

The Groaning Savior

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[0 : 00] Well, before we hear the preaching of God's word, I'd invite you to take your Bibles and turn to the gospel of Luke in chapter 12. Luke chapter 12. We're going to begin reading at verse 35 and read through the end of the chapter.

Be dressed, ready for service, and keep your lamps burning like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks, they can immediately open the door for him.

It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table, and will come and wait on them.

It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. But understand this, if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Peter asked, Lord, are you telling this parable to us or to everyone?

[1 : 12] The Lord answered, Who then is the faithful and wise manager whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns.

I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, My master is taking a long time in coming, and then begins to beat the men's servants and maid's servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk.

The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he is not aware of, he will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.

But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded.

[2 : 20] And from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled.

But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed. Do you think I come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.

From now on there will be five and one family divided against each other, three against two, and two against three. They will be divided father against son, and son against father, mother against daughter, and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

He said to the crowd, When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, It's going to rain. And it does. And when the south wind blows, you say, It's going to be hot.

But, and it is, hypocrites, you know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret the present time?

[3 : 30] Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled to him on the way, or he may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.

I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny. Let's hear the preaching of God's word. Well, we're into that, or at least nearing the season when men have chosen to remember the incarnation and birth of our Savior, and it provides the opportunity for us to consider afresh the reason that he came.

And that's what our text tonight is about. It's verses 49 and 50 of the passage that was just read in Luke 12. The words of Jesus here answer the question, why did Christ come to earth?

And in these two verses, we have two purposes for his coming, closely related to each other and yet different. He uses two symbols to tell us why he's come, fire and baptism.

And we not only have the mission of Messiah revealed here, but we also have his heart to carry out the mission revealed to us.

[4 : 57] And so, be looking for that. The mission and Jesus' heart for the mission. Verses 49 and 50. I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled.

But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed. So we'll look at the two mission statements and the heart of our Savior to fulfill his Father's mission.

The first mission statement there in verse 49, I have come to bring fire on the earth. Come to bring fire on the earth. Now, the mission is clearly stated as bringing fire.

But what does this symbol of fire mean here? Some say it means the Holy Spirit. We remember Pentecost, the tongues of fire, symbolizing the Spirit. Others say, no, it's zeal, or love, or persecution, or holiness, or judgment.

And these do symbolize fire in the Bible is not the issue. The issue is one of determining which is meant here in this particular passage.

[6 : 16] And I believe fire here is referring to judgment. Let me give you three reasons to see fire here as a reference to judgment.

And so that Jesus is saying, I have come to bring judgment to the earth. First of all, it's most common usage in Scripture. How is this word normally used?

Fire is used in the Scripture 459 times, and I didn't add up all of them, but most often it refers to judgment. Not always, but most often, and none of the exceptions are even a close second to that. And we have to remain open to the possibility that maybe this passage is one of those exceptions, but unless there are good reasons for rejecting the most common use of a term, we ought to go with it.

So that's my first reason. The most common use of fire in the Bible is a reference to judgment. Secondly, as we go on and search for the right interpretation, we turn next to the immediate context.

[7 : 26] What has been going on in this passage of Scripture, of Jesus' speech? What's he talking about in his words before and after our text? Well, the passage was read for you.

What was the subject? What was the topic? Well, immediately before our text, he's been talking about the Master going away and coming back and holding judgment, right?

Judging his servants. And those servants ready and doing what he charged them to do will be rewarded in that judgment, but those that are not ready will be assigned a place with the unbelievers in hell.

Judgment comes when the Master comes. And then, after our text, Jesus continues to speak of the signs of his coming and the ensuing judgment right on into chapter 13.

Unless you repent, you'll all likewise perish. And the text you had this morning, according to what I heard, of the axe going to chop down the tree if it doesn't bear fruit, that's a message of judgment.

[8 : 26] So, before our passage, after our passage, Jesus is talking about judgment. So, that's another reason to believe that this word fire here is referring to judgment.

Thirdly, the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah's coming. Since the topic in our text is Jesus talking about his coming, we want to know did the Old Testament prophets speak of Messiah's coming and his mission in terms of fire.

And the first thing we notice is that the Old Testament prophets did not distinguish between his first coming and his second coming. They just spoke when the Lord comes, this is what's going to happen.

And it's only later with New Testament revelation that it would be made clear that some of the things that the Old Testament talked about would happen under the first coming of Christ and others under the second coming.

