

How to Prepare for the End of the World

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MAIN VERSES

[Matthew 10:34](#) • [Matthew 4:19](#) • [Daniel 7:25](#) • [Matthew 24:21](#) • [2 Peter 2:5](#) • [2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#) •
[Deuteronomy 28:64](#) • [John 15:5](#) • [Jeremiah 16:16](#) • [John 21:1](#) • [John 21:15-17](#) • [John 21:18-19](#) • [2 Corinthians 6:4-10](#) • [Colossians 1:24](#) • [Romans 5:3-5](#) • [Romans 8:17-25](#) • [Acts 28:30](#) • [Acts 14:22](#) • [John 16:33](#)

So how has your week been? Fantastic. I'm glad to know that your week was awesome. I had a very good week as well, and it kind of prompted me to readdress this message that I've done before, but I decided to change it a little bit and bring it to a different angle.

Living in the Latter Days

How many of you guys know we live in the latter days? How many of you know it's upon us, it's here? We've read the scriptures, we know what's coming. We know the end of the book, the wearing out of the saints, as Daniel puts it. Tribulation, as Matthew puts it. Tribulation's coming. Like nothing the world has ever seen, according to Yeshua. Are you prepared? Are you ready? Do you guys know how to be prepared for the coming of the end of the world?

What's the biggest priority? Is it shelter? I mean, shelter is pretty important, right? Maybe guns, ammunition. They got a lot of green tips right now for sale, right? Water purification systems, pure water, clean water source. You guys don't live in the city, do you? Because the only safe place is out in the Ozarks or at least past the mountains of Tennessee. You guys realize this, right? That's the only place that you can be safe. Why? Because you've got to protect your family. Because you have to be able to set up a fortress and have food set aside. And so when they come, you will be able to protect your family. You guys realize that's what Noah did, right?

Noah: The Ultimate Prepper

Peter tells us exactly what. And if he didn't spare the ancient world but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness... So you guys know Noah, right? They made a big movie about him. It was pretty cool. Had the Nephilim and everything.

And Noah was a man that understood what to look for when the times of tribulation were coming. Noah understood what it meant to prep. He was the ultimate prepper. Okay?

And because Noah prepared, he was saved. But that's not what Peter says. Peter says, speaking of God, if he didn't spare the ancient world, but he protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness and seven others, when he brought a flood on the world of the ungodly. Noah didn't save himself. Why was Noah saved? Why was Noah favored by God? Because it says he was a preacher of righteousness. What does that mean? Long story short, he was someone who was intent on furthering the kingdom of God, even if he was the only one. That was his mission. His mission was to say, okay, Father, what is your will? And I will do it. I will walk in faith.

Now, God did tell Noah to build an ark, but Noah's obedience to building the ark wasn't prepping. It was obedience. Noah wasn't storing guns up and having all his rifles ready and water purification system ready and all his freeze-dried food, that good stuff that astronauts eat. We need that stuff. Add some water to it. That's not what Noah did. He obeyed. He didn't prep.

Personal Preparedness

Now, some of you know that I'm kind of a prepper. Jenny and I have the little bug out bags and we got the food and we got water purifier systems and we may or may not have guns. I want to make it very clear right now. We don't have these things to prepare for the end of the world. We have them just in case. And no, I don't have guns just in case I need to have a shootout. You're not going to survive a shootout with anybody. No. We have guns for hunting and whatever. Jenny and I are not preparing for the end of the world by storing up food or storing up guns or buying a piece of land out in the middle of the country. That way the government can't find us. If the Father tells us to do that, then guess what? We will obey. But I'm not going to rearrange God's plans for me and my family for the end of the world by taking it upon myself to think about how I'm going to fulfill the role in the end of the world, if we're even in the end times.

A Life-Changing Health Crisis

Some of you know I had a scary experience this past week. Tuesday morning, I woke up around 6.30 in the morning. I was very confused. Long story short, I couldn't speak. I could not use my words. I could barely use my hands. I had a lot of stroke symptoms. Went to the ER. I had a head CT. Could barely talk. Could barely remember my wife's name, much less tell her I loved her, even though I knew she was my wife and I did love her.

My brain was not functioning. I had a head CT, chest x-ray, lots of blood work—man, he took a lot of blood. And long story short, I'm fine, everything's good. What most likely happened, or what did happen, is I skimmed a diabetic coma, if you will. My blood sugar dropped something very, very, very low in the middle of the night—never happened before in the past 10 years.

