

The End of the World - Part 1

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: 04 February 2024

Preacher: Cory Brock

[0 : 00] I'm going to read together from the Gospel of Mark chapter 13 verses 1 to 27. So it's printed in your bulletin.

You have a hard copy there in the bulletin. We've got more Bibles out today than we've had in the past. There's some at the back, there's some on the sides. We've had a big Bible donation recently, which is great, always good to have more Bibles.

So feel free at any time to grab one if you'd like to have one while we look at God's word together. So Mark 13 verses 1 to 27.

And as Jesus came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, Look, teacher, what wonderful stones, what wonderful buildings. And Jesus said to him, Do you see these great buildings that will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down?

And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately. Tell us, when will these things be? What will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?

[1 : 04] And Jesus began to say to them, See that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name saying, I am he, and they will lead many astray. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed.

This must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, there will be famines.

These are but the beginning of the birth pains. But be on your guard, for they will deliver you over to councils and you will be beaten in synagogues. You will stand before governors and kings for my sake, and for kings for my sake to bear witness before them.

And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and they deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you will say, but say whatever is given to you in that hour, for it is not you who speak but the Holy Spirit.

And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my namesake.

[2 : 12] But the one who endures to the end will be saved. But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be, let the reader understand, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Let the one who is on the house top not go down nor enter his house to take anything out, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days, pray that it may not happen in winter.

For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now and never will be. And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved.

But for the sake of the elect whom he chose, he shortened the days. And then if anyone says to you, look, here is the Christ, or look, there he is, do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders to lead astray.

If possible, the elect, but be on guard. I have told you all things beforehand. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will be falling from heaven, the powers in the heavens will be shaken, and then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

[3 : 31] And he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. This is God's holy word. All right.

We are coming back to Mark's gospel. We spent a good chunk of 2023 in Mark's gospel. And then from now till Easter, we're going to finish Mark's gospel, Mark 13 through 16.

The back half of Mark's gospel, chapter 9 to 16, is all about Jesus' journey towards the cross. So he's got his eyes turned towards Jerusalem. Now, 13 and beyond, he's in Jerusalem.

So he's never going to leave again. And for two weeks, we're going to be in Mark 13 this weekend next week. And if you're reading with me, you will have noticed that Mark 13 is about the end of the world.

It's about everything that's going to happen in the end of history. A lot of times, people will preach Mark 1 to 12 and 14 to 16, because Mark 13 is notoriously tricky, very difficult, lots of language like the abomination of desolation.

[4 : 33] What is that? So we're going to look at it for two weeks together and think about it. Since the 19th century, I think there have been three big trends related to people, modern people thinking about the end of the world.

So when materialism rose up in the 19th century, this view that there is nothing that exists but matter in motion, no God above, no heaven beyond, nothing invisible.

People started to talk about the fact that the end of the world is just one day the sun is going to either go cold or explode fire. So we're going to die, all of us, either by heat or by freezing to death.

Nothing's going to be remembered. Nothing's going to matter. So that's the 19th century's view, materialism. And then that gave way, I think, to the 20th century where we love the post-apocalyptic.

So the 20th century, every single decade, I read an essay about this recently, how every single decade since film was created, we've seen an increase in post-apocalyptic movies, that genre, books, movies, films, cinema.

[5 : 43] People love the post-apocalyptic. The viewers say that by their money. They go to the cinema to see post-apocalyptic films. There's great literature in the genre, The Road, Cormac McCarthy, wonderful book.

Then there's The Hunger Games. Go back to the 90s, Armageddon, all the way to the zombie apocalypse craze that we're in right now.

Tons of zombie apocalypse movies coming out at the moment. People love to think about the end of the world. We're going to say more about why in just a moment. One of the third big things that's happening is about the end of the world is the transhumanist movement.

Transhumanist movement is a movement that seeks to incorporate artificial intelligence into the human body so that the end of the world will ultimately be the possibility of downloading human consciousness so that we can live forever.

This past week, Elon Musk put a microchip in a human brain, and the claim is that that person that he did that surgery on is now able to control technology by just thinking.

[6 : 48] They said it was successful. A person is walking around right now that can control their phone and a computer just by thinking. That's transhumanism, that's the development of it.

