

20a REV

This is Friday, the 30th of December, 2005. Last Bible class of this year. We continue tonight our study in the book of Revelation.

We're going to be picking up in chapter 16. How many chapters in Revelation? 22. We're at 16, so we're getting close.

Getting close to working through the last third of the book. Let's take a moment as we approach our study to organize our thoughts and recognize the role of God's Holy Spirit in teaching us from his words. Shall we pray? Father, we're grateful for your blessings, your compassion on us, the mercies that you renew for us each and every morning.

We know that our time on this earth is short. The book of Job tells us that our days can, even though they are short, be full of trouble sometimes. And we know that there is a purpose, there is a plan, there is structure to our lives.

And we thank you for your sustaining grace, for the hope that is set before us, and that we have the example of the Lord Jesus Christ in keeping our eyes on that goal. And we pray that our study this evening will help us to focus more attentively on redeeming the time that is given to us, investing it in the future, in eternal things, and not being imprisoned in the moment and in the affairs of this life. We pray that we will gain insight and understanding through the study of your word this evening.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. As I said, we begin chapter 16 tonight, having seen in chapter 15 the introductory and preliminary maneuverings that lay the foundation for the final seven dispensations of judgment in the book of Revelation, the seven bowls.

You'll remember that in broad outline form, there are four sets of seven things that are given to us in the book of Revelation. You have the seven seals, the seven thunders, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls. You can't really study the seven thunders because that's the contents of the seven-sealed scroll.

And obviously, there wouldn't be much point in sealing the scroll if God let the cat out of the bag, so to speak, let the thunders out of the bag. Then it would all be anticlimactic. But John is not allowed to reveal what the seven thunders uttered because that is the plan and purpose of God.

God has a system of security, just like our government does. That's classified. It's not revealed.

The angels don't know it. There are certain things that even Jesus Christ himself does not know, such as the day and the hour of his return. That is known only to the Father.

The three members of the Trinity are co-equal and co-eternal, but they do not

necessarily share the same knowledge. We know that because Jesus said, the Father knows the day and the hour, and I don't. No one knows it.

And the content of these thunders is unknown. When God speaks, but he doesn't want it to communicate, it sounds like thunder. This happened on the road to Damascus.

Paul's associates. His name was Saul at the time. They heard thunder.

They saw the light. They were afraid, but they couldn't hear the dialogue because God didn't want them to hear it. Jesus was talking to Paul.

He's the only one that was concerned. This happens at various other times, such as the time of the Holy Spirit descending like a dove, God talking to Moses on Mount Sinai, and so forth. So, four sets of seven.

Perfect, complete set of judgments. Four is universality on the earth. Seven is perfection from heaven because it's four plus three.

It's the interaction of God with man, of heaven with earth. And so, you have four sets of seven. It's perfection.

Well, we are aware now of the content of the seven seals, which begins with the human perspective. And it is the earliest in time, isn't it? The riding forth of the four horsemen, that precedes everything else. It prefigures the Antichrist and his dominance of the earth.

When you start with the trumpets and the angelic view of the judgment of the last days, it picks up somewhat later. The bulls are going to pick up now even later. So, it is as though you're looking at the side of a bull, where the part closest to the ground, if you're in the middle of the bull and you're trying to walk out the edge, you're an ant, the thing you encounter first is the closest to the ground level.

And as you climb higher, you get up the sides of the bull, but you're also further from the center, further in time. And that's what we find here. The content of the trumpets is earliest, of the seals is earliest, of the trumpets is midway, and of the bulls is the finality.

Now, let's take a look at the chart, if you will, because we're going to be going through this in detail. And you'll see that the content of the judgments contained in these bulls, noisome grievous sores upon men and worshipers with the mark of the beast is going to be the first one, is going to correspond with the third seal, which is pestilence for men, famine and so forth. There is death and hell and a quarter of the earth, sword hunger, death, beasts of the fourth seal, and so on.

So, as the third and fourth seals are coming to fruition, this is really when the bull judgments of God begin. And this corresponds basically to the first and second trumps.

So, you get the third and fourth seals, the first and second trumpets, as the first bull of God is being poured forth.

Now, as we saw last time in chapter 15, the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power. No one is able to enter until the seven plagues of the seven angels are completed. So then in chapter 16, John says, I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, Go and pour out the bulls of the wrath of God on the earth.

