

The Eternal Gospel of Salvation and Judgement

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: 24 March 2024

Preacher: Paul Brennan

[0 : 0 0] We're going to turn now to our Bibles, and we're reading this morning in the very last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, and in chapter 14.

Paul has been back in Revelation these last few weeks, and we come now to this magnificent chapter.

Chapter 14, then reading at verse 1. Then, says John, I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his father's name written on their foreheads.

And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters, and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders.

No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. It's these who have not defiled themselves with women for their virgins.

[1 : 1 9] It's these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb. And in their mouth no lie was found, for they're blameless.

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people.

And he said with a loud voice, fear God and give him glory. For the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made the heaven and the earth, the sea and the springs of water.

Another angel, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.

And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or his hand, he also will drink of the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger.

[2 : 3 4] And he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever.

And they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name. Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write this, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Blessed indeed, says the Spirit, for they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them.

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud, one like a son of man with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.

[3 : 50] So, he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle.

And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire. And he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, Put in your sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth.

For its grapes are ripe. So, the angel swung his sickle across the earth, and gathered the grape harvest of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

Amen. May God bless this word to us, and help us to understand all that it has to say to us today. Well, good morning.

[5 : 09] Please have Revelation open in front of you, chapter 14. A weighty chapter, but a chapter full of hope.

Now, can I ask, as we begin, what realities, what realities, what realities occupies, occupy your mind, fill your heart?

What realities drive the direction of your life? What are the big things that are your priorities? If you were to stop and pause and think for just a few moments, what would you land on?

What are the key realities in your life? What is your life really all about? What ought it to be about?

The day-to-day grind of life can often blind us, can't it, to what is truly important. The day-to-day grind, the daily discouragements in the Christian life, the sorts of things we've considered in recent weeks in Revelation 12 and 13 about the activity of the enemy, the dragon, Satan himself, that can occupy our thoughts.

[6 : 33] We do need to be clear about those things. We need to be clear about how Satan is at work in our world, but that can distract us from the ultimate realities. We can become skewed in our thinking.

See, Christians are to be neither pessimists nor optimists, but we are to be realists. To ignore the realities of chapters 12 and 13, to ignore the reality of evil, is to be afraid to face up to deeply unpleasant and hurtful realities.

But on the other hand, to be wholly consumed with them, to be taken up with the forces of destruction and deceit and ungodliness, if that fills our minds, then we're falling for the dragon's propaganda, aren't we?

We are doing what he would want us to do, which is to be consumed with his deceits and his lies. There are times we must look away to other realities, eternal and glorious.

Realities which look ahead to the day that is surely coming. A day triumphant and glorious, when evil will be defeated once and for all, destroyed.

[7 : 52] It is a day of judgment that is coming, when all will have to stand before the maker of heaven and earth, and all will have to give an account for how we've lived our lives.

All of us. That day is coming. And that is what we have here in Revelation 14. The beasts of chapters 12 and 13 are, in the end, nothing.

The lamb of chapter 14 is everything. The dragon and his world will pass away, but the kingdom and the power and the glory, they belong to God and his lamb forever and ever, will never fade.

That is the bigger reality. That is the destiny of human history. And after pretty tough chapters of 12 and 13, if you've been here in recent weeks, Revelation 14 is something of a reset, a glorious realignment in light of coming ultimate realities.

This is a chapter that gives us real hope. If you're a Christian here, this chapter is a chapter of real hope. If you're not yet a Christian, and we're delighted you're here, you're so welcome.

[9 : 18] But if you're not yet a believer, these are hard realities to come to terms with, but you must come to terms with them. You must come to terms with the coming judgments and make a choice.

We'll come to that later, but this is a weighty chapter because it deals with ultimate realities. Hearing and absorbing the message of this chapter will refocus us if we become distracted in life.

It will refresh us if we become discouraged. It will rejuvenate us if we become disillusioned. It has some hard truths, weighty truths, it does, but at the very heart is a glorious gospel.

A gracious God stands at the very center of this chapter. The great defeat of the dragon is surely coming.