This is all of this. It's about the end of the world. What's the end of the world going to be like? That's exactly what the disciples were asking about right here. Jesus, what are these things? The end of the world. What is it?

Now, when Christians start talking about the end of the world in a modern city like Edinburgh, I think two things can happen or two issues come up. Maybe today you're here exploring the faith, and you'll have heard this, that when Christians talk about the end of the world, there are two problems.

One is that there is a Christian subculture that comes to places like Mark 13, Matthew 24, the parallel passage, and creates their entire Christian tradition around these passages, builds big systems of thinking about the end times, what's going to happen in and tries to basically read the Bible alongside the news cycle, and read the abomination of desolation and what's happening in the United States and Israel and places like that all the time.

That's a real problem. Jesus actually comes in this passage and says, do not do that. We're going to talk about that next week. He tells us, don't do that. Don't read the end times next to the news cycle and the Bible altogether.

[8 : 08] He warns us against that here. The other issue that we face is that people in the modern world will say, Christians are escapists.

They think about heaven, they think about the end of things, the heavenly life, the pilgrims progress to the celestial city, some say, and they do that so much that they become of no earthly good at all.

They think about the end so much that they don't think about the present and they don't think about injustice. They don't think about the problems of today, the problems in our city, the problems that people are facing.

This in Mark 13, we're going to see this week, next week, says to every single one of us today, you really do have to think more about the end of the world.

That's a Christian duty, in fact, to think about the end of the world, to ponder over it, to explore it, and at the same time, while you say there is an end of the world, I need to think about it. He gives us, I think, here five reasons why thinking about the end of the world more, not less, makes you more helpful.

[9 : 15] His more helpful is good for today, for the present. Now, we're not going to do all five. This morning, we're just going to do two, and we'll do three next week. Let's think about that. First, let's think about what is Jesus teaching here about the end of the world, and then what are two of the five ways that He says, thinking about that actually helps you immensely right now, can really actually transform your life in many ways, right now.

What is the Christian view of the end of the world? That's what He's talking about here. What is it? What is Jesus teaching here? Let's simplify it as much as we can. Jesus is talking in this passage about two big events that are going to take place, and you can see the first one He mentions in verse two.

He says to the disciples, do you see these great buildings, the temple mound, all the great buildings of the temple? And He says, every single one of these stones is going to fall. And then if you jump down to verse 14, He says that this is called the abomination of desolation.

Let the reader understand. Now we'll come back to why He uses that language in just a second. The other language that gets used there is tribulation. What is the tribulation? The first thing that He's talking about, this great tribulation, that's the language of the first century.

That's normal language for a Jewish believer in the first century to say, the tribulation, the end of all things. What is it? And the first answer is, it is the destruction of the temple.

[10 : 40] So that's what He's talking about here. He says, friends, disciples, before you pass away, you're going to see this place destroyed, this temple. Not every single one of these stones is going to fall.

And so He's talking first about the temple. Jesus leaves the temple at the beginning of this passage, verse one, for the very last time. He'll never come back to it.

And in the previous two chapters, Mark 11 and 12, He battled the Sanhedrin all about the theology of the temple. He did battle with them, and He tried to help them understand what the temple was really about.

And in Mark 11, He had caused a fig tree to wither and die. And He had said, this fig tree is a sign of what's going to happen to the temple.

So He's been talking about this. And now He leaves the temple for the last time, and He says, now, every single one of these stones is going to fall down. He's talking here about the destruction of the temple, the abomination of desolation, where the tribulation is that.

[11 : 38] It's the destruction of the temple. Now the disciples, they say, Jesus, look at this place. They're sitting on the Mount of Olives 300 feet higher than the temple, looking at it, overseeing it.

From where they're sitting, there's a vantage point, we think, right into almost the Holy of Holies. The temple was a mile wide in circumference at this time, Herod's temple. It was enormous.

And they say, look at these marvelous stones. We have from other extra biblical documents, we know that there are stones at the temple that are 20 meters wide, 20 meters long, four meters wide.

I mean, absolutely, in almost 400 kilograms, they estimate some of these stones. It was an architectural marvel. And they're looking at it, and He's saying, every single one of them is going to fall, all of them.

Now, what do we learn? First, Jesus was absolutely right. So 37 years later, in 8070, Rome came and destroyed Jerusalem and toppled the entire temple.

