

The End of the World

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[0 : 00] Good morning, church. Pastor Matthew here on this cold Sunday morning and glad that we can join together in person, even as we're separated.

And as we're coming together, as I often say when we are separated, but we're together virtually, I encourage you all to comment on the sections there in the comment box on the bottom right of your Facebook page and just say something as simple as hello or good morning, share who you're watching with and where you're watching from.

And of course, I've seen a bunch of you already doing that before I turn the camera around. So thank you. And it also gives me a sense that helps me know that I'm not just alone in a room in my house talking to a camera.

But there's actually other people here. I can sort of see some of the comments as I'm looking at the screen on the camera. So special welcome to you. If you are new with us, we're glad that you're here and we'd encourage you to connect with us.

If you go to our website and hopefully someone can post the link for our website in the comments section, it's cmpca.net. But if you go to our website, there will immediately be a pop up and that pop up will have a link for you to fill out our digital visitor card.

[1 : 14] And that helps us to connect with you and to help connect you with our community. We're going to jump right in this morning. You'll remember that we are studying the book of 2 Peter together.

And 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 we're near the end of the letter now. We've been in chapters 2 and 3 and especially in chapter 3. And as we're in chapter 3, we're continuing to talk about what we started in chapter 2, which is the idea of the false teachers.

And you'll remember that the false teachers are promoting a couple different things. They're attacking the reality that Jesus is coming back to the earth. And they're also attacking the authority of scripture.

We've been talking the last two weeks about their objection that we saw in verse 4. And their objection is that Jesus is not coming back. And the reason that they claim he's not coming back is because he hasn't come back yet.

[2 : 15] In other words, why is it taking so long? And we saw two answers to that last week. One, Peter rejects the premise of their question. He says, God's view of time, God's relationship with time is very different than your view of time, your relationship with time.

And then he also tells them, God is not slow, he's patient. He's not slow, he's patient. So that's where we've been.

Here's where we're heading this morning. We have the same situation we had last week, which is we have got some heavy sledding theologically. And so I want us to go in with a strategy. You'll remember I told you last week we were not going to discuss all of verse 10 because we were going to discuss that this week.

So this week, we're starting at verse 10 and we're going to verse 13. We are going to focus on verse 10, the end of verse 12, and verse 13. We are not going to look at verse 11 at all.

We're not going to look at the beginning of verse 12. We will cover those next week. So there's just a lot going on in these passages. They're very dense and we don't want to rush through them. And so it's for that reason that we're taking it slow.

[3 : 23] So we didn't cover as much of verse 10 last week. We'll cover it this week. We're not covering verse 11 this week. We'll cover it next week. And next week, we'll add verse 14. With that

strategy in mind, I want you to think of this question.

Ask yourself this question. When you think of the end of the world, what comes to mind? When you think of the end of the world, what comes to mind?

And in addition to that, when you think of what's talked about in Scripture as the new heavens and the new earth, what comes to mind? What comes to mind in that situation? Christians have a variety of ideas about what this is going to look like.

Some Christians believe we're going to have this sort of disembodied existence. Now, they wouldn't necessarily articulate it that way. But when they think about the end of the world and the new heavens and the new earth, they think we're escaping material reality somehow.

Now, some people think that maybe there's an alternate earth that we're going to go to. There's this alternate universe. And so I'm not going to give you the answer right away, but I'm just going to remind you there's all kinds of ideas about what's going to happen.

[4 : 27] And I'm sure you have an idea as well. And so that's the question we're going to be asking this morning as we look at 2 Peter 3. We're not going to look at everything the Bible has to say about the end of the world.

We're going to look at what this passage has to say about the end of the world. And so it's with that that we turn now to God's Word. I invite you to turn with me in your Bible, either a physical Bible like I have here, or on your phone, or maybe on a web browser.

I do encourage you to have all of chapter 3 opened up because we're going to refer back, especially to verse 7. But as we come to this, remember that this is God's Word. In Proverbs chapter 30, verse 5 tells us, every word of God proves true.

He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. And so that's why we read now 2 Peter chapter 3, starting at verse 10. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a 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.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn.

