

Heaven | Week 2/3 | Kevin Fitzgerald

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Date: 27 February 2019

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[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Really, really like, and I trust that you will like it too.

Don't worry if you forget, when I was in school, I loved the teachers that would review at the beginning of every class because I might doze off, you know, and I need a review.

So we're going to do that now. We're going to take about five minutes and kind of review and get our minds percolating. So, when you hear the word heaven, what comes to your mind?

Last week we talked about, usually, not all the time, but many of us think about heaven as this far-off place. It's kind of bright, a lot of clouds.

They've got to have smoke machines all over the place, right? And everybody's dressed in white, and there's no green, no trees. There may or may not be wings.

[1 : 02] And, of course, there's angels. You've got to have angels in heaven. And we're pretty much gathered around the throne 24-7, worshiping the Lamb. Not that that's wrong, but this is, at least when I was growing up and even last couple years, this was kind of my main thinking of what heaven was like if I were to keel over and die and go there.

But we talked about the role of heaven for the dead in Christ today. And we used the example, like if you were traveling somewhere, let's say you were going from L.A. to Boston, and, of course, there's not a direct flight.

There never is, right? And you had to stop over with a layover in Chicago. So you take off, you land in Chicago, but you don't get all excited about Chicago because your final destiny is still to come.

Well, that's kind of like it is in the spiritual realm. Physical death, by the way, we're all going to die, unless we're that generation when the Lord comes. There's coming a day when we're going to die. Unfortunately, sin has brought death to the world. And so we begin a journey. Anyway, next week, next week, I saved the best for last. You know, people say, what's it going to be like in heaven?

[2 : 22] Are we going to have chocolate chip cookies? Will we be thin and young? Will we have gray hair? All that stuff is next week. But we're all going to die, but it begins this marvelous journey to our final place where we're going to spend eternity if we have believed in Jesus for eternal life.

But there's not a direct flight, you see? There's a stopover in what theologians call the intermediate state. That's what we talked about last week.

Is your mind percolating? The truth is, a careful study, you study the Bible of end time issues, you're going to see that there's simply no role for heaven as the final destiny of the redeemed.

Now, you know, we could use the term heaven to describe heaven on earth, but in this study, when I say heaven, I'm talking about the third heaven up wherever it's at where God is now in his throne room.

So notice that. Nowhere in the Bible do we find a single verse that says that is our eternal resting place. There's someplace else.

[3 : 33] That is not it. Rather, this might blow your mind, but God is going to redeem and renew the earth. You see, sometimes when we break bread, our view of redemption is rather narrow.

It's usually just limited to people. But last week we saw that every square inch of the universe belongs to Christ, and it's been affected by the curse, and he's getting it back.

And he's not only going to resurrect us with new bodies, but we're getting earth 2.0. We're getting a new earth, and we're going to live on this earth where we're going to spend eternity in physical glorified bodies.

Get rid of the fog machines and the bright white lights. Think of trees and greens and food and banquets and things like that. And here's why.

We were designed, we have lungs, we have taste buds, we can feel, we breathe air. We were designed to live in a physical environment.

[4 : 40] Last week we talked about the only reason that Adam and Eve, the only reason we go to this intermediate state, Adam and Eve, if they wouldn't have died, most likely would have spent eternity here in a physical place.

But Satan threw a monkey wrench in all of that. And so the biblical worldview presents the believer's final destiny not in some white, foggy place where we're sitting on clouds strumming harp, but rather on earth 2.0, a renewed earth where there's no sin, no pollution, no problems, no poison ivy, no Chicago...

No, I'm just kidding. So, last week we talked about this was God's plan. We talked about how the Bible in Genesis 1 and 2...

Wow. See the power I have? You should pay attention. God threw... Satan threw a monkey wrench in this plan.

He got Adam and Eve to get on his side. We use the illustration of a train derailment. God's kingdom plan was temporarily derailed.

[5 : 56] And Adam and Eve died. But God didn't just say, Oh, too bad. Well, alright, we'll give this victory to Satan. We'll win the war. We'll just... We'll see this battle.

What we'll do is we'll go to plan B. We'll just take everybody up here to heaven and we'll give him the earth. Err. No. No. He sent his son... On that first Christmas, the word became flesh.

Can you imagine that? This was phase one of God's rescue mission to get the kingdom plan back on the rails. And when Jesus died, there was a lot of things going on.

Yes, he was absorbing the penalty for our sins. Okay, we never want to forget that. But there was a lot more going on. 1 John says Jesus came to put an end to the works of the devil.

He came to put an end to angel rule. You see, it was never God's plan that this kingdom that was going to come would ever be ruled by an angel.

[6 : 59] So something had to take place to get the scepter back from a fallen angel back in the hands of humans. And this is how God did it. Now, all of us have been affected by the curse.

Have you had a headache? Have you been sick? Have you seen a car wreck? Have you attended a funeral? Have you gotten poison ivy? It's all because of the curse. But the curse is only temporary.

When Jesus returns, it's going to be lifted, and he's going to redeem. He's getting back his creation in a better version than it is now.

So Jesus came to put an end to angel rule. Remember we talked about last week in the garden when Adam and Eve bowed down to Satan. They dropped the scepter, and before it hit the ground, he grabbed it, and now he's the ruler of the earth.

Jesus came to destroy that and put the train back on the track so we humans could rule someday on this earth. And so the third heaven that we kind of have in our minds is really a stopover on our way to the main event.

[8 : 06] That's kind of our review from last week. We ended with this. You know, Satan wants us to have this view of heaven.

This view of heaven where it's all white and smoky and it's boring. You see, he wants us to have this boring view of heaven, and we're going to emphasize this tonight. He wants us to have this view of heaven where it's all just praise 24-7 and nothing wrong with that.

But, you know, after about an hour and a half of being in a church and listening to somebody preach, I'm ready for lunch, right? Well, Satan wants us to have this boring view of heaven.

He doesn't want us to have the real view of heaven where we have the opportunity to just live on this wonderful planet and to co-reign with Christ and to discover and be over things and have status and enjoy.

You see, that might motivate us to live faithfully now. Satan doesn't want... You know, revival might break out if we get the real version. So Satan wants this version of heaven amongst the believers so we don't get excited.

[9 : 14] Tonight we're going to talk about how did this happen? Where did this concept of heaven come from? Wow, there it is. He's the one, Satan is the one that wants us to yawn.

