

# The One Who Keeps the Words

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Turn in your Bibles again, this time to Revelation 1, Revelation 1, and we're going to be reading verses 1 to 3.

Revelation 1. Revelation 1.

And blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near. Brother, come preach to us. Well, we've come to the end of our short series, a series that started in the Psalms and then kind of went over into the New Testament as we've traced this theme of blessing.

So as we've come to the last sermon in this series, it seems fitting that we would be in the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation.

I think it goes without saying that Revelation is a very unique book. We are intrigued by it, maybe even a little confused by it, perhaps all at the same time.

[ 1 : 4 3 ] When I was in high school, I did this Bible study with some 7th grade boys. And I made the mistake of asking them, what book of the Bible would you guys like to study?

And unanimously, the answer was Revelation. Revelation, they were curious. They were interested. They had lots of questions. And I had next to no answers.

And so I sought many wiser, godlier men than I to help in studying through that book. But it's not just 7th grade boys that find it perhaps both intriguing and also perhaps hard to understand.

For many Christians, we feel the same way. Lord, we want to know what is it that you have to say to us in your word, in all of your word, including Revelation. Revelation, yet here is this book that is filled with visions of heavenly scenes.

And it's filled with visions of earthly judgments. It's filled with angels blowing trumpets and pouring out bowls with a scroll that's being opened and a scroll that's being eaten.

[ 2 : 5 5 ] It's filled with visions involving a beast and a dragon, a lion and a lamb. And it is filled with promises of blessing.

All throughout the book of Revelation. Did you know this is the only book in the Bible that both has a blessing at the beginning of the book and a blessing at the end of the book?

Both in chapter 1 and in chapter 22. But those aren't the only blessings in Revelation. There are many in the chapters between. In fact, there are seven blessed sayings in Revelation.

And that number seven is very purposeful. The number seven matters. It carries significance in the Bible. It's often used to convey completeness or fullness.

I mean, you go all the way back to Genesis and chapter 1, chapter 2. God creates all things in six days and then he rested on the seventh day. Because as Genesis 2, 2 says, God finished his work that he had done.

[ 4 : 0 6 ] So we have seven blessings this morning. It is a fullness of blessing. And the first of those seven is found here in chapter 1, verse 3.

All he has been blessed this morning already. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy. And blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it.

For the time is near. Now, like many New Testament letters, when these letters would circulate in the churches, when they would come to the churches, they would be read out loud to the people.

And so as John is writing this and these words are penned, the implication is this blessing is for all those, whether the reader or the hearer who heeds the words.

Now, often when Revelation gets read, it's read with the future in mind. We want to know, well, what is going to happen when Christ returns?

[ 5 : 14 ] We want to know what is going to happen when God brings redemptive history to a close, when the new heavens and the new earth are ushered in for all of eternity.

And there is so much that Revelation does tell us about those things. Things to come. Things in the future. This is a book of prophecy, after all.

We just heard that in Revelation 1-3. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy. Now, here's the problem with ourselves, often, when it comes to prophecy of any kind.

We can read it at times only because we want to figure things out. We want to know what is going to happen. We want to take the puzzle pieces and fit them together.

And so we can be tempted to read Revelation and then look at the world around us and just kind of say, now, how is this all going to play out in the end? That's not necessarily a bad question.

[ 6 : 15 ] But we have to read Revelation. But we have to be very careful that we don't read Revelation only as a source of information. A bordering, perhaps, even on entertainment.

Like we want to get the scoop on what is going to happen. Yes, Revelation tells us of things to come. But Revelation also tells us of things that are happening right now.

Revelation has much to say to us of things concerning what happens between the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ, both the future and the present.

And in all of that, all that Revelation tells us about what is happening now, what is happening one day, all of it, it is not just for pleasure reading.

It's not just to gain information. Revelation is written, like all of Scripture, not just to inform, but to instruct.

[ 7 : 17 ] Revelation instructs us to obey. Revelation calls us to obedience. We see that here in chapter 1, verse 3.

This is the outset of the book. Blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it. Both hearing and keeping.

Or you could say hearing and doing. That's a common theme in God's Word. It's a theme that's already come up in our worship this morning. Hearing and doing.