And my body was starved of sugar for an extended period of time and my brain started to shut down essentially. And it's fascinating because when I was laying there in the ER after the head CT and doctor coming in and out, what's this, what's that, had a headache and all this mess, I didn't care so much about Facebook anymore. And I didn't care so much about a couple of the bills that Jenny and I might be a little behind upon. Suddenly, that's not a big priority anymore in my life, laying there thinking I might die. This might be it. I didn't even get a chance to say goodbye to my son. It caused me to refocus on several different things in my life.

In that moment, did I actually fulfill my purpose on earth? Did I? Have you? Have you actually stepped into the role that God has created for you to be in as a believer, as someone in the kingdom? Have you stepped into that role and have you done the job that God has called you to do? Or when I die, will people just remember me as someone who maybe looked like he knew a lot of stuff?

Knowledge Without Relationship

Let me tell you something about knowledge. Knowledge, guys, biblical knowledge. There's a lot of cool stuff in that book, in the Bible and extra-biblical literature, a lot of cool stuff in the Hebrew language and the Greek language. Absolutely, none of it will save you. It's one thing to learn about God. It's another thing to have a relationship with God, and I feel sometimes that we get trapped in this mindset that we must know everything and we must understand everything. And every single question that comes up, theological question or chasm that comes up, we have to know with 100% certainty whether that is correct or this is correct or did Jesus really die on Wednesday or was it a Friday? That didn't save you. Most of you in this room accepted Christ into your life before you even read the Bible, did you not?

Caffeine, Knowledge, and Obsession

I was talking to my friend Chris Pope over at Tour Babies and we were talking about caffeine intake. And anybody know what this is? This is a rock star energy drink. Now, I like coffee and espresso and I like lots of espresso in coffee. And I also like Monster, Rockstars, whatever. Yeah, it is what it is.

Now, how many of you guys drink energy drinks? We've got a couple people coming out of the closet. Okay, good. How many of you guys drink coffee? How many of you guys drink coffee and look down at people who drink energy drinks? I see you, look at you, yeah! Like you much better. This can of Rockstar has 240 milligrams of caffeine in it. Oh, that's good stuff. Now granted, when I worked as a valet, I used to drink espresso every night. One time I drank eight shots of espresso. Time stood still, it was an amazing evening.

So 240 milligrams of caffeine is in this Rockstar energy drink. And many of you know, hang out with Jason, you can buy those water flavor squirts, you know what I'm talking about? You can squirt them in the water and shake them up and they taste like strawberries—they're awesome. Well, they have some that have caffeine in them, 60 milligrams per squirt. And so you take your 240 milligram Rockstar soda and you take your caffeine additive and you just do a couple of squirts in, just no big deal, right? Go to the gym, you're going to be throwing some weights around, right? I realized that I should probably stop drinking caffeine when I added about 100 milligrams of caffeine to a 240 milligram Rockstar drink. Didn't feel a thing. When I drink coffee every single morning, it didn't do anything for me. I could drink water or coffee and I feel the same. And so I'm taking a break from caffeine right now, but I wanted to impress something on you.

Knowledge, knowledge, for the sake of having knowledge, is like caffeine. I mean, who loves coffee? We all love coffee, right? And so when you first started drinking coffee, it's kind of nasty, but you're like, man, this feels great. I don't even care if it tastes nasty. I'm going to actually say it tastes good just to trick myself, right? And you start drinking caffeine, and caffeine's good. Is caffeine good? You can be honest. Caffeine's great, right? And caffeine's addicting. We can say it. It's okay, right? And sometimes you want a little bit more and you crave a little bit more, maybe you're having a rough day—I'm not going to just turn the switch on a Keurig pot, right? I'm going to make a whole pot. Dunkin' Donuts, small... We want more and more and we crave more, more, more, more, more. The more caffeine we can get, the better we feel, the more fun it is. This is like knowledge, guys, just for the sake of having knowledge.

Knowledge vs. Relationship

If you want knowledge, if you study history just for the sake of studying, if you study the Bible just for the sake of studying the Bible, just for the sake of learning and having knowledge, it's not going to last, because one day you're going to start reading some more of the Bible and it's going to be stale. Just like your relationship with God probably is because it's been replaced

with something else. Not going to be exciting anymore. I've learned everything. Do you have a relationship? That's something that'll never fail. You guys understand what I'm trying to say?