Heaven, oh, clouds, smoke machines, oh, praise Him, Jesus, amen. Oh, amen, right? Satan wants Christians to imagine heaven as this vague, smoky, white, undefined, unfamiliar to us, boring place

so we don't give it much thought.

You see, the opportunity for us humans, those who believe in Jesus for eternal life, to co-reign with Christ on an exciting new earth has greater potential.

I don't know about you. We're going to learn tonight about the importance of living faithfully now because that's going to determine, not if we get in, because that's a term in the moment we believe, but our status in the kingdom, our enjoyment to be great in the kingdom.

Did you know that? That's why everything we do here is important because it affects then. You see, God not only gave us this new world to come, He's not like this mean despot, I'm in charge, but He's invited us to co-rule the universe with Him.

[10:44] But that depends on our faithfulness now. You see, Satan doesn't want you to enter, you know, as a victor.

He wants us limping into heaven, into the kingdom, after we've wasted our lives. And so that's why I believe this study is rocking my world.

So here's the big idea. We're going to take off here in a minute. If you remember one thing, the major overarching point that I want us to leave with next week is that we, someday, we are going to be resurrected in physical bodies, headed for a new earth.

And how we live now, how we raise our children, how we fill out our tax forms, how we drive, how we talk and don't talk, how we serve, how we enjoy being human.

All of that will determine our status and enjoyment in the coming kingdom. That should motivate us.

[11:51] You know, I don't know about you, but I want to be great in a holy way, not, oh, look at me. I want to be great in God's kingdom. Don't you? We were wired, we were created to rule the earth, not to limp into the kingdom after a wasted life.

So this is the big idea. All right, a question. Why do so many Christians imagine heaven as, you know, this place we've been describing, this spiritual, non-earthly realm somewhere in outer space? What happened to the teaching of living in God's physical kingdom in a renewed cosmos? You see, we believe in what is called a holistic redemption, a cosmic redemption.

You see, he's not just saying, all right, I'm going to take all the people and the physical world can go to hell. No, God is getting it all back to be renewed for us.

That's the plan. When you think of heaven, you should not think of this, you should think of that.

Where in the world is the, where is this in the Bible?

[13:02] We Americans, we're not good at getting to the end of our books. It's at the end in Revelation, you know, 20, 21, 22. It's in the middle of Isaiah. How many of you did a verse-by-verse study of Isaiah? Not many.

Turn off Dancing with the Stars and study Isaiah. It's all in there. So how did the church come to believe in man's final destiny in this transcendent, immaterial realm?

I'm going to give you a little history lesson tonight. Before we do, I just want to say, we are, I believe we are going up to that throne room.

And while we certainly do not deny the importance nor the reality of the intermediate heaven, listen to this, there does not exist a single reference, find out, if you could prove me wrong, there does not exist a single reference to heaven like the third heaven as the eternal destiny of the redeemed in the entire Bible.

The Bible presents our home here on earth. You know, did you ever hear, oh, I can't wait till the rapture, till we're out of here, it's all going to burn, this place is not my home, maybe you, I'm going to change the way we think.

[14:18] Well, we can thank Mr. Plato. I'm not a history buff, but Plato lived a long time ago, he was a Greek philosopher, and I can't rub shoulders with him, I'm sure he was very smart, much smarter than me, right?

But nobody gets it right. And where he didn't get it right was what is called, what we call a certain aspect of Platonism. He believed that material things like human bodies and dogs and earth and trees and mountains, material things, including our bodies and the earth, anything with matter is evil, while immaterial things, such as the soul, heaven, angels, God, etc., are good.

You say, well, how did that get in the church? Well, we could thank some of our so-called church fathers, Philo, Origen, Augustine, they bought into this Greek philosophy and brought it right into the church.

And we are affected even to our day. I'm going to give you some examples of how we are, how Platonism has affected the church and we have bought into, to some degree, this Greek philosophy.

These men, some of our church fathers, not the apostles, not the ones who wrote inspired writings, but men who studied the Bible later, they rejected the idea of heaven as a physical realm and spiritualized the biblical teaching of resurrection and people living on the earth.

[15:59] That's how we got it into the church. So, many church fathers held that humans, here's how it works, are essentially divine souls trapped in evil bodies.

And our goal is to become free from our physical bodies and eventually join God in heaven. You can just, this is kind of the evangelical way, right?

We can't wait to get out of here. Here's how it looked. I have a bad picture here. I'm sorry you can't see it, but the Greek worldview, the Platonic dualism, is in the higher realm, up above, you have what is spiritual.

You have God up there and angels and things like that. And in the lower realms is the physical realm. And so, in Greek philosophy, our goal was to get out of the physical realm so we can escape and go to this better world.

They believed that the material world, bodies, earth, matter, was bad, and that immaterial things like souls and spiritual things like up in heaven were good.

[17:12] For example, we kind of do this. Well, that's the secular. He has just a normal secular job.

The pastor, he's got a sacred job. So we kind of categorize the sacred like church and worship and prayer, evangelism, Bible study, all those things, that's good stuff.

That's spiritual stuff. The rest of this, yeah, we're human. We've got to go through this. Our jobs, education, work, you know, anything down here on earth, including intimacy. I have a pet peeve about this and I'm going to resist preaching a 30-minute sermon, but I'm going to give you a one-minute version, okay?

There is no division. If you are an engineer or a housewife, a doctor or a gardener, what you do, you are fulfilling the human mandate given in Genesis 1 and 2.

You are taking this world, the garden, so to speak, and taking it and putting order and discovering and making things better.

[18:21] We've got to get rid of this idea that the only time God is happy is when we're teaching Sunday school or we're on a mission trip or we're handing out tracks. If you work for a company and you go into a home and you put order in that home by fixing something, you're carrying out the human mandate, of course, we don't, we want to keep the main thing the main thing, but this division between the sacred and the secular comes from Greek philosophy, not from the Bible.

Take sexuality. For centuries, even today, there are people who believe that marital intimacy was just for procreation and when you're done having kids, okay, we're done with that.

Hello, didn't God give us an entire book of the Bible called the Song of Solomon for us to learn how to rock that gift, enjoy that, right?

My favorite verse, this is God talking to Solomon and the Shulamite in King James. What is it? It's imbibed deeply. What would that be in street language?