That's at the very heart. And the truths of this chapter ought to be the central realities in our lives. These things must occupy our hearts and our minds.

[10 : 30] These things must have greater sway over our hearts than everything else. Even the things we've thought about in the last two chapters, they are significant, but this is more important.

This is the bigger reality. This chapter lifts our gaze from the day-to-day grind, and we see here our great destiny. We see our great gospel, and we're presented with a great choice.

So let's look firstly at the first five verses, verses one to five. And we see here the glorious destiny of God's people. The glorious destiny of God's people.

Now these opening verses, they show us a glimpse into the future. A glorious vision of the Lamb standing majestically on Mount Zion as the victor of all the anti-Christian forces in the world.

And gathered around him are his precious people, the church, who share in his glorious victory. And the previous chapters, as we thought about, these 12 and 13 of Revelation, they've been a hard slog.

[11 : 42] If you've been here in recent weeks, it's hard. A very necessary warning for us about the nature and work of Satan in this world. John unveiled for us some key tactics that Satan will use in order to discourage and derail God's people.

Sometimes through sheer power. Often through governments set out to persecute God's people. But often it's also through subtle propaganda.

We saw that last week. Satan is above all things deceitful. He will sow lies. And so we need to exercise wisdom. We need to endure if we are to stand firm and not be taken in by the enemy's lies.

It was a cold shock of reality. But it's not the sum total of reality. The devil, his great desire is to blot out the horizon, to restrict our vision to the worst things and the worst moments and the worst people and persuade us that that's the real world.

As if there's nothing else but evil and justice and death and the feeling that produces. That is Satan's desire. And that can have a very depressing effect on God's people.

[12 : 57] I certainly feel that at times. I'm sure you do too. But that is Satan's goal, isn't it? To distract and depress and derail God's people.

He wants to do that so that we would take our eyes off our key task of proclaiming the eternal gospel of salvation. Satan wants to stop the church from doing that. And chapters 12 and 13 are not the whole story.

These next verses here in chapter 14 are just as real. And they are a much needed tonic because they set before us the glorious destiny of God's people. Alongside the vision of the dragon and his two beasts, John sets this majestic vision.

He unveils a horizon for us. He shows us where things are really going. See, the Bible doesn't restrict our vision.

It enlarges it. Satan wants to restrict but God enlarges it. Christianity is about truth, the whole truth and not the partial truths of censorship and propaganda that Satan would propagate.

[14 : 08] And we're given a glimpse here, I think, of what is the future reality of the church, of God's people. And here is what is ultimately true of you. If you're a Christian here this morning, here is your destiny.

Here is your true identity. Look at verse 1. Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his father's name written on their foreheads.

Mount Zion gives us the location. It is the heavenly Mount Zion, the place of divine deliverance throughout the Bible. The prophet Joel foretold that those on Mount Zion would escape the great and terrible day of the Lord.

And the writer of Hebrews refers to Mount Zion as the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. And so what we're given here is a glimpse forward in time to that day when Christ has returned and gathered his people.

That is the vision. The Lamb gives us the person at the very center of history who, as we've already encountered in Revelation, the Lamb is the Savior of God's people.

[15 : 26] The Lamb who was slain, Jesus Christ himself, by whose blood he ransomed the people for God. are people from every tribe and language and nation and people from Revelation 5.

The 144,000 tells us who is gathered around the Lamb. And as we saw back in chapter 7 some months ago, that number is a reference, not a literal reference to a literal number of people, but it's a reference to the whole people of God through all of time.

It's the sum total of God's people all through history who one day will be gathered around the throne and worshipping the Lamb who was slain. And the encouraging thing is that this 144,000 coming as it does after all the grimness of chapter 12 and 13, this 144,000 is the same group of people as we saw in chapter 7.

The 144,000 in chapter 7 is God's people on earth all through history. This is a leap forward in time to the end of history and it's the same group of people. Not one has been lost.

It's not 120,000. It's not 143,000. 144,000. Not one has been lost. in John chapter 10 Jesus promised that those who follow him in faith will never perish.