Jesus ended his Sermon on the Mount with that very theme. He said, Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Not just the one who hears, but does these words of mine, Jesus says. Simply hearing is not good enough. It doesn't cut it. The godly don't just hear.

[ 8 : 16 ] They do. They obey. We listen to the Word every week as it's preached. We listen to the Word as we read it for ourselves.

We hear it often. But what is our response? What do we do? Do we heed what God's Word says? James 1.22 But be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

Deceiving yourselves. Even in that, it's implied, You can think, I heard the Word. I'm good to go. And he's saying, no. We're to be doers of that Word.

And then listen to how James finishes that thought in verse 24. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

Those who hear and do, they are blessed. Here's the blessed person yet again for us in the book of James. And it's in that context of obedience.

[ 9 : 25 ] Those who obey are blessed. Those who hear and do are blessed. So that's the same idea that we now find here in Revelation 1.

Blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it. So we're to keep what is written in Revelation. Do you think of this book in that way?

Do you come to Revelation ready to be exhorted by God? Do you come to Revelation as God's Word meant to be kept by you?

The words of this book are meant to be obeyed. There's expectation that we will hear and do what God says in Revelation. So it's not just read Revelation to find out how everything shakes out in the end.

It's read Revelation to see how God expects you to live until the end. That changes things. Whether the end comes with the return of our Lord, or the end comes as you go to meet Him in death.

[ 10 : 37 ] And either of those could happen at any time. Because what does Revelation 1.3 tell us? The time is near. The return of Jesus is imminent.

It could happen any day, any time, any moment. And that is reason all the more for us to keep what is written.

So how do you read Revelation? How do you receive the words of Revelation? Do you read it like all of Scripture is to be read? To obey what God says.

Because what is there in it for those who obey? Blessing. Blessed is the one who hears and keeps. We see it again and again here in the opening chapter.

And again in the close. The last chapter of Revelation gives us another blessing. Revelation 22, verse 7.

[ 11 : 37 ] Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. So we are called to keep the words. To hear and to do what Revelation says.

We need to know then, what is Revelation calling me to do? What is the blessed person to keep? Now we don't have time this morning to unpack all of Revelation, of course.

I tried this week in preparing to cover every blessing passage in Revelation. Failed at that also. So we are going to look at three of the blessings that time will allow.

Remember there are seven in total. But we are going to look at three. Three of those blessed sayings because they show us what it looks like to keep the words of this book.

So here is the outline for this morning. Those who keep the words of this book and are blessed. We do three things. We persevere. We prepare.

[ 12 : 40 ] And we are made pure. We persevere. We prepare. And we are made pure. So first, let's consider this perseverance.

And we see this blessed saying in Revelation 14. Turn there with me to Revelation 14. Revelation 14. And we'll read verse 13.

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

So the Apostle John, he is the one receiving this revelation from the Lord. And he's given this command. Write this down.

Write this blessing down. And maybe it's a bit of a surprising blessing to us. Blessed are the dead. That almost seems contradictory.

[ 13 : 50 ] Especially if we think about where we started in this series, Psalm 1. We think of the blessed man of Psalm 1. Here's a man who flourishes. Here's a man who is living this rich, godly life.

He's like a tree planted by streams of water whose leaf never withers. In all that he does, he prospers. So the blessed person flourishes.

They prosper. And here we're told, Blessed are the dead. We think of death being kind of the opposite of flourishing, of prospering.

We think, well, life is ended. It's done. And yet here John is told, Write it down. Put it down on paper. Put it on the record.

Blessed are the dead. Blessed are those who die in the Lord. But then we see how this all makes sense. They are blessed because they are resting from their labors.

[ 14 : 52 ] Those who die in the Lord find rest. Weary, worn out, tired from working hard. And they are blessed in death because in death they find rest and relief.

And if we look back just a few verses, we see what those labors were. What they were working so hard to do. Look back beginning in verse 9. And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, verse 9.

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints. Those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

So those who die in the Lord were laboring to resist. They are laboring to fend off temptation.

Temptation to compromise. To turn from the Lord and their allegiance to Him and to swear allegiance to another. To whom?

