

Rev 26-04-19b

In this session, we are going to undertake a very, what to me is a very fascinating study, and that is to take the elements of these judgments. And what I'm focusing on, particularly, I know that unbelievers have made choices that bring them under divine judgment. They deserve it.

God is righteous and fair in so doing. I am more interested in believers and what we are to do in times of stress, because there are believers on the earth throughout these judgments. We don't arrive at the bowls and a second rapture has happened and there's nothing but unbelievers.

There are believers there. So the elements of the judgment, whether it is scorching or darkness or blood or whatever else, believers in this scenario, and we are reminded that they are there. That's why the Lord Jesus speaks.

He hasn't spoken since Revelation chapter three in the first person, red letter edition ink here. Why does he speak now? Because it reminds us that in the midst of these most severe of all judgments, the like of which has not been seen since the foundation of the world, there are believers on the earth who need God's grace, who need to qualify for God's preserving power. So what do those judgments look like? What are the elements of it? Number one, let's just think we don't know enough about the thunders, although I will give you a opinion about that here before long.

Think about the seals, the trumpets and the bowls. The seals, this is a lot of human machinery at work, human attempts to solve problems, human failures, human efforts to exert leverage and power and the failure thereof and the consequences of the shortfall. Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the living God, right? That's what you see.

So this is really a time of testing and evaluation. Will people wake up and realize that the arm of flesh will fail you and you dare not trust your own? That's a line out of Stand Up for Jesus, I think. But the arm of flesh will fail and the seals are a demonstration of that.

The more they try, the harder they work, the more catastrophic are the results. So this is a time of testing. On what will you rely? To what will you turn? Where will you aim your faith? And this sorts the human race into those who are going to turn and repent, who are going to become Old Testament saints and heirs of the Old Testament promises and those who won't.

And so at this level, from this perspective, especially in the earlier part, those first four horsemen, there is an opportunity to realize that this human government thing is not working. By the time you get to the trumpets and you realize the spiritual conflict that is going on and the trumpets are all about angels, good and bad, good angels are blowing the trumpets, bad angels are emerging from nooks and crannies and wreaking all kinds of havoc. This is acceleration.

And if you weren't convinced by material issues and human interventions, are you sensitive to the spiritual issues and that there are larger forces at work, that it goes beyond what man can control or address? And this is a period of invitation, and it's going to culminate when you get to the bowls in that first bowl angel proclaiming the everlasting gospel, last chance. As I said, from one perspective, these are coincident and overlap, but it really begins with the four horsemen by the time you get to the middle of those seal judgments, you see a lot of the same things happening that occur in the trumpets. And you've seen the close overlap between the trumpets and the bowls.

We saw everything from the blood and what's poured out on the earth and what's poured out on the waters and what happens in the sky and the Euphrates and so on, very close overlap. These things are two perspectives on the latter part of that three and a half years, but it begins at the beginning of the bowls with the everlasting gospel, last chance. If you don't respond now, the temple is going to fill with God's glory and there is no appeal.

So do any of these conditions soften the heart and result in humility? Your best opportunity is at the beginning of these judgments. And by extension, when things begin to go wrong in our lives, or we come under stress or pressure, and we're not where we should be spiritually, the entrance point is humility. Those who do not repent, lack humility.

Those who have humility, repent. Humility is a recognition. This is the first step in the book for AA and other step programs.

You have to recognize that you do not have what it takes to solve a particular problem. And you have to look outside yourself. You need strength from beyond yourself.

Recognizing our own limitation and insufficiency is humility, the willingness to be helped specifically by God. So if you don't respond in humility, which is also teachability, I can learn, I can see where the power lies and how to access it. You're going to end up with anxiety and you're going to try to control things through human effort.

That's what you see in the horseman. When you get to the trumpets, is there repentance? Repentance is a spiritual issue. And you either change your mind or you harden your heart and continue to resist.

You see this in the Pharaoh in Egypt and so on. And the entrenchment, the complete adamant head and heart, the hardened heart is reflected when the bowls are poured out. And no matter what God does, no one moves into humility.

No one goes into repentance. If they were going to, they would have yielded before now. And this is the final judgment.