Our pursuit in our faith—the goal of our pursuit of faith is not the Bible. It isn't. Guys, I love the Bible. I study the Bible. The goal in the pursuit of our faith is not the Torah. That's not our goal. It's not. The goal and pursuit of our faith is to our king and our God. That's what we're running towards. We're not running towards the Bible. We're not running towards the Torah. We're running towards the Father. We're running towards the Son who is our king.

The Bible can help facilitate that relationship, but it is not the relationship. The Bible is not your God. If you treat it as such, it's idolatry.

Stories of Faith and Faithfulness

So yeah, I'm taking a break from caffeine for a while. I wanted to talk about how to prepare for the end of the world today, and I admit that was kind of a bait title—got you here.

I have a book here. It's a fantastic book, and I'd like to read a few stories from it. Can I read a few stories to you guys? It's a book about people who have prepared for the end of the world, actually. And we can learn a lot from them. It's about believers—believers in Yeshua—who understood their vocation as image bearers. Their vocation as tselim, which is what that word "image" means in Genesis, actually means not idol, but statue bearer. Like an idol, if you will. That's what you were created to be: a vessel for God's presence.

And so I have a few stories here. Can you guys bear with me? You don't have a choice. Let me see if I can find this. Here we go. This one is called "I Am a Soldier of Christ." And this book is called Jesus Freaks because it's about some Jesus freaks, right?

It's about a 15-year-old boy, this short story, called Roy Ponto. And he lived in Indonesia in 1999. And so the story begins:

"The teens could tell that the shouts and chanting were getting closer and closer. An older teen looked nervously at his friend. 'The Muslims are coming. We'd better hide the kids.' Others, following his lead, helped the smaller children find hiding places in the buildings nearby. Then they hid themselves. It was January, and a crowd of mostly Christian children and teenagers had gathered for a Bible camp at a station field complex in Padimura University on the island of Aban, Indonesia. When the camp was over, cars came, taking the laughing, rejoicing children back to their homes, but there were not enough cars to hold all the young people. Meki, Sainakik, and three other Christian men had gone to Wakal village to try to rent an additional

vehicle to take the rest home, but they had not come back yet. What the kids waiting for their rides didn't know was that on their way to the village, the men were attacked by a Muslim mob who pulled them from their car and onto the road. And Meki and one of the other men were stabbed to death. And later their bodies were burned by the mob. The two other men escaped with their lives. Before long, the mob reached the university. They found many of the teens and forced them to come out of hiding. Rory was forced from his hiding place and made to stand before the mob. 'Renounce your Jesus or we will kill you,' they threatened. Rory was terribly frightened. Though trembling, he looked up and he answered, 'I am a soldier of Christ.'

I have another story here. Let's see... Here we go. This one takes place in North Korea, I believe.

More Love to Thee

The title of the story is "More Love to Thee." Pastor Kim and his entire congregation in North Korea in the 1950s. For years, Pastor Kim and 27 of his flock of Korean saints had lived in a hand-dug tunnel system beneath the earth. Then, as the communists were building a road, they discovered the Christians living underground. The officials brought them out before a crowd of 30,000 in a village of Goksan in a public trial and execution. They were told, "Deny Christ or you will die," but they refused. At this point, the head communist officer ordered four children from the group seized and had them prepared for hanging. With ropes tied around their necks, the officer again commanded the parents to deny Christ.

Verse 1: This be the parting cry my heart shall raise. More love, O Christ, to thee.

The execution was reported in North Korean press as an act of suppressing superstition.

Finally, there was a Christian pastor in Cuba who was asked to sign a statement containing charges against his fellow brothers and believers that would lead to their arrest. He said, "The chains keep me from signing this document. I can't sign it." The communist officer protested, "But you're not in chains." "I am," said the Christian. "I am bound by the chain of witnesses who throughout the centuries gave their lives for Jesus Christ. I am a link in this chain and I will not break it."

Take Up Your Cross

How to prepare for the end of the world? Maybe we should start by reading about the people who have gone through it.

[Matthew 10](#), verse 34. Starting there, it states this: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword." And whosoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

This was an understanding in the early church all the way until now—at least in most of the world—that it brings God glory to follow in the footsteps of Yeshua. Whoever does not take up his cross—it's hard for us to take this saying seriously as if the disciples didn't really know what Yeshua was talking about when he said it, because he said this before he was crucified, right? So did they really understand what he was talking about? Yes, they really understood what he was talking about.

Both Josephus and Cicero, the Roman orator, used to say that the most cruel and terrifying penalty and the most pitiful of all deaths is crucifixion. Why? Because it was the number one execution, the top execution that the Roman Empire could pull on someone, especially a revolutionary.