[ 16 : 28 ] To this beast and its image. Now this beast appears in chapter 13. He's coming up out of the abyss. It's clearly signaling to us this beast is an enemy of God and His people.

And then it's made more clear as He's uttering blasphemous words. People are worshipping Him. And listen to what they're saying about Him. Who is like the beast?

And who can fight against it? Those are words that are strikingly similar. That are often said not of a beast, but of God in the Old Testament. Who is like the Lord?

That's a question of worship. So the beast is setting himself up as God. People are bowing down to Him as though He is God. He's satanically inspired.

The enemy of Jesus Christ. The Lamb. And the enemy of His people. Chapter 13 says that He was allowed to make war on the saints.

[ 17 : 34 ] So what's the temptation? The temptation is to give in. To cave. To throw in the towel. To turn from Christ. And to submit to this beast. And what's the sign of that submission?

It's that mark on the forehead. It's that mark on the hand. These are signs of ownership. Those who receive the mark belong to the beast.

Now why those places? Why the forehead? Why the hand? Well they represent important things. They represent our knowing and our doing. They were the places that faithful Israelites were commanded by God to keep little boxes.

With God's Word in those boxes. They were to place them on their forehead. And on their hand. God commanded it in Deuteronomy 11 verse 18. You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.

And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand. And they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. So the beast is doing the same thing.

[ 18 : 44 ] Putting his mark on the hand and between the eyes. Those who receive his mark. They belong to him. They submit to him. They keep his word.

And ultimately they are condemned. Chapter 14 verse 9. We read it. Those who receive the mark. They will receive what? God's wrath.

His fury. A torment forever and ever. And what else? They will find no rest.

No rest. No rest in hell. No relief from torment. No breaks. No timeouts. No rest for those outside of Christ.

Because Revelation is telling us. They chose their rest in this life. They did not work hard to persevere in the faith.

[ 19 : 42 ] They fell away. Proving that they were never Christians to begin with. So they rested now. And they find there is no rest then for them in eternity. So Revelation 14 is presenting before us a matter of life and death.

Twice here in chapter 13. And in chapter 14 there is this call. A call for the endurance of the saints. Those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

Those who labor in this life to persevere. So this call is also very much for us. When John received this revelation.

He was writing to Christians that were living in a hostile world. A world that was influenced by Satan. A world under his power. And we live in such a world today.

Many Christians around the world are persecuted for their faith. In ways that are very similar to the early church that John was originally writing to.

[ 20 : 49 ] Christians are being imprisoned. Their families are being threatened. They are suffering physical affliction. And intense pressure to renounce Christ.

Some are even being put to death for their faith. So Revelation 14 was written for all Christians. In all generations. Including us living in this present time.

So Revelation 14 calls for us to endure. Are you laboring in your life to remain faithful to Christ?

Are you working hard? Are you straining with all of your might to resist the temptation to return to the world in its ways? Where are you tempted towards compromise?

Now we have no outward markings upon us that would distinguish those who belong to the Lord and those who belong to the beast. But does your life look any different from unbelievers?

[ 21 : 50 ] Do they see a marked difference in you? And do unbelievers see a marked difference in how you live? So often in our society, compromise often takes the form of silence.

We may not be put in situations where we are being actively pressured to renounce Christ. We may not be threatened to renounce Him. Though there are definitely times that happens.

But are we quick to speak of Him when the opportunity arises? We can excuse ourselves pretty quickly. We don't speak a word for Christ because we don't want to offend.

We don't claim Christ as our own because that might be embarrassing. Or it might be off-putting. Or it might make this interaction strained. We may not be risking our lives in those moments.

But we are risking our dignity before other people. I don't want to look foolish. I don't want to say something that others will scoff at. I want to be accepted and well-liked and respected.

[ 22 : 58 ] But at what cost? Where is my allegiance found? Do others know who I belong to?

So the call to holiness, it is a call to faithful endurance. It is not a call to a life of ease and comfort. It's what Jesus said.

It's a life of denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following Him. Those words of Jesus are just put in picture form for us here in Revelation 14.

