

Our scripture reading this morning is from Colossians, chapter 1, verses 15 through 20.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.

All things were created through him and for him.

And he is before all things.

And in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Good morning.

How many of you are nervous?

Because I'm extra nervous now that that just closed.

I am thankful, though, that I don't have to worry about the raging fire off to my left that was happening.

You could even see that on the live stream.

All right.

How many of you, as I'm going to bumble through, I can't believe I did that.

Makes it even worse.

Hold on.

How many of you like a good story?

Most of us like a good story, right?

Like there's things that stand out.

I'm trying to do two things at once.

I apologize.

Let me pull this up before I try.

Nope, that's not it.

I know I should have saved this to my desktop.

Well, this is the last time Pastor Nate asks me to fill in last minute.

All right, I think we're cooking with gas here.

There it is, there it is.

You know, all things work together for good.

All right.

Good morning, did I say that already?

All right, so how many of us like a good story?

Most of us do, right?

Whether we're watching a movie, whether we're reading a book, whether it's a graphic novel, something like that draws our attention.

Maybe it's the plot.

Maybe you're big into the plot, the narrative.

Maybe it's the soundtrack, just that reverb of sound that just puts everything together, that just allows everything to just be memorable.

You're humming it for weeks afterwards.

Maybe it's the breathtaking scenery.

the grandeur of just looking at something and seeing how majestic it is.

And you love movies like that, where you love how when you read a book, how you can just almost flip through the pages as you're viewing it.

Maybe for some of you, if you're like Kirk, you love an action-packed movie with a strong male lead.

I love Hallmark.

Some of you love Hallmark.

Some of you are big into suspense or comedy.

Things stand out in movies, right?

Things stand out as we read a book.

And in many cases, a character, an individual in the story, is what stands out more than the plot, than the scenery, than the sound.

How many of us can relate to that?

We try sometimes even living this out in our own lives.

After we watch a movie, we're like, I want to be like that person.

And so we begin imitating that.

the person we just read about, the person that we just watched.

We take on characteristics that we think were important or valuable from that individual, and we start trying to live those things out in our life.

Maybe on a smaller scale, we wish that their life could be ours.

Maybe in other ways, after we're finished reading or after we are finished watching, we go out and we react in some way.

Some of us have probably watched the movie Marley and Me.

Some of us are crying immediately as I mention that story.

But it's a story that causes you to go out, to love on your current dog, or to have fond memories of a past pet.

How many of you probably were a fan of the Lone Ranger back in the day?

So you turned off the radio, you turned off the TV, and you found your razy red Ryder BB gun, lever action, mind you, you shot up some soda cans, and saved the day with your trusty friend.

Some of us maybe grew up watching Lucille Ball, watching skits of Robin Williams or Will Ferrell, and we know Pastor Nate loves a good Steve Carell show now and then.

You know, working on those one-liners, working on the things that are memorable that can maybe make us stand out in a crowd or with our friends.

This morning, we're going to look at something that's far more important than any of that.

We're going to be looking at a story that

We're going to be looking at a character that is greater than any character that has ever been written by man, that has ever been portrayed on the big screen or in a graphic novel.

The main character that we're going to be talking about is God.

Spoiler, it's not us.

Spoiler, it's not the people that are in the Bible.

We may read stories of Abraham.

We may read stories of Joseph, of David, of the Apostle Paul.

And though they are important, they are not the main character of their story.

And many times we can get confused by that.

And we're going to unpack that a little bit this morning.

And we're going to be using the seven C's from Answers in Genesis as a little bit of a framework, as a guide to help us as we go through this.

The seven C's, I believe that they're going to be on the screen here

is creation, corruption, catastrophe, confusion, Christ, the cross, and consummation.

So will you buckle down with me this morning?

And as we kick off here, let us pray.

Gracious God, Lord, you are a good God.

You are an awesome God.

Lord, we are thankful.

And we're in awe and we're humbled by your majesty.

Lord, may we strip self aside.

May we lift you up.

And Lord, during this time, Lord, may you give me the words.

May you give me a softened heart to hear what you have to say.

May us, as we're gathered here together...

Lord, may we see your face.

May we have a desire to know you more, to put you in that place that you rightly deserve.