Enjoy this. This is my gift to you. I don't know about you. Did I give you the illustration last week?

You know, Cindy and I wanted to give a gift, a special gift to one of our grandkids and they opened it up and they looked at it and they looked it up and they say, oh, Papa and Anna, we just want you.

[19:50] I don't want this gift. No, we want, as the giver, we want our grandchild to enjoy that gift. But we got this idea from Platonism that, I mean, have you ever felt the tension sitting in a hot tub?

I wonder if we should have spent the, or on vacation. You feel the tension. We could have given this money to mission. Now, each one of us has to decide all that, but listen to me.

God wants you to enjoy His gifts. Now, of course, anything can be made an idol, right? Anything. Everything has been made an idol. But when we enjoy it within holiness, and it's not out of whack, it's not an idol, I think God goes, I think God is pleased, just like I would be pleased to see my grandchild enjoy His gifts.

So, many theologians and Bible teachers actually teach there is no physical resurrection. There is no new earth. I can't remember who told me the story.

Somebody picked up Randy Alcorn's book, Heaven, at a conference. They took it to their seat and read about a page or two and brought it back and they said, this is heresy, and they gave it back.

[21 : 05] A lot of people think, oh, no, this is what the Jehovah Witnesses teach. What do you mean eating and drinking and going to feasts and cities and cultures and nations and working and ruling and having a good time?

We've got to get it out of our minds that God is a cosmic killjoy. Look at our offer. Anybody having fun to stamp it out? God wants you to enjoy being human. He gave you this earth on a silver platter. Now, it's been messed up by sin, but we honor God when we enjoy and thank Him for the good gifts He's given us. As a result of Platonism, Christians for centuries have thought of spending eternity then in this non-physical someplace, you know, out in outer space.

In the Christian world view, what should be our attitude toward the physical realm? We're going to look at a little study. It's just going to be a little brief one. We don't have time to really get into it, but what we're going to find is the Bible nails the coffin shut on Platonism and I pray that if anybody here thinks that you can't enjoy being human and going on a vacation, enjoying a sunset, a cup of coffee and a good book or whatever, you fill in the blank, I hope you have a different view after you see what we're going to see tonight.

First of all, the physical world, physical matter is not something bad. It's part of God's good creation.

[22 : 39] After six days of creating and saying, this is good, this is good, on the seventh day he stepped back and he looked back and he said this. Then God looked over all that he had made and it was, I like that, this is my version of the Christian standard Bible, it was excellent in every way.

And can I add a little version, this is a Kevin Fitzgerald version, and don't you Platonists contradict this. It's good.

I made things good. Yeah, it's been messed up by the fall but there's still goodness in the world, there's still beauty and enjoyment. Take Adam and Eve, this idea of not being physical.

Adam and Eve were created to be both physical and spiritual. Think about this. Adam and Eve did not become human until they were both human and spiritual.

Genesis 2, 7 says this, then the Lord God said, I'm sorry, then the Lord breathed, okay, so, hold on, he's got this, you know, 60% water, the rest of it's clay, a few chemicals, you know, kind of a mud puddle, right, it's kind of a mud pie, Adam, and he breathes into his nostrils the breath of life and he becomes a human being.

[23 : 58] He is physical and he is spiritual. You see, how could the physical world be bad if God created it, if God created man to be physical, to be human?

And then what about this, right? The Gnostics tried, oh, you know, the Holy Spirit came over him from birth and it left him on the cross because they can't go with Jesus being in a physical body, it doesn't fit their narrative.

And the apostles tried to stamp this out. The Bible says the very word God left heaven and he became matter. He wouldn't do that if it was something evil.

Christ not only created the physical world, he also became part of it. That's why John, you know, Platonism and Gnosticism have a lot of things in common.

When John wrote there was a lot of people with this idea, they were affected by Greek philosophy. How could God be in a body? The body's evil. And so they started to affect the churches with this slop.

[25 : 05] And John, you ever think about it, most of our epistles were written because of bad doctrine to correct it. What did John say? Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

But every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of Antichrist. Do you understand what John is saying? Matter is good. If matter was evil, Jesus wouldn't have become a man.

You remember doubting Thomas? We call him doubting, but they all doubted, right? And so do we. Jesus was raised in a physical body. He was not a phantom. You know the story of doubting Thomas.

Jesus shows up. Hey, hey Thomas, come here. Sit down. Put your finger here and look at my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Don't be faithless, but believe.

What did he say? A ghost doesn't have body like I do. He ate fish. He sat down. He had a picnic on the beach. What about us? A lot of people say, oh, do we turn into angels when we go to heaven?

[26 : 10] There's a lot of books out there on angels. Even in the Christian bookstore, you don't turn into angels when you die. You don't get your wings. Angels have wings. We don't have wings.

We're going to get body 2.0, just like Jesus.

When Jesus rose from the dead, was he still a man? Yeah. Did he have a voice? Yeah. Did he have feet? Yeah. Did Martha recognize his voice? Yeah. There's continuity from the old to the new. And doesn't the Bible say we're going to be like him? We're going to get physical, resurrected, glorified bodies.

1 John 3.2, we know that when he appears, we will be like him. How is he? Well, he's in a physical, glorified body. He took up residence in humanity.

And he's going to be throughout eternity in a body. Just like we are. Next week, we're going to see how he was. Through walls and kind of fun stuff like that.

[27 : 13] So our final destiny, beloved, is a physical earth. There's going to be cities, streets, plants, all kinds of feasts and fun and nations and cultures. I like what Randy Alcorn said in his book, Heaven.

We are pilgrims in this life. Not because our home will never be on earth, but because our eternal home is not currently on earth.

It was, remember back in the garden? It was, and it will be, but not right now. In other words, this is not the version. We were wired for another world.

When I came in, your musicians were singing some wonderful songs. It's amazing how Platonism has influenced songs, Christian songs.

The reason this is important is, you know, I typically preach a sermon once or twice and I never preach it again. The theology in our songs, we sing over and over, year after year, decade after decade.

[28 : 15] It's important what our songs say. More, more important, we're getting more from our songs, theology from our songs, than we are from preachers. Now, here's an example.

Have you ever heard of the countdown song? Somewhere in outer space, God has prepared a place for those who trust Him and obey.