But here, Isaiah 66, 15 and 16, See, the Lord is coming with fire and his chariots are like a whirlwind. He will bring down his anger with fury and his rebuke with flames of fire.

[9 : 38] For with fire and with his sword the Lord will execute judgment upon all men and many will be those slain by the Lord. And then in verse 24, 24, Those who rebelled against me, their worm will

not die nor will their fire be quenched and they will be loathsome to all mankind.

Clearly a reference at Jesus coming. He's coming to bring fire, judgment on the earth. And then the last words of the Old Testament speak of the coming of the Lord.

The book of Malachi. Just one sample here. Malachi 3, 17 and following. They will be mine, says the Lord Almighty, in the day when I make up my treasured possession.

I will spare them just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

Surely the day is coming. It will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble and that day that is coming will set them on fire, says the Lord Almighty.

[10:45] Not a root or branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the son of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.

Then he will trample down the wicked. They will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things, says the Lord Almighty.

So again, the Lord's coming is to be a day of fire and of destruction for the wicked. Judgment. Well, the last of the Old Testament prophets was John the Baptist and he actually lived and was the forerunner and the one that introduced Jesus to Israel.

And John's message was he's coming. He's coming. The kingdom of God is at hand. And then he was able to point to him and say, here he is, the Lamb of God. So in Luke 3, John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, you brood of vipers who warned you to flee from the coming wrath.

[11:52] Produce fruit in keeping with repentance and do not begin to say to yourself, we have Abraham as our father. For I tell you that out of these stones, God can raise up children for Abraham.

The axe is already at the root of the trees and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. And just a few verses down, the people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering at their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ.

And John answered them all, I baptize you with water, but one more powerful than I will come. The thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. And he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

What kind of fire? Well, he tells us his winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

So the Savior's coming. He's coming and he's coming with a winnowing fork. He's coming in judgment. He's going to distinguish and separate chaff from wheat and he's going to burn up the chaff in unquenchable fire.

[13:04] Judgment. Judgment. And fire. Associated with the coming of our Savior. And Peter's interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies runs along the same line in 2 Peter 3.

You've got scoffers scoffing, saying, where is this coming that he promised? Everything goes on as it has from the beginning of the world without interruption. And Peter says, oh, but they deliberately, they intentionally are forgetting something.

They're forgetting that God did judge the world once by water. And by the same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

So, again, you see why I believe that in our passage here, this statement of Jesus' mission, I have come to bring fire on the earth, is a reference to judgment.

I've come to bring judgment upon the earth. Now, the theme that emerges from Scripture is that salvation comes through judgment.

[14:14] And if we don't understand that, we might misunderstand our Savior's excitement about coming to bring fire on the earth. salvation comes through judgment.

Even Adam and Eve and their seed are to be saved by Eve's male child whose heel will be bruised in the judgment and the crushing of the serpent's head.

So, Jesus will crush Satan's head in judgment and the judgment upon Satan will be the salvation of her seed. Salvation comes to Eve's seed through the judgment upon the enemy.

Noah and his family lived in a violent age and it was so violent that God saved Noah and his family through the judgment of the flood that killed off the whole human race that was so violent and wicked.

Israel at the Red Sea. God would save the Israelites and he does so by destroying in judgment the Egyptians that were chasing them.

[15:33] The period of the judges. Israel's often under the heel of the enemy nations because of their apostasy from God. And then God raises up saviors to save them. And how do these judges or saviors save them?

By destroying their enemies. Judgment upon the enemies brings salvation deliverance to the people of God. Same in the period of the kings. And so that paradigm is what will be found at the ultimate judgment.

That God will save his people by judging his and their enemies. We will only experience full and final salvation by the judgment that will fall upon God and our enemies.

There's no salvation apart from the destruction of our enemies. And that's what you see in the book of Revelation. Satan and all who serve him will be cast into the lake of fire tormented forever with only the righteous left then to enter into the new heavens and the new earth the home of righteousness where all the saved will enjoy perfect shalom peace and rest perfection the way the world was intended to be without sin death suffering evil tears.

So let's remember that as we think about the Lord's mission he's come to bring fire to bring judgment on the earth because that's the way he will save his people.

[17:08] That's the way he'll save us by crushing his and our enemies. So that's the mission statement I've come to bring fire judgment on the earth what's Jesus heart toward that mission?

Is he a bit reluctant is he bashful and backward about it or is he all in? How I wish that it were already kindled.