The Revolutionary Kingdom

What do you think believers were? Revolutionaries. See, Yeshua on the cross, he was killed between two what? What were they? The two guys? There were two what? Thieves, right? Translated thieves. So the Greek word actually means revolutionary. I mean, they may have been thieves, but most likely they were revolutionaries. They were opposing the Roman government.

Yeshua's kingdom not only opposed the Roman government but every single power that was in that present age. And his followers? We have a new king. It wasn't too long before this that Judas the Galilean proclaimed himself to be the Messiah in the early first century, and basically got into a skirmish with the Roman empire. Of course, he was defeated. But four thousand of his followers were crucified right outside of what is now Nazareth.

The disciples understood very well what Yeshua was saying when he said the words: you need to take up your cross and follow me. It wasn't as much about being crucified as it was about facing death for living a life proclaiming the righteousness of God in a world that hates him. You will be killed.

Paul asserts a mandate—our vocation as believers in Yeshua. And I'm going to pull this verse up, and you might be like, "This verse again," and I'm going to be like, "Yeah, this verse again." See why I always pull this verse up? It's in [2 Corinthians 5](#), because in order to do our job, we need to know what our job is, right? Everybody? Fantastic.

Ministers of Reconciliation

So [2 Corinthians 5:18](#), and this is from God. So do we need any more authority than that? "Who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that God was reconciling the world to himself in Messiah, not counting people's sins against them, and he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Messiah's ambassadors."

Do you guys catch that? You're ministers. You've been given a ministry of reconciliation. Every single one of you is a minister. If you're in the kingdom, you have a job to do. It's to minister to the world. What am I supposed to minister to the world about? You're supposed to minister to the world about the fact that God has reconciled himself to them. Not counting their sins against them.

Guys, we said this at Passover, and I want to reemphasize it now because we're going to be doing a series on this in a few weeks. And Paul says that we've been redeemed from the curse of the law. Do you guys know what the curse of the law is? At the end of Deuteronomy, it states basically all the blessings and curses of the Torah, and the curse climaxes, essentially. They climax at exile. If you continue walking away from God, you will be scattered throughout all nations. This was the punishment that was given to the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians. This was the punishment that was given to Judea through the Babylonians. And they never really came out of exile.

And it was also the punishment given to all of mankind in the garden, exiled from God's presence. You've been redeemed from the curse of the law. The curse of the law is exile from God's presence. What were you redeemed from? You were redeemed from being away from God. That's what that verse is indicating. Why do you think that your sins had to be forgiven? Because the witness of you being in exile apart from God is your sin. If the sin is taken away, then guess what? The exile's ended. All of it. It's done. Not just the exile in Judea, not just the exile for the kingdom of Israel, the exile for all mankind from the garden, from God's presence. That was the passion of what Paul was preaching about the gospel.

See, we have the four gospels, and they tell us exactly how everything happened. Then Paul comes up and tries to reemphasize—the things that you're missing in there are the biggest deal here. We have a king now who is reigning over all the earth. He has been established and we get to be in his kingdom and we have reconciliation with God. That's the gospel. That's it. And that's a big deal.

The Anointed King

Do you guys know what Christ means? Messiah means the same thing. In Hebrew, Mashiach, which means the anointed one. And so we typically stop at that. We're like, oh, the anointed one. Okay, well, that's pretty cool. Yeah, he's the anointed one. The anointed what? The anointed what? He's king. That's what the messianic figure was. He is king.

And so this one scholar, every time Christ shows up in the New Testament, he translates it: King Jesus. Right? Rightfully so. Imagine going to all the world saying, listen, you have a greater King now—not the kings that are ruling over you in this current present evil age, not Caesar, not the Roman Empire. No, you are equals in this greater kingdom. And let me tell you about this king named Yeshua. Let me tell you about how you're gonna be an ambassador to the king and you are now a minister of reconciliation.

And so I ask, are you doing your job as ministers of reconciliation to the world—that you don't have to be apart from God's presence any longer?

The Apostles' Refusal

Why couldn't the apostles walk away from the horrible deaths that they experienced? You guys know the traditions of all the apostles and disciples and how they died? We'll fix and review them. Don't worry. You won't miss out. Just deny Yeshua and you'll be saved. You won't go through this horrible. You will not be burned alive. You will not be crucified. You will not be stabbed. We're not gonna bash your skull in with a club. Just deny Yeshua. We will not hang your children in front of you if you just deny Yeshua. Why didn't the Koreans act in this way? They could have gotten away with it: hey, we deny him, we don't want to die. A steamroller singing, more love to thee, oh Christ, more love to thee—because they understood that in that moment they were imitating the footsteps of Yeshua.