And Lord, may you work in our hearts and in our minds and in our lives, even this morning as we go from this place.

Amen.

Creation.

Let's start with creation.

The first C that we have.

Genesis 1.1.

If you want to turn to Genesis, we're going to be in Genesis a little bit.

We're going to be flipping around.

I have a lot of scripture that we're going to be looking at, and so I will try to allow for you to keep up with me.

Some of it will be on the screen.

I do apologize if my bullet points are a little bit small, but I will try to correlate and share what is up there.

Genesis 1.1.

In the beginning, God created...

In the beginning, God created.

So right off the bat, right at the beginning, our biblical framework is built, is put forth.

God was.

Now for us that sat through this summer during the principles of Bible study, we were looking at, or if you've ever done any Bible study, you know that there's different words that the English use.

Language does not translate extremely well or really show the meaning behind it.

And this is one of those cases where when we look at the Hebrew, and relax, I'm not going to be taking us through a big Hebrew lesson this morning, although we will look at a couple words.

I think it's important.

And I think it reveals more about who God is when we look at the Hebrew in this sense.

In the beginning, God created.

The Hebrew writes it as Bereshit bara Elohim.

Bereshit bara Elohim.

The placement of Bereshit here shows an emphasis on the beginning, on a headship, the source of all new beginnings.

The word there, bereshit, right in the middle you see the word resh, which is meaning the head, the headship.

And bet, first part, and the last part of bereshit is the meaning of in or at.

So right off the bat, right at the beginning, we see that there's this headship in God at the beginning.

And it actually foreshadows to Revelations 1.18.

where it references the Alpha and the Omega, at the beginning and at the end.

So we have Bereshit.

In the middle is this headship, is this beginning.

But it's the beginning at the beginning and at the end.

In between that is this headship of God.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

God is the ultimate source.

He's the originator, sustainer of all things.

And he's setting the table for what is to come.

Barah, the next word that we have there, is Hebrew for create.

Uniquely used only for an act that God performs.

We also see this again in Psalms 51 verse 10.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

we see that only God can create something new.

Only God can generate a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us.

He is the only one who is capable of bringing forth life.

No matter how hard we are trying, and we try hard as people, don't we, to make things perfect, we're not the ones who bring forth a new creation.

We're not the ones that bring forth the new concept or even a repentant heart.

God is the orchestrator of all new things.

Barashit Baro Elohim.

Elohim is a grammatically plural noun coming from the base of Eloah, showing that from the beginning, God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit was there.

The Trinity was not a created position or a status.

As it shows here, they have always been.

And they've been working in unison since the beginning of time.

The originator, the sustainer, God in the Trinity, together with the Son and the Holy Spirit.

So here we see our first see.

We see God's wonder and his majesty.

God's creation is a showcase of order and design.

From the insects to the galaxies, from the dinosaurs to the hummingbird, from the dust of the ground to the beating of man's heart.

God's power on full display.

Creation gives glory to God, and we see this.

It shouts its praises.

Psalms 19.1 says, Heavens declare the glory of God, and the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

We also see where Jesus refers to this in Luke 19, verse 40.

And Jesus stated that if the people remained silent during his entry into Jerusalem, who would cry out?

The rocks would cry out.

Creation would cry out to the Son of God and give him praise.

Man, we have sometimes minimized or eliminated God's role in creation.

But also in our own lives.

We look at what we have done, what we have brought forth, the fruit of our hands.

But who truly brings these things into being?

Who brings these concepts?

Who fulfills the work of our hands?

It's God.

And God will continue to do these things as he holds all things in his hands.

The second C that we'll look at this morning is corruption.

Corruption.

And I want you to think about as we go through this sea, as we go through corruption, is this something where we're living in?

Are we living in this state?

This is where sin and death enters the picture.

Some of you are in Genesis 1.

If you want to flip over to Genesis chapter 3, just over a page, we're going to look at the fall.

I'm going to start in verse 1.

And now the spirit was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord had made.

He said to the woman, Did God actually say you shall eat of any tree in the garden?

And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.

And she also gave to her husband who was with her and he ate.

Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and

And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you?

Here we have death entering the picture.

Sin and death.

Romans 5.8 carries this same tone.

It says, Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, Adam, the first Adam, and death through sin...

And so death spread to all men, because all have sinned.

