

## **Rev10 – Rapture!! Revelation 4:1**

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Open your Bibles. I'm excited about today. Title of the message this morning, "Rapture!!" I know you've been wanting to talk about the rapture since we started Revelation ten messages ago. This message we get into the rapture. We are doing one entire verse today. Revelation 4:1.

Let me give you a sign of the times alert. First of all, listen carefully; if you are a prophecy student, this is going to blow your mind. July 24, 2012 the BBC which is the world's largest broadcaster put up their Olympic website. On their Olympic website, under the Olympic team for Israel they refused to write that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Refuse to do it. At the same time, they have invited, the I.O.C. has invited a team from the future state of Palestine. And on the BBC Olympic website, if you'll look under the future team of Palestine it will say the future capital of the future state of Palestine is East Jerusalem. Now listen, if you know something about prophecy, right now you are getting into the rapture position. This is a sign.

You want more than that? Two days later, two reporters "dogged" the press secretary of the White House of the United States of America. This happened on July 26, 2012, and they said to the press secretary, "What is the capital of Israel?" He would not say. *He would not say.* Do you want a good place to get news, the news we like to call the truth? There's like to places in the world to get this kind of news. Try [www.WND.com](http://www.WND.com) (World Net Daily.) You can see the audio and video of this, but there is also a transcript because some of it is muffled. So there is a transcript of this verbal sparring where our White House press secretary refuses to acknowledge that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. That's a big deal.

It makes me feel like I need to hurry and get through this message, just in case. Because I would like to at least get through the message before Jesus gets back. I've done all the work on it. But I don't know if I will.

You know if you've been around me, especially through Revelation, you know that I say all the time, listen, people have been saying the rapture is imminent since before the Bible was written. It's why the Book of 1 Thessalonians was written. And so we know that great Bible scholars, beyond the writers of the Bible, the great Bible scholars of our time, especially since 1948 have been saying the rapture is imminent. The rapture is imminent. And I want to go on record today to join those great Bible scholars and tell you the rapture is imminent. *It is imminent.* And if you say "Yeah, but it has been imminent for a long time," I'm just going to tell you that means it's even more imminent now. If it was imminent in 1948 it is really imminent now.

The rapture is imminent. And the rapture needs to impact our lives. Do you know that? *The rapture needs to impact our lives.* If you're a Christian today the rapture needs to

impact, it needs to affect how you view things, how you look at the world, how you react and respond, and where your priorities are. This subject is critical.

And listen if you haven't made Jesus Christ your Lord yet today, the rapture is a really good reason to do that. Amen! Wait until it happens, you'll think "Oh that was a good reason to get saved right there."

The rapture needs to impact our lives. *It needs to impact our lives.* So get ready to hear about it.

Let's pray. *Lord Jesus we need to have clear in our hearts and our minds the glorious appearing of our God and Savior. That moment when you are going to snatch us away, you're going to catch us up. Lord, you will come just close enough that we can meet you in the clouds and we'll be with you forever, Lord. We long for that day. We look forward to that day. We position ourselves for that day. We position our hearts and our minds and our priorities Lord, for that day. For the day that you will call us home. And God we pray for anyone who is not ready for that day, especially those who might think they are. If they are not we pray that you would speak to us and give us the great confidence that we will be in that number when the trumpet blows and you call us home. We pray Lord that you would unveil it to us in Jesus' name, amen.*

So prophetically nothing needs to happen between this very moment and the rapture. Nothing. 1187 prophecies about the end times in the Bible, and not one needs to occur prior to the rapture from this moment to that. That's why I am in a little bit of a hurry to get through the message today. There is no prophecy that needs to be fulfilled for the rapture *but* there are still prophecies that need to be fulfilled for the second coming. And we are going to talk about the difference in just a minute.

For instance, there is a prophecy that leads up to this phenomenal battle in Ezekiel 38 and 39 where all of the superpowers of the world turn against Israel. They don't all attack her, but the ones who don't allow those who do to attack her. We will go to Ezekiel 38 and 39 when it is appropriate.