Love Displayed Through Suffering

Why did suffering have to happen to Yeshua? Suffering had to happen to Yeshua so that the unconquerable love of God could be portrayed to the world in a way that it would not be ignored. Crucified? Crucified? No one's going to come back from that. Crucified? Yeah, he'll give it up then. He'll want a quick death. He'll repent when he's on the cross. Don't worry, we'll put him up there. Father, forgive them. Well, I mean, I don't know that you're supposed to follow Yeshua.

Why do you think during the time of Nero, Christians didn't just deny the faith? The earliest Christian persecution, outside of Stephen, of course. Not too much longer than that, Nero got

up. And Nero's persecution of believers was so bad that there are people today that believe that was the tribulation. Preterists, right? And they make some valid points when they start talking about the knowledge of Scripture and everything. Nero, whenever he wanted to light up his garden, go grab a Christian, coat him in wax, and light him on fire so I can see my garden at night.

The Witness of Unconquerable Love

The earliest believers understood that the world could not take anything from them. I have a quote here from Tom Wright, and he states something very profound. He says, The victory found in the cross will be implemented by the same means. Through Yeshua's suffering, death, burial, and resurrection, the unconquerable love of God was witnessed by all the world. That same victory may be seen in your life. It may be seen in my life if we're willing to follow our Messiah wherever we would go.

Sorry, guys. Maybe the title of this message really caught a lot of people off guard. Maybe you thought this was going to be a really fun message about shelter and how to survive the end of the world and how to make it, right? That may not be what you're called to do. You may not be put in a place where that is the conclusion. Have you prepared yourself for that?

Follow Me

[John 21](#), 18. We're fixing to go through [John 21](#). And I love it because this verse at the very end, he's talking with Peter and they're having breakfast. And truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.

See, a couple of you looked a little surprised earlier when I said it brings glory to God when you follow the footsteps of Yeshua in suffering. You're like, what? That's biblical. There's this verse right here, verse 19. This he said, he is Yeshua, said to Peter to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God. And after saying this, he said to him, follow me.

Amazing. We're all about following Yeshua until some of us realize where he's wanting us to go.

Peter, you sure you love me? Yeah, I love you. Are you sure you love me? I love you, Lord. I mean, you kind of denied me three times. No, forget about it. Do you love me? Tend my flock,

feed my sheep. You got this. Yeah, I'm good. I'm going to follow you wherever you go. All right. This is the way that you're going to glorify God through your death. Follow me.

What Took Place on the Cross

Guys, I want to emphasize something today. And besides the stories, besides everything else, I want to emphasize what took place on the cross. And I want you to leave here understanding that what took place on the cross was revolutionary. It was kind of a big deal. It was the greatest thing that took place since creation.

Let me tell you about this. We talk a lot about how great Passover is every single year because we commemorate the exit from Egypt, right? And we come out of Egypt and the Passover land was in the ten plagues and we went through the Red Sea and did all this stuff through Egypt and this was fantastic.

And do you guys realize that in the first century there was an expectation of a greater exodus to come that was to be held in by the king, the Messiah, the anointed one? And he was going to be the one that was likened unto the prophet Moses, right?

And so, the fact that Yeshua had 12 tribes and the 12 tribes, maybe that's not, or the fact that he's known as the lamb, well, the Passover lamb, yeah. Or maybe, let's see here, you have 40 days in the wilderness, Yeshua fasted for 40 days, just like Moses did on the mountain during the Exodus account. Oh, and then they also had those 40 years. And the three temptations that Yeshua had were likened to three of the temptations that Israel had in the desert.

Three Temptations

When Israel rebuked God or rejected God's provision, and so he gave manna, fine, I'll give you some manna. Just turn this rock into bread, Yeshua. Come on, you can do it, right?

When he took him up at the high pinnacle of the temple and said, jump off, the angels will catch you. There was the incident where Israel was in the desert and they finally got fed up, right? Because they were selfish and ungrateful. And they said, is the Lord with us or not? Wandering through the wilderness. Is he here or not?

And Yeshua, throw yourself off. I mean, God is surely with you, right?

Golden calf, replacing God with something else completely. Yeshua, bow down to me and I'll give you everything.

The connections. And then the Last Supper. I have been waiting to eat this Passover with you.