Notice he says that the fire the judgment for which he came has not yet been set ablaze it's not yet been kindled it's not come that final judgment has not come yet but I wish that it were already kindled he says.

The translation wish as we use it is way too calm a word for what Jesus is saying here. It means it can mean wish desire will want but this is a strong statement this is a strong desire so Robertson speaks of the volcano in his heart bursting forth in these words.

Lenski speaks of this statement and verse 50 as well coming with intense feelings that well deserve an exclamation mark these are exclamations of our Lord's heart pouring forth from his mouth so I believe it's such a yearning desire more than what we would say oh I have a wish something light no Jesus is burning with desire to bring this fire to earth such that he wishes he desires that we're already kindled it's almost a groan it's hard to read his words without reading it with a groan in our Savior's heart it's why he came he wants to come and finish the work that the Father has given him so why why would he be groaning for the fires of judgment to fall it's not because of some sick desire of destroying people Ezekiel says he would rather to see men turn and be saved but rather it's because of what we've seen from

[19:17] Genesis to Revelation that salvation comes through judgment and that it is going to be by the fire of judgment in destroying his enemies that salvation will come to his people and to his planet and glory will come to his Father why should he not be groaning why should he not be eager sin and evil has so long ruined his good creation and marred his glorious image in man injustice and suffering have for so long tormented his people and it's only right for him to be groaning for final judgment to right all wrongs and to finally and fully and eternally restore the creation to its intended order and perfection we know that the whole creation is groaning isn't it it's groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time because it's been subjected to frustration to bondage to decay due to the curse imposed upon man man sin the earth the creation was cursed and it's now groaning as it eagerly awaits liberation from its bondage to decay to be brought into this glorious freedom of the children of God that will happen when when

Christ returns in judgment to the earth and not only is creation groaning we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit are groaning inwardly as we eagerly await our adoption as sons the redemption of our bodies so we too are waiting for Christ return when our bodies will be resurrected with glorious perfected bodies fitted for the glorious new heaven and new earth we will enter into that eternal home of righteousness which is what will happen at Jesus coming in judgment destroying all that's evil and restoring all that is good so if creation itself is groaning for that day of

judgment and salvation if we who have the first fruits of the spirit are groaning for that day how much more should the son of god whose people we are whose creation it is should he not be groaning would we not expect the creator and redeemer of the world to be groaning with desire for the day when what satan has been ruining for all these hundreds and thousands of years to be put right to have satan completely crushed and out of the way and to see man redeemed in his people entering into a redeemed creation forever

I've come to bring fire to the earth and how I wish it were already kindled have we underestimated what the creation means to our savior it's his project I mean if you've had a project that you've poured 10 20 maybe a business something you've poured your life into something dear to you it's yours it's what you've done with the work of your hands and then you just sit by and see it just come to nothing and see people destroy it without any concern for it have we underestimated our savior's interest in his own creation creation what mankind what this world means to him what we just read in Jonah and cattle why does he throw that in because Jesus made the cattle he cares about his creation so maybe we need to rethink creation and the heart of the creator for his creation it was his project it was his design without him was nothing made that was made it was made by him it was made for him it was all very good until sin and evil entered and suffering and death entering through sin and the destruction of his good creation was vandalism it was it was a vandalism of his precious!

possession it was the dishonor and defamation! of his glory and so he doesn't sit by passively and carelessly! say well it's no big deal to me and watch it all go down the tubes but rather with a controlled volcano within with something much stronger than a mere whimsical wish he does not take lightly all the sufferings of his people and all their afflictions he too is afflicted he doesn't like to see the affliction of his people he suffers with them when you persecute them you're persecuting me and instead of the creation being a pure source of blessing to man as it was created to be we now found that this world can become the source of great grief and suffering and death to his people with floods and hurricanes and tornadoes and droughts and fire plague cancers diseases harmful genetic mutations death the whole created orders out of joint and it's it's often working against us and that's no small thing to

Jesus he's not happy with it at all to see the whole world under the control of the evil one first John 5 19 to see justice perverted his people suffering his institutions of family church and state perverted the rebellion against his holy righteous and good laws the disintegration of order and beauty and righteousness and peace in his world he doesn't take it sitting down and the fact of the matter is things won't be right they aren't right and they won't be right until he comes in judgment and puts it right first John 3 8 the reason the son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil we need to remember that the baby in the manger is the destroyer!