But let me tell you what one of the signs of that might be. It might be something like the superpower in the greatest media outlet in the world refusing to acknowledge that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. It might start with something like that. How about this? It might start with the United Nations with some possibly covert encouragement, unilaterally making a Palestinian state and promising that Palestinian state that their capital can be half of the great city of Jerusalem. Again, if you know a little bit about prophecy, and we'll get there when it is time, you'll know that the antichrist is going to bring peace to Jerusalem.

That is a sign. But it is not a sign of the rapture it's a sign of the second coming. But listen carefully. We're going to get into it. The second coming occurs seven years after

the rapture. So if I can open up the newspaper from this week and give you signs of the second coming, and the rapture is going to occur seven years before that, how imminent is the rapture? It's imminent, it is right there. It could be today and I love living like that. And I pray that we as a church and that you as a Christian would live like that.

Let me recommend a book, Dr. David Jeremiah has this real gift of making the complications of prophecy very simple. He doesn't get all into the wacky stuff. He just lays out what the Bible says. One of his books is called "*What in the World is Going On?*" It's a simple book, easy to read, and it will give you some of these details about both the battle of Ezekiel 38 and 39 and the timing of the rapture and the second coming. And all that stuff we will eventually get to. But you can grab that book and get ahead of me.

I also want to thank Dr. Jeremiah for helping me clarify this message. Because this message could be a six week series. And so I have to do it all in forty-five minutes and he really tried to help me clarify. He doesn't know he did, but he did.

It's important for me to also say there are some different views about when the rapture is going to occur. Not *if* the rapture is going to occur, but *when* the rapture is going to occur. And so here is what we need to know. Number one, this is not a salvation issue. When, the timing of the rapture, when that occurs is not a salvation issue. And so what's going to happen is when we all get to heaven, then those who think the rapture is going to be at some other time before seven years before the second coming, here's the deal, when we see them in heaven we are not going to have the sin nature anymore and so I am assuming we are not going to say to them, "Neener – neener!" Because we won't have a sin nature anymore. But if there were a sinner in the group, and if it was me, I'd be saying, "I told you so." But they'll know, I won't need to tell them.

So all I can do today is share with you how we see scripture. We believe that what I am about to share with you is the simplest way to approach scripture. The simplest view of the rapture, the clearest view. So that is all I am going to give you.

So I want to start with two things. I want to start with the outline to the Book of Revelation. And I want to show you this incredibly clear demarcation – this line in the sand – that's drawn between the last verse of Chapter 3 and the first verse of Chapter 4. That's our first job. Look again the outline of Revelation and see this clear demarcation, this clear line, between Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

Turn back to Revelation 1. It's laid out in Revelation 1:19, let's start there. When Jesus first called John to write the Book of Revelation, we see a very super simple outline for the book.

## **Revelation 1:19 (esv)**

***19 Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.***

These are the three major divisions in the Book of Revelation. They are all right there in this verse.

- 1) The things that you have seen – that is who Jesus Christ is today. We did a whole message on who Jesus Christ is today and that is the first outline. That's Chapter 1.
- 2) The things that are – Chapters 2 and 3. This is the second major division and takes up Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. That is what we call the Church age as we went through the seven letters to the seven churches we explained how that is a picture of the church age.
- 3) The things that are to take place after this – Basically everything from Chapter 4 on falls into the “after this” category. After this.

Revelation Chapter 4. We go from looking at the seven churches and we spent really eight messages on the seven churches (not sure how we did that.) But we spent at least seven weeks on the seven churches. And the whole time it's Jesus looking at the church on earth. And through church after church after church we looked at different problems, different personalities, characters and different periods (or ages) of the Church. And suddenly Revelation 4:1 everything changes. Suddenly we find ourselves in heaven with the Apostle John and everything that we are seeing is happening in heaven or we are seeing it from heaven.

Here's one thing you need to know. I'm going to tell you a bunch about the rapture this message, here's one of the first things. The Church as a whole is not addressed again in Revelation until Chapter 19 when we return with Christ at the physical second coming. That's a big deal. Eighteen times in three chapters, most of it in Chapters 2 and 3, eighteen times the word for church – ECCLESIA – the called out ones, those who are called out of the world, eighteen times this word has been used in two chapters. And then all of a sudden Chapter 4 verse 1 John gets caught up to heaven and the church as a whole is not addressed again until the end of the book. What could that mean? Think about it.