This has multiple issues here, right? Jesus will come again and though we don't know when, the countdown's getting lower every day, 10 and 9, 8 and 7. We're going to blast off and this song gives us the idea that we're going somewhere in outer space.

And it kind of leaves us. What are we teaching our children? No wonder they walk away from the faith. I don't want to go to a place where there's worship all the time. What about this Christmas song?

Imagine how many millions of people sang this song. The author is in dispute. Some say it was Martin Luther. I don't know. I don't know who it was. But it's rated as the second most popular Christmas carol of all time.

[29 : 20] Just to show you the impact of Platonism's message, how it's getting out there. So let's look at a few lines of Away in a Manger. Be near me, Lord Jesus.

I ask thee to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in thy tender care and take us to heaven to live with thee there.

It kind of gives the idea that we're done here, we go up there, that's our home. Platonism. I hope this is not your favorite song.

I love this song. When I found it, it's like, oh no, not my favorite one. On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise and the glory of his resurrection share, when his chosen ones shall gather to their homes beyond the skies.

Is that where our home is? It's our temporary home. But the song gives us the idea that we're out of here.

[30 : 28] Somewhere beyond. Oh no, not this one. Not this one. I'm not going to sing it for you because I saw some people leave when I started to sing. To the old rugged cross I will ever be true with shame and reproach gladly bear.

Then he'll call me someday to my home far away. Kind of gives us the idea somewhere out of here where his glory forever I'll share.

Now you can make the argument, okay, he's calling us to our eternal home, but if you don't know that, what is this song teaching generation after generation? There is no heaven on earth, so to speak.

It's out of here. I'll fly away. Some bright morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away. Where? To that home on God's celestial shore?

Yes, we're going to be taken out of here, but that's not our home. That's not our home. That's a temporary stopover. When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be.

[31 : 39] Wouldn't it be more biblical to say when we all get to earth, to the glorified earth in the earthly kingdom? Let's be very careful with what we sing. Another negative effect on Platonism, on Christianity, is that the physical pleasure should be denied by spiritual people.

I want to ask you a question. Every physical pleasure you've enjoyed, who thought of it first? God. Let me give you some examples. I like to eat. Do you like to eat? Who created food? Who talked about banquets? Who put taste buds on our tongue?

God. This is three times a day, this beautiful blessing we can enjoy with family and friends. A meal. Oh, don't enjoy it too much. Oh. What about this? Whose idea was this? Whose idea was it? Intimacy within marriage.

[32 : 47] It wasn't man's idea. It was God's idea. Imbibe deeply, please. It's a command. All of you married people, go home and imbibe deeply. It's a command.

Who invented friendship? Do you like getting together late? Cindy's got this group of ladies she goes with, she enjoys. I love it. She comes home a better person because she's been with her friends.

Who created friendship? God created friendship. What about having fun a weekend off, a weekend at the cabin where you just let your hair down and enjoy?

You feel the temper. I wonder if I should be at the mall handing out tracts. Come on. Enjoy being human. You like music. Where do you think music came from?

Whose idea was it? What about art? Fill in the blank. What about laughter and enjoyment? Too many Christians are like they've been marinated in lemon juice.

[33 : 46] They're sour. Come on. God, we should be the best billboards for Christianity. Hey, I want in on what they have. Look at them. They enjoy. Look at how they're enjoying.

That's the idea. Now, some people say, oh, what about these verses? I'm going to go over. I just want to sample this before we get to our break. Notice the word apparent.

Apparent contradictions to New Earth theology. Kevin, what about that verse in 1 John? Do not love the world or the things in the world. What's the deal? In John 3.16, it says God loved the world.

Here he's telling us not to love the world. That's a bad deal. How come he gets to love the world and we don't get to love the world? You ever think about that? Do not love the world or the things that are in the world? If anybody loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

In other words, don't play Stratego. Don't go on vacation. Come on. Just stay focused on heaven. Hold your thought on that one.

[34 : 47] We're going to come back. So if you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. You see, it seems to contradict what we've been looking at here.

How about this verse? Oh, this world, our citizenship is up in heaven where we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus. Don't get involved in this world. Don't enjoy the world.

Just wait for heaven. And then one more verse. Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Do you feel the tension here? What do these verses mean? Whoever wants to become a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God?

Well, I'll give you this. This world can be a very bad place. But it's not all bad. Let me ask you a question. Is the created world the problem?

Or is sin the problem? I think you already know the answer, right? Here's the effects of Platonism or Gnosticism on Christianity.

[35 : 52] Have you ever heard somebody preach or say or espouse this version? Love not the world. It's all going to burn. The only thing that matters is loving God and saving souls.

Don't go to movies. Don't drink wine. Don't have fun. Don't dance. Don't play. Have you bought into that version? I call it out of here theology.

You can quote me. I just made this up. But I thought it's a good... We Christians approach our lives... It's all going to burn. And Christ is coming. And we're going to leave this world.

Sorry, I'm going the wrong way. You know? And the idea is... Don't focus on that original mandate to put order in the world and become relevant.

It's all going to burn. Just focus on heaven. Just pass out tracts. I would say that is a theological error. And we need to rightly divide the word of truth. Here's the problem.

[36 : 52] We err when we confuse the physical world with the ethical world. We err when we confuse the physical world with the ethical world.

Let me explain. Let's take this verse that we started with. Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Now, if you parachuted down and yanked this verse off the page, you could probably come up with a really good sermon. But if you kept reading, you'll notice in the next verse that the author, the biblical author, John, gives us a description of what he's talking about. He's talking about lust and pride. And these are ethical rather than physical terms. John's warning is related to sin, not the created physical world.

Listen to the rest of the verse or the rest of the passage. Don't love the world. For everything in the world, notice he didn't say mountains and vacations and cups of coffee.

[37 : 54] Everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of one's possessions, he didn't say one's possessions, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

You see the difference between the stuff and the sin? Beloved, the problem is sin, not stuff. Go to the next verse.

Man's problem, this isn't a verse, by the way, man's problem is sin, not God's excellent creation. And we don't want to confuse the ontological world, the physical world, with the ethical part that the Bible, the New Testament talks about.

Let me give you an example. Here's two young men. They're both Christians. They got jobs. They're ready to get married. They go to church.

And at church, there's this beautiful female creature, lovely lady. One of them looks at her and thinks really nice, good biblical thoughts.