And in many ways, it's going to be reflected in later judgments. So as believers looking at this in

our present age, when there is general difficulty, what is our response? Do we in humility recognize that we're probably not equipped to handle this ourselves and turn to the Lord and look for his provision? If it is something we can handle, what has he given us to handle it? Where are the divine resources with which we can deal with these situations that seem beyond human control? If these things intensify, it may be time for change of mind. Maybe this is guidance in the form of divine discipline.

Maybe I need to change something in my life. If difficulties arise in humility, I seek to use what God has provided to me to deal with it, but it does not change. And I am still stressed, and I am taxed, and I am tested.

Despite using what I think are God's provided resources, I need to do a second evaluation. Maybe there is something that I have not considered. Maybe there is something in my heart or in my life that I need to change.

Maybe there is a habit pattern that I need to break. Maybe I am inadvertently exposing myself to an ongoing temptation, and I fail every time. And the answer is not to beef up so that I can resist that temptation.

The answer is to change the game, change the situation. There are some people, just as a random example, there are some people for whom alcohol is a bad idea. Maybe they are not alcoholic.

Maybe they are not going to get into some terminal drunkenness and destroy their liver and lose their job and their family and all the rest of it. But just the effect of the alcohol in lowering inhibitions and changing the parameters and the landscape of the mind is enough to open the door to temptations of other kinds. You become less sensitive, and you say things you shouldn't say, and you do things you shouldn't do, and you are unaware of an effect that you are having on others.

People say, well, alcohol, the problem is alcoholism. The problem with alcohol is lowered inhibitions and reduced ability to access your spiritual assets and resources if you go into excess. This is why scripture does not prohibit wine, but it says, be not drunk.

Be not drunk with wine. That is excess. And if you tend to start and without realizing it, you get into excess, that opens up a world of problems that may be short of alcoholism, but nevertheless, open up potentials for failure.

This is an example of, I need to change a habit or change a pattern. Maybe I will make a new rule. I will never have more than X, or I will swear off entirely.

But if we have a pattern sin, what contributes to the pattern? Sometimes it's not the sin itself we have to wrestle with. It's the pattern that opens us up to almost inevitable failure in that area.

Change the parameters, change the habit, change the schedule, change the rules so that you don't get to the point where you can't succeed.

And the trumpet judgments represent an intensification because now we're at a spiritual level. The material level is one thing, but here is angelic influence, good and bad. And to be aware that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.

This is the idea that it's not just, I've got this physical problem here, let me fix it. It's spiritual. So we move from the seals that talk about, here's what I encounter on the earth in circumstance and in situation.

I need to raise my game and think in trumpet terms. This is a spiritual battle and I need to reflect spiritual priorities and spiritual goals. My goal is to change my mind and get away from sin and get away from habits that inevitably result in sin because this is a spiritual thing.

And if I don't succeed at the circumstance management level, I need to get into my spiritual armor and work at a spiritual level. Because if I don't, if I am not warned by failure and circumstances, and I don't move up to trumpet level and start thinking in spiritual terms and use spiritual resources and set my spiritual values and view myself and my life in spiritual terms, wrestling against the principalities powers and the darkness that rules this age, I can end up at the bowl level where God says, I have given you time and I have given you opportunity. I've given you resources.

You've been exposed to the truth of the word of God, and you know who you are and you know why you're here. You know how my power comes into your life, God says, and you're not doing it. You have a hard heart when it comes to this.

Severe, inescapable, and irreversible judgment will come. This is called in the New Testament, the sin unto death. And God's not fooling around.

When people who know better don't do what they know, God will remove us and put someone else in our place who will do what needs to be done. There is a witness that needs to be maintained. There is a light that needs to shine, and spiritual failure is not getting that job done.

We are not our own. We have been purchased with a precious price, and our purpose is to glorify the Lord in our body. That's our life.

That's what is viewed and visible, and it is not a light responsibility. It's not casual. It's not an also ran.

This is why we're here, and if we fail that responsibility because we fall into pattern sin that we don't deal with, heaven help us, literally. When you think about the seals and trumpets and bulls, you can imagine, you know, here's the run-up to Armageddon, what nations and so on. That doesn't help you today and tomorrow and the next day with stewardship of spiritual opportunities,

spiritual resources, time, material goods, conversations, relationships.

Jesus gave us this book to enable us to live the life that maximizes our opportunity for service and function, reward and inheritance, and future blessing in the kingdoms that are to come. That's what this book is for. That's why he gave it to us.