Listen, God is still at work on earth during the tribulation. He is still at work, he still has witnesses. There are still those who are being saved. But the church as a whole is not addressed on earth. So let me just share with you that from my relationship with the Lord, I would think that if the Church was actually going through this incredible tribulation we are going to spend some weeks looking at, that Jesus would at least give us a little encouragement. He would encourage us if the Church was on earth. But instead, the Church is absent from everything that happens on earth. Absent from being acknowledged, or addressed, in the Book of Revelation until Chapter 19. We believe the

Church isn't addressed on earth during the great tribulation because we are watching it in heaven. We are actually busy. We'll get into it. We'll have some stuff that we are going to do.

This is a demarcation. This is a clear line in the sand. It's like – hey wait a minute. Everything up to this verse is on earth. And then suddenly everything is in heaven and the Church isn't addressed on earth anymore.

Look again at verse 19 before we go to Revelation 4:1 at the end, those things that are to take place after this. You know I love to use Greek terms or phrases that are fun to say. This is a really fun one to say. META TAUTA. (Me-*ah tow*-tah.) It means “*after this*.” It's an incredibly important phrase because Jesus uses this phrase in verse 19 of Revelation 1. And when he says write the things that are going to happen – META TAUTA – after this.

Now look at Revelation 4:1.

#### **Revelation 4:1 (esv)**

***1 After this** (met-*ah tow*-tah) **I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!** **And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this** (met-*ah tow*-tah).”*

“**Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this** it's called a demarcation. It's a line in the sand. It's a time marker. After this. After what? After what's been happening on earth that we just finished in Chapter 3. Look how John was caught up in Revelation 4:1. In the middle of the verse, **the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet.** Very important. It refers back to Chapter 1. The voice he is referring to is in Revelation 1:10. This is the voice that John initially heard and that John hears again when he is caught up (raptured if you will) into heaven.

#### **Revelation 1:10 (esv)**

***10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet***

This is important because John can only use what he can acknowledge. Like a trumpet. **I heard a loud voice like a trumpet.** It's the voice of the Lord and it's the same voice that John hears in Chapter 4:1 when he is called up abruptly. Suddenly. Snatched away into heaven. It's the same voice that spoke to him in Chapter 1 calls him up to heaven.

Here is one of two key scriptures for the rapture.

#### **1 Thessalonians 4:16 (esv)**

***16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God . . .***

Same voice. Same process. Same approach to catching up the Church as John experienced in being caught up in Revelation 4:1. Do you see where I am going with this? It's pretty clear, really.

One more look. This is the second key scripture for the rapture.

**1 Corinthians 15:52 (esv)**

***52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.***

Listen, it's the same process. It's the same event that happens to the Church, happens to John. It's almost like Jesus is showing us through the rapture of John what's going to happen to the church in Revelation 4:1. Do you see it?

**Revelation 4:1 (esv)**

***1 After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!***

There are two times that the door of heaven opens in the entire Book of Revelation. Two times. Once is here when the Church goes in and the only other time the door of heaven is open is in Revelation 19 when the Church comes out, and comes back to earth with Jesus in the second coming and joins him in the millennial reign. Listen, only twice the door in heaven opens. And once the Church isn't addressed on the earth anymore, and the next time the Church comes back to the earth. It gets pretty clear, right? I hope it does.

It seems really clear to me that the "after this," the META TAUTA of Revelation 4:1 is the Church being called home in the rapture. It's the simplest interpretation and it is critically important for the way we are going to look at the chapters from 4 through 19, but especially 6 through 19 when the tribulation starts.

Let's deal with a couple of more things. (I'm just laying the groundwork for you so that you understand. And then we are going to get to what you really need to hear, it's called the application, and we are going to get to that before we are finished this message.)

- 1) The word rapture.
- 2) The timeline between the rapture and the second coming.

We are getting into the prophecy stuff. But first of all the word rapture is NOT found in the original languages of the Bible. Don't let anybody ever give you a hard time about that. The word rapture comes from the Latin word RAPTO (or RAPTURO) which means "to be snatched away, or to be caught up." Listen the Greek is just as fun a word to say HARPAZO, and it means "to be caught up, to be snatched away." We are going to be snatched away, we are going to be caught up in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye Jesus is going to call us home and we are going. Amen!