I don't know if you realize this or not, but if you are reading this here in Genesis, death did not exist before Genesis chapter 3.

Death did not exist in creation.

If we look back at Genesis 1 verse 29, it says,

in verse 29.

So animals weren't killing animals.

Men were eating

It was basically an endless supply of Panera salads to all of creation.

But here, we have death that ruins that.

Death and sin enters the picture.

Their relationship, mankind's relationship, is broken.

The eyes of man were opened.

Their childlike innocence was gone, and a new awareness now stood in its place.

The sweet communion they once experienced is now filled with a sense of guilt and vulnerability.

A longing to hide from exposure rises within them.

The fear of being found presses in around them.

Shame causes it hard to breathe.

Insecurity causes them to cast accusations on others.

The scene reeks of despair and unworthiness.

Is there any way of escaping this corrupted state, this corrupted being?

Where could an escape come from?

Could anything heal this corrupted state?

You know, maybe this is the scene.

I don't think maybe, I think it is the scene where the great deceiver wants us to linger.

This is where Satan wants us to sit in a sense of hopelessness and unworthiness.

Satan wants us to find our identity in that.

Why?

Because he doesn't want us to continue reading

He doesn't want us to see what God is doing next.

In Genesis 3.21, God provides a covering for his people.

God's care, his provision continues despite man's sin.

God's provision, God's care for you, for me, continues even in our sin.

God's grace abounds.

We see a sacrifice was made.

A sacrifice was required.

An animal needed to die in order for these coverings to be made.

We see in Genesis 3, the fig leaves that man made did not work.

They were insufficient.

They failed.

They tried to cover their nakedness.

They tried to cover their insecurities.

They tried to cover what they had done that was wrong.

But it was insufficient.

God's covering was needed.

God's covering was needed, and that was the only way to truly and adequately cover their nakedness.

God, in his mercy and in his grace, took the initiative to provide a covering for humanity's sin, even after their disobedience, even after our disobedience.

God provides escape, or maybe a better way to put it, he provides restoration from the corrupted state of sin.

We move on to the next one here.

We have catastrophe.

Do we focus on catastrophe?

We talked about do we live here?

Do we linger here?

This is do we focus here?

Because of corruption, a judgment is necessary.

Okay, so here's some audience participation for you that are under 30.

What is the next catastrophe

The next bad thing that happened after the fall.

What is, what is, you think, the catastrophe?

Under 30.

Gotta be loud.

I see a hand.

That is one.

Yes, I even have that in my notes that I would have a green boy say that the first homicide would be

From an unrepentive heart of anger and bitterness.

But there is a much larger catastrophe.

What would that be?

A much larger catastrophe after Cain and Abel.

Sin is causing this.

It's rearing its big head.

It deals with a lot of water.

The flood.

Yes, the flood.

The flood.

is the great catastrophe that we'll look at here.

We have here in Genesis chapter 6...

Verse 5, And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.

So the Lord said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.

Verse 8, but Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

The wickedness of man grew so great a catastrophe was required.

As we see here that God grieved to his heart.

We're going to look here at the Hebrew again.

Of he grieved into his heart.

This is not a human regret.

A human regret of making a mistake.

And like us believers.

or me, drinking two large chocolate milkshakes.

That would be a human regret that I would have after that.

It's not going up to your crush and completely making a fool of yourself.

Or maybe it's missing an important meeting or meetup because you forgot to put it on your calendar.

Those are all human regrets.

Those are all human things of feeling remorse.

But this is totally different than that.

A lot of times we'll put our

emotional response, and paint God into a picture, into a corner of reacting how we would react.

But that's not what is happening here.

In the Hebrew, the word nakam signifies a deep sorrow or move to compassion.

He's grieved to his heart, uses the Hebrew word also later on, astav, meaning a deep mental or emotional pain and sorrow.

So he grieved, that first part, as he was moved to a deep sorrow, a deep compassion.

In his heart, it's referring to this deep mental and emotional turmoil that he is experiencing, that he has.

We see a double down now of God and his immense love looking down on his people.

Like a parent who in great pain, in great sorrow, is witnessing a child falling prey to something horrible.

The flood, we see here this catastrophe, shows both God's justice and his compassion.

As we saw before, God is not controlled by this world.