The Greater Exodus

Why did Yeshua die on Passover? Thank you. Was it for forgiveness of sins? Because Passover wasn't about forgiveness of sins. Yom Kippur was, if we wanted to do that. Yeshua died on Passover because Passover was a festival of freedom. And it wasn't just freedom from Egypt. It wasn't just freedom from a taskmaster as bad as Pharaoh. It wasn't just freedom from a corrupt government. That enslaved us. No, it was freedom from something greater. It was a greater Passover, a greater exodus that took place. It wasn't freedom from slavery. It was freedom from sin, exile from God. It wasn't freedom from Pharaoh. It was freedom from the powers of this present evil age.

So when you leave here today, despite everything else we talk about, I want you to understand that what took place on the cross should never be minimized in any conversation that you have or in any thought that you have and it should never be replaced with something more valuable because that's it.

The Conviction of Martyrs

You guys know how the first believers died? Peter, right? First Pope. He was crucified under Nero's regime and when he went to go get crucified, tradition says that he proclaimed that I don't deserve to be crucified in the same manner as my king.

The Apostles' Witness in Death

Turn me upside down. Paul got his head chopped off in Rome proclaiming. James—Josephus indicates that he was stoned and then clubbed to death, so his head was crushed in with a bat. Simeon the Zealot, the story goes that he ministered in Persia and was killed for refusing to sacrifice to a sun deity. "I will not sacrifice to a sun god. I don't worship a sun god." "We're going to kill you." "Then kill me. I will not betray the loyalty to my God by worshiping your false pagan sun gods." Killed. Matthias replaced Judas, that guy. Tradition says he went with Andrew to Syria and was burned to death.

And then John. According to tradition, John was the author of Revelation. He took care of Mary, Yeshua's mother. He was exiled to the island of Patmos. Early Latin tradition states that he was boiled in oil, alive, and then escaped. So we're not sure what happened to him.

Persecution Continues Today

Guess what? The pursuit of the world to snuff out the message of God's reconciliation did not stop with them. It still continues today. Go to Syria. Go to the Assyrian Christians that are dying right now. What are we supposed to be doing? How are we supposed to be preparing ourselves for a life following Yeshua?

Called to Fish for People

Turn with me to [John 21](#). We'll read through this chapter real quick. It's a fantastic chapter about fishing, about feeding, about following, and about being faithful to Yeshua. How many of you know that your job is to be a fisherman? That's what we're supposed to be doing. Two people. Fantastic. We're going to learn how to fish. This chapter is about fishing for people.

When Yeshua told his disciples he would make them fishers of men, remember that? He said, "I'm going to make you fishers of men." It was not just a phrase he made up. It's actually from Scripture—from [Jeremiah 16](#), 16. And [Jeremiah 16](#), 16 is speaking about God sending fishermen and hunters to gather the exiles. Gather the exiles, because that's what Yeshua came to do: to regather not just some of the exiles, but all of mankind who was in exile away from God.

How many of you know that God loved more than just Israel? Is that dangerous to say? I'm glad he did. He loved the world, that through a people he would allow to be a light unto the world, if they would choose to be, and his kingdom would spread.

The Miraculous Catch

So [John 21](#) takes place after the resurrection, of course. And in Matthew, he tells his disciples to go to Galilee and wait for him. So they go to Galilee and they start fishing again, because that's what they do best, right? They'd just been through a very traumatic time in Jerusalem and hiding out and escaping and all that ordeal. And now they're finally getting back to something familiar. Getting on a boat, they said, "Hey, let's go fishing."

Chapter 21, starting in verse 1. You can read along with me here. There we go. That sounds like a great idea. What a fascinating lesson right there. You got these guys—are they professional fishermen? They know what they're doing, right? They've been doing it all their lives, what they were trained to do. But they didn't catch nothing.

Yeshua says, "Toss your net over to the right side," so they did. It's amazing because you cannot do anything, anything without the provision of Yeshua. This doesn't happen, does not happen.

What's [John 15:5](#) say? Apart from Him we're nothing. You can do a lot of good things in your life. You can be a good fisherman. You can do a lot of great things, humanitarian aid. You can be a nice person. You can love your neighbors. You can love your enemies. But if you're not doing it while holding the banner of Yeshua, it's just like drinking a Rockstar drink. It doesn't have any lasting effect. The purpose is to be a vessel of God's love, and to be an ambassador of Yeshua.

Not Only Instructions, But Resources

And so we have these fishermen. In order to fish, you've got to have Yeshua. So not only does Yeshua give the instruction, but he gives the resources. Look at the very next verse. So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because of the quantity of fish.

