

What Are You Looking Forward To?

Tim Moore

Presented at Brookhaven Church, McKinney, Texas

April 25, 2021

Tim Moore: Wow, what a wonderful day it is to be here in the house of the Lord! And how wonderful it is to already be led into His presence by a worship team like you all have here at Brookhaven. So, good morning. I do great you in the name of Jesus our soon returning King. And I have to tell you I have been so excited to come here this morning. Thrilled to be able to follow in the footstep of Glenn Meredith, and Nathan Jones as we continue this four-part series on Living in the Last Days. And I am glad to be able to kind of wrap that up this morning.

But as I reflected on that, and speaking of living in the last days, I realized that our ability to get excited about things to come, depends upon our appreciation of a situation.

Now, I'll give you an example of how I came to realize this. I served for a number of years in the Kentucky Legislature. And while I was there several of the legislatures from eastern Kentucky, up in the hill country, had interesting stories. And one in particular told me about an old fella that lived way up in the hills and was an avid hunter. You see he had hunting dogs and they lived right in the house with him. But one time he came down to town, and he approached the Baptist pastor and said, "Pastor, I need a favor from you." And the pastor said, "Alright, Joe, what can I do for you?" And he said, "Well, my favorite hunting dog, Old Blue has died, and I'd like you to preach his funeral." The Pastor said, "Well, Joe we don't typically do dog funerals at the Baptist church. That's just not something we really have ever done. You might go talk to the folks at the Pentecostal church, the Church of God, maybe even the United Methodist, they might do a dog funeral. But I don't do that sort of thing." Joe thought about it and said, "Alright." He said, "What do you think a dog funeral ought to cost? You think \$5,000-\$6,000 is enough." And the pastor said, "Hold on just a minute! You didn't tell me that was a Baptist dog. That changes the whole situation." You see that pastor did not initially appreciate the potential of his situation.

And I dare say, brothers and sisters, that we don't often appreciate our situation. I'm convinced that our ability to appreciate, and look forward to the things to come, whether it be the Rapture of the Church, the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, the Second Coming, the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ, or even the Eternal State that we can look forward to, depends entirely on our appreciation of our situation.

So, with that in mind, let me ask you a question this morning: What are you looking forward to? I want you to think about that.

I had several weeks to think about what I'm looking forward to. And admittedly I've been looking forward to being here with you here this morning. I always look forward to coming to Brookhaven, to sharing in the fellowship, I have many friends already here at this congregation. I look forward to the preaching of the Word under Pastor Glenn, and others who bring messages here at Brookhaven. And I look forward to the warm spirit of fellowship that you all have. As I look forward to coming today I reflected on what Paul wrote to the church in Rome, as he looked forward to being with them. He said, "For I long to see you so that I may impart

some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine." (Romans 1:11-12) And indeed, I have been looking forward, to being encouraged, and to hopefully being an encouragement to you this morning.

But there are other things that I look forward to. Every year I look forward to Christmas. I look forward to the family traditions that we have in the Moore family, both in my extended family, and my growing immediate family. I look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ at His First Advent. And I look forward to all the wonderful times that we have as a church family gathering together to celebrate our Lord and Savior at His birthday.

But as I have gotten a little bit older I look forward to other things as well. I began, a few years ago, to think, how long is it until I hit, quote on quote, retirement age? And having said that I don't ever plan to retire really, but I will be changing jobs. So, I had my computer start a countdown. I can tell you as of today there are 4,109 days until I turn 65. There are actually 1,907 days until I turn 60. So, you can see I've given a little thought. Some of you who are already retired can recollect looking forward to that blessed event. And those of you who are still working, well, you might not have counted the days, but you get the idea.

Since last fall my family has been looking forward to the arrival of grandchild number three. The day after my son deployed overseas for a number of months he and his wife found out that they were expecting. So, Caleb and Lauren, who are stationed in Idaho are expecting a son. We have affectionately nicknamed him "Tater Tot" and he is due to arrive next month. Fortunately, my son did make it home in time to be here for that blessed event.

I'm already looking forward to this fall because last month my daughter told me that baby number four is on the way. We don't know if it is a little boy, or a little girl, but you can see our immediate family is expanding. So, sometime this November there will be additional joy added.