[12 : 41] And we have this documented in hundreds of ways in extra biblical literature. So let me read to you a quote from Josephus, a historian of the first century.

He says, Caesar ordered the entire city of Jerusalem and the temple to be raised to the ground. The entire wall encompassing the city was so completely leveled as to leave future visitors to the spot, no reason for believing it had ever existed.

So Josephus says, this really happened. Now, one of the things we can say about that is, what does it mean for us? Well, the first thing it means for you today is that Jesus Christ dies.

There is not a historian that questions this. Jesus Christ died by 33 AD at the latest. Mark wrote his gospel by 58 AD at the latest.

This is, evangelical scholars say this, historical critical scholars that don't believe the Bible's God's word also all agree that Mark's gospel was written before 68 AD.

[13 : 45] And then Jesus says here, look, you see that place? It's going to topple. And in 70 AD, it did. The first thing you have to come to this and say is, what is your hope when the world ends?

Well, it's not Elon Musk's brain chips. It's not that the sun's going to blow up. No, how about a man who can at least 37 years before it would ever happen tell you that something's going to take place in the future and it actually does?

In ancient Israel, if you're a prophet and you give a false prophecy, you are condemned to death for that. And he stands here under the old covenant order and says this and it actually comes to pass.

Jesus Christ knows he is God. He knows what's going to take place. There's no way to get around it. If you're here today wrestling with what to think about this man, just know that there is no disagreement that this was written prior to 8070.

So it was either a guess or a prophecy. And it's the latter. Now the second thing to say, what do we learn here? How does this matter for us today? This tells you exactly what to think.

[14 : 50] Four times in Mark 13, and this is where we're really camp out. Four times he says, okay, what do you do with this? And he says, be on your guard.

So he says it first in verse three that the ESV doesn't quite translate it like that, but it's the same thing in verse three when he says verse four, he says, sorry, verse five, see that no one leads you astray.

That's the same language you'll get later, be on your guard. And then you see it again in verse nine, be on your guard. Verse 23, be on your guard. Verse 33, beyond what we read, be on your guard.

Stay awake. What do you do with teaching about the end of history? What do you do with teaching about the end of the temple? Well Jesus says, here's what you do, you need to be on your guard.

Okay, what does that mean? Well he's talking here about the image of a soldier, a sentinel standing on a city wall. And he's saying, you need to be like a soldier that stands on the city wall, a sentinel, and looks out and looks for the incoming, the spies, you know, that are coming close.

[15 : 58] What's the worst thing that you can do if you're the guy posted on the city wall at night? The worst thing you can do is fall asleep. And that's why at the end of the passage verse 33, he says, be on your guard. Stay awake.

And what is he talking about? What are you to be looking for when you're standing on the city wall looking out? He's saying, this is the condition of your mind, the condition of your heart. You should be awake looking for something.

What are you to be looking for? Now the events of 8070 have already passed. He was saying that at their time to them saying, look out. So he goes on and says, you know, if you're a mother and you're pregnant or nursing in those days, it's going to be really hard.

Because Rome, he was talking about something very real. Rome is going to come and surround the entire city. And when you have a baby, it's going to be harder to get out in time. That's what he was talking about. He's saying, so be on guard.

Look out when you see signs of this. What does he say? Fleet of the mountains. So he said, it's coming. The destruction of Jerusalem is coming. Be aware.

[16 : 56] Run to the mountains when you start to see signs of it. Hopefully it will not be in winter, he says, because that would be harder if you're going to the mountains to hide, to live in the middle of winter. It's very practical. That's what he's talking about here.

But what is he saying to us? And here's what you get. When you start to read through a passage like this, Mark 13, there is language in it where you say, I can see that he's talking about the past, but all of a sudden in the next sentence, it's like he's talking about the future.

And it sort of blends together and there's attention. And you can see that. He's talking about the destruction of the temple, but you come to verse 19, he says, but in those days, there will be such tribulation as has not been seen from the beginning of creation.

And you say, but is he still talking about just the destruction of Jerusalem? Because there's been lots of cities destroyed, lots of cities leveled. This is this kind of thing that's happened before. And as you read on, you realize he's talking about something else and it all blends together.