[17 : 06] No one will snatch you out of my hands. So no matter the attacks of the enemy, no matter the discouragements along the way, Jesus has his people.

he has you and he will keep you until that day. Yes, the realities of 12 and 13 are real.

God's people do face persecution and hardship. But ultimately Satan cannot snatch you from the devil from Jesus' hands. You're safe for all eternity.

Notice verse 1, we are told that they have his name and his father's name written on their foreheads. The mark of the beast we saw last week is given way to the mark of God.

It's a mark of true belonging. And if you have repented from your sin and put your trust in Jesus, if you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, then you're his.

[18 : 13] You belong to him forever. You have his mark on your forehead. This is therefore the glorious destiny of God's people, his bride, his church.

Whilst the hardships he's thought about in previous weeks are real, those hardships are time limited. This glorious destiny is not.

There is no expiry on what we read here. This will go on forever. We have to wait until we experience it, but it is an experience that will go on forever.

And this is your true identity. If you're a Christian here, this is who you are. You belong to Jesus. This is your destiny. And that's one of you liberating, isn't it, in our world, where we're told to look within, to discover our identity and create our destiny.

It's very much down to us, so we're told. But that crushes people rather than liberates them. No, for a Christian, you are given your identity.

[19 : 28] You are given your destiny. We do not create it ourselves. And that is liberating. And notice what God's church, God's people are doing.

They're singing, verse 3. They are singing a song more beautiful and more profound than you and I can imagine. Think of the hymns that bring most joy to your soul, the hymns that wonderfully articulate the beauty of Christ and the goodness of his promises, hymns that stir our hearts and bring tears to our eyes.

Well, this hymn will be off the scale. We'll be before the throne of God, seeing him in all his glory and majesty, in the presence of our Savior, worshipping him, praising him.

That's our destiny. And notice how God's people are described. Verse 4, they are undefiled. It is these who have not defiled themselves of women, for they are virgins.

Now, there are many ways you could take that wrongly. It's not saying that the people of God are some sort of spiritual elite who've maintained a celibate lifestyle.

[20 : 48] That's very much out of line. What the rest of the Bible says about human sexuality. sexuality. Sexual purity in the Bible is about abstinence outside of marriage, but also sexual faithfulness within marriage.

But this verse isn't talking about human sexuality in that way. It's talking about faithfulness to God. It's talking about spiritual purity, spiritual faithfulness. And God's people, the 144,000, God's people are those who have maintained spiritual faithfulness to Jesus.

Christians, they've not followed after other gods. They've not gone after other ideologies in this world. Look on to the next sentence.

It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. That's a wonderful, concise description of what it is to be a Christian.

A follower of Jesus wherever he goes. Wherever he goes, you follow. Where Christ calls you to go, go we must. What Christ calls us to do, we do.

[22 : 00] His instructions to us are contained in the scriptures and so we are to be good listeners of his word, to be doers of his word. That is what it is to be a Christian. You listen to Jesus, you follow him.

Looking on, we read that these have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb. And in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless. What's in mind here is not merely general truthfulness, but Christians who witness Jesus.

When they are under pressure, they continue to speak the truth. They do not lie, they proclaim Christ and his gospel. They are not part of multi-faith superstition or paganism, confessing God and the other gods, Jesus and his rivals.

No, there is one way, one God. It is this God alone, Jesus only, one way of salvation, one way to life. No lie was found in their mouths.

And when it says in verse 5, they are blameless, the thought here is not so much moral perfection but spiritual integrity, innocence with regard to the world's verdict.

[23 : 21] These Christians, they would have been despised as stubborn and rebellious, hating mankind and insulting the deities. today, we're so often called self-righteous or narrow-minded, a threat to personal freedoms, a threat to social cohesion.

But God knows we're blameless of such charges and he will vindicate his people on that day. It's his opinion that matters in the end, his judgment that is of ultimate importance.

On that great day, it's his verdict that will be important. And he says his people are blameless. Do you see what a great encouragement these verses are to us this morning?

God has purposed us, chosen us from the beginning of the dawn of time. He has saved us through his son, by his death on the cross.