I've been looking forward to the transition that we are undergoing at Lamb & Lion Ministries. This has been a many months process, as Dr. Reagan has mentored, and brought me along to follow in his very large footsteps. For a while we were planning on making that happen in September, but he has asked me to accelerate that transition, and so our date will be June 1st, and that is only 37 days from today, or about 890 hours, for those who might be counting.

But more than all of that I am looking forward to the Rapture of the Church.

Now, let me just say this, I only am looking forward to it because I believe with all my heart that it could happen at any moment. If I didn't believe that. If I didn't have an expectation that the Lord is going to snatch us away in the twinkling of an eye, I wouldn't be looking forward to it. It would be like a surprise birthday party; it's impossible to look forward to a surprise birthday party. Or maybe to look forward to grandchild number five or six. Now, let me just say, I've never had a surprise birthday party, and I don't really expect to have one. And although there probably will be another grandchild at some point in my life, it's hard to get excited about something that is theoretical or unknown.

But as, Nathan Jones shared with you last week regarding the Rapture, it is something that we should grasp as imminent. And so, it is something that gives us hope. And let me just say even as I've used the word hope, it's not like the world would use the word hope. The world when they say, "I hope something would happen." They mean, well, that would be nice if it happens, but we don't know if that is going to happen.

Well, I am more sure of the Rapture, then I am of my own flesh and bones standing here in front of you. I'm more sure that Jesus Christ is coming then I am of anything else in this life, and I hope you are as well. Paul put it this way when speaking of our Blessed Hope as believers, writing to Titus he wrote, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." (Titus 2:11-13) Now, as Paul wrote that his focus was on Jesus Christ. But notice how he references Jesus, he references him as the grace of God that has appeared, as the bringer of salvation to all men, and as the Blessed Hope who is coming again; soon and very soon. And I am again, am more certain of that hope, then I am of my five senses.

As Nathan shared last week, when the trumpet sounds, all of us who belong to Jesus Christ, who have put our faith in Him, will be caught up to meet Him in the air. In the twinkling of an eye, we will be glorified, trading in these bodies that are admittedly running down, for one that is glorified. We will be like Jesus Christ's body after He was resurrected, for He felt no pain, He could walk through walls, and yet He still enjoyed fellowship and food. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54) In other words, I think we will all be about 29 years old. But regardless, it will be a wonderful moment when we are gathered to be with the Lord.

Revelation 19 goes on to say that then we will be blessed to partake in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. While the world experiences the outpouring of God's wrath, during the Tribulation, we'll be joined with Jesus as His Bride. (Revelation 19:7-9) I can hardly wait. Now, that is something to look forward to. As a matter fact anticipating that glorious homegoing makes me understand why one of my friends often says, "I can't wait until I get some patience." You think about that. But as I thought about anticipating things to come, I realize that there are a few ways that we can react or behave even as we look forward to arriving at an eventual destination.

And to illustrate my point I want you to imagine for a moment that you are traveling in a car filled with children. We've all been there. It doesn't take a lot of imagination. You've either been a child with other siblings in the backseat, or you've had children riding along with you. So, I realize that there are some reactions that our children manifest, that we have manifested at various stages of life, that are kind of common to mankind.

As Glenn mentioned a couple of weeks ago, some kids are so eager that they ask, repeatedly, and annoyingly, "Are we there yet?" Now, in the old days before mandatory seatbelt laws, a child like that would have been the one sitting in the middle of the backseat, bouncing up and down, or leaning over the front seat, asking repeatedly, "Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" And nothing a parent could say whether it is, "No, it is another 300 miles, it won't be until tomorrow," or "If you ask one more time I'm going to stop the car and put you off on the side of the road." Nothing the parent could say can dampen that child's enthusiasm.

For some parents, the experience is completely different, especially as your children reach the teenage years. And yes, we were all there as well, because they often go to sleep, and will not express interest in anything that is going on, inside the car, or outside of the car. When we traveled I always tried to study up on the places we'd travel through, some of the points of interest, and bring those up as we drove. But when my kids were teenagers, I can tell you they really didn't care. Even as a home schooling family that tried to make all of our journeys educational, there was a time when they were completely uninterested in anything going on inside the car or out, and seemingly apathetic even about the destination we were headed toward.