He wasn't caught off guard by the deception of the serpent.

He has a plan, a redemptive plan, and in that plan, there must be judgment.

There is a catastrophe here.

It is necessary.

Some of us, and maybe we've had friends that say, how can a loving God provide judgment or issue judgment?

How can he be loving?

Well, it's necessary.

Sin cannot go unpunished.

Proverbs 11, verse 21 states, Romans 6, 23,

But the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sin cannot go unpunished.

And it's also this judgment is justified as God is the sovereign king and the creator.

2 Corinthians 5 verse 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body whether good or evil.

Psalms 9, 7-8 continues this idea, this truth that God is a sovereign king and creator.

But the Lord sits enthroned forever.

He has established his throne for justice.

And he judges the world with righteousness.

And he judges the people with uprightness.

So we see that judgment is necessary.

Judgment is justified today.

And it's appropriate to God's plan.

John Piper explains it this way.

So allow me to read a quote from John Piper.

If I spank my son for blatant disobedience and he runs away from home because I spanked him, I may feel some remorse over the spanking.

Not in the sense that I disapprove of what I did, but in the sense that I feel some sorrow that the spanking was necessary and part of a wise way of dealing with my son in this situation.

and in great sorrow that he ran away.

And if I had to do it over again, I would still spank him.

It was the right thing to do, even knowing that one consequence would be alienation for a season.

I approve the spanking from one angle, and at the same time I regret the spanking from another angle.

If such combination of emotions is possible for me in my finite decisions, it is not hard for me to imagine

that God's infinite mind, the infinite complexity of God's emotional life, would be capable of something similar or even more complex.

Are we witnessing God's mercy and his grace today?

Do we see that around us?

Do we see that in our life?

Are we receiving God's forgiveness of sins?

Or do we find ourselves running from God this morning?

Are we shrinking away from

riddled with fear, insecurity, and guilt.

We see in Isaiah chapter 30 of a rebellious people, God's people, the nation of Judah.

They hear the instructions, the promises of God, but they don't turn to that.

They turn instead to Egypt, and they choose Egypt for protection and for care, which leads to calamity.

Are we trying to find a means to

outside of God that leads to salvation?

Maybe our mantra or your mantra today is like Bon Jovi's song, It's My Life.

I'm not going to sing it for you this morning, but I do have a phrase here.

It's my life.

It's now or never.

I ain't going to live forever.

I just want to live while I'm alive.

It's my life.

My heart is like the open highway.

Like Frankie said, I did it my way.

I just want to live while I'm alive.

It's my life.

Apart from God, we can stand cold and defiant, singing, It's my life.

I'll live it my way.

But scripture shows and says that life comes from God alone.

Acts 17.28 says, In him we live and move and have our being.

Our days are not our own, nor are they sustained by our will.

True life is found not in living for ourselves, but in surrendering to the one who gives life and holds it in his hands.

Once again, God provides deliverance and an opportunity for life as he sustained Noah's life during the flood.

By showing him favor, by showing him grace, allowed him to build an ark, preserving humanity and establishing a new covenant between

with the rainbow of promise.

Do not miss God's promise.

Do not miss God's provided deliverance that he is offering you today.

He offers life.

This leads us to our fourth C, confusion.

We see Satan trying to cling on.

We get confused quite quickly, don't we?

We're a fickle little group of human beings.

We shift our focus from God to ourself in just an instant, at the snap of a finger.

Remember the characters from earlier, the Marley and me, the Steve Carells?

How many of us wanted to be someone that we weren't?

We've watched a movie, and all of a sudden we believe that we're Ethan Hunt, and we can be anyone, be anywhere, do anything that we want.

We want a better marriage, so we start looking at others instead of seeking out the needs of our spouse.

We want better kids, so we hand them off to the professionals to fix them.

We think we deserve a better job, so we no longer give our current job our best.

We know better than the mentor or the pastor, so we could quickly check out and deal with matters that count.

We have a better understanding of what is right

And what is acceptable in this modern age.

So we do not go to the Bible for guidance.

These things and much more was probably happening during the Tower of Babel.

In Genesis 11.

We see this account of where man thought they were better than God.

They wanted to be like God.

Genesis 11.6 says nothing that they proposed to do.