He has drawn us by the power of his spirit and he will never leave us all forsake us. He will take us to our eternal home. We will gather around his throne and worship him forever. That is your identity.

[24 : 39] That is your future. That is who we are. That is where we belong. That is our glorious destiny. And how we needed to hear that.

After the previous chapters, we need to see this glorious vision. That is our vision. That is the future. But looking on to the central section of this passage, our gaze is now directed away from eternity and the future and we are brought into this present age, the age we are now living in.

And we see in this middle section the gospel declaration of judgment and salvation. salvation. So verses 6 to 13. We see here the gospel declaration of judgment and salvation.

Look at verse 6. Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people.

In this middle section we have a set of three angels who unfold the gospel message. A call to fear God.

[25 : 54] They look at the promised destruction of evil and the certain day of judgment. And these angels come with one purpose, which is to warn mankind of the coming judgment in order that men and women, boys and girls, may turn to God in faith.

It's a warning of judgments. It's the gospel summons. Come and follow Jesus. And it's a very sober message. But it's a necessary one.

It's an urgent one. Notice the words of the first angel in verse 7, spoken in a loud voice. He says, fear God and give him glory because the hour of his judgment has come.

and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water. This is the key summons of the gospel.

This is the essence of what the Lord Jesus has commanded his people to go and proclaim to the very ends of the earth. To a world that has by and large turned its back on its creator.

[27 : 06] The one who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water. And this is a confronting message because it declares to a world which in its madness has fallen for the lies of Satan, the great dragon.

A world which has turned its back on the source of life, the source of beauty and goodness and truth. The gospel message is a message to turn back, to fear God and give him glory, to worship him, because there is a judgment coming.

It is the eternal gospel. Verse 6. Eternal because it's unchanged. Eternal because the response to it has eternal implications for all of us.

either for salvation and reigning with him forever or eternal destruction. One of those two will be our destiny.

And this has always been the call of the gospel, the warning of the gospel. It has always been to turn, to repent from our evil ways and fear God, to worship him, to glorify him because there is a judgment coming.

[28 : 30] Jesus himself, recorded in Mark's gospel, chapter 1, said, the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel.

The apostle Paul, very same gospel message, in the very epicenter of cultural elitism and philosophical debate in Athens, proclaimed the same message, Acts 17.

He said, the times of ignorance God has overlooked. But now, he commands all people everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man he has appointed.

And of this, he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. Repent because judgment is coming.

God is coming to God. And we need to be clear that this is our message. We are to call people to fear God, to give him glory.

[29 : 39] And we do that, we fear him, we give him glory by believing in his son, Jesus Christ, who died for our sin, who rose to life, to give us everlasting life.

We do that by repenting, turning from worshipping false gods, living only for ourselves, and turning to worship the true and living God, the creator of all things.

we warn that there is judgment coming. That is our message. And if you are not a Christian here this morning, if you do not yet follow the Lord Jesus, then this is a very urgent and pressing message for you.

Will you heed the call of this eternal gospel? Will you fear God and give him glory and worship him? Because he is your creator.

And there is judgment coming. The second and third angels unpack the nature of this judgment that is to come.

[30 : 53] And it does not make the easy reading, does it? The second angel, verse 8, says, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.

Now Babylon, as we'll see later on in the book of Revelation, Babylon is the metaphor for the Rome of John's day, and it stands for today for any worldly society where people's spirituality is deflected from God, where their sense of guilt is deadened, where their need of God is masked by a hundred substitutes.

Babylon is the non-anti-God world. It is shorthand for this fallen wicked world, and all who fall for the dragon's lies.

And the thing is that Babylon seems impregnable. It seems impossible to defeat. It seems powerful.

But not to God. There will come a day when Babylon will fall, when she will be no longer. Confined to the dust of history, Babylon will be forgotten.

[32 : 20] But God's kingdom, God's people, remain forever. So don't be fooled into thinking that the trappings of Babylon will last.

Do not think that the anti-God world has anything real to offer you. It doesn't. We may find ourselves greatly tempted by the goods that Babylon offers.