[38 : 57] Hey, I'd like to imbibe deeply someday with that. I want to marry her. And another one looks at her and has a different approach. Is the problem the girl?

No. It's not the stuff. Excuse me, I'm not saying she's stuff, but you understand what I'm saying. It's the sin. It's not the physical world. God has given us beautiful wives.

We should enjoy that gift. Listen to Colossians 3, 1 through 2. So if you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

See, Kevin, what you're teaching is wrong. We shouldn't. We shouldn't focus on that new earth you're talking about. Hold on. As the passage goes on, Paul explains what he means by earthly things.

Note, as we are going to see now, that they belong to the ethical category, not God's good creation. He goes on to say, therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed, et cetera, wrath, malice, slander.

[40 : 06] You see, we don't want to confuse God's good creation with the ethical negativity in this world system. Believers should take care not to confuse the ethical with the physical category and not suggest that the material world is somehow evil or beneath us or something that we need to escape from.

Philippians 3, our citizenship is in heaven. Kevin, come on. You're talking about our citizenship is on that permanent earth. This one says our citizenship is in heaven. What's the deal?

Our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly wait for a savior from there, our Lord Jesus Christ. And the idea is he's coming to get us and the world's going to go to hell in a handbasket and we're going to go up and be in spiritual bodies and sing songs.

I already said this world is an evil place. But a believer should not get used to life here. Here's the mystery. We should stay focused on heaven and our deliverance from this earth slated for destruction.

Here's a better suggestion. As believers, we should seek to live on earth now as representatives of a heavenly kingdom of God that will eventually come to earth. earth. We demonstrate in our earthly lives now a different manner and order of things from the current fallen world.

[41 : 29] Jesus taught his disciples to pray, your kingdom come and how things are in that upper coming kingdom that they be like that on earth.

And so when he says let your mind, our citizenship is in heaven, doesn't mean we want to leave this earth. It's all going to burn. It means we get our cues from up there.

Let me give you an illustration. After Cindy and I left Ecuador in 2000, they built the U.S. Embassy there. Haven't been to it yet, but doesn't that look nice? Believe me, it's much better than the old one, right? So let me introduce you to the current ambassador to Ecuador, Mr. Todd Chapman. I'm going to use this as an illustration. So let's say Mr. Chapman, he is down there, and in that foreign country that he lives now, the ambassador represents the U.S. President and the affairs of the United States government.

That's what an ambassador does. Now while in that foreign country, he conducts himself in a manner that best represents the U.S. President and the affairs of his homeland, right? He doesn't isolate himself in the embassy waiting to be called home.

[42 : 35] Hey, close the door. Let's get in here. Come on, we'll just wait until we're done. No, that's not what an ambassador does. When he goes to the new country, he doesn't isolate. He engages the people and culture of that country to promote and represent the agenda of his homeland.

So as he's out representing, he's meeting the president. We knew the ambassador when he was there. He used to come to our softball games. His kid was on our team. We'd watch him engage the Ecuadorian culture.

His citizenship was the United States, but he was in a foreign country. And so when the Bible says our citizenship is in heaven, we are his ambassadors now to promote his agenda on earth.

That's what it means. It doesn't mean that the physical world is evil. And so as ambassadors of Christ, we represent him and the affairs of his coming kingdom, right?

We engage the culture. We don't hunker down, us four no more, circle the wagons, honey. We don't do that. We wait to be, we don't circle the wagons and wait to be called home.

[43 : 43] We engage people. We engage the culture in this foreign land that we're in now to promote and represent the agenda of our king and our homeland.

That's what that verse, I believe, means. And now our final one before we take our coffee break. Look, don't you know? Come on, Kevin.

Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be friends of the world becomes the enemy of God? Is it stuff? Or is it sin?

It's the sin. The New Testament often uses the word world, cosmos, for a system that is opposed to God and controlled by Satan.

That's what their authors are saying. Don't love the world system. He's not saying don't enjoy your vacation or a good book. What is the point?

[44 : 40] We need to be careful not to confuse the physical world with the ethical world system controlled by the devil. I hope this is freeing to you to enjoy being human and the good gifts that God has given us.

I love these two verses. We're going to end with this before we go to our coffee break now. I don't know about you but doesn't that look inviting? Man, you're at home. It's a beautiful snow by a lake. Friends, maybe it's Christmas or Thanksgiving. No, we can't love those things. Hold on, hold on. What does Paul say to Timothy? Everything is created by God is what?

Can I hear? What is it? It's good. Of course it's been affected by sin but it doesn't mean it's all evil. Nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.

How about this verse? Instruct those who are rich. This isn't a slam against the rich. I just want to get to the last part of this verse. Notice he doesn't say being rich is evil. Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on uncertainty of wealth but on God and I love this.

[45 : 58] Who richly provides us with what? All things to enjoy. And you know what I'm going to do right now? I'm going to go in that room and I'm going to enjoy those cookies I saw.

So let's be back here in 15 minutes. Okay, we're going to change gears now and talk about two future judgments.

Final destiny. The judgment seat of Christ and what is called the great white throne judgment. I'm more interested rather than the mechanics going for the goal at the judgment seat of Christ.

So, there's two major final judgments coming for human beings. Both take place after death, by the way.

Next week we're going to talk about what death is. What death is, what happens after death. But our two judgments tonight in the Bible, we refer to them as the judgment seat of Christ and the great white throne judgment.

[47 : 15] The judgment seat of Christ is an evaluation for believers and the great white throne is an event for unbelievers.

We'll put a pin in that. In this judgment seat of Christ, it's not to determine where you go because you're already with Christ.

That's already been settled. This is an evaluation to see about rewards or loss of rewards or status or loss of status in that coming earthly kingdom that we have been talking about.

The other one, the great white throne, is a judgment. This, again, is not to determine where you're going. It's already been determined. If you are at this judgment, oh, it's going to be the worst day of your life.

It's a judgment not to see if you go to heaven or hell because you're on your way to the permanent lake of fire. It's about your status there. And so the two final judgments, they take place after death.

[48 : 21] The judgment seat of Christ and the great white throne. Where we're going to spend eternity will not be up for discussion in either one of these. If you want to get that nailed down where you're going to go, you do that before you die.

After that, it's too late. If you want to appear on that earth and participate in the judgment seat of Christ, well, you know what, I'll save that. I'm going to talk about that in a little while.