Now, a voice from the temple is a resonant idea in Jewish thinking. It goes all the way back to Isaiah chapter 66. Now, remember our whole scenario about the book of Isaiah, right? What do we call it? It's the miniature Bible because it has how many chapters? Sixty-six.

So, chapter 66 of Isaiah would correspond to what book in the Bible? Revelation. Isaiah chapter 66, verse 6 says, The sound of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, the voice of the Lord who fully repays his enemies. The voice of the Lord from the temple fully repaying his enemies.

Isaiah 66, 6. 666 of Isaiah. You should be able to remember it. This is the voice from the temple and it says, Go, pour out the bulls of the wrath of God on the earth.

This unidentified voice is only said to come from the temple in the whole book of Revelation twice. And that's here and about 16 verses forward. Verse 17 of this chapter is going to say, The temple is filled with the smoke of the glory of God.

No one is able to enter until the seven plagues of the seven angels are complete. Now, we just heard that in chapter 15, verse 8, didn't we? It is repeated for us if you skip forward to chapter 16, verse 17. The loud voice coming out from the temple of heaven from the throne saying, It is done.

It is finished. So, the voice speaks from the temple before the bulls are poured out and it's going to speak again after the bulls are poured out. These are the two times that this voice is said to speak.

Now, why do we care? This is always the question, isn't it? It's interesting, mildly amusing to try to figure out what things mean in Revelation, but you ask yourself the question, So what? I still have a life to live here. I've got challenges. I have obligations.

I have to get through my day. So, what are you trying to tell me from all of this rigmarole going on in heaven? In the future, people I don't even know are going to be down here on the earth suffering these judgments. Well, think about this.

There is order, there is a plan, and there is a purpose. Look at this chart. Look at the things that are going on on the earth.

You have got horses riding forth conquering and to conquer. Peace is taken from the earth. Men are killing one another with the sword.

There is economic distress. There is hail, fire, blood, cast to earth, a third of the trees are burning, the green grass is burning up, noise and grievous soars, stuff falling from heaven, stuff falling in the sea, stuff burning up hither and yon, sea, land, air, stuff going dark, sun not shining right, the stars falling, the moon turning to blood, water turning to blood, pestilences coming forth and flying around. We have seen all of this, right? Do you ever get the feeling that your life sort of reflects this kind of chaos? That things are out of control? It is stuff above and beyond the call of duty.

It is beyond anything you should expect, right? It is just off the hook. It is out of control. And you are not responsible.

You don't feel like, well, you know, I made decisions and these are the consequences of my actions. This is just what is happening. This is the time in which you live.

We didn't choose to be born in the last half of the 20th century. We didn't choose to have our kids growing up in public schools full of juvenile delinquents and drug-induced hazes and fogs and manias and one thing and another. We didn't choose to live in a time where you don't know what's in your food and you don't know what's in your water and you don't know what's coming at your TV and you don't know what's going to meet you on the road and you don't know what some loony bin is going to do unexpectedly.

Nobody signed up for this. Nobody said, well, let me see. We've got 7,000 years of human history.

I pick the 1950s or the 1960s or the 1970s in which to be born. We've just arrived and this is the hand that we get dealt, right? Well, that's what's going on here. So, how are we supposed to view our life and the unpredictable nature of the things that happen to us? And honestly, it isn't just this age.

You think back, I mean, would you really rather live in the Dark Ages or the Middle Ages where if you feel bad, they'll put a leech on you or they'll nick you in the arm and bleed you until they think they got the evil humors out, where there's no sanitation, not even such a thing as an aspirin. Nobody takes a shower. People identify each other by smell before they ever come into view.

I mean, you think about it. A bath once a week with no air conditioning. It was a whole different sensation living on this planet prior to, say, 100 years ago where people started getting indoor plumbing on a ubiquitous basis.

So, it has ever been thus. It seems worse to us, but everybody's had this row to hoe. The book of Revelation has been here for 2,000 years now.

What is it telling us in these chapters? Well, by way of introduction, God speaks from the temple and God says, break the seals. God says, blow the trumpets. God says, pour out the bowls.