We may think it is a good place to live, but it won't last. See, Babylon makes the people of this world drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.

The wine will go down easy. It will taste pretty good. Things will seem wonderful for the moment. But the hangover comes.

All that was promised will turn out to be an illusion. Babylon, says the second angel, will fall. And the judgment to come is real.

[33 : 26] And it's terrifying. Look on to the third angel. End of verse 9. If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath.

He will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. And they have no rest day or night. These worshipers of the beast and its image and whoever receives the mark of its name.

There are only two categories of people in this world. Those who belong to and worship God and bear his mark on their foreheads.

And those who belong to and worship the beast. And bear his mark on their foreheads. The ultimate destiny of those who belong to God is Mount Zion.

[34 : 38] Verse 1. God's eternal city. And the ultimate destiny of those who belong to the beast is set out here. And it's grim reading.

It tells us that there is judgment coming and it is eternal. Now certainly the symbols of revelation are not to be taken literally, but metaphors mean something.

Burning sulfur. What was known to the ancients from volcanic activity. It was from ancient warfare being poured from the city walls onto invading troops.

It inflicted terrible pain and death and burns. And the metaphor here is terrible. Because the reality is terrible.

And the greatest terror of hell is this unending character. We cannot even imagine it. The angel tells us that the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever.

[35 : 46] They have no rest day or night, these worshippers of the beast. But there is hope. There is hope. The cup.

The cup of wrath that the third angel warns about reminds us of another cup. Do you remember Jesus in the garden? When he asked his heavenly father, Father, might this cup pass from me?

Jesus understood what that cup was. This was a cup of wrath. And Jesus said, nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

And so submitting himself to his father, he drank the cup of wrath. He drank the cup of God's wrath for his people, for his sheep, for his bride, for his church, for you.

If you fear God, he drank that cup for you. You need not drink this cup of wrath because Christ has drunk from it already.

[36 : 52] this does not need to be your destiny. And Jesus, who himself drank that cup of wrath, he warns us more clearly than anybody else about the coming judgment and about hell, where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

He warns about eternal punishment and eternal life, Matthew 26. See, Jesus talks about it more than anybody else. You might think the Apostle Paul was the one warning of judgment and Jesus talked about it more than anybody else with greater clarity.

And Jesus does that. Jesus warns about the coming judgment, about hell, because Jesus sees the reality clearer than we do. Jesus sees the horror of sin clearer than we do.

Jesus sees the holiness of God clearer than we do. Jesus sees the urgency to proclaim the gospel clearer than we do. Jesus issues the warnings clearer than we are often comfortable with because hell is real.

Eternity really is eternal. Jesus knew that hell was so real and eternity so long that he used the most terrifying pictures and metaphors to describe it.

[38 : 23] That's the same here in Revelation 14. And it's not because Jesus is callous, but it is because he's compassionate. Because he wanted to sound the warning, that is how men and women, how they relate to him determines their destiny.

And so he warns, this is real. Judgment is coming. Turn, follow me. I've drunk the cup of wrath for you. These warnings would be manipulative and cruel if the thing being warned about wasn't real.

But it is real. We don't look back and condemn Churchill for his constant warnings through the 1930s because of what he was warning about.

We don't condemn him because what he was warning about, Hitler and Nazism, was a real danger. Churchill warned in the 30s that with just a few hours' notice, the Germans could launch an attack on London, bombs could be falling, stones being scattered, fires everywhere, people dying.

He said, we are vulnerable as we've never been vulnerable before. Was he wrong to speak of fire and smoke in the streets of London as bombs came crashing down?

[39 : 59] Well, no. He wasn't because the threat was real. And Jesus' warnings, this warning here in Revelation 14, these warnings are not needless.

They're needed because judgment is real. Hell is real. so heed Jesus' warning. Turn from your sin and worship him.

Fear God and give him glory. And notice the words of comfort to the end of this middle section. Look down to verse 13. These verses for you.

If you fear God, if you've turned to him, then hear these words of comfort. I heard a voice from heaven saying, write this, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.