Rather than determine where you're going, these judgments will determine your status in your final dwelling place. It's not all static. Remember last week we talked about American T-ball where everybody gets the same trophy?

No matter how lousy you are, it's not how it is in either one of these places. So let's begin. What is the judgment seat of Christ? Now, while eternal life is free, it's a free gift received by faith alone and Christ alone, eternal rewards are not free.

They are earned for work done and growing and being mature. Every believer will appear at the judgment seat of Christ to be evaluated.

[49 : 37] I'll explain it in just a minute. Where are the verses? There's three main verses. Romans 14, 10 and 12. For we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

That's where we get the name, right from the Bible. So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Again, this is not a pleading, Lord, let me in. You didn't understand.

I gave all that money. That's not what this is about. You're already in. The second passage is in 2 Corinthians 5, 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body.

In other words, during our life, whether good or evil. So Romans, 2 Corinthians. Now, I have recruited little Joey here. I like moving parts and graphs and illustrations.

That's how I learn. Little Joey is going to help us explain it. Let's say that Joey, he is born in 2008. He's a, what would that be?

[50 : 39] He's not a millennial. What's the next one? I can't keep track. So he lives a good old age and he dies at 76. And so he died in 2084.

So born in 2008, dies in 2084. He lived to be 76 years old. But let's say that in 2018, he was a student in the Bethel daycare.

And when his children, when he was in that, his lovely teachers explained to him how the obtaining of eternal life is a free gift as opposed to earning and working and so forth. And so little Joey that day put his faith in Jesus' promise of eternal life and was born again.

In other words, he became a believer. God wrote his name in the book of life. So let's say then that Joey lives from 2018 when he became a Christian and he dies in 2084.

He lived 66 years as a believer. That is what is up for evaluation. You see, God gives us eternal life and we might study one of the parables next week.

[51 : 49] He says, now, do something with your life. Just don't sit back and wait for the coming of the Lord. You know, God wouldn't want us to be self-centered, right? Use that life.

Engage the culture. Raise your family. Be a good employee. So what will take place at the judgment seat of Christ? The believer's works will be examined to distinguish worthy works from worthless ones.

These are the deeds done by the believer during his or her Christian life and all will be reviewed and examined some will pass the test because they are good works.

Others will fail because they are worthless works. Again, remember, this is not to determine where you're going. Some people have lived not for self but for Christ and for others.

They've engaged the culture. They've been good employees. They've raised their children well, et cetera. Unfortunately, many people take that Christian life and waste it.

[52 : 58] And so at the judgment seat of Christ, there's going to be loss. Not the loss of being in heaven because you're already there, but a wasted life.

A life lived on self. just to be clear, the basis of the judgment is not one's saved or lost condition, but the profitability of one's life for the master's benefit.

In other words, it's not to see whether you go to heaven or hell. It's to see your reward and your status in that coming earthly kingdom.

kingdom. So, let's be clear, eternal life is a free gift, but ruling in the kingdom is a prize.

You see, eternal life is not a prize that God gives to the religious, right, who work hard. It's a free gift that he gives to sinners. One is received by faith alone.

[54 : 08] The other is earn. Earn. You can't earn eternal life, but once we get it, we're off to the races to determine our status and our enjoyment in that coming kingdom.

Isn't that great? God leaves that up to us. That's why I have this phrase. We are becoming today what we will be then in the kingdom. We are in training time for?

For? Raining time. So, again, I like charts, right? I want to show you a chart to show you the difference between eternal life and rewards.

I just want to say this to parents. Parents, sometimes our kids, they get their cables crossed in their heads as we raise them. On the one hand, we're teaching them, oh, you know, believe in Jesus for eternal life, but don't pull Susie's pigtails.

I told you not to do that. So, well, you know, I've lived, and sometimes they think that it's like they combine the teaching of eternal life with discipleship stuff and they come up with a cocktail that's deadly.

[55 : 11] As we raise our children, let's continue to teach them the freeness of eternal life, but obeying and growing in Christ for greatness in the kingdom.

So, let's look at our chart. Eternal life, a free gift. But rewards are not free. You're not going to get up to the judgment, judgment, what the, where did all these gifts come, what?

You're not going to back in to great status in the kingdom. It just doesn't work that way. They're earned. Elbow grief, determination, turning off the TV, you know, enjoy it first, but then turn it off.

Eternal life can't be lost. You ever wonder if it could be lost, it has the wrong name, right? It's eternal life.

Rewards can be lost. How many of us know Christians that started well out of the chute and then they get distracted and they do dumb things and they get away from the Lord? They can lose their rewards, not their salvation.

[56 : 16] Eternal life is received through faith. Rewards are received through service and becoming. You get eternal life instantly. I got it in 1978 in the month of September.

I don't have time to tell you the story. But eternal rewards, I'm still working on those. It's a lifelong process. In eternal life, who paid the price?

Not us, right? Jesus paid the price, but in eternal rewards, we pay the price. If you forget anything that I taught you, this is the main point of why we want to get eternity and the afterlife correct.

Our degree of participation in this coming kingdom is dependent on how we live now for the glory of God. And if we got this boring view and we're yawning, oh, I'm not interested in heaven, it doesn't give us motivation to live for that kingdom.

This should motivate us to remain faithful to the end. Not this, that. Isn't it cool? God left our status up to us.

[57 : 27] All right, I've given you eternal life, and I want you to work for me. I want you to enjoy life, but I want you to put me first. And we determine our enjoyment and our status in the coming kingdom.

You see, in America, you know, we know a lot about status, right? We want to be, number one, the top dog. Well, in a holy way, in a sane way, Jesus teaches that there's going to be varying degrees of greatness in the kingdom.

And it's not like we're competing against each other. That's not what the Bible teaches. We are all individually trying to please the master to hear his well done.

Let me show you something. I don't have time to expound this passage. I just want you to notice the words in gold. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches people

to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

But whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Not everybody is going to be the same in the kingdom of heaven.

[58 : 37] There's going to be great and least in everybody in between. It's a serious thing. A wasted life will have negative consequences at the judgment seat of Christ.

I implore you, don't waste your life. Enjoy it. Live it for the glory of God so that you hear that well done.

1 Corinthians, Paul is talking about this evaluation and he says, if anyone's work is burned up, if anyone's work is burned up, it will be lost.