[25 : 32] evil! He's come to destroy evil he's come to bring fire on this earth and he's as much the destroyer of evil as he is the savior of the world in fact he can't do the latter without doing the former he can't save the world without destroying the evil that's destroying it and it's only by judgment that he will save his world so Jesus the destroyer of evil has come to judge the world in righteousness to restore and bring back to order what sin has brought into chaos to pay back his enemies all who resist him his laws his gospel to wipe away every tear to swallow up death forever to remove the curse to restore his own honor and defame glory to bring to an end the sufferings of his people the frustration and bondage and decay to his creation and the defacing of God's image in the world do you get a sense of the heart of the savior why he is so all in to the mission that

God has given him go son take fire to the earth the father has put the whole restoration project of his kingdom on earth squarely on the shoulders of his eternal son and he sent him to accomplish! it that's what that Christmas text means for to us a child is born to us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulders because there are no other shoulders in all the universe broad enough strong enough to bring the kingdom of God to earth in such a way that God's will is done here on earth as it is in heaven that's work for the Messiah and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand Isaiah 53 10 he will accomplish God's saving plan for this planet and that's why in Revelation 5 he's the only one worthy to break the seal to break the seals and open the scroll of God's purposes and to bring them to pass he's none other than the lion of the tribe of Judah and here in chapter 12 of Luke he's growling he's groaning with desire to get on with it to see it accomplished I've come to bring fire on the earth and how

I wish it were already kindled he wants to have the pleasure of handing the restored kingdom he made it perfect through Satan and sin and evil and death it's all out of joint he's going to redeem it back to its pristine condition and even higher than it used to be and he's going to present it to his father first corinthians 15 in christ all will be made alive but each in his own turn christ the first roots then when he comes those who belong to him then the end will come when he hands over the kingdom to god the father after he has destroyed all dominion authority and power all that opposed him for he must reign until he has put all of his enemies under his feet and the last enemy to be destroyed is death and then he'll hand this kingdom back to his father perfectly restored so let there be no doubt as to

Jesus heart for the father's mission I've come to do your will I delight to do your will oh my God and here in verse 49 we hear the lion groaning can't wait to see it kindled wish it was already it's kind of like a race horse that's brought to the starting gate and pushed his rear end in and slammed the gate shut and there he is just a bundle of nerves just waiting for the gate to open to get out and race Jesus is chomping at the bit as we would say to get on with the finishing the task the redemption of the planet and all of his people by bringing judgment to the earth well if that's Jesus heart and it's such a strong desire what's holding him back why doesn't he just proceed well he tells us in verse 50 there's another reason why he came he says but yes I can't wait to see it accomplished but but [29 : 59] I have a baptism to undergo a baptism yes I've come to bring fire but but first I have a baptism to undergo and how distressed I am until it is completed so there's another aspect to his mission isn't it something must be done first there's there's no question among commentators as to the meaning of this baptism baptism symbolizes death earlier in the gospel account John and James wanted to be seated on the right and the left hand of Jesus in the kingdom of God and Jesus says that's not mine to give those positions are the father's to give but let me ask you can you drink the cup I am to drink and can you be baptized with the baptism with which I am going to be baptized the cup you know what the cup was Jesus prayed take this cup from me it's the cup of God's wrath death on the cross can you can you go through what

I'm going to can you be baptized plunged into the suffering and death that I am going to undergo so there's no question when we come to Jesus words here in verse 50 what this baptism is it's his death on the cross and obviously the Old Testament speaks of Messiah's mission as a mission of suffering and death doesn't it Psalm 22!

Isaiah 53 Psalm 69 it's a messianic psalm in which Christ is speaking and he speaks of his death in terms of being immersed in water that's baptism save me oh my God for the waters have come up to my neck I'm sinking in the miry depths where there's no foothold I've come into the deep waters and the floods engulf me I'm worn out calling for help my throat is parched my eyes fail looking for my God referring to his death on the cross there's many more illusions later on in the psalm as he goes on deliver me from those who hate me from the deep waters do not let the flood waters engulf me and the depths swallow me up or the pit close its mouth over me scorn has broken my heart and left me helpless I looked for sympathy but there was none I looked for comforters but I found none they put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst so our