Well, there is a third kind of experience that most of us are familiar with, at least if you've had more than one child. You see because when there is more than one child it is likely that at some point during the trip, especially long trips, fighting will break out in the backseat. Anybody been there? You know this usually starts with fairly innocent infringements on personal space. And those grievances are aired with age old complaints like, "Will you stop touching me!" And eventually those grievances rise to getting parents engaged, like "Mom, will you tell so, and so, to just stop touching me!" And as you know without appropriate parental engagement, eventually there are physical assertions of personal autonomy. We've all been there, to the point where you're ready, again, to pull over on the side of the road and put the whole lot of them out to wait until you come back after the journey is over.

Well, the proper, but rare response when we are traveling as a group, with children, or again folks, with ourselves sometimes, is to engage and use the time productively. In other words, learning what we can learn about the journey itself, and constructively encouraging those who are along with us traveling to a particular destination. That doesn't happen too often. And I'll confess the only time when I can remember me and my siblings, or my own kids acting like angels during a trip was when we were on our way to Disney World, yes the same location that the Meredith's have been the last couple of weeks. Why? Because the wonder, and the joy that we anticipated at being at Disney World made us behave, on our best behavior during the journey.

So, which one of those types describes you and me today, as we are on a journey to a particular destination, but don't really know when we are going to be there? Are you so eager that you can only ask repeatedly, and perhaps annoyingly, "Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" Now, I don't believe that praying earnestly, and often, "Maranatha, come Lord Jesus," is annoying to our God. That's because it was the prayer repeated frequently by the apostles themselves. As a matter of fact, it is also John's rightful response to Jesus promise repeated three times in Revelation 22 that He is coming quickly. Maranatha, come quickly, Lord Jesus. But I'd also emphasize that even though I pray this prayer often, I'm not the one who will decide when Jesus comes.

Aren't you glad that I didn't determine that Jesus should already have come before you put your faith in Him as Lord and Savior? I'm certainly thankful that the Father did not decide to send Him before I had the opportunity to put my trust and faith in Jesus Christ as my Lord.

Well, what about the second response? What about those who are just asleep and uncaring? Sadly, I believe this describes much of the Church in America today. You see to a large degree the Church today is like the Church at Sardis in Revelation chapter 3. Jesus knows our deeds and some churches even have a reputation of being alive. But here's what He said to the church at Sardis, He said, "Wake up! And strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent." (Revelation 3:2) Sometimes we who are kind of snoozing through this journey on our way to Heaven need to wake up, repent, meaning turn back toward the things that remain, in which we have received and heard, and build our own excitement and enthusiasm so we can encourage those with us.

But I have to confess that lately I've witnessed too many examples of the third type of traveler. On that note, perhaps some of us have forgotten the nature of the journey that we are on together and find that we are just annoyed by the constant bumping and jostling of others that are on this journey alongside us.

Now, Brother Glenn, is not here today, but as strong as a community of believers that we have, and you have here at Brookhaven Church I'm sure there have been moments, perhaps, over the last year to year and a half, when there have been certain times of stress, and strain. Perhaps your patience has been tested as you witnessed fellow Christians come to different conclusions regarding a whole host of issues.

So, on that note, I have to tell you a little secret. I've brought with me today, two of the greatest threats to Christian unity that exist in the world right now. One is already on the stage with me, and it is the most deceitful entity I know. And the other has been the source of the greatest discord that I've witnessed in my lifetime. And it is so dangerous that I've got it in a special locked box, and my assistant, Nathan Jones, is going to bring it up here. Well, while he is bringing this dangerous object in the locked box. Thank you, Nathan. I do have the key. Careful, don't let it get out.

Let me just talk for a moment about that most deceitful enemy. You see a lot of people think that Satan is the most deceitful entity that we know. And he does work tirelessly to lead us astray. But Scripture says that the heart is more deceitful than all else. Why? Because it is within me all the time and tends to lead me astray. The Lord said it is desperately sick, and who can understand it? Even believers recognize the sad truth expressed in the Old hymn, "Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the Lord I love." And certainly, I've had times when I've felt that I'm prone to wander. Why? Because I take my eyes off of Jesus Christ, as I'll discuss in a minute.

But in these perilous times another threat has emerged. In just the past 12 months it has become one of the most divisive threats to Christian unity that I've seen in a lifetime, or that I've heard about in the last 100 years. And I have an example here with me today. It is the mask. Yeah. Now, you may scoff, brothers and sisters, but I have seen churches torn asunder, and families split apart by nothing more than different positions regarding COVID mitigation measures. Have you been on social media lately? Have you seen people tearing each other apart on whether or not to wear a mask, whether or not to be vaccinated? And if you think I'm wrong, again, go and check out Facebook, or talk to any pastor who has tried to walk a tight rope, and strike an appropriate balance on encouraging believers, but showing Christian concern toward them as well.