Blessed is he who reads. Blessed is he who keeps the words of this book. I can't keep Armageddon when I'm not going to be there.

I can't keep faithfulness during darkness and scorching heat and things turning to blood and the rest of it. How can I read and hear and keep the words of this book? I can figure out what it means in my life right now. So let's take a look at some of the elements.

Let's step back a bit from the order and the sequence and the overlap and just look at the elements of these judgments. So one of the primary elements that you see in these judgments is darkness. We see it in this bowl.

Darkness comes after the scorching heat, right? What does darkness represent in Scripture? We have a trumpet judgment back in chapter 8, verse 12, and we have a bowl judgment in 1610 that we just saw. And we've seen the close overlap of these trumpets and bowls because we're looking at things from above. What does the New Testament say about darkness? How does that relate to us right now? We are to walk in the light.

1 John 1 7, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with Him and He with us. We have fellowship one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, keeps on cleansing us from all sin.

Notice, aren't we supposed to be keeping our garments? In Revelation, how does one keep his garments? They wash them and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, right? So 1 John 1 7, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, keeps on cleansing us. How do I keep my garments? I keep watching for sin in my life. I confess it.

I depart from it. I look at that acceleration in intensity from seals to trumpets to bowls and say, I'm getting off of this train before I get to the bowl level. I will make whatever changes I have to make.

I will change the rules. I will change the circumstance. I will change my path through the day so that I don't go near the crafty harlot's street where she's whispering from the corner, come with me to the casbah and we will make beautiful music together.

We saw that in Proverbs. The crafty harlot is whispering from the doorway. Come on in.

I've got a table set with dainties. We'll have a good time. Don't go down that street.

You'll never hear her whisper. Change the route. Change the path.

We all have besetting sins. Sometimes it may be gossip. We talk about things that we know that we shouldn't share.

I heard it one place and this human nature thing is I want to be the one to reveal something startling. Well, does this happen with the same people in the same circumstance? Change the way you interact with those people. Don't get in a place where you're tempted to share what you shouldn't.

If it is worry, well, when does this worry take place? Do I worry when I'm watching the news? Maybe I need to do something different in terms of watching the news. Maybe I need to limit it. Maybe I need to do it only when I'm around other believers and not watch it by myself where I don't get all wrapped around the axle about what would happen if.

Do I worry about loved ones? I love them and I'm worried about them because I think they're not where they should be. When does this happen? How does it happen? Worry is a sin. Concern is one thing.

Worry is another. How can I make sure I'm not worrying? What are my promises? What are my principles? What are my doctrines from the word of God? Casting all your cares upon him for he cares for you. Can I trust God enough? This is a matter of faith.

Where is your faith? Can I commit this situation to God, fire and forget? Lord, I commit this to your hands. You know all the causes, conditions, successions, relations. You know how best to reach this person.

If I can be a part of that process, please give me wisdom. Let me know when to speak and when to remain silent. If I'm going to speak, you have promised the disciples that if they were to stand before kings not to worry about what they'll say, it will be given to them in that hour.

I pray that when I'm in contact with this person with whom I have contact or concern, I am absolutely claiming your promise that you will put it in my heart what to say and what not to say. That you will give me discipline to control my tongue. If I can bridle my tongue, my whole body will be in subjection.

Think scripture. Plow scripture into these situations, whatever they may be. Think of a patterned sin.

I'm in traffic and I just get incensed and I cuss at people that cut me off and stop short and all the rest of it. What can I do different in traffic? Well, think about it. Why don't I turn on my audio book from the book of Jeremiah and be listening to scripture when I'm in traffic? If I can still cuss and sin against people when I'm listening to the word of God, what's the matter with me? Keep my mind on high ground.

Don't go into the gutter where people who live in the gutter beat you with experience. Figure out how this pattern works. Pray about it.

Seek the scriptures about it and do something different. Break the pattern. You do not want to come as far as the trumpet judgments.

Figure it out during the seals and go with the woman that hides in the desert and the dragon's flood does not reach her. So darkness, first John, gospel of John 3, 19 and 20. Remember this after John 3, 16.

It's so helpful if you just keep going in the gospel of John past what Jesus says to Nicodemus and you go to John 3, 17 and 18 and 19. God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He who believes in him is not condemned.