Notice it doesn't say he will be lost, but he will be saved, yet it will be like escaping through the fire as you smell the smoke of a wasted life. This is the goal.

Beloved, you were created to rule and to reign on the earth in God's coming kingdom. And I want to repeat this again, the lives we currently live determine the degree of kingdom greatness we will experience in the future.

[59 : 53] You see, you want to enter that way, not this way. You want to be great in God's kingdom. So I'm going to give you a real quick study on how to be great in God's kingdom. It's not to be complete.

And I just noticed at the clock, I only have five minutes, but I'm going to tell you, somebody from this congregation told me today that my message last week was too short. So if you don't like me going over, see me later, and I will tell you who that person was.

I'm going to have to do this fast, and I'm going to have to edit on the fly to be done. Notice the word inversion, how to be great in God's kingdom. We know in the world, you know, we step on the backs of our colleagues to get up to the top.

We want to be the big kahuna. And you get saved, and God says, hey, come over here. Things in my kingdom are done differently. You want to be great in my kingdom? Grab a broom. You want to be great?

Serve others. Don't look out for yourself only, but for others also. Unfortunately, I don't know about you, but my default mode is not others. Do you have a problem with that?

[60 : 56] Being great in the kingdom requires that we go through life with Christ at the center of everything we do. It's not just simply putting Christ at the top. He should permeate my family life, my work life, my recreation life, community life.

Unfortunately, the world has their system. Me first. Me always. Right? Philippians comes along and says, no, no.

See, the Romans had a problem. Those Italians, huh? They thought, you don't, you don't serve others. You make your name great.

Paul comes along and says, consider others as more important than yourself. This was a particular problem for these Italians. Everyone should look out not only for his own interest, but the interest of others.

In other words, yeah. You see, the evaluation of the judgment seat of Christ isn't just what we do or don't do. It's becoming. Are you more mature than you were six months ago?

[62 : 04] Have you ever heard somebody say, that's just the way I am. It's the way God made me. You got to get used to it. All right, you're a crank, but work on it. Apply the scriptures. Be becoming.

Christ left us a great example. This is a good one for the Romans. In the Roman culture, to be a slave was like the most terrible thing. There's only one thing worse, and that was dying on a Roman cross.

See, Romans, it was against the law to crucify a Roman. It was for other people. Can you imagine being a Roman Christian? Hey, our Savior's a slave and he died on a cross. Are you kidding me? They would have been laughed to scorn.

And when they were bringing this attitude, this baggage, into the Philippian church, and Paul writes them and he says, look, let me give you an idea here. The sovereign of the universe, the creator, descended and he became human.

And he not only became human, he became a slave. And not only that, but he died on a Roman cross. And they're thinking, what? This doesn't fit our culture, our narrative. Of course, the verse, the passage isn't finished yet, is it?

[63 : 13] But how's the verse go? So, he highly exalted him. He went way beyond the emperor. And Paul says, do that.

Think of others. I love the NIV in Philippians 2. Speaking of Jesus, it says, he did not consider, having a senior moment here.

He did not consider, anyway, it'll come, something to be used for his own advantage. Isn't that how we get a title, we get a position, we get a little authority, and we kind of use it for our own advantage?

Christ did not consider being equal with God to be used for his own advantage. We teach pastors around the world in this ministry that I'm involved in, and the first thing we tell them is, you've got to understand.

Leadership isn't bossing people around. It's servanthood. You want to lead people? Be an example. Serve them. We have this motto, this idea at Fenton Crossing. We want to create an environment where our folks can thrive.

[64 : 23] We have no business bossing people around. I'm the elder. I've been an elder for, I don't know how long, how many decades, on two continents, and I've never pulled the elder card.

You do it because I'm an authority. Nope. We appeal from the scriptures. We plead. Please obey what God has to say. He says, the greatest among you will be your servant.

This is the most. Christ first, others, then us. Not promoting self-loathing or anything. We have Christ esteem. But real quickly, evaluation of the judgment seat of Christ is not just based on what we do or don't do.

It's how we become. It's becoming like Christ. Implementing the fruit of the spirit in our lives. It's being and doing.

It's not just one or the other. A growing Christian serves others even when he doesn't feel like it. Yeah, I'm going to go to church this week because I'm really looking forward to it.

[65 : 24] I don't really. Do you have, I know you probably don't have them here because we don't have them in our church. But at some churches, there's some Christians that don't come when they don't feel like it. Growing Christians, they're not in it for themselves.

They're in it for others. A lot of kids, a lot of you have kids at Oana. I got to, some days I don't want to go to Oana. But you know why I go? It's not, my life is not about me. A growing Christian serves others even though that person may not like that person.

A growing Christian serves even when he doesn't enjoy the work. Yeah. Becoming and doing. What about being? Sometimes we're really good at doing.

But we lack in the being area. We bend. Okay. I think I got it figured out. Stay back this way, right? Okay, the sound man's going like this. Look at that handsome sound man over there.

Not the speaker over here, the speaker over there. A lot of us have been, well, most of us have been to the cross to get eternal life. But we haven't been back for the breaking of our will.

[66 : 37] Becoming more like Christ each day. Are we, when people like, when people say, hey, look at John Kleppel, he reminds me of Jesus.

I'm not talking about Jesus' haircuts and sandals, anything like that. I'm talking about character quality. When people look at us, are we growing? Are we growing in obedience, truthfulness, when you fill out your tax forms, kindness, gentleness?

It's amazing what the Bible says about gentleness. Joy, love, patience. I want to bring this session to a close by telling you a quick story.

It was this lady named Florence Chadwick. She was a long distance swimmer. You can see from the date. She's not with us anymore. She was an amazing swimmer.

She was the first swimmer to swim the Catalina Channel, the English Channel, both directions, by the way, in the Strait of Gibraltar. Well, one day, on a foggy morning in 1952, before I was born, on Catalina Island, this 34-year-old swimmer wanted to swim from Catalina Island over to the coast of California.

[67 : 58] So, she was determined to be the first woman to ever swim the 21 miles. I can hardly walk 21 miles, much less swim it.

So, boom, original photo, by the way. More than 15 hours later, numb with cold and lost in the fog, she felt she couldn't go on and she asked to be taken out and put in the boat.

Later, she realized, because of the fog, she couldn't see, she'd only been a half a mile from the shore. She couldn't see it because of the fog.