Well, who would have thought that Satan could have sown so much discord with a simple piece of fabric, and a couple of elastic bands? Or that he could send brothers and sisters in Christ into divergent camps, not based on the upholding of core principles of our faith, like the nature and significance of baptism, or the frequency and style of communion, but rather on the wearing of a mask, and getting of a vaccination.

Now, let me just confess, are those important issues? Certainly so. But do they rise to the level of Jesus Immaculate Conception? His sinless life? His death, burial, and resurrection? And His soon return? Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

So, why would we who are a part of the body of Christ, a collective assembly of believers that are called the Bride of Christ begin tearing into each other? Have we become so bored with our Christian walk, or so distracted from the purpose God has for us along this journey that we are reduced to fighting like a bunch of wayward kids in the back seat of a car? Too often that has been the case.

I'd simply encourage all of us, and by the way, yes, this message steps on my toes as well, to keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

When we go to Israel on pilgrimage trips, we go out onto the Sea of Galilee. And I recount the story of Peter. You all remember Peter, he walked on the water. And as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus Christ he stayed on top of the water. But as soon as he took his eyes off Jesus Christ he began to sink into the waves. What caused him to get distracted? You know it is fascinating the Scripture says that he saw the wind. Now, I'll submit to you, you can't see wind. What Peter saw was the effects of the wind. He felt the spray hitting his face. He saw the waves. He maybe felt his cloak flapping against his leg. But all of those things distracted him, and he took his eyes off of the Lord, and He began to sink by losing focus.

Brothers and sisters, with darkness descending all around us in this world, it is absolutely crucial that we maintain our focus, and that we keep our eyes on Jesus Christ.

I'll offer you one other example from Scripture. Glenn began this lesson series on Easter Sunday, what we often now refer to as Resurrection Sunday. And as Christians we remember the glorious morning when the women visiting the tomb discovered that He had risen. So, I ask you today, are we Saturday Christians?

Now you may say, "Well, what do you mean by that?" Let me explain. You see it is easy for us to accept the wonderful truth that He has risen. We are Christians who have never experienced the overwhelming despair of knowing that He has been killed, without also knowing that He has risen. He has risen indeed! But for a moment, I want you to imagine that you are a follower of Jesus Christ, and it is Saturday, Jesus is dead, and hope seems to be snuffed out. Now, you can just consider the behavior of the disciples on Saturday, they were discouraged, distraught, and despairing. And if you think that I am being too dramatic in that statement read the accounts offered to us by the writers of the Gospels. The disciples fled when Jesus was arrested. They denied even knowing Him when accused of being His followers, and they coward in fear as they wondered, what now?

You know when many of His followers had drifted away previously, Jesus asked His closest disciples, if they would also abandon Him. And Peter the first person to confess Jesus as Lord, and as the Son of God, responded, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:68-69) And yet, as his world came crashing down with Jesus' arrest, Peter denied even knowing Jesus, three times, and the other disciples also went into hiding

As we read the Gospel accounts the disciple's anguish, and helplessness is palpable. Following the crucifixion, they did not care for His body. Joseph of Arimathea with the help of Nicodemus did that; taking it down from the cross, wrapping it in a linen cloth, and placing it in his unused tomb. Mark says that the apostles were mourning and weeping. When Mary Magdalene came to tell them that He was alive, they refused to believe it. (Mark 16:10-11) Luke says that the women's testimony appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. (Luke 24:11) Only Peter hoping against hope, ran to the tomb and looked in, and seeing only the linen wrappings he went away marveling. (Luke 24:12) John says that seeing the empty tomb, the rest of the disciples yet did not understand the Scriptures, that He must rise again from the dead, so they went away to their own homes. (John 20:9-10)

Now, you wonder how this retelling of the period between Jesus' death and burial and His resurrection applies to us today? Let's just think about the turmoil and stress many of us have

witnessed, if not endured for the past year. Instead of focusing on our risen Lord and being inspired by our anticipation that He is coming soon, many of us have been distracted by the division, and strife churning the world around us.

