hope and confidence in what we believe has happened in the past.

[23 : 55] If you're not a Christian, you should be challenged and chastened by what you see happening in the present. God's judgment is real. Now, I don't have time to read much of it, but you'll remember Mark Fairbrother gave many copies of this book for you to pick up.

The last one was picked up this morning. The one who picked it up will remain nameless. But he talks about this reality. Part of what we see in the coronavirus, now I'm not saying that everyone who gets the virus, it's because of their specific sin, right?

We've talked about this before in suffering. All of us experience suffering. It's not necessarily a punishment for our specific sin, but all suffering is a result of sin. And Piper talks about that in this book.

He tells us, this is in chapter six, sin, in fact, is why all physical misery exists. This is on page 62. The Bible does not see this brokenness as merely natural, but as the judgment of God on a world permeated with sin.

In other words, when we experience brokenness in this world, we, in a sense, see some of the future brought into the present.

[25 : 12] God is bringing his judgment to bear on this world. God judged the world with Noah, back what Peter calls the ancient world.

He will judge it in the future as well. God judged the wicked at Sodom and Gomorrah. God will judge the wicked in the future. He has completed those kinds of jobs in the past.

He will complete them in the future. And so we're reminded here, if you're not a Christian, the application for you is to beware.

Just because you don't see judgment now doesn't mean it's not coming. You will answer to God one day for everything you have done in this life. And so your only hope is in Jesus Christ, who offers salvation for sinners.

If you are a Christian, your application is this, to hold on. God will do what he's promised to do. He has done it in the past.

[26 : 26] He will do it again. His judgment is real. Hope on it. His judgment is real. Your righteousness is not in vain.

His judgment is real. Everything one day will be made right. And so we see, from the references and from the world around us, the reality of God's judgment.

And I told you this book, this section in this book is written primarily to Christians. And so, of course, we also see the reality of his salvation. When we get to the reality of God's salvation, we have not three references, but two references.

We get to skip the angels this time. They're only an example of judgment. We get to, however, have references of God's salvation. First, verse five, Noah.

If he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah. God brought his judgment and he saw the righteous. God brought his judgment and he saved the righteous.

[27 : 38] And not only was Noah righteous, he was in an extreme minority. It was him and seven other people. And so, as radical as it might sound, I want you to imagine for a second that us in this room are the only Christians in the world right now.

Imagine how terrible that would be, how isolating that would be. we would be in an exponentially better situation than Noah was. The people in this room were the only Christians in the world.

We would be in an exponentially better position than Noah was in. He only had seven others. And God preserved him. And we'll talk about this more when we come back to this passage in January, but we're told he's a herald of righteousness.

Some people believe what's happening here is that Noah was actually actively preaching while he was building the ark. He was telling people about the hope that he had in God and no one would listen.

And God protected, preserved Noah. He did it supernaturally. And so Noah is a reference of God's faithfulness. These people are surrounded by false teachers, just like Noah was surrounded by the wicked.

[28 : 54] And Noah made it. God saved him. Reference two. Not just Noah. Verse seven. Righteous Lot.

Now we won't go into this, but if you're familiar with the story of Lot, you know Lot was radically imperfect. Lot was not a role model.

I'm not going to go into that this morning, but we're told here he's righteous. He had, despite all his flaws and imperfections and sin, hope in God in the midst of a wicked city.

He was greatly distressed by the conduct around him. He was tormenting his righteous soul. And very beginning of verse seven, God rescued him.

God rescued Lot. It's not just that God knows how to do the job of judgment. He's also really good at doing the job of salvation. It's not just that God is good at the job of judgment.

[29 : 57] He's also good at doing the job of salvation. So the application for us is this. God was faithful to Noah and Lot. They were in the extreme minority.

God will be faithful to you as well. God was faithful to Noah and Lot. God will be faithful to you as well. God saved Noah and Lot.

He will save you. Imagine with me how discouraging it was to be Noah. Imagine how discouraging it was to be Lot.

More discouraging than we can imagine. When we are discouraged, we remember their stories and we can see the story we're in.

Remember what part of the story you're in right now. They were greatly discouraged at times, I have no doubt, and God saved them. How much more can we have hope and confidence in the midst of our discouragement?

[31 : 02] How much more can we have hope and confidence than Noah and Lot did? They lived in a wicked and unrighteous world. As we live in a wicked and unrighteous world, we can also look forward to God's redemption and salvation.

God rescued them. He will rescue us. Finally, there's probably lots of moments where righteousness didn't look like it was worth it. I wouldn't be surprised if Lot and Noah sometimes wondered if they were crazy.

In the end, it was worth it. They held on. God came through and delivered them.

And so for us who have faith in Jesus Christ, it is on us to trust and hope and obey. Remember that knowledge and grace are intimately connected to each other.

The purpose of growing in knowledge is to grow in grace. And so we're to remember everything we were told in chapter 1. Remember, verses 5 through 8 gave us a list of qualities to be working for.