"That disciple whom Yeshua loved—he wrote the book of John—therefore said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.'" "It's the Lord. He's out there." When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment for he was stripped for work and threw himself in the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

Once again—an example. Verse 11: "So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn."

Peter's Zeal

So Peter's always the guy jumping out of a perfectly good boat. I mean, good gracious. He's just overzealous and passionate for his king, for Yeshua. I love that. It's kind of like when Mary went to the tomb. "What angels? I'm looking for Yeshua. Big angels. I don't care about y'all. Where's Yeshua? Where's Yeshua?" The Lord's out there. "Peter, we got a lot of fish. We need your help. Swim to the shore." Yeshua, right?

Finally, the disciples got to shore. But Peter had left them all to drag the boat in. Finally, Yeshua looks at them. "Why don't you go get some of the fish that you just caught?" So Peter had to go back and help haul the fish in.

I want to be Peter. I want to have that excitement every single day when I wake up. I want to have that excitement every single time I see someone in need that I can help. I want to have that type of excitement when I see someone that can be ministered to by the love of God through me. I want to be that excited to just jump out of the boat, stop what I'm doing, rush

over and say, "Father, use me." How many of us do that? Amazing what would happen to the kingdom if that was our focus.

The Significance of 153 Fish

153 fish. You guys know why there was 153 fish, right? Because that's how many fish they caught. I was reading IVP and Zonerman commentaries about 153. It said there have been attempts made for Gematria numerology and all that mess, but both commentaries state and make a valid point. Everywhere in Scripture, especially in the Tanakh, wherever God performed a miracle—whether He defeated an army or gave food—the numbers often seem exaggerated, even if they weren't, to show it was God, not man. So 153 is here, possibly just because they counted and that's how many there were. And they were big fish and the net didn't break.

"Yeshua said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.'" "Now none of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord." Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them. And then with the fish, fish sandwiches. And this was now the third time that Yeshua had revealed himself to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Prepared and Equipped

Yeshua gave them instructions. Yeshua gave them the resources. And Yeshua gave them the ability to carry a big old net of fish on the shore. This was all about Yeshua. This was all about his kingdom. And if we look in between the details, we see something quite profound. This was more than just a breakfast. This was an example of what Yeshua was leaving his disciples to follow. And then he gave them the honor and privilege of joining him in his work and obeying his instructions.

The one thing we learn through verses 1 through 14 is Yeshua prepares and equips his people, equips you, to do what? To do his work. That's what ambassadors do. Just because Yeshua isn't physically here is not an excuse not to continue the work that he started. You have the resources. You have the instructions. Do it. Even if that means going up on the cross, do it. Be an example. If that means helping the poor, do it. If that means healing the sick, do it. If that means supporting someone, do it. If that means calling someone who's been having a bad week just to see how they're doing, maybe you can start there. We have instructions and we have a mandate and we have the work to do. Are we prepared to do it?

Feed My Sheep

"When they had finished breakfast, Yeshua said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'" If you love Yeshua, you will take care of His flock. That's the message. You will tend the flock, you will feed the flock. Every single one of you has been called to spread the kingdom of God throughout the world. Is there something stopping you from doing it? Is there something stopping you from being that ambassador at your workplace, in your own home, out at the supermarket? We need to identify these things, these walls that we have up, so that we can fulfill the role that we have.

If Yeshua was here right now asking you, "Do you love me?" Would you say yes? I mean, I sure would. Then do my work.

You've Been Hired

"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted. But when you were old, you will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you did not want to go." This he said to show by what kind of death he was going to glorify God. And after that saying, "Follow me."

I say all this to state this one point: You've been hired. You're not waiting on your vocation. You're not waiting on your job interview to get approved. You're not waiting on the letter to say, "Hey, guess what? You're hired." You're not waiting on God to review your resume because it wasn't that great to begin with.

You were hired. You're employed as part of the kingdom of God. Do you understand the weight that carries? What will it take for us to realize what kind of weight that does carry? The only thing I pray that I can give you today is an encouragement and a boldness to be the witness of Yeshua that you were employed to be. When you walk out these doors here, we're gonna say hey, we're gonna hug and pray over each other. It's gonna be great. When you leave, the people that you engage with—will they know that you're working for the King? Will they know that you're an ambassador? Will they know that you're a believer? Will they know that you serve Yeshua? Is that something that they're gonna understand when they see you, when they hear you speak, when they see you engage with them in certain ways, when they see you engage with other people? Because that's how we fish.