So, I have to ask, are we so fixed on the threats, and fears, and annoyances multiplying in the world that we find ourselves even sniping at Christian brothers, and sisters? Or losing heart? Satan would like nothing more than to paralyze us with fear, leaving us cowering before the forces of evil, multiplying around us. He'd love to see us reduced to infighting and division, because we've grown impatient waiting for the Lord, or maybe even because we've begun to doubt that He's even coming again.

Well, maybe you are just overwhelmed. You are overwhelmed by the criticism and the scoffing heaped on us by our increasingly secular world. If that's the case I'd encourage you to consider the wisdom recorded by the psalmist Asaph in Psalm 73. He wrote this, "But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, My steps had almost slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant, As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; They speak from on high. They have set their tongues against the heavens, And their tongue parades through the earth. They say, 'How does God know? And is there any knowledge with the Most High?' Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure, And washed my hands in innocence; For I have been stricken all day long, And chastened every morning." (Psalm 73:2-3, 8-9, 11, 13)

Do you feel like Asaph sometimes? Do you feel like you've been stricken all day long? Do you feel like the crush of division, and turmoil, and strife just is wearing you down? And every morning you wake up chastened. Do you ever feel like the dark doubts, and fears, and thoughts, that sometimes bubble up in our heart want to come out of our mouths? Well, listen to the wisdom of Asaph came to realize. He said, "If I had said, 'I will speak thus.'" In other words, I will give voice to my doubts, my fears, my discouragement, my despair. "Behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children." (Psalm 73:15, 16) In other words, if I had given lips, and voice to my doubts, my discouragement, my despair, I would have planted seeds of doubt, discouragement, and despair in the lives and hearts of my children, my grandchildren, and those all around me. That truly would be a tragedy.

But then Asaph had this realization, he said, "When I pondered to understand this it was troublesome in my sight, until I came into the sanctuary of God, then I perceived their end." In other words, when Asaph had an eternal perspective, everything came into focus. And he realized that his doubts and discouragement were only for a moment, and not worthy of giving voice to, because His eternal perspective, focusing on the Lord and all the promises that had been made to Him and to us, far exceed any of the sufferings, and the trials and tribulations that we are experiencing right now.

And on that insight, let me offer you one last appreciation of our situation. At Lamb & Lion Ministries we often preach from passages like Matthew 24 where Jesus answered the disciples question when they asked, "Tell, us when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of Your coming? And of the end of the age. And as Glenn and Nathan have described, Jesus went on to tell about a number of signs that would be evident in the world, in the last days. Things like the signs of nature, signs of society, signs that are spiritual in nature, signs of world politics, technology and Israel. And the fact is, He said, that those signs would increase in intensity and frequency, just like birth pains. And we have seen that happen. Especially in the last 50 to 100 years, to the point that today Bible prophecy teachers talk about the convergence of all those signs coming together, absolutely increased in intensity and frequency as the time of His coming approaches.

But in Matthew 24:12 He said this, "Because lawlessness is increased most peoples love will grow cold." And for a long time I thought, yeah, that is true. I always considered that to be the world's problem. Their love is going to grow cold as lawlessness increased. But over this past year I began to realize, you know what? The world never loved in the first place, not with the love of Christ. And so, as I watched the news over this past year and grew angry over the turmoil, and the riots, and the lawlessness. As I witnessed a rise in racial division in this country rearing its ugly head. As I grew frustrated over the spectrum of response to public health efforts, from total acquiescence to stubborn denial. And witness previously committed Christians break fellowship over eternally trivial matters. God hit me right between the eyes, and asked, "Tim, is your love growing cold?"

I have to confess this verse became a wake up call to me. Do I have my own eyes on Jesus? And am I loving the members of the body of Christ as He did, as His own Bride? Am I loving those who are lost and deceived, and flaunting their own wickedness, as much as He did when He came and died on a cross on their behalf and mine? So, once again I ask you: Are we Saturday Christians, full of distress, discouragement, discord, and despair? Or are we Sunday followers of Jesus Christ, more sure of our risen Lord than we are of anything, or anyone else? Is His Holy Spirit leading us to understand His prophetic Word? And do our hearts burn within us as the disciples on the road to Emmaus testified when Jesus revealed to them all the prophecies that pointed to Him? And are we so emboldened by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the fervency of our commitment to Christ that we must obey God rather than men, even if it causes us to be persecuted, or prosecuted for our faith?