And second, I need you to get a clear simple timeline of the rapture and the second coming. The way we see things, the rapture occurs seven years before the second coming. The rapture occurs before the tribulation. You might say “pre-tribulation.” And then the second coming occurs at the end of the tribulation in Revelation Chapter 19. Here’s the real difference between the events. The rapture is stealth. It is stealth. Jesus comes just close enough to meet us in the clouds and catches us up with him. Here’s the difference, the second coming John already referred to in Revelation 1:7 where he said,

**Revelation 1:7 (esv)**

*7 . . . every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him . . .*

That’s the second coming. That’s at the end of the tribulation which occurs seven years after the rapture.

Now that we have all that settled, let’s look at the rapture. It’s the next grand event on the prophetic timeline. This is the real deal. Jesus is going to call us home in an instant. This is great encouragement, next to salvation, just knowing that Jesus is going to call us home to be with him forever. It’s such great encouragement.

Let’s start in John Chapter 14 in the Upper Room Discourse. Let’s look at verses 1 through 3. Here’s what is happening. Jesus is trying to explain to his disciples that he has got to go. Some bad stuff is coming and that he is leaving. And the more he talks the more uncomfortable the disciples get. And so Jesus gives his disciples and gives us some incredibly confident generating assurance in the first three verse of John Chapter 14.

**John 14:1–3 (esv)**

*1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. (the conditions of this promise)*

*2 In my Father’s house are many rooms (dwelling places). If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?*

*3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*

Amen! I think I use this at every funeral I do. And it is a great funeral verse. But let me just tell you why this is about the rapture. Number one, if you are alive when the rapture happens, that’s when this occurs. When Jesus takes you to himself that where he is you may be also, that’s the rapture. But listen, the dead in Christ benefit from the rapture too. Those who have died in Christ, their souls are with Jesus, 2 Corinthians 5:8 tells us, but their bodies are in the grave.

Well at the rapture Jesus gives us all a new body, a glorified body. Isn’t that great news? This is real. The dead in Christ who are with Christ now, their soul – if you will – their

spirit, their bodies are going to be raised at the rapture. They are going to get a glorified body. But they get to go first. Jesus says, ***if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*** And whether you are alive when it happens or whether someone you love in Christ has already died, gone to sleep in Christ, this is a big, big moment.

Turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Do you know that most scholars believe that 1 Thessalonians was only Paul's second epistle that he wrote? That he only wrote Galatians prior. Here's what should blow your mind is that the subject matter of 1 Thessalonians is all about the rapture and the second coming. But it is only the second letter that the Apostle Paul wrote. And he is already encouraging the Church with the rapture and the second coming. That is the purpose. The way the rapture is written by the Holy Spirit in the Word is to always encourage the Church so that we always have an ear to heaven. So that we are always straining and looking for the soon and imminent return of Jesus Christ. It's closer today than it was when the Bible was written. Amen!

This would be a great book to read, by the way, in your devotion time. The intimate time you spend with the Lord everyday where you interact with him because you love him. Because you are married to him. Because you want to live in unity with him. This would be a great book to read while we are studying Revelation, read 1 Thessalonians.

#### **1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (esv)**

***13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.***

Paul says, listen, you've got to know what happens to those who die in Christ. So you can grieve. Don't ever imply that a Christian shouldn't grieve at the loss of a loved one. And don't ever as you're grieving over a loss think that Jesus would not have you grieve. Jesus wept for his friend and for his stress on his other friend, Lazarus' sisters. Jesus wept. We can grieve. But we don't grieve like those who have no hope. We grieve with hope because we know that Jesus has conquered death for all those who have put their faith in him. And we know that we are going to be reunited. It's going to be an incredible day when it happens.'

***14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.***

Since, because Jesus has already conquered death and the grave on our behalf, because we know that, through Christ, through his victory we know that God is going to bring with him those who have fallen asleep. That's good news.

Then Paul gets to the point in verse 15.



*15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord (authority), that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.*

*16 For the Lord himself (not angels, not Holy Spirit) will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.*

*17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*

It's coming. I'm telling you, it's coming. And we need to live like it's coming. And if we are not ready for it we need to get ready for it because it is going to happen too fast to get ready when it happens. Notice Jesus doesn't come all the way to earth here. He does a little u-turn. He comes off his throne. Comes down into our atmosphere just close enough so that we can hear him and says, "Come on. Come up here." And we are caught up to meet him and those who have died in Christ, in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord, together.