And this is not just believing for salvation. If we trust in the Lord Jesus and his provision, he's the one that gave us the Holy Spirit. I will send you another comforter who will lead you into the truth.

He who believes, he who trusts in him is not condemned. He who does not trust, who does not believe is condemned already because he has not trusted in the name of the only begotten son of God. And this is the condemnation, verse 19, John 3, 19.

This is the condemnation that the light has come into the world and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed. Everyone practicing evil, not just unbelievers, this is habitual sin, patterned sin.

It becomes a practice. Repeated sin leaves the sin definition and enters into evil. Evil is habitual sin.

Everyone practicing evil isn't walking in the light and doesn't want to come to the light. Much of the time, this will be in secret, your thought life, but you don't share it. You're thinking something and you're just quietly coming to a boil, but you don't let on.

You've got a resentment, you've got a grudge, you've got an issue, and it just seethes. It simmers. It's in the background.

It's producing heat and not light. And it doesn't come to the light. It doesn't get brought before the Lord and exposed and confessed.

And there's no request for wisdom. If any of you likes wisdom, ask of God. He will tell you how to fix this patterned sin that has become evil.

Practice of evil. Everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. Now there's a choice.

Do you want to continue to be in the darkness of a patterned sin, of a habitual evil? Or do you want to come to the light? If you love the light, you're going to leave the darkness behind and you will figure out how to do it by God's grace, with the wisdom that comes from God's Holy Spirit through the Word. He who does the truth comes to the light. He who practices the truth.

This is a life that serves as a testimony. It is a lamp on a lampstand. It is the lampstand of the seven churches, those who are overcomers, who inherit, who are obedient and faithful, even faithful unto death.

Sometimes this is the death of something in our life. We have got to cut off a relationship. We have to leave a situation.

We've got to change the dynamics in some way. And there is something that used to be there and it's gone. This can be termed a death.

And sometimes it is cutting off the hand. It is plucking out the eye. Why? We love light.

He who practices the truth, does the truth, accomplishes the truth, comes to the light so that his deeds may be clearly seen. Jesus talked about this in another place. The light of the body is the eye.

And if your eye is clear, your whole body is illuminated with light. No furtiveness, no secrets, no hidden agendas, no grudges, no bitterness, bitterness, no implacability, no failure to forgive, no desire to judge and to inflict recompense on someone. You're in the light.

You're characterized by light. Others can be drawn to that light and ask you a reason for the hope that is in you. How can you stay in the light when bad things are all around you? So when you see the darkness judgments in the trumpets and in the bowls, what does darkness mean in my life? It means I'm not walking in the light.

It means I'm not in the light where God dwells. God is light and in him is no darkness at all. So how do I maintain walking in the light? I want to do the truth.

If you put this in the margin, you'll thank yourself later. If you read your Bible and go to 1 John 1, put John 3, 19 through 21. Light is in the world.

Light has come into the world. What are we doing with it? So that's the idea of the darkness judgment. You can also go to Ephesians chapter four, verse 18.

And you remember there is a darkness in understanding that is reflected there. Ephesians chapter four, verse 18. Paul says in verse 17, I say therefore and testify in the Lord that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk in the futility of their mind.

It's futile having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God because of the

ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart. Blindness is darkness. We should no longer walk that way.

Ephesians 4, 18 and context. 2 Corinthians 4, 4. 2 Corinthians 4, 4. Remember 2 Corinthians 4, 3 and 4? Memorize this with my mom as a child. Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the God of this age has blinded, who do not believe otherwise the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

Remember the everlasting gospel preached by the first bowl angel? Remember the gospel that is testified by the two witnesses? The gospel that exists in the Old Testament and New Testament that is still available in hundreds of millions of copies during the tribulation period? Their minds the God of this age has blinded. That's Satan. That's the dragon, who do not believe, who do not trust, who do not exercise faith.

Otherwise, the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. The light would shine if they didn't continue to be blinded. And this is willful blindness.

We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves, your bondservants, for Jesus' sake. For it is God, verse 6, who commands light to shine out of darkness, who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. When you see these darkness judgments, you can imagine the tribulation.

Is it going to be clouds? Is it going to be astronomical interruption? Will volcanoes put smoke in the air? Or do we think about what darkness represents in our lives? And what we need to do to preserve the light. Water is turning to blood. This goes all the way back to the judgments on Egypt, and is reflected consciously so, as God judges the waters again by turning them to blood.