But there is something else we need to remember. Although the Rapture is the next prophetic event that I am personally looking forward to, it is not the end of God's plan for us. You see after we are caught up to meet Jesus in the air, after we've joined with Him as the Bride of Christ and enjoyed the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, after we have the honor of witnessing Jesus coming in the glorious Second Coming. (Revelation 19:11-16) As He comes down in the same way that He went up in view of the apostles, this time riding a white horse to descend back to the earth. (Acts 1:9-11) Setting foot on the Mount of Olives and ascending to the Temple Mount to take the throne of His Father David. (Zechariah 14:3-9; Luke 1:32-33) Where He will judge the nations, and separate the sheep from the goats, meaning separating those who are His, from those who have rejected Him. (Matthew 25:31-33)

Then God has revealed another wonderful plan for us. You see for a thousand years Jesus will reign over the earth, repopulated by mortal believers who put their faith in Him during the Tribulation, and persevered through that period of unimaginable horror. He will flood the earth with peace, righteousness, and holiness. (Isaiah 9:6-7) And yes, we will reign with Him. Can you image a world restored to the perfection that existed in the Garden of Eden? (Romans 8:18-22) Satan will truly be bound. (Revelation 20:1-3) Human lifespans will be dramatically increased. (Isaiah 65:17-25; Micah 4) And Israel will become the preeminent nation of the world. Even the famous Dead Sea will team with life as life giving water flows from Jesus' throne. (Ezekiel 47:10)

But the greatest reason for Jesus to come and reign on the earth, is so that He can receive the honor that He was denied at His First Coming. As God declared through His prophet Isaiah, He said, "I have sworn by Myself; and My word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness, And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, and every tongue will swear allegiance. They will say of Me, 'Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.' Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him will be put to shame. In the LORD all the offspring of Israel will be justified and will glory." (Isaiah 45:23-25)

Do you understand the shift in pronouns, even in that verse? The Father, God, is declaring I have sworn by Myself. And the word has gone forth from My mouth. And then in the second verse He says, "Men will come to Him." Speaking of the Son, Jesus Christ. And all who are angry at Him will be put to shame. Well, if that is the promise to be fulfilled to Jesus, are you eager to witness that? And to participate in its glorious fulfillment? I certainly am. Daniel referred to the role, that we will serve as saints of the Highest One. (Daniel 7:8, 27) Jesus referenced the entrustment of talents that we have in this lifetime as a test to determine how much responsibility we should be assigned when He comes to reign. (Luke 19:11-17)

In Revelation 20:6 he says this, "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priest of God, and of Christ Jesus, and will reign with Him for a thousand years." And following that thousand year reign we will enter the Eternal State.

Romans 8:18 says, "The sufferings of this present age are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed to us."

And in 2 Corinthians 4:17, Paul says that that glory is an eternal weight of glory. Far beyond all comparison. Do you understand the glorious privilege that awaits you and the stakes of your stewardship in this lifetime? Are you serving and exercising the gifts the Lord has entrusted and invested in you with the understanding that the ramifications will resonate far beyond this life? And are you looking forward to all that Jesus has instore for you? Are you so earthly minded that you are no heavenly good?

You know over the past three weeks, Glenn and Nathan have given you a glimpse of things to come. They have both described the Rapture and try to give you an awareness of the glory that awaits us as we look forward to the Rapture. Every day I wake up crying in my heart, "Maranatha, come Lord Jesus." Maybe today. So, if we truly appreciate our situation, and all the promises we have to look forward to, certainly we would act like that group of children who were so excited about the destination that they were headed toward that they embrace the journey, act their best, learn and encourage those around them.

But I have one other question for you this morning: Have you ever stopped to consider what Jesus Christ is looking forward to? You know right now He is seated at the right hand of God the Father, on His throne in Heaven. He is constantly mediating for us, interceding for us, and pouring blessings in our lives through His Holy Spirit. He has need of nothing. In other words, He is totally content, and His relationship, His communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit is not only enough; it is the all sufficient relationship that has existed always, and forever, before time. And yet, Jesus tells us in Scripture that because of His relationship with the Church, who He refers to as His Bride, and Himself as the Bridegroom, He conveys the great love, and anticipation He feels toward us.

Those of you who are married understand this. You know that when you were engaged, or betrothed, you were looking forward to actually being united with your bride, or bridegroom. The joy you felt at engagement, was nothing to be compared to the fullness of joy that you would experience in marriage. And with that I'd like to show you a brief video clip.