[5 : 53] Verse 13. But according to His promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 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 that you've given to us, that you haven't left us alone to wander around, but you speak clearly to us. And we thank you that you do that, even when it's cold outside and it's snowing, and even when we're separated in person and we have to join through the internet over video.

We ask that you would help us with that this morning, the many distractions that come as we're watching a screen rather than looking at a person, and that you would show your power by still speaking clearly to us in your Word.

We ask these things knowing that you'll help us, not because of what we've done or how we've performed, but you'll help us as we ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Now, I didn't plan to preach this sermon from a room in my house, but it actually proves to be timely and helpful. And I want you to think for a second, as you look at this room that I'm in, what does it say to you?

[7 : 09] Now, there's a variety of things it might say. You might say that there's not a whole lot of things on the wall. And so you might think, well, that's what it's like to live as a bachelor. You know, it just doesn't know what to do with this room. There are other things it might say to you.

I'll tell you what it says to me. When I look at this room and a variety of places in my house, it screams the 1990s. This house was built in 1995.

I only bought it in 2019. And so I have not had it that whole time. But if you look at that door right there, you look at those closet doors, that is something that happens with 1990s houses.

You would not buy a house today and see those kinds of doors. You wouldn't necessarily see those colors, right? There's something dated about it. And when I first walked into this house with my realtor, back in the spring of 2019, one of the first things she pointed out to me was the kitchen floors.

She said, these kitchen floors, you can tell something's, they're not been treated well. The owners are using too much water when they clean them. Because you can see there's a little bit of a bend in some of the pieces.

[8 : 10] It's sort of this, I'm not good at describing these materials, but you know, it's a non-wood material. Some kind of plastic. But they said it's been cleaned with too much water. And so you see the edges start to kind of come up on the different pieces of the floor.

Well, after I purchased the house, I had a handyman come and take a look at a variety of things. And he looked at the kitchen floors and he told me, the problem with these kitchen floors is not that the previous owners use too much water when they clean it.

The problem is that these floors aren't designed to be in contact with water. You have the wrong kind of floors for a kitchen. And unfortunately, those same floors are also in several of the bathrooms.

And so he looked and he said, these floors are not meant to be in bathrooms. So over time, regardless of what happens, water is going to destroy them. You have the wrong flooring. Of course, this is what happens when you're a homeowner, right?

And you buy a home that's been in existence for a long time. You inherit all sorts of decisions made by other people. And so when it comes to these kitchens, they have to be replaced.

[9 : 15] They don't have to be fixed this year. They don't have to necessarily have to be fixed next year, but they must be fixed. In other words, there is a coming day of judgment and wrath for my kitchen floors.

My kitchen floor has failed. I might wait for a time. I will not wait forever. There will come a day when they will be destroyed.

And of course, there will be a process to it, right? There's two parts. First of all, it's going to have to be stripped down, and then it's going to have to be remade. That's the same thing we see Peter here talking about when it comes to the judgment of the world, the end of the world, and the new heavens and the new earth.

There are going to be two steps, just like with my kitchen floors. When the judgment comes, when the day of wrath appears, so it is with the earth. It is first, and this is what we're going to look at at the beginning, it is first going to be stripped down to the studs.

God is going to strip this world down by fire. We look with me now at verse 10. We've already looked at the beginning last week, that the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then we see that the heavens will pass away with a roar.

[10 : 32] Now, of course, we have to wonder what exactly is meant by heavens when we come up against a passage like this, and we're going to clarify it by looking back at verse 7. So I invite you to look back at verse 7 with me.

We looked at this a while ago, but it says, but by the same word, the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire. So verse 7 is going to clarify a lot of what we come up against today, and we see heavens and earth coming together as a pair, and we also know they're going to be destroyed by fire.

So when we see heavens and earth as a pair, what I want you to think of is everything that God has created. Now, today is Valentine's Day, and as one person illustrates it, when we come against phrases like this, if you were to say to your spouse, I love you, body and soul, what do you mean? Well, you're not trying to draw out different distinctions about the human epistemology. What you're actually trying to say is, I love all of you. I love you, body and soul. You're not trying to make this philosophical statement.

You're making a personal, emotional statement. I love every part of you. The heavens and the earth are going to be destroyed. Everything is going to be destroyed.