Now the theologians of history, they've given us language for this. And they say, when it comes to understanding what Jesus teaches about the end times, we say that some things are now and some things are not yet.

[18 : 09] Some things have already taken place or presently were right in the middle of and some things at the same time in this mysterious language he uses are not yet. The temple has been destroyed.

That's in the now it's present, it's over, it's past. But what is it? He's talking about something that's not yet and you get it down when you by the time you get to verse 24. And in verse 24, what does he say?

He says, eventually here's what you need to do. When the temple is destroyed, he says, that will not be the end. Don't listen to the false prophets. You say that's then instead verse 24.

In those days, the days of tribulation, the sun will go dark, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven. Verse 26, you will see the son of man coming with the clouds.

He's talking here about the second coming. Jesus has come once and he's saying here that one day, what will the end be like? Jesus is going to come again.

[19 : 03] And he will come with the clouds, that means he will come in the glory cloud that we saw in the Old Testament. It doesn't mean that when he comes, you'll see a cloud and you'll go up into the clouds with him.

That's not what he's saying. He's saying just like in the Old Testament, when God condescended onto Mount Sinai and glory cloud, one day Jesus will come back in glory cloud and you will see him and that will be the real end of history.

That will be the beginning of everlasting life. And this language about the moon and the stars and the sun falling, this is all Old Testament language from the prophets about the destruction or the end of current government order, of principalities, of powers.

These are the metaphors that the Old Testament used to describe that. And that's what he's saying. That's the end. Two things he's talking about, the destruction of the temple and his second coming. All right.

That means he's saying to you today. It's the Christian call to think about the second coming. Do you? Do you think about the second coming?

[20 : 05] Do you ponder over it? Do you make it a habit in your life? To regularly think about the second coming of Jesus. That's what he means. Be on guard. Be like a sentinel looking out and what are you looking for?

You're looking for the second coming. You're awake for it. You're longing for it. You should be a person. We should all be people. He's saying where you're sitting around, you're daydreaming and somebody comes up and says, what have you been doing this week?

What have you been up to? What are you up to right now? Looks like you're kind of dazed off and you say, I'm just sitting here thinking about the second coming. That's what he's saying. That's what you should be. I'm just daydreaming and longing for the second coming of Jesus.

Now two ways that that matters today. Two ways and we'll do three more next week. Two ways. The first is that he teaches us here thinking about the second coming directs you away from false objects of hope, things that you might attach to and think are the hope of the everlasting life that aren't really.

That's I think what he tells us here. You see in verse one, remember he says, the disciples had said these four disciples. These are by the way, these four are the original disciples that Jesus first called to follow him and they say, Jesus, look at the temple.

[21 : 22] Look at these stones. This place, there is nothing like it in the world. That was true at the time. Herod's temple, nothing like it. What does he say? He says, every single one of these stones is going to fall.

I think the first thing Jesus is telling us when we think about the end, about all that Jesus has been doing in history from that moment all the way till the second coming, is that Jesus was trying to teach us and then right there that you can never put your hope in any earthly institution.

The people of the first century had great hope in the temple. This is the center of their identity, the meeting point of the national culture. This is the place you go to meet with God.

This is where you go to be reconciled to God. Jesus was saying, every single earthly institution that humanity has ever built is eventually going to go away.

You can never find your hope in anything that humans build. For some of us, we do that in political systems. We look at the next election and think that this is finally going to be the moment where things get better.

[22 : 32] Jesus is coming to say, it's all temporary. No earthly institution, no human being, no local church. There is not a single local church on earth that is the object of your hope.

Do you know that? No local church. St. Caesar's is so great. That's been my experience. But we of course know that it is not everlasting.

We of course know, if you know the history, that the church goes up and down. Local churches get healthy and then they're not. Then they get healthy and they're not. That happens. By God's grace, we pray that St. Caesar stays healthy.

There is no person or institution that can ever be the object of hope. Jesus was trying to say that here about the temple. Some of you today, I've had this conversation with some of you that you're here, but you've also been burned by the church in the past.

You've had a really rough experience with a person or a local institution. It's important to hear today that what Jesus is teaching is that the object of hope is not in Christians or the institutions they build.

[23 : 43] The object of hope is something much greater than that. We're about to see what it is. You probably already know. Here's one more thing he says to us. In other words, he's saying, the second coming, when you think about it, it relativizes every single earthly institution that will ever exist.

The British government is very big and very great. It's been around for a long time, but it's not everlasting. The monarchies are not everlasting. None of it is. What the theologians help us to see is this.

When you think about the second coming, you can use this language. It relativizes all earthly temporal powers, and then it fulfills them.

In other words, you think about the greatest earthly institutions that you love so much. Maybe the greatest earthly institution is the family.

We all long for great families. We want to be a part of a great family. We want to build a great family if you have a family. We want to be within a loving family. What this is telling us is that the greatest family that has ever existed on earth, whatever family that is, is a shadow of the way that when Jesus comes back, he will fulfill the institution of the family.

[24 : 55] One day when Jesus comes, it will be the greatest family that's ever existed. He will relativize all earthly families, but fulfill the family when he comes.

How about states? Have you ever longed for a perfect state, a government, a government that will establish justice and peace, a government that doesn't demand unjust things from you, a government that always gets it right, that always gets it right?

It's saying that Jesus' second coming relativizes every government that will ever exist and says it's important, but it's not important. Then fulfills that government ultimately by being the kingdom of righteousness, justice, and peace.

He subverts, he fulfills. He tells you that it matters, but not that much because the second coming is coming. The kingdom is coming.

I need to move on, but let me say that he also tells us here, verse 6, many, when the temple gets destroyed, he says there's a lot of people that are going to come in that time and say, I'm the Christ, the end is here, follow me.

[26 : 05] He says it in verse 21, many will arise in the latter days and say, I'm the Messiah, follow me. Now that happened. We have numerous accounts, first century, second century, third century, extra biblical data of people that rose up and said in turbulent times, the fall of the Roman Empire, I'm the Christ, follow me.

He's saying here, no matter what's going on in life, no matter the amount of wars and rumors of wars, no matter who stands up and says, follow me, I'm a great leader, I can be your hope, implicit Messiahs, explicit Messiahs, there is only one object of your real hope.

There's only one object. And the big idea here is that he's saying the temple is coming to an end because Jesus is telling them I am the temple.

Whereas the object of human hope, Jesus is saying it's me. The temple is going to be destroyed because the temple is standing right in front of you. The temple is the place where you come to meet God. The temple is the place where you come to be atoned for your sins, to be reconciled.

And he's saying that is me, that's here, that there is no earthly object of hope except for me. I'm the only place that you can hope in, ultimately, finally.

[27 : 19] That's what he's teaching us here. Now secondly and finally, does that then make us, make a Christian? Let's say that somebody, your friend finds you this week, you're at work, you're not getting your work done, you're at your desk, they say, what's going on?

You seem to be lost pondering and you say, well, I'm just thinking about the second coming. Does that make you an escapist? Is it true? We're just pilgrims longing for the celestial city and that what we do on earth, we think so much, we can become people that think so much about the second coming, we don't matter at all to anybody around us.

Jesus also says emphatically no in this passage. We'll see one way now and one way next week that that's true. But here it is, here's the principle. The more that you think about the kingdom that is to come, the more that you think about the second coming of Jesus Christ, actually the more you really think about people around you.

The more you start, in other words, to see people's pain and misery, the more you think about human suffering that stands all around you in the present.

Why is it that people are so into post-apocalyptic stuff? I read an essay this week and it was, the author was suggesting that over the past 30 years, we have seen almost a doubling every decade in post-apocalyptic film and book publication.

[28 : 46] And he noticed in the essay with that, that there was also a shift in the style of post-apocalyptic, the post-apocalyptic genre. He said, in the 90s, you had Armageddon, right?

And the earth was going to get destroyed in Armageddon, but Bruce Willis, we had Bruce Willis, he's going to save the day. He's going to be our hero.

That was the old post-apocalyptic genre. There was hope. Human ingenuity, human power and moxie could really overcome.

But in the last decade, it's been the bleakest era of post-apocalyptic films and books. And in almost all of them, what takes place? The government's fall, the internet stops, and the human being is unleashed.

And everybody turns into a beast. And the whole point of every one of those movies is nothing but can you be the last one to survive? Can you make it in the midst? Could you survive the apocalypse?

[29 : 46] That's been the trend. And this author asks why, and he says this. He says, since the 19th century, when secularism started to take over, there's no God above, there's no law within.

What do you have? If the world does start to go that way, if everything goes wrong in your life, what do you have except survival? There's nothing to hope in.

All you can do is try to outlive the next guy and use anything that you can to do that. He said, that's why. It's because of secularism. And Jesus comes and says something so different.

He says, when you see the Son of Man rise from the dead, he's telling his disciples, and you realize there is hope in a resurrected ending of all of history, then something's going to happen to you.

What is it? When you believe in a land where every single tear will be wiped away from your face, a land of justice, righteousness, and peace, it doesn't make you, it doesn't draw you away from thinking about the present.

[30 : 46] Instead, what you start to see is people's pain, people's suffering, people's misery. When you think that one day there will be a place, well, there will be no more tears, a kingdom of justice, righteousness, and peace, it enables you to look at this life and say, am I too comfortable right now to realize the true miseries of a sinful world?

Am I awake? Maybe you have a pretty good life and things are pretty easy. But thinking about the second coming helps you think, man, there, oh, I should be longing for a place where the physical and spiritual miseries of this life are no more.

And then that makes you awake to seeing how much other people around you are hurting, even if they don't say it, even if they don't show it. It makes you realize, wow, there is something so much more than this, and it makes me care about people more.

The last way I think Jesus tells us how this works is, what does he say to the disciples? He says that verse nine, you're going to be, one day, when all this takes place, he says you're going to be persecuted, you're going to be taken up by councils, you're going to be imprisoned, you're going to be killed.

And he said, and he uses the language of actually, you're going to give yourself away in that. In other words, how in the world can a person, can these disciples say, I'm willing, I'm willing to be taken, I'm willing to be killed for the sake of the gospel, for the name of Jesus.

[32 : 21] And the only way you can say that is if you realize that I was made for a different land. You know, I was made for a land that is coming in the second coming, a kingdom.

And that enables me today to say, I will take big risks. I will take risks for the gospel, because I know that the person next to me and around me is something more than just a blip on the map in this life.

Actually I realize now that the people I see every day are immortal. And so I'm willing to risk myself for them. I'm willing to say and tell them the truth about the gospel, because I long for them to be a part of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Let's close with the words of C.S. Lewis, because he captures this. He captures the entire sermon today better than I can say it. He puts it like this, this is all of it right here.

He says, we've got to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person that you talk to may one day be a creature which if you saw today, you would be strongly tempted to worship.

[33 : 29] Where else they will be a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare? There are no ordinary people.

You have never talked to a single mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization, and institutions, these are mortal. Point one, those are mortal, right?

And their life is to ours like the life of a nat. He says, the greatest monarchies of all of history are so short lived relative to every single human soul that it's like the life of a nat relative to us.

He says, but it is immortals with whom we joke, work with, marry, snub, and exploit, either immortal horrors or everlasting splendor.

He's saying that every single person you encounter, every single person you encounter is going to live forever. And the most ordinary person or the person that you think is the problem with our current social order, that person may one day, by the power of the gospel, after having been there 10,000 years, have no less days to shine forth God's grace than when they first begun on day one.

[34 : 44] Every single person you encounter one day can have the potential to shine the light of God themselves in their face in a way that if you looked at it right now, you would be blinded by.

Every single person is an immortal. When you think about the second coming, it makes you really care about the people around you. One thing to do this week, make it a habit to think about the second coming.

Pray about the second coming. Long for the second coming. Enfold it into your daily consciousness. Make it normal this week. And we're going to come back, come back next week.

And here are three more ways that Jesus drives us to think about this. Let's pray. Lord, we give thanks today that you are coming again.

And so we pray the prayer that you taught us at the end of the Bible, come, Lord Jesus. And we say that knowing ourselves, knowing the miseries of life, thanking you that things are not as bad as they could be.

[35 : 46] There's so much goodness and joy to be had here. Yet at the same time, we don't want to get comfortable. So we pray that you would help us all to remember that you are coming again with the glory of the clouds.

Teach us what it's like to meditate on that. Take us into places as we think about it that we're surprised by this week. Enfold these truths into our prayer lives. Oh, Lord, give us great desire to meditate on the coming of the kingdom.

And we pray these things now in Jesus' name. Amen.