It's just as Jesus said. That is what we are seeing these Christians doing. Denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following Jesus. Are we laboring to endure to the end?

To remain faithful to the finish? To joyfully claim Christ as our own, no matter what the cost is in this life? Because your labors will pay off in the end.

[ 24 : 01 ] Those who do finish, those who die in the Lord, that's those who maintain their trust in the Lord to death. That's those who maintain their confession of Christ to death.

Revelation 14 says we are blessed with rest. With an eternal rest for our labors. So those who keep the words of this book are blessed.

We persevere. That's the first thing that we do. Here's the second. We prepare. Turn with me to Revelation chapter 16. Here in Revelation 16, we are given this vivid description of God's wrath being poured out on the earth.

There's these seven bowls. Now remember the number seven, signifying completeness, fullness. So here we have these seven bowls. They're symbolizing God's complete wrath being poured out.

And it's the sixth bowl in particular that we're going to look at. And this bowl describes preparations. The preparations of God's enemies for this great battle between them and the Lord Jesus when he returns.

[ 25 : 21 ] The kings of the earth. They're influenced by Satan and his demonic forces. And they are assembling themselves. They are mustering their armies. And in the midst of this description, of all these preparations that the enemies of God are making, there's a blessing.

And it's a blessing that comes straight from the mouth of Jesus. Jesus speaks. But he's not speaking to the kings of the earth who oppose him. He's talking directly to us who are Christians, to his people.

So let's read that blessing. Let's start back just a little bit in verse 12. The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates.

And its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east. And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet three unclean spirits like frogs, for they are demonic spirits performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world to assemble them for battle on the great day of God, the Almighty.

Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed.

[ 26 : 40 ] And they assembled themselves at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. So this sixth bowl, it's all about preparation. God actually is drying up the river Euphrates to allow for these kings to prepare to battle him, for them to cross.

The wicked kings themselves, they're making preparations. They're assembling under this demonic influence. So there's all of this preparation going on for those who are against Jesus.

And in the midst of this, Jesus has a word of preparation himself. He has something to say about preparing, but he says it not to those who are against him, those who are for him.

And he says it directly, very abruptly. The ESV actually puts this in parentheses, even highlighting more how it's like someone talking just directly into the camera here. He says, In other words, blessed are you who are prepared.

Not prepared to battle against Jesus, but prepared to joyfully receive Jesus when he returns. These words that Jesus speaks here in Revelation 16 echo the words that he spoke in Matthew 24.

[ 28 : 08 ] Verse 42, Jesus taught the same thing in parable form in Luke 12.

Verses 35 and 36. Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning. And be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks.

So we are to be vigilant. We are to be watchful, dressed for action with our lamps burning, standing at the door, ready to open it.

This last week, I was waiting for a package from Amazon. And I wasn't standing at the door waiting for it, but I was watching my Amazon app.

Because I recently discovered that you can watch as your package gets closer and closer to your doorstep. And you can't watch it when it leaves South Bend, but as it gets to about nine stops away, I've discovered, you can start to track it.

[ 29 : 38 ] And you can see where this package is on its route. I can see if it's delivering to my parents. I can see if it's delivering somewhere, because I can watch it as it comes. So I'm not standing at the door waiting to burst it open, but I'm standing in my office, holding my phone up, watching this delivery driver icon as it gets closer and closer to my door.

I wanted that package quickly. So I told Casey about this. And do you know what her response was to me? Why did you do that? You wasted time standing there.

Not at the door. No, that's not foolish enough. Even more foolish. Watching your phone as that delivery driver approached. So is that what it means to be prepared?

We're just standing, waiting, watching even our phones? Of course, that's not what it means to be prepared for Jesus to arrive. We see that here in Revelation 16.

Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed. So there it is.

[ 30 : 49 ] That's what we're supposed to be doing. Keeping our garments on. Now that language there of keeping our garments on, keeping ourselves clothed and not being exposed, that's all about doing good works.

Like living righteous, holy lives. Paul talks about it in the putting on of godly virtues and the putting off of ungodly vices.

Or Peter, even perhaps more directly, clothe yourselves with humility. Nakedness, on the other hand, nakedness is associated with shame, with shameful evil living.

And being clothed is associated with God honoring living. So what does it look like to be alert? What does it look like to be prepared? We live righteous lives.

We aren't just kind of coasting to the finish. We're working out our salvation with fear and trembling, as Paul says in Philippians 2.

[ 31 : 57 ] What do you want to be found doing when Jesus returns? Unexpectedly, he's going to come. Like a thief in the night. I love what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5.

Turn over to 1 Thessalonians 5. Paul has much to say about the return of Christ. He speaks even of that day coming, like a thief in the night.

Many parallels to Revelation here. And we see what he says about this idea of keeping our garments on. 1 Thessalonians 5, beginning in verse 1.

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

While people are saying, there is peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

[ 33 : 01 ] But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night. And those who get drunk are drunk at night.

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us. So that whether we are awake or asleep, we might live with Him.

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up just as you are doing. Paul sees no place for idleness. There's no place for sleep, spiritually speaking.

[ 34 : 03 ] It's time to be awake. It's time to be sober. Don't take off your garments like you're getting ready to put on your PJs to go to bed. Keep your garments on.

And those garments aren't just like a t-shirt and shorts and flip-flops. Look at the text again, verse 8. We should have our full battle gear on, the breastplate of faith and love, with our helmet being the hope of salvation.

We are to be ready for His return. We are to be prepared as we live in obedience to the Lord, fully clothed with our battle gear on.

That's what the blessed person does. The one who keeps what is written in the book of Revelation. That person is prepared for Christ to return.

And it shows up. It shows up in the kind of godly lives that we lead. There's no time for being a sleepyhead. There's no time for lounging around.

[ 35 : 09 ] So those who keep the words of this book of Revelation and are blessed, we prepare. That's the second thing we do. And now finally, we see the blessed person who keeps the words of this book has been made pure.

Has been made pure. Turn with me to Revelation 22. The very last chapter of Revelation. Jesus is sharing His final words here.

This is very common in letters that were written in the New Testament times. You can read other letters in the Bible. And we'll see that the writers are giving these kind of final instructions. They're giving final words of blessing, perhaps sending greetings, or speaking of things they'd like to have the hearers do for them.

And here Jesus is sharing His final words. So it's a bunch of just quick hit statements. They're the closing words of this letter. They're the closing words of our Bibles.

And in verse 14, this is what we read. Blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

[ 36 : 23 ] So we are still talking about clothes here like we were in chapter 16, but in a slightly different way. Jesus isn't talking about keeping our garments on.

Jesus is here talking about having gotten our garments washed. Blessed are those who wash their robes. Now this blessing here in chapter 22, it's very much tied back to chapter 7.



Chapter 7, John is given this vision of this great multitude in heaven. People from every nation, from all tribes and languages, they're standing before the throne and they are worshiping God.

They're worshiping the Lamb. And what are they dressed in there in Revelation chapter 7? White robes. So as John is witnessing this incredible scene, he's told who these people are in these white robes.

Verse 14 of chapter 7 says, these are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

[ 37 : 32 ] So the blessing here in chapter 22, that blessing could be said like this, blessed are those who have had their robes washed in the blood of Jesus.

The slain Lamb of Revelation. Or as John the Baptist himself said, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. So here's Christians from all over the world with their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Now worshiping before the throne. And this will be us one day as well if we are in Christ. Our garments were filthy.

Our robes were caked with our sin. But by the grace of God, we have been washed. Having believed that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose again, we've had our robes made white.

Kids, maybe last night you took a bath. You took a bath because your parents thought we want to be cleaned up as we're preparing for church tomorrow.

[ 38 : 43 ] We want to be washed. Kids, did you know that all Christians have been washed? But not in water. Not with soap.

Not washed maybe like your mom washes your clothes with detergent. We've been washed as Christians with blood. That seems strange. Your mom might wash your clothes because you get blood on it.

But for the Christian, we've been washed in blood. The precious blood of a Lamb. The Lamb that was slain. The perfect, spotless Lamb whose blood cleanses us from sin.