Lord speaks of his suffering and his death as being engulfed in a flood of water going under wave after wave hitting him pushing him down there was man's wrath but then there was the worst that Satan and his hellish crew could do but God's wrath that left him helpless and crying my God my God why have you abandoned me looking for help but finding none looking for comforters but finding no one to comfort feeling the forsakenness due to sin not his own but for his people until it was then finished and he died well that's the baptism he must undergo and undergo before bringing fire on the earth isn't it a merciful thing that that he would undergo that if he was to come and bring fire on the earth well we'd all be toast we would all be damned by his judgment because we've all sinned and are guilty and deserve the wrath of God but amazing mercy and love and grace the heavenly father sent his son on this mission to be baptized a baptism of fire a baptism of suffering a baptism of death in the place of sinners he laid our sins on him and then he entered into judgment with Jesus for our sins hell came to Calvary that day as God's fire of judgment fell on him you see he had a judgment to undergo before coming in judgment he himself must be judged before he comes to judge he must be baptized in the fire before he comes and pours out the fire and the picture that came to my mind was that which I've often told you of the Native Americans teaching the settlers how to prepare and how to survive a prairie fire and as the smoke arose on the horizon they would take fire and go out and burn off an area absolutely

incinerate everything combustible in that area then put it out and then they get their wives and children and all that was precious if they had time and put it inside the burn off area and then as the fire came it would come up to that point but those flames those hungry flames would find nothing to feast upon in that circle the fire had already fallen there and so it would go around and they would be safe and survive the prairie fire Jesus says I'm coming and I'm bringing fire and the only safe place to be in the universe is in me because the fire has already fallen on me at Calvary I've got a baptism to undergo and I'm going to suffer the wrath and the fire and judgment of God there and anybody who gets into me you see then will be safe when I come and pour out fire on the earth so part of the father's mission for Christ was this baptism into death on the cross what was

[35 : 53] Christ's heart for this part of the mission we saw him saying oh I wish it were already a kindle his judgment what's his heart toward his being baptized in fire he says how distressed I am until it is completed until it's finished again you see how he's opening his heart to us he's he's he's telling us what he thinks about I'm distressed again the word is a strong word it's to be troubled it's to be pained it's to be gripped it's to be absorbed to be under tension until it's complete he carried around a distressed heart here's the groaning of Jesus the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world by becoming the substitute sacrifice in the place of his people so this aspect of Jesus mission is is not to bring fire on the earth but to be baptized in fire not to judge but to be judged and how does he feel about it well he's trembling he's distressed we see that in the garden don't we father if there's any possible way for it to happen without me drinking this cup without me entering into this baptism let it pass it really distressed him and what we learn is that what he suffered in

Gethsemane was a continual thing with him as he walked the earth as he prepared for his cross his heart was distressed and it will be distressed until it's completed until I can say the word there is the same as the word that he used on the cross it is finished until it's finished of course he did take all the fire of God's wrath for our sins and then the last words before he gave up his spirit and death was it is finished only then would the distress end once my own have been safely gathered within the circle of my love so that the father's wrath given to me to come and pour out onto this world will not touch them I'm distressed until I finish this work that they might be saved does it not make you love your savior more that he's so distressed by what's coming he knows what's coming he knows his father's wrath and yet though it distresses him it does not deter him it doesn't move him it rather distresses him until he could see it accomplished until he could die for your sins and my sins and ensure that that wrath will never touch us because there's only two places where sins are finally punished and one is in Christ on the cross and the other is in hell in Christ your substitute or in hell yourself and Jesus says I'm willing to go to the cross in your place that God's wrath not trust you well

God's God's wrath cannot touch you this this is the statement then of Jesus mission I've come to bring fire judgment and I have come to be baptized with a baptism of suffering and death and his heart it's all in he just can't wait to see it accomplished and he's distressed until it happens a few applications and we're done there's both good news here and bad news isn't there there always is where there's salvation because there's salvation only by destruction remember we saw that if anybody's to be saved it's by the judgment of another if you're ever to be saved it's going to be by the judgment of Jesus Christ on your behalf and that's what he did as he was baptized in blood at Calvary so good news and bad news I do believe that the absence of Jesus message on coming judgment has made him the greatest irrelevance in people's minds today

Jesus Christ why do I need him they found other ways to make life work other ways to find happiness other ways to find peace now granted we could push and push and maybe expose the cracks in that peace and that happiness but there's false peace folks isn't there and there's false happiness and there's pleasure in sin for a season and all the rest people find ways to make it work without Jesus and so he becomes the greater relevance don't need Jesus don't want Jesus but there's one place where Jesus will not be irrelevant and that's when he comes bringing fire when God comes to judge there's only one thing that matters and that's Jesus am I in Jesus then I'm safe from the destroying fire of God's judgment if I'm not nothing else matters however good I am whatever