This is the trumpet judgment in Revelation 8, 10, and 11. Wormwood comes in and makes the waters bitter. I think this is another way of talking about the non-viability of the water.

Wormwood and turning to the blood of a dead man has all the same effect. It is unusable and kills everything. In the bold judgments, our chapters 16, verses 3 and 4, the rivers and the sea, in those two bold judgments, turn to blood.

So, again, Gospel of John, chapter 4. Living water. Living water, not the water of death. The blood of a dead man.

And it is no accident that death is mentioned there. But when you read John chapter 4, starting at the beginning, this is Jesus speaking, and he says to the Samaritan, woman, give me a drink. His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

That's verse 8. Verse 10. Jesus answered and said to her, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that says to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water. Living water available on request.

What about the days where it seems like all the water has turned to blood? All the water is poisoned with wormwood. Where can I find Christian fellowship? Where can I find Christian teaching? Where can I find Christian relationships? Cross genders. I'm single and looking for someone with whom I can share my life as believers with a shared enthusiasm.

Living water, water of life. It is available on request. Now, what form it takes is up to God.

And just praying for a wife doesn't give you one. I can attest to you that you can spend about 13 years doing that and it may eventually be fulfilled. But in the intermediate time, you say, well, aren't you answering my prayer? And God says, wait.

But it's available by request. Verse 13. Jesus says, whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, this well water.

But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. Are you depending on the water of the world? It'll turn to blood.

It'll turn to wormwood, especially as God renders judgment. But if you've got an internal source of water, this is like the city water supply gets poisoned or gets full of mussels or whatever, but you've got a well. Don't need city water.

Got my own well. There's an Old Testament passage that says, let every man drink waters from his own cistern and draw from his own well. You're not dependent on the world for these things.

Water. What is water in these judgments? What is it in our lives? Where is the water of life? It is available on request and it will become in us a fountain. It will reproduce.

It's like Jesus reproducing the bread and the fish. It is a fountain of water and the inner spring of life and strength and refreshment. James 3.11 talks about bitter versus fresh water.

The tongue, you know, can the same fountain produce bitter water and fresh? Matthew 15, verses 18 and 19, Jesus talks about what flows from within. Come to the waters, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water. Matthew 15, 18 and 19.

So when you see waters in these judgments, what does it mean to me? We have sores, the sore boils. It's the first of the bowl judgments. We saw it in the plagues of Egypt, which are closely tied and inevitably in the background of these judgments.

This was Revelation 16.2, we just saw. Look at the gospel of Mark chapter seven, verses 21 through 23. Mark seven, 21 through 23.

Jesus begins up in verse 18. Are you without understanding? Do you not perceive that whatever

enters a man from outside cannot defile him because it does not enter his heart, but his stomach and is eliminated. And by this, this is an anticipation of all foods being clean, Peter with the sheet let down and so on.

Verse 20, what comes out of a man, that is what defiles a man for from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, and murders. In other words, if these are areas of sin and evil and failure, and they're emanating from the heart, the heart is what needs fixing. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, and the evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness.

All these evil things, these pattern sins, these syndromes come from within. That is what defiles. So to fix the defilement in Israel, you would go to the priest, water, purification, sacrifice, and so on, purify.

But in reality, in spiritual terms, moving up from the seals to the trumpets and looking things in a spiritual perspective, defilement is fixed by purifying the heart. These garments that are washed in the blood of the lamb, you focus on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, love for Jesus Christ, not wanting to grieve him or his spirit. And we eschew and we flee youthful lust.

We flee sin patterns. We figure out a way to break the power of canceled sin. And like prisoners, we are set free.

That's from O for a Thousand Tongues. That's a wonderful hymn if you want to read those lyrics. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.

So that's what these sores do. Remember in Egypt, these leprosy and other skin afflictions, boils and such, were a symbol of defilement. And these painful afflictions are the manifestation of something that might've been inside, but now is manifesting on the outside.

Skin lesions and things are often the result. It's like measles. You've got something inside and it's manifesting outward.

Scorching fire, scorched by intense heat. We just saw this in verses eight and nine of chapter 16. Look at first Corinthians three 13, where fire is going to test everyone's work.