This isn't saying that man is capable of doing the impossible.

It's a hyperbole.

Saying that everything that they were coming up with, anything that they could imagine, it was going to continually get worse and worse and worse.

As they were unified together, they were connected, and their heart was only towards their self.

Their heart was only striving for things that weren't pleasing to God.

It's not a literal statement that they were able to do the things that were impossible.

But God perceived their unity as leading to an extreme defiance against his holiness.

This was a direct defiant act against God's instruction that he handed out in Genesis 8, verse 17.

Which he says in Genesis 8, 17, Bring out with you...

every living thing that is with you of all flesh.

This is speaking to Noah.

Birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may swarm on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.

So we see that there is this command, this instruction from God to, you've survived this catastrophe.

You are now to go and to swarm and to spread over this world.

But we see that they didn't.

That many of them conglomerated together after so many years and saying, no, we have a better plan.

We have a better idea.

We're going to be like God.

And we're going to do what we want to do.

As in the example of the early catastrophe that we looked at, God continues to work as he directs all creation to look to him as a sovereign leader.

Isaiah 60 says,

Verse 19 to 22.

The sun shall be no more.

Your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light.

But the Lord will be your everlasting light.

And your God will be your glory.

Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself.

For the Lord will be your everlasting light.

And your days of mourning shall be ended.

Your people shall be righteous.

They shall possess the land forever.

The branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.

The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation.

I am the Lord, and it's time I will hasten it.

We have all walked through a season of confusion, haven't we?

We've all walked through a season wondering, where are you, God?

We wonder where God's at work.

Why things are happening in such a fashion.

Maybe that's where we're at right now.

And we're trying to make that solution.

We're trying to come up and create that plan.

We're putting ourselves in the place of who God is.

We are blinded, but God uses the catastrophes.

God uses the confusion, the things around us for good.

In 1 Corinthians 1, verse 26 says, For consider your calling, brothers.

Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards.

Not many were powerful.

Not many were of noble birth, but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are.

So that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

So that it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.

Are we boasting in the Lord this morning?

I hope we are.

I hope that as a people of God, our boast is not in ourselves, puffing our chest up, but that we're boasting in the work of God.

This leads us to hope and love personified in the work of Christ, our fifth C. The narrative has led us to this point

In God's timing.

In the fullness of time, God provided his son.

Habakkuk 2, 1-4, but highlighting verse 3, says,

God is at work.

In the fullness of time, God will reveal himself.

In the fullness of time, God provides.

God is never early.

God is never late.

At the perfect time in history, he sent his son.

And likewise, at the perfect time in history, he calls to himself his own children.

And he orchestrates their days.

We're reminded of this again in Genesis with Noah.

Noah.

In Genesis 8-1, but God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark.

And God made a wind blow over the earth and the waters subsided.

God didn't forget Noah.

God didn't forget him on the boat in the middle of the sea.

But in his perfect timing, he sent that wind and the waters subsided.

Remember the catastrophe, the flood, the judgment.

Before that, the broken relationship between humankind and God.

God did not forsake, did not leave Adam, did not leave Noah hanging to their demise.

But he has provided a way through his love and through his grace to save them.

And through that same love and through that same grace, he has provided a means to save each one of us.

Jesus Christ came to live, and not only to live, but to live the perfect life, fulfilling God's promise to redeem humanity.

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people

should be kept alive as they are today.

We see in Genesis 50 in the story of Joseph, which is one of those stories that we can very easily just quickly read through and think of Joseph and everything he went through and commiserate with him and feel sorry for him, losing sight of he's just a person in the story and that God is the main character.

God is at work providing things that were meant for evil for Joseph, God meant for good.

God was working in Joseph's life.

God is working in our lives.

Christ, God's son, who was there at creation, as we read in Colossians, he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.

All things were created through him and for him.

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

And through him to reconcile to himself all things, which on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Christ, God's Son, who was there at creation, the redemptive method to counteract the corruption of sin, as we see in Romans chapter 6, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Christ, God's Son, who was there at creation, the redemptive method to counteract the corruption of sin,

who took the judgment due mankind for those that put their faith in him.

As we read continually in Romans 6, verse 25, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance, he has passed over former sins.

And it was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and

and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Christ lived the perfect life that we could not live.