I've done I'm damned so it's important that we not only hear the message that Jesus brings about judgment that's coming but that we proclaim that message lest we leave him to be the great irrelevance that no one's really concerned about there will be nothing irrelevant about Jesus on the day of judgment so the bad news first if 2,000 years ago Jesus was longing to bring the fire of

judgment upon the earth what is his heart today after watching 2,000 more years of wickedness of men and women boys and girls destroying themselves and others and the planet is he not yearning with desire to bring judgment upon the earth to bring in full salvation by destroying all of his enemies the other piece of bad news is that the thing that was holding

[42 : 36] Jesus back I have judgment I have fire to bring on the earth but I have a baptism to be baptized with that's what was holding back the fire I have this baptism first he's already been baptized in blood at Calvary that's over there's nothing holding him back now his mission is twofold to suffer God's judgment and then to bring God's judgment there's an urgency if you're lost to get into Christ you heard it this morning God's patient but there's an end to his patience and then he comes to judge behold the judge is standing at the door press into Christ tonight don't gamble with your eternity and the good news is that a substitute sacrifice has been slain yes judgment is coming but there is a safe place it's called

Jesus Christ it's a person the fire of God's wrath has fallen on him and if you're in him you're safe more happy but not more secure the glorified spirits in heaven you are just as safe as my Josie that's in heaven already you are just as secure as she is there she is happier than you but you're you're no less secure than she is why because you're in Christ and in Christ the judgment has fallen it can't fall twice so that's the he promises if you come to him he will not turn you away he welcomes you he's anxious he's more willing to save you than you are to be saved but to reject him is to welcome his coming judgment leaving only yourself to blame for all eternity when you might have had eternal life on December 1st 2019 I could have had it but

I rejected! Disciples of Jesus drink in the encouragement of Jesus gospel words just the assurance that we have in Christ I'm in Christ I'm ready for judgment if he's to bring fire of judgment today I'm ready I'm secure and out of that security there's gospel motives then to live for this Christ was he so zealous to die for us then let us be zealous to live for him if he was so consumed to finish the work his father gave him to do let's let's not quit let's not toss it in and say I've had enough no let's finish let's finish all the way to the end that's what Paul said in Acts 20 24 however I do not consider my life worth anything if only

I may finish the race and complete the task that the Lord Jesus has given to me the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace I want to finish for him and why do you want to finish he finished for me oh how I wish that it were finished he says and from the cross he cries it is finished no take up that cross that is yours to bear and go all the way to the end all the way I live for him who died for me application number two are you longing for Christ's return to bring fire and full salvation to earth because they always come together he's taught us to pray your kingdom come are you praying for that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven do you groan to see it restored and made new to say farewell to tears and sin and suffering and to see your place in a new heavens and a new earth then then take your groans to

Jesus even so come Lord Jesus and persevere even as we've said a better world is coming a perfect world keep your eye on that day even Jesus had to wait didn't he had to wait oh I wish it were kindled distressed until it were completed he had to wait he had to wait you're called on to wait for him to long for him he's coming well let's sing of his coming number 238 Christ is coming that's the the chant that ought to remain with us until we see him face to face and we step into that full salvation in the eternal age with him 238 let's stand as we sing pray with me father we deserve the fire of your judgment and we stand before you as those who have rebelled against you and had you consigned us to hell forever we would have had nothing to complain about we would be receiving the reward for our due what we had coming but this idea of

[48 : 27] Jesus coming the son of God the eternal son of God coming to take the fire of judgment for us we didn't deserve that there was no way that we could ever oblige you to or merit that kind of grace from your hand and so we bow and we we feel that thank you is just a weak response to such love on your part when we see the heart of our savior his heart for this world his heart for his creation and his desire to see it put right our own hearts grown with his we do want to see you come lord jesus put down all yours and our enemies and to bring to an end all sin and death and suffering and to receive the glory that you deserve and for us to enter into those joys unspeakable but we are most thankful to be in

Christ to be in you and we are most thankful for what you suffered for us father for not sparing him but giving him up for us so we would say take our lives we're not our own you've bought us and do help us then to fix our eyes on Jesus and on his coming again in fire Lord those here tonight that

aren't ready don't let them rest until they are safely in Christ hidden in Christ so thank you thank you for such mercy thank you for another Lord's day on the earth just to remind us where we're at what is your agenda your mission our purpose to realign our hearts with yours make us then to profit from the word that we've heard today from our fellowship with each other and be glorified in our hearts this week we ask in
Jesus name amen