Haven't we, Christians? We have been washed in the blood of Jesus. And so like God said through the prophet Isaiah, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

That's what we see here in Revelation. And that's what is true of us now. In Christ, we are white as snow. And one day, we will join with those saints gathered around the throne, worshiping God for all of eternity.

[ 39 : 57 ] All of those worshipers around the throne in Revelation 7, they could not be there if they still had robes that were caked with sin, defiled and dirtied by sin.

And if we don't have our robes washed, we can't be there either. Without your robes being washed, without your sins being forgiven, you will not be found before that throne.

You will be barred from it. The throne that we read of in Revelation 7, that throne is in a city. And that city is well fortified with walls that protect it.

This city is called the New Jerusalem. Revelation 21 and 22, they describe this New Jerusalem in great detail. It's descending from heaven to earth.

And all things are being made new. And it's in that city that God says, I will come to dwell. So it's in that city that we find God upon His throne.

[ 41 : 05 ] But Revelation is clear. Not everyone gets into that city. Not everyone gets to stand before God's throne. Revelation 21, 27 says, But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false.

But only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Only those written in the Lamb's book of life get into the city. Only those washed in the blood of the Lamb and their robes made clean, made white, get before God's throne.

Have you washed your robes in the only source that can cleanse you of your sins? It is only in Jesus Christ that you and I can be forgiven.

It is only in Jesus Christ that you and I can enjoy life forever in God's new creation one day. So if you are outside of Christ today, turn to Him in faith and repentance.

Because one day, if you do not turn to Him, one day you will find yourself outside of that city. Outside of the city's gates.

[ 42 : 22 ] Barred from entering into it. No access to God's throne. That's what Revelation 22, 14 says. It says no access to the tree of life.

Now that tree of life was in the Garden of Eden way back in Genesis 2. And when Adam and Eve fell into sin, what happened? Barred from access to that tree of life.

Denied access to it because they were filthy with their sin. You and I are just like Adam and Eve. Apart from Christ, in our filthy, sinful condition, we have no right to that tree of life.

No right to enter the city of God by its gates. No right to worship God before His throne. Those found outside of Christ on judgment day will find themselves outside the city gates.

The second death in hell is all that awaits. And you need to know. You need to understand the reality of hell. Some people think of hell as this place where they are like fully separated from God.

[ 43 : 37 ] In fact, in some ways, for some people, they actually find hell appealing because they think, I'm away from God. I've gotten away from Him. They are so given over by their sin, they're so in love with their sin that they want to be far away from God.

God, leave me alone. Hell sounds like a good place because I can be left alone. I don't want to be in His presence. And so these people think, hell sounds like a nice escape from God.

This place of isolation. I can be by myself. But that is not at all how the Bible describes the reality of hell.

You will never, ever escape the presence of God in the sense that all of His wrath and His fury against your sin, it will be very present indeed.

Revelation 14 says this about the rebel sinner in hell. He will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of His anger, and He will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

[ 44 : 51 ] You cannot escape God. Just as David said in Psalm 139, He reflected on this truth. Where shall I go from your spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. Nowhere to run from God. Not even in hell.

Only eternal torment awaits in the presence of the Lamb. So wash your robes in the blood of the Lamb, sinner friend.

Wash your robes this morning so that you have the right to the tree of life, so that you have access to the city of God by its gates. So many of us are journeying towards that city this morning with its gold streets, with the river of the water of life flowing from the throne, with the tree of life and its fruit in abundance, where unending blessing awaits in the presence of God.

Will you join us there one day? Will you be found with that multitude that is worshiping before the throne? One day Jesus Christ is returning, and He's returning to make all things new.

[ 46 : 16 ] So blessed is the man, blessed is the woman, blessed is the child who is found in Him. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we marvel to think that you would set your love upon sinners, rebels such as us, that you would love us in Christ, that you would, by your grace, draw us to yourself, and that you would make us to be a blessed people in you.

Father, we pray for those who are far from you, that they would turn to you in faith, that they would find the rich blessing that is only found in you, for you are the blessed God yourself, the most blessed of all.

And so Father, we praise you, we give you thanks for salvation that is found in you, help us that we might then persevere to the end, and then one day stand before your throne in all joy and delight, worshiping you for all of eternity.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.