And so, in an interview the next day, when she was being interviewed, she said this, I'm not excusing myself, but if I could have seen the shore, I know I could have made it. If I could have seen the shore, I know I could have made it. Our enemy, the devil, doesn't want us to see the shore.

[69 : 07] He wants us to give up, to be discouraged. He wants Platonism's foggy view of heaven to obstruct the view of our amazing afterlife.

He wants us to yawn with boring thoughts of eternity so we're not motivated beyond just getting there. He doesn't want us to wonder about this beautiful, oh, it's just going to be this boring place. Just go for the gusto because you're not going to get it there. You might as well get it here, right? And as we go through life with all of its trials and tribulations, God wants us to keep our eyes fixed on the shore, on the goal of what is coming and that is co-reigning with Christ in his earthly kingdom based on a life well lived now.

You say, well, I'm going through trials, I'm going through tribulation, I can't see the shore. That's why a study like this, see, it's really not about getting all the data right, I mean, that's important. But getting this idea, getting rid of that foggy heaven view and realizing the devil doesn't want us to know about this. You are determining your future, your status, your enjoyment in that coming kingdom and Satan wants us to, no, no, just go with the blind version, the foggy version, the boring version.

[70 : 32] We give up. We take our eyes off the shore. Interesting. Two months later, Chadwick tried again. The fog was just as dense, but this time she kept the goal in mind even though she couldn't see it and guess what?

She made it. 13 hours, 47 minutes, and 55 seconds she reached the California shore breaking a 27-year-old men's record by more than two hours and becoming the first woman to ever complete the swim.

Beloved, we're headed not for a celestial shore but for an earthly shore we cannot see. don't give up. If you're flirting with an adulterous relationship or going to go home and do some weird things on your computer tonight, don't give up.

Get your eye on the shore. Put some zip back in your marriage. Get some counseling if you need it. Get in a Bible study. Don't let Satan get you yawning about your future.

So the two final judgments both take place after death. One is the judgment seat of Christ. It's for believers. The issue is reward. And then the great white throne judgment on the way to the lake of fire.

[71 : 53] We're going to close now. It's a very short study. I don't like this part of the study so it's shorter. It's about this other judgment. This is the judgment of all the people throughout history who have said, you know what?

I'll make it on my own. God, you can go take a hike. Or I can make it on my own. I go to church. I'm religious. John says, then I saw a great white throne and one seated on it.

Earth and heaven fled from his presence and no place was found for them. I also saw the dead, the great and small standing before the throne. You don't want to be at this one. John goes on.

He says, the books were open. Another book was open, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the book. Notice, it isn't a judgment to see where you're going. It's the books were open to evaluate your works.

In other words, the little old lady who tried to get to heaven and never believed in Jesus is not going to suffer like Adolf Hitler or Mussolini. That's my interpretation of it. Revelation 20, 14 through 15, death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.

[72 : 58] See, people that go to hell right now, it's kind of a temporary holdover tank on the way to their main event. They were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

It's being separated from God forever. And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. I'm going to talk about that book as we close.

So, let's wrap this up. We're all headed somewhere. You see, we're going to learn next week that death doesn't mean cease to exist.

We are... The people that go to heaven are going to exist forever, just like the people that go to the lake of fire. We don't say they have eternal life because the quality of life is not what we describe as eternal life.

Hebrews says, and just as it is appointed for people to die once and after this, the judgment. And so, here's the question. Where will you be on judgment day?

[74 : 02] Will you be up in eternity being rewarded for a life of service? Are you going to spend eternity on the new earth? Or, are you going to be headed in this horrible place on the way to the lake of fire?

You know, I've learned, being a Christian, studying the Bible, the bad news makes the good news really amazing. So, I'm going to give you the bad news.

I think you already know this. Not everyone's going to make it into the eternal city. That's the bad news. The good news is, it's not too late.

There's still time, so to speak, to get your reservation. So, we'll close with this. Getting in that eternal city, being saved, is a gift.

If a person can earn it by being good, then it wouldn't be free, but it is. It is given to those who do not work for it.

[75 : 11] Many years of my life, I was under this system. Here, Lord, look what I'm doing for you. In 1978, I came to believe that eternal life was a free gift. I believed in Jesus for eternal life and not my good works.

You have to understand, beloved, our self-salvation efforts, baptism, being good, giving money, doing this, that, and the other thing, our self-salvation efforts can never make us worthy of eternal life.

That's why He had to come. The Bible says, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. I love this verse. He is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

One of the last things that He said on the cross was, it is finished. Now, it's easy to go to church and say, well, Christ died for the sins of the world. Can you say tonight that Christ died for my sins?

He died. That should have been you on the cross. That should have been me. We should have been receiving the just judgment. He never did anything wrong, but He says, Kevin, sit down.

[76 : 21] I'll go for you and you and you and you. And the Son of God took the punishment that we deserve so that we can go free and be in that earthly city.

Hebrews says, He, Jesus, appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. That's where sin is placed. Not at your church, not at your baptism.

Jesus paid the price so eternal life would be free to us. Notice what this verse says. I love this verse. The one who behaves in the Son.

Wait, I think I misread that. The one who believes in the Son has eternal life. This is not rocket science. Jesus couldn't have made it any clearer. He uses illustrations.

I'm the bread of life. You hungry? Are you thirsty? I am the water of life. I've come down from heaven. I am the door.

[77 : 20] We know He's not mahogany with a golden handle. He's the way. John 3.16, For God loved the world in this way. Imagine this.

He gave His one and only Son so that everyone who not behaved, nobody can behave perfectly.

That's why it says believe. Anyone who believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.

I want to wrap this up tonight. Beloved, Christ's kingdom is a paid for place. If you show up thinking that you have paid for it, that's going to be a problem.

The eternal coming kingdom is a paid for place. Our place has been purchased. We can't purchase it.

Jesus says, Truly I tell you, anyone, old, young, black, white, red, yellow, anyone, oh, Kevin, you don't know all the sins I have in my closet.

[78 : 30] Let me tell you something. The grace of God goes beyond your skeleton. Beyond what you've done. He invites you to believe in Him to be in that earthly kingdom.

Lord willing, next week we're going to look at some really fun stuff. What happens after death? Are we going to eat there? What are we going to be like? What kind of body are we going to be? Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.