Now, His people are mingled down amongst the unhappy recipients of this judgment. And they're getting caught somewhat in the fallout, right? They're being persecuted. They're being killed.

The Antichrist is having his way with a lot of them. And you think, well, that's kind of a raw deal. Why don't they get to be affluent Americans living in the year 2005 munching Fritos and watching Monday Night Football? I understand we just had our last game of Monday Night Football on ABC.

No more Monday Night Football. Why do these people get such a raw deal? Well, if we answer that question, we can answer when we're in a period where we say, why am I getting such a raw deal? Right? Either life is a happy accident, it's just a coincidence of molecules coming together as the evolutionary, atheistic, materialistic, mechanistic philosophers say, or there is a purpose and there is an order and there is a design. Believing in God and believing His word is true and looking at the book of Revelation, what do we see that... I mean, look at this.

This chart I gave you is a page full of chaos. This page contains the worst things that ever happened on the planet. Find something worse than what's on this page in history.

You cannot. God says this is as bad as it will ever get. But then look at it more closely and you'll see that it is ordered, it is structured, it is sequenced, and it is timed, and it is decreed carefully in an orchestrated, planned, foreordained, well thought out fashion by the God of the universe.

And you know, people who study chaos theory have come to discover that really there is a lot more order in chaos than what we thought. You look at... My example of this... Have you ever watched a cigarette? Of course, not your own cigarette, somebody else's cigarette that's been parked in an ashtray and you look at the smoke that comes up from the end of it and it's in a still room and the smoke is real smooth up to a certain point and then it starts rippling. Or you look at the track of something through the water water coming out your garden hose, you're out there watering and it's a smooth, perfect little cylindrical shape out to a certain distance and then it starts fuzzing up and breaking up in individual droplets and gets all dispersed.

Well, there's chaos theory that goes in and explains why and can actually write equations for the chaos that is the bow wave of a ship or the smoke rising from a thing or water flow and this kind of thing. Chaos theory explains why some people's hot water pipes bang in the walls. It has to do with the way water moves and venturi effects and things like that.

Well, this is my rather long-winded introduction and point. The things we're looking at here are the worst... We're about to look at the worst devastation that will ever hit this planet. The seven bowls peg the meter.

This is as bad as it ever gets. It's worse than the flood. It's worse than Egypt under the plagues.

It's worse than anything. That's what we're about to look at tonight. Why are we looking at it and why do we care? We're not going through it.

At least, not in this form. But you and I face in our lives at various times and in various ways similar levels of chaos. And I will argue from Revelation chapter 16 that although it seems chaotic and it seems out of control, it is in fact ordered, orchestrated, modulated under the very direct sensitive control of Almighty God.

He knows exactly what He's doing. There's not a stick that blows in a tornado that God doesn't know where it is and why it's there and where it's going. There's not a drop of the flood that hit New Orleans that God didn't know about, didn't allow, didn't plan for.

And the same is true in any test in our lives. You can have chaos in prosperity. Have you thought about that? I thought about it at Christmas.

You get in a house full of over about eight people for me and I have to go get away for a little while. It's too much happiness. It's too much frivolity.

It's too many people talking. My little sensor is just overload. And I have to... It's good chaos.

It's all family, wonderful people. Nobody's fighting. But it's just too much.

It's overload. It's too chaotic for me. I have to get away.

Go take a walk. And I know a lot of you are that way as well. So it doesn't matter if you're facing a prosperity test or an adversity test or just a stick to it and keep doing it test.

It's important for us to see from the Word of God that God is in control. God has his sevens. God has his fours.

Nothing is a surprise. Nothing is out of place. So, Revelation chapter 16.

As we move into this final, most catastrophic episode, we hear first the loud voice. This, by the way, is interesting because a lot of times in Scripture you have this... It doesn't mean loud. The word is not loud.

This word is megalos. We get mega. It was a mega flop.

It's a mega store. We use mega, byte, for something big. Well, this is the megalos

phonos.

Phonos can be voice or sound. You basically, in Greek, have to wait. If you get words, it was a voice.

If you don't get words, it was a sound. It's a phonos, like phonograph. You say, I got a phonograph record here.

Is it music or is it spoken? Well, you don't know until you put the needle on and play it. This is a megalos phonos from the temple, saying to the seven angels. Well, when it says saying, now we know it's a voice.