I don't really know how much we will recognize those who have died in Christ. I know that Jesus recognized the prophets who had died when he saw them on the Mount of Transfiguration. And there are other places in the Bible where we recognize (the core disciples) Moses and Elijah too. So, I don't really know about that. But, I think we are going to recognize each other. That's just a personal thing.

Then Paul closes with verse 18

### **1 Thessalonians 4:18 (esv)**

*18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

Listen, we are going to get caught up. We are going to get caught up. Maybe today. I know that circumstance you are in, I know it's tough. I know it's difficult. But it is going to change. It might change by Jesus shouting like a trumpet and calling you home, and that is a great way to change a circumstance. You might say, "Lord I need some money," and he says "How about if you come to heaven instead?" "Okay! This is good!"

Listen guys, we've been deceived into thinking that the greatest blessing is Jesus fixing some temporal, fleeting, soon to vaporize circumstance of this world. Listen, Jesus came for this. He came to conquer sin and death in the grave so that you can be called home to be with him forever. That's why he came. And out of his love and out of his mercy he still works in your circumstances, but it is to prepare you for this. It is to use you to get other people to come with you. Jesus loves you. He is involved in your circumstances, but this is the victory. This is the big victory.

Here is the process, just so we get it clear. The Lord descends from heaven with a cry of command, voice of the archangel, trumpet call of God. The dead in Christ get their

resurrection bodies, and then we are caught up with him together to meet the Lord in the air. And then we are all together with the Lord forever. That is a happy ending. Listen, the only real happy ending on this earth is going to heaven.

1 Corinthians Chapter 15. You need to know the main rapture scriptures. If someone says the rapture isn't in the Bible you need to know where to go.

**1 Corinthians 15:51 (esv)**

***51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,***

The context is about the rapture.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53 (esv)**

***51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.***

The dead get their resurrection bodies. We are transformed into ours, all at the same time.

***53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.***

This is the victory! Paul goes on to say that this is the moment that even the sting of death is taken away. When the perishable puts on imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, death is taken away in Christ. Even the sting of death is taken away. But I need you to hear this. It is not universal. *It is not universal.* Look at verse 57.

**1 Corinthians 15:57 (esv)**

***57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

We want it to be universal. We want “all dogs to go to heaven.” But the Bible says Jesus has to be your way. He is the way, he is the truth. He is the life. It's in Christ that this victory is won. It is in Christ that you're part of the rapture and no other way. And we need to understand that, and we need to understand it now for then. And so I would just say that again, if you haven't made Jesus Christ your Lord, today is a great day. Today is a great day for salvation, to make sure that his victory becomes yours, so that when the rapture happens you are counted in the number and your name is written in the book of life.

Why? Because listen. The whole world benefits from the Holy Spirit's presence on earth. The whole world. Believers and unbelievers benefit from the presence of God on this earth. But listen, the Bible, the New Testament teaches very clearly, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We house the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is at work in the world for the Church, the ECCLESIA, the called out ones, the believers. And when the believers are gone for the most part, the Holy Spirit is going with us. Chuck Smith calls it taking the

lid off. The Holy Spirit is the restraining power of evil of this world. And when the true believers who are the temple of the Holy Spirit are taken away, I'm not cussing when I tell you that all hell will break loose on this earth. Because the Holy Spirit will be, for the most part, gone.

Now, there are still people who get saved, and we can't get saved without the Holy Spirit. And so we recognize that the Holy Spirit is still here for the witnesses and for those who get saved during the tribulation. But listen, that's not a good time to get saved. Okay? If you have to choose to get saved now or get saved in the tribulation, trust me – stick around when we get into Chapter 6 and following – you'll be thinking going into the rapture is better. So here is the point; When the Holy Spirit leaves, the salt and light that Matthew 5 says that we are is gone. The presence, the temple of the Holy Spirit is gone. When we leave. And that is probably, if you think about it, a kind of a kick start to the tribulation. All Christians being removed simultaneously, instantly. There are some that believe that the reason that the United States is primarily not specifically mentioned in prophecy (and they are optimists, I guess) they say that there are so many Christians in the United States that this country is going to fall apart, because all of our best people are Christians. And I want to believe that, but I will tell you this. That when the Christians leave, this world is going to break down bad. And it could easily lead into the tribulation period. In fact we believe that it will.