[32 : 08] Knowing that, verse 9, this is what would lead to the entrance of an eternal kingdom. And so Christians continue, like Lot and Noah, being faithful in an unfaithful world, knowing that God will come through and do what he's promised to do.

We trust, we hope, and we obey. Of course, our Lord Jesus also taught these things. He also taught about Sodom and Gomorrah.

In Luke chapter 17, Jesus says his second coming is going to be just like Sodom and Gomorrah. Oh, I wonder where Peter got this from. Probably got it from Jesus.

He says, in Sodom and Gomorrah, people were having all kinds of fun doing all sorts of things, and then the judgment came. And then Jesus tells us, hey, by the way, the same thing is going to be true for me.

People are going to be having all sorts of fun doing all sorts of things, and then I'll come in judgment. And so Jesus tells us this same thing. However, Jesus does something else as well.

[33 : 13] Jesus is an even greater reference of God's judgment and his salvation. Jesus is an even greater demonstration of judgment and salvation being brought into the present.

However, unlike Sodom and Gomorrah, when judgment was brought into the present on Jesus on the cross, it was the punishment not of the unrighteous, but the righteous. And so judgment was given to someone who did not deserve it.

And when salvation was brought in, it was brought not for the righteous but for the unrighteous. And so as sobering and challenging a topic as it is to talk about God's judgment, it is also a topic of incredible hope because these people know it was Jesus who took the judgment for them.

The reality of God's judgment was demonstrated most importantly on the cross when Jesus died for our sins. And the reality of his salvation was made possible and only possible by his death.

And so Jesus is the one who ultimately shows us the reality of God's judgment and the reality of his salvation. And we know, of course, in this passage we see the word righteous show up a few times, right?

[34 : 31] Verse 5, Noah was a herald of righteousness. Verse 7, Lot is righteous and yet we also know that that righteousness is not something that earned them anything from God.

We know that because of this very same letter. Remember verse 1 of chapter 1. To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In other words, the only righteousness that matters is the righteousness that belongs to Jesus and he gives to us. And so if we have faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we need not fear his judgment but look forward to his salvation because he has already brought future judgment into the present on Jesus Christ.

And so the call is for everyone. Remember, there are only two types of people. This passage makes that clear. There are the godly and the ungodly, the righteous and the unrighteous. There are only two destinations and so the call is clear for us today.

The question, which side do we fall into? Are we righteous or unrighteous? Are we godly or ungodly? Do we have, chapter 1, verse 1, the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ or do we not?

[35 : 46] If we have that righteousness, we look forward to salvation. If we do not have it, we look forward only to judgment. which side will you fall on?

Remember, we're asking this question, why should we believe in God's judgment and his salvation? Now, if you're familiar with history, art history, you've probably heard of a Renaissance painter named Giotto.

And Giotto was an Italian painter in the late 13th and early 14th centuries and there's a story told about Giotto where the Pope was looking for someone to be his painter.

And so, he commissioned samples from a variety of artists. He sent out his representative to bring in drawings and paintings from various people. And so, people would give him, right, their best works, the things that they hoped would impress the Pope that he would pick them.

Giotto, however, picked a very different strategy. Representative came to him asking for a sample. He whipped out a blank canvas and then with just his hand, his wrist, he quickly flicked out a circle.

[37 : 06] And as the story tells it, it was a perfect circle. It looked like it had been drawn by a compass. Now, this representative felt insulted. He said, is that really what you're going to send to the Pope?

You're just going to send him a circle on a sheet of paper. Giotto said yes. So, all of them went back to the Pope and he examined all these different wonderful drawings and came to Giotto's blank canvas with one circle written with his wrist.

And the Pope understood what the messenger had missed. And the point was clear. If I can draw a perfect circle with just my hand, imagine what I can do when I use my whole body.

the Pope realized that Giotto was the greatest of all the artists who had sent samples. So, guess who got the job? Not the ones who'd sent in wonderful paintings, but the one who had just sent in a perfect circle with the flick of his hand.

Brothers and sisters, Peter is telling us this. God is saying, look at the judgment that I can do just with the flick of my hand. if that's what I can do just in a minute, imagine what my judgment and salvation will look like at the end of the age.

[38 : 28] Imagine that. Hope in it and trust in it. It will be greater than anything you can imagine. You can look at the small things that I have done in the past and have confidence in the great thing that I will do in the future.

And of course, we can have confidence most of all because of the judgment and the salvation that we see in Jesus Christ. We see how great his judgment is and how great his salvation is.

And so, I invite you to pray with me for this passage from your word and we ask that you would use us to convict us of the reality of your judgment and to drive us to hope and faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

We thank you that you haven't left us alone but you've given us your word to guide us as we walk towards that great and glorious future. We ask these things thankful that we don't have to earn them or deserve them but we ask them in Jesus' name.

Amen.