This is the only place where the adjective precedes the noun. All the way, every place else in Revelation and every place else in the Bible, it's the phonos megalos. I heard a voice, a loud one.

That's the order in which the ideas hit your mind. Only here, only here, do you get this word order. Only here does the voice come from the temple in this chapter.

Why? This is the big deal. This is the pinnacle. This is the culmination.

This is the loud voice from the temple. That's God. There was a legend back in the days of Jesus Christ, the first generation after him, that there was a voice that spoke in the temple right before the Romans destroyed it.

This legend is preserved by Tacitus and Josephus in the Jewish wars and so on, where an unidentified voice from the temple in Jerusalem reportedly said, quote, we are departing from here. And this has passed into Jewish legend. But of the 20 times in Revelation that you have the phonae megalae, only once is it found in the plural.

We already saw that in chapter 11, verse 15. And this is the only place where the adjective precedes the noun. Megalae, phonae.

You have that same idea, a loud voice, 48 times in the Septuagint, which is the Greek Old Testament. So, one of the things you find here is that there is sort of a reticence about identifying God as the speaker. You infer, you understand, you come to know that it's God because of where the voice comes from or how the voice is described or what authority the voice speaks.

But it doesn't just come out and say, and behold, God spoke from the temple. Why is that? Do we really care? Yes, we do. We do care.

And it's important. Why? Why? This great voice speaks from the temple, but it's not identified as God, but we know that it is God. How do we draw that conclusion? We have a frame of reference.

We know who can and can't be in the temple. We know that the glory cloud is filling the temple and no one can enter it, and now a voice is speaking out of it, right? This is a reminder to us that we can know things that are not stated by applying what we do know. It's a relatively simple point, but think about it.

If I read this verse to Joe the Buddhist down the street, say, hey Joe, come here. I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, go pour out the bowls. What chance is there that Joe the Buddhist is going to know that that's God? He has no clue.

What temple? What voice? What angels? What bowls? Go away. I'm meditating. Trying to figure out why my little fat guy has got six arms.

Have you ever wondered that? I do not understand why Buddha's got so many arms, but that's a different issue. But think about it. I heard a loud voice.

We know this, and this ought to give you some confidence. Each of us ought to gain some confidence because you have spiritual perception. The things that you learn from the Word of God enable you to draw informed, accurate conclusions.

This is one of the skills we have to have and that we have to use when we're under pressure. Sometimes we're fearful. Sometimes we are mixed up.

Sometimes we're confused. Sometimes we're dazed. Sometimes we get blindsided.

What are the skills for dealing with chaos? Everybody can say, well, you know, have faith, brother, and trust God. It'll, you know, pie in the sky, by and by. That's not what we need.

What we need is, I need some practical steps that I can follow when I'm in the chaos. If I fall off into the high-speed current here, I need some advice on how to swim, how to get my head back above water, how to get my bearings, how to get through or out of the problem. Well, here's number one.

We take what we know and we draw informed conclusions. Look at this. I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, go pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.

We know who's speaking. We can figure that out because we have a frame of reference. Well, verse two.

The first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image. I find this fascinating because if you consider the mark of the beast to be a little electronic gizmo like they put in your pets or like they put in the items in the store. Have you gotten stuff home from like the bookstore and you open it up and there's that little

foil spiral wetchy in there? Or you get something from the store and you open it up and it's got that little sticky white envelope looking deal with a barcode on it? You know that's remote sensing technology at work.

There are sensors at the door and if you try to walk out the door and they haven't deactivated your little deal, why bells and whistles go off and the store security people come and have a chat with you. That's happened to me about four times because the person at the register didn't know how to deactivate the technology and for no good reason the world started coming to an end there at the door of the store. But think about this.

This wonderful technology that is going to enable people to buy and sell and everybody that has the mark of the beast they're going to be all plugged in to the electronic commerce age. When God starts this judgment something about the judgment is going to have a deleterious effect on this technology. So it would be sort of like microwaving it.

If you had a little chip in your head and then it got hit with microwave energy and started kind of frying inside your skin what would be the result? A foul and loathsome sore. So this is pretty easy to imagine. Came upon the man who had the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image.

This is the first bowl. Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea and it became blood as of a dead man and every living creature in the sea died. Now, take a look at your chart.

Second vial. Sea as blood of dead man. All in sea die.

You look up at the second trumpet. Great mountain burning. Cast into the sea.

A third of the sea creatures die. A third of the ships are destroyed. Now, if we believe that these are to be identified as basically the same plague from two different perspectives, why does the trumpet say that a third of the sea creatures die and the bowl says that everything in the sea dies? On the basis of that distinction, although many observers, many scholars, many interpreters have seen the similarities between seals, trumpets, and bowls, the general consensus is that they are all separate and that they are somehow sequential rather than overlapping and different views of the same thing because of these differences.

Because one says a third die and the other says they all die. I think this is a faulty distinction to make. If God hurls something into the sea and a third of it turns to blood and a third of everything in it dies immediately, what's going to happen as time goes on? Over time, everything else is going to die.

Remember, the bowls are God's perspective. What's God's perspective on what happened in the garden? What did God tell Adam? In the day thou eatest thereof, what?

Dying thou shalt die. Thou shalt surely die.

It's a doubled Hebrew verb. Moot. Mooting you will moot.

If I can corrupt the Hebrew. Well, from God's perspective, on the day they eat, they're dead. From God's perspective, as soon as He begins the blight that initially kills a third, kiss the rest of them goodbye.

The two-thirds of them might be alive now, but what I have done is going to kill them all. So, first bowl, they're dead. Kiss them goodbye.

God's perspective. In God's perspective, once He initiates something, He doesn't have to stand around and wait for it to finish. Now it is when you're backing out.

If you have an electric garage, for years my garage door didn't work and I moved to a new house and got it all fixed and now our garage door works. But you know when you're in a hurry and you back out of the garage and you drive away and you hit the button and you say, well, garage door is shut. A lot of times you don't stick around and wait for the thing to go all the way down.

You hit the button, you see that it starts and then you leave. Well, if somebody has put something out there, a bucket or a skate or a trash can or something, you may drive away and your door comes down and it goes bonk and bounces right back up and you leave your stuff open to any passer-by until you return. And so, that happens to you about once and then you push the button and you sit there and wait until it comes all the way down and you say, ah, okay, now I can drive away.

Well, God doesn't have to sit and wait for the garage door to come all the way down. God pushes the button, sees it moving and He leaves. He knows it's going to come all the way down.

So when He pours out the bowl on the sea, man sees a third of things die immediately and he says, wow, sure glad we still got two-thirds of them left. But God says, I've poured out the bowl. They're all dying.

It's all turning to blood. It's all, this is a complete and total judgment. You've just seen the beginning.

So, you'll see this pattern throughout as we track these bowls against the trumpets and seals. You'll see that in God's mind, when He does something, it's complete. But when you look at the trumpet or seal in a corresponding view, it doesn't seem like it's complete yet.

But that's just a man type of perspective. So, the second angel pours it out on the sea and it becomes the blood of a dead man. And every living creature in the sea died.

They don't die right away. A third of them die right away. The rest of them are dying.

Because you think about it, how long is it going to take for every living thing in the sea to die? It's not going to happen in an instant. These things are going to spread. You've got tides, you've got currents, you've got the laws of physics at work there and this is a process over time.

I see this pictured somewhat by the bowls. A bowl, you blow a trumpet, it's like toot and the trumpet's blown. But you pour out a bowl and it's a process.

You start pouring and then all the liquid comes out until the bowl is empty. Third bowl, verse 4. The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the water saying, You are righteous, O Lord, the one who is and who was and who is to be, because you have judged these things.

For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets and you have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due. Second point of chaos management.

God is just. We either believe this or we don't. There are only two kinds of people in the world.

Those who believe that God is fair and those who don't. And those who don't try to deny that he even exists and they say, How could there be a God for all these things to happen? Their basic argument against the existence of God is, The God I see is not fair. This is Satan's argument against God.

God is not fair. It's a fundamental argument everybody makes when something goes wrong. Well, this is not fair.

Look, God is either fair or he's not. What does the angel say as this death and blood and destruction get poured out on the earth? You are righteous, O Lord. And this is what we have to train ourselves to remember.

It's always true, but we don't always remember it. God is always righteous. God is always fair.

You have judged these things. They have shed the blood of the saints. You have given them blood to drink.