Here's the question. How should the rapture impact your life? I talked to you about the academic stuff. And the academic stuff is fine. But listen. Don't make prophecy some interesting conversation. This is about eternal life and eternal death. This isn't about turning people's names into numbers and other crazy stuff. This is about life and death. And I promise you the rapture will impact your life. If you're a believer, you are either going up in the rapture or you're getting your glorified body in the rapture if you die before then. If you are an unbeliever, if you're alive you are staying. If you are dead and not in Christ it's not good. The rapture is going to impact your life.

Let's start with the believer. If you are a believer today, here's my question to you. Are you looking for, straining toward – the picture in the Greek is stretching your neck – the glorious appearing of our Savior, the Son of God? Does it drive your life? Are you so caught up with minute things, the details of your life? What you want is you want to go when Jesus says come! That's what you want. You want to be ready to go. You want to be straining your neck, looking for the glorious appearing of your Savior. It drives you. *It drives you.* And then you can say “yes Lord, I need you involved in these circumstances but I know you're coming. I know you are coming any minute. And so yeah, my circumstances are tough, but I am looking for you, I am straining the neck for you.”

If you are a believer, the question is are you eagerly waiting to hear the trumpet call?

Or, is Jesus going to be like, “Come on, let go. Come on it’s time to go!” (That is purely not theologically based!) But to me Jesus is going to be like “Listen, your roots are so deep into this world, I’m going to have to get a jackhammer or chainsaw or something and cut your roots off so you can come.” I’m just saying. I’m just saying keep light on your feet. Don’t grow your roots too deep in this world because Jesus is going to shout and you want to be in launch position. Just kind of have your knees bent, and say “Okay Lord, I’m ready!”

Revelation 3:20 says our citizenship is in heaven from which we eagerly await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. We are eagerly awaiting. Living in the rapture position.

If you haven’t made Jesus Christ your Lord today, the rapture is a good reason to consider the fact that you are a sinner and that your sin requires the judgment of God. It requires it. *It requires it.* And that judgment either has to fall on you or fall on Jesus Christ in your place. And you’re the one who gets to make the choice. And we realize there are people who will refuse that. They will choose to be left behind. They will choose to take the judgment of God over the forgiveness and salvation offered freely in Christ. I am encouraging you today, don’t do that. *Don’t do that.* Acknowledge that you are a sinner today. Acknowledge that you deserve the judgment of God. Receive his forgiveness freely and make him Lord so you can say honestly, “Lord when you come, I’m ready.” That is how you should respond to the rapture.

Let’s pray. *Heavenly Father we pray that you would give us by your Spirit the ability to believe. The faith to believe. Pour out your Spirit right now. Convict our hearts. For those of us who call you Lord, may you put the image of the rapture clearly in our mind. May we live for that day. In the midst of everything that we are doing, may we always have one eye on the horizon, one ear pointed to heaven waiting to hear your call. And Lord if you are not the Lord of any life listening, I pray right now that you would reveal that. That you would speak. That your Spirit would convict and that we would respond.*

I am going to give you a chance to receive Christ. Because what matters is that you are there on that day. The only way you can do that is receive the forgiveness and the righteousness that is in Christ. You repent of your sin. You receive Jesus Christ as Savior. You make him Lord, which means you follow him. You surrender your life and take up his. You live for him, allow him to live in you and then you just walk above the ground just waiting for God to move. Waiting for him to call you home. If you need to do that, do it now. Cry out to him now. Just say,

*Lord, I need that. This is something I need. I need to be there on that day. I know I deserve your judgment. I thank you Lord that I am still alive today to receive your forgiveness and to make you my Lord. I just make you my Lord right now, Jesus. Come into my life; fill me with your Holy Spirit. Make it real every day. Speak to me every day. Reveal yourself to me every day. And send me a disciple maker to teach me how to follow*

*you. Thank you Lord. Thank you for saving us. Thank you for making a place for us. And thank you that you are about to return to receive us to yourself. In Jesus' name, amen.*