[11 : 43] Verse 7 is easy because heavens and earth are together. Verse 10 makes it slightly more challenging because they're separated, but the point remains the same. What God has created will be judged by fire.

The heavens will pass away with a roar, and this roar here is most likely the sound of fire. You know that if you're by a bonfire, there's a sense in which it roars.

Now, we're very careful about bonfires here in Colorado, but if you're from the East Coast, you are much more casual about them, and you know that people love to have them in a large field, and as they get larger and larger, the sound increases as well.

The same thing is what we're told here in verse 10. These heavens are going to burn up, and there's going to be such a great fire that you can hear it. Now, we've been talking here about heaven and earth, right?

So we've covered the heavens, and then we find out here the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved. And if you're like me, and you're using an ESV translation of the Bible, you'll see that there's a note at the bottom, and it says it could be translated heavenly bodies.

[12:50] It could also be translated elements. I'm going to argue here that it's translated elements for a variety of reasons. A main one is that that matches most closely with verse 7. Verse 7 tells us about heavens and earth.

Verse 10 is expanding on verse 7, so we expect to hear about the heavens, and then we expect to hear about the earth. The elements then are giving us more detail about what it means for the earth to burn.

Everything that makes up the earth is going to melt. And so really what's going on in verse 10 is we're seeing an expansion, an elaboration of what happened in verse 7.

And so that's essentially summing up for us this judgment by fire that we've seen. The heavens will pass away by fire. It's going to be so loud there's a roar. It's also going to be so hot that the elements, here translated heavenly bodies, will be burned up and dissolved.

So this is going to be a fire that is incredibly hot. Now I'll just point out that this is parallel with verse 12. In fact, verse 12 is essentially saying the same thing.

[13:53] So I'm not going to recover all this material. This will help you understand why we waited for verse 10 for this week. But verse 12 tells us, the heavens will be set on fire. Exactly what we saw in verse 10.

The heavens have a roar to them, a loud fire. And the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn. Again, we're going to translate heavenly bodies as elements. So the earth is going to melt as it burns. And so I've spent a long time just telling you what verse 7 has already told us, that the heavens and the earth that now exist are being stored up for fire. Now there's a variety of views about these things.

We don't want to get caught up in the details because we want to understand the main point. We don't want to get caught up in, so caught up in the details that we miss the main point. And the main point is this.

There is a totality to God's judgment. It will touch everything. He is coming in judgment for both the heavens and the earth.

[14:51] Everything that he has created will be remade. And we have to see also the parallel that's going on here with the flood to help us understand how this is going to work.

So we're told about this judgment by fire in verse 7, verse 10, and verse 12. And it's compared to the judgment that has already happened by water. So remember verse 5, the heavens existed long ago and the earth, again, heaven and earth together for what God has existed, created.

The heaven and the earth, verse 6, was deluged with water and perished. So there was a judgment in the flood by water. That's in the past.

There will be a judgment by fire. That's in the future. This raises, of course, for us the question, what is this exactly going to look like?

What does it look like for the earth to be judged and destroyed by fire? What does it mean for the elements to melt and the heavens to burn?

[15:55] Well, this is actually a pretty easy question for us to answer. And all we have to do to answer it is this. Think about the last time that you witnessed a total and complete judgment of the entire world.

Just think about that. You know what that looks like. You know what this will look like. Of course, I joke, right? You have never seen an entire and complete judgment of the world. And so, of course, there's going to be an element in which we can't fully understand or comprehend what this is describing.

This gets back to what we talked about last week. Remember, I told you, when we came to the portion that a thousand years is like a day and a day is like a thousand years to the Lord, I reminded you that we have to have humility when we come to these things because God is so much higher than us.

He understands and knows things that we have no frame of reference for. You have never experienced a total and entire judgment of the world. You have no frame of reference for it. And so, of course, it would be difficult, in fact, perhaps impossible for us to fully understand what this will look like. Thankfully, the point, the goal of this passage is not for us to know every detail about the coming judgment, but to have assurance, as we talked about last week, that it will, in fact, happen.

[17 : 12] God will come and judge the world by fire even though he delays now. And these things are outside of our frame of reference.

There's a certain sense in which we won't fully understand what verse 10, verse 12, verse 7 is talking about until we experience it. Remember, we talked about this concept before.

People in the Old Testament had prophecies about what Jesus' coming would look like and they were surprised. We have prophecies about what his second coming will look like and we will be surprised.

And so there's some humility that comes here as we think about and look at Jesus' second coming, his judgment on the world. What we do know is the main points.

It will be total and complete. It will consume the heavens and the earth. It will not be by water, but by fire. Now, much of the application for this passage is going to come next week in verses 11 and 12.

[18 : 12] We have so much to cover just in terms of the new heavens and the new earth that we need to split it into two. And so some of this we just need to wait for next week. We are laying groundwork right now that we're going to see the fruit of next Sunday.

But I'll give you one application now. There's one section you may have noticed in verse 10 that I did not talk about. And it's at the end. After the heavens and the earth are burned up, the works that are done on it will be exposed.

In other words, God is coming with this complete judgment and as part of his judgment, everything that's secret will be made known. In fact, Jesus himself talks about this in Luke chapter 12.

He says, Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be made known.

Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.

God will delay his judgment for a time. He will not delay his judgment forever. There will be secrets for a time.

[19 : 20] There will not be secrets forever. And so the point that I made last week still stands. Remember the beginning of verse 10. The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

When it comes and everything is revealed, all secrets are made known, will you be saved or will you be destroyed? When God's judgment comes, when everything that is secret is made known, will you be saved or will you be destroyed?

You'll remember from the last several weeks, there are only two kinds of people. Those who have faith in Jesus Christ, who have repented of their sins and embraced his offer of salvation because they know that when Jesus lived, he lived the perfect life that we should have but didn't.

And when he died, he received the punishment that we deserve and saved us from it. Those who have faith in Jesus Christ will experience that. They do not need to be afraid of the end of verse 10. All the works on the earth being exposed. Those who do not have faith in Jesus Christ must have great fear. And as I've been telling you, the time to repent is now.

[20 : 34] God will delay his judgment. He will not delay it forever. He is coming like a thief in the night. When he finally returns, we will be surprised.

And when he returns, every secret will be revealed and made known. And so while we can't imagine or understand or know every detail, we know what we need.

We know that he's coming to judge. And we know that the works that are done on the earth will be exposed. Remember, I told you there's two steps when the day of judgment and wrath come for my kitchen floor.

Of course, the first is that it's going to be stripped. And that's what we've seen here in this passage. The first step is this judgment by fire that's going to strip the earth. The second step, however, it's that it's going to be remade.

It's not just that I remove the old kitchen floor, right, but that I'm going to put something more beautiful, more wonderful, more glorious, more resilient, something that can actually handle water

on it.

[21 : 44] And that's the same thing we see here in this passage. It's not just that fire comes and destroys, but that the world is also going to be remade.

And that raises the question here, right, what does this fire do? Does it destroy the world completely? Is this earth that we live on going to disappear? This gets back to the question I mentioned at the very beginning, which is that a lot of people have different ideas about what's going to happen at the end of the world.

What does it mean, in other words, in verse 13, when we're told that we're going to have a new heavens and a new earth? In what sense is this world new?

Is it new in the sense that God's going to create a new earth? Is he going to create a new universe? Well, I'm not going to belabor it, but I'm going to cut straight to the point when we talk about the new heavens and the new earth, I would put it in the words of one theologian who says this, the new heavens and the new earth will be new in quality.

It will not be new in time or origin. It will be new in quality. It will not be new in time or origin. Now, if that sounds fancy and technical, then I just want you to think about it this way.

[22 : 59] If I told you or someone told you that they were remodeling their kitchen, they might say this. They might say, I'm getting a new kitchen. Right? And, that kitchen is only new in quality.

In other words, it's still in the same room. When I have the replacement of my kitchen floors, I'm not moving. I'm not taking the kitchen and putting it upstairs.

It's going to stay downstairs. I will have the same address when and if I have new kitchen floors and you send me a Christmas card, you're going to address it the same way that you did the previous year.

We get a new earth. In other words, the address stays the same. That is what we mean when we say that the new heavens and the new earth are new in quality.

We might put it in a different way. If I get a new kitchen, it will be new in quality, not new in location. God is going to strip the earth down to the studs.