It is their just due. I heard another from the altar saying, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments. You see this inclusio, this bracket.

This is a harsh, harsh judgment. A lot of people say, Hey, what kind of a God is this? Are we back to the God of the Old Testament? I thought we were in Revelation, the New Testament. Sounds like the old, mean, Canaanite-slaying Old Testament God.

How is this bracketed? You are righteous, O Lord. True and righteous are your judgments. This is a good thing.

We either believe it or we don't. Then the fourth angel. Remember the first four of the seals and the first four of the trumpets and the first four of the bowls are a set.

A lot of times people, especially when you are single, people give you a set of dishes. You typically get four. Four plates, four cups, four forks, four knives.

You get a little set of four. It is just a nice even number. It is a good starter set when you don't have a big family.

You don't want to just have two because then what if you have guests? If you are all out, you have to go get the paper plates, the Dixie cups. A set of four. It is nice.

You can be a couple. You can entertain a couple. You can play canasta and have a big time.

So a set of four is nice. Four seals, four trumpets, four bowls. And they are a set.

Of course, in the biblical economy, it is not about playing cards. It is about that number four representing entirety on the earth. So the fourth angel pours out his bowl on the sun.

What have these bowls been poured out on now? On man. On the sea, salt. On the water, non-salty, rivers and streams.

And on the sun. Power was given him to scorch men with fire. All of these things have deleterious effects on people, don't they? Because everybody is on a healthy diet.

They are all eating fish. Low cholesterol. Well, now all the fish are dead.

No water to drink. No sea life. No more tuna.

No more salmon to eat and so on. Shipping is all destroyed. The sun here scorches men with fire.

They are scorched with great heat. They blaspheme the name of God who has power over these plagues. And they did not repent and give him glory.

This, by the way, was the verdict after what? The sixth seal? After six seals said men did not repent? Or was it the trumpets? It was the sixth trumpet. In Revelation 11, 13. The great earthquake.

Tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake 7,000 people were killed. The rest were afraid.

But the people do not repent. I lost my reference for that. So, none of these things

produce the desired effect.

The discipline of God is designed to turn us and change our minds. That's what parents do. You misbehave, I give you a sharp reprimand.

You misbehave again, I give you a sharper reprimand. You misbehave again, and we keep upping the ante trying to get a person to change their mind about whatever it is they're doing. Not eating their peas or sticking their fingers in the potted plants or whatever it might be.

And we figure, I will have to up the ante until you no longer consider it worthwhile to disobey. Well, God is now at 10 when it comes to discipline. And if people are not going to turn in the bowl judgments, there is no turning them.

And that's what we see here in the fourth bowl judgment. So, they did not repent and give Him glory. That's the verdict after the first four bowls.

And this is what God is looking at. Well, this is a good division point. After four bowls, we'll stop here and take our break.

These things are just as applicable in prospect as they would be if they were history. We know that we face in a milder form a lot of problems and circumstances. We face a lot of challenges.

We face a lot of crisis management. Even when we have good things, we can have too many blessings. We can have too much prosperity and have trouble figuring out how to handle it.

But there are certain procedures we can follow. There are steps that we can take. And they're based on keeping our eyes on God.

It is all about objectivity. Worthy are you, O Lord. Your judgments are righteous.

He is the one that speaks from the temple. He is the one that orchestrates and organizes. This is what got Job through forty-odd chapters of trouble, isn't it? I don't understand.

I'm confused. My friends aren't helping. But I'm not going to curse God because I know He's in His heaven.

I wish there was a way I could talk to Him better. I wish I had a mediator. Job wishes a lot of things and he is dazed and confused.

But he never loses his fundamental confidence in God. That's why God can bless the latter end of Job even more than the beginning. Because at the end of it all, God says, none of you guys have held to the line like my servant Job.

And Job ends up twice as blessed at the end. And that's what we have to remember. We may not figure everything out.

We may not understand everything. But we do know who God is. And we know what His characteristics are.

And we have to cling to that like the boy who lashed himself to the broken mast. Whatever the storm. Whatever the gyrations.

God is righteous. God is faithful. God has a plan.

And it's all going to come out right to those who love God who are called according to His purpose. Well, we'll pick up here in verse 10 when we come back from our break.