***Before the Wrath* video clip**

Female Narrator: From His promises made through wine at the Last Supper. To why the world cannot know the day of His return. We were chosen to preserve the truth until the end of days. So, even if we are not spared from death, others can unveil what we know, and believe.

Jay McCarl: This discovery proves that He is coming back.

Tim Moore Presentation

Tim Moore: This video is a wonderful film called, "Before the Wrath," that talks about the Rapture of the Church, the Bride of Christ before the outpouring of God's wrath during the Tribulation. I love the picture in there of the young man who is the bridegroom, as his father wakes him and says, "Go and get your bride." The look of joy and excitement on his face. I also love the look, if you noticed, of the father as he has total joy seeing his son go to get his bride, and she is lifted up and carried back to their home.

So, we are all in a relationship with Jesus Christ right now if we put our trust in Him. And we need to understand that He is eager to be joined with us, to show us the place He has prepared for us. To share with us the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, and to introduce us to His Father in person.

Scripture tells us that the world will be excluded from that Marriage Feast. But while we are joined with Jesus Christ, the wrath of God will be poured out on all of those who have rejected Him. Indeed, His wrath abides on them right now. And shortly after the Rapture, that seven years period known as the Tribulation will begin. Some people will be convicted of their sin and will turn to God in repentance and faith during that horrible period, but most will grow even more defiant, and relishing their own sinfulness they will shake their fist at God and curse Him.

At the end of the Tribulation the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ will return to earth in the glorious Second Coming. And in a reversal of the vision that Ezekiel saw where the Shekinah Glory of God left the Mercy Seat above the Ark of the Covenant. Went to the eastern side of the Temple, then to the eastern gate of the city, and then to the mountain to the east, and finally left all together. In the end of time, at the Second Coming Jesus will return coming down to the Mount of Olives. The Valley of Kidron will split open, and the Eastern Gate that has been sealed for centuries, to keep the Jewish Messiah out will blow open, the King of glory will go in, up to the Temple Mount where He will take His seat on the throne of His father David, and from there again, He will judge the sheep and the goats. Those who are sheep, who have put their faith in Him during the Tribulation, will enter that Millennial Kingdom. And those who have rejected Him will be destroyed as goats. That will allow the mortal believers to live and to repopulate the earth. And for a 1,000 years He will reign on the earth, and we will reign with Him.

What are you looking forward to this morning? Are you looking forward to just being reunited with your family and friends who have gone on before? Are you looking forward to getting the promises that Scripture has for you? Maybe in seeing the streets of gold and getting your mansion? Are you looking forward to Jesus receiving the glory, the honor, and the praise that He has always been due?

If you'd like to assure your participation in all of these promises, in all of this glory that we have to look forward to, then I'd encourage you to come see me after this service. Come talk to Chris.

We'll put you in touch with Pastor Glenn and encourage you to commit yourself to this body of Christ here at Brookhaven Church.

And if today's message has sparked your interest in things to come, and the fulfillment of the promises to Jesus Christ, then I'd encourage you to pick up a copy of the booklet in the foyer that I've written called, "Looking Forward to the Reign of Jesus Christ." I pray that it will be a blessing to you.

But in order to close I could do no better than to cite the writer of Hebrews when he captured the essence of our challenge right now. He said, "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-3)

To that I will add his encouraging note in chapter 10 where he said, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who has promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:23-25)

Paul when writing to the Romans said this, "Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore, let us lay aside the deeds of darkness, and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife, and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts." (Romans 13:11-14)

Brothers and sisters in Revelation chapter 22 Jesus did promise three times that He is coming quickly. And John recorded Revelation 22:17, "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

If you are here today and want to put your faith in Jesus Christ, come. Soon and very soon, we are going to see our King.

Join me in prayer. Father God, what a glorious privilege it is to turn the pages of Scripture and realize that you have reveled the end just as you have disclosed the beginning. You've told us what we can look forward to, if we keep our eyes on your Son Jesus Christ we can stand above the waves, and we can continue on this journey without distraction. Father, I pray that all those who are here today, all those who are watching online will indeed keep their eyes on Jesus Christ, the author and perfector of our faith. And I pray that if any here do not already know Jesus as Lord and Savior, that they would indeed come. And then they too would join the throng of saints throughout the ages, and around the world today who cry out, "Maranatha, come Lord Jesus." It is in His precious and holy name that I pray, amen, and Godspeed.