[24 : 06] That is different than destroying or annihilating the earth. Okay? God will make all things new here. When I replace my kitchen floors, I will have new kitchen floors here in this house.

The house that I'm talking to you from. The floors will be new in quality. They will not be new in location. Now, I've stated here I have to prove to you that this is true.

You may think I'm just playing fast and loose with the words here. Right? Doesn't new mean new. Now, first of all, I'm going to call your attention to the context of this chapter itself. In this chapter, we're told about the flood.

Right? Verse 6, the earth that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But what does it mean that the world perished in the flood?

Well, we know that we still live on the same earth that suffered from the flood. So, it perished in the sense that it was purified. It perished in the sense that the sinful civilization that existed was done away with.

[25 : 17] It was that sense in which it perished. It's a related word that Peter here uses in verse 12, I believe, or verse 10 to describe what's going to happen.

Yeah, verse 12, what's going to happen to the earth. And so, in context, in the context of this chapter, when Peter talks about destruction, he's talking about new inequality.

We know that because that's the kind of destruction that happened in the flood. And so, why would we assume that it's any different in this second judgment? The judgment by fire. So, in the context of this passage, when we compare verses 6 and 7 with verse 12, we should assume that the judgment by fire is similar to the judgment by water.

Both destroy the earth in a certain sense. Both, neither one, I should say, annihilate the earth. The earth as we have it is still going to be here.

Now, there are a variety of other arguments I could make to explain to you that the earth is going to be new only in quality. I'll just give you a couple more. If you're familiar with the Apostle Paul, you know that in Romans chapter 8, he writes about the creation and he tells us this in verse 19, the creation has eager longing for the future.

[26 : 29] In other words, there's a sense in which the trees and the mountains are looking forward for Jesus' second coming. We don't know exactly what that looks like. We just have to know that there's a sense in which that's true because Paul tells us the creation has eager longing for the

future.

And you have to ask, why would the creation have any sort of longing for the future if the future involved the creation being completely annihilated? Then, he goes on to tell us in verse 21, the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

And so, the creation is going to be set free. There is a sense in which there is a teaching here by Paul that the creation has something to look forward to. Our created world only has something to look forward to if God is renewing and restoring it rather than annihilating it.

And so, we see again, new means new in quality. Finally, if you think I'm playing fast and loose with the English language, I'll point out an argument by a man who writes in this book about the word new in Scripture and points out that the word new in Scripture often is used this way.

He says this, and he's talking about 2 Peter chapter 3, this is no verbal trick, rather it conforms to the nature of the theme of eschatological newness in Scripture.

[27 : 57] Eschatological is just a fancy word that means the end of the world. The redeemed have undergone a new birth. We are already new creatures in Christ, live under the new covenant and have new hearts, but we still remain what we were before in the sense that we retain all of our substantial continuity with the world that God made before the fall.

In the act of regeneration, God does not perform open heart surgery and literally give us different hearts. Rather, our hearts, a cipher for the whole person or seat of thought, emotion, and will are rebuilt, refurbished, renewed, restored, reconciled, redeemed, and regenerated.

Same heart, new orientation, new power. So we see that the word new is used this way throughout Scripture. I'll just point to one example. We're told in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17, that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

Well, we understand what kind of newness that is. It's the newness he speaks of here. A newness that means rebuilt, refurbished, renewed, restored, reconciled, redeemed. The same is true of our world.

It will be new in the sense that it is rebuilt, refurbished, renewed, restored, reconciled, and redeemed. It is in that sense that it will be new. Now, I'll stop here in terms of my arguments.

[29 : 12] I have not even touched Jesus' discussion of the renewal of the world or the book of Revelation. I'll simply say this. When it comes to this category, the new heavens and the new earth, theologians would tell us it is a restoration and a renewal, not an obliteration or an annihilation.

It is a restoration and a renewal, not an obliteration or an annihilation. I will install a floor that cannot be penetrated by water.

In that sense, it will be new. God is going to create a world untouched by sin. In that sense, it will be new.

Now, as we look at these concepts of the new heavens and the new earth, there's a variety of places I could go with this. I could talk with you about the inherent goodness of creation. The fact that God loves it so much, he's going to redeem it.

I could talk with you about the wonder of the material world. That there's a reason that we enjoy, some of us, snow so much. Some of us hate it. There's a reason we enjoy the beauty of the mountains in Colorado.

[30 : 19] That's something good and right. God designed us to be that way. That will not disappear when Jesus returns. And we could go in all those places. This morning, I just want you to think of one thing that we take away.

One application that we have, which is this. When it comes to Jesus and his victory, it is total and complete. Now, it's good and right for us to think of Jesus' victory over sin and death as something that brings us salvation from eternal punishment.

And that is the most important part for us of his victory over sin and death. It is not less than that. The reality is that it is much more than that.

His victory is so complete that it eradicates ultimately every piece of sin. It is a complete retaking of territory.

You know, when it comes to war, victory and territory are intimately connected. If you win, you retake whatever territory you lost in the war, right?

[31 : 26] If you win, you might get to take some of your enemy's territory. The same is true of Jesus' victory. What sort of victory would it be if in winning the battle over sin and death, he lost the

territory of this earth?

No, Jesus' victory is complete. The surrender of sin is unconditional. He loses nothing.

He takes back everything. That's how powerful and complete Jesus' victory over sin and death is. It is not just good news, then, for us as individuals.

Remember Romans chapter 8, the creation longs. It is good news for the entire world. God does not negotiate terms with sin.

He does not cede territory to sin. His victory is complete. Sin's surrender is unconditional. He gains all his territory back.

[32 : 34] The earth is his. Romans chapter 8, the whole creation groans, the whole creation will be redeemed. And of course, this is made fully and finally true in Jesus.

We're told in the New Testament about his complete victory. Colossians chapter 2, verse 15, tells us this. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

There's a disarming of rulers and authorities, right? There's open shame, there's a triumph. This is Roman military language. He completely defeats his enemies. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 24, again speaking of Jesus.

Then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. Anything and everything lost to sin is regained by God, including the whole world.

Of course, that doesn't mean there aren't things that are lost in the sense that they're judged. But when it comes to territory, it means that God takes it back. God's victory is complete. It's complete because of Jesus' victory on the cross.

[33 : 46] When he died, he did not just take the punishment, the penalty for our sins. He also defeated sin and death for all and forever.

And so we then see that when he finally comes in his second coming, stripping the earth down to the studs and rebuilding it, recreating it, giving us a new heavens and a new earth.

Remember, I started by asking you when it comes to the end of the world, what do you think of?

What do you think of when you think of the new heavens and the new earth?

Ronald Reagan, President Ronald Reagan liked to talk about his strategy in the Cold War to defeat the Soviet Union. And he used this phrase in various ways at various times.

One of them was in one of his State of the Union addresses. He described his strategy against the Soviet Union. He said this, my idea of American policy towards the Soviet Union is simple and some would say simplistic.

[34 : 53] It is this, we win and they lose. What do you think of that? Brothers and sisters, when we come to this world, we know that Jesus has won and sin has lost.

It is total and complete. and so we look for the total and complete reclaiming of all his territory, the restoration of this entire earth.

That is what we think of and see when we ask how the world is going to end and we think of the new heavens and the new earth. And ultimately, it is true because of Jesus who has conquered sin and death and has disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

Let's pray. Our Father in Heaven, we thank you for the encouragement and hope we take that you have defeated sin and your defeat over it is so great and so complete that you will come back and reclaim this earth once and for all.

We ask that you would give us that hope and that confidence as we live this week and you would prepare us again next week to hear from your word as we look to see what kind of lives we live in response in preparation for your return.

[36 : 16] We ask these things. I'm grateful that we ask them not because of our victory but because of Jesus' victory and so we ask them in his name. Amen. As we end our time together, we'll have us end our time together with a benediction and you'll remember that a benediction is a good word from God.

God, it's a word that is true in a world filled with words that are not true. It's tradition for the minister to hold up his hand to send out God's blessing on God's people and it's tradition for God's people to hold out their hands to receive God's blessing and so I invite you even as you're at your homes to hold out your hands and to hear God's good word over you from Hebrew chapters 13.

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus the great shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the eternal covenant equip you with everything good that you may do his will working in us that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen. Thanks for joining us. Stay warm and we look forward to seeing all of you very soon. Thanks so much. And we look forward