For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 5.8, but God shows his love for us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Through Christ, God provides redemption

and salvation, which leads us to the next sea, which leads us to the cross.

Remember in Genesis 3, where Adam and Eve attempted to cover their sins, to run from their guilt?

The fig leaves were insufficient, but God was able to provide a sufficient covering.

Jesus, the Messiah, as a central figure in the scriptures, reveals God's saving work and his character.

We can read through the scriptures about characters and individuals, wars, famines, captivity, pain and sorrow.

And in every instance, each and every one, God was at work.

His character, his patience, his forgiveness, his justice, his love, his faithfulness was on display.

That was the framework.

That was the backbone in each and every instance.

The narrative, whether it was historical or poetic, has led us to the gospel, to the good news.

It has led us to Jesus, to the foot of the cross.

The cross, it displays, it represents to us God's grace, his forgiveness, and his love.

poured out for us, poured out for humankind.

It shows also that a judgment was necessary because of this sin.

A judgment, a penalty that we could not pay.

2 Timothy 1, verse 8 and 9 and 10.

Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling.

not because of works, but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and mortality to life through the gospel.

Death is defeated on the cross.

Life, abundant life, is found in Jesus.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him, we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

The corruption of sin is abolished by Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection three days later.

God demonstrates his power over sin and the grave

And in doing so, provides us, provides humankind with the hope of eternal life.

Sin's penalty was paid in full by Jesus Christ.

The lyrics of Bon Jovi's song might still be ringing through our head.

I just want to live while I'm alive.

But it's a sad reminder that in this world, we can never truly be alive.

God has provided a rescue from death through the cross.

Have we accepted God's mercy?

Have we accepted God's plan of recovery and rescue?

Do you know him this morning as your personal savior?

Only a perfect man could pay for our rebellion, could pay and redeem the corruption that's in man's heart.

So Jesus came as a man, died on the cross for you, for me, for all of mankind.

True life,

True life is found in him.

This leads us to the final stage of restoration.

This promise that is yet to come leads us to the final seventh, to the final and seventh C, consummation.

Consummation, God's plan fulfilled.

God promises a new heaven and a new earth.

The world that we live in, the fallen, corrupt, the constant what may appear as catastrophes around us will be no more.

Revelation 21, verses 2, 3, and 4.

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people.

And God himself will be with them as their God.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore.

For the former things have passed away.

Oh, glorious day.

Oh, glorious day.

May it be soon.

May we look forward to it.

1 Corinthians 15.

Verse 50, And I tell you this, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the perishable.

And as we continue through to the next following verses,

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed 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.

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

When the perishable puts on imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality,

Then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?

The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law.

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

Christ's second coming will establish a new heavens and a new earth, ushering in an ultimate restoration where we're able to glorify God in perfect union as the original creation intended.

The first creation was created by God and

was created by God and Adam was given authority over it.

But he rebelled and brought God's judgment of death and suffering, the curse, upon the world.

We have seen how corruption requires a toll in which we could not pay.

Humankind continued to stray from God as an effect of the curse, which led to a catastrophe and confusion.

However, God's plan brought Christ to this earth

to live the perfect life that we could not live, providing a cure for the curse and for corruption, a correction from confusion, and a calm to the catastrophe.

One day, he will return and put an end to death, to disease and suffering and the curse, and all who receive his forgiveness will dwell eternally forever with him in the new heaven and the new earth.

Let us rejoice this morning.

Let us be glad in all that God has done and that he will do.

Do we believe in that?

Do we praise him?

Do we give him the praise that is his, that he deserves?

May we read the Bible with fresh eyes.

May we view our lives with him as the one who's in control.

May we submit ourselves in humility to his will.

knowing and trusting that from creation to the end of time, God is there sustaining, holding things together in his righteousness and in his power and in his faithfulness.

Let us not lose sight that God is the main character.

He is the MC.

He is the master and commander of our lives and of all time.

during this Christmas season, throughout this year, from beginning to end.

He alone offers life.

Let's pray.

Gracious God, Lord, we are so thankful for your word, for your love, for the life that we can have in you.

Lord, we submit these words, we submit this time to you.

May you be lifted up.

May you be glorified.

We love you.

We cherish you.

We thank you.

Amen.