Blessed indeed, said the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors for their deeds follow them. You can have hope of this rest if you'll turn to Jesus.

[41 : 08] We must look on as we close. we've heard about the great gospel destiny. We've had the great gospel declared.

And now we see it delivered. Verses 14 to 20. This is the great day of judgment and salvation. And these verses speak of two harvestings.

The harvest of the righteous, verses 14 to 16. And the harvest of the wicked, from verse 17, which speaks of the wine press of the wrath of God. And the judgment day that's been warned of in the middle section will surely come.

That's the message of this last section. And it is a gruesome end to the chapter. These are hard words to read. But there will be a gruesome end to history and to evil.

Later on in Revelation, we'll see Christ himself depicted as the divine warrior whose garments are splattered with blood. And we find these words shocking, don't we?

[42 : 21] But the New Testament writers would tell us that the problem is ours, not God's or Christ's. He speaks very plainly about it. We have sanitized judgment.

judgment. We want evil just to disappear. We want everyone just to love God. But it doesn't disappear. And people don't just love God.

Many will spend eternity cursing him. That's the reality. See, evil will only disappear when it's been conquered. And the thing is, it will never be conquered by moral persuasion since evil is essentially uninterested in truth.

It is only concerned with desire and passion. That is the devil's tactic. That is what he cares about. Truth is irrelevant. And we see that very clearly, don't we, in the debates of our day.

Truth is sidelined, desire and passion. That's the winning argument. Evil must be defeated. That is our only hope.

[43 : 34] And its final conquest will be by force. The force of omnipotent good. God himself. And this is the only way that the dragon and his followers will be defeated forever.

This judgment really is real. Evil really must be conquered. Now this is a hard chapter, isn't it, to read?

It's a hard chapter to preach, but it is needed. It presses real urgency upon us. If we're Christians here this morning, we need to keep these realities front and center.

we need to be captivated by the gospel in all its glory. We need to remember that the gospel is the great message our world needs.

We need to be clear there is judgment coming. Hell is real. Eternity is eternal. And these realities ought to shape our presence.

[44 : 48] Our priorities, our plans, our prayers need to be aligned with Revelation 14 so that we would reach out to a lost world, holding out the great hope of the gospel.

See, Christianity is taken up with the great concerns of salvation and eternity. And the reality is, in our city, countless thousands are heading to an eternity away from God's and eternal punishment in hell.

That's the destiny. And that ought to consume our minds and hearts, shouldn't it? the trivial concerns of our lives, the next holiday, the Netflix series, the home renovations, those things ought not to be the chief concerns of our minds.

Eternity, judgment, salvation, ought to be front and center. Our personal comfort and enjoyment in life, that can't be the priority, can it?

So this chapter presses real urgency. Yes, there's a great hope. We see our destiny, our glorious destiny. But that ought to shape our entire outlook on life.

[46 : 25] There's also a message here for you if you're not yet a Christian. perhaps this is new news for you, this talk of judgment and hell and eternity.

Maybe this is new information. Well, the question is, do you fear God? Have you turned to him?

Have you repented? Do you belong to Jesus? Do you know where you're going to spend eternity? mercy? If not, then I urge you, cry out to him for mercy.

He will hear that call. He will respond, and he will welcome you in forever. Without Christ, we face eternal judgment and punishment.

He is your only hope. He is my only hope. Fear God and give him glory because the hour of his judgment has come and worship him.

[47 : 37] He made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water. And if that's you this morning, please come and talk to me.

I'd love to hear from you. Let's pray. Father God, these are deep and weighty matters.

Our lives are so consumed with the frivolous and the temporary, the passing, the fading. But Lord, please help us set our minds on these great eternal realities.

And Lord, please help all of our lives, each one of us, to be shaped and transformed by the great concerns of time and eternity.

So please help all of us to fear you, to love you, to follow you, because you are God. You are our creator and judge.

[48 : 54] So please help us, all of us, to turn and repent and follow you. For we ask it in Jesus' name and for his glory.

Amen.