I hope that you will find the boldness within yourself to say, "You know what? I am an ambassador for the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. God, help me do my job."

The Formula: God's Love and Suffering

So why the suffering? Why'd you bring that up, Matthew? That's uncomfortable to talk about. Well, because that's the formula. That's God's love. God's love was poured out upon all creation. Why the suffering? Because the defeated powers are fighting back. The powers of this world do not want God's love to flourish. They do not want God's kingdom to reign. So that's why there's suffering—that's what it is.

What can they take? Paul says this in [2 Corinthians 6](#), 4. He says, "But as a servant of God, we commend ourselves in every way by great endurance—great what?—great endurance. In tribulations, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, and hunger. By purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love. By truthful speech and the power of God. With the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left. Through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise, we are treated as imposters and yet we are true."

[Colossians 1](#) verse 24. How many of you guys have never seen these verses quite in this light before? Just emphasized.

Suffering Produces Endurance

[Romans 5.3](#). That suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame because—everybody say "because"—God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

"For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Remember that when you leave today.

[Romans 8](#), 17. "And if children, then heirs. Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subject to fertility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God."

I wonder, have we forgotten these things? Have we forgotten the very basics of what it means to be a believer? The very foundation—have we forgotten? I mean, guys, studying Hebrew is cool. Don't get me wrong. I love it. And Greek? Greek's really fascinating if you dig into Greek. Have we forgotten our first love?

The Boldness of Paul

This is the attitude that encouraged Paul when he was illegally beaten, stoned, imprisoned, bit by the stupid snake, and shipwrecked—it was like the Titanic. I mean, the ship sunk in the sea. He made it to shore. Until finally he made it to Rome. And when Paul was in Rome, he was placed in prison and he was placed in the very court of Caesar under Caesar's nose.

And do you know how the book of Acts ends, in chapter 28? It ends with Paul standing there with the now-defeated leader of the Roman Empire, right? And Paul is staring at the court, and Paul says it: he does not shiver, he does not shake; he's not scared, he's not fearful, he's not trembling, he's not stuttering over his words. He has the boldness it takes to look and say, "Yeshua is King, and He is Lord." That is what suffering got Paul. And then his head was cut off.

But what did they take from him? You guys know what the word martyr means? Witness! Witnesses!

More verses here. [Acts 14](#), 22: "Strengthening the disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith by telling them, it is necessary to pass through many troubles on our way into the kingdom of God." Perseverance. As we share in the life of Messiah, we share in the suffering of Messiah. Guess what? We share in the burial, and we're going to share in the resurrection of Messiah.

We know where we've come from. Do we know where we're prepared to go? We don't need to prepare for the end of the world. We need to rely on God to prepare us for what He's willing for us to partake in—whatever form of glorification that would be for Him.

Take Heart: He Has Overcome

There's one verse here. [John 16](#), 33. "I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you may have tribulation. But take heart. I have overcome the world."

And so this message really wasn't about how to prepare for the end of the world. Because... God's going to prepare you for whatever you have to go through. I know that there are many people in the fellowship going through different trials and tribulations right now. Maybe none

of you are facing martyrdom yet, but perhaps the stress, the anxiety, the times, the things with your family feel like that at times. And so what I wanted to facilitate today is for the prayer team to come up.

And if you have a need—if there is an obstacle in your life, maybe you just need support for boldness, maybe you just need support to stand, maybe you just need support with taking down those walls that are keeping you from fulfilling the role of what God has called you to do or the person He's called you to be in your life—this is what the fellowship is for. We can get up here and we can talk. We can sing songs together. But community, right here, this is what I value. And so if that's you today, I would ask that you come. If there is something in your life that you need help with or you just want encouragement with, we have a prayer team right here dedicated for you.

For More Information

Hey guys, I'm Matthew Vanderels, pastor at Founded in Truth Fellowship, and I really hope you enjoy this message. If you'd like to write us, you can do so at Founded in Truth, P.O. Box 38042, Rock Hill, South Carolina, zip code 29732. You can also check out our Facebook page at facebook.com/foundedintruth. If you would like to see more messages and teachings like this one, please subscribe to our YouTube channel. And if this message has been edifying to you, please consider supporting us and the ministry through our secure online giving portal. This will ensure this message, along with many others, will continue to reach those who find themselves far from God.

I pray that you stay blessed. I pray that you guys stay encouraged. And I pray that you stay fit. Founded in Truth. We'll see you guys next time.

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [Foundedintruth.com](https://foundedintruth.com)

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