This is the judgment seat of Christ passage. It's specifically talking about communicators. If you look at the context, but in reality, the context begins with communicators and how do they build on the foundation that the apostles have laid and they are building by what they teach.

By extension, it goes to everyone. I planted a polis water. God gave the increase.

He who plants isn't anything or he who waters. You don't get your eyes on the communicator. It is God who gives the increase.

He who plants and he who waters are one. Each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. Again, the primary reference here is to communicators.

By extension, it applies to us all. We are God's fellow workers. You are God's field.

You are God's building. Verse 12, if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear for the day will declare it because it will be revealed by fire. When scorching fire comes, what is going to survive? What is going to endure? What will be revealed by fire in that day? If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss.

He himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know you are the temple of God? The spirit of God dwells in you. If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him for the temple of God is holy and you are that temple.

We need to pay attention to the witness that we bear in our life, in our body, in our material existence on this earth. We are the temple of God. We house the Holy Spirit and God takes that seriously.

Scorching heat or fire, locusts and torment. Romans 2.15, our conscience either accuses or excuses us. Got to be sure our conscience is founded on solid objective truth.

We've seen the conscience when we did Timothy, a pure conscience and faith. Remember that? A pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. Our conscience has to be good.

You can't trust that thing saying, I'm right. This is okay. We have got to found our conscience.

We've got to bolt it to the objective truth of the word of God or it will deceive us. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can fathom it? Who can understand it? Who can know it? Jeremiah 17.9. Epistle of James 1.14. Our desires entice us and ensnare us.

The Euphrates drying up. This is the removal of restraint. God can limit.

God can balance. There will come a time when God removes the restraint, that which restrains is taken out of the way. The Euphrates is dried up and the enemy comes across.

Angels that are imprisoned are released. You look at these judgments. God does this because people are unrepentant, disobedient and rebellious.

If we become unrepentant, disobedient and rebellious, you can expect God to remove restraint. He took the wall of fire away from around Israel. I don't want that to happen.

I want God to shield me and protect me and hide me in the cleft of the rock and cover me there with his hand. Psalm 91. Dwell in the shadow of the Almighty and be protected from the perilous pestilence and the snare of the fowler.

If I'm apathetic, if I'm not serious about my spiritual life, God will remove restraint. We can go into captivity. We can be slain by the invading armies, ravaged, robbed, destroyed.

Our choice can result in either blessing or judgment. That's what you think about with the Euphrates gathering for battle in Armageddon. Again, John 3, 19 through 21, there are those who dwell in darkness and those who are in the light.

When the ultimate conflict comes between darkness and light, you see this with the battle in heaven, the unfallen angels battling the angels that accompany the dragon. There's war in heaven. Michael and his angels fight the dragon and his angels.

We are in the midst of this spiritual conflict. We are supposed to be on the side of light. We want to do as Paul exhorts Timothy.

We saw this in 2 Timothy 4, 7 and 8. And here's where we will close. Fight the good fight. Run the race and finish the course.

Don't get distracted. Remember the tortoise and the hare. There's some truth in that old Aesop fable.

You might be fast, but if you get distracted, the steady plodding pace will out distance you and win. So as you think about light and darkness every day, every hour, what am I doing? Am I walking in the light or am I encouraging and trying to take momentary gratification out of the darkness? You can't win that way. We can't be overcomers.

We walk in the light and we have fellowship with the Father through Christ. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, keeps on cleansing us from all sin. Keep short accounts.

Fail. Acknowledge it. Figure out if it's a part of a pattern.

Break the cycle. Change the game. Shift the schedule.

Shift the contact. Do whatever you have to do so that you don't get cornered into a place where you're going to fail. Don't be cornered.

My dad used to say, quoting some old Western, yeah, we'll corner him in the roundhouse. Live in the roundhouse and you'll never be cornered. And we'll close with that happy thought from my father.

Bless his memory. Father, thank you for the truth of your Word. Thank you for how powerful these images are, not only to tell us what the future holds for those who will be on the earth at that time, but the meaning and purpose and definition of our own lives and how we can learn lessons by observation that serve to encourage us, to lift us up, to give us the ability to live in the light of your power and your grace, and to fulfill your purpose in our lives, both now and in the

ages to come.

We thank you and we pray that the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen.