



God's Church-Part 3
The Invincible Lord of His Church
Pastor Mike Fabarez

Well, it's true, I hate to say it, but it seems like election season is back again. It keeps getting a bit earlier and earlier every cycle, doesn't it? And yet we're here. We've got the debates, we've got the commercials, we've got the Internet ads. We've got the town hall meetings, we have the campaign committees, all that starting to ramp up again. I wonder what it would be like to be a part of one of those campaign committees. Now, imagine that you were coming this morning to a campaign committee meeting. I wonder what that would be like. What would we do? What would be on our agenda? What would be our process? What would we be thinking about in terms of our web site? How would we go about just the activities of our organization? How would we raise funds? What kinds of things would we do in terms of planning? How would we just focus on whatever it is that you focus on when you're at a campaign committee meeting? That would just be an interesting thing to think through.

Well, we don't have to imagine. Of course you can go look it up and see how this all works. It's easy to access and see what these things are all about. You recognize this: in the fog of all the activity that goes on in these big campaign committees, you recognize that they're pretty clear about what they're there for. They're there to promote a candidate and they're there to promote his or her campaign platform. I mean, that's what they do. Are there ancillary things? Of course, there are. There are lots of things that they do that aren't directly related. I mean, they've got a lunchroom in the big headquarters. They probably have a ping pong table or a foosball table over here or over there. I mean, they even get together as they have meals. They probably even have park dates, I suppose, for their kids in the weekends. There's a lot of stuff they do because they're human beings, they work together and there are a lot of activities, but they never lose sight of what they're there for. Or more specifically, who they're there for.

Jesus told a parable. It's a bit of a stinging parable when he talks about the world and what it does. How it goes about what it does. He speaks about the focus and the purpose and the goals and even the shrewd kind of advancement they make to make the things happen in their world that they want to see happen. And then he gives this stinging punch line. He says, "The sons of this world are more shrewd in relation to their own generation than are the sons of light." You're the sons of light, he says. And here they are, a team of people that he had collected, a clear team of people who had a purpose and a goal. And he says, it's really sad that people out there for other things, secular, temporal priorities, they go about all their work and they seem to do it a lot better than you do. Ouch!

How stinging an indictment that is, and I would hope it would never be true of us here in our church. Now, of course, we're not a campaign committee, but we are the church. The church has a goal. It certainly is here to promote a person. And there is a platform. There are a bunch of things that this person has told us that we are to advance and to make known and to really call people to be a part of. It's more than a vote. But clearly, to jump on board and support this "candidate," a candidate who, by the way, in our Christian theology, has already been enthroned. Oh, he hasn't



taken his great power and begun to reign quite yet. His kingdom is coming and we're praying for that inauguration day. But in terms of his coronation that has taken place and we're out there to advance his cause.

Well, there's a lot of ancillary activities in a church. Churches like ours, bigger church, got a lot going on here, and there are things that we do. We've bought a foosball table and a ping pong table that's somewhere on this campus. We've got all kinds of park dates and things that happen. We eat a lot of meals together and there are certainly ancillary activities. But may God prevent us from ever forgetting what we're here for, who we're here to promote. It ought to be the governing anchor in our lives that makes it very clear, this is what the church is, this is what we do. No matter how difficult it might be, we don't forget that. It's reflected in everything.

Now, I suppose it's appropriate that God made sure that the first sermon of the Church in the Second Chapter of Acts, it really anchors the Church in the purpose. He's declaring things that should be obvious to all of us, but in the fog of activity of doing church, sometimes we can forget. And not only do we want to not be eligible for the stinging indictment of Christ, who said, "Man, I don't want the world chasing its priorities and promoting its causes better than you do yours, because you are the people that have the truth and you're promoting the right thing, the most important thing." But I'd like us to leave church every time we assemble. I'd like us to interact with each other with a sense of we're hitting our purpose, we're doing what we're called to do. I don't want to lose sight of that. There's a sense of teleos in that, a sense of like satisfaction in that, a sense that this is what we do and we don't forget what we do. This is not just a bunch of activities.

So I hope that this can be a clarifying look into a sermon that started all sermons in churches, the very first sermon by the Apostle Peter in Acts Chapter 2. And we've decided to take three weeks to work through all this material and we're right in the middle right now. We took a look last time we were together at the beginning of this sermon and next week, Lord willing, we'll look at the end of this sermon, but today, let's jump into the middle.

15 verses, which is kind of a lot for us to cover in one sermon, so it's only going to last about three hours. But we will deal with this center section. That's not true. We will deal with this center section and look at what Peter has to say guided by the Spirit and enlisting two Old Testament passages to think about the person and platform of Christ. And I'll tell you what, if we can look at this text and make sure this is our passion, then I think we'll be in good shape and we'll hear from the Lord, "Well done, good and faithful servant." I'd like him to say that about our little campaign committee here in South Orange County, California.

So take your Bibles if you haven't already and look at this passage and see if it can't center us, focus us, and even bring us great satisfaction knowing that we're living this. We're about this. We do this. As he says to that first audience in that first crowd on that first day of the Church, he says, "Men of Israel," verse 22, Acts 2:22, "hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know -- this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of



God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up," verse 24 "loosing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

For David said concerning him..." Now, he's preaching in the first-century. David was a thousand years before Christ, and now he's quoting one of the psalms David wrote, Psalm 16. He's about to quote verses 8 through 11 in Psalm 16. And he starts here in the middle verse 25. Here starts the quote, a rather lengthy quote. "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore, my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You've made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence."

Peter picks it back up. He now says in verse 29, "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day." You can go visit it here in Jerusalem, he said, "Being therefore a prophet," David was, "knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne." We call that the Davidic Covenant in Second Samuel 7. A promise that God made about some eternal king to come from his lineage.

Well, David then, verse 31 "foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of Christ," in this passage, "that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore," verse 33, "exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, which he's poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing." Remember all that went on here? He says, "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says..." he did not bodily rise up to the sky but they had just seen Jesus do that.

Now he quotes Psalm 110, which Jesus himself quoted. A very interesting and strange passage even in the 10th century B.C. It must have been an odd thing to hear someone say, especially the king. It says, "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." I'll try to untangle that in a minute. Verse 36. Here's the conclusion, at least of this section of the sermon. "Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

What a great passage for us to say we need to be anchored and focused and centered on the person and the platform, the teaching of Jesus Christ. It ought to be the governing focus of all that we do as a church. It begins with something that we had studied in the gospel of Luke that laid out for us the unique ministry of Christ. Let's just take that one observation in verse 22 and start there. Here is Peter saying, listen, this Messiah, we know he's the Messiah, this Jesus of Nazareth, because he was attested to you, "O men of Israel," verse 22, "hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God." Now, we don't use the word "attested" very much. We talk about maybe certified or verified, "with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know." Verify, certify, made real, attested.

Your apps on your computer probably bark at you the way that mine barks at me and says, you know what you really need right now? You need two-factor authentication on this. Ughh. I don't



want two-factor authentication. I just want to put in my password and make it work. But no, it'd be good for you. That way these web sites or these apps can know for certain that you are who you say you are. I mean, this is the sense here that we're attested. Jesus may have fit all the profile, he might put in the right password, he comes from the right tribe, he was born in the right city, he was born at the right time, he's saying the right things, but we need some kind of attestation. We need some kind of verification. We need the veracity of his claims to be absolutely clear, so here comes the two-factor authentication.

Factor number two is there's going to be a code sent to your cell phone. Right? I mean, that is in our day. But what was it for them? Well, one kind of thing, a category of thing described in three different words in the Greek language and here in four words in our language. Let's take a look at it. With "mighty works," that's the first word that comes from a Greek word, "Dunamis," which you probably have heard people talk about. We get the derivative word in our language, "dynamite." Right? It's the Greek word dunamis. Power. It has that kind of power that goes beyond human being's activities.

In other words, you can't as a human being walk on water. You're not capable of that. You don't have the power to do it. You can't take H₂O and turn it into the very complex chemical compound called wine. You just can't do that, you don't have the power to do that. You can't take a man born blind in John 9 and just make those eyeballs that have never worked, you can't make them see. You can't take a man who is dead in a grave and has been there for four days, you can't say, "Lazarus, come forth" and have that happen. Human beings can't do that stuff. You can't make someone who is a paraplegic all of his life, you can't say stand up and walk. Human beings can't do that. You need some kind of divine supernatural power.

Well, Jesus did those kinds of things. Dunamis. He showed the power that he had was more than human power. And the next word to describe that kind of thing that he did is the word "wonders." Wonders, which is more describing, not a different kind of event, it's describing what happens to people when they see them. Their jaw drops open. Whoa! That's the wonder. They wonder at that. That is an amazing thing. People are wowed by it. That's what happens with the suspension of natural law when God does something that shows that he's in charge of creation. Well, that's an act of power. It's something that makes people wonder.

But in the three descriptive words to describe what Jesus did to add this extra factor of authentication, it's the third one that's most important. All of these things weren't to make people's mouths drop. It wasn't just to, you know, to show God's in charge and this is, you know, it's this. It's a sign. And I almost set it by accident. This is. That's the point. A sign says this is something. There's something to read here. There's something to look at. There's something indicating. And the two-factor authentication here, if you will, is God saying, "This is him. This is him."

Matter of fact, the first thing that God did to say this is him, at least in his public ministry, was when he came out of his, you know, silent years, you know, from his youth, from Galilee, and he comes to the Jordan River and John the Baptist is baptizing there. As Jesus goes down into the water to fulfill all righteousness, because he has to do everything right the way that God would



want it done for human beings. So he's going to go down there and be baptized, not that he's repenting of any sin, because, of course, he's sinless. But as he does that, God does a miracle. He does something that is not humanly possible. He's having a visual representation of something that is not of this world come down upon Jesus, a visible manifestation of the Spirit. Then there's a voice from heaven. I mean, even in our modern times, with all the technology, if I went out in the parking lot and I said, look here and something came visibly out of the sky and then there was this big booming voice, you'd say, how did he do that?

Well, clearly, it made their mouths drop. But the sign was clearly, in this case, audible with an actual voice that they could understand. Here was God saying, "This is my beloved Son." I mean, that all happened in Luke Chapter 3. He was baptized in Luke 3. Well, guess what happens in Luke Chapter 4? He starts doing miracles. "This is my Son. This is the one." And he starts doing all these miracles in Chapter 4. And then in Chapter 5, after making it clear to everyone who he is, he starts calling his campaign committee together and he calls his disciples. He's going to make them apostles later on. He's going to authorize them to go out and to win more people for this campaign. He's there collecting his followers.

And then guess what? From Luke 6 to 8, as they're in close proximity with him, Luke's Chapter 6 through 8, he does more and more miracles. Miracles. Miracles. Miracles. When we taught through that section it was like overwhelming. He just keeps doing things to suspend natural law. The biggest concentration of the miracles of the Bible. There are not a lot. There are less than 100 specific acts of miraculous suspension of natural law. They're just coming fast and furious now.

Do you know what happens in Chapter 9? The Transfiguration. If you know your Bible well, you know Luke 9. OK, that's when God takes Peter, James and John up to a mountain and then all a sudden we have two other guys show up here. They had to be wearing nametags because there's no way they knew what they looked like. But two guys there that Jesus introduces to them, and one of them is who? Moses. And the other one is Elijah. Moses and Elijah.

Do you know what you had to be careful to do as a first century Jew? You better listen to Moses. You better listen to Elijah. Right? Moses, he's the one who wrote the law. He's the one who God used to reveal truth about heaven to man. Revealed it to him, govern the writing of it and here we have the law. Then the prophets. That's the way Jesus liked to talk about the Old Testament - the law and the prophets. Representing the prophets was the most famous prophet of the Old Testament who started a school of the prophets and was out there just assembling and caring for those who are the spokespersons of God among the children of Israel. And right in the middle was Christ. Christ is revealed in some weird, bizarre, photonic way. He's glowing. And in the middle of all that, there's another miracle. A voice booms out of heaven and says, "This is my beloved Son," pointing at him again, and now he adds two words: "Hear him." Or as it says in our English Standard Version, three words, "Listen to him. Listen to him."

So we have him coming on the scene, identified as the Christ, does miracles for a chapter, then calls his disciples and does miracles for more chapters, 6 through 8. And now he's presented and God says, listen to him. And guess what we have in Chapters 10 through 19 in Luke? Teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching. Listen to what he teaches. Listen to



what he says. Because at the end of all this, you know what's going to happen? He's going to say, "Go out there, make disciples, build a campaign committee and teach them to obey everything that I commanded. So you got to learn my platform. You've got to know what I'm saying. You've got to know what I'm teaching. You're going to go and echo this throughout time for 2,000 years now in this organization called the Church. You better know what I teach."

He says things like this, Luke 13:9, I know you've heard this a million times. Jesus says, "He who has ears let him hear." In the middle of all of this teaching, "You better listen to me." Matthew 11:29, "Learn from me. Learn for me." Get your mind engaged. Learn from me. Luke 9:44. I love the way that the English Standard Version translates this. "Let these words sink into your ears." Listen to what I'm saying. Let it go deep into your head. Mark 4:24. "Pay attention to what you're hearing. Pay attention to me." Listen. Matthew 9:13, "Learn what this means," in the middle of his speech, "learn what it means." Learn. Luke 8:18. "Take care how you listen." Be careful. Think carefully. Be sure you are a good learner, a good listener.

One of the reasons we have a two-factor authentication when it comes to Christ is because God wants to say, "This is him. Now, listen to him and be a student of his." There's one thing the Church should be doing. It's certainly what Peter is calling these people as the Church goes from 120 to over 3,000 men and their families here in the first day of the Church is that we're all called to be students of this, if you will, candidate, who's already been coronated, but the one who's going to rule the world. You better learn of him.

Number one on your outline if you're taking notes. The verification was part of the motivation for you saying, "You got to learn what he says." Number one, be a "Student of the Verified Christ." God has authenticated, he has certified him and he said, "This is the one. You'd better study what he says." I know we like the word Christian. There's nothing wrong with that although it was initially a term of disparagement toward the followers of Christ, "the little Christ. There's the little Christ." That's what "Christian" means. But the word they preferred and the word that Jesus preferred that he kept calling his followers, he called them disciples. Disciples. We still use that word today, mostly in church. We don't ever think of what it means. But disciples, I sometimes say, maybe you've heard me say this, the Greek word is a word that has made its way into English and here's how it sounds. It's a "Mathetes." Mathetes is the Greek word that we translate into the English word "disciple." Mathetes we transliterate into our language, least the first part of it, and we find the word "mathematics." The reason I hated math in high school was because I had to study to learn it. I couldn't fake my way through it. So, I had to study because that's what you do when you're a student of math. You sit there with an open book and you study. It's rightly translated "pupil," "learner," "student," and we call it disciple, you're a disciple of Christ.

I know I do this a lot on the back of the worksheet. I mean, it doesn't happen every week, but I like to sneak in there often that you, on the recommended resources, buy some Bible software. I guarantee you, you'd be the envy of the Christians of Church history, were you to invest in some software that by simply clicking around on your touchpad, you end up calling up a wealth of information about the truth of the Bible. Let's start in the Gospels to learn what Jesus says, what he taught, who he is.



Every time I recommend that you buy some Bible software and there are lots of Bible works and concordances and all that, we around here, the pastors all use Logos, which I do think is the best and premier Bible software out there, at least currently. And people always choke on the price. "That costs so much." Yeah, it costs a lot. I'm sorry. Now they say, "What level should I buy?" And always say whatever you can afford. Just buy as much of it as you can. Then just start, instead of playing Tetris or whatever you do on your iPad, poker, at night, just pull that thing up and start clicking on it. Click around on that laptop, even on your phone, the Logos version for your phone, just click around and see what you can learn. I mean, I don't want you to be haphazard. I'd love for you to be systematic about your study of Scripture. But I'm just saying, let's invest in some tools because here's what God likes to see you as: a student, a student of Christ.

"He who has ears, let him hear." "Learn for me." "Let these words sink in your ears." "Pay attention to what you hear." "Learn what this means." "Take care how you listen." This is about us being students of God's truth. You and I, frankly, we are a campaign committee for the King, and it's certain that he's going to win. It's not up for a vote. The Creator's already said this is the King of the world. All dominion and all peoples will be in subjection to him. And we're out there as a minority in the world calling people to come and vote for Christ. More than that. Join his band. Be a part of who Christ is. We're supposed to teach what he teaches. We're supposed to say what he says. We're supposed to call people to obey everything that Christ commanded. You got to be a student. And the reason you should be absolutely certain that this is the thing that should occupy the most and highest priority of your intellectual pursuits in your life is because he has been verified by God. God has said, "This is him." And then the second time he comes on and says, "This is him. Listen to him." Learn from him.

I know it's odd, but the church is about a platform, I mean, this is how it ends up flushing itself out, with a podium and a guy behind it teaching and yakking for an hour about biblical information. That is, I mean, the centerpiece of church work. We work together to be students of God's Word. And I send you out and I'm hoping that you continue that. Whet your appetite, so you'll be good Bereans, so that you'll search the Scriptures daily. That's the goal. And why would I spend all that time doing that as opposed to learning, you know, stats of some baseball player or whatever it is? I mean, I'm not saying it's either-or. Great. I'm just saying give your highest priority in intellectual pursuit to studying the most important person in the universe. He's been attested by God. God says study this book. A lot of you can quote all kinds of stats about Tiger Woods or Mike Trout or whatever. Listen, can you recognize that the number one thing you ought to be focused on is the one that God the Father pointed at? His name is Jesus. Learn from him. Be a student of the verified Christ.

The theme verse for our church is Psalm 43:3. "Send out your light and your truth and let them lead us." God is sending out his light and his truth. Matter of fact, that was the theme from Isaiah 60. As we get near Christmas we always hear the Handel's Messiah about the light rising on the darkness and shining on the people. And it is. And Zechariah reflects that in Luke Chapter 1, he's told he's going to have a baby in his old age as John the Baptist and he talks about the light shining. It's the truth. That's a great metaphor for the truth. And here it comes. And then when the Apostle John speaks of John the Baptist, Zechariah's son, he says, you know what? He came, Jesus, he was the light of the world and then he sent John. There was a man sent from God, his



name was John, and he bore witness to the light. That's our job. And to help reflect that, to amplify that, to give a voice to that so people will give an ear to it. That's our job. But we got to learn.

We have to be a student of the verified Christ, it's a lamp to our feet and the light to our path. That is certainly an advantage to us. But more than that, it's the study, it's the investment in knowing the platform of the "candidate" who we're trying to promote in this world. Be a student of the verified Christ. He's been attested to you by God in the most dramatic way, through dunamis, through mighty works, powers and wonders and signs.

This Jesus, back to our passage, verse 23, the second thing Peter says is Jesus has been "delivered up," just like you would bring a lamb to a worship service in the Old Testament who would symbolically be a representation of someone dying in your place. That lamb would be delivered up and the priest would put that lamb and deliver it up and put it up on the altar and it would be sacrificed.

Well, Jesus was delivered up. And then he makes it very clear, "according to the definite plan and," the prognosis of God, "the foreknowledge of God." We get the word "prognosis" from the word "prognosis" in Greek, and that there was this sense in which God ahead of time didn't know it. Like, "Oh, I looked ahead on the tapes. I see what's going to happen. Right? I streamed forward here, I scrub forward, I saw..." God is not impressed by new information. This was part of his definite plan and was all about what he knew was going to happen because he had planned what was going to happen, and what he planned to happen is to have the Lamb of God take away the sin of the world by dying in our place and absorbing and suffering the human penalty of sin.

Now, that came "through the hands," as it says here, "of lawless men," speaking specifically of the Romans who killed him. A public, professional execution. But he lays it on them. Now, remember, there are a lot of pilgrims, we'll talk about this more next time we get together, that came from all over the place for the Feast of Pentecost, 50 days after his death and resurrection. And as they're there, we don't know how many those people were there 50 days ago. Maybe it's some were faithful in the pilgrimage and maybe some of the same people. But you killed him? What do you mean you killed him?

Well, there's something about that that extends to you and even to us. The point is, my sin certainly put him there and God delivered him over, but that was his plan so that he would suffer so that I can be forgiven where this whole sermon is going, as we'll get into next week in verse 37 and following. But for now, what I want to focus on is that great phrase, the definite plan and prognosis of God, "the definite plan and foreknowledge of God." This is all part of the plan.

There's one great thing that has been happening in my life this fall in expositing the beginning of the book of Acts, while at the same time I'm doing the apologetics lecturing on Thursday night here for Compass Night. That combination has been great for me. I mean, it's put me back squarely in the Old Testament trying to unpack so much of what we see in the Old Testament that leads up to Christ. It's been the emphasis in Chapter 1 of Acts. Certainly we see it here in these quotations from the Old Testament a thousand years before Christ. All these images and pictures



and typology and specific prophecies about the coming of Christ, which does a great deal to get me confident as I go out into the world and I present the message of Christ, I promote the campaign of Christ. And I say, here's who you should follow.

And one of the things that just brings me great confidence in all that is the fact that this was all laid out in the Old Testament. Jesus kept calling people back to see how the Scriptures testified of him, starting with Moses and the prophets. He concerned and interpreted those Scriptures all in light of himself. I mean, the whole point, if you look throughout the book of Acts, the preaching, it said things like this: Acts 3:18 as Peter preaches in the next chapter. "God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, and he's thus fulfilled it." Later in the sermon, verse 24, "All the prophets have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, they also proclaim these days," that Christ was going to come, be delivered up.

Stephen, preaching in Acts Chapter 7. He speaks about how they were resisting God's plan in rebelling against Christ and he said, you know what? "Just like your forefathers who killed the prophets, who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One." How encouraging, bolstering, how confident and bold we can be, even like a Galilean fisherman from the country coming and standing before Roman officials flanked by Roman soldiers with swords on their on their hip, being able to say, "No, Caesar is not Lord, Jesus is Lord." How in the world is he so bold? What are you, crazy? No, but they're confident. You know one the reason they're confident? Because all of human history was headed toward this person.

Number two on your outline, you and I need to feel that confidence. The church should be confident in our message. Be "Confident in the Predicted Christ." He was prophesied, he was foretold, he was anticipated, he was predicted. There's a brand-new work that came out. I had the privilege of being able to get an advance copy and they asked me to endorse it, which I did. It was easy to endorse. It just came out about a month ago. I put it on the back of your worksheet again here. I think I've done that twice now. Michael Rydelnik is the editor of this book. It's about 1,500 pages. It's an anthology of all kinds of Old Testament professors and teachers and academics looking at every predictive prophecy regarding the Christ in the Old Testament. I recommend you get this. I've read good chunks of this. I'm encouraged by this work. It's another volume in a long history, 2,000 years now, of people saying this Christ was predicted.

To use the words of Acts 7:52, "It was announced beforehand, this coming of the Righteous One." "It was foretold," Acts 3:18, "by the mouth of the prophets." Acts 3:24, "All the prophets have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after, proclaimed the coming of Christ these days." I'm just telling you, go back to the first point, if we're not a student of Christ's teaching, maybe it's because we're not confident enough to know how important Christ is. Maybe you need to go back and start studying the Old Testament and saying you need to know and understand the coming of Christ was all of what the Bible had anticipated.

We can't get out of the book of Genesis before we have very specific prophecies about Judah, the one tribe of twelve from which the ruler was going to come forth. I love this line where, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah," to quote Genesis 49:10, "nor the ruler's staff from between



his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be all the obedience of all the peoples." This is the king, the one king. And it isn't going to be David. It's going to be the son of David.

Even the non-Christians who were prophets for hire... You know, sometimes you drive down Alicia Parkway or whatever, you see the psychic reading sign or, you know, you're at the at the Spectrum Mall, you see, you know, the fortune teller and all that. Think about one of those people. I mean, I don't know, I don't want to reduce Balaam to someone who's set up a card table at the mall. But Balaam of the Old Testament was a prophet for hire. And Balak, who's concerned about Israel marching through the land and decimating their land, he says, I need to bring a spiritual whammy on them. So let's go down and find someone who can give them a spiritual whammy.

So he hires Balaam and the Balaam prophecies in Numbers 24, are an amazing unfolding of God taking someone trying to say bad things about Israel and ending up not being able to spit it out. I always say it's like Fonzie trying to apologize, you old people who know the Happy Days reference. He just can't do it. And one of the greatest sections there in that passage is where the second oracle of Balaam, when he realizes that when he tries to say bad things about Israel, God is now prompting him to say good things about Israel, which doesn't make his boss who hired him, Balak, very happy. It says he tries to leave. He tries to "set his face toward the wilderness and get out."

And then there's this phrase. But "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him." He opens his mouth in the second oracle, and he takes up the discourse and he starts to speak. In that chapter in Numbers 24, he starts to unfold, not only is Israel God's going thing on the planet, but from him, verse 17, "I see him, but not now; Behold, not near. I do behold him; a star that will come out of Jacob, and a scepter that shall rise out of Israel." And Balak, I know you hired me because you didn't want to be the decimated enemy of Israel. You wanted to meet a whammy them so that you can defeat them. But here's the thing. That star, that scepter, "it's going to crush the forehead of Moab, it's going to break down all the sons of Sheth. Edom we'll be dispossessed; Seir and his enemies will be dispossessed. Israel is doing valiantly." And when it comes to that star and that scepter, it's going to do even more valiantly. "And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of all the cities!"

Here's a picture of the dominance of, as we've seen in Daniel 7, the Son of Man to whom all dominion will be. The point is before, by force, he subjects the people, let's get a campaign together and get some people voting for Christ. Let's get them on our team as pedantic as that seems. Let's get them to vote with their lives and their hearts to say, "Jesus is Lord." Let's get them on our side before the King comes back and in the book of Revelation decimates his enemies. Even Balaam, God fills his mouth with prophetic words.

I think that is something worth studying when Jesus himself says he's the morning star in the book of Revelation. He rises and his truth shines on me. I mean, study the Old Testament enough for you to know I'm confident that Christ is the apex of human history. It's all about him. It's about our focus and devotion being in him with complete confidence. You're never going to get out there and tell people, "Subject your life to Christ. Jesus is Lord." You're never going to be able



to like fishermen and tax collectors from Israel looking at the powers that be in the Sanhedrin or in Rome being able to say, "Yep, this is it."

The boldness that characterize them, yes, it's a work of God's Spirit, but it was also a work of God's Spirit in their mind, making it very clear that they're confident that the great hope of Israel's not David, the great hope of Israel is the son of David, Jesus, the Lord and the Christ. Be confident in the predicted Christ. Doubts should not be eschewed by you closing your eyes, saying, "Well, I guess faith is just believing what I can't prove. "It is about you proving in your own mind, by good study of the Scripture, that Jesus is the Christ.

Be a student of the verified Christ, that's his platform, you need to know what he taught. Be confident in the predicted Christ. You need to know who he is and that all of this in Scripture was leading toward this. And then in verses 24 through 32, we get a reprise of something we've been dealing with not only in Acts, but that's how we left the book of Luke in Chapter 24. It was all about the resurrection. Peter says, "God raised him up." Oh, he was killed and crucified by the hands of lawless men. More on that next week. But now "God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it."

Oh, he is man. That's how it started. Jesus of Nazareth, verse 22, "A man, attested to you." He is man, but he is also God and as God, whether we're were talking about Ignatius, or whether we're talking about Chalcedon or Ephesus or any of the affirmations of the Church, we have to affirm this is "all God" and "all man." In man we recognize his subjection to death, but as God, if the wages of sin is death, God is holy, holy, holy, holy, and that holy God, how in the world can he be held by death? That's the punishment of being a sinful person. Well, apparently he takes on sin enough to be a sacrifice for us absorbing the penalty. But that's not going to hold him.

I mean, there's something strange in all of that and unique in Christ. But he says, listen, this isn't something you should be surprised at, because even David, who all of Israel wants to pin their hopes on that, you need to realize David could even see a thousand years ahead of time, at least his words depict this. And now he quotes Psalm 16. "I saw the Lord always before me." Now, here's the problem. Listen how I read this. Me? Who wrote this? David did. Who's "me" in that verse? Well, David.

Matter of fact, when I quote Psalm 16, which I do periodically from the platform because it's such a great psalm, I'm often getting you to identify with David, who says things like this: "I saw the Lord always before me. He's at my right hand." Mike Fabarez, at least say to Israel, you know, he's going to hold my hand through the fire, through the river. The Lord is with me. "He's at my right hand that I may not be shaken." Who? Who? Who? Well David or us, by extension, we think. Well, I want to identify with David and I want to have the Lord by me. "Therefore, my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced." I want that kind of hope and faith in God walking me through this life and whatever battles I face, he's there and I can say I can rejoice, I can be glad and I can be hopeful. "My flesh will dwell in hope."

Why? Because I'm about to go out to this battle and face this problem. For you it might be cancer. For you it might be some legal problems, some relational issues, some economic problems. And



you can say, "Oh, OK, I'm going to trust in God, and I know this: you're not going to abandon my soul to Hades," to the grave, "or let your holy one..." Now, the first time we have it in the third person now, but we can see him talk in those ways. We talk about Job being holy. We talk about Daniel being holy. We talk about Noah being holy. We've even talked about Christians. We're called saints. Holy. We get that.

You don't want your holy one, your saint, your child here, to see corruption. "You've made known to me the paths of life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence." I'm going to face a trial. I'm going to walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. I'm not going to fear. I'm going to trust you. I'm going to be glad. I'm going to have faith. I'm going to hope. At least that's how we read the passage.

But Peter says, "Hey, brothers, I want to tell you this. I may say to you with confidence," verse 29, "about the patriarch David," the father of Israel, "that he both died and was buried in his tomb." You want to see it? I can take you to his tomb. "His tomb is there today." If you had the guts and you can get away with it, you could open it up and see the remains of David. That's what he's saying.

But remember this. This is Scripture. These are God-breathed words. "Being therefore a prophet..." "Nabi" in the Old Testament is a mouthpiece. That's the Old Testament word for it. It's like it assumes a source, this is God speaking ultimately, a prophet. "Being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him," Second Samuel 7, "that he would set one of his descendants on his throne." All these superlatives about a forever leader, about an eternal kingdom. I mean, Isaiah talking about a mighty God, everlasting Father, prince of peace, and of the "extent of his government, there'll be no end." I mean, this eternal king coming from David's lineage.

Well, when you think about that, he says you need to know this. In this passage, David here, the ultimate author, the Spirit "foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of Christ, that he did not abandon to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption." He's out of the grave in two and a half days. "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses." We've seen his resurrection.

That's a hard thing. You look at a passage like this, that's so easy to apply to ourselves. We look at Dave and we think, well, he's applying this to himself and all of a sudden, now we're saying, no, this is about Christ. Well, it's about Christ, clearly, because the Bible says here it is about Christ. It is about for Christ because every time we look at this passage we know we're modifying it. We're mitigating it. We're filtering it. We're toning it down. We're saying things in a way that we know is only temporal.

When we start saying things like this, verse 25 again, which is Psalm 16:8, "the Lord is always before me. He's at my right hand that I may not be shaken." Now, I understand those are truthful statements about you and I spiritually. But even as Paul said, at our best we're seeing through a glass dimly. Oh, we know one day face-to-face. But you know. Come on. Walk through the Valley of Shadow of Death, I'd like to hold his hand, but I'm not, I mean, I'm not there in his presence.



Matter of fact, I know God dwells in unapproachable light. He's there in his heaven. And I'm here on this earth. Oh, his Spirit may minister but, I mean, come on, "in his presence." Yeah. Okay.

And then to say, "he will not abandon my soul to Hades..." As David marches out to war, you can go back to his teenage years, standing in the shadow of Goliath, he may have a confidence as he trusts in God, and says, "God, you're going to get me through this. You're at my right hand." He knows this: if you were to stop and ask him, "Hey, David, what are you talking about? Do you think you're never going to die?" David says, "Well, no. I mean, I'm just saying right now, I'm not going to die on the battlefield. I trust God. I think he's going to deliver me." Well, that's a great confidence. It's a great hope. But, you know, just like you know, if through the cancer or the problem you're having, you rally and recover and God gives you grace and extends your life like he did Hezekiah. Hezekiah even knew when he was healed of his illness, "Well, it doesn't mean I'm not going to die. I know I'm going to die."

And then even words like "holy one" or "let your holy one see corruption." We can use that of Noah and Daniel and David. We can use it of a lot of people in the Old Testament, Job. You can call yourself a saint and say, "Well, yeah, I'm right with God, I'm holy. Matter of fact, progressively, I'm increasingly more holy this decade than I was last decade in my Christian life." Well, that's great. But you don't mean that in an absolute sense. And we know that, even Job presented as a holy man, we know within chapters we've seen he's not perfectly holy. Matter of fact, the only one that's really holy, holy, holy, holy is the triune God.

So in an ultimate sense, we can't mean that. As a matter of fact, "being made known the paths of life." Well, yeah, we're walking in this path. "You'll make me," know the fullness of gladness, "full of gladness with your presence." So here's David going out to battle, thinking about God, trusting in God. "God, I'm not going to die out here. I trust in you. I'm confident in you. I'm going to be glad and hopeful. And so I'm going to come back and I know I'm going to march back into Jerusalem and I'm going to go there where the Tabernacle is set up and I'm going to be in the presence of God." He always spoke in those poetic terms.

But he's not even a priest. He can only go into certain areas. Not only that, he's not the high priest. He can't even go... Only one high priest can go into the holy of holies, into the presence of God. Then we got to say "time out." I know that's not really the presence of God. Well, of course it's not the presence of God, but it's the symbolic presence of God. So all of this is mitigated. All of it is attenuated, you understand. We don't mean it in an absolute sense.

But David felt that way when he walked into the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle compound. Well, yeah, but we know the real presence of God is not here. We know that the fullness of gladness is something eschatological. Matter of fact, that's how we apply this to ourselves. When we think about this, we may think, well, yeah, God may get me through this, but I know that when I look at verse 28, which is Psalm 16:11, I know that I'm thinking about an eschatological truth.

How is it that you have any hope about an eschatological truth? How do you even know that you're going to now see through a glass dimly but then face-to-face? How do you know that you're going to have life after death? How do you know that you're really accepted before God as



perfectly holy? Well, I know that because there was someone who did this. There is someone who fully fulfilled this. Therefore, you can say, well, even if I die, yet shall I live. And if I believe in him and live, then I'll never die.

How can I not undergo corruption? Well, that will be in my next body, at least my reconstituted resurrection, glorified body. And then I can say, how come? Well, Paul makes the comparison. Because Christ really did it. And then you will be the first fruits of it. So there's temporal deliverance and temporal salvation and temporal presence of God. And then there's Christ that does it perfectly. And then one day you get to experience it perfectly, but all on the coattails of the one who did it perfectly. He was the holy one, the real holy one. He didn't undergo decay. He wasn't abandoned to the grave. And he is in the presence of God. And I mean the presence of God, the unmitigated, unfiltered, unattenuated presence of God.

That's the thing I want you to get clearly in your mind this morning. I'm saying we're a campaign committee going to deliver a message to the world. If you don't have a future hope that is clearly anchored in the fact that these passages are fully fulfilled in one who allows you to participate in the benefits, then how in the world can you ever be convincing as you go out into this world to say, "Hey, vote for Christ? Join our team." You've got to know it's more than just getting delivered in a battle with cancer or some divorce or some problem in your life. It's about the then and there. Our citizenship is in heaven. This world is not our home.

Number three in your outline, you need in your heart to have a "Hope in the Resurrected Christ." The kind of hope that First Corinthians 15 speaks of, that you know that because you trust in Christ, everything about the future of your life is exactly what Psalm 16:11 says, "In his presence there'll be fullness of joy." I'm not talking about a special worship night, or when you had a really great quiet time, you know, on Tuesday morning like, "Ahhh, I've been in the presence of God."

You are not in the presence of God the way you will be in the presence of God when the Bible says the dwelling of God will one day be among men, and the good presence of the unmitigated glory of God will dwell on earth, that's coming. How do you know you're qualified for that? Because this passage was fully fulfilled, because God, in his sovereign, declarative, revelatory plan, put passages in the Old Testament that spoke so clearly about the fulfillment of what was going to happen in Christ so that I might be able to have hope.

I've quoted First Corinthians Chapter 15. It may be worth turning to this one real quick. First Corinthians Chapter 15. I want you to go to the end of the chapter, if you would. Call this up on your device or turn in your Bibles to this passage really quickly. Look at all that is said as you glance through this, this great section about he is the first fruits. I believe my future is hopeful and secure and good because Christ accomplished it all and proved it all and was raised from the dead and didn't undergo corruption. I understand that this was a foretelling of Christ, so I have hope.

Now drop down in this passage, look, for instance, at familiar verses like this, like verse 53. First Corinthians 15:53, "For this perishable body..." This one right now that even if I have a few, you know, staving off of dying, I know it's going to die. "It must put on the imperishable, this mortal

body must put on immortality." Verse 54, "When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that was written," great Isaiah text, "death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?".

The sting of death is sin, right? That's the whole problem is sin. And sin keeps me there. But the power of sin is the law. That's the problem, I broke the law. I should suffer the consequences. I should be separated from God. I should not have the light of life. Now underline this. "But thanks be to God, who gives us," present tense, "the victory through our Lord," here's our three words from our passage, "the Lord Jesus Christ." Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us victory.

So right now in the present, I'm thinking about a future eschatological, completed, fulfilled hope. And that is that one day all of this can be behind me. The kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. And I will see him in a favorable relationship as he reigns forever and ever. That picture right there is one that you should be able to say, "I feel that, I see that, I experience that." And if not, how in the world are you going to go out there and tell people to vote for Christ? How in the world are you going to say come join our team? How are you going to say submit to Christ unless you're fully convinced of the benefits? Is your hope set on the resurrected Christ? If it is, well, then you can say, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." If you can't say that yet you have some work to do to get to the place where you say that's it.

And you know why? Because I'm all getting down to this. Our campaign committee work perfectly expressed in this motivational statement in verse 58. Keep reading. "Therefore," what? I have victory in a resurrected Christ. "Therefore, my beloved brothers," campaign committee members, "be steadfast, be immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor's not in vain." What's the task? I mean, in one sense, the great commission task is in Corinth. Hey, you Christians in Corinth, you got a lot of work to do here. You got to represent Christ. You got to promote the person and the platform of Christ. You've got to get out there and get more people to join our team. Be hopeful in the resurrected Christ.

Back to our text, verse 33, he was resurrected, but he didn't just walk around on earth forever. For 40 days, he made appearances and he spoke. He let him sit for 10 days, about a week, and then gave the Spirit but there was an exaltation, he left the planet. Verse 33, "Being therefore exalted to the right hand of God," which he explains in Chapter 1, we preached on it, "having received then from the Father the promise of the Spirit." That's the first part of the passage. We get this promise of the old covenant looking forward to a new covenant when the Spirit would be the hallmark of that new relationship with God, the permanence and the closeness and intimacy with God that people will have. Not like the kind we're going to have in his presence, but a new kind of relationship.

Well, he's poured out. "He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing." We saw the miracles that were described in the first part of this chapter. Right? You had that visible sign. The photons in your eyeballs were seeing something come down on the head of these 120.



You hear a sound of the wind, which it wasn't wind, it didn't blow their hair around, but there was this big sound. It would take a lot of subwoofers to represent that sound. But they heard it.

And then they also heard them saying these things about how great God is in their own languages because they had come from all over the ancient world and they saw this was God. God had given his Spirit. Well, when he talks about the exaltation of Christ, he says, well, let's think of another verse here that David wrote, verse 34. "For David did not ascend into the heavens." Right? I mean his spirit may have gone to be with God, but here's the thing, his body is there and we've got his tomb right here. So the encapsulated, enmeshed human soul, spirit, body of David, I mean, he didn't ascend into heaven.

And yet he says, Psalm 110:1, "The Lord said to my Lord," which is a weird statement, "The Lord said to my Lord." Who are you? You're the king. Is there anybody higher than the king in the ancient near east? No, that's the king is the king. The king is the ultimate. And yet he says, "The Lord said to my Lord," Now in Hebrew, there's a distinction there, because our translators take the word Yahweh, the proper name of God, some 7,000 times in the Old Testament, and gives us capital "L" capital "O" capital "R" capital "D." And we say, okay, that's the proper name. And then there's another word in Hebrew "Adonai," which means the boss, the captain, the Lord, and they translate that with regular "o-r-d" small case.

And so the Lord, David is writing this, "The Lord," he says, Yahweh of the Bible, to the great God, "said to my Lord." Well, who's over David? No one's over David. He's the monarch. I mean this is a monarchy. "The Lord said to my Lord." So even Jesus brings this passage up going well someone he saw superior to himself and it wasn't the Father. Who is this? And he said, "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand." That's a reference to the fact that he ascended and said he was going to the right hand of the Father.

Well, here's a passage that David, a thousand years before Christ, made that reference, mysterious head-scratching reference. What's going to happen when he sits up there until he's dispatched to come get his kingdom? Well, "He's going to make the enemies of his a footstool." He's going to put him under his feet in one of two ways. One, either by conversion, by joining our campaign committee, or by rebelling until the end of their life and then facing the judgment of God. One way or another, this man of war, God... I hate to say it that way, you know, if you're a peacenik, but Jesus is coming back to slay his enemies, that's the picture in the Bible. He will come with all the rebels who have opposed him and he will vanquish his foes.

But the hope is we can take from the rebellious world some people who will join our team, who will be a part of our Christ-exalting platform, articulating group of people. So until then, till we have this settled, he's sitting at the right hand of God, about to be dispatched. He's going to preach in Chapter 3 about him coming back. But right now, he says, you know what, you ought to know, even by that reference about David talking about someone who is above him that the Lord calls the Lord, that Yahweh calls Adonai, well then you need to know this. You need to know who we're talking about there.



Who is over, David? Who is exalted above David? Who is looked up to from David's vantage point? Well, you should know, "Let all the house of Israel know for certain," you ought to know "that God has made him both Lord and Christ." Who? "This Jesus," now again is this stinging phrase, we'll look at it next time, "whom you crucified." He's exalted. And anytime you start time you start talking about the Lord, here's one thing you want to do if you're in the presence of David in the Old Testament, you better do what he says. He's the ultimate. Well, the ultimate king in the Old Testament said there's someone above me that the Lord has put over me, and that's the Lord. It gets confusing. But who is the Lord? Jesus is the Lord. So you need to do what he says. We need to obey him.

One thing about these campaign committees that are promoting their candidate and his or her platform is when they live lives that are contradictory to the platform, you start going, "Oh, hypocrites." And it's easy to point that out if you have a reason not to like the candidate. And you know what the non-Christians say about us? "A bunch of hypocrites." I want to give them less material to work with, that would be good. I would like us to really do what the Lord says. I would like to do what the platform puts forth. I want to be teaching everyone to obey everything Christ commanded. And I'd like for me to be doing that myself. And you and I, if we're going to represent him in this world, we need to do that.

Number 4, you to be "Obedient to the Exalted Christ." He is in charge. He was attested. He was predicted. He's resurrected. All of that to say he is the Lord. He is the Christ. He is the Lord. He is in charge. And we ought to obey him. It doesn't matter how familiar you are with Christ. You're really not in league with Christ until you're responsive to his leadership. I say that because even when Jesus was preaching and his family showed up, Mark and Luke record this, they thought he was going crazy, making more of himself than he should. And as he's they're crowded around people in a house, his mother and brothers show up, his half-brothers show up, and they want to press in and get Jesus out of there because he's embarrassing himself. And then they report this in Luke 8 verse 20. "And they told him, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, they desire to see you.'" And we know from Mark that they're trying to say, "Oh, we got to get him out of here." And Jesus' response? What does he say about Mary and his half-brothers? He answered, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it."

I'd like to be in the committee that is promoting and presenting Christ to my generation, someone Jesus can say that about. It isn't about knowing the Bible because the Pharisees knew the Bible, but Jesus kept saying, "the Scriptures testify of me and you refuse to come to me." Come to me how? As the Lord? He says in Luke 6:46. "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I say?" This is an old harp, I realize that. We're plucking on it often, it's a saw we're often sawing on, because if you don't work to distinguish yourself from this world, you will become bashful about our message and about the person who we're exulting.

I guarantee because it's going to go from bad to worse. That's the forecast. Second Timothy 3:1, "In the last days, there will be difficult times." Why? Because everyone's going to want to do whatever they want to do. Because even as Jesus says to the people of his day, you can either follow my campaign or if you're not in my campaign, you're not apolitical, you're actually in the other campaign.



First, John 5, you're either child of God or you're a child of Satan. Jesus said to the ones who would not come to him and be freed from their sins, he said, "You speak like your father. I'm speaking from my Father. You speak like your father." They say, "Satan's my father?" That's right. You're a liar. You know the truth but you don't respond readily to it. The devil's been a liar from the beginning. All I want to tell you, you want to talk about switching parties. You're in a party right now as a non-Christian that is absolutely anethetically opposed to the party that we're supposed to be promoting. We're calling people to step into this. And if you don't reflect that, you don't have the fruit that shows that your repentance is present in your life, we've got a problem. If we don't obey the platform so that we can have a relationship with a person, but we get to meet the person by God's grace, and then we're supposed to walk in the platform. We're supposed to do what he says.

The forecast is it's going to get harder and harder because "people are going to be lovers of themselves, they're going to love money, they're going to be proud and arrogant," they're going to be brash or "abusive." People are going to look at human authority and discard it. "They're going to be disobedient to their parents. They're going to be ungrateful, they're going to be unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving the truth, treacherous." Can't trust them. "Reckless, they don't care about consequences. "Swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

And if that's the world we're trying to promote this campaign in, it's going to get really hard. Why? Because they're saying stuff like this. "If there is a tree with fruit on it and I like it and it looks good to me and I want to get it and eat it, then I don't see any problem with that. I should be able to do whatever I want." That's the campaign of the world. And you're saying, nope, submit to Christ and Christ's going to call you to obey God. And we're going to say, I don't care how it tastes. I don't care how it looks. I don't care what you think about having it. If God says you can't do it, you can't do it. And that is the difference that separates the men from the boys. The people who really are part of the campaign of Christ who say we submit to the lordship of Christ and those that say we'd like some of his benefits, but we don't want to listen to his platform.

I did some traveling this week. It was out in the Midwest. Whenever I travel, people ask me where I'm from, I say I'm from California. They go to, "Oooo, California. Must be paradise out in California" (audience laughing). I like California and all, it's great. I guess I'm glad to be from here. I've got work to do here and we're doing it. But I sometimes think you've no idea. Right? This ain't Paradise. I mean, you really got a lot of problems here in California. They think it's all beaches and movie stars and fast cars. OK.

By the way, on this last trip, I did meet someone from Paradise. "This is getting weird, Pastor Mike." No, from Paradise. Paradise, California. Paradise, California. He and his family had left Paradise, California. If you know anything about the history of our state, you know, when I say Paradise, California, and you think back to what happened not too long ago, you would say, "Oh, yeah. The worst, most destructive, most deadly fire the state of California has ever seen was in Paradise, California." It was a beautiful place. Everyone loved to live there. Problem is, there are not many roads in and out. When the fire swept down the hillside in Paradise, it just utterly



devastated that place. Matter of fact, there are pictures of the Paradise sign on fire. Talk about a hard contrast of images. Right? Paradise sign. "Welcome to Paradise." And it's in flames. Of course, this family I was talking to, they left Paradise and weren't going to rebuild, couldn't afford to rebuild. They're out in another state now. Left.

I often quote Second Peter Chapter 3, "That according to his promise, we are looking forward to a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells." That's a great text. And it's just preceded by the fact that the world right now that you're in, that everyone thinks is increasingly, depending on your heart, increasingly a good place to be because you can do whatever you want, get hearty approval from our culture. It doesn't matter. We don't have rules. We're free. We do what we want. Here's the thing about the paradise that people are trying to live in here in this world. It's going to burn. And in that passage, it says it's going to melt with an intense heat.

The paradise of what everyone's chasing in our culture, whether you live in California, Illinois or Florida, wherever you're from, we'd better be clear about this: our citizenship is not here. This world is not our home. We're campaigning for a kingdom that's not on this earth right now. We're campaigning for a King who everyone thinks is restrictive and harsh and harshing out my freedoms. So that Christ, that platform, I know you don't like it, but the world has to see this is the only way because the kingdom is going to come like a "bride adorned for her husband coming down from heaven."

There's going to be a kingdom on this earth and a new earth where righteousness goes, according to his promise. Our job is to get people on board. I don't think it's going to happen if you're not a student of the platform of the Christ of this message we're bringing. If you're not confident that this is the apex of history. Christ is the one predicted, prophesied and foretold. And I'm hopeful, but the benefits are worth it, even though you forsake a lot of things in this world. What's coming in the next for Christians is the best. At his right hand there are pleasures forevermore. And our job is to try and live consistent with the message of our King, as hard and as self-denying as that may be, submitting to his instructions.

We're not a campaign committee, we're the Church, the pillar and foundation of the truth. Much maligned, much embattled in our day, increasingly so. Put your helmet on. It's only going to get worse. But can you lovingly stand with our invincible Lord and hold out the words of life to this generation? Know that we serve a king who one day will take his great power and begin to reign.

Let's pray. God, we thank you very much for all that you have done for us in sending your son to atone for our sins. We're grateful for that. We want to be profoundly grateful, enough to see the victory that we have in our Lord Jesus Christ so that we can be immovable and steadfast, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Let's not be distracted by carnivals or park days or ping pong tables. Let us know that as a church, we gather to do one primary thing: to promote the person of Christ and to proclaim his message. God, motivate us in that regard this week.